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Reflection on Sponge City Programme

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CENTRE FOR
WATER, OCEANS AND
SUSTAINABILITY LAW



UCWOSL

The Utrecht Centre for Water, Oceans and Sustainability Law (**UCWOSL**) of Utrecht University does research in the area of water law, oceans law, environmental law, climate law and sustainability law.



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Research History



**Amsterdam
Rainproof**



VS



Reflections

- Assessment indicators & Accountability system

 legitimacy

- Technical guidelines/ standards

 credibility

--- showcased an understanding of the complexities involved

--- demonstrated competence in management

Outlook

Change mindset:

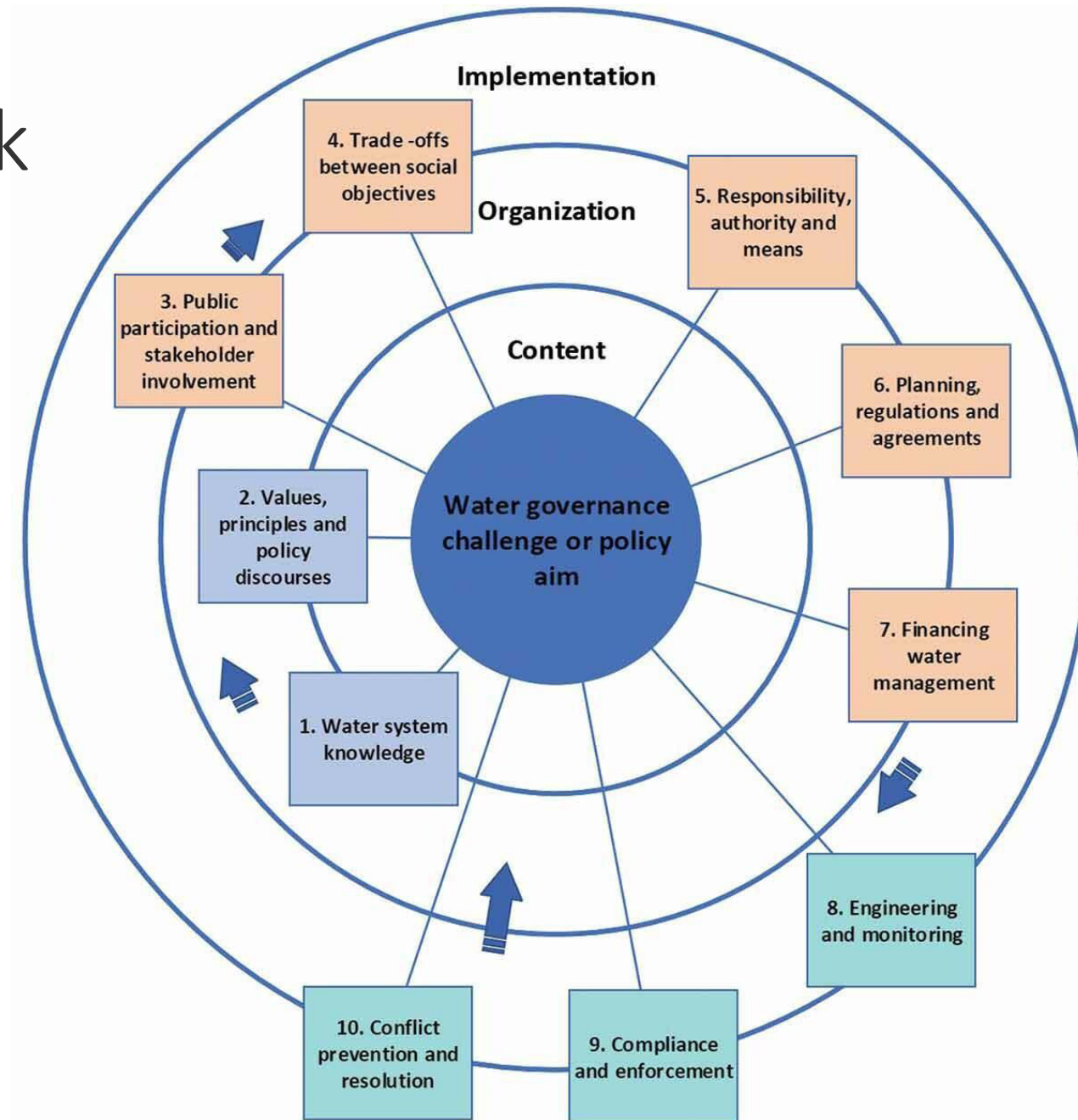
engineering\ technical project  social-cultural project

