

Reconciling innovative knowledge partnerships with existing institutions: the Dutch Knowledge for Climate program

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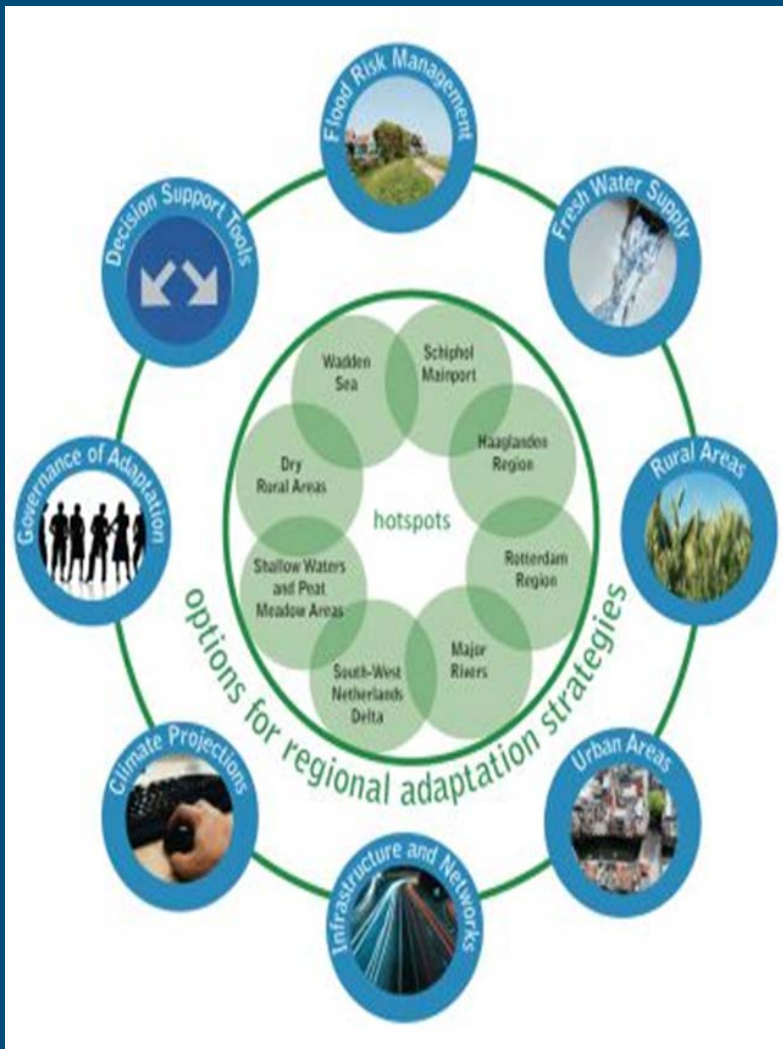


Center of Excellence "Governance of Climate Adaptation"

Some familiar assumptions

- Adaptation to climate change: uncertainties, ambiguity, wickedness
- Collaborative arrangements between science and policy as a way to address the specific challenges
- For technical and also for governance knowledge

Knowledge partnerships on governance



- Set up by the Dutch Knowledge for Climate program
- Co-production of knowledge with hotspots stakeholders
- Funded by central government and co-financed by others
- Developing and testing governance arrangements
- 2009-2014

Our puzzle

Why does the collaborative knowledge production, despite the advanced process design, the initial participants' enthusiasm and the available resources, progresses with ups and downs?

It is the institutional mismatch, stupid!

■ Hypothesis:

