

Session DD 7.5: Methods – Novel approaches

Chairs	Dr. Christopher Pettit, Department of Primary Industries, Victoria, Australia
Keynote speaker	Prof.dr. Renaat de Sutter, University of Gent, Belgium
Speakers	Dr. Leendert van Bree, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, the Netherlands Simone de Groot, Geodan Next, the Netherlands Vincent Marchau (instead of prof.dr. Warren Walker), Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands Dr. Tineke Ruijgh-van der Ploeg, Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands Prajal Pradhan, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany Dr. Joop de Boer, Institute for Environmental Studies, VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Rapporteur	MSc. Marit Heinen, Climate changes Spatial Planning, the Netherlands

Officially Belgium doesn't have an adaptation strategy, but there is more than meets the eye. Renaat de Sutter explains the situation in Flanders. There are already a lot of studies and research in the field of climate change adaptation, but they are not coordinated and focused on existing research gaps. The development of an adaptation strategy or plan has some advantages: it promotes exchange of information, it generates commitment, it generates national as well as international visibility and the activities on adaptation and mitigation will be coordinated.

The Netherlands is very densely built and populated and has been adapting to water influences for centuries. The adaptive ability of the Netherlands is influenced by choices in spatial and non-spatial developments and the political and societal willingness to adapt. The Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) has therefore requested the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) to develop a roadmap for a climate-proof Netherlands. Adaptation strategies are discussed in terms of co-benefits with existing and new urban and health policies. Leendert van Bree elaborated the theme of climate change and health. The two most important health issues are heat stress and secondly allergy & infection diseases.

Simone de Groot started her presentation very nicely by asking in which fields the audience are working. Apparently there was no spatial planner in the room. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a useful method to help address the interrelations between climate change and spatial planning in a consistent manner. SEA aims to integrate environmental and sustainability considerations in strategic decision-making. According to Simone, Regional Spatial Strategies are an essential step in translating relatively abstract global and national level developments and regulations to more practical local level. In the audience there was some doubt if the provinces are the right geographical level to discuss climate change measures.

Vincent Marchau (instead of Warren Walker) argues that adaptive policymaking is the best approach to make more robust plans by not ignoring uncertainty and acknowledging that we cannot know the future. Policies are needed that are flexible and adaptable, enabling learning to take place on the relationship between climate change and sea level rise. Someone in the audience suggested that adaptive policy making might be synonym for 'we don't have the money now, we will invest later'. Prajal Pradhan showed that based on similarities of socio-economic and ecological features, and climate change impacts, he can identify locations from which adaptation experiences may be transferred to comparable locations. A prototype of his tool has been presented at COP15. At COP16 they hope to be ready to show a final version of the tool. It is not yet tested with end-users.

It is important for decision makers to be made aware that frames, including the frames that are 'build-in' in decision tools, which can subtly shape their concept of reality. Joop de Boer explains that frames can be expressed by various representations, such as how a problem is stated, who is expected to make the statement about it, what question appears relevant and what range of answers might be appropriate. Interaction with a number of adaptation projects showed that frame analysis works as an eye-opener for actors involved in decision making; introducing a contrasting frame can be used to open-up the process of decision making.