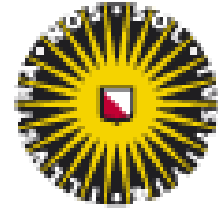




Utrecht Centre for Water,  
Oceans and Sustainability Law



# Shifts in Floods Policies in Netherlands

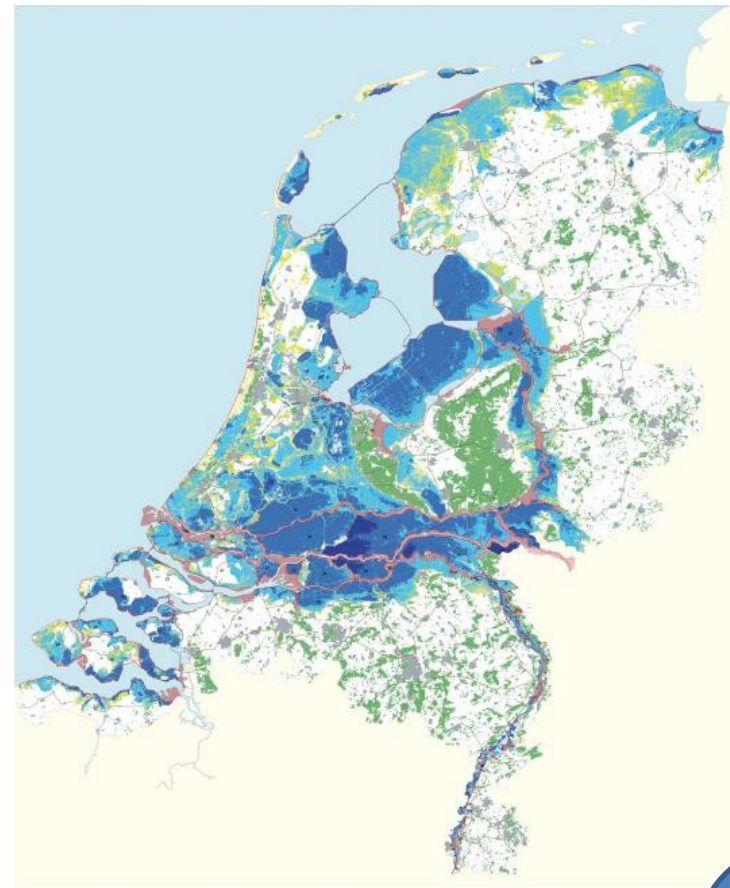
Marleen van Rijswick

Cercle Français de l'eau \*\*\* Colloque du 15 Janvier 2015

S'inspirer de nos voisins européens ?



# Flood risk management based on a public approach: Why?



- A delta in North-west Europe
- Surface: 41,526 km<sup>2</sup>, 18% is surface water!
- Residents: 16,515,057
- Population density: 397.7 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>
- 2/3 of the population live in an area with serious flood risk
- More than 50% of the country is threatened by floods (from rivers or the North sea)
- 3291 kilometers of dikes and dams; 268 kilometers of dunes, 808 artificial water works to protect against flooding
- Over 3000 polders that must be drained
- Drinking water quality is good, chemical and ecological status are not sufficient
- 4 river basins: Rhine, Meuse, Ems and Scheldt

Maximale overstromingsdiepten bij overstromingen vanuit grote rivieren, kustwateren en IJsselmeer/Markermeer gebaseerd op gegevens uit 2008

*'The Dikes make up the State'*



# Leading principles



- decentralisation
- prevention
- solidarity
- Integrated approach
- cost recovery (taxes per water board)
- democratic institutions (water boards) for public participation
- powerful legally binding public policy instruments



# Water authorities: public and shared responsibility



- Two water authorities with management competences (Water Act 2009)
  - **the Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment** (larger water systems including the marine environment)
  - **23 Water Boards** (regional water systems, groundwater and waste water treatment)
- **Provinces:** strategic regional planning, coordination and supervision of municipalities and water boards, *competent authority for granting licences for large water abstractions (> 150,000 liters a year)*
- **Municipalities** have a duty of care for urban water management and land-use planning

## Policy instruments

- Safety standards (acceptable probability of flooding within embanked areas)
- Adaptive planning & monitoring
- Regulations to prevent the increase of flood risks
- Permit system
- Taxes
- Possibility to build and maintain flood defence works
- Duty to compensate (égalité devant les charges publiques)



# Participation & Financing



## Participation

**Stakeholder representation by designation** and a guaranteed delegate in the board of the daily management

- Agriculture
- Nature conservation organizations
- Industry/Commerce

### **Direct elections**

- Citizens

## Stake-say-pay

- Since medieval times,
- Starting at a very small community scale
- Payments related to stake
- Say (participation) related to stake
- Payments originally in *natura*, later in money



# Water and Spatial Planning: towards better coordination

---



- Land use prevails- water is following: the safety paradox
- Two separate regimes
- Coordination by means of:
  - Coordination and integration of plans
  - Water assessment or water test
  - Water storage areas





# New developments: Multi layered safety



## Room for the river

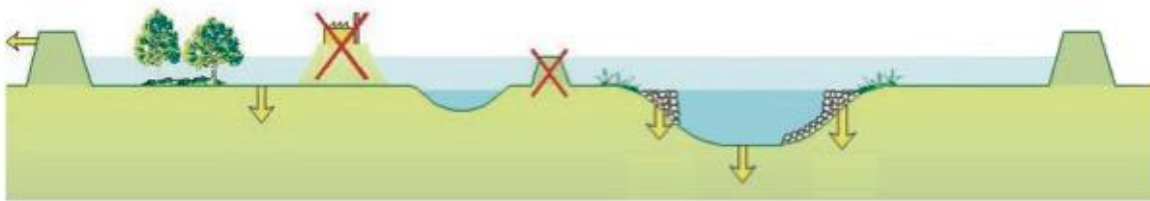
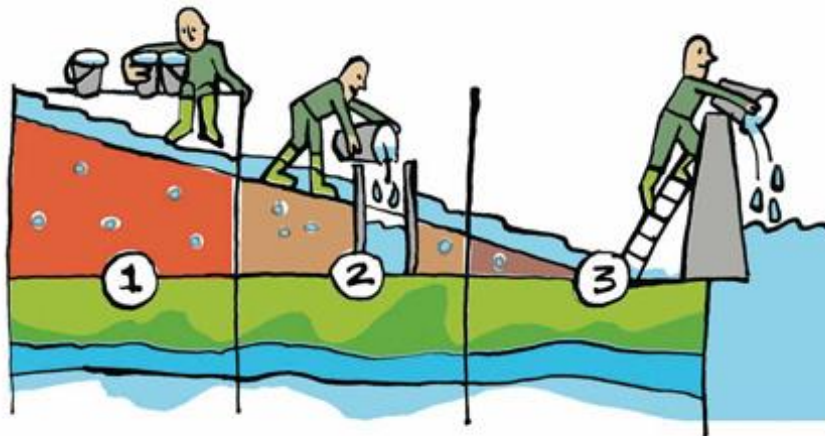
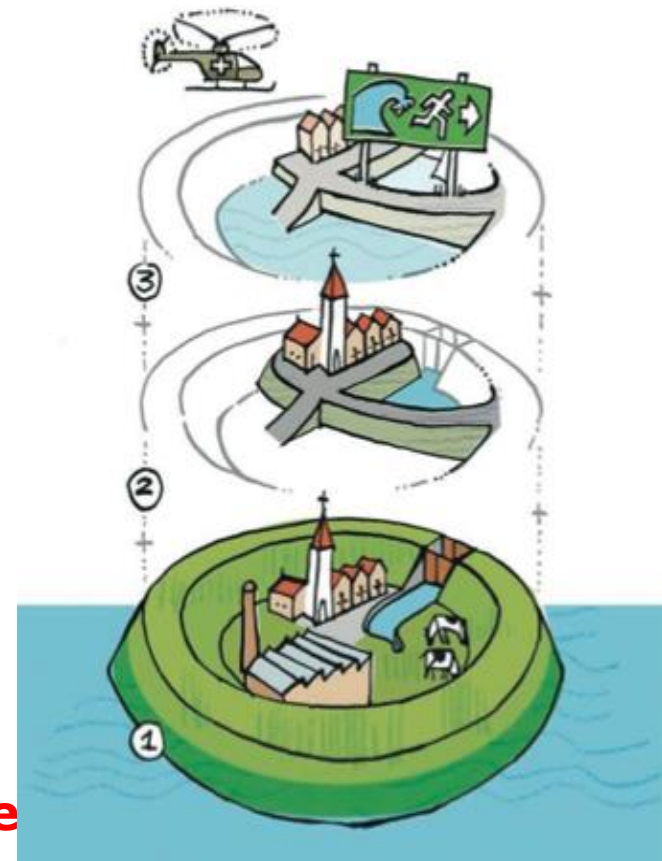


Figure 46: Measures to increase the conveyance capacity: Enlargement of the flood plain (laying back dikes), lowering the flood plain, removing obstacles, secondary channels, "removing summer dikes", lowering the groins (which focus the flow of the river during low discharges).



1. Keep the water
2. Store
3. Discharge

## Multi-layered safety



# Insurance?



- Is the Netherlands uninsurable?
  - > crop damage insurance
- Focus on prevention
- Disaster relief after floods (government)
- Is the current system which is based on taxes comparable with mandatory insurances?
- Insurance takes away incentives to live in safer areas
- Resilience based on society as a whole
- Pro's of insurance in the Dutch context?

Low probability & high impact







---

**Merci beaucoup!**

**Any questions?**

Now or later: [H.vanRijswick@uu.nl](mailto:H.vanRijswick@uu.nl)

