

The myth of stakeholder participation

The effects and consequences of participation in planning processes



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Abstract

From the 1990s on, the collaborative planning style became popular including its stakeholder participation. Despite its popularity, it appeared that stakeholder participation is not always easy to implement in planning processes. It involves more than just 'chatting' with participants and organising general information sessions. The objective of this research is to inquire into the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation in planning processes. In order to study this, a comparative case study research is conducted on two Natura 2000 planning processes. Results show that the initiating organisations as well as participating organisations have different and sometimes unrealistic expectations concerning their roles, the process and product. The effects of these varying expectations are large; arguments and frustrations might occur which eventually extend the process. Improvements can be made in future planning processes in the field of expectation-management, custom-made communication strategies and in the ways participative processes are started.

Keywords: stakeholder participation, effects, consequences, Natura 2000, Beekvliet/Stelkampsveld, Wooldse Veen.

Preface

With this master thesis, I reflect on the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation in planning processes. When I started my master education Spatial Planning at Wageningen University, I was rather sceptic about 'science'. In my perception, many reports disappeared straight away into filling cabinets or they were useless in practice. Although I still think that there is a knowledge gap between science and practice, I changed my sceptic vision. Different courses opened my eyes about planning theories and methodologies. Wageningen University taught me that there are always multiple ways or perceptions in studying topics.

With this preface, I would like to thank everybody who helped me to realise this thesis. First, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support. Especially, I would like to thank Lesley for her comments. I also would like to thank Raoul and Rob for the fruitful discussions, their enthusiasm and constructive criticism. Furthermore, I am very grateful to all the interviewees and their willingness for co-operation and openness. Their interesting stories are an essential part of this thesis and made conducting this research a pleasant journey. Finally, I would like to thank my boyfriend for his support and patience. Without him, I would have never completed this academic adventure successfully.

Enjoy reading the thesis,
Wieteke Schotsman

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Summary

Due to changes over the last 25 years in the complexity of social, political, economic and ecological worlds, planning theories and practices required modification. One of the theories that emerged over the last twenty five years is 'collaborative planning' including its stakeholder participation. Though participation is a popular instrument, it appeared that it is not always easy to implement in planning processes. Furthermore, several scholars indicate that there is a knowledge gap between the collaborative theory and practice. The objective of this research is to inquire the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation on planning processes. To inquire into this objective; the following main research question was formulated:

'How does participation influences planning processes and which consequences does it have for stakeholder parties involved?'

In order to answer the main research question, a theoretical framework needed to be developed. After preliminary literature research, four main concepts were included into the framework namely stakeholder participation, communication, social relations and conflicts. Interrelations between these four concepts were analysed and visualised in a conceptual model. Because it is impossible to study every planning process, two Natura 2000 planning processes were selected. A comparative case study research is performed between the cases *Beekvliet/Stelkampsveld* and *Wooldse Veen*. The main data collection method that is used to analyse the cases are interviews with representatives from participating stakeholder groups and initiating organisations.

Both case studies reveal that the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation are often underestimated by the stakeholders as well as by the initiating organisation. If participation is mentioned, from the first moment on, each involved stakeholder forms its own perceptions and expectations concerning participation. Stakeholders develop certain expectations towards their role, the process and their ability to influence the content of the plan. These specific perceptions and expectations depend on different factors such as experiences with previous processes, local culture, and the participant's satisfaction concerning its role. The initiating organisation has expectations concerning the progress of the process, the role that stakeholders should adapt and the content of the plan. If these expectations differ, and if these are not explicitly discussed, frustrations and problems can arise during the process. Frustrations on the side of stakeholders might arise because the process is progressing slowly, their input is low and they have the idea that they cannot decide on important topics. On the other hand, frustrations of the initiating organisation might arise because the stakeholders are complaining and their attitude is less or non-cooperative which results in longer processes, which eventually cost more money. This is sometimes enhanced by an underestimation of the initiating organisation of the complexity of a participative process. Despite that it is crucial to manage the expectations and perceptions during the process carefully, the factors that influence these expectations are complicated to influence by the initiating organisation. Two methods that could help in gaining insight in the perceptions and expectations of stakeholders are doing research on the previous planning processes and the development of long-lasting relationships. Found research data provide insights in points of departure of stakeholder groups considering participation and furthermore, it provides insights in progress of previous planning processes. This knowledge can be translated into a customised communication strategy and furthermore, it provides input for the organisational structure of the participation (the do's and don'ts). Furthermore, it could be fruitful to invest time in the development of long-lasting relationships. After all, stakeholders are often participating in several processes over a longer period of time. Experiences from previous processes are important for the actual attitude and expectations of stakeholders. Indirectly, developing long-term relationships over several processes might influence the experiences of stakeholder's positively, which eventually can lead to more realistic expectations and perceptions and to cooperative attitudes at the beginning of a process.

There is always room for improvement in planning processes. This research concludes with practical recommendations concerning the consequences of stakeholder participation, expectation-management, a method to start participative processes and communication.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the chosen field of research: a case study on the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation in planning processes. In order to study the effects and consequences, two Natura 2000 planning processes were selected. Stakeholder participation is introduced in paragraph one. Because the effects and consequences are studied in two Natura 2000 planning processes, it is necessary to introduce the European Natura 2000 policy as well. The policy is briefly introduced in paragraph two. The third paragraph contains the motivation for selecting this field of research. In addition, the problem field is outlined resulting in a problem statement. The fourth paragraph contains the research objective and research questions.

1.1 Stakeholder participation

Due to changes over the last 25 years in the complexity of social, political, economic and ecological worlds, planning theorists started to debate about the advantages and disadvantages of different theoretical approaches. It has become clear that planning theories and practices require substantial modifications. Obviously, many theories have already undergone substantial modification (Hillier & Healy, 2008). One of the theories that particularly emerged over the last twenty years is 'collaborative planning' which is also often assigned as 'communicative planning'. Planning theorists got interested in collaborative planning from the understanding that *"we are diverse people living in complex webs of economic and social relations, within we develop potentially very varied ways of seeing the world, of identifying our interest and values, of reasoning about them, and thinking about our relations with others"* (Healy, 1996 quoted in Hillier & Healy, 2008, p. 3). If we assume that the main aim of planning is to provide demands and needs of stakeholders, then communication about different moral and ethical values, interpretations and interrelations between different (social) groups become highly important.

The influence that stakeholders (should) have in processes and participation is frequent studied in science (for instance Allmendinger, 2009; Healy, 1997; Sager, 2009 and Huxley & Yifrachel, 2000). Stakeholder participation is embedded in today's popular planning style 'collaborative planning'. Although the style originated in the 1970s, it became popular from the 1990s on (Hillier & Healy, 2008). According to Davids (1996, quoted in Buchy & Hoverman, 2000), stakeholder involvement became popular for two reasons; first because of a mixture of circumstances. These circumstances are increased access to information, a more intrusive media, alienation from traditional structures, protest movements and a new sophistication amongst interests and lobby groups. Second, stakeholder participation could also arise due to the awareness that other (planning) approaches used in the past have failed to deliver. Nowadays, many scientists describe (for instance Neufville, 1983; Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1997; Innes, 1995 and Sager, 2009) that there is a knowledge gap between planning theory and practice. Many of the published articles about collaborative planning and thus stakeholder participation are written without consideration how these theories can be implemented into practice. According to Huxley & Yifrachel (2000), the importance of collaborative planning lies in its ability to contribute to a better discussion and deliberation about common shared futures of stakeholders. The role of the planner has shifted from a technical expert (Allmendinger, 2009) towards the idea that the planner and thereby the practice of planning, becomes more about facilitating communicative interactions between different stakeholders. The collaborative process moves away from the expert top-down planning approach towards a joint involvement mode involving actors from across different levels (Bouwen & Taillieu, 2004). Allmendinger (2009) is sceptic about the planning style 'collaborative planning' and asks himself if this is the right way forward in planning theory and practice:

"To accept communicative planning you must accept its foundations of planning as a redistributive activity, of planners as more than apolitical arbiters between different interests and, most importantly, of planning as a participative process... [...]. It also questions the whole basis of a 'planning profession' - how can you have a profession if you argue that there is no such thing as expert knowledge, only different opinions brought together?" (Allmendinger, 2009, pp. 220 – 221).

1.2 Natura 2000

Within the seventies and eighties European member states began to realise that their biodiversity was threatened and that the protection of birds was necessary (Boom, 2004). Ever since European member states exert to protect their nature heritage, one of the policy instruments that submit to this is the Natura 2000 policy. The main aim of the Natura 2000 policy is to ensure biodiversity by conserving natural habitats and wild flora and fauna in the territory of member states. For this purpose, a cross-border European ecological network with special protected sites is being set up (Council Directive 92/43/EEC, 1992). When this cross-border network is developed, it covers an area of approximate 450.000 square kilometres. This is 10 to 15 percent of the total territory of the European Union (Agriholland, 2009). The Natura 2000 policy is preceded by the Bird Directive (1979) and the Habitat Directive (1992). The objective of the Bird Directive is to protect (migratory) birds (Council Directive 79/409/EEC, 1979). The Habitats Directive has the objective to protect habitats of individual plants and animals (Council Directive 92/43/EEC, 1992). Moreover, the Habitats Directive demands for a network of European nature areas: the Natura 2000 network (Bouwma et al., 2008).

The Netherlands designated 162 Natura 2000 sites. The majority of these sites consist out of inland wetlands and coastal areas. In total, 1.115 hectare is designated as Natura 2000 sites. This is approximately 13 percent of the total surface of the Netherlands (including large water bodies, rivers etc.). Of the terrestrial Natura 2000 sites, almost 70 percent is forest and semi-natural areas. Approximately 30 percent of the Natura 2000 sites include land under agriculture cultivation (Bouwma et al., 2008). According to Neven et al. (2005) it is important to realise that in regard to other European member states, implementation of the Natura 2000 policy in the Netherlands is a complex process. Reasons for this complexity are the small scale of the sites and multi-disciplinary land use. Besides the conservation criteria that determine the selection of sites, Rauschmayer et al. (2009) conclude that neither the Birds Directive nor the Habitat Directive provide guidance for the procedure of site designation and their management. In the Netherlands, five steps can be distinguished in the implementation of the European Natura 2000 policy. The first three steps are already accomplished. Step 4 must be accomplished in 2010. The fifth step must be accomplished three years after the official designation of the Natura 2000 site. The five steps are (Verburg et al., 2008):

1. Selection of the Natura 2000 sites;
2. Pre-designation of the Natura 2000 sites;
3. Formulation of goals for the Natura 2000 sites;
4. Official designation of the Natura 2000 sites;
5. Formulating management plans for the Natura 2000 sites.

In contradiction to other European member states, the Netherlands has made formulation of management plans obligatory under national law (Bouwma et al., 2008; Neven et al., 2005 and Verburg et al., 2008). The content of the management plans contains further elaboration of the preset goals for Natura 2000 sites. The management plans should contain at least three components. These components are 1) how the settled goals are going to be accomplished and with the use of what policy- or management measures, 2) the costs and 3) which forms of existing practices are allowed to continue their activities. Management plans have a validity of six years (Verburg et al., 2008 and MinLNV, 2005). After official designation of Natura 2000 sites by the minister of the Department of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (MinLNV), the concept management plans can be transformed into definite management plans. According to the latest validated progress report of 1 March 2010 written by the Agency Directive Natura 2000 (Regiebureau Natura 2000) concerning the development of management plans, fifty-one Natura 2000 concept management plans are completed. The Agency Directive Natura 2000 expects that until June 2010, thirty-seven more concepts will be finished. The prognosis is that in the second half of 2010, fifty-five concept management plans will be finished. The remaining nineteen concept management plans will be completed in the course of 2011.

Different governmental departments and organisations are responsible for formulating the management plans. In principle, the national government is responsible for the sites that are directed by the state. Provinces are together responsible for the formulation of hundred management plans. The Governmental Service for Land and Water management (DLG) is responsible for the formulation of 41 plans and the Department of Waterways and Public Works (RWS) is responsible for 20 Natura 2000 sites. The Department of Defence is responsible for the formulation of one management plan (Verburg et al., 2008). The implementation of the Natura 2000 policy in the Netherlands is a complex process. Besides governmental departments, several stakeholder groups are involved because the Natura sites are assigned on their own property or on areas nearby their activities. An example of this is that approximately 30 percent of the Natura 2000 sites include land under agriculture cultivation (Bouwma et al., 2008).

Which stakeholders are involved in the process depends on the location of the Natura 2000 site, the specific site problems and how the planning process is organised (Verburg et al., 2008). Examples of stakeholders who represent different land use activities are agriculture (LTO), hunting (KNJV), water recreation (HISWA) and recreation (RECRON). Beunen & van Ark (2005) conclude that many stakeholders felt that they were improperly involved in the designation of Natura 2000 sites, even though they sometimes have major interests in those sites.

1.3 Problem statement

For over a long period of time the Natura 2000 policy and its implementation are in the Dutch news. Striking is that many of these articles have a negative point of view considering the policy (for instance Severt, 2009; Lubbers 2009; Schreuder, 2008 and Kleine, 2009). The focus on stakeholder participation in combination with Natura 2000 originated when the author of this thesis read a joined letter of several stakeholders (Constandse, 2006), who wrote to the chamber commission of the Department Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in 2006. The stakeholders complained about minimal opportunity for contribution of their principles, values and statements. Rauschmayer et al. (2009) concluded after studying the subsidiarity of the European Union that member states have to decide on their own whether stakeholder participation is appropriate in designation of Natura 2000 sites and site-management processes. In other words, the Dutch government chose consciously to invite stakeholders for participation in the implementation processes of the Natura 2000 policy.

The influence that stakeholders can exert on the content of the management plans has significant social impact. Nowadays research is conducted after the social-economical effects of Natura 2000 on its surroundings (Wikkerink, 2010 and Witte, 2010). If it appears that stakeholders are unable to influence the content of the management plans, it is possible that representatives fail to represent their grassroots support appropriately. As a result, stakeholders who carry out activities in or nearby Natura 2000 sites might be obstructed in practice of their daily activities because of the nature conservation claim in the particular area. Nature conservation and activities such as recreation, agriculture and hunting often do not have the same goals and can therefore conflict (Boonstra et al., 2009). Due to the Natura 2000 claim it is possible that stakeholders are unable to perform their activities properly which can lead to an economic decline. When the described social impact of the Natura 2000 policy is considered, the importance of stakeholder influence on the planning process in order to represent their grassroots support (to minimise economical impact) becomes important. In order words, stakeholder participation in all its facets is an important element in the implementation of the Natura 2000 policy.

The Dutch government was free to select an approach to implement the Natura 2000 policy. According to Beunen & de Vries (2009), the Dutch government has a hierarchical approach towards the implementation of the policy. This because is of the government's steering and controlling role. In addition, there is a lack of flexibility between different departments and layers of the government. Moreover, Frans Evers (former managing director at the Dutch Forestry Commission) states that the Dutch government is handling the Natura

2000 policy with an improbable technocratic-ecological precision. With this, the government gives a signal to the outside world that nature is makeable. Furthermore, all the technocratic-ecological concepts make it impossible for civilians to understand the European policy with the result that the social basis for Natura 2000 decreases (Marijnissen, 2010). Although stakeholder participation is part of the collaborative planning style, the technocratic approach of the Dutch government according to Beunen & de Vries (2009) and Evers (2010) makes it likely to believe that the collaborative style is not implemented completely. Van Thijn (1985, quoted in Aarts, 1998) noticed already in the mid 1980s that the central government blocked signals from the outside. According to van Thijn, the government is a self-centred board and it does not allow people to take a look inside. After studying the Fourth Note Spatial Planning, the Nature policy plan and the National Environment policy, Glasbergen (1990, quoted in Aarts, 1998) concluded that these four policy documents represented more unwelcoming interests of the government itself than third parties. The aim of the plans leaned more towards safeguarding the future of the government rather than creating a fruitful combination between the different policies and a better prospect for society.

Earlier in this problem statement, we saw that Rauschmayer et al. (2009) concluded that European member states could decide on their own if they wanted to use stakeholder participation in the designation of Natura 2000 sites and site-management processes. It is clear that the Dutch government has consciously decided to invite stakeholders for participation (Verburg et al., 2008). Interesting to consider is -if collaboration between different stakeholder groups, departments of governments, water board districts and landowners is set as a point of departure-, why stakeholders often say that they feel left out of the site-management process (Lubbers, 2009 and RECRON, 2008). And why Natura 2000 receives so much negative attention in the Dutch news? Moreover, do these negative observations have consequences for the remaining Natura 2000 planning processes or perhaps for other processes in the future? It is therefore reasonable to study which effects and consequences stakeholder participation has on planning processes. If it appears after research that stakeholder participation is indispensable for planning processes in the case of this research for the success of Natura 2000 processes. The next question arises: if stakeholder participation should be seen as an approach or as a methodology. In other words, can participation be seen as an 'end', or as 'means' to an end (Buchy & Hoverman, 2000) and how should this be organised?

1.4 Research objective and questions

This research stretches out an important element of the Natura 2000 policy: the translation and implementation of the European policy into concrete management plans for Natura 2000 sites at local level. The objective of this research is to inquire into the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation in planning processes. In order to examine this, two Natura 2000 planning processes will be selected as a case. Criticism that Natura 2000 received in the Dutch media (for instance Sijtsma 2010; Gertsen, 2009; Severt, 2010 and Dokter, 2010) makes it likely to believe that the processes and thereby the way in which stakeholder participation is organised are insufficient. Besides the Dutch press, who is questioning the implementation of Natura 2000 and the opportunity for stakeholders to participate, also on European level questions are placed by the implementation of the Natura 2000 policy. This became clear after visiting the workshop "Conflict management in the Natura 2000 network" organised by European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) on 17 March 2010 in Brussels. It appeared that several European member states are struggling with the implementation of the Natura 2000 policy and especially with stakeholder participation and conflict management (for instance Bouwma, 2010; Nowicki, 2010 and Rambaud, 2010). Olsson (2009) concluded that although planning institutions may be actively 'designed', actor behaviour and interaction is always constrained by prevailing norms and rules at other scales. Although there are laws that enable participation, it cannot be guaranteed that the process is free from manipulation by power or strategic behaviour.

In order to examine the research objective, a theoretical framework needs to be developed. After preliminary research, four main concepts are selected for the theoretical framework. These four main concepts are:

stakeholder participation, communication, social relations and conflicts. The main concept social relations is divided into three sub-concepts namely trust, interdependence and power. In order to study stakeholder participation, it is important to conceptualise what stakeholder participation exactly is and how it can be studied. Therefore, the main concept 'stakeholder participation' is added to the theoretical framework. During the workshop in Brussels of 17 March, but also during the workshop organised by ECNC on the 18th of June 2009 about stakeholder participation and conflict management, many participants acknowledged that there was a lack of early and clear communication. The lack of early and clear communication caused all kinds of problems (conflicts) during the Natura 2000 process (anon, 2009). For this reason, the concepts communication and conflicts are included into the theoretical framework. Furthermore, it is interesting to study how the components of social relations (trust, interdependence and power) influence the success of the planning process. Earlier research demonstrated that the relationship between power symmetry and conflict is moderated by trust: when stakeholders of equal power trust each other, they are more likely to choose for more cooperative strategies (Davidson et al., 2004 quoted in Coleman, n.d.). Furthermore, Slocum et al. (1995, quoted in Buchy & Hoverman, 2000) concludes that the role of power is central to participatory processes. The theoretical framework is described in chapter 2.

To inquire into the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation in planning processes, the research objective is translated into the following main research question:

'How does participation influences planning processes and which consequences does it have for stakeholder parties involved?'

Before it becomes possible to conduct a case study, it is first necessary to study available literature about stakeholder participation, communication, social relations and conflicts. The following sub-research questions are formulated in order to study the four main concepts and eventually to develop a theoretical framework and a conceptual model:

1. What is stakeholder participation and how can this be studied and analysed in a planning process?
2. What is communication and how can this be studied and analysed in a planning process?
3. What are social relations (trust, interdependence and power) and how can these be studied and analysed in a planning process?
4. What are conflicts and how can these be studied and analysed in a planning process?

Important to mention is the function of Natura 2000 in this research. As stated before, this thesis does not want to argue whether or not the Natura 2000 policy is sufficient in order to ensure biodiversity. The focus of this research will lie on the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation in planning processes. Two Natura 2000 planning processes will be used as a case, to inquire the effects and consequences. In the Netherlands, there are many planning processes where stakeholder participation is included. As described on the website www.kennisonline.wur (2010), the Dutch government formulated the laws 'Law Design Rural Areas' and 'Investment budget Rural Areas' which enable the government to involve civilians in policy-making processes. Examples of other participative processes are the projects: "Room for the River" and "Framework Directive Water". The developed theoretical framework and conceptual model are assumed to be used in any research about stakeholder participation in planning processes.

Results of this comparative research can be useful in future implementations of (European) policies and stakeholder participation. This thesis report is written for scholars, policy-makers who have to deal with the challenges of the Natura 2000 policy or who in general have to deal with the challenges of stakeholder participation, stakeholders and of course everybody that is interested in stakeholder participation.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework

In order to conduct a case study research objective as best as possible, it is necessary to gather multiple theoretical insights. In the first paragraph is explained what stakeholder participation is and how it could be studied. Furthermore, motives and rewards of participation seen from the perspective of the responsible organisation and stakeholders are put out. Communication and its role in processes is explained in paragraph two. In the third paragraph, the sub-concepts of social relations are explained. The fourth paragraph contains an enumeration of the main concept 'conflicts'. The fifth paragraph contains the conceptual model. Derived from the theoretical framework and conceptual model, a second set of sub-research questions is formulated in the last paragraph in order to examine the selected cases in detail.