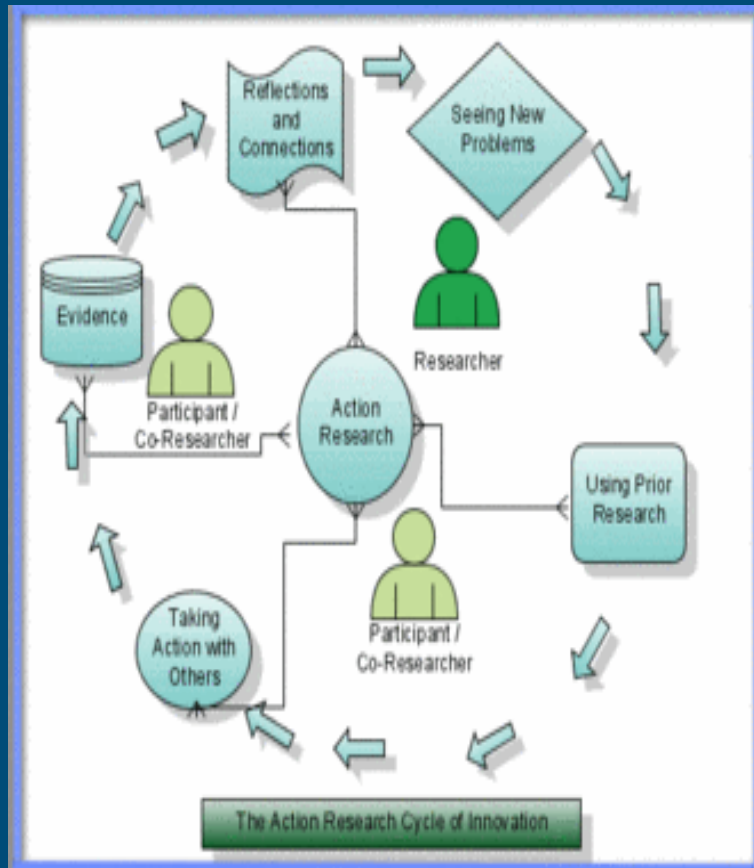
- Tensions exist between the collaborative arrangements and the existing policy and knowledge institutions

■ Research questions:

- To what extent can these tensions explain the risen difficulties?
- Is it possible to reconcile innovative knowledge partnerships into existing institutions in the field of climate adaptation?

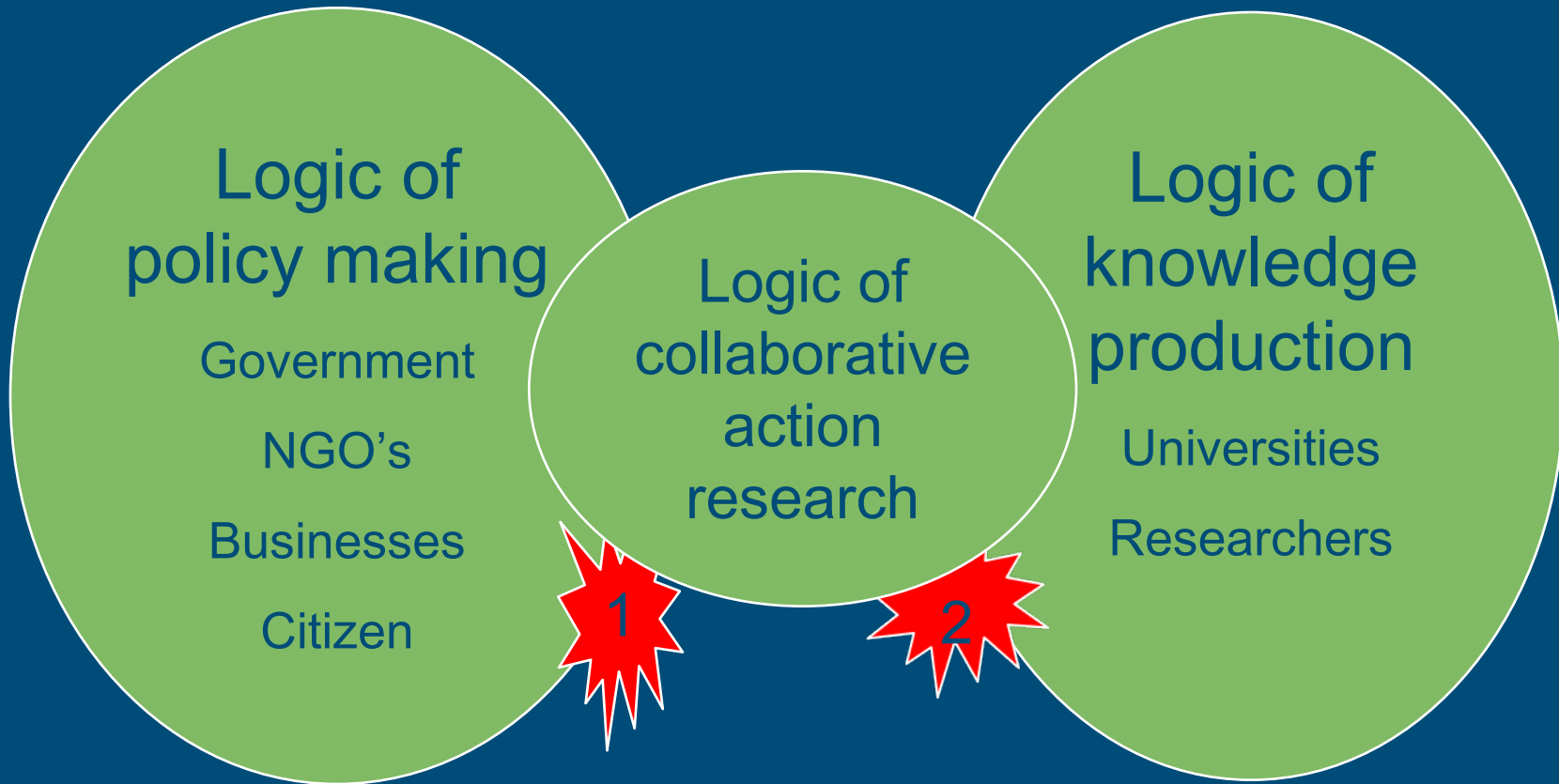
	Logic of research	Logic of governance
Progress	Empirical cycle: research questions, hypotheses, data collection, analysis, (intervention), evaluation	Disjointed incrementalism: non-linearity, hick-ups, setbacks
Structure	organized around a research project and a structured set of involved researchers	multi-actor, multi-level and multi-arena
Production	New data and insights are used to refine hypotheses and to adjust interventions	Changing circumstances or power balances can necessitates changing course
Intervention	Contribute to get more insight in the way in which processes unfold and to test hypotheses	Contribute to realize effective and legitimate collective action
Outcomes	Results have to be scientifically valid and valuable to be published	Results have to be politically feasible and attract enough resources to be implemented

