



**Improving flood risk governance:  
exploring the opportunities and  
barriers in six European countries**

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Deltas in Times of  
Climate Change II  
Conference, session  
DD2.6 Flood risk  
management challenges  
in national policies.  
September 26, 2014;  
9:00-12:00 hrs.

**STAR-FLOOD**

**STAR-FLOOD research project**

...Search for appropriate and resilient Flood Risk Governance Arrangements (FRGAs) for dealing with flood risks in vulnerable urban regions;

...in the context of broader debates on the need to diversify Flood Risk Management Strategies (urbanisation/climate change);

...and prominent policy initiatives (e.g. EU Floods Directive)



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## Main concepts: Flood Risk Management Strategies and Flood Risk Governance Arrangements



- Starting assumption 1: diversification of FRMSs makes countries more resilient to flood risks **IS THIS THE CASE?**
- Need to link together and align the strategies in terms of the **actors, discourses, rules and resources** through which they are embedded.

## This presentation: preliminary comparison of national level analyses in the six STAR-FLOOD countries



- Good practices cannot uncritically be transferred from one context to another – **no one size fits all solutions**;
- Different background situations, e.g. attention for flood risks in spatial planning; presence of insurance schemes;
- But what determines whether a specific good practice is “**appropriate**”?





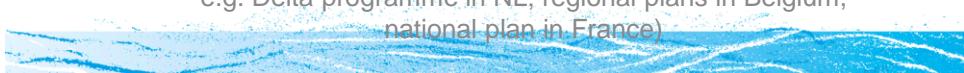
# Facts and figures



## Nature of flood risks and ways in which flood policies have been institutionalized differ



- **Types** of flooding (tidal, fluvial, pluvial, dam break);
- **Consequences** (very low (Sweden); very high (Netherlands))
- **Degree of institutionalisation** differs
  - Very high (Netherlands) – ad hoc (Poland)
- **Priority of flood issues** differs
  - Between countries and within the country
- **Presence of national adaptation or flood risk plans** varies
  - e.g. Delta programme in NL; regional plans in Belgium, national plan in France)





# Analysis of FRMSs and FRGAs



**Most resources go to flood defence;  
but countries vary in where  
discourses are going:**

- “defence as cornerstone” (Netherlands)
- “Prevention” (France)
- “Practicing all types of strategies” (England)
- “we first need money for flood defences (Poland)
- No separate Policy domain (Sweden)
- “Prevention” (Belgium)



## Large differences in what the national Flood Risk Governance Arrangement looks like:



Different **sub-arrangements** with their own **actors, discourses, rules, resources**

- Belgium: flood management (3x); flood preparation and flood recovery;
- Sweden: no real “flood arrangement”
- England: water management, emergency management, insurance and spatial planning, local bottom-up initiatives
- Netherlands: water system management; urban water management; spatial planning; emergency management;
- Poland: Flood defence/ flood preparation / insurance
- France: Prevention/defence/recovery/crisis management (mitigation)



Source: Landelijk Beheer Organisatie Risicokaart van het Interprovinciaal Overleg, CBS

## Each country reports at least some degree of fragmentation between different **flood relevant policy domains**.



- Search for bridging mechanisms:

- coordination committees (Belgium)
- resilience fora (England)
- Delta Programme (Netherlands)





# Explanations for the degree of stability/dynamics



## Different drivers of stability and change



### -Drivers of stability

e.g. Historical backlog of spatial planning; lack of cooperation; implementation gap of policies; lack of risk awareness of citizens; existing balance of interests, sunk costs; path dependency; established practices formalised in rules etc.

### -Drivers of change => it can come from *within and from outside the flood policy domain*

e.g. Increased flood awareness, European legislation, trigger events, changes in political ideology (e.g. privatisation/localism); policy programmes; change agents; autonomous learning





# Evaluations in terms of appropriateness and resilience



## Again: does diversification of strategies lead to more resilience?



- Netherlands focuses on flood defence, but this seems to work well;
- England applies all strategies, but still has serious flood problems and asks for “bringing in the Dutch”;

=> But: this picture may change due to the changing nature of flood risks (climate change)?





# Tentative “requirements for successful diversification”



## Successful diversification seems to require at least:

- Bridging mechanisms
  - e.g. water test, duty to inform (Flanders); river contracts (Walloon); duty to cooperate (England); PAPIs (local action plans) (France)
- Relevant decision making frameworks/tools
  - cost efficiency calculations (Flanders)
- Recovery mechanisms
  - CatNat (France) – but may be bad for prevention
- Country-specific implementation of the Floods Directive
  - Mindful of relevant similarities and differences
- Debate on safety standards
  - For which strategies? Similar for different countries?
- Ongoing learning between countries



Source: Landelijk Beheer Organisatie Risicokaart van het Interprovinciaal Overleg, CBS

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- Hegger, D.L.T., Driessen, P.P.J., Dieperink, C., Wiering, M., Raadgever, G.T., Van Rijswick, H.F.M.W. (2014) Assessing stability and dynamics in Flood Risk Governance: an empirically illustrated research approach. *Water Resources Management* DOI 10.1007/s11269-014-0732-x