2.1 Stakeholder participation

Before it becomes possible to study stakeholder participation, it is important to clarify the concept. According to the Cambridge dictionary (2008) a stakeholder is *"a person such as an employee or citizen who is involved in an organisation, society etc. and therefore has responsibilities towards it and an interest in its success"*. Participation is defined as *"when you take part or become involved in something"*. According to Edelenbos et al. (2006), the concept stakeholder participation can be defined explicit as the participation of people (citizens) in the establishment of policies. Nelissen (1980) noticed that it is important to distinguish the concepts 'participation' and 'involvement' from each other because in practice people tend to mix up the meaning of the concepts. According to Nelissen (1980), participation can be seen as plural forms of citizen's participation in decision-making processes varying from minor to major opportunities for participation in the decision-making process of policies. Involvement is just a form of participation; citizens have the opportunity to discuss the policies but eventually are not able to change them. Neuvel & van der Knaap (2010) define participation as *"consulting during the elaboration of a solution or consulting on specific issues..."*. In addition, Bouwen & Taillieu (2004) encourage to perceive participation not as a mere management technique but as a practice based on philosophy. If participation is studied from this perspective, it becomes interesting to study social dynamics, which result in sharing responsibilities, information exchange, shared construction of reality empowerment and internationalisation. The above-described definitions of stakeholder participation are only a small enumeration of the definitions available in literature. In order to make stakeholder participation operational to research, the author of this report selected the participation ladder of Edelenbos & Klijn (2005). The ladder of Edelenbos & Klijn (2005) is explained in the next sub-paragraph.

In order to have meaningful stakeholder involvement, Bouwen & Taillieu (2004) pose three required conditions. First, stakeholders should experience participation in a process as feasible and realistic based on their task. Second, the boundaries, limits of the stakeholder's authority and decision-making scope should be clearly defined and mutually accepted at the beginning of the process. Third, participation originates sheer in a climate of openness and trust. Furthermore, Bouwen & Taillieu (2004) conclude that identifying key stakeholders, getting their attention and involvement, sharing different perspectives of the issues at hand and working towards a common vision are crucial for the success of the process. If stakeholders start to participate in a process, they all have their own particular view about the problem domain and thus the possible problem definition. During the process, stakeholders start to affirm their identities and create the base for the negotiation of a proper membership in the process. All these identities have to find a way to be acknowledged in their specificity and their role in the project. A critical role is the role of the project leader (e.g. facilitator or mediator) which has to lead the process in the right direction. Although the facilitator has a significant important role in the process, according to Bouwen & Taillieu (2004) it is impossible that the facilitator is neutral. The facilitator can only participate as another interested party who is able to create 'learning moments' and opens up transitional space where ambitions can be created towards new meanings and memberships.

2.1.1 Participation ladder

According to Edelenbos & Klijn (2005) it is important to consider two dimensions of participation. Inspired by Dahl's "preconditions for a polyarchy", Berry et al. (1993) formulated those two dimensions of participation which are important for a system with "strong participation" (Wille, 2001). The first dimension is the "width" of participation. This dimension refers to the degree of participation every member (stakeholder) is offered in each phase of the planning process. The second dimension is the "depth" of participation. This dimension is determined by the degree stakeholders have in the opportunity to actively influence and change the outcome of the process (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005 and Wille, 2001). It is possible to study the "width" of participation with an analysis of the actors. Important to consider is how the responsible organisation for the management plan has shaped the invitation for stakeholders to participate (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005). Thus, was it for instance possible for the stakeholders to indicate that they wanted to be involved in the process, how many and which stakeholders were invited and how often was it possible to participate? For studying the "depth" of participation, the participation ladder provides good basic principles. With this ladder, it becomes possible to analyse the influence stakeholders have in shaping opinions and on the final product. In 1969, Arnstein developed the ladder used by Edelenbos and Klijn (2005). Arnstein already wondered in the 1960s/1970s what (citizens) participation exactly was. In order to encourage a more enlightened dialogue in that era, Arnstein presented a typology of citizen participation. The typology is arranged for illustrative purposes in a ladder pattern, with each rung of the ladder corresponding to the extent of citizen's power in determining the plan. Because the ladder of Arnstein was a starting point for the participation ladder developed by Edelenbos et al. (2006) and other theorists, it is useful to explain the ladder of Arnstein more extensive. The first two rungs at the bottom of the ladder are 'manipulation' and 'therapy'. These two rungs represent non-participation of citizens; the objective here is not to involve citizens in planning programs but it enables powerholders to "educate" them in such a way that they eventually will agree with the statements of the powerholders. Rung three and four respectively 'informing' and 'consultation' represent two levels of tokenism; participants have the impression that they influence the plan but eventually they lack power, and the powerholders still decide. Rung five 'placation' can be seen as a higher level of tokenism, although the ground rules allow the participants to advice, the powerholders continue the right to decide. Rung six, seven and eight, respectively 'partnership', 'delegated power' and 'citizen control' represent forms of participation. In these three steps it becomes possible for citizens to enforce power on the decision-making and therefore to determine the content of the plan. The ladder developed by Arnstein is a simplification of the real, coloured and powerful world. It is impossible to divide blocks of homogeneous people in the ladder as "powerholders" and "citizens" without any diversion in the groups themselves. Furthermore, it is implausible that each rung can be seen separated from another rung. Perhaps there is not a sharp distinction possible between the different rungs; they overlap each other.

As stated earlier Edelenbos and Klijn (2005) pose that it is possible to analyse the "depth" of participation with the participation ladder. The most left column of table 1 (on the next page) represents the participation ladder. The levels are arranged in such a way that when the role and influence of the government decreases, the input and influence of citizens increases. In the first two levels of the ladder, citizens are regarded as idea-generators, organised by local government who is interested in new ideas. In level three, four and five a higher level of interaction occurs: citizens are given the opportunity to determine the agenda in planning processes and cooperate in defining problem definitions. Although there is a higher level of interaction, the government remains power to make the final decision. The government adopts a facilitating style in the highest level of the participation ladder in which citizens are able to decide about plans (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2005). In 2006, Edelenbos et al. linked the rungs of the participation ladder with seven government styles developed by Pröpper and Steenbeek (1999). Besides that it is possible to study the "depth" of participation, it also becomes possible to analyse which role the government or organisation adopts that is responsible for formulating the management plan and if this role is corresponding to the supposed level of stakeholder participation.

Table 1 Participation rate and management styles (Edelenbos et al., 2006, p. 21 and Neuvel & van der Knaap, 2009, p. 104)

Participation ladder Edelenbos (2000)	Government style Pröpper and Steenbeek (1999)	Role citizen	Role government
5. Co-decide	7. Facilitating style	Initiator	Development and policy-making is left to the initiators and stakeholders. Authorities facilitate this process.
4. Co-produce	6. Co-operating style	Co-partner (on basis of equality)	Authorities and stakeholders are partners. Agenda setting and problem-solving are joint activities. The authority commits itself to the results of the process.
	5. Delegating style	Co-decision (under certain preconditions)	Authorities give participants the power to make decisions within decision-making context provided by these authorities.
3. Advice	4. Participative style	Advisor	Citizens have the opportunity to bring up problems and formulate solutions although the authority defines the agenda. The politicians are committed to the results in principle, but can deviate from them.
2. Consult	3. Consulting style	Consulting conversation-partner	Authorities define the problems and possible solutions. Citizens are consulted about the problems and solutions and can give their points of view. Authorities are free to commit to these points.
1. Inform	2. Open authoritative style	Target-group (no input possible)	The citizens are informed about the policy process, but are not allowed to have input.
No participation	1. Closed authoritative style	none	The public is not informed about the policy-making process and is not allowed to influence it.

2.1.2 Motivation

Why are stakeholders motivated to enter a participatory process? Moreover, what do they gain when time and money is invested in participative processes? According to Olsson (2009) one motive that is often used for participation is interdependence. Participants are motivated to enter a participatory process because they acknowledge their interdependence with other participants. Interdependence and the role of interdependence in planning processes will be further described in paragraph 2.3. This section first concentrates on motivations and rewards stakeholders (expect to) receive when entering a participatory process. The second section considers what the motivation of the responsible organisation is to involve stakeholders. According to Olsson (2009) stakeholders can be motivated to participate when some exclusive additional relational rewards can be obtained. The first type of relational reward is the membership in a social capital network. Access to this network is typically member-exclusive and enables stakeholders to gather available useful information and analyses about the project. Besides useful information about facts, participants also have the opportunity to gather information about other participants. The second relational rewards are the specific links and network positions participants acquire. It might become possible for participants to form strategic coalitions. The third reward contains communication externalities. Communication externalities can be seen as costless by-products in networks: information and knowledge spill-over due to proximity. The above described rewards are in favour of the participants. In a process probably not all participants will have an active attitude. How are the attitudes of passive participations related to the relational awards? Olsson (2009), states that although passive stakeholders have access to important information about colleague participants, they do not anticipate in

active networks. Because of this, the passive stakeholders are only connected to the process instead of other participants which eventually lead to less additional rewards.

Until now, the possible motives of stakeholders to participate in a process are discussed. On the other hand, it is interesting to consider what the motivation could be of the responsible organisation to involve stakeholders in their processes. According to Hage & Leroy (2007), different targets and motives can be distinguished. In general, targets and motives to involve stakeholders can be divided into four main categories respectively quality targets, instrumental target, democratic targets and emancipation targets. Stakeholder participation can be used in order to reach high set qualitative targets. In addition, with the help of stakeholders missing (scientific) knowledge can brought in to the process. The critical attitude of stakeholders can also be used to check the quality of concept plans/ policies, which results in a higher validity of the end products. Instrumental targets refer to the status of the project instead of the product itself. Instrumental targets are necessary to create broadly based consensus. Furthermore, instrumental targets can be used for agenda-setting and eventually a wider spread of the content of the report. The democratic target that Hage & Leroy (2007) address seems obvious; participation on its own could be seen as a democratic target. Emancipation targets assume that society benefits from participation; society is improved in some way (for instance economically or more sustainably) (Hage & Leroy, 2008).

Aarts & van Woerkum (2000, p. 39) mention several advantages in involving stakeholders in policy development:

- Interests, goals and experiences of different stakeholders that might seriously hinder policy implementation will be clarified at an early stage, so that they can be dealt with much more effectively;
- Seemingly separated problems can be linked and solved in relation to each other. By this, solutions of one party will not automatically become problems of the other;
- Good ideas existing among stakeholders from 'the field' can be integrated, and will not be isolated and neglected;
- The support of stakeholders will develop during the policy making process.

2.1.3 Analytical points

After studying literature on stakeholder participation, it becomes possible to determine analytical points. These points allow the researcher to study and analyse stakeholder participation in the planning processes of Natura 2000 sites. Before it becomes possible to inquire the relation between the stakeholders and the responsible organisation, it is first necessary to analyse which stakeholders are participating and which group they represent. If there is an overview of all the participants, it becomes possible to study the way they are involved. For instance, were stakeholders able to indicate the responsible organisation that they wanted to participate, or were they invited by them? If it appears that the responsible organisation invited every stakeholder, it becomes interesting to study which selection criteria are used and who decided what those selection criteria should be. After researching the above mention points, the "width" of stakeholder participation is studied. Next, the second element of the participation ladder can be studied namely the "depth" of participation. In order to investigate the depth of stakeholder participation, the participation ladder of Edelenbos et al. (2006) can be used. Before stakeholders are questioned about their perspective and expectations on participation, it is interesting to study if appointments have been made on forehand about their level of participation (thus role) in the process. Furthermore, did the stakeholders agree with their role which was designated in advanced? Moreover, it is interesting to study stakeholders' perspectives on the perceived level of participation in different phases in the process. For instance, at which level of stakeholder participation do stakeholders place themselves at the beginning of the process? In addition, at which level of the participation ladder places the responsible organisation the stakeholders at the beginning of the process? Eventually, when all perspectives

and expectations about the level of participation during the process are gathered and analysed it becomes interesting to compare them and see if there are differences. These answers provide insights in the relation between stakeholders and the responsible organisation. Furthermore, it is interesting to analyse which government style, the responsible organisation is adapting and if this government style matches the perceived level of stakeholder participation. The last analytical point concerns the motivation of stakeholders to participate in the process. Moreover, what is the motivation of the responsible organisation to invite stakeholders for participation? What is also interesting to study is how all parties (stakeholder or responsible organisation) perceive the level of motivation of each other in order to reach a sustainable outcome of the process.

2.2 Communication

Before it becomes possible to study and analyse communication in a planning process, it is necessary to define the concept communication. Within communication science 'communication' is often determined in terms of a source, message, channel and receiver. This classic communication model of Berlo (1960, quoted in Aarts & van Woerkum, 2008) implies that there is 'communication' if a sender with a message wants to reach a receiver through a certain channel. Ever since the publication of this model, the classic theory is heavily criticised. First, communication theorists realised that this way of defining communication excluded the autonomy of recipients. As readers of a novel create their own story around the outline the authors give them, recipients create their own message. Secondly, the classic communication model does not account the context of the situation in which communication takes place. Third, critics arose from the process-side; communication needs to be seen as a component of a process or activity, not as a singular object. Fourth, the classic model does not consider the relationships between the communicating parties and the underlying power relationships. Finally, the classic model only takes into account the 'visible or verbal' communication, the model ignores the fact that non-verbal signs provide a great amount of information and could be interpreted in many different ways (Aarts, 1998 and Aarts & van Woerkum, 2008). It is difficult to define exactly the concept 'communication' because of the wide application of the concept. In this thesis, the interactive communication model of Aarts & van Woerkum (2008) is used as the definition for communication. This model anticipated on the critiques of the classic communication model. Figure 1 shows the interactive communication model. Communication can be studied in many different ways (Cuc, 2008; Auweraert, 2008 and Wiertzema & Jansen, 2005). Important is to realise which role communication fulfils in the perspective of the Natura 2000 planning processes. In this research, communication is studied from the perspective which role communication fulfils in the planning process and how people perceive this.

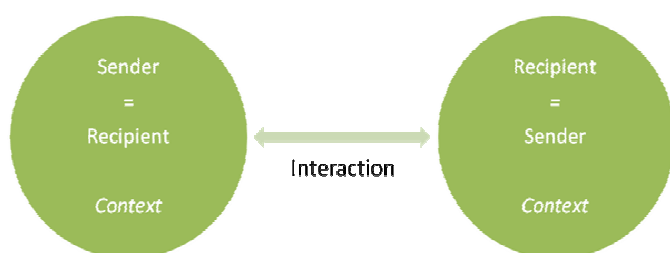


Figure 1 Interactive communication model (Aarts & van Woerkum, 2008, p. 6)

According to Aarts (1998) who studied the character and progress of communication considering nature and nature policies, three important concepts are connected and interwoven with communication. These three concepts are culture, policy-making and nature. It is irrelevant to elaborate on the concept nature further. Reason for this is that Aarts (1998) used the concept nature in a similar way as the concept Natura 2000 in this research. The remaining concepts culture and policy-making will be further elaborated in this paragraph. An important starting-point for many interactive processes is the assumption that interaction with other cultures leads to the ability of stakeholders to put their reality and truth in perspective. After the acknowledgement of their own reality, participants realise and accept that other groups have different realities and truths. The

acceptation of pluralism of realities and truths forms a solid basis for mutual problem solving. According to Aarts (1998) the above described assumption creates too high expectations on the power of communication and its ability to create mutual understanding. Cultural differences lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication. Furthermore, if people lack to study each other's culture and major cultural differences stay unnoticed, than this eventually could lead to unsolvable conflicts. Secondly, Aarts (1998) states that it is unreasonable to assume that every participant is willing to understand cultures, thus realities and truths of others. Participants often pretend to be interested in other cultures only because in this way it becomes possible to eventually pursue their own goals. Furthermore, Aarts (1998) states that problems in cultural differences also appear because people do not realise that they are part of a culture with particular ways of thinking and realities. To conclude, Aarts (1998) states that communication problems are often coherent to cultural differences and power-relationships. Problems occur when relevant cultural differences and changing power-relations stay unnoticed. The second concept that is closely connected with communication according to Aarts is policy-making. When interactive processes are organised, communication becomes an instrument. The aim of this instrument is to emphasise on the mutual dependence of participants. Based on this mutual dependence future goals can be developed.

2.2.1 Analytical points

After studying literature about communication, it becomes possible to determine analytical points. These points allow the researcher to study and analyse communication in the planning processes of Natura 2000 sites. First, it is interesting to study if stakeholders are aware of their own culture, realities and truths and thereby the 'message' they communicate to the outside world. Although this is interesting to study, it might be difficult for stakeholders to answer what their culture, realities and truths are. Instead of defining their own culture, they could define the culture of colleague stakeholders. It might be easier for stakeholders to mention similarities and differences. Seen from the perspective of the responsible organisation, did they invest time in researching the similarities and differences? Furthermore, if it appears that there are significant differences between stakeholders and their cultures; did the responsible organisation undertake action to diminish the cultural differences? The next analytical point concerns policy. When interactive processes are organised, communication becomes an instrument. As stated before, the role of this instrument is to emphasise the mutual dependence of the participants. Was the responsible organisation able to emphasise the mutual dependence between stakeholders with communication as an instrument? The last analytical point concerns how people perceive the communication strategy and what this for effects this strategy has on the process.

2.3 Social relations

The term social relations can be divided into three sub-concepts, respectively trust, interdependence and power. These three sub-concepts are connected to each other in different ways and play an important role in planning processes. Furthermore, according to van Ark & Edelenbos (2005), trust appears to be important in inter-organisational relationships. These inter-organisational relationships occur also in Natura 2000 processes, the government appreciates mutual interdependence and stakeholders are allowed to enter the process. Morrison (2003) acknowledges that honesty and trust between participants is fundamental to the success of the initiative. Besides honesty and trust between participants, Morrison states that honesty and trust are particular important on the side of governments. Hansen (2006) states that trust between key interdependent stakeholders in policy-making and planning is often necessary in order to achieve commitment, will, resources and accountability in finding and implementing solutions. Power in planning processes is often forgotten (Flyvbjerg, 2004), surprisingly because power has a major influence on trust, interdependence and thereby on planning processes.

2.3.1 Trust

What exactly is 'trust'? According to van Ark & Edelenbos (2005), some general characteristics can be derived from literature. First, if a participant is willing to trust another participant it results in the fact that the

participants are willing to adopt an open and vulnerable attitude. Participants trust each other that they will take their interests into account in the cooperation (Rousseau et al., 1998, quoted in van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005). Second, trust plays an important role in unpredictable situations (Nooteboom et al., 1997, quoted in van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005). Trust is a condition in unpredictable situations before any actions are undertaken. If trust is absent, participants will refrain from any actions. Third, trust reduces unpredictability in interaction because the participants assume that they can rely on each other. Trust causes (either positive or negative) expectations and intentions of the participants amongst each other. The value of trust in a process lies within the fact that trust enhances the chances for cooperation between participants. Especially in uncertain situations, trust is a crucial condition for the initiation and the continuation of co-operation in processes. Furthermore, trust reduces the transaction costs involved in decision making and organising. In addition, it is an important condition for creating stability and durability in cooperation (van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005). Important to realise is that although a high degree of trust is essential for the success of a process, *“the more complete the trust, the greater the potential gain from malfeasance”* (Granovetter, 1985, p. 491, quoted in van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005). This means that it is always possible that participants abuse the trust that is given to them. According to de Vries (2008), who studied the role of trust in spatial planning, there are two ‘types’ of trust namely emotional trust and rational trust. Emotional trust and rational trust can appear in combination or next to each other. Which type of trust is leading depends on factors like behaviour, knowledge and information given by its environment (Mosch & Verhoeven, 2003 and Rousseau et al., 1998, both quoted in de Vries, 2008). The basis of rational trust is reliability, competence, knowledge and fairness structured on the underlying building-blocks information and communication based on facts. Rational trust is based on a clear balance or rational calculation of the costs and benefits of the information available (Eshuis, 2006 and van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005, both quoted in de Vries, 2008). The opposite of rational trust is emotional trust. In this type of trust, knowledge about each other is important. If participants already have a mutual history and knowledge, it becomes easier to develop emotional trust (Vermunt, Aarts & Woerkum, 2002, both quoted in de Vries, 2008). This type of trust does not consider the knowledge of participant’s expertise as in rational trust, but their intentions and attitudes. Emotional trust is based on fairness, openness and reputation (O’Brain, 2001, quoted in de Vries, 2008). Until now, trust is discussed in a positive perspective but what happens if trust of stakeholders is violated? According to Lewicki (n.d.) consequences of trust violations not only lead to reduction in trust but also in the willingness to cooperate. Stakeholders are likely to adjust their perceptions of the distrusted party and invest less in relationships. Important to consider is, if trust can be created in processes. According to van Ark & Edelenbos (2005) it is possible to create and manage trust. A condition is that this should be done through frequent interaction over a long period of time.