Collaborative action research as method to cope with tensions



	Logic of collaborative action research
Acting	If you try to understand it, try to change it
Learning	Actors reflect on their actions and the way they are learning
Researching	Results in reliable, generalizable, valid knowledge
Collaborating	Practitioners actively participate in the research; researchers are involved in practical problem solving
Cyclic	Continuous feedback loop between analytical activities and practical activities

Institutional mismatches



	Tensions with research	Tensions governance
Acting	Cautious to engage in policy practices. Aim to direct and plan interventions and experiments	Hesitating to experiment. Research design clashes with governance dynamics
Learning	Focus on usefulness of data. Limited time for reflection.	Focus on practical usefulness of outcomes. Limited room for learning and reflection.
Researching	Epistemological and ontological assumptions. Theory and concept driven research questions	Instrumental research question. Researchers as workforces to realize policy goals.
Collaborating	Time consuming. Pressure to publish. Problems with co-financing. Competing research programs.	Shared expectations and commitment. Separated divisions for research and policy. Funding rules: no interactions. Budget cuts
Cyclic	Planning and control within universities and PhD schedules	Planning and control within public organisation. Politics.

Specific challenges for climate adaptation

- Contested knowledge
 - Risk of stereotyping; eroding trust
- Scale misfits
 - Boundaries of the research exceed administrative boundaries of funding public organisations
- Changing political agendas
 - Lack of urgency; new frames
- Projected impacts and uncertain benefits of adaptation measures:
 - Limited opportunities to organise feedback and to test governance arrangements

First conclusions

- Many of the assumptions underlying the collaborative arrangement conflict with the rules and beliefs of both research and governance institutions
- Innovative knowledge arrangements require institutional change
- Cherish tensions
- Quality of interactions
- Interpersonal trust
- Small wins and patience

	Conditions of research	Logic of collaborative action research	Conditions of governance
Acting	Commitment to practical results in addition to research results	If you try to understand it, try to change it	Ability to experiment and to improve practices
Learning	Willingness to learn in interaction in addition to data analysis	Actors reflect on their actions and the way they are learning	Willingness to learn and reflect. Stepping out of defensive routines.
Researching	Allow practical questions to steer research	Results in reliable and actionable knowledge	Allow research questions to steer interventions
Collaborating	Collective decisions about research processes	All actors actively participate in research and practice	Collective decisions about interventions
Cyclic	Long-term research commitment that is	Continuous feedback loops	Ability to be flexible and responsive