

Session DP GV 3.2: Governance capacity for climate adaptation

Date and Time of Session: Wednesday, 29 September 2010, 16.15-18.00

Short description of the session topic and the objective of the session:

Topic: a couple of scholars from different disciplinary perspectives (law, policy sciences, water governance, economics, risk management, innovation studies) reflect upon the case study 'Noordwijk-Netherlands. The Dutch approach of coastal defense is being discussed by focusing upon the Weak Links program.

Objective: distill the most important governance lessons out of the case study and think about what constitute the governance capacity to realize innovative and robust adaptation strategies which integrate various agendas, domains and interests.

Session Agenda and Main Speakers

Session chair: prof. dr. Geert Teisman, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Main speakers:

- Introduction to the Noordwijk Case: Herman Kasper Gilissen, Centre for Environmental Law and Policy Utrecht University, the Netherlands.
- Legal analysis Noordwijk Case: Prof. dr. Marleen van Rijswijk, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands.
- Flood Risk analysis Noordwijk Case: Dr. Matthijs Kok, Delft University of Technology HKV Lijn in water, the Netherlands.

Most exciting insight, moment or outcome

- Adaptation requires a sense of urgency and strong commitment.
- In the case 'Noordwijk' the authorities had no fear to take responsibility. In reality there is a clear role for every authority. Climate change however adds something to this discussion and results likely in new roles. From a legal point of view the water authority should solve the political question 'who is responsible for the new roles'.

Main conclusions, themes, insights or messages

Highlights of the first part of the session

Aspects that contributed to the success of the project from a legal point of view::

- Through the safety objective the whole project was widely publicly supported.
- Clear agreements on which government actor was responsible for what action.
- Clear and structured procedure in which public participation was of high importance.

Highlights of the second part of the session

The project has been successful from a legal point of view. Reasons for this are:

- The provision of flood protection is a goal that is received positively by the citizens.
- A clear division of responsibilities between the central government, the province, the water boards and the municipalities.

- A government organization that performs its task seriously and adequately.
- The decisions-making process went well from a legal point of view, legal procedures were followed.
- Implementation of the plan in a way causing as little damage as possible.
- Bringing compensation regulations to people's attention in advance and assisting them with the application for compensation.
- A sufficient degree of legal protection.

Highlights of the third part of the session

Key success factors from Flood Risk Management point of view:

- The Wateract demands an update every 5 years of hydraulic load and strength of flood defenses.
- Technical analysis about the safety gap was supported by independent committee (TAW). There was consensus in the Technical Advisory Committee about the problem.
- The Minister of Public Works and Water management has budget to solve the 'safety gap'.
- Local interest are incorporated in the design.

Highlights of the last part of the session

The case Noordwijk from a water governance point of view

- The project is developed and implemented in a relative short period of time.
- The project got a broad programmatic approach.
- The project team aimed for a broad support by residents, NGO's and land/property owners.
- Adaptive water management evolved: the maintenance of the area in the development of plans and solutions with a certain degree of flexibility.
- There is a trade-off between efficiency and innovation.

Main conclusion

Adaptation requires a sense of urgency and strong commitment.

Key phrases or quotes

- Adaptation requires a sense of urgency and strong commitment.