

LINKING SYSTEMS AND ACTORS TO UNDERSTAND POLICY GAMES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DELTA INFRASTRUCTURES

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Infrastructures, whether man-made or formed by nature, are intended to provide various goods and services to societies. Also natural infrastructures such as dune areas or tidal estuaries are increasingly maintained, modified or managed by human society. In these processes, various actors are involved, often with diverging interests and perceptions. Nature organizations may argue for the maintenance of certain natural infrastructures so that also future societies can benefit from the resulting ecosystem goods and services. Business groups may argue for increased modification and control of natural processes, to allow current generations to reap the benefits that rural delta regions can bring. For actors in these processes, but also for government agencies responsible for facilitating such multi-actor decision-making processes, it will be useful to see how they could strategize to influence the process and its outcomes.

This paper presents a conceptual framework that helps to organize and identify various possible strategies for influencing such multi-actor decision-making processes that revolve around the management of biophysical (delta) systems. The framework is based on a combination of systems analysis and actor analysis frameworks. It has been developed as part of a larger research project to study developments over time in decision-making on coastal management in the Netherlands and in South-Africa. In the Netherlands, national and provincial coastal management processes have been studied. In South-Africa, the construction and operation of the Wolwedans dam upstream of the Great Brak estuary has been studied. The use of the framework will therefore be illustrated with examples from these cases.