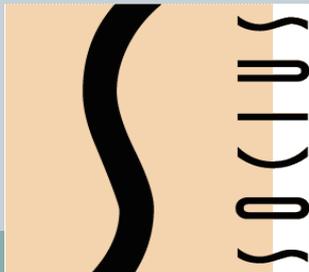


Why is it so difficult to get stakeholders at the (climate change) table?

A look into the kitchen of science

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Research Motivation



- **Circle -Med Programme call (2007) :**
- **to build knowledge** on “adaptation strategies in the water sector and coastal zones” (...)
- “adaptation strategies **call for early collaboration with decision makers** (...)to disseminate recommendations to (...) policy
- **to aim at identifying and providing information to solve practical adaptation problems”.**
- **Circle – Med Final conference (june 2012):**
 - **Researchers acknowledged difficulties and frustration in dealing with stakeholders**

Problem statement



- Which are the stumbling blocks and enabling conditions for the relationship between scientists and stakeholders as to achieve the call's objectives?

Linking Science and society in Europe



- A number of initiatives in Europe have taken place to improve science –society interactions
- But , its implementation in research endeavours has not fulfilled the expectations raised
- For instance , the crisis discourse
 - has pushed up for a strong (technological, not social or organizational) innovation agenda
 - In which societal participation is sidelined
 - Given the argument that too much societal reflection will slow down development and constitutes an hindrance (speed of innovation is more important than which? innovation ; for whom ?)
 - In moment of crisis, no (sufficient) time and money is allocated to imagining and experimenting alternative futures
- ESF . Science policy briefing, June 2013

Object of study



- The 7 research projects financed by the CIRCLE MED– **21** research teams (Portugal, France, Italy, Israel, Tunisia, Croatia, Morocco).
- Main disciplinary areas are biology, marine ecology, hydrogeology and chemistry.
- **NOTE:** the 8th project is not in this study as it was conducted by our team.

Methodology



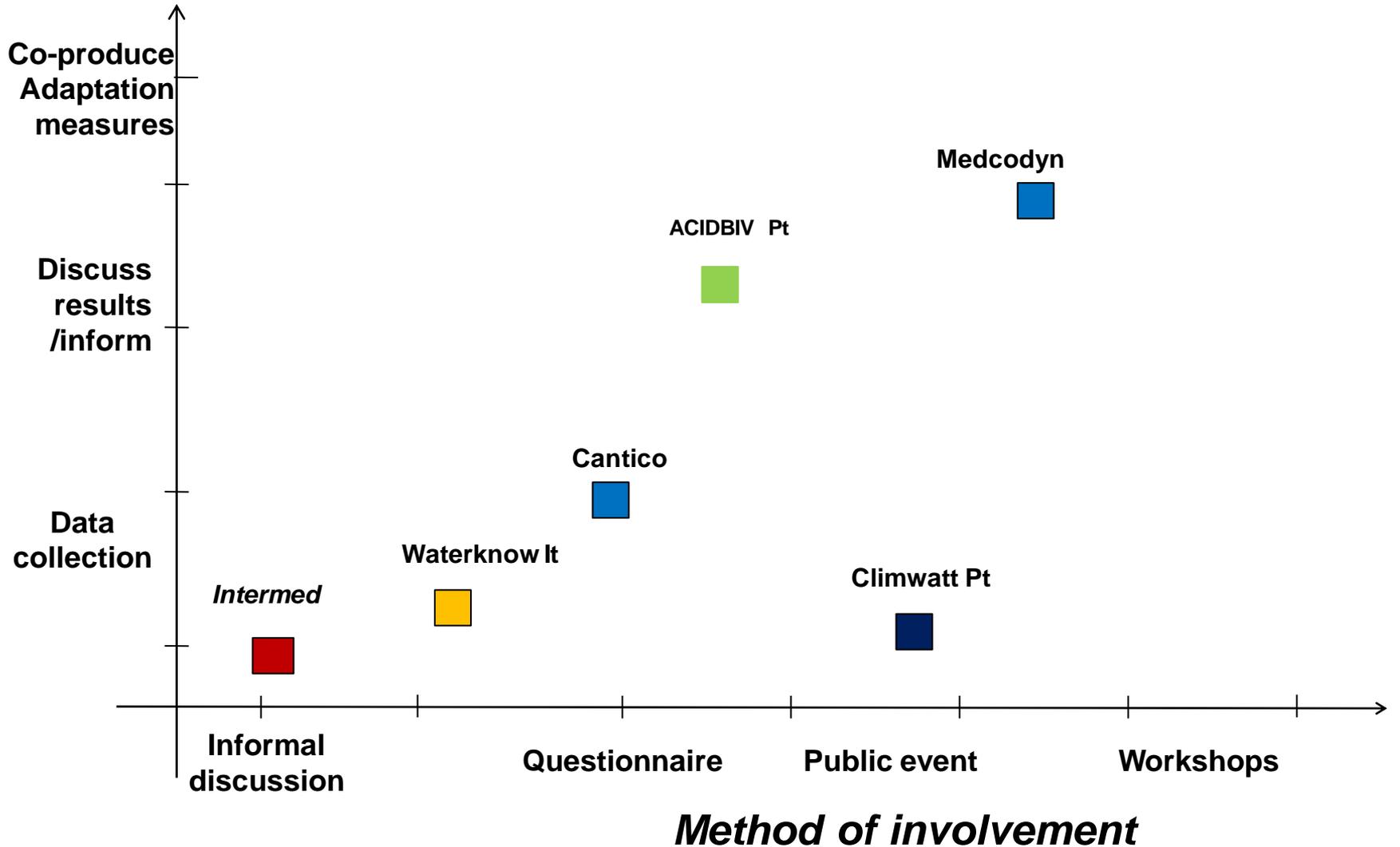
- Analysis of documents of each CIRCLE -MED research project
- In depth (recorded) interviews to researchers and project coordinators (+ stakeholders)
 - 15 in person interviews to researchers –recorded and transcribed ;
 - 4 phone interviews
 - 2 e-mail interviews
 - 9 in person interviews to stakeholders of 6 research teams

Some Results on the interaction of researchers and stakeholders

