

Session DP FR 4.5: Preparing for an uncertain future

Date and Time of Session: Friday, 1 October 2010, 10.15-12.00

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

Sustainable water management copes with uncertainties in the natural and social environment. Ideally, a strategy is robust under different climate change scenarios, socio-economic developments and social perspectives, or the strategy is flexible enough to adapt. Uncertainties inherent to these developments lead to different potential pathways of water management into the future. Their hypothesis is that in order to achieve sustainable management under an uncertain future the interaction between the water system and society needs to be taken into account.

This workshop has experienced the importance of interactions between the water system and society with an interactive simulation tool, and experienced how these may influence decision making process in everyday water management and future strategic planning. The workshop aims at providing participants with a transdisciplinary approach to improve their decision making process for an uncertain future.

List the Session Agenda and Main Speakers

Session chair and team members:

- Prof. Dr. Hans Middelkoop, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.
- Marjolein Haasnoot, Deltares, the Netherlands.
- Astrid Offermans, Maastricht University, the Netherlands.
- Michael van Lieshout, the Netherlands.
- Pieter Valkeringen, the Netherlands.

Most exciting insight, moment or outcome

Deltares, University Maastricht University Utrecht and others developed a game with the main question: "The future is uncertain, and what is the best water management strategy? "

This game was played by 2 teams, each group with different beliefs, one chair and one writer

Each group was asked several times to follow the next steps:

- 1) Rethink group perspective.
- 2) To define maximum 2 measurements for the fictive area.
- 3) Making a white paper: Defining reasons to do so (see 2).
- 4) Checking society support (society was played by team member).
- 5) Negotiation.
- 6) Veto or not to veto.
- 7) Calculation of Risk indicator, economic costs and nature indicator by program part of the game and run by "the team".

Main conclusions, themes, insights or messages

Conclusions after playing the game:

- The game not only give a lot of energy and people were very enthousiastic about, the game in itself also gave a clear insight in the relationships between the watersystemmeasermets and the connection with society.
- It also showed the participants very clearly that strategies are of no use for “ever lasting times” or in other words: each strategy has its own short or long term that it is effective.
- The third major lesson is that playing this games more and more gives you more inside into the most robust pathway for an adaptation strategy. By exploring different strategies you are able to find out robust measurments. Adaptation is a pathway.
- The game also included a warning: policymakers tend to react on events rather than anticipate climate variability.

Key phrases or quotes

Advices towards the team were given to strengthen the current game:

- build something in the game that you are not Sant Claus: there is a limit on the money to spend.
- add a tool for when making which decisions.
- add a desk-tool for information during playing what information is build in the system.
- add community resilience.