

# WP5.x – Experimental governance beyond experiments in coastal climate adaptation

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## Research design

### Objective:

Identify the governance challenges and changes needed to enable the transition to a robust water system in Zeeland by 2050 via experimentation and learning.

### Methods:

- desk research on collaborative governance approaches
- focus group discussions within 4 interdisciplinary workshops
- 2 case studies: Zeeuws Vlaanderen and Zuid Holland
- 10 interviews with key stakeholders during May-July '23 to deepen insights on collaborative governance from Workshop 1 and 2
- Thematic color coding and discourse analysis



### Workshop 2 (15th March 2023)

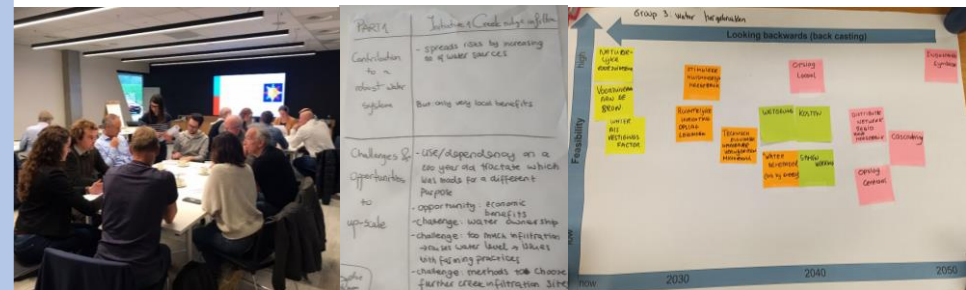
Two initiatives: creek ridge infiltration + effluent reuse

- **Contribution to a robust water system:** increase availability of water during dry season multiple purposes
- **Challenges and opportunities to upscale initiatives:** legal or financial feasibility
- **System change:** resources, policy and legal framework, levels of trust and conflict
- **Collaborative actions:** involvement of stakeholders, how to share knowledge
- **Collaborative dynamics:** actors engagement, shared motivation, capacity for joint action

## Results

### Workshop 1 (14th October 2022)

- **Water challenges:** droughts, salinization, flooding
- **Future initiatives focus:** water storage and monitoring
- **Governance challenges/ opportunities:** rigid and outdated legal frameworks, unclear roles and responsibilities of authorities in water management and lack of collaboration in practice.
- **What to do next:** more attention to the governance challenges



### Workshop 3 (6th Sept 2023)

3 interdisciplinary groups developed 3 roadmaps for a robust water system in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen by 2050:

- **Roadmap 1 on longer water retention:** dynamic (polder) water level management using modelling + pilots
- **Roadmap 2 on water storage:** local (rain)water buffers with centralized management (one body + one budget)
- **Roadmap 3 on water reuse:** need of water storage, decentralized regional water distribution

**Synergies and clashes** between roadmaps:

- More **synergies** were found between the roadmaps. The roadmaps increase the optimal water (re)use in the region. The implementation of measures requires a clear governance: one steering authority, proactive role, and collaboration between water users.
- **Clashes:** centralized vs decentralized water management could be overcome with a clear long term vision

## Future plans

- Qualitative data analysis from workshops, interviews and desk research
- Organize workshop 4 (last one) in December 2023 or January 2024 to identify a governance structure to implement a roadmap (developed in Workshop 3) for a robust water system.
- Bring all data together and start writing the scientific article

## Take home messages

- The **collaborative water governance** in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen needs to be strengthened. There is shared interest while shared understanding and shared trust needs attention. More actors engagement is required, especially from the water board, nature and farmers organisations. Leadership is missing at the moment.
- The view of national government on how to **improve regional leadership** would be helpful.