2.3.2 Interdependence

According to Bouwen & Taillieu (2004, p. 147) interdependence is *“the mutually negotiated and accepted way of interacting among the parties with the recognition of each other’s perspective, interest, contribution and identity”*. Stakeholders can experience positive and negative interdependence (Janssen, 1994). Moreover, interdependence occurs horizontal and vertical in processes (Hansen, 2006). When stakeholders experience positive interdependence, there is a positive connection between them and towards the realisation of mutual goals: ‘swim or sink together’. Because of the positive interdependence, stakeholders are willing to substitute their own actions by the actions of other stakeholders (‘substitutability’); stakeholders develop positive attitudes (‘cathexis’) and are willing to let other stakeholders influence their opinion (‘inducibility’). The three above-mentioned concepts are conditions for a positive experience of interdependence between stakeholders. When stakeholders experience negative interdependence, there is a negative connection between them and towards the realisation of mutual goals: ‘if one swims, the other must sink’. The negative interdependency causes stakeholders to tolerate no substitutability, inducibility and to adapt a negative cathexis (Janssen, 1994). Horizontal interdependence in processes is the interdependence between different actors (Hansen, 2006). Vertical interdependence represents the interdependence between different levels as well as different interests of stakeholders (Hansen, 2006). Actors can perceive the horizontal and vertical interdependence

positive or negative. In other words, the experiences of interdependence developed by Janssen (1994) can be connected to the horizontal and vertical interdependence developed by (Hansen, 2006). Bouwen & Taillieu (2004) distinguish three successive sorts of interdependence in the development of a group. First, the group is dealing with safety concerns through dependence, then dealing with influences through counter-dependence and working on differentiated interactions with equals through developing interdependent relationships.

Why is interdependence important in processes? If it appears that if stakeholders do not value their interdependence (horizontal and vertical) with other stakeholders, progress of the process could stagnate. A condition for interdependence is trust (Hansen, 2006). According to Hansen (2006), if trust is absent; it becomes difficult to acknowledge interdependence. According to Beck (1999, quoted in Hansen, 2006) interdependence is important because stakeholders realise that they do not know enough (en probably never will) to solve problems on their own because of the complex situations. Just as Beck (quoted in Hansen, 2006) concludes, Innes & Booher (2003) state that stakeholders must be aware that they cannot meet their interest working alone but the shared problem with others needs to be solved collectively. In addition, Innes & Booher (2003) state that stakeholders begin to learn about their interdependence on other stakeholders when they explain their own situation and needs. They learn most if the group goes through the difficult task of agreeing how to define and measure the problem and deciding on their shared mission. Bouwen & Taillieu (2004) conclude that to realise interdependency, stakeholders have to go through a process of discovering and learning about all those interdependencies and develop common projects. In order to do this all the social differences have to be recognised. Besides the social issues, stakeholders also have different styles and strategies of working. These differences have to be recognised before interdependence is fully formed. Innes & Booher (2003) argue that the group of stakeholders that is participating in a policy process must be diverse to have a full advantage of creativity.

2.3.3 Power

Power can be interpreted in many ways and among researchers there is little consensus about what power exactly is and how it works in processes (Dhillon, 2004). A few consider power as to reside in the organisational resources and hence the ability to get others to do what is wanted of them. Another body of research opposes this statement and advocate that power stems from the organisation's decision-making processes in the form of procedures that could be used to prevent some from fully participating in the process (Dhillon, 2004). Some scientists acknowledge the view stemming from the work of Foucault. Foucault argued that power can be seen as a technique and that is affective through its disciplinary character, thereby residing in the values, traditions, cultures and structures of organisations. According to Dhillon (2004), this view of power is called in literature 'power of the system'; even if individuals may benefit from this, they find it difficult to change it. Buchy & Hoverman (2000) consider the role of power in a system where participation is seen as an end, in other words they see participation as an approach. As already stated in the research objective, according to Slocum et al. (1995, quoted in Buchy & Hoverman, 2000) power is central to participatory processes. Furthermore, power is one of the major reasons why stakeholders may decide to get involved in processes. Although Painter (1990, quoted in Buchy & Hoverman, 2000) questions if the role of power is not overestimated in decision-making, the nature and levels of participation in a process are often measured in terms of power and roles that different stakeholders have during the decision-making process. The participation ladder explained in paragraph 2.1 of this theoretical framework is a good example of this. In addition, Buchy & Hoverman (2004) point out that power is something different as empowerment. Critical awareness is often implied as an aspect of empowerment. Claridge (1997, quoted in Buchy & Hoverman, 2000) concludes that the context of successful empowerment, the meaning of 'power' has shifted from power 'over' to power 'to', designating an enabling power.

Flyvbjerg (2001; 2002) developed a vision of power based on tradition of power studies running from Machiavelli and Nietzsche to Foucault and Bourdieu. Flyvbjerg tried to understand the, according to him,

biggest problem in planning namely the ambivalence about power in planning. Flyvbjerg developed a methodology that enables the user to study power. This methodology named 'phronetic social science' has the main aim to clarify values, interests, and power relations as a basis for praxis (Flyvbjerg, n.d.). Four questions can be addressed as the starting point for this type of research. The value-rational questions can be used by researchers for answering specific problems in their field of interests, for instance spatial planning. The four questions are (Flyvbjerg, 2001):

1. Where are we going?
2. Who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power?
3. Is this development desirable?
4. What, if anything, should we do about it?

Using the concept 'phronetic research' it becomes possible to provide in-depth understanding how power works and with what consequences. In addition, suggestions can be done about how power might be changed and work together with other consequences (Flyvbjerg, n.d.). Of course it is impossible to consider all the questions that Flyvbjerg poses, this would be a research on its own. Taken the power perspective in consideration, the second phronetic question is a very relevant one to consider in the light of stakeholder participation in Natura 2000 processes. Although the second phronetic question is very interesting, it remains difficult to study it in an actual planning process. Reason for this is that it is difficult to objectively determine and judge as a researcher "who" is exactly gaining and losing by which mechanism of power. The question can be posed seen from different perspectives (for instance, of the responsible organisation or the stakeholders). The chosen perspective will probably influence the answer.

2.3.4 Analytical points

After studying literature about social relations, it becomes possible to determine analytical points. These points allow the researcher to study and analyse social relations in the planning process of Natura 2000 sites. First of all, considered from the 'trust' perspective it is interesting to inquire if the different stakeholder trust each other, and in addition the responsible organisation. Do they have the feeling, that they can express themselves freely and without any drawbacks or are they playing the "game" strategic? Which consequences does the (ab-) sense of trust have for the process? In addition, did the responsible organisation considered a form of trust management. Secondly, considered from the 'interdependence' perspective, it is possible to study if stakeholders consider themselves interdependent to each other. In addition, how does (a lack of) the sense of interdependence influence the process? Thirdly, considered from a 'power' perspective it is interesting to inquire into if participants realise that there are power structures. In addition, who gains and loses by which mechanisms of power considered from a stakeholders or responsible organisation point of view. In perspective of this research it is interesting to study how the different stakeholders and the responsible organisation perceive the necessity of social relations in order to achieve successes within the process. Finally, it is important to realise that the three concepts are interrelated to each other. Therefore, the question becomes interesting 'how' the three concepts are related to each other, what happens if one is lacking, and which influence they have on the "success" of the process.

2.4 Conflicts

Before it becomes possible to study conflicts, it is important to identify the concept. After all, a conflict for one party does not have to be a conflict for another party; people perceive conflicts different. According to the Dutch van Dale dictionary a conflict is *'a battle or difference in meaning'* (van Dale, 2010). Prein (quoted in Brenninkmeyer et al., 2005) defines a conflict as *'when two (or more) parties desire goals, stakes or values, which are not possible to combine'*. Bouwma (anon, 2009) describes in her presentation conflicts in relation to Natura 2000 and defines the term as *'a situation in which a dispute between various parties over the management of a Natura 2000 area or its direct surrounding occurs and in which no co-operation or negotiation between parties exists'*. Moreover, conflicts can be compared to social constructions: conflicts originate, develop, deteriorate and perhaps dissolve when stakeholders communicate. Furthermore, Aarts & van Woerkum (2008) state that conflicts are dynamic and are caused by changing power-relationships. Dreu (2005) concludes that many definitions emphasize the unsolvable situation between two or more parties. Although these definitions are operational, Dreu encourages studying conflicts as a process. The process of conflict starts when an individual or groups notices that another individual or group is acting in a way that will negatively influence their own interests, views or values. Figure 2 shows the process of a conflict. The advantage of perceiving a conflict as a process is that it becomes possible to distinguish conflict experiences, conflict management and the outcome of the conflict. In other words, the three components of the conflict process allow the researcher to analyse the conflict as neutral as possible (Dreu, 2005).

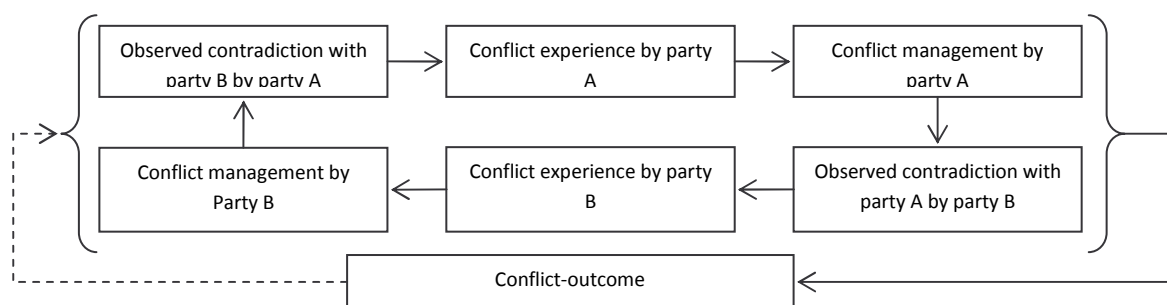


Figure 2 Conflict between two parties in process form (Dreu, 2005)

Besides the possibility of studying a conflict as a process, it is also possible to distinguish four different types of conflicts (Aarts & van Woerkum, 2008). The first type of conflict, instrumental conflicts, concern conflicts about business affairs. Causes of these conflicts vary from misunderstandings to a lack of consensus of parties about certain points. The second type of conflict is a social-emotional conflict. This type of conflict occurs when the identity of people is at stake. Negotiation conflicts occur when scarce sources have to be divided. The fourth type of conflict is a power- and dependency conflict and contains rivalry between different organisations or individuals. It is often impossible to determine just one type of conflict in a conflict situation. Conflicts can be multidimensional. When conflicts develop further in time, their scope and depth also develop further (Apol et al., 2006). Development of the scope means that the number of people involved increases (parties seek for partners in the conflict). Development of the depth of a conflict results in a downwards spiral. In 1967, Pondy developed a five-stage model of conflict. Just as Deu (2005), Pondy assumed already in the mid 1960s that conflicts can be seen as processes. In these processes different stages can be identified:

1. Latent conflict: conditions which provide potential for conflict. a) competition for scarce resources, b) drive for autonomy and c) divergence of subunit goals;
2. Perceived conflict (cognition): one or more parties become aware of conflict potential;
3. Felt conflict (affect): parties 'feel' the conflict. The conflict receives emotional tension e.g. anger, frustration, hostility;
4. Manifest conflict (behaviour): exhibition of adversarial behaviour;
5. Conflict aftermath (conditions): conflict resolution or basis for future conflicts.

Depending on the importance of the concerned issue and relationship, people tend to handle conflicts in four different ways (see figure 3). If the relationship and issue are both of minor importance, there is little point of having a conflict. If the importance of the issue is low but the preservation of the relationship is high. Parties will more than likely adapt their strategy to manage the conflict. If the importance of the relationship is low, but the issue is high; stakeholders tend to fight for their right. And finally, if the importance of the relationship and issue are both high, parties have to negotiate and cooperate.

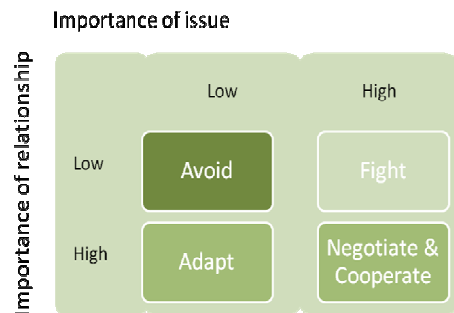


Figure 3 Ways of managing conflicts (Thomas & Killman (n.d.) quoted in Aarts & van Woerkum, 2008)

Although most people experience conflicts as something negative (and therefore try to avoid them), they could also have positive consequences. Conflicts have the potential to cause changes. These changes might lead to improvements in the future. Furthermore, conflicts reveal energy that leads to creativity because both parties show maximal effort to change the situation for their best. During conflict situations, people tend to express their emotions and actually tell what is bothering them, there is clear form of communication. In the end, conflicts can be the basis for renewed mutual trust and sustainable solutions in the future (Aarts & van Woerkum, 2008 and Apol et al., 2006).

2.4.1 Analytical points

After studying literature about conflict, it becomes possible to determine the analytical points. These points allow the researcher to study and analyse conflicts in the planning process of Natura 2000 sites. Conflicts can be studied in two ways. First of all, although multiple definitions of conflict are presented it remains difficult to ask stakeholders straight away if they are having a conflict and with who. The reason for this is that everybody perceives a conflict different. A conflict or problem for one stakeholder is not necessary a problem or conflict for another stakeholder. Nevertheless, it is interesting to study how stakeholders perceived a conflict and with whom. In addition, was the conflict about the site-management process or regarding to the content of the management plan? Did every stakeholder interpreted the problem the same or are there any differences? Furthermore, what were the reasons for the conflict? If stakeholders acknowledge that there were conflicts in the process it becomes interesting to study how the responsible organisation handled the conflict. For instance, did they notice the conflict on time, or only when it escalated? Furthermore, was the responsible organisation able to solve the conflict (and do the stakeholders agree that the conflict is dissolved)? If it appeared that there was a conflict between all the stakeholders and the Natura 2000 policy in general. How did the person responsible handle his? Moreover, are there any stakeholders who perceived the conflicts as something positive? A conflict could cause a breakthrough in the process. Secondly, in order to analyse conflicts more structured it is useful to use the three components of Dreu (2005). In addition, with the four types of conflicts posed by Aarts & van Woerkum (2008) it becomes possible to distinguish the type of the conflict. Furthermore, the five-stage model of Pondy (1967) provides the opportunity to analyse on which level the conflict is. Finally, it becomes possible to study how the conflicting parties are managing the conflict with the use of figure 3.

2.5 Conceptual model

After studying literature about the four main concepts it becomes possible to formulate a theoretical framework. The theories of the four main concepts which have been discussed in this theoretical framework and sub-paragraphs 'analytical points' form the point of departure for development of the conceptual model. In addition, the analytical points provided guidance for the formulation of the interview questions. Within the conceptual model, all the facets of the four main concepts are connected to each other. The conceptual model together with the theoretical framework provides a good guidance in examination of the two selected cases. In order to examine these cases consequently, a second set of research questions needs to be formulated. These questions will be presented in the next paragraph. The theoretical framework and conceptual model are used to analyse the two selected cases.

In order to explain structured the conceptual model, the connections between the different theoretical concepts are visualised by arrows and guided by letters of the alphabet. The conceptual model is visualised in figure 4; the boxes represent one of the main concepts of the theoretical framework. There are two exceptions concerning the context of the boxes. First, the three sub-concepts of social relations are not visualised in one box (as the other three main concepts) but in front of the main concept (thus visualised in front of the green box). Reason for visualising the three sub-concepts separately is that the three sub-concepts are interrelated and influence each other. Second, the responsible organisation is visualised in a box. Reason for this is that the responsible organisation and their task to implement the Natura 2000 policy on local level form the starting point for the conceptual model. Thus, although the organisation is visualised in a box, it is not part of the theoretical framework and therefore marked red. Furthermore, some of the connections between concepts are marked with the sign [*]. It is impossible to study each facet of the conceptual model purely empirical. Although it is possible to for instance empirically analyse how the planning process is organised, which stakeholder groups are participating and what their perspectives are on participation. It is on the contrary complicated to empirically study the underlying relations and feelings of stakeholders. These connections must be revealed partially by the researcher's interpretation of the empirically found data.

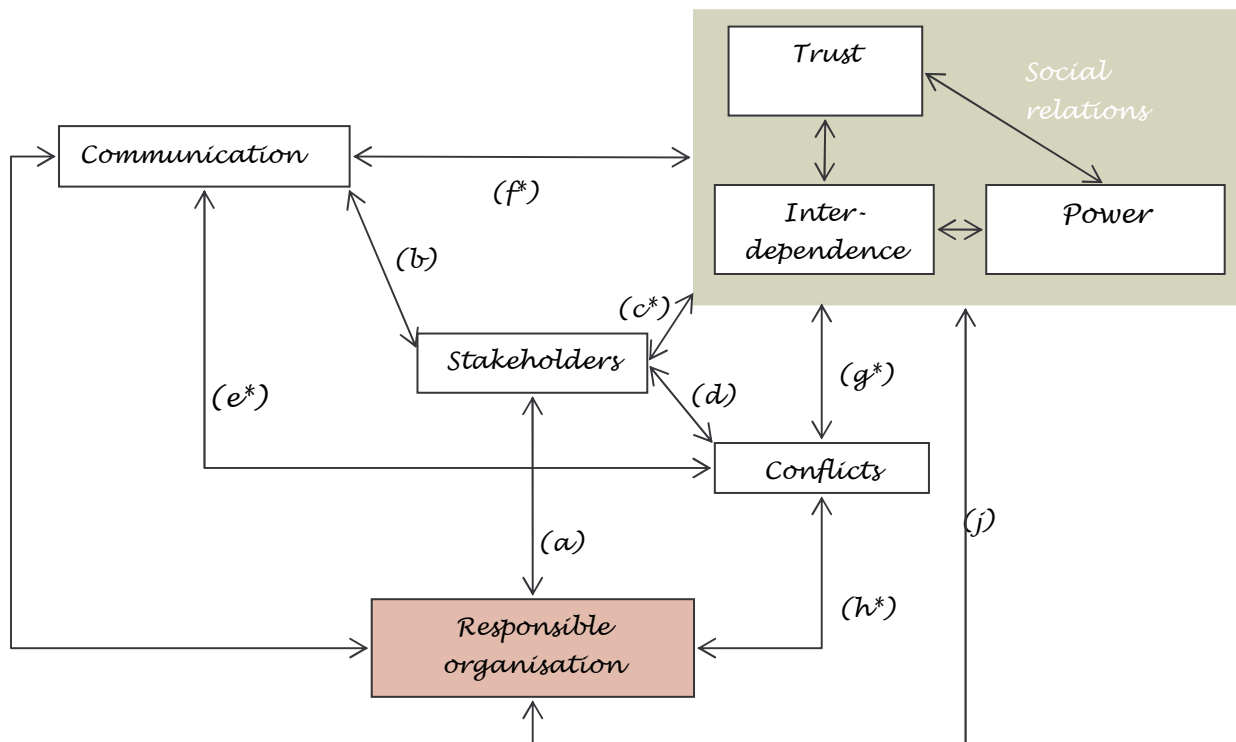


Figure 4 Conceptual model (own elaboration)

Each letter of the alphabet corresponds to a relation between concepts of the theoretical framework. Alphabetically the connections are explained:

- a) The connection between the responsible organisation, the involved stakeholders and their perceptions about participation. The relationship between the organisation and the stakeholders can be neutral, positive or negative. As the conceptual model shows, it is possible that this relationship is influenced by other connections. For instance, different perceptions about the level of participation might cause conflicts (see connection $[d] \rightarrow [h]$). Furthermore, a lack in the abilities of the parties to communicate (see connection $[i] \rightarrow [b]$) could for instance also influence connection $[a]$. Besides that connection $[a]$ can be influenced, it is also possible that connection $[a]$ itself influences other connections in the conceptual model. The most important connection that can be influenced is most likely the coherence between the three sub-concepts of the main concept 'social relations' (see connection $[c]$).
- b) Stakeholders and their ability to communicate. The ability of stakeholders to communicate might influence other connections in the conceptual model. The ability to communicate can strengthen or weaken the coherence between the three sub-concepts of social relations (see connection $[f]$). Furthermore, it can influence the stakeholders relationship with the responsible organisation (see connection $[d]$) and even more, cause conflicts (see connection $[e]$). Furthermore, it is also important to realise and research how stakeholders perceive ways of communication and which effect this has on their relationships and the planning process.
- c) Stakeholders and the main concept social relations. When stakeholders participate in processes and communicate with each other (see connections $[a]$ and $[b]$), social relations (neutral, positive or negative cohesion) originate. As stated by relation $[a]$, besides the relationship between stakeholders and the responsible organisation, there could be also different relationships amongst participating stakeholders. Of course, stakeholders could already be familiar with each other thus; perhaps some sort of social relations could already exist before the start of the process and which effect this has on the process itself. Trust, interdependence and power influence the way stakeholders treat each other. If participants are willing to trust each other, it more likely results in that they are willing to adopt an open, vulnerable and co-operational attitude. It is difficult to determine if interdependence is a condition for trust or vice versa. Nevertheless, if stakeholders refuse to acknowledge that they are interdependent in order to reach mutual set goals the process might stagnate. Stakeholders begin to learn about their interdependence in the starting phase of the process when stakeholders explain their own situation and needs by communicating (see link $[b]$ and $[f]$). Power is central in participatory processes: power struggles amongst stakeholders might lead to a lack of trust and sense of interdependence. The coherence between the three sub-concepts of social relations and stakeholders also might influence other relations in the conceptual model. The relationship between power and conflicts (see connection $[g]$) is moderated by trust. Furthermore, the neutral, positive or negative coherence between the three sub-concepts can influence the ability of stakeholders to communicate with each other (see connection $[f]$).
- d) Conflicts between stakeholders. Were people are working and negotiating about (sensitive) subjects, conflicts may arise. These conflicts could be caused by a lack of clear and early communication (see connection $[e] \rightarrow [b]$). In addition, conflicts could also be caused by a negative coherence between the three sub-concepts of social relations (see connection $[g]$). This relation focuses on conflicts amongst stakeholders but of course, conflicts could also appear between the stakeholders and the responsible organisation. Connection $[h]$ focuses on conflicts between the responsible organisation and the stakeholders. Important to realise is that every participant can perceive a conflict differently.

