

Session DD 6.2: Regional strategies of climate adaptation: concepts and Dutch examples

Chairs	Prof.dr. Katrien Termeer, Wageningen UR, the Netherlands and Elizabeth Wilson, Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom
Keynote speaker	Prof.dr. S. Kuks, School of Management and Governance, University of Twente, the Netherlands
Speakers	Jeroen Rijke, UNESCO-IHE, the Netherlands Dr. Rutger de Graaf, DeltaSync, the Netherlands Prof.dr. Joyeeta Gupta, VU University, the Netherlands Prof.dr. Bernd Siebenhüner, Carl-von-Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany Saskia Hommes, Deltares, the Netherlands Dr. Saskia Werners, Wageningen UR, the Netherlands Ingmar van Meerkerk, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands
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Often when contemplating important steps for the future, we look at the past. So does keynote speaker prof. dr. S. Kuks (School of Management and Governance, University of Twente, the Netherlands) when he leads the audience into historical Enschede, a city in the east of the Netherlands. Enschede used to be a city of creeks. In 2010 those blue nerves are long gone and water quickly disappears in the sewers. The inhabitants of Enschede forgot to make room for water and now pay the price: floods are all too common and likely to increase in the future due to climate change. The area surrounding Enschede, Twente, needs to make room for 12.000 ha of water retention. Twente needs also prepare for shortage of water and improve citizen risk awareness. To solve the water problem creeks are brought back in the area. Enschede has rolled up its sleeves to bring back the old creek Roombeek into the city.

Some international examples shown during this session include Germany and Australia. German city planners are obliged to take rainwater storage into account when planning new buildings. Australia experiments with decentralized 'water markets', where stormwater sewers are disconnected, buildings are flood-proofed and local water harvesting and reuse are alternatives to a combined sewage system.

A truly inspiring concept was presented by dr. Ruther de Graaf (DeltaSync, the Netherlands) who aims at building the first self-supporting floating city in the world. De Graaf stresses the importance of making space in current institutions for unrestricted, innovative thinking. His point is backed up by one of the poster presenters, Tineke Ruigh-van der Ploeg (Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands): 'Constraints are mostly in the institutional sphere. But people find ways to circumvent the institutions.'

The envisioning project Rotterdam Watercity 2035 created enough space to surface crazy and innovative ideas, like building a 'Chinese wall' measuring 6 meters around Rotterdam to protect the city from the water. Many ideas made it into policy, like the floating pavilion and the water squares. Urban water structures of the future should be flexible, reversible and if possible, decomposable.

Let's get back from 2035 to 2010. How are the Netherlands doing right now in terms of adaptation? The Adaptive Capacity Wheel is a method to see how adaptive different sectors are. The wheel is not an objective measuring tool, but points out probable weaknesses and strength and a basis for taking action. The Dutch water sector scores well, but the Dutch nature sector, including Nature 2000 regulations, has low adaptive capacity.

Another method of analyzing adaptation strategies is provided by the Climate Adaptation Navigator, a 3x4 matrix. The matrix describes the institutional structure for the three layers of the traditional physical planning approach: the base layer, the networks layer and the occupation layer. The navigator can show implementation routes for the ideals from the National Water Plan.

Adaptation however is only one side of the coin when dealing with climate adaptation. The other side is provided by the reduction of greenhouse gases and mitigating climate change. 'Adaptation is not an excuse strategy for failure in effective mitigation', says Prof.dr. Bernd Siebenhüner (Carl-von-Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany).

Dr. Saskia Werners (Wageningen UR, the Netherlands) grabs the accordion to get across a pressing point – singing. It's all good and well that we talk about methods and implementation, but do we know who in the end has the power to decide? The Dutch Delta Programme focuses on what kind of things we should adapt to and what kind of measures we should take, but pays very little attention to the question: who adapts?

By several speakers it has been stressed how important cooperation with different stakeholders is for an integrated approach to adaptation. As Ingmar van Meerkerk (Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands) puts it: 'We need good leaders who don't push their own opinions, but connect stakeholders.'

The session ended with a positive note from poster presenter Stephan de Boer (DHV). He has an optimistic view on adaptation. De Boer: 'It's positive! We have more opportunities for recreation and housing.'