

# The governance of ambitious adaptation policy in the Dutch Delta

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*Who are the people holding the cards  
in a climate of change or delay.  
Who are the people rolling the dice,  
it puzzles me more every day.  
Who sets the agenda against rising seas?  
Whose risks are considered, whose uncertainties?  
Who networks for research, supporters and rights?  
In the end who decides?*



## Today I hope you would like to discuss

- ⌘ Potential governance characteristics of ambitious adaptation policy
- ⌘ Motivation research, characteristics from lit. <-> case: Delta Program
- *Governance characteristics of ambitious (adaptation) policy process are reported, yet no coherent framework and few are tested*
- *Gap between science, policy ambition and implementation practice*
- *Need for recognition how/where/ **by whom** more ambitious policies can emerge, be tested, be debated & implemented*



Amsterdam  
Januari 2008

# Maak ruimte voor klimaat!

Nationale adaptatiestrategie - de beleidsnotitie

Ministeries van VROM, V&W, LNV, EZ  
IPO, VNG, Unie van Waterschappen

18 oktober 2007

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Adaptatie aan klimaatverandering is geen taak van de overheid alleen. Het vereist een transitie in het denken en doen van alle betrokkenen. Van reactief naar pro-actief. Deze transitie moet er uiteindelijk toe leiden dat klimaatbestendigheid een volledig geaccepteerd, logisch onderdeel wordt van denken en handelen in de ontwikkeling en uitvoering van beleid en investeringsbeslissingen ('mainstreaming'). Een transitie zoals hier bedoeld vereist systeeminnovaties op het vlak van techniek, fysieke ingrepen

NATURE GEOSCIENCE | VOL 2 | JULY 2009 | [www.nature.com/naturegeoscience](http://www.nature.com/naturegeoscience)

## commentary

# Dutch coasts in transition

Pavel Kabat, Louise O. Fresco, Marcel J. F. Stive, Cees P. Veerman, Jos S. L. J. van Alphen,  
Bart W. A. H. Parmet, Wilco Hazeleger and Caroline A. Katsman

The Netherlands has a long and varied history of coastal and river flood management. The anticipation of sea-level rise during the twenty-first century has renewed the push for sustainable solutions to coastal vulnerability.

Vol. 438 | 17 November 2005

**nature**

## COMMENTARY

### Climate proofing the Netherlands

Regional climate change should not be seen only as a threat; changes to weather patterns could generate opportunities for large-scale innovations, say **Pavel Kabat**, **Pier Vellinga** and their colleagues.

Deltacommissioner Wim Kuijken

Conference Deltas in Times of Climate Change, 29 Sept.2010:

*One of the biggest challenges is dealing with uncertainties in the future climate, but also in population, economy and society. This requires **a new way of planning**, which we call **adaptive delta planning**. It seeks to maximise flexibility; keeping options open and avoiding 'lock-in'. In the meantime, we prepare the so-called delta decisions about the measures to take if our current water system reaches its limits.*



## Research Question

To what extent does the implementation of ambitious adaptation policies meet characteristics that science reports on as important for policy change (case: Delta Program)?

Context: What are (sufficient and necessary) governance characteristics for realizing ambitious adaptation policies?

## Governance characteristics

1. Developing common perception and shared vision (Loorbach and Rotmans, 2010)
2. Encouraging experiments, create space for niches (Kemp *et al.*, 2001; Schot and Geels, 2007)
3. Planning for up scaling of experiments and niches (Smith, 2005)
4. Creating enabling institutional environment (subsidies / interactive and reflexive forms of governance)
5. Acknowledging role of individuals and leadership (Huiteima and Meijerink, 2009; Werners *et al.*, 2010)
6. Carrying out value related & deliberative research, sense making
7. Realising fundamental change in mindset, technology, institutions & knowledge

## Deltaprogram: long term water safety, fresh water supply. Capitalise on opportunities

### 4 generic subprograms

- Delta Act
- Water safety (floods)
- Freshwater supply
- (Re)development plans

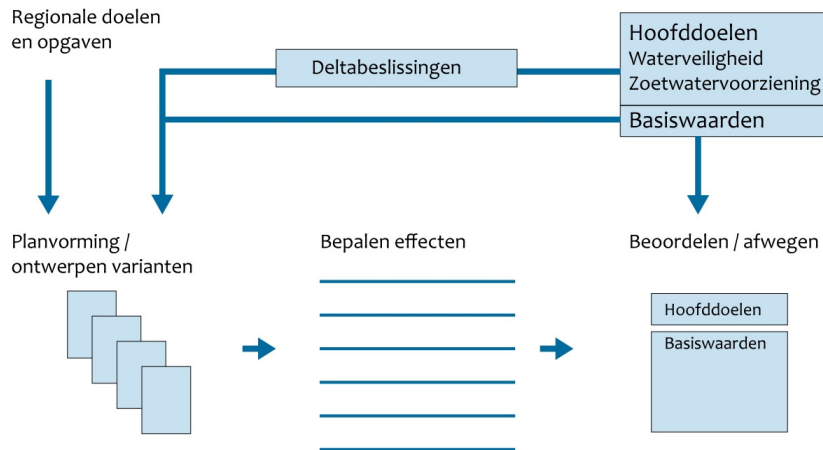
### 6 regional subprograms

- Coast
- Rijnmond / Drechtsteden
- Wadden Sea region
- Southwest Delta
- Rivers
- Lake IJsselmeer

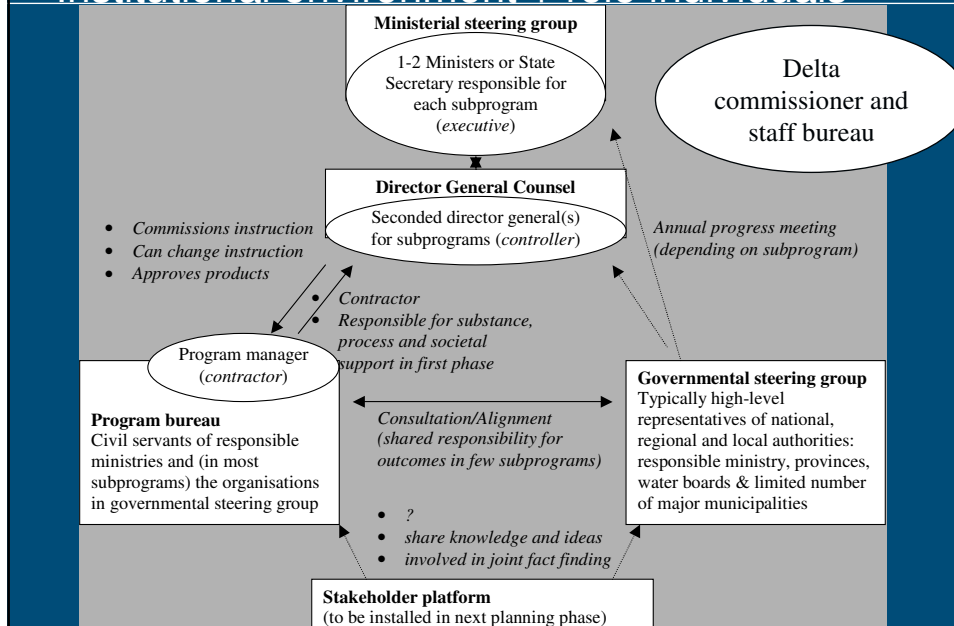


## Results – Common perception

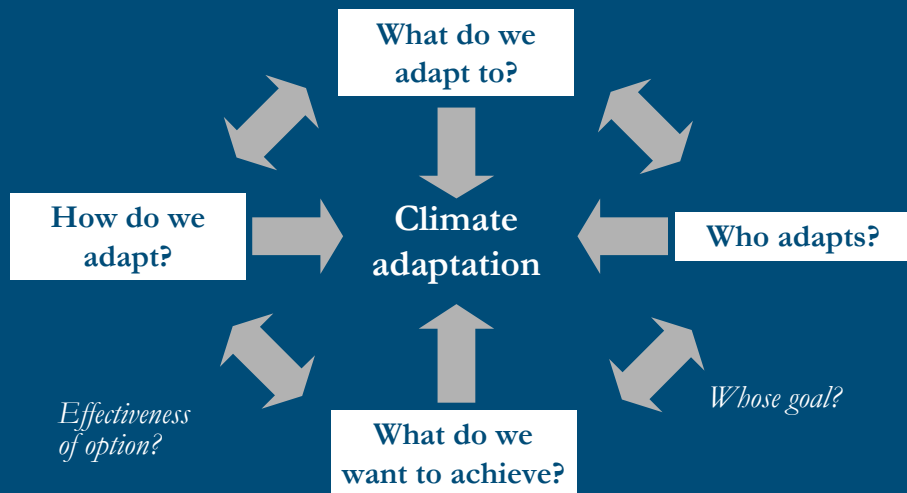
### Basiswaarden richtinggevend voor planvorming en beoordeling