- e) The relation between conflicts and communication. In this research, communication must be seen as a concept with two sides. As described in relation $[d]$; conflicts between stakeholders might arise due to a lack of clear communication. On the other hand, communication could be the necessary instrument to solve conflicts. These could be conflicts between different stakeholders (see relation $[d]$), but also conflicts between the stakeholders and the responsible organisation (see connection $[h] \rightarrow [d]$).
- f) The relation between communication and social relations must be seen as a continuation of the relations $[c]$ and $[c] \rightarrow [a]$. Firstly, communication might strengthen the cohesion between the sub-concepts of social relations, related to the involved stakeholders (see connection $[f] \rightarrow [c]$). Secondly, communication might also strengthen the cohesion between the sub-concepts of social relations, related to the relationship between the stakeholders and the responsible organisation (see connection $[f] \rightarrow [c] \rightarrow [a]$). On the other hand, for all relations counts that a lack of communication could cause a decrease of cohesion within the social relations.
- g) See explanation from the connections $[c]$ and $[d]$.
- h) At connection $[d]$, conflicts are described seen from perspective between stakeholders. Connection $[h]$ must be seen as a continuation of the connections $[h] \rightarrow [d]$. In other words, conflicts between the responsible organisation and the stakeholders. The relation between the stakeholders and the responsible organisation might influence other connections in the conceptual model. If it appears that there are conflicts between the responsible organisation and the stakeholders, the cohesion between the sub-concepts of social relations (see connections $[c] \rightarrow [a]$) might decrease. As the conceptual model shows, this decrease of cohesion might also influence other connections which have consequences for the process.
- i) The used communication strategy by the responsible organisation and its effects on the process.

2.6 Second set of sub-research questions for case examination

Until now, the theoretical framework and conceptual model have provided the answers to the first four research questions. At this point, it becomes possible to derive a second set of sub-research questions from the theoretical framework and conceptual model. This second set of sub-research questions allows the researcher to conduct a comparative case study research within a well-considered and narrowed down research scope. The questions are derived from the literature found, but have been made operational in order to use them in the case examination. The following sub-research questions are formulated in order to study the main research question:

1. How is the planning process organised and which stakeholder groups are involved?
2. How is participation arranged in the process and how did the stakeholder groups perceive their participation?
3. How is communication arranged and which effects did this communication had on the process?
4. How did stakeholders perceive their social relations and which effects and consequences did these have for the process?
5. Which effects and consequences did conflicts have for the process?

In order to answer the second set of research questions, a structured research method is necessary. The used research method is explained in chapter 3.

Chapter 3 Research method

After the introduction of the research subject, problem statement and research questions in chapter 1, and the theoretical framework and conceptual model in chapter 2, this chapter provides insights in the used research method. In the first paragraph of this chapter the comparative case study research method is explained. Validity, reliability and ethical considerations are three important concepts that influence the success of a comparative case study research and will be discussed in paragraph 3.2. In paragraph 3.3, the two selected cases are briefly introduced followed by the data collection methods in paragraph 3.4. In the last paragraph, special attention is given to the most important method of data collection namely interviews.

3.1 Comparative case study research

The research method that will be used is comparative case study research. A comparative case study research has the advantage that it achieves a more complex and fuller explanation of the phenomena (De Vaus, 2002 and Eisenhardt, 2009) than other research methods. De Vaus (2002) advocates that a well-designed case study will avoid examining just some of the elements of the case; therefore the selected cases will be examined holistic. This result in a research that will build up a whole picture of the planning process by taking information gained from many levels in the planning process into account. The consequence of choosing a comparative case study research method is that only a small number of cases is selected and examined holistic making this a qualitative research. The results of this research will not be based on calculations and models but on interpretations of findings and literature research. The final case study represents more than, and something qualitatively different from, that which any constituent element of the case could tell (De Vaus, 2002). Because there is no statistical generalisation of the collected data and the purpose of a case study is not to generalise to a wider sample of cases there is little point in random sampling the cases. Two cases are strategically selected in this research. The cases will be examined parallel and in a retrospective design. A parallel design means that the two cases will be examined at the same time and only if the two case studies are completed it is possible to analyse and compare the results. All case studies have an incorporated time dimension. The time dimension in this research is retrospective. This time dimension makes it possible to give an adequate comparison. A retrospective design involves collecting on one occasion (research-period) information related to an extended period. The design requires reconstruction of the history of the two cases, so the history of the planning process of the Natura 2000 management plan must be examined (De Vaus, 2002).

3.2 Validity, reliability and ethical considerations

Case study research has many advantages. However, the research should be internally and externally valid, should produce reliable results and should be amenable to replication (De Vaus, 2002 and Creswell, 2003). It is important to identify threats to the internal validity of the research. Creswell (2003, p. 196) formulates internal threats as *“experimental procedures, treatments, or experiences of the participants that threaten the researcher’s ability to draw correct inferences from the data in the research”*. Another threat to the internal validity can arise from participant’s characteristics (ex. participants develop during the research and change their opinion). The following strategies could be applied to strengthen the internal validity of the comparative case study research (Creswell, 2003):

1. Triangulation of data from multiple sources. Triangulate open-ended interviews with concerned stakeholders parties with desk-research and observations;
2. The informant will serve as a check throughout the analysis process. The dialogue between the researcher and informant has to be an ongoing process;
3. Using a peer examiner or discuss steps of the research with colleague scholars.

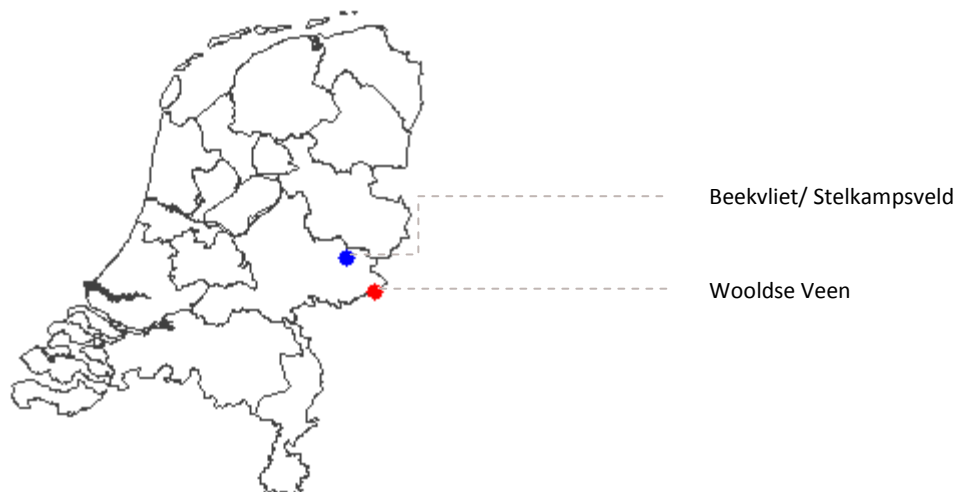
Threats to external validity arise when the researcher draws incorrect conclusions from the collected data or when the researcher tries to generalise the outcome to a wider population beyond the two examined cases (De Vaus, 2002; Flyvbjerg, 2001 and Creswell, 2003). Ethical considerations are important when a qualitative

research is conducted. The foremost consideration is that the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants (Creswell, 2003).

3.3 Case selection

The two Natura 2000 sites that are strategically selected as a case are *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* and *Wooldse Veen*. In both cases, the responsible organisation started in 2008 with the translation and implementation of the Natura 2000 policy. Moreover, both organisations expect that the sites will be officially designated in 2010 (Provincie Gelderland, 2009 and DLG, 2010). The similar time path of the cases indicates that the two cases are in the same phase of the planning process, therefore it becomes possible to conduct a comparative case study.

The first case *Stelkampsveld* is located in the province of Gelderland nearby the villages Barchem and Borculo. In map 1, *Stelkampsveld* is indicated with a blue dot. The site exists of 15 hectares with dry and wet heath land, bluegrass land, lime morass and flooded pit vegetations. *Stelkampsveld* is part of a larger nature area (named *Beekvliet*) of 128 hectares alternated with agricultural grounds and forests. The Governmental Service for Land and Water management in cooperation with the Forestry Commission are responsible at first hand for the formulation of the management plan (DLG, 2010). Reasons for selecting *Stelkampsveld* as a case is that on the website (DLG, 2000) it is already stated that the largest part of the site is in ownership of the Forestry Commission although the Commission leased parts of it to farmers. Secondly, an already existing advisory committee for other processes in the area is asked to join the process instead of constructing a new one with concerned stakeholders. The combination of different ownerships of grounds of the designated site and already multiple involved stakeholders make *Stelkampsveld* an interesting case to examine. The second case *Wooldse Veen* is also located in the province of Gelderland and lies nearby the German border and the German Natura 2000 site *Burlo/ Vardingholter Venn*. In map 1, the selected case *Wooldse Veen* is indicated with a red dot. The site *Wooldse Veen* exists of 67 hectares with high moorland. The peat moor is absorbing the rainwater; the peat is surrounded by a natural zone of wet birch forest (Provincie Gelderland, n.d.). The province of Gelderland is responsible for formulation of the management plan. The Natura 2000 site *Wooldse Veen* is selected because many different stakeholder groups are involved in the planning process, all with diverse and sometimes opposing interests.



Map 1 Selected Natura 2000 cases (MinLNV, n.d.)

Both processes are in the same phase namely formulation of the concept management plans (Regiebureau N2000, 2010). Compared to the five steps in the Natura 2000 implementation process posed by Verburg et al. (2008), both processes are between the fourth and fifth step. The processes started both in 2008 and in 2010, the responsible organisations have to legally deliver the same product (management plan) because the Dutch government has made the formulation of management plans obligatory under national law. The delivery of

similar products gives the opportunity to compare both cases. Furthermore, both cases are a terrestrial Natura 2000 site, which makes them comparable. In addition, it is likely to believe on forehand that both cases are dealing with similar problems (Provincie Gelderland, 2009 and DLG, 2010). The two strategically selected cases cannot represent all the processes of the 162 Natura 2000 sites in the Netherlands. Each site has its specific problems, goals and asks for involvement of different stakeholders and planning processes. On forehand, the researcher expected that there was one significant difference between the two cases. This difference was that the province of Gelderland is responsible for the formulation of the Natura 2000 management plan for the site *Wooldse Veen*. The Governmental Service for Land and Water management was however thought to be responsible for the management plan of the site *Stelkampsveld*. This difference was confirmed in February 2010 by the internet pages of both Natura 2000 sites. After conducting interviews in the period April-May 2010, it appeared that the province of Gelderland is after all also responsible for the management plan of *Stelkampsveld*. Although the same organisation is responsible for the management plan of the two sites it still remains interesting to inquire into and compare the planning process and the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation.

3.4 Data collection

In order to answer the main research question and the two sets of sub-research questions, different data collection methods are used. For answering the first set of sub-research questions posed in paragraph 1.3, the data collection method used is desk-research. Sources used for answering the sub-research questions are archival records, documents, scientific articles and other available literature (primary and secondary data) (De Vaus, 2002; Eisenhardt, 2009 and Creswell, 2003). To answer the second set of sub-research questions posed in paragraph 2.6, the main data collection method used is interviews. Sources for answering the second set of sub-research questions are stakeholder representatives participating in the processes.

Interviews are the most important method to answer the second set of sub-research questions posed in paragraph 2.6. The structure of the interviews was open-ended and semi-structured; this allowed the researcher to search for a deeper explanation of topics raised by the respondents (Kempton, 1991 quoted in Goodwin, 1998). Two types of open-ended questionnaires are developed, one for the responsible organisation (see annex 1) and one for the involved stakeholders (see annex 2). The interview questions are derived from the theoretical framework and the conceptual model.

There were two selection criteria for interviewees. The first criterion is that the interviewee should actively be involved in the process. Second, the interviewees should present different stakeholder groups. The result of applying these two criteria is that it becomes possible to study participation in the light of different perspectives of different organisations. The two selection criteria resulted in fifteen interviews, which was more than originally expected. The list of interviewees per case is added in annex 3.

Chapter 4 Case Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld

In the first paragraph, the policy framework of Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld is briefly introduced. In the second paragraph, the process is described chronologically. Along with this description, perceptions of interviewees of several important moments in the process are added. The four concepts of the theoretical framework and the conceptual model are used in the last paragraph to analyse the results of the case study.

4.1 Policy framework

Stelkampsveld is part of a larger nature conservation area. This larger and surrounding nature conservation area named *Beekvliet* exists of 128 hectares. The nature conservation area contains forests and other nature types alternated with agricultural land. Besides the designation of *Stelkampsveld* as a Natura 2000 site, two other policies are designated to the entire nature conservation area. The reason for these three designations is that the area *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* contains special nature values which are threatened by extinction due to dehydration. Despite the fact that all policy processes have their own specific objectives and organisational structure; they elapse within one time framework due to planning of the province of Gelderland. Initially, the Governmental Service for Land and Water management was responsible for the Natura 2000 process. As a consequence of the two other policy designations, the province of Gelderland decided to adapt a comprehensive directing role. Although the province of Gelderland is directing the Natura 2000 process, the Governmental Service for Land and Water management remains responsible for formulation of the Natura 2000 management plan. Summarised, the three designated policies are:

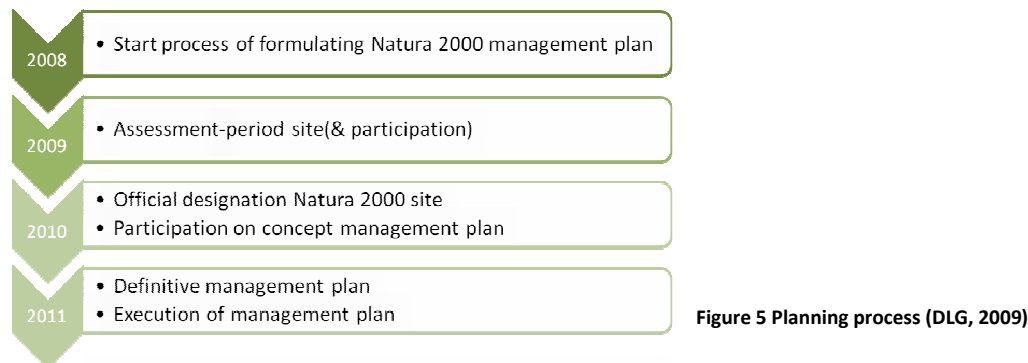
1. Natura 2000 - *Stelkampsveld*: protection and improvement of 15 hectares with dry and wet heath land, bluegrass land, lime morass and flooded pit vegetations;
2. Desired Ground- and Surface water Regime – *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld*: the total nature conservation area is placed at a priority list of dehydrated locations in the province of Gelderland. For these locations a plan has to be formulated which contains the desired ground- and surface water regime for that location;
3. Provincial Long-Range Plan – *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld*: due to the designation of the above posed policy processes, the province of Gelderland decided to start a third processes. In this process an all-embracing framework is formulated wherein integral measurements on behalf of nature, dehydration and agriculture are developed. This all-embracing framework results in a comprehensive execution-programme for measurements within the whole area.

In order to complete the Provincial Long-Range Plan and to formulate its comprehensive measurements, it is necessary to formulate the Natura 2000 management plan, the Desired Ground- and Surface water Regime plan and an agricultural agenda. The reason for the formulation of the agricultural agenda is that farmers in and around the nature conservation area might experience negative effects due to the required comprehensive measurements of the three policies. Formulating the Desired Ground- and Surface water Regime plan is a crucial step within the comprehensive process: the chosen scenario (e.g. regime) determines which objectives are achievable concerning dehydration (and thus which Natura 2000 objectives are achievable).

4.2 Case description

The comprehensive process started in 2007; the province of Gelderland established a Steering committee in order to invite stakeholders to the process. In July 2007, this committee approved a starting document. The document contained the objectives of the three designated policies and the required organisational structure. Furthermore, the document contained a fourfold phasing of the comprehensive process. The first phase is named the initiating phase: in this phase the starting document is formulated. In addition, this starting document needs to be approved by the Steering committee before the process continues. In the definition- & design phase (second phase), a process document is formulated along with the Desired Ground- and Surface water Regime plan, the Natura 2000 management plan, a ground strategy plan, an integral measurement

execution programme and at last, the formulation of a communication plan. If the second phase is accomplished, the third phase starts. This developing and contracting phase contains the approval of the integral execution program, risk- & process management and formulation of contracts with others in order to execute measurements. The last phase, the execution phase, contains the execution of necessary measurements based on the starting document, the integral measurement execution program and the contract- and communication plan (Hemelaar, 2007). Figure 5 shows the planning of one of the three processes namely the formulation of the Natura 2000 management plan. At the time of writing this thesis, the planning balances between the second and the third phase in 2010. At the end of 2010, the Natura 2000 site has to be official designated and in 2011, the fourth phase (execution) starts. Execution of the Natura 2000 management plan is planned in three periods, each with a validity of six years.



Besides the fourfold phasing, the starting document also contained the required organisational structure. Figure 6 shows the organisational structure of the three policy processes and the place of the Steering committee within the process. As the figure shows, the committee has a central role in all the three policy processes. The role of the committee in the Desired Ground- and Surface water Regime process and Natura 2000 process is rather of an advising nature. In these two processes, decision-making belongs only to the qualified authorities. Within the Provincial Long-Range Plan process, the committee guides the execution and gives advice to the Provincial Executive of Gelderland. Members of the Provincial Executive of Gelderland consider the given advice in their decision. Members of the Tuning group discuss at project management level if all the three processes are progressing according to their management & organisation, planning and communication strategy. Members of the study group 'Hydrology & Ecology' try to fine-tune the content of the Desired Ground- and Surface water Regime with the content of the Natura 2000 management plan. Project group members develop a proposal for the integral measurement execution programme and are responsible for reporting the progress of the process.

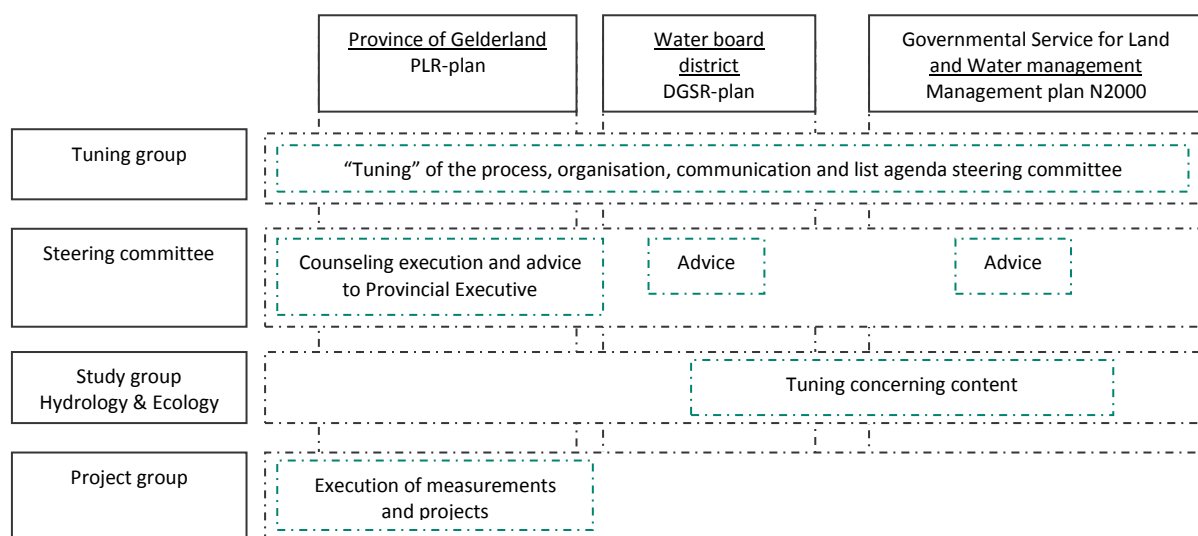


Figure 6 Organisational structure *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* (Hemelaar, 2009)

In May 2008, the comprehensive process became 'visible' for locals who work and live nearby the nature conservation area. The chairperson of the Steering committee sent an invitation letter on behalf of the Governmental Service for Land and Water management to join the kick-off information sessions (afternoon and evening) of the process on the 26th of May 2008. During these information sessions, the Steering committee wanted to inform interested locals about the Natura 2000 management plan, the Desired Ground- and Surface water Regime and the Provincial Long-Range plan process. These first information sessions turned out to be an important issue in the process. The information letter was written in such a way that readers could interpret the message as if the Natura 2000 management plan was already formulated and that these information sessions were purely to inform them. As a result of the misleading invitation letter, many locals attended the information sessions with mixed feelings. Before the official start of the evening session by the panel chairperson, a visitor took over the microphone. Unfortunately, interviewees could not remember who this person was. The visitor read a letter with a pro-nature tone to the audience about the area *Beekvliet/Stelkampsveld*. According to several interviewees, the letter touched the field of tension between nature and agriculture perfectly. What happened further during the evening session was a succession of negative and unfortunate events: the panel chairperson was not capable to handle the reader of the letter properly and the rest of the evening as well. The audience became noisier and rebellious. According to one interviewee, the province of Gelderland was unable to answer all questions and the panel chairperson did not give all the visitors a fair chance to ask their question. In addition, the chairperson of the Steering committee announced that the composition of the Steering committee could not be changed. During the information sessions on the 26th of May, an employee of the Water board district Rijn & IJssel also presented their strategy. After the two sessions, the Water board district concluded that giving a presentation during information sessions is an ineffective way to communicate with their target group. Therefore, they decided to organise "kitchen-table meetings" with farmers who might get de-benefitted by measurements of the new water regime. During these one-to-one meetings, nobody of the Natura 2000 side was joining the Water board district. The Water board district was afraid that this would change the setting of the meeting in a negative way.

Despite the fact that the chairperson of the Steering committee announced, during information sessions, that the composition of the committee was not debatable, locals were unsatisfied with the representativeness of the committee. As a result, four additional stakeholder groups joined the Steering committee after the information sessions. Two stakeholder groups namely Vereniging Contact Barchem (locals) and 4 B/S (farmers & locals) indicated that they wanted to join the committee. The stakeholder group 4 B/S used the European laws (and collected the required amount of signatures) to prove that they had a right to join the participative process thus to have a seat in the Steering committee as well. Although the chairperson was reserved about the membership of those two groups, eventually their representatives received a seat within the Steering committee. Representatives of the stakeholder groups LTO Lochem (agricultural organisation) and Natuurmonumenten (nature organisation) were invited to join the process. When the four additional stakeholder groups joined the process, the Steering committee contained thirteen members (excl. chairperson and secretary). According to a process document formulated in January 2009, the role of the Steering committee is more of an advising nature.

As the meetings of the Steering committee in 2009 continued, it became clear that not all stakeholders trusted each other and most representatives did not consider themselves to be interdependent with one and another. In addition, some of the stakeholders did have a major suspicion towards the province of Gelderland. Discussions tended to focus on the organisational structure and dissatisfaction about the opportunity to participate instead of discussions about the content of the Natura 2000 management plan. Deadlocks originated between different stakeholder groups and between stakeholders groups and the province of Gelderland. An often-made remark is that not all representatives could separate their local emotions and interests from the desired comprehensive focus for the whole process because of their direct interests in the area. Furthermore, the position of the chairperson of the Consulting committee became intolerable and some

of the stakeholder groups thought that the chair was conspiring with “the government”. Due to these quarrels and the unpleasant meeting culture, a member of the Provincial Executive of Gelderland decided to hold an evaluation of the process and the performance of the Steering committee. Two independent persons carried out an interim evaluation in the period October-November 2009 and delivered a report with recommendations concerning the process and its organisational structure. The evaluation resulted in change in the organisational structure. From April 2010 on, the organisational structure exists out of a Managerial Advisory group, a Project group (the former Steering committee), several study groups and an Official Coordination organ. By implementing the new organisational structure, different levels of representatives (managerial and local) are separated in the Managerial Advisory Group and the Project group. The change of the organisational structure appeared to be an important point in the process. Despite that interviewees at the beginning of the research-period did not notice a difference in the meetings and especially in the meeting culture. Most of the interviews did indicate that they were pleased with the change in the organisational structure. The last interviewees in the research-period did already notice a positive change. According to them, the meeting culture changed positively and stakeholder groups were committing themselves to the process. Attitudes of representatives became more cooperating compared to the attitudes in the former Steering committee.

Figure 7 on the next page shows the new organisational structure. Members of the Managerial Advisory group are appointed by the Provincial Executive of Gelderland and have an advising role towards members of the Provincial Executive of Gelderland. In addition, the Managerial Advisory group will also give advice to the Water board district Rijn & IJssel and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in some cases. When the Managerial Advisory group is formulating their advice, they will take the advice given to them by the Project group into consideration. Representatives seated in the Managerial Advisory group represent one or more stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the representatives have managerial skills and approach the process with a strong comprehensive focus. The Managerial Advisory group exists out of nine active members and six agenda-members and will meet four times a year maximal. Representatives seated in the Project group represent one stakeholder group. For managerial subjects, the meetings of the Project group are preparatory for consultation in the Managerial Advisory group. For non-managerial subjects, the Project group acts as a brainstorming group. In general this means that representatives seated in the Project group deliver local knowledge, give input for the Natura 2000 management plan and represent their grassroots support. The Project group exists out of twelve active members and will meet around seven times per year. According to the new organisational structure, members of the Project group are not allowed to have a seat in the Managerial Advisory group as well. Both groups are chaired by an independent chairperson. Members of the study groups are planning measurements concerning the Natura 2000 management plan, the Desired Ground- and Surface water plan and the agricultural agenda. Their findings will be listed on the agenda's of the Project group and the Managerial Advisory group. Members of the Official Coordination organ keep a careful watch on the progress, planning and the alignment of the three processes. Furthermore, they act as an agenda-commission for the Managerial Advisory group and the Project group (Hemelaar, 2010).

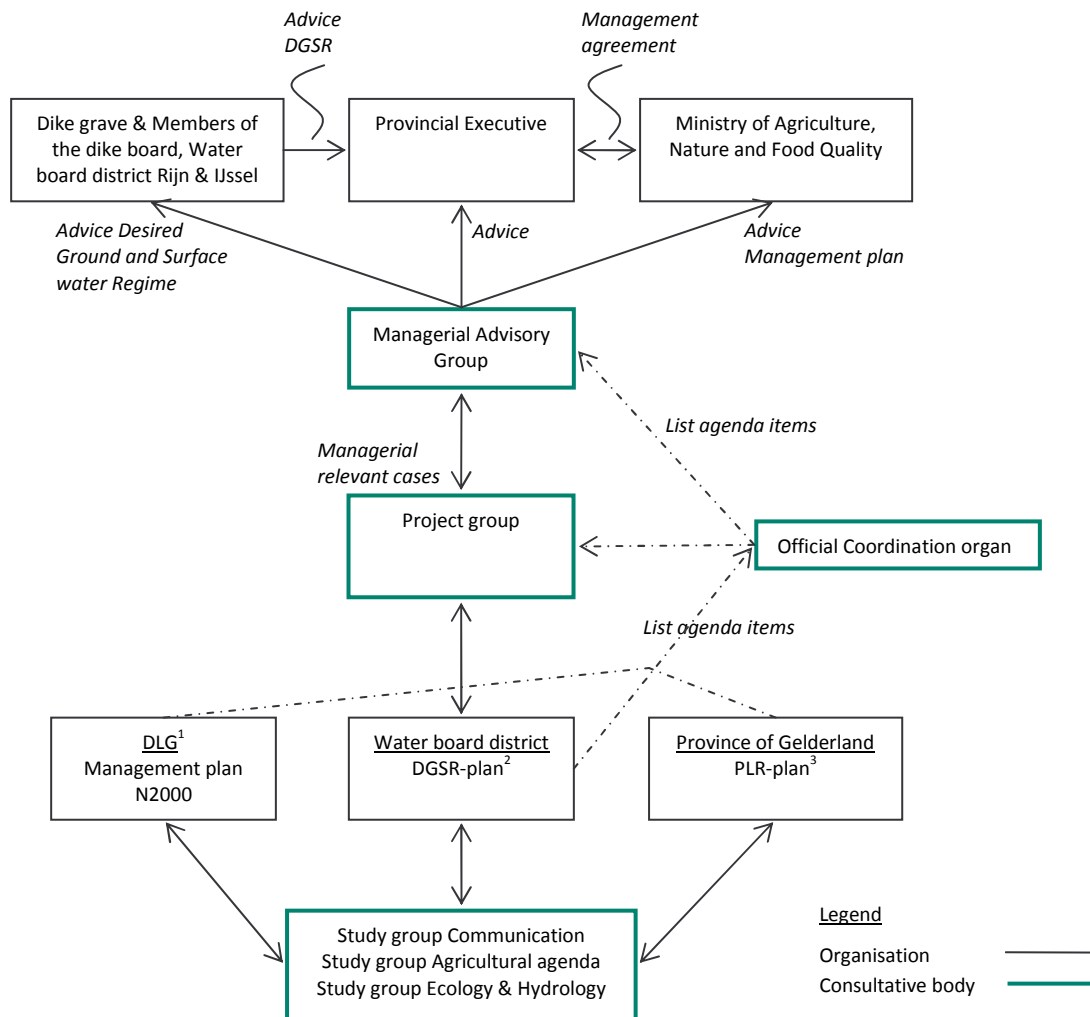


Figure 7 Renewed Organisational structure Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld (Hemelaar, 2010)

¹DLG stands for the Governmental Service for Land and Water

²Desired Ground and Surface water plan

³Provincial Long-Range plan

Currently, the organisational structure is as exposed in figure 7. At time of writing this thesis, the Project group has had its first meeting and the Managerial Advisory group has its first meeting scheduled. With the new organisational structure the province of Gelderland hopes to accomplish phase three of the process this year. If the Natura 2000 management plan will be supported within the entire area remains doubtful according to the interviewees. Important decisions about measurements and the execution of these measurements have to be made in the nearby future. One important factor that will determine the success of the process is the available budget. The execution phase (fourth phase), according to the planning in the starting document will start in 2011. At this moment it remains impossible to get into detail on this phase. According to the process document, this phase probably requires adjustments in the organisational structure. These adjustments will be announced by the province of Gelderland when the time is ready (Hemelaar, 2010).

4.3 Analysis

The theoretical framework and conceptual model are used to analyse the results of the case study. This paragraph contains perceptions of representatives seated in the Project group. These members were interviewed because they represent (semi-) local stakeholder groups. Members seated in the Managerial Advisory group are more professionally involved in the process on higher juridical and managerial level, a level that lies beyond the focus of this research.

4.3.1 Stakeholder participation

After conducting the interviews with members from the Project group, it became possible to analyse the width and depth of stakeholder participation. First, the width of stakeholder participation is analysed. At the beginning of the process, the province of Gelderland used one selection criterion to invite stakeholders for the Steering committee. This selection criterion was their seat in an advisory committee in another nearby process named *Neede/ Borculo*. According to the compiler of the Steering committee, the process of *Neede/ Borculo* was in several ways similar to the process *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld*: stakeholder groups were almost identical. In addition, the process *Neede/ Borculo* was led by a successful chairperson. As a result, several stakeholder groups and the successful chairperson of the process *Neede/ Borculo* were invited to join and chair the Steering committee of the *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* process. The question arises if the applied selection criterion was in first stance useful and second, if this criterion is applied consequently. After all, stakeholder's perceptions and events during the first information sessions indicate that locals were unsatisfied with the representativeness and composition of the Steering committee. After the information session, eventually four additional stakeholder groups joined the Steering committee. The joining of four additional stakeholder groups indicates that the selection criterion is not applied consequently. Furthermore, the change in organisational structure indicates that the selection criterion did not result in a successful composition of the Steering committee. This might have been caused by an incorrect selection criterion. The effect of using an incorrect selection criterion resulted in dissatisfaction amongst stakeholder groups about the organisational structure of the process and representativeness of the Steering committee. What appeared to the compiler as a logical step to invite stakeholder groups from a successful nearby process, resulted in the perception by locals from *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* that their stakes were improperly represent. By using a selection criterion as in *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld*, the first step of participation is actually left out: stakeholders did not have the opportunity to discuss their seat and the seat of their colleagues. The composition of the Steering committee led to detailed discussions and missed according to several interviewees the comprehensive focus for the entire process. Furthermore, several interviewees mentioned that representatives from managerial level perceived that the local representatives were unable to separate their emotions from the desired comprehensive focus for the process because of their direct interests in the area.

When the organisational structure of the process changed, the Steering committee changed into the Project group. Most of the members of the Steering committee received a seat within the Project group. The applied selection criterion was that members should represent one stakeholder group and were able to feed the process with local knowledge. Members of the Project group are representing:

- Province of Gelderland
- Water board district Rijn & IJssel
- Staatsbosbeheer (forest organisation)
- Natuurmonumenten (nature organisation)
- LTO Berkelland and Lochem (agricultural organisation)
- 2x - Governmental Service for Land and Water management
- Vereniging Contact Barchem (locals)
- Municipalities Berkelland and Lochem
- 4 B/S (locals and farmers organisation)
- GMF (nature & environmental organisations)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

An independent person is chairing the meetings of the Project group, and a secretary formulates the minutes. In total, the Project group exists out of twelve members (after all, the Governmental Service for Land and Water management is represented by two persons). The group seems to contain a reasonable representation of relevant stakeholders: the group contains no superfluous members and furthermore, the size of the groups allows having structured meetings.

After analysing the ‘width’ of stakeholder participation, it becomes possible to study the ‘depth’. For studying the depth of stakeholder participation, the participation ladder of Edelenbos et al. (2006) is used. Each interviewee was asked to give their perception concerning their level of participation. Interviewees could do this by appointing their role on a visualised ladder of participation (which is equal to the described ladder of participation in table 1). Interviewees were asked to give their perception on their level of participation in the beginning of the process and at this moment in the process. In addition, they were asked to appoint their ideal level of participation. Figure 8 contains the results of the perceived and ideal level of participation of all the interviewees.

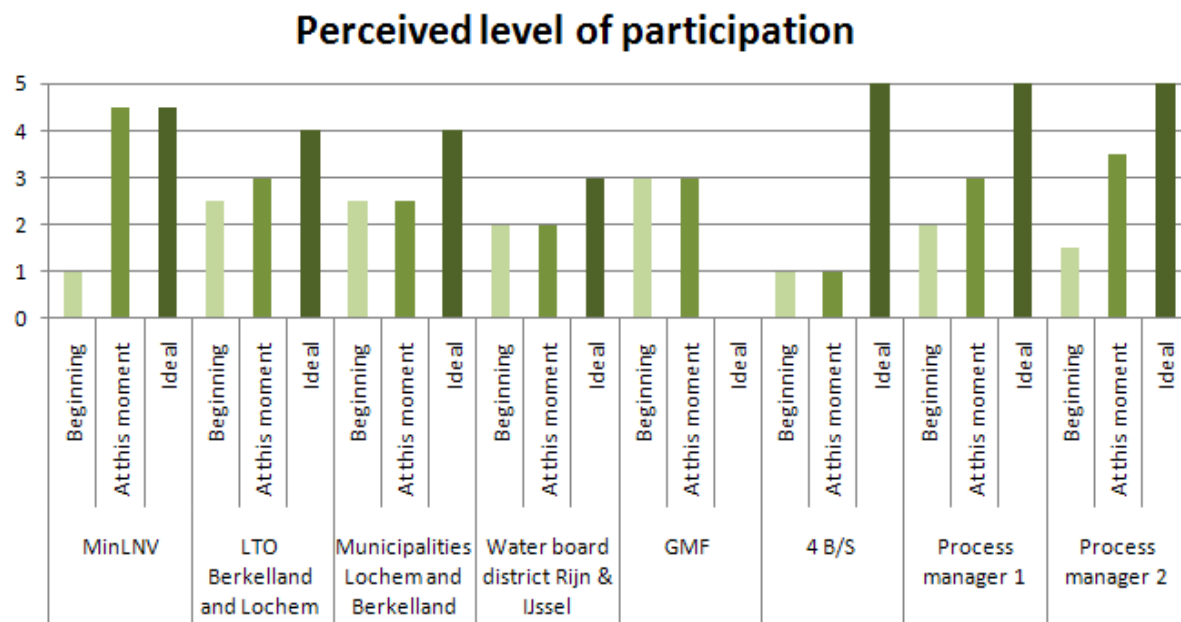


Figure 8 Perceived level of participation by interviewees (own elaboration)

Before interviewees were asked to give their perception on their role within the area-process, they were asked if their role in the area-process was explained to them on forehand. As explained in sub-paragraph 2.1.1 a level of participation refers to a role a citizen (or stakeholder) can have within a process. Most interviewees acknowledge that their role is explained at the beginning of the process by the province of Gelderland. However, some of them doubt if this explanation was clear enough. When most stakeholders agree about the fact that their role is explained at the beginning of the process, it is likely to expect that their perceptions about their role at the beginning of the process will be similar. Figure 8 shows results in contrast to the above posed hypothesis. Perceptions and their corresponding expectations about the level of stakeholder participation differ in range from level 1 to level 3. The perceived level of participation of the process managers at the beginning of the process differs slightly between an intermediate form of advising and coproducing. A reason for this difference could be caused by the fact that both managers joined the process later on, respectively mid 2008 (manager 1) and at the beginning of 2010 (manager 2). The perceived level of participation at the beginning of the process is an educated guess of both managers. The six interviewed stakeholders all have a different perception of their level of participation. These perceptions need to be seen in perspective; perceptions and expectations about participation are partially influenced by the stakeholder’s satisfaction about the process at that particular moment. Nevertheless, the province of Gelderland was incapable to create realistic expectations amongst stakeholders towards their level of participation (role) at the beginning of the comprehensive process. If they did have the capability, the perceived range amongst the interviewees would probably have been smaller. The province of Gelderland also acknowledges that perhaps they gave the impression to stakeholders that their influence was higher than they eventually had. A comparison of the perceived level of participation at the beginning of the process between the two process managers and the interviewed stakeholders is impossible: after all, the managers made an educated guess.

Both process managers perceive that there was progress in the level of participation stakeholders had in the process. Nevertheless, not all interviewed stakeholders agree with the perceptions of the process managers. Two of the six-interviewed stakeholder's notices progress in their level of participation. The rest remained perceiving their level of participation similar to the beginning of the process despite the organisational change. The range of the perceived level of participation differs at this moment in the process from level 2 to level 4,5. Once again, these perceptions need to be seen in perspective: perceptions and expectations depend partially on the interviewee's satisfaction about the process at that moment.

The ideal level of participation of all interviewees ranges from level 3 to level 5. The representative of the stakeholder group 'GMF' did not know what his ideal level of participation was and therefore did not answer this question. Figure 8 shows that the ideal level of participation of all interviewees lies higher than the perceived level at this moment in the process. Stakeholders do have higher expectations towards their role in the process. The difference in range between the actual perceived level of participation and the ideal level of participation indicates that in this phase of the area-process, the province of Gelderland was also incapable to create realistic expectations amongst the stakeholders about their role. This constant tension between the expected role of stakeholders and their lower perceived role did have negative effects on the process. Discussions of the Steering committee tended to focus on the organisational structure, the representativeness of the participating stakeholder groups and other minor details. As a result, dissensions arose between different stakeholder groups, and between stakeholder groups and the province of Gelderland.

Edelenbos et al. (2006) linked the rungs of the participation ladder with seven government styles developed by Pröpper and Steenbeek (1999). This link makes it possible to study which government style the province of Gelderland is adapting, and if this government style matches the perceived level of participation by the stakeholders. During the interviews, the researcher perceived different government styles adapted by the province of Gelderland. Elements of the styles 'open authoritative', 'consulting' and 'participative' can be distinguished. The information sessions in May 2008 contained all elements of an open authoritative government style. Visitors became the target-group of the presenters: they were presented with information about the three policies. Furthermore, the presentations suggested that locals were not allowed to give input within the Natura 2000 process. Elements from the consulting government style can be found in the fact that the authorities have defined some of the problems and possible solutions. In later phases of the process, the role of the stakeholders changed partly from consulting to advising; the Project group is giving an advice to the Managerial Advisory group. In principle, the Managerial Advisory group is committed to the given advice of the Project group but can deviate from it when wanted. The described facets do indicate that the government is also adapting a participative style at some points. The adopted government styles do not match the perceived levels of participation of the interviewees. The differences result in that the province of Gelderland is creating higher expectations towards participation possibilities than their own style allows.

The last analytical point of the concept stakeholder participation concerns the motivation of stakeholders to participate. First, for all stakeholder groups counts that their motivation to participate in the comprehensive process is to represent their grassroots support. On the other hand, sometimes it appeared that stakeholder's motivation to participate is driven by fear or distrust towards "the government": without their presence, probably measurements will be selected which influence their activities negatively. In addition, one stakeholder group joined the process because they were afraid that otherwise the process would be unfair. Most of the stakeholder groups did not participate in the process with the motivation that they thought they were interdependent to each other. Although it is good that stakeholders are willing to participate, their motivations for participation are not always desirable. Motivations influence the attitude of stakeholders and their (un-) willingness for cooperation. If stakeholders participate because they are otherwise afraid that the policy becomes a threat, it has its negative effects on the process.

4.3.2 Communication

The province of Gelderland performed an actor-analysis when the starting document was formulated in 2007. Time was invested in research about interests, role, activities and available instruments of stakeholder groups seated in the new established Steering committee. Despite this actor-analysis, an often-made remark from the province of Gelderland and stakeholders seated in the Steering committee was that some of the stakeholders were unable to separate their local interests from the desired comprehensive focus for the entire process. During the research it was difficult to study if the stakeholder representatives were aware of their own culture, realities and truths and thereby the message they communicate to their surroundings. It was not self-evident to have a conversation about stakeholder's realities and truths and in addition those of the other stakeholders. During the interviews it appeared that at the beginning of the process every stakeholder knew his own basic assumptions (own culture, realities and truths) and assumed that they also knew the basic assumptions of the other stakeholders seated in the Steering committee. During the process, stakeholders slowly found out and learned more about each other and about each other's basic assumptions. The fact that stakeholders only assumed that they knew each other's basic assumptions had consequences for the process. Unclear goals, motives and basic assumptions led to a strategic and awaiting attitude of stakeholders. Eventually, this attitude resulted in a longer process. Representatives do not play all their cards at once but wait until somebody makes the first move. It remains unclear if the province of Gelderland performed a new actor-analysis when the organisational structure changed and the Project group was established. Nevertheless, during the first meeting of the Project group (despite that most of the members were already familiar with each other) representatives got the opportunity to explain their basic assumptions, goals and motives. Discussing this decreased the strategic attitude: stakeholders know from each other what they want to achieve.

The second analytical point of the concept communication is the high expectations on the power of communication and its ability to create mutual understanding. Furthermore, when communication becomes an instrument in policy-making the aim of this instrument is to emphasise mutual dependence of participants. In this case, interaction did not immediately led to the ability of stakeholders to put their reality and truths in perspective, thus to create mutual understanding. A result of this is that stakeholders were unable to except that other stakeholder groups have different realities and truths, which eventually led to misunderstandings and miscommunication. Furthermore, with communication as an instrument, the province of Gelderland was unable to emphasise the mutual dependence of members of the Project group.

During the interview-period, it appeared that the developed communication strategy was not the main topic to discuss. During the interviews, a conversation about the chosen communication strategy soon turned to the topic how locals perceived the strategy and which effect their perception had on the success and progress of the process. The time of providing information contained a field of tension. Often processes contain several uncertainties at the starting phase. If information is communicated in this phase, there is a possibility that specific questions cannot be answered at that moment due to uncertainties. The effect of this is that locals experienced that they are not taken serious and they feel misunderstood. On the other hand, waiting with communication until some of the uncertainties are dissolved might cause suspicion amongst the locals. In addition, inaccurate stories will begin to circulate within the area. Both project managers acknowledge that mistakes have been made in the communication towards the area and within the Steering committee. The name 'Steering committee' appeared to be confusing for the representatives and locals. The committee did not have 'steering' role. After all they could not steer the process, they could rather 'advise'. Amongst locals, the invitation letter to the information sessions in May 2008 caused commotion. The message in the letter could be interpreted in different ways; one of these ways was that the Natura 2000 management plan already was formulated. As a result of the mixed messages locals joined the sessions with various emotions. Eventually the two sessions caused a negative start for the process. In addition, the negative results of the information sessions caused a war-like attitude of visitors towards the next information sessions. Almost every interviewee referred to this letter if the conversation touched the topic communication. Furthermore, one stakeholder

notices that another communication mistake was that the province of Gelderland could not always square the Natura 2000 policy to the (participating) stakeholder groups. Instead of explaining the policy, the province referred to a higher level in the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Actually, the province was referring to a person that did not exist. In addition, some of the interviewees experienced the communication strategy as ineffective because the province of Gelderland did not have feeling for the area.

The province of Gelderland did develop a communication strategy for the whole process. When this research started in the beginning of 2010, information folders about the Natura 2000 site and relevant documents could be found on the website of the province of Gelderland. At this moment of writing the thesis (after the organisational change) the provided information is significantly less. The provided information about the process on the website of the Governmental Service for Land and Water management remained the same during the research period.

4.3.3 Social relations

During the research-period, there was a low degree of trust between the stakeholders. This lack of trust was noticeable in the process: minor topics in the concept management plan caused major discussions. Furthermore, there was disagreement about the organisational structure, discussion about the representativeness of the Steering committee. In addition, one stakeholder group was hiring other an advisory organisation for second opinions, there were non-cooperative attitudes and there was a lack of respect between some of the stakeholders. The lack of trust had consequences for the progress of the process, it became slow and with a troubled atmosphere. In addition, the lack of trust resulted in an unstable and unsustainable environment for cooperation. Although not all interviewees trusted each other, there was a certain degree of trust towards the process managers. Interviewees trusted on their expertise and their ability to manage the process as successful as possible. Besides that, the form of trust was lacking as described in the theoretical framework, also another form of trust appeared to be important in the process. This form of trust is stakeholders personal 'trust' and 'believe' in a successful end of the process. This personal trust in a successful end of the process influences the attitude of stakeholders. If stakeholders are unconvinced that the process will end positive, their effort will be minimal. A combination between the first form of trust (thus lacking trust between stakeholders) and the second form of trust (in the process) results in difficult situations and in a troubled atmosphere.

It appears that most of the interviewees do not consider themselves to be interdependent with other stakeholders. Although some interviewees remark that the required measurements of the Natura 2000 management plan have to be executed by them. The general absence of the sense of interdependence could be caused by the difficult start of the process, the lack of trust, or it could mean that interdependence in case of Natura 2000 is unnecessary in order to achieve the desired objectives. As described before, in the beginning of the process it was unclear to stakeholders which basic assumptions and goals other stakeholders had in the process. They slowly found this out during the process. This left out step at the start of the process resulted in the fact that stakeholders did not have the chance to learn about their interdependence because they did not have the opportunity to explain their own situation and needs. A lack of trust amongst stakeholders influences the perceptions about interdependence. The third possible reason for the absence of the sense of interdependence is that perhaps in case of Natura 2000 it is unnecessary to have a sense of interdependency because parties are not interdependent with each other. One interviewee noticed that they are not interdependent with other stakeholders because they have time to achieve their desired goals. The time for realising their goals stretches out in a period of approximately 18-30 years. Global economy, (inter-) national market processes, politics, etc. are inconstant factors in this time-period. These inconstant factors result in a changing and adapting strategy of stakeholder groups. This changing and adapting strategy triggered by the long time-period (might) have led to the foreseen direction of this particular interviewee. The lack of the sense of interdependence influences the social relations within the group. Although the Project group appeared as

'one' group, some of the stakeholders choose consciously to dissociate themselves from the more informal events and social relations. The third analytical point mentioned in the theoretical framework is 'power'. All interviewees realise that there are certain power structures within the area-process. Although all interviewees realise that there are power structures, they do not all experience this as a negative thing. Only one interviewee referred to the misuse of power by the province of Gelderland. This stakeholder group perceived the process as unfair. It appears that the (mis-) use of power becomes important when stakeholders feel that they have been treated unfair.

Despite the lack of trust and lack of sense of interdependence, all members of the Project group seem to realise that social relations are important to achieve successes within the process. Perhaps too many negative things happened during the process in order to restore the necessary social relations. The lack of social relations resulted in a difficult and tardy process. Eventually it led to the unwillingness of cooperative attitudes. The last important discussion point that occurred during the interviews and that influences the social relations, are experiences from previous processes. In case of *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld*, not all previous processes were successful. This resulted in a form of distrust amongst some stakeholder groups towards the government. If the comprehensive process then start with a series of unfortunate events, this distrust is confirmed which makes it difficult to stay open minded.

4.3.4 Conflicts

During the interview period, interviewees did not mention a particular conflict that influenced the progress of the process. The lacking capability of the province of Gelderland to create realistic expectations about the process and the role of stakeholders within this process resulted in a difficult and tardy progress. Due to this progress, conflicts disappeared into the background. A consequence of not specifying the interviews to conflict topics is that it results in that it becomes impossible to study if stakeholders perceive that they had a conflict and with whom. In addition, it is also impossible to study if stakeholders perceived the conflicts the same.

Although no specific conflicts are studied into detail, it was possible to analyse if the tone of the conflicts was about the site-management process or regarding the content of the management plan. Seeing the meeting culture of the Steering committee and later on the Project group it is also possible to analyse the ability of the province of Gelderland to solve conflicts. Although many conflicts or discussions were about the content of the management plan, the majority of the conflicts are about the site-management process. The evaluation of the performance of the former Steering Committee and eventually the change in organisational structure confirm this.

Chapter 5 Case Wooldse Veen

In case of Wooldse Veen it is unnecessary to explain the policy framework. The participating stakeholders seated in a Consulting committee discussed merely Natura 2000 related topics instead of elements of a comprehensive process. In the first paragraph, the case is described chronologically. Along with this description, perceptions of interviewees are added. In the second paragraph, the four concepts of the theoretical framework and the conceptual model are used to analyse the results of the case study.

5.1 Case description

In 2006, a local organisation initiated a study group to discuss the upcoming Natura 2000 policy. The initiating organisation wanted to explore the possible effects of the Natura 2000 legislation for all Natura 2000 sites in the region 'Achterhoek'. The province of Gelderland is responsible for the formulation of several Natura 2000 management plans in this region; one of them is *Wooldse Veen*. Despite that there was an initiated study group, the province of Gelderland decided to start the *Wooldse Veen* process in 2008. According to the province, before 2008 there was no available policy framework to guide the processes. Eventually, the study group never got together. In 2008, the project leader formulated a project plan containing the organisational structure, the setting of a Consulting committee and the planning. The organisational structure is shown in figure 9, followed by the planning in figure 10.

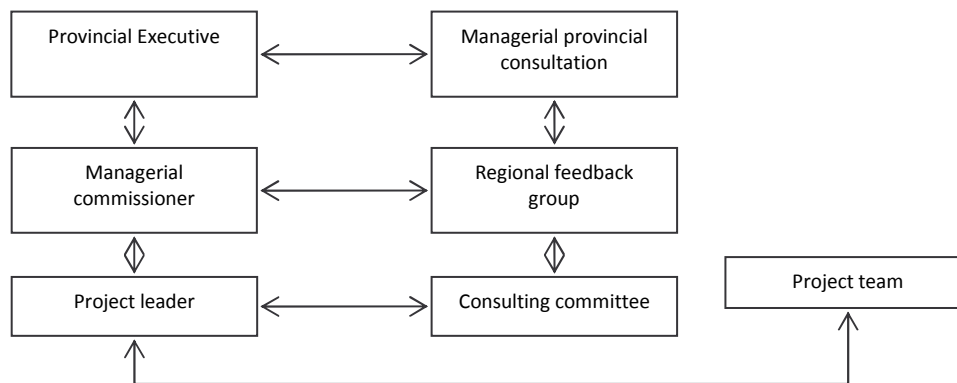


Figure 9 Organisational structure *Wooldse Veen* (Wolf, 2010)

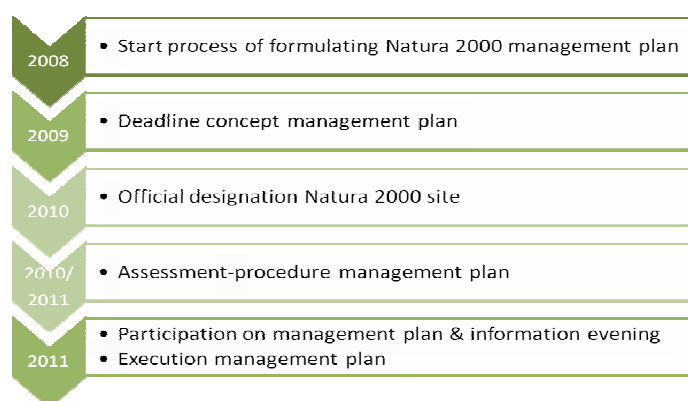


Figure 10 Planning process (Wolf, 2010 and province of Gelderland, n.d.)

An independent person employed at a consultancy firm is chairing the Consulting committee meetings. In total, this committee contains seventeen members representing different stakeholder groups. One of these seventeen members is a German representative because the Natura 2000 site *Wooldse Veen* is adjoining to the German Natura 2000 site *Burlo/ Vardingholter*. In addition, the Consulting committee is supplemented with internal experts seated in the Project team. The role of the Consulting committee is to support and advice the

project leader (and team) in the formulation of the Natura 2000 management plan. When additional information is required, external experts are contacted. These experts are not seated within the Consulting committee but are informed about the progress of the process (Wolf, 2010).

Indirectly three other groups are involved in the process of formulating the Natura 2000 management plan. These groups operate on a provincial and regional level instead of local level like the Consulting committee. The Project team exists out of internal experts of the province of Gelderland and contains a project leader, project assistant and other members. The Project team is responsible for the formulation of all provincial Natura 2000 management plans. Besides the Project team, a Feedback group is established. The feedback group exists out of managerial members, which represent stakeholder groups on regional level. This group provides feedback on intermediary products. Furthermore, for the smaller Natura 2000 sites in the province of Gelderland a Managerial Provincial Consultation group is established with representatives from the province of Gelderland, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and water board districts (Wolf, 2010). The province of Gelderland hired a consultancy firm to write the Natura 2000 management plan. Furthermore, a communication firm was hired to formulate and execute a communication strategy. This strategy is formulated in consultation with the Project team.

The Natura 2000 process became 'visible' for locals who live and work nearby *Wooldse Veen* in February 2009 when the province of Gelderland organised an information evening. During this information evening the province presented their inventory about the land use in and around the Natura 2000 site. After this evening, the process progressed structured. According to the interviewees no major conflicts occurred during the process. A second information evening was organised in December 2009. Interested people who attended this evening were informed about the concept Natura 2000 management plan. At time of writing this thesis, in August 2010, the process is waiting on the official designation of the Natura 2000 by the minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. After the official designation, the province is expecting to finish the management plan in 2011. If the management plan is finished, the province organises a final information evening for all interested people. Most interviewees expect that the management plan will be supported within the area. However, two important factors namely available budget and legislation concerning nitrogen could influence this support in the future either positive or negative.

5.2 Analysis

The four concepts of the theoretical framework and the conceptual model are used to analyse the results of the case study. This paragraph contains perceptions of representatives seated in the Consulting committee. These members were interviewed because they represent (semi-) local stakeholder groups. Members seated in the Project team, the Feedback group and the Managerial Provincial Consultation group are more professionally involved in the process on a higher juridical and managerial level, a level that lies beyond the focus of this research.

5.2.1 Stakeholder participation

After conducting interviews with representatives seated in the Consulting committee, it becomes possible to analyse the width and depth of stakeholder participation. First, the width of stakeholder participation is analysed. Several stakeholder groups are involved within the process and members of the Consulting committee represent:

- 2x – Province of Gelderland
- 2x – Natuurmonumenten (nature organisation)
- Geldersch Landschap (landscape organisation)
- NSW Landgoederen (rural estates organisation)
- German Natura 2000 site *Burlo/ Vardingholter Venn*
- Ondernemerskring Winterswijk (OWIN, entrepreneurs organisation) & Chamber of Commerce
- Governmental Service for Land and Water management
- Private land owner
- Individual farmer
- Individual camping owner
- Municipality Winterswijk
- Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie (LTO, agricultural organisation)
- Stichting Waardevol Cultuurlandschap Winterswijk (WCL, man-made landscape foundation)
- 2x – Water board district Rijn & IJssel

In total, seventeen representatives are seated in the Consulting committee (excl. chair person). The province of Gelderland, Natuurmonumenten and the Water board district Rijn & IJssel are represented by two persons. An independent person chairs the meetings of the Consulting committee. Members of the committee were selected based on three selection criteria formulated by the project leader. The selection criteria are:

1. The representative should have a role in the area or should be a land user in or around the Natura 2000 site;
2. The representative must have the competences to represent a stakeholder group;
3. The Consulting committee should have a mixed setting of representatives of organisations and locals.

The broad composition of the Consulting committee does raise several questions about the usefulness of the selection criteria and furthermore, if these criteria are applied consequently. The used selection criteria appear to be logical and applicable to select stakeholder groups. The broad composition of the Consulting committee hardly caused discussions about representativeness within the area. Several interviewees only doubt the representation of private land owners. Within *Wooldse Veen* many small parts of land are owned by private owners. Due to inheritance over several generations, owners these days might not actually 'know' that they own a piece of land. As a result of the inheritance and lacking cadastral administration, not every owner is identified yet. At this moment, it is the question if the representatives of the private landowners are a realistic reflection of all the owners despite that there was not much discussion about the representativeness of the Consulting committee. The number of seated stakeholder representatives does indicate that the criteria are not applied rigidly. First of all, three organisations are represented by two persons. Second, one of the represented stakeholder groups does not have a negative influence on the Natura 2000 site and vice versa. In

addition, every interviewee perceives that the composition of the Consulting committee is too large. Due to the large composition, the project leader suggested that it was perhaps more difficult to formulate the Natura 2000 management plan. According to several interviewees, the broad composition of the Consulting committee slowed down the process. Furthermore, a meeting with seventeen members is highly complicated and costs a lot of time. In addition, not all stakeholder representatives had the desired knowledge level about Natura 2000 and the area.

After analysing the ‘width’ of stakeholder participation, it becomes possible to study the ‘depth’. For studying the depth of stakeholder participation, the participation ladder of Edelenbos et al. (2006) is used. Each interviewee was asked to give their perception concerning their level of participation. Interviewees could do this by appointing their role on a visualised ladder of participation (which is equal to the described ladder of participation in table 1). Interviewees were asked to give their perception on their level of participation in the beginning of the process and at this moment in the process. In addition, they were asked to appoint their ideal level of participation. Figure 11 contains the results of the perceived and ideal level of participation of all the interviewees.

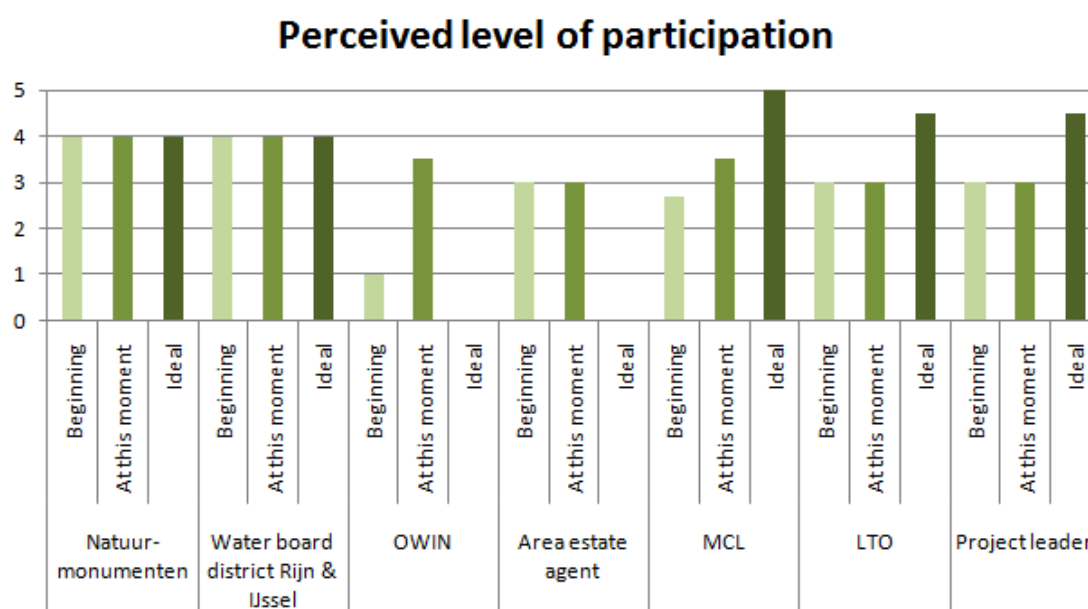


Figure 11 Perceived level of participation by interviewees (own elaboration)

Before interviewees were asked to give their perception on their role within the process, they were asked if their role in the process was explained to them on forehand. As explained earlier, the level of participation refers to a role a stakeholder can have within a process. According to the project leader, the role of the representatives is extensively described and explained at the beginning of the process. All interviewees, except one, acknowledge that their role is discussed at the beginning of the process by the province of Gelderland. Furthermore, all stakeholders, again except one, agreed on the content of their role. One stakeholder was displeased with their role because the process-structure did not allow them to design measurements. It was only possible to discuss the measurements in their consulting function. They would have liked to design the measurements because eventually, they are partly responsible for the realisation and execution. When most stakeholders agree about the fact that their role is explained at the beginning of the process, it is likely to expect that their perceptions about their role at the beginning of the process will be similar. Figure 11 shows results in contrast to the above posed hypothesis. Perceptions about the level of stakeholder participation at the beginning of the process differ in range from level 1 to level 4. The perceptions and expectation of representatives towards participation are partially influenced by their satisfaction about the process. The perception of the stakeholder group that perceived the lowest level of participation at the beginning of the process must be seen in perspective: the representative was displeased with the process so far. Three of the six

interviewees perceived the same level of participation as the project leader. Furthermore, two interviewees perceived their level of participation one rung higher on the ladder. Seen the range of the perceived level of participation, the province of Gelderland was incapable at the beginning of the process to create realistic expectations amongst all stakeholders towards their level of participation, thus their role. If they did have the capacity to do this, the perceived range amongst the interviewees would probably have been smaller. On the other hand, if the lowest perception of stakeholder participation is seen in perspective because the representative was displeased about the process. The range becomes smaller respectively from level 2,7 until level 4. Although the range still indicates that the province of Gelderland was unable to create realistic expectations amongst stakeholders about their role, the deviation between the different expectations is significantly less.

Two of the six interviewees perceive progress in their level of participation. The project leader and the other four interviewed stakeholder representatives remained perceiving their level of participation similar to the beginning of the process. The range of the perceived level of participation differs at this moment in the process from level 3 to level 4. The range at this moment in the process is smaller than the range in the beginning of the process; during the process the province of Gelderland was capable to create more realistic perceptions and expectations of stakeholders towards their role. The ideal level of participation of all stakeholders ranges from level 4 to level 5. Two representatives (OWIN and area estate agent) did not want to answer this question. According to them, the Natura 2000 policy contains no space for an ideal type of stakeholder participation. If they would have chosen the highest level, they should have organised the process by themselves and that is unrealistic. Figure 11 shows that the ideal level of participation of the other stakeholders lies slightly higher than the perceived level of participation at this moment in the process; stakeholders have slightly higher expectations towards their role in the process than they actually have. The difference in range between the actual perceived level of participation and the ideal level of participation indicates that in this phase of the process, the province of Gelderland was partly able to create realistic expectations amongst stakeholders about their role. The ability to create more or less realistic expectations amongst stakeholders about their role in the process has a positive effect on the process and its progress. Instead of discussions about the organisational structure of the process, members of the Consulting committee discussed topics concerning Natura 2000.

Pröpper and Steenbeek (1999) developed seven governmental styles. Edelenbos et al. (2006) linked these government styles to the participation ladder. This link makes it possible to study which government style the province of Gelderland is adapting, and if this government style matches the perceived level of participation by the stakeholders. The province of Gelderland adapted a mix of two government styles during the entire process namely the 'consulting style' and the 'participative style'. Elements from the consulting style can be found in the fact that the authorities have defined the problems and possible solutions (the policy-framework). An element from the participative style is that although the province have defined the problems and possible solutions, they committed themselves to the results (advise) of the Consulting committee. During the process, stakeholders perceived that they had a role ranging from informing to a co-producing one. There is a difference between the perceived level of stakeholder participation by the representatives and the adapted government style by the province of Gelderland. The difference results in that the province of Gelderland is creating slightly higher expectations towards participation possibilities than their own style allows.

The last analytical point of the concept stakeholder participation concerns the motivation of stakeholders to participate. The motivation of all stakeholders to participate in the Natura 2000 process is to represent their grassroots support. The motivation of most of the interviewees is high; in 2006 several stakeholders tried to establish a study group. The positive motivation of stakeholders to join the Natura 2000 process resulted into a pleasant working atmosphere within the process and a high commitment. In addition, the project leader also perceived a high commitment of stakeholders which resulted in a constructive atmosphere. Nevertheless, this

high commitment sometimes resulted in the fact that representatives thought that it was “their” plan. Members of the Consulting committee had the feeling that they should approve the management plan. This biased view of representatives is equivalent to the moderate ability of the province of Gelderland to create realistic expectations about their role.

5.2.2 Communication

It was difficult to study if the interviewed representatives were aware of their own culture, realities and truth’s and thereby the message they communicate to their surroundings. During the interviews it did not appear self-evident to have a conversation about stakeholder’s culture, realities and truth’s and in addition those of other stakeholders. It remains unclear if the province of Gelderland performed research on the basic assumptions (culture, realities and truth’s) and goals of participating stakeholders. During the interviews, it appeared that every stakeholder was aware of their basic assumptions. In addition, several stakeholders were familiar with basic assumptions and goals of colleague stakeholder groups. Knowledge about these assumptions was acquired during cooperation in previous processes. Stakeholder groups who did not participate in these previous processes, found out about each other’s basic assumptions and goals along the process. Clear goals and basic assumptions led to an active, transparent and less strategic attitude of representatives.

The second analytical point in the concept communication concerns the high expectations on the power of communication and its ability to create mutual understanding. Furthermore, when communication becomes an instrument in policy-making, the aim of this instrument is to emphasise mutual dependence of participants. In case of *Wooldse Veen*, interaction did led to the ability of stakeholders to put their own realities and truths in perspective, thus to create mutual understanding. Furthermore, with communication as an instrument, the province of Gelderland was able to emphasise the mutual dependence of members of the Consulting committee. A result of this is that stakeholders were able to from a firm basis for mutual problem solving within the process; all stakeholders were willing to work towards one goal.

One stakeholder mentioned that -seen from the perspective of locals- there was critique on the communication of the province. However, the communication strategy was not an actual point of discussion during the interviews. Most of the interviewees perceived the communication strategy as sufficient. The province of Gelderland did realise which effects communication might have on the process (and its progress). Before several means of communication were spread to a wider audience, it was checked by stakeholders seated in the Consulting committee. In this way, some stakeholders had the opportunity to advice the province about the used dialect and tone. The information evenings were -according to the interviewees- well attended. It is difficult to analyse the success of the evenings further because they were not “the” discussed topic of the interviews. Despite that the interviewees were satisfied with the communication strategy, almost every interviewee mentioned the field of tension of when to give information by what means. When early information is provided, the process itself probably has uncertainties. Due to these uncertainties it is possible that not every specific question can be answered. The effect of not having an answer might result in the feeling amongst locals that they are not taken seriously. Communicating too late causes suspicion amongst locals towards the province. In this case, it is hard to determine if the communication strategy had a positive influence on the progress of the process. Nevertheless, it is evident that the used communication strategy did not slow the process down. The available information about the Natura 2000 site on the website of the province of Gelderland remained the same (and was updated) during the whole research-period.

5.2.3 Social relations

A few interviewees mention that experiences from previous processes caused distrust amongst locals against “the government”. In addition, the project leader noticed a minor suspicion amongst some members of the Consulting committee at the beginning of the process also due to experiences with previous processes. Despite the mentioned distrust by some interviewees, during the research-period it appeared that there was a high

degree of trust between stakeholders. Furthermore, stakeholders mentioned that they also trusted the province of Gelderland. The province was able to take the distrust amongst stakeholders away during the process. The degree of trust between several stakeholders was already established in previous processes. Positive experiences from previous processes influence the degree of trust positive. The high degree of trust had consequences for progress of the process; stakeholders adapted a cooperating attitude and respected each other. In addition, the degree of trust created a stable and sustainable environment for cooperation.

It appears that most of the interviewees consider themselves interdependent to each other. In addition, the province of Gelderland realises that they need the stakeholders in order to execute the measurements; they are interdependent with the stakeholders as well. The sense of interdependence has positive influences on the process; every stakeholder is willing to cooperate. Furthermore, the sense of interdependence influences the social relations within the committee; stakeholders do respect each other. The Consulting committee is presenting itself as one group that appreciates working together. According to the project leader, every member had and still has a positive and critical attitude but is willing to cooperate. Interviewees acknowledge the constructive attitude of their colleagues: it is pleasant to work together. The third analytical point considered social relations is 'power'. Although all interviewees realise that there are certain power structures within the process, they do not experience them as negative. None of the interviewees referred to the misuse of power, during the process they had the feeling that they have been treated fair.

A high degree of trust, a sense of interdependence and no misuse of power resulted in a pleasant meeting atmosphere within the Consulting committee. The atmosphere makes stakeholders willing to cooperate which leads to progress of the process. Experiences from previous area-process appeared to be important in this case. Although some of the stakeholders mentioned that there was suspicion against "the government" due to earlier area-processes, the suspicion was not large enough to slow the process down.

5.2.4 Conflicts

Reasoned from the opposed interests some stakeholder groups have, it is hard to believe that there have been no conflicts during the process so far. On the other hand, none of the interviewees referred to conflicts, rather discussions. Because no conflicts occurred before and within the research-period, it is impossible to use the theoretical framework and conceptual model for analysis.

Chapter 6 Comparison of the case study results

In this chapter, the results of the two case studies are compared with each other. The four main concepts of the theoretical framework provide guidance for first four paragraphs of this chapter. The last paragraph contains a discussion to on which extent the results might have been influenced by the chosen research method.

6.1 Stakeholder participation

Despite that the province of Gelderland is responsible for both processes, different selection criteria were used to invite stakeholders. Both cases reveal the effects of choosing (a) particular criteria(s) to invite stakeholders. Although it was logical for the *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* compiler to invite representatives seated in an advisory committee of a nearby planning process. The effect of using another planning process as selection criteria resulted in discussions about the representativeness of the Steering committee. Discussions about representativeness and furthermore about the organisational structure of the process sometimes distracted the Natura 2000 management plan focus. The effect of discussing the representativeness and organisational structure is that the scope and focus of the process narrowed down. In case of *Wooldse Veen*, the project leader formulated three criteria to invite stakeholders. The applied selection criteria resulted into a Consulting committee broadly represented by different stakeholder groups. The committee was hardly discussed concerning its representativeness. Nevertheless, the large committee slowed the process down; meetings were sometimes difficult and not all stakeholders had the required knowledge level about the Natura 2000 site. What the case *Wooldse Veen* shows is, that it is useful to start every new process with specific formulated selection criteria. By applying local selection criteria and using these in order to invite stakeholders, the discussion about representativeness can be avoided which keeps the focus on Natura 2000

Both cases reveal that managing expectations and perceptions about stakeholders' roles appears to be difficult. In both cases, interviewees perceived a higher 'ideal' level of participation than their perceived level of participation at that moment. In other words, interviewees indicated that they expected to participate on a higher level than they were allowed at that moment. The higher expectations of representatives show that in both cases the province of Gelderland was unable to create realistic expectations about the stakeholder's role at that moment in the process. The perceived levels of participation at the beginning confirm this observation. Despite that in both cases the role of stakeholders was discussed before the start of the process, the range of the perceived level of participation amongst the interviewees was actually large. In both cases results indicate that the variance of the perceived levels of participation is wider at the beginning of a process than during the process. Related to this is that interviewees were more dissatisfied about their role at the beginning of the process than during the process.

Planning processes contain different phases. These phases demand different roles of stakeholders and initiating organisation. In both cases, no distinction is made between different phases and the role of stakeholders. Respondents indicate that at the beginning of a process their required level of participation is low. In this phase, useful information needs to be gathered which is done by the initiating organisation. Stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide useful (local) knowledge. This opportunity does not meet up with the actual expectations of the stakeholders; they assumed that in this phase they could already 'participate' and discuss topics. Stakeholders became frustrated and disappointed when it appeared that their only role was to provide information. When both processes progressed and phases changed, stakeholders became more involved and were invited to give advice instead of knowledge. This change in role met the preset expectations and perceptions of participants.

The difference in the perceived levels of participation amongst the stakeholders indicates that as well at the beginning as during the process it is difficult to create realistic expectations. Before the start of the processes, stakeholders already formed a definition about what participation means for them and how it should look like. For the initiating organisation -in both cases the province of Gelderland- it appeared difficult to change this

definition. During the process, stakeholders constantly compared their preset definition with the actual situation. These two definitions were not always similar which resulted in arguments about their role. Furthermore, in both cases the adopted government style of the province of Gelderland, did not match the perceived level of participation of the interviewees. By their appearance and the way the processes were organised, the province of Gelderland created higher expectations towards participation possibilities than their own style allowed. Despite that in both cases expectations and perceptions about stakeholder participation were not always realistic. In case of *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* this resulted in a difficult and tardy process while the *Wooldse Veen* case progressed kindly.

A remark made by many interviewees in both cases is that some colleague representatives could not separate their local interests from the desired comprehensive focus of the process.

6.2 Communication

Results of both case studies point out that communication is crucial within a planning process. Communication occurs in many facets in planning processes. First of all, communication about basic assumptions of stakeholders appears to be important. In the case of *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld*, participating stakeholders only assumed that they knew the basic assumptions of colleague stakeholders; during the process they slowly found out and learned more about each other. The effect of non-communication about basic assumptions, goals and motives resulted in a strategic and awaiting attitude of stakeholders. This strategic and awaiting attitude resulted into a tardy process in which stakeholders are acting passively. In the case of *Wooldse Veen*, several stakeholders were already familiar with the basic assumptions of their colleagues. This knowledge was gathered during cooperation in previous processes. Stakeholders who did not participate in previous processes, found out about each other's assumptions during the process. The consequence of this awareness is that stakeholder's representatives will adapt to an active, transparent and less strategic attitude.

According to Aarts (1998), the power of communication and its ability to create mutual understanding is often overestimated. In the case of *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* interaction did not immediately lead to the ability of stakeholders to place their basic assumptions into perspective. This resulted in misunderstandings and miscommunication and eventually in a minor sense of mutual understanding. In the case of *Wooldse Veen*, interaction (and interaction in previous processes) caused that stakeholders could place their own basic assumptions into perspective and become familiar with those of other stakeholders. Case study results indicate that investing time in exploring each other's basic assumptions, goals and motives at the beginning of a process can eventually save time. Stakeholders adapt to a more open attitude with less strategic positions from the start of the process.

Both cases reveal that a communication strategy has several effects on the process. Three factors within a communication strategy appear to be important. These factors are the used dialect, the moment of providing information and third, the means of communication. The case *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* indicates that a couple of misplaced words have the power to influence the start of a process. The most difficult aspect of communication is that the interpretation of the message cannot be influenced by the sender. Despite all efforts to communicate with locals, their own emotions and local culture, perceptions, expectations and experiences from previous processes contribute to the image about the starting process. In the case of *Wooldse Veen* several stakeholders had the opportunity to check some means of communication. In this way, stakeholders had the opportunity to advice the province of Gelderland about the used dialect and tone. The province received no major criticism about their communication and the information evenings were well attended according to the interviewees. This indicates that communicating in dialect, positively influences the process. The second and third factors concern the field of tension of when to provide information and by which means of communication. Often processes contain several uncertainties during the starting phase. If the choice has been made to provide information in the starting phase, then there is a risk that specific answers (for instance

during information sessions with locals) cannot be answered due to uncertainties. As a result, locals might experience that they are not taken seriously. After all, the initiating organisation “does not even has an answer to their question”. On the other hand, communicating after some of these uncertainties are dissolved might cause suspicion amongst locals. Suspicion because the process has started, but they have not heard anything about the process that might have consequences for their surroundings. Results of both cases indicate that every process needs its own specified communication strategy based on the needs of that specific area.

6.3 Social relations

Both cases reveal that social relations within a process should not be neglected by the initiating organisation. The status of these relations between stakeholders and stakeholders and the responsible organisation influence the process either positive or negative. Furthermore, experiences from previous processes influence the perceptions and expectations of stakeholders at the start of a new process. In the case of *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* a lack of trust and a small sense of interdependence and power (mis-) use resulted in a difficult and tardy process. Discussions (conflicts) tended to focus on the organisational structure instead of the content of the Natura 2000 management plan. In addition, not every stakeholder group was always willing to cooperate. In contrast to *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld*, the process of *Wooldse Veen* progressed gradually. In the latter, stakeholders did trust each other and the responsible organisation, there was a sense of interdependence and none of the interviewees experienced any misuse of power. As a result, stakeholders respected each other and operated in a durable environment for cooperation. The last analytical point concerning social relations is ‘power’. Case study results indicate that power becomes important when stakeholders feel that they have been treated unfair.

6.4 Conflicts

In both cases, it was difficult to study conflicts. Conflicts are not easy to discuss within one-off interviews. Interviewees considered conflicts as delicate issues and therefore their answers were reserved. In the case of *Beekvliet/ Stelkampsveld* conflicts about the content of the Natura 2000 management plan faded into the background of the process. Site-management and the organisational structure of the process caused the majority of all conflicts. During the interview-period, these organisational conflicts overshadowed other conflicts. In case of *Wooldse Veen*, none of the interviewees perceived a conflict despite the opposed objectives of some stakeholder groups. Unfortunately, the discussion about conflicts is minimal. Studying conflicts with one-off interviews as foremost data collection method appeared to be a utopia.

6.5 Possible effects of the chosen research method

The used research method -a comparative case study research- might have influenced the case study findings. Besides desk-research to formulate the theoretical framework and eventually to design the conceptual model, interviews are held to collect case study data. These interviews were open-ended and semi-structured. This particular interview technique has the advantage that it allows the researcher to search for deeper explanation of topics raised by respondents. A disadvantage of this technique is that not all respondents raise similar topics within an interview. As a result, not all different points of view about one particular topic could be discussed with the respondents. In both cases, the representatives were interviewed in a period of four weeks. The spread of interview data could have caused a minor deviation in the perceptions and expectations of representatives concerning the process. In other words, the internal validity of this research could be threatened because respondents develop (and perhaps even change) their opinion during the research. On the other hand, conducting interviews over a longer period of time provides a more holistic overview concerning the progress of the process. Nevertheless, interviews are a snapshot of the process at that moment: an occurrence just before or after the interview-period could cause a change in answer. The number of interviewees strengthens the internal validity of this research. Despite that it was impossible to discuss every topic with all respondents due to the interview technique; all stories of the respondents formed a holistic view

for both cases. Due to time limits it was impossible to interview every representative twice; this would however have provided an even more holistic picture over a longer period of time.

During the interviews, the researcher tried to record the information as objectively as possible. Unfortunately, it is impossible to stay neutral and impartial. Statements of interviewees can be interpreted different by the researcher as actually meant by the respondent. This is caused by a difference in frame of reference of interviewees and interviewer. Because of this, it is possible to draw incorrect conclusions from the collected data. To strengthen the internal validity of this research, the data and results are discussed with different scholars and colleague students.

In both cases, a selection has been made in the representatives who have been interviewed. The focus lied on representatives who represented (semi-) local organisations. By selecting this focus, representatives operating on managerial and juridical level are left out. Finally, the research focussed on the interviewed representatives and their perceptions and expectations. By applying this second focus, communication between the representatives and their grassroots support is retreated into the background of this research.

Chapter 7 Discussion

Besides Natura 2000 planning processes, many other planning processes are also dealing with the challenges of stakeholder participation (for instance Breman et al., 2008; Bouwmans, 2009 and Salverda & van Dam, 2008). Although each planning process has its own specific problems, goals and involved stakeholder groups, their common divisor is that stakeholder participation has effects and consequences on the process. In this chapter several case study results will be discussed into a broader context of planning processes.

Already when the theoretical framework was developed, it appeared that stakeholder participation is a concept that can be interpreted and explained in many ways (for instance Edelenbos et al. 2006, Nelissen, 1980 and Bouwen & Tallieu, 2004). Results of both case studies underpin this finding; management of expectations and perceptions concerning participation appeared to be difficult. Also in other planning processes, this situation occurs. Schendelen et al. (2008) concluded that in a process about the Delta, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and other involved stakeholders had different expectations considering the planning process, which resulted in tension within the area. Ovaa et al. (n.d.) conclude after examining 12 case studies in the Netherlands in the context of stakeholder participation, that the perceptions and expectations of actors about the process and their role are highly important. Furthermore, several scholars point out the importance of expectation management. Hegazy (2008) for instance acknowledges that it is obvious that an understanding of stakeholder's needs and expectations is crucial to success. Pomeroy & Douvere (2008) who researched the engagement of stakeholders in the marine spatial planning process conclude that successful implementation of plans depends on the identification and understanding of different stakeholders, their practices, expectations and interests. Furthermore, Warner (2006) mentions in his article about more sustainable participation that great expectations inevitably bring disappointments. However, is it for an initiating organisation possible to create realistic expectations amongst involved stakeholder parties? And if so, how should they do this? After all, the initiating organisation for the two Natura 2000 planning processes, discussed the stakeholders role at the beginning of the process. How is it possible to influence the stakeholder's perceptions? Techniques or tactics on how to manage stakeholders' expectations diverge and are often mentioned in economical and management papers (for instance Bansal & Clelland, 2004; Pitt & Jeantrout, 1994 and Pourciau, 1993). Ginzel et al. (quoted in Bansal & Clelland, p. 4) state that tactics such as excuses, justifications, concessions, apologies, denials and attacks are used to influence stakeholders' perceptions. Although these tactics are applicable, the question remains if these tactics are sufficient for planning processes because of their directness (they can be interpreted as aggressive and manipulative). Results from the case studies indicate that there are two methods that might help to gain insights in the perceptions and expectations of stakeholders. These methods are doing research on the previous planning processes in that area, and the development of long-lasting relationships. Scott & Lane (2000) underpin these findings and state that *"...increasing interaction among stakeholders and the organization in organizationally sponsored settings is likely to encourage expectations of future interaction. In this way stakeholders and the organization not only develop a history but come to anticipate future interaction in a form that has meaning for each of them"*. Furthermore, Koontz (2005) concludes that if time and effort is invested in a planning process which leads not to the expected results. This might lead to a disappointing experience of participants and as a result the participant will be reluctant to engage in future planning efforts.

Many papers have been written about the impact of stakeholder participation on the content of the plan (for instance Koontz, 2005; Brody, 2003; Nare et al., 2006 and Curtis et al., 1995). However it is difficult to find specific scientific results of the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation on the process and stakeholders involved. The same counts for researches about the antithesis between sharing local knowledge by stakeholders in a larger desired comprehensive vision formulated by the initiating organisation. However, is it realistic and fair to demand from stakeholders that they have to separate their local emotions and interests from the comprehensive focus? After all, they were invited to share their local knowledge and present their vision about the area in which they live and work.

A topic that did not particular emerged from this research is the role of trust within the planning processes. Although it is discussed with interviewees if they trust their colleague stakeholders and the responsible organisation, the mechanisms of trust faded into the background of this research. Nevertheless, the role of trust should not be underestimated. According to de Vries (2008, p. 77), the role of trust in planning processes is important because *“it enables people to deal with uncertainties, risks, expectations, power, vulnerabilities and it gives guidance to their role in a project”*. In addition, it remains arguable if trust is a required condition for interdependence as Hansen (2006) assumes. Or vice versa, that interdependence should be seen as a required condition for stakeholders to trust each other, as assumed by Laplante & Harrisson (2008). Unfortunate, results of both case studies are not convincing enough to eliminate one line of reasoning.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and recommendations

In the first paragraph the main research question will be answered. The answer is underpinned with conclusions regarding stakeholder participation in general. In the second paragraph recommendations are given towards the practical implementation of stakeholder participation and for further research.

8.1 Conclusions

This research concentrated on the effects and consequences of stakeholder participation in planning processes. The posed main research question is:

'How does participation influences planning processes and which consequences does it have for stakeholder parties involved?'

Both case studies reveal that participation has major consequences for the planning process and the stakeholders involved. First of all, when participation is included in a planning process, every involved party forms their own perception and expectations towards the concept. Stakeholders form expectations towards their role, the process and their ability to influence the content of the plan. These specific perceptions and expectations depend on different factors such as experiences with previous planning processes, local culture and the participant's satisfaction about their role. The initiating organisation forms expectations considering the progress of the process, the role that stakeholders will adapt and the content of the plan. Although it is crucial to manage the expectations and perceptions of participating stakeholders carefully, the problem is that these factors are difficult to influence. If it appears that the expectations differ between the initiating organisation and the participating stakeholders, frustrations and arguments can arise. Frustrations on the side of stakeholders can arise because the process is progressing slowly, their input is low and they have the idea that they cannot decide on important topics. On the other hand, frustrations of the initiating organisation might arise because the stakeholders are complaining and their attitude is less or non-cooperative which can results in longer processes, which eventually cost more. This is sometimes enhanced by an overall underestimation of the initiating organisation of the complexity of a participative process.

The way stakeholder participation is organised in processes can lead to arguments about representativeness and the organisation. Indirectly the organisational structure of a process determines the scope and focus. Furthermore, there appears to be a contradiction between sharing local knowledge by the stakeholders and the desired comprehensive vision from the initiating organisation. Stakeholders are invited to share their local knowledge. If this knowledge does not align to the desired comprehensive vision (often developed by the initiating organisation), stakeholders input is perceived as difficult. Finally, communication is a crucial factor within processes. Because every planning process contains its own history, problems, specific elements and stakeholders, a custom-made communication strategy should be considered.

It remains difficult during the process to manage expectations. Two methods could help in gaining insights on the expectations stakeholders will have about the process. First of all, research on the progress of previous planning processes. The process its difficulties and the involved stakeholders could provide insights on the point of departure stakeholders will adapt. Furthermore, the gained area specific knowledge can be used in the customised communication strategy and the process structure (do's and don'ts). Second, it is fruitful to invest time in the development of long-lasting relationships. After all, often similar stakeholder groups are participating in several planning processes over a longer period of time. As case study results indicate, experiences from previous processes influence the actual attitudes and expectations of stakeholders. Indirectly, developing sustainable relationships over several processes might influence the experiences of stakeholder's positively, which eventually can lead to more realistic expectations and perceptions and cooperative attitudes at the beginning of a process. The above mentioned conclusions will be further discussed in the following sub-paragraphs.

Involvement of stakeholders and its consequences

When an organisation initiates stakeholder participation within a process, the initiating organisation has to realise that this has several consequences towards the organisational structure and their adapted role within the process. If stakeholders are involved they should have the opportunity to represent their stakes properly. This results in an organisational structure wherein different levels cannot be separated from each other. What often happens nowadays in planning processes is that governmental, provincial, managerial and local levels within one process are separated into different meeting structures. Due to this separation, the essence of stakeholder participation is partially lost. This so called 'isolation' of stakeholders within one meeting group (instead of representing their local interests together with other levels) has several consequences. First of all, the outcome of the process is on forehand influenced due to the group composition. Secondly, the potential to formulate a mixed, realistic and comprehensive vision (with local and regional aspects) about the area is partially lost. Stakeholder participation equals risks and several uncertainties during a process. There is a possibility that the results (e.g. advice) formulated by the stakeholders are not corresponding with the desired comprehensive vision or foreseen results formulated by the responsible organisation. When stakeholder participation is taken seriously, the responsible organisation has to commit to the formulated results by the stakeholders. If the responsible organisation chooses not to commit to the formulated results, it would have been much easier to only have participation along the formal participation-ways the Dutch laws provide within each project. Each process asks for a careful consideration if stakeholder participation is necessary. If goals and objectives are already determined at the beginning of the process, then this could result in a minimum space for negotiation with third parties. In other words, the intended purpose of some policies makes stakeholder participation unnecessary. In these policy processes, the risk of committing to the formulated results of stakeholders is too large. Nevertheless, stakeholder participation is a useful instrument when there is space for negotiation and when the responsible organisation is willing to commit to the results. Furthermore, when stakeholders are involved in a process, the responsible organisation becomes in fact a stakeholder as well. Essentially, a stakeholder has one role namely to represent the stakes of their grassroots support. In case of the responsible organisation, this is often to implement and execute a policy. A project leader or process manager should not have double roles. Different independent persons should embody different roles within one organisation. After all, stakeholders are also designated with one role.

Different perceptions and expectations

As soon as 'participation' is mentioned in a process, different perceptions and expectations about this concept arise. An invitation for a stakeholder to participate in a process then creates certain expectations and perceptions regarding their contribution to the product, the process and their role. The image that is formed by stakeholders is partially based on experiences from previous processes. Before the start of the actual process, stakeholders form an overall picture together with expectations about the process. If their experience with previous processes was positive, their overall picture is positive as well, which more likely results in an 'open' and 'cooperative' attitude of the participant. If the participant has had negative experiences with previous processes, his or her attitude might result in a (negative), less-cooperative and awaiting one. In other words, experiences from previous processes influence attitudes of the participants at the beginning of the process and thereby their actual expectations and perceptions. Besides experiences from previous processes, the attitude is also influenced by the local culture and the stakeholder's satisfaction about the process. Eventually, it does not matter how extensive and clear a role of stakeholders is described in a document at the beginning of a process, it is the stakeholders way of processing the given 'message' that matters. The processing of the 'message' is done along a frame of mind that already exists and which is based on previous and new formed expectations and perceptions. The responsible organisation cannot change experiences from previous process; they can only try to influence new formed expectations and perceptions of stakeholders. Influencing these new expectations and perceptions might result into realistic expectations about the process, product and the stakeholder's role within the process. If it turns out that the set expectations and perceptions of stakeholders do not match the actual situation, problems might occur. When the process is not living up to expectations and perceptions

stakeholders have, a cooperating attitude might change into a hindering attitude. Nevertheless, it is difficult to create reasonable expectations amongst stakeholders. A difficulty herein is that expectations and perceptions change during the process and depend partially on the 'satisfaction' stakeholders have about the process. If stakeholders are unsatisfied about the area-process, it is likely to believe that their expectations about their role and attitude in the process will change. In this case they would like to have a more controlling role and furthermore, they choose to have a strategic and closed (perhaps even provoking) attitude. If stakeholders are satisfied about the process, it is likely to believe that their expectations about their role match with the actual situation in the process. As a result, they trust other stakeholders, and have the ability to give responsibility about the process to others.

Scope and focus

The organisational structure and planning of the process determine its scope and focus. Stakeholder participation can nowadays sometimes be classified as narrow and short term minded. Expectations and perceptions about the process, the product and roles change during the process and are often different. This difference might lead to problems in the progress of the process. Frustrations of people involved concerning a slow progress result in what can be characterised as a 'professional circle'. Within this professional circle, processes keep on circling without making noticeable progress. When the process turns into a professional circle, members tend to relapse into their profession. Project leaders or process managers are often not personally attached with the set goals of the policy which has to be executed; their job is to manage a plan being formulated. Afterwards, the project leaders or process managers are assessed on the formulated plan. Stakeholders do not have the same goal as the project leader or process manager: stakes must be represented in the formulated plan as well as possible. Their goal is to influence the content of the plan. Different goals could lead to a deadlock in the process. This deadlock enables the professional circle. As long as none of the actors is willing to compromise on their personal goals in order to reach an agreement, the circle continues. Within the professional circle, the scope of the discussion only focuses on the deadlock and it appears that the larger scope of the process is being faded into the background. All parties keep circling around several points until one factor appears to have the ability to break the professional circle. Which factor has the ability to break the circle and adjusts the focus and scope to be broader and long-term minded? It is difficult to determine this factor due to the constant change in expectations and perceptions about the process. These expectations and perceptions influence the state of the professional circle. Factors that could have the potential to break the professional circle are trust and a sense of interdependence.

Antithesis between local interests and the desired comprehensive vision

An often used motivation to involve stakeholders is that their ideas and local knowledge are valuable and can be used as input during the formulation of the plan. On the other hand, an often heard comment from responsible organisations is that stakeholders are unable to separate their emotions and local interests from the desired comprehensive vision of the process. Often the responsible organisation has developed this desired comprehensive vision. On one hand, stakeholders are invited because of their ideas and local knowledge but on the other hand, these ideas and knowledge are perceived as difficult because they do not meet the desired discussion criteria for the comprehensive vision. A vision, that often brings no benefit to the local interests of the participants. Some planning processes might contain an antithesis in the main objective of stakeholder participation: it is important to share local knowledge and to represent local interests but this must be done along the frame of a desired comprehensive vision.

Communication

Every process contains a field of tension which deals with the question of when to communicate and by which means of communication. An initiating organisation must communicate with representatives of the involved stakeholder groups and their grassroots support within the area. A communication strategy should be based on the specific needs of an area and on their culture with its dialect, traditions and habits. Furthermore, the

moment of providing information is difficult to determine. When information is provided too early in a process, the process itself contains uncertainties. Due to these uncertainties it is possible that not every question can be answered. The effect of this is that stakeholders doubt if they are taken seriously. Communicating too late causes suspicion. Locals hear from their stakeholder representative that the process has started; only this process is not 'visible' for them.

Long-lasting relationships

A goal of stakeholder participation should not only be to create a supported plan for a specific policy, it should also be orientated towards the development of long-lasting relationships. Due to difficulties in processes, people tend to forget the long-term focus of policies and plans. The plan becomes an 'end' instead of the desired 'means'. A process is not finished when a plan is formulated because measurements still need to be executed. The long-term form of policies and plans is also important because stakeholders often will meet again in future processes. Often different organisations are responsible for different policies; this makes it complicated to invest time and money in long-lasting relationships. The predominating attitude is "we only need each other at this moment; we shall see what happens the next time". Unfortunately this attitude negatively contributes to experiences of stakeholders in processes. As described before, experiences from previous processes are important for the actual attitude and expectations of stakeholders. Indirectly, developing long-term relationships over several processes might positively influence the experiences of stakeholder's, which eventually leads to more realistic expectations and perceptions at the beginning of a process.

8.2 Recommendations

Two types of recommendations are given in this paragraph. First, practical recommendations are given towards stakeholder participation in processes. In the second part of this paragraph, recommendations are given for further research on this topic.

8.2.1 Practical recommendations

Be aware of the consequences of stakeholder participation!

Stakeholder participation is not that easy as it appears to be, it involves more than just chatting with participants. Be aware what the consequences of stakeholder participation actually are for the process; it costs a lot of time and effort in order to organise a successful participative process. Despite that the technocratic top-down approach is considered to be old fashioned and highly criticised, stakeholder participation does not necessarily have to be the solution. Before the start of a process one must reconsider if stakeholder participation is the instrument in order to achieve the preset objectives of the policy. In addition, it is important to consider if there is space for negotiation with third parties. Formulate pros, cons and motives for stakeholder participation. "Everybody is inviting stakeholders for the sake of the process" should not be the argument for involvement. As an initiating organisation you have to believe that together the process will be more fruitful. If it is decided that stakeholders can participate, this means that their visions, ideas, knowledge etc. should be respected (do not refer constantly to a desired comprehensive vision). In addition, the responsible organisation has to show commitment to the products produced by the stakeholders, solely taking them into account is not enough. It is undesirable that stakeholders are placed in a group separated from other meeting levels in the process. Furthermore, since stakeholders have one role in the process (namely to represent their stake), the initiating organisation should be aware that employees do not have a double role. Therefore, different interdependent persons should embody different roles.

Expectation management

When stakeholders are invited to join a process they immediately form perceptions and expectations regarding their contribution to the product, the process and their role. Often these expectations are influenced by

experiences from previous processes. These expectations are sometimes unrealistic. However, these two factors determine the (un-) willingness of stakeholders to cooperate. Managing expectations appears to be crucial for the success and progress of the process. Expectation management requires insights in process management, people and the local culture. Discussing the stakeholder's role at the beginning of a process is not enough. After all, phases change within a process which causes the roles of stakeholders to change as well. Furthermore, the expectations of stakeholders also change during the process. Expectation management requires a constant gearing about the role of stakeholders between the responsible organisation and the stakeholder representatives. Although it costs valuable time to discuss everybody's role, this gearing results in realistic expectations and eventually might avoid frustrations and disappointments.

Start in the field

Formulate local selection criteria(s) to invite stakeholders. A discussion about representativeness can be avoided in this way. During the first meeting explain why the specific selection criteria(s) is chosen and why stakeholders have been invited. In addition, if some of their colleagues have not been invited, explain this and use the selection criteria(s). Leave room for discussion about the setting of the participative group, seats should be debatable. When the participative group is established do not start with formal meetings. Start the process in the field. After all, this is where the stakeholders are practicing their profession. Explore the perceptions of stakeholder groups: give all stakeholders the opportunity to explain their basic assumptions during this day (or days) and try to find out what is important to them. Not all the basic assumptions have to be similar but at least, stakeholders know what they can expect. Despite that starting the process in the field costs time and money, it eventually saves time during the process. During the process, stakeholders might adapt a less strategic attitude; they are familiar with the goals of their colleague stakeholders. Furthermore, by organising field day(s), fruitful social relations have the opportunity to originate under informal conditions. These relations can lead to an open meeting-culture, respect, trust, a sense of interdependence and cooperative attitudes.

Custom-made communication strategy

Every process needs a custom-made communication strategy. The strategy should be tuned in to the local culture of that area with its specific dialect, traditions and habits. Knowledge of representatives seated in the participative group can be of value when the strategy is formulated, their opinion should be asked. Furthermore, consider the effects a communication strategy has on its receivers and which consequences this might have for the process. Communicating in the dialect of the specific area creates the feeling amongst receivers that they are understood and that, the initiating organisation invested time in trying to understand the local culture. Use of scientific language creates the feeling that people behind desks are formulating some kind of plan which of course will not work in practice; people refer immediately to the rigidity of the Dutch government concerning legislation.

Furthermore, use networks to communicate. Representatives who joined the field day(s) will likely to communicate their experiences to their grassroots support. Publish an information folder together about these days. Furthermore, provide the reader with information about the process seen from both sides. It will remain difficult to decide when to give information and by which means and this should also depend on the information need of the area. Do not start the process with a general information evening: it is difficult to present something to a large group with different interests and questions; in all probability people will go home unsatisfied because their question is unanswered. Consider information rounds per sector. During these sector-evenings, specific information can be provided to the visitors. Be prepared for questions during this evening, invite experts. It is probably impossible to have an answer to all the questions because there are often uncertainties, so be honest about the fact that there is no answer yet. The absolute platitude is to stand with a team of experts in front of the audience when there is an opportunity for asking questions. It is

recommendable to gather around in small groups and discuss topics. General information can be provided consistently via mass-communication such as the internet and informational letters.

History is important

Experiences from previous processes do matter. These experiences influence the actual expectations of stakeholders and their attitude. If the opportunity arises, perform a small research on recently finished processes. What were success factors and what not, how was the process organised, which stakeholders were involved? This insight information provides valuable knowledge which can be translated into the custom-made communication strategy. In addition, this information provides insights on with which expectations and attitude stakeholders will enter the process.

8.2.2 Recommendations for further research

It was impossible to research all topics related to stakeholder participation in this thesis. Nevertheless, during this research, several new research questions arose. These new research questions are translated into recommendations for further research.

Inviting stakeholders or not?

Despite that it is difficult it might be challenging to inquire further into which elements and factors are crucial in processes. In addition, how do these elements and factors influence the possibilities for stakeholder participation? After determination of these factors and elements; research can be done after the mechanisms behind these factors. With this knowledge a small questionnaire could be developed. The outcome of the questionnaire contains an indication if stakeholder participation in that particular process is fruitful or not.

Guidelines for participative processes

Of course not everything should be debatable in participative processes; a certain framework has to provide guidance. Despite that there are already many guidelines developed for stakeholder participation, it would be interesting to see if new guidelines can be developed with the results from this research. Or, that old guidelines need to be adjusted. Questions arise as which topics are desirable to debate? Should there be a maximum number of involved stakeholders? What is an optimal organisational structure for a participative process?

Expectation-management

In both case studies, expectations stakeholders have about their role, the process and the product appeared to be crucial for the success of the process. These expectations depend on several factors. In addition, these factors change during the process. Several factors which influence expectations are already determined (experiences from previous processes local culture and satisfaction about the process). It would be interesting to study if there are more factors that influence expectations. In addition, another interesting question is how these expectations should be managed, by what means, and in what way?

Long-lasting relationships

The paragraph 'conclusions' ended with a phrase about long-lasting relationships. In this research it is assumed that the development of long-lasting relationships could influence the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders considering participation. Interesting is to research over a longer period of time, how relationships between different stakeholders develop. In addition, which effects these relationships have on processes. Furthermore, the question arises how long-lasting relationships can be managed and by which means.

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Annex 1 Questionnaire – responsible organisation

General

1. What is your function & background?
2. What is your role in the process of formulating the management plan?
3. What do you see as the goal of Natura 2000?

Process

4. How is the process of formulating the management plan organised?
 - a. Who decided that the process should be organised in this format?
 - b. During the process, did you have to adjust the format of the process?
5. How is stakeholder participation arranged in the process?

Stakeholder participation

6. Which stakeholders are involved in the process of formulating the management plan?
 - a. Could stakeholders indicate that they wanted to participate, or did you select them?
 - b. If the stakeholders were selected, which selection criteria are used and,
 - c. Who decided what the selection criteria should be?
7. In your opinion, are all concerned stakeholder invited to participate in the process?
8. Did you invest time in researching the cultures, stakes, values and principles of the participating stakeholders?
 - a. If yes, could you give a brief description of them per stakeholder?
 - b. Are there -or do you aspect- conflicts between the different cultures, stakes, values and principles of the participating stakeholders?
 - c. If not, could you please explain?
 - d. Does every stakeholder has the same level of motivation?
9. On forehand, are there appointments made with the stakeholders about their role in the process?
 - a. Did all the stakeholders agreed with their role?
 - b. Changed the role of the stakeholders during the process?
10. Taken the participation ladder of Edelenbos et al. (2006) in account, at which level of participation do you place the stakeholders at the beginning of the process?
11. Taken the participation ladder of Edelenbos et al. (2006) in account, at which level of participation do you place the stakeholders at the middle/ end of the process?
 - a. If it appears that the answers of question 8 and 9 are different, what could be the reason for this?
 - b. Are you pleased with the role of the stakeholders, or should it have been different?
12. What is the motivation to involve stakeholders in the process of formulating the management plan?

Communication

13. Which means of communication are used during the process?
 - a. Is information easy accessible for stakeholders?
14. Did you develop a communication strategy?
 - a. What do you want to achieve with this strategy?
15. Was communication needed in order to enhance the social relations between the different stakeholders?
16. If there were any conflicts, how is communication used in order to solve these conflicts?

Social relations

17. Do trust all the stakeholders your organisation?
18. Do all the stakeholders trust each other?
19. Did you consider a form of trust management?
20. Are you interdependent to the co-operation of all the stakeholders?
21. Are there stakeholders who are abusing their (power) position?

Conflicts

22. Were there any conflicts? If yes:
 - a. A conflict between who?
 - b. What caused the conflicts?
 - c. What was the topic of the conflict (the process itself or with respect to the content)?
23. Did every stakeholder perceive the conflict the same?
24. Were you able to solve the conflict?
25. Besides the negative aspect of conflicts, do you think a conflict could also have a positive side?
 - a. If yes, in what way?

Additional

26. Reflecting on the organisation of the process until now: the next time would you arrange something different?
 - a. If yes/no, for what reason?
27. Do you think that the stakeholders are pleased with the way the process is organised?

Annex 2 Questionnaire – stakeholders

General

1. What is your function & background?
2. What is your role in the process of formulating the management plan?

Stakeholder participation

3. How did you get involved in the process of formulating the management plans?
 - a. Did you indicate to the responsible organisation that you wanted to participate?
 - b. Were you invited by the responsible organisation?
4. In your opinion, are all concerned stakeholders invited to participate in the process?
 - a. If no, who is excluded from participation and for what reason?
5. How is stakeholder participation arranged in the process?
6. Could you describe the cultures, stakes, values and principles of the other participating stakeholders?
 - a. Which stakeholder groups differ in their principles compared to your organisation?
 - b. Do you have the impression that the responsible organisation put effort in research on the different principles stakeholders have?
7. Before the beginning of the process, are appointments made about your exact role in the process as a stakeholder?
 - a. Did you instantly agreed on this role?
8. Taken the participation ladder of Edelenbos et al. (2006) in account, at which level of participation do you place yourself at the beginning of the process?
9. Taken the participation ladder of Edelenbos et al. (2006) in account, at which level of participation do you place yourself at the middle/ end of the process?
 - a. If it appears that the answers of question 8 and 9 are different, what could be the reason for this?
10. Is the beforehand appointed role similar to your actual role in the process?
 - a. In addition, are you pleased with this?
11. Did every stakeholder have the same level of motivation?
12. What was your motivation for participating in the process of formulating the management plan?

Communication

13. Which means of communication used the responsible organisation?
14. Was the communication between you and the responsible organisation sufficient?
15. Do you agree with the message of the communication strategy?
16. Was information considering the process easy accessible?
17. Was the responsible organisation able to emphasise the mutual dependence with communication as an instrument?

Social relations

18. Do you trust the responsible organisation?
19. Do you trust your colleague stakeholders?
 - a. Do you have the feeling that you can express yourself freely without any drawbacks?
20. Do you have the impression that the responsible organisation considered a form of trust management?
21. Do you think you are interdependent to the responsible organisation and other stakeholders?
22. Do you think that there are stakeholders, which have more power than you when it comes to changing things?
23. Do you think that the responsible organisation is using their power correctly?

24. In your opinion, how important are the social relations in order to achieve success?

Conflicts

- 25. Were there any conflicts? If yes:
 - b. A conflict between who?
 - c. What caused the conflict?
 - d. What was the topic of the conflict (the process itself or with respect to the content)?
- 26. Did every participant perceive the conflict the same?
- 27. Noticed the responsible organisation the conflict on time, or had the conflict escalated first?
- 28. Was the responsible organisation able to solve the conflict?
- 29. Besides the negative aspects of conflicts, do you think a conflict could also have a positive side?
 - e. If yes, in what way?

Additional

- 30. Reflecting on the organisation of the process: would you recommend changes to the responsible organisation?
 - f. If yes/ no, for what reason?
- 31. Looking back on the process so far, do you have the feeling that your input is appreciated by the responsible organisation?

Annex 3 Interviewed stakeholder representatives

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