

The Main Challenges in the Management of Joint Property Units in Waters in Finland

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SUMMARY

The joint ownership of waters is a very unique form of property ownership in the Finnish cadastral system. There are about 20000 joint property units in waters in the cadastre. The owners of participating property units form a joint property management association. The shareholders together have the power of decision of all matters concerning the unit. The association can become organised by approving the rules for its operations but it can also operate unorganised. However, there are many challenges in the operations of the joint property management associations.

It is estimated that less than half of all associations are organised, and also they may have ceased in the course of time. Most of the unorganised associations have never had any activities. It is often difficult to tempt shareholders to participate meetings and find volunteers to the associations' administration. The average age of active shareholders very high being a risk for continuous operation in the long-term. All shareholders don't also have equal opportunities for participation, especially those living far, as most associations don't use any modern tools in their communication or in meeting arrangements.

The joint property management associations are the holders of fishing rights. Therefore the organisation of fishing and the management of fishing waters have traditionally been the main forms of their operations. However due to changing values and interests, increasing number of shareholders are not anymore interested of recreational fishing but prioritise good water quality. Thus they are less interested of participating the operations of associations focusing only on fishing.

In some waters the structure of properties is very fragmented. In this kind of cases the neighbouring property units should be encouraged to join together to consolidate the structure.

The poorly organised association can't also supervise effectively the interests of their property and shareholders. Such associations are probably not able to react quickly enough for matters concerning their interests.

These challenges in the management of water areas may hinder the possibilities for exploitation of the water resources for economic purposes and recreational use in Finland. Therefore there is a need for measures to support the operations of the joint property management associations. Many challenges could be tackled by more effective communication to shareholders and associations of the management of joint property units, but there are also some needs for amendment of legislation.