



DELTAS IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE II INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE, SCIENCE, CITIES AND BUSINESS
ROTTERDAM THE NETHERLANDS, 24 – 26 SEPTEMBER 2014

Deltas in Depth scientific sessions	
Deltas in Depth 9. Governance of adaptation	
DD 9.7 Multilevel governance of adaptation in the Netherlands	
Chair	Prof. dr. Dave Huitema, VU University Amsterdam, Institute for Environmental Studies, the Netherlands
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Arwin van Buuren, Erasmus University, the Netherlands● Carel Dieperink, Utrecht University, the Netherlands● Mathijs van Vliet, Wageningen UR, the Netherlands● Rutger van den Brugge, Deltares, the Netherlands● Jeroen Rijke, UNESCO-IHE, the Netherlands

The session about multi-level governance of climate change adaptation in the Netherlands – chaired by Dave Huitema, VU University Amsterdam - provided us interesting insights into the need for governance changes in the perspective of a changing climate. Over coupling was that all speakers describe the Dutch historical focus on flood prevention and asses the need for changes in governance from different perspectives. Even though the session started from a Dutch perspective, many lessons could be learned for adaptive climate adaptation governance on a global level as well.

The first speaker, Arwin van Buuren – Erasmus University, the Netherlands – shows us that water governance and climate adaptation are complex multi-level challenges and that those multiple levels should ideologically reinforce each other. He describes the concept of governance capacity and the role of program management. Based on his and Teisman’s evaluation of the Dutch Delta Programme (DP) (2014), he provides some positive conclusions about this programme, such as the long term focus, the emphasize on the national character (regional processes) as the inclusive dialogue creates mutual understanding, the combination of top-down and bottom-up governance, just as the boundary role of the Delta Commissioner. Besides, he points to positive aspects of the process (e.g. joint exploration of strategies and increased political attention). Some critical comments also pass by, focussing on the upcoming implementation phase and the possibilities for multi-level governance, the fact that program management was successful in the preparing phase, but is it also helpful in the implementation phase? And the fact that the programme provided a temporal vehicle and structure, but could this be a fail factor for the implementation? For the DP case, it could be concluded that program management is successful for fostering governance capacity between governmental levels, yet consolidation is difficult.

Carel Dieperink – Utrecht University, STAR-Flood programme - also addresses the need for changes in governance in the light of a changing climate, however he focusses on the debate of the diversification of Flood Risk Management Strategies (FRMS). Stressing that there should not be a focus on structural measures alone, yet that there is a need for diversification of FRMS. He provides five examples of FRMS (defence, retention, prevention, mitigation, preparation and recovery) and states that an intensification of each type will lead to different steps and challenges. Overlap in challenges could be found in the fact that there is no one size fits all solution and that FRMS should be tailor made, that coordination is necessary due to upstream and downstream interdependencies, that we need boundary agents and policy entrepreneurs to bridge concepts and of course appropriate scientific backing. Also societal awareness and support is seen as significant. For the





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Dutch case it appears that a diversification of FRMS is visible (e.g. via the Multi-Layer Safety concept (MLS)), yet flood prevention remains the corner stone. Central for discussion is if diversification is the best option to deal with FRM, either is the focus on one strategy better in some cases?

Mathijs van Vliet – Wageningen UR, the Netherlands – elaborates further on the governance implications of integrated FRM by studying how the Dutch move from a probability to a flood risk management approach. It appears that the first layer of MLS (flood prevention) stays dominant in the DP just as the striving for cost-effectiveness, while the second (damage reduction via spatial planning) and the third layer (crisis management) are of less importance. Via an analytical framework of Termeer (2011) he studies FRM and MLS in the Netherlands on four themes. He addresses the challenges of reallocating responsibilities when shifting from the first (water, public and central government dominated sector with clear boundaries) towards the second and third layer, as spatial planners and safety regions become co-responsible, the role of the private sector changes, just as funding mechanisms. Besides it appears that the second and third layer deal with different – often softer - types of knowledge in comparison to the hard norms of the water sector. So far, FRM was addressed via a cost-effectiveness approach, yet MLS is asking for more trade-offs. MLS also requires the rethinking of the underlying normative principles of climate adaptation governance, such as solidarity and resilience. Mathijs states that MLS needs more than new rules and regulations, there should be attention to frames, processes, bridges between sectors and smart solutions.

After that, Rutger van der Brugge – Deltares – takes us a step further through his speech about tools for thinking about and setting up government arrangements for the implementation of adaptation strategies. Those government arrangements should be able to deal with the specific characteristics of the climate change issue (e.g. long term impacts, irreducible uncertainty and the need for an adaptive and responsive strategy). He clarifies the importance of prospective tools that incorporate thinking about implementation already during the development stage. The study of Deltares focuses on three levels; the strategic, tactical and operational. For the first, the adaptation pathways approach is used to explore possibilities for adaptation paths. Rutger shows that next to ordinary evaluation methods, also the governance complexity of an adaptation path should be assessed, including socio-cultural conditions. On the tactical level, climate adaptation governance should be secured in policy documents. And for the operational level Deltares has developed an implementation canvas tool to facilitate discussion between participants with regard to measures and critical factors for implementation. We could learn that governance issues should be considered from the start, easy tools could support people for thinking about implementation and that the most significant barriers for implementation are often institutional, socio-cultural and governance related and not so much technical.

Lastly, Jeroen Rijke – UNESCO-IHE, the Netherlands – spoke about the emergence and application of Adaptive Delta Management (ADM) in the Netherlands by showing us his evaluation of the DP's adaptive management. He considers ADM as a way of thinking for strategic planning where long term changes are incorporated in short term planning. ADM evolves in four key principles; long term change in short term decision-making, flexible management (keeping options open), adaptation pathways instead of end-goals and the linking of investment agendas. Jeroen tells us that the DP selection process was less open-ended than planned. Yet, actors were stimulated to think further and the connection of long and short term and the increased awareness about future uncertainties were





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considered positively. The DP enhanced flexibility in the future, yet only a limited number of options are open, showing that keeping options open is politically challenging. For the third principle, also steps in an adaptation path are difficult, only for fresh water and salinity problems the idea of tipping points was valuable. His analysis also clarifies that linking the water investment agenda to other sector's investments agenda is complex, due to mismatches between planning programmes. Jeroen concludes that ADM provides a better explanation for short term investment decisions for climate adaptation governance, yet solutions are not radically different. Besides, ADM helps to think about uncertainty and beyond the water domain. Tipping points could be seen as subjective and bring less than expected in ADM. And there are limited options to link investment agendas of sectors, perhaps this should be done at the tactical level.

The discussion afterwards revealed various points, such as is climate change adaptation markedly different than other policy problems? Another interesting point of discussion is related to the missing normative discussion on FRM in the Netherlands. In this session the trend from top-down water management in the Netherlands towards multi-level governance was clearly presented, yet do we need and want this? It seems that those new approaches (such as MLS) institutionalize on top of the old institutions, yet how do they interact? Is it beneficial for the common benefit when FRM becomes a responsibility of residents, private actors or a mixture of actors? Also the implementation of climate change adaptation governance was discussed, for instance how to connect top-down and bottom-up challenges, just as private and public actors? Also the point was made that cost-effectiveness seems to drive FRM in the Netherlands, but that other criteria are relevant as well (e.g. equity, predictability, solidarity). In contrast to the Netherlands, the discussion also shows that less developed countries face more immediate problems and are less able to think about the long term adaptation strategies. In conclusion, multilevel governance of adaptation provides plenty of opportunities and issues to continue this discussion.

