

Panel 13: Connective capacity in water governance

Chaired by: Jurian Edelenbos (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Stefan Kuks (Twente University) and Arwin van Buuren (Erasmus University Rotterdam).

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

Water governance is especially about connective capacity. Water governance concerns multi-level issues. Water doesn't stop at borders or jurisdictions. It crosses local, regional/provincial, national and European/international institutional borders. Moreover, water concerns citizens, NGOs, and private actors. So it is not only a public/governmental issue, but also a societal and private sector issue. But how can we bring the three spheres (public, private and society) together? Water is also a multi-domain issue: other (spatial or policy) domains have to be taken into account to accomplish water governance. A variety of governmental and non-governmental actors have to be mobilized and their actions have to be synchronized.

Other types of connections are equally important. We can consider, for example, the interconnection between interactive processes and formal procedures ('watertoets', environmental impact assessments, etc.). Subsequently, how do we effectively interlink different frames of actors, ways of knowing, ambitions and values? What different timelines/horizons do actors use in solving water issues? How can we combine the short with the long term in coping with climate change in water governance?

We explicitly invite abstracts that give special attention to the question how to deal with the various sources of fragmentation in water governance by organizing meaningful connections and developing 'connective capacity'. In our panel we want to study connective capacity and try to find out what 'ticks connective capacity': what are its determinants, how is it manifested in practice and how can we mobilize, use, and consolidate the capacity to connect different scales, domains, levels, actors, agendas, processes, etc? Connective capacity does have many components: personal, relational, organizational, and institutional. We invited paper givers to reveal some of these components with in-depth case studies.