Give more weight to

- Ecological restoration
- Regular progress assessments
- Social equality
- Environmental justice
- Overall governance

10-Building Block Framework

- An interdisciplinary assessment approach
- Capture the complexity of water governance dynamics
- Three dimensions (Content, Organization and Implementation)



Assessment Questions

Is there sufficient knowledge of the existing water system in order to deliver the required service level of societal functions? If not, what are the gaps? Is sufficient knowledge available to assess the impact on the water system because of changes in environment and societal functions?

Is there sufficient knowledge of shared or conflicting values, viewpoints and principles (represented by different policy discourse coalitions) for water issues and their consequences for facing water management issues?

Are all relevant stakeholders involved? Are their interests, concerns and values sufficiently balanced and considered in the problem analysis, solution search process and decision-making?

Are agreed service-level decisions based on trade-offs of costs, benefits and distributional effects of various alternatives?

Are authorities, responsibilities and means well-organized to deal with water issues at the appropriate administrative scale(s) in a participative and integrative way?

Are regulations and agreements legitimate and adaptive, and if not, what are the main problems with regard to the abovementioned legitimacy aspects?

Is the financial arrangement sustainable and equitable?

Are SLAs sufficiently available (implicit or explicit) in order to redesign the existing infrastructure? Are the design and consequences of different alternatives sufficiently available? Is there sufficient monitoring of the system and are the data analysed?

Are regulations and agreements enforceable by public and/or private parties, and are appropriate remedies available?

Are there sufficient conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in place?

The Water Test Process



Initiator	Phases	Water Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves stakeholders in process • Consults water manager information • Map out private participants 	Idea Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joins the conversation • Knows the conditions • Knows water interests • Communicates information about water system (among others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires water information • Makes agreements and writes memorandum together 	Initiative Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides water information • Brings in water concerns • Indicates permits or exemptions • Makes agreements and writes memorandum together



Initiator	Phases	Water Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops the plan 	Development and Advice Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinks together Checks (pre)design and writes Water Advice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writes Water Paragraph using of Water Advice Sends draft decisions Organizes public participation 	Decision-making Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks draft decisions Possibly submits an Opinion Consults with the State or province, if necessary, about the Opinion and indication Raises any objections to the Council of State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements the plan Takes care of the implementation or transfer the management 	Implementation and Management Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants waiver or permit, if necessary and possible Monitors the implementation and management

Lessons Learned

- Political Willingness/commitments
- Laws and Guidelines are in place
- Stakeholders Involvement
- Periodic evaluation



Room for the River Programme

Types of measures: our Toolkit

Strengthening dikes



Dyke relocation



Depoldering



Lowering of floodplains



Lowering groynes



Deepening summer bed



High-water channel



Removing obstacles



Water storage



Lessons learned

“Decentralize what can”

- PKB---a framework-setting instrument at the national level and legally binding
- Administrative cooperation agreements--decentralized governments committed to the implementation of the PKB



Participation

- Informal participation---information evenings, kitchen table conversations..
- taking the community's input into the decision-making process as much as possible



Flexibility in Decision-making

Project decisions--limited flexibility (e.g. permits, exemptions, or other approvals) but not prevent innovative solutions

Implementation decisions--giving contractors freedom to determine the method of execution





Thank you!