



June 11th, 2023

Ad Hoc Group “Public Awareness Strategies”

Refers to all ICOLD European Country Members

Duration: 2023-2025

Introduction

Public awareness and furthermore acceptance is an indispensable mean to promote dam development, as their role is becoming crucial for energy, potable and irrigation water security, flood control and defense and other important uses (e.g., fires). To achieve this, people have to associate the enormous benefits modern societies derive from dams' operation and the adverse consequences from their development stagnation.

Local, most frequently, opposition for new projects, is delaying or canceling their deployment and in many cases, this is attributed to misinformation and knowledge insufficiency. On a European basis, organized actions in favor of dam removal are spreading out and despite their initial focus on obsolete dams and weirs, simplistic analysis on dam impacts is discrediting their value.

The dam community, identifying both their benefits and impacts, needs to provide their values and educate people on the necessity to sustain and further develop these projects, incorporating modern sustainable practices.

European countries, either members of the EU or not, are interconnected and they face common challenges to adapt to raising energy demands and climate induced impacts. Many National Committees have already developed actions to promote dams at a national level (educative material provided online for students and kids, kids book, various actions by ITCOLD like the video projected etc.).

In 2016, the European Club issued the Manifesto on dams and reservoirs, which presents the beneficiary and important role of dams to modern societies. ITCOLD has also created an associated video to visually communicate these values.

Scope

Following the Video projection and the Dam Day proposal by ITCOLD, EurCOLD could brainstorm towards the following issues and explore, indicatively, the following:



- Can we collect information on public acceptance and opposing groups?
- Can we promote public awareness strategies on a European basis or focus on implementing parallel actions nationally?
- What kind of actions are already implemented by the National Committees?
- What kind of information we should collect to share and promote?
- For which social and age groups?
- What kind of strategies could be effective? e.g.
 - o Video promotion / documentary / animation (to promote in conferences, film and other thematic festivals, institutions and associations, universities, schools, other)
 - o Printed (and digital) information e.g., leaflet of selected projects etc.
 - o Online information (on websites or create a targeted website)
 - o Podcasts?
 - o etc.
- Could we collaborate with other associations and institutions?
- Can we provide a list of strategies to National Committees to use as a reference?
- Could the National Committees incorporate this information and to what extent?
- Can we ensure funds for the proposed strategies?

As a European dam community, it is important to brainstorm towards feasible strategies and an Ad Hoc Group with the active participation of representatives from the ICOLD European country members would be essential.

The activities proposed, will be associated with the Dam Day proposal by ITCOLD.

The Group will interact and collaborate with ICOLD TC N – Public Awareness and Education.