

## Panel 4: Citizens in Action in Water Governance

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Water governance is an upcoming stream in public administration. Water issues are approached in (close) interaction with citizens. Water governance is more than preventing the people from floods. It becomes more an integral part of spatial planning and development. Water governance requires combining different spatial functions (nature, recreation, agriculture, housing, economy and infrastructure) with measures to increase water retention, safety against floods, estuarine dynamics, and so on.

The involvement of stakeholders and especially citizens seems to be a crucial condition for realizing water governance. The goals of water governance are multiple: to realize the support for the measures, to improve the quality of the measures, and to enhance the public awareness of the necessity of the measures. However, this development poses several questions about the way water governance has to be organized. These questions are for example:

- What are the possibilities for citizens to bring in their perceptions, ambitions and local knowledge in projects of water governance;
- How does the 'citizen input' relate to the input of officials, politicians and experts;
- How does a process of citizen participation relate to the formal decision-making procedures as organized by the political-administrative authorities;
- How is the process of citizen participation tuned with the process of decision-making in the representative democracy;
- How contributes citizen participation to the quality, the rationality and the legitimacy of water governance; and
- How are processes of water governance managed, and what management strategies seem beneficial?