## Institutional environment + role individuals

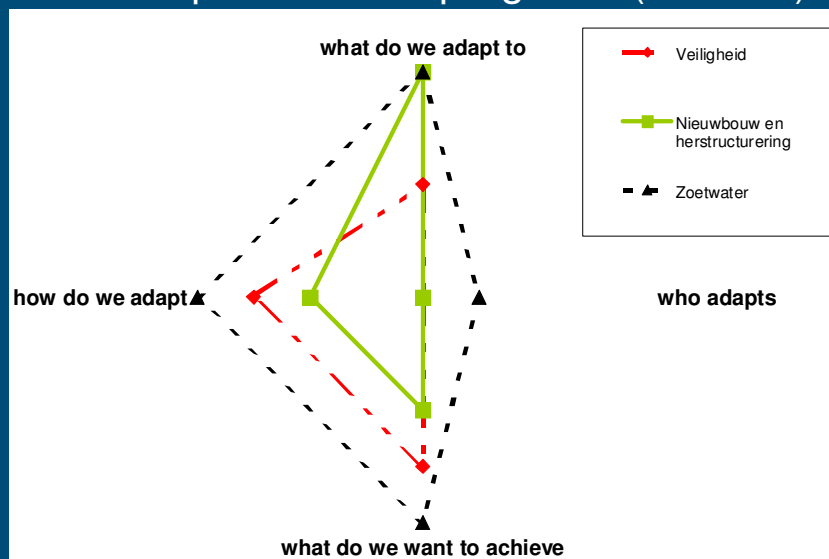


## Research questions

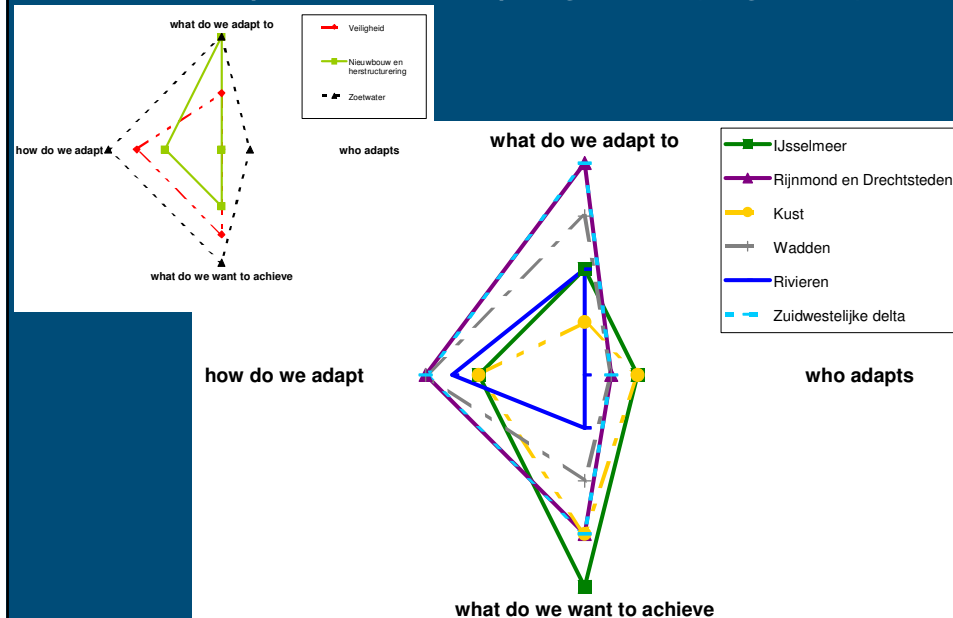


*After: Preston (2010)*

## Research questions subprograms (national)



## Research questions subprograms (regional)



## Conclusions

### Lessons learned

- Characteristics related to the governance of policy change reported, yet no coherent frame or few tested
- Gap between theory/science, policy ambition and impl. practice
- Little attention to the role of agents and especially individual actors
- Ministries rely largely on 'own' knowledge institutes. Few social scientists actively involved in design governance / policy dynamics

### Opportunities

- Fragmented implementation could be turned into advantage by recognising pilots & (sub)programs as set of experiments, from which actors can learn
- Cooperation in planning and decision support (research)
- Recognition how/where/by whom more ambitious policy measures can emerge, be tested, be debated & implemented

## Thank you & discussion

- Your opinion about research question
- Your opinion about characteristics of major policy change
- Other cases?

More on role individuals:

Werners, S. E., P. Matczak and Z. Flachner (2010) Individuals matter: exploring strategies of individuals .... Ecology and Society 15 (2), 24.  
Huiteima, D. and S. Meijerink (Eds.) (2009) Water policy entrepreneurs: A research companion to water transitions around the globe, Edward Elgar Publishing, Camberley, UK - Northampton, USA.

- Saskia E. Werners ([Saskia.werners@wur.nl](mailto:Saskia.werners@wur.nl))
- Continue: European MEDIATION project [www.mediation-project.eu](http://www.mediation-project.eu)



## Results – Common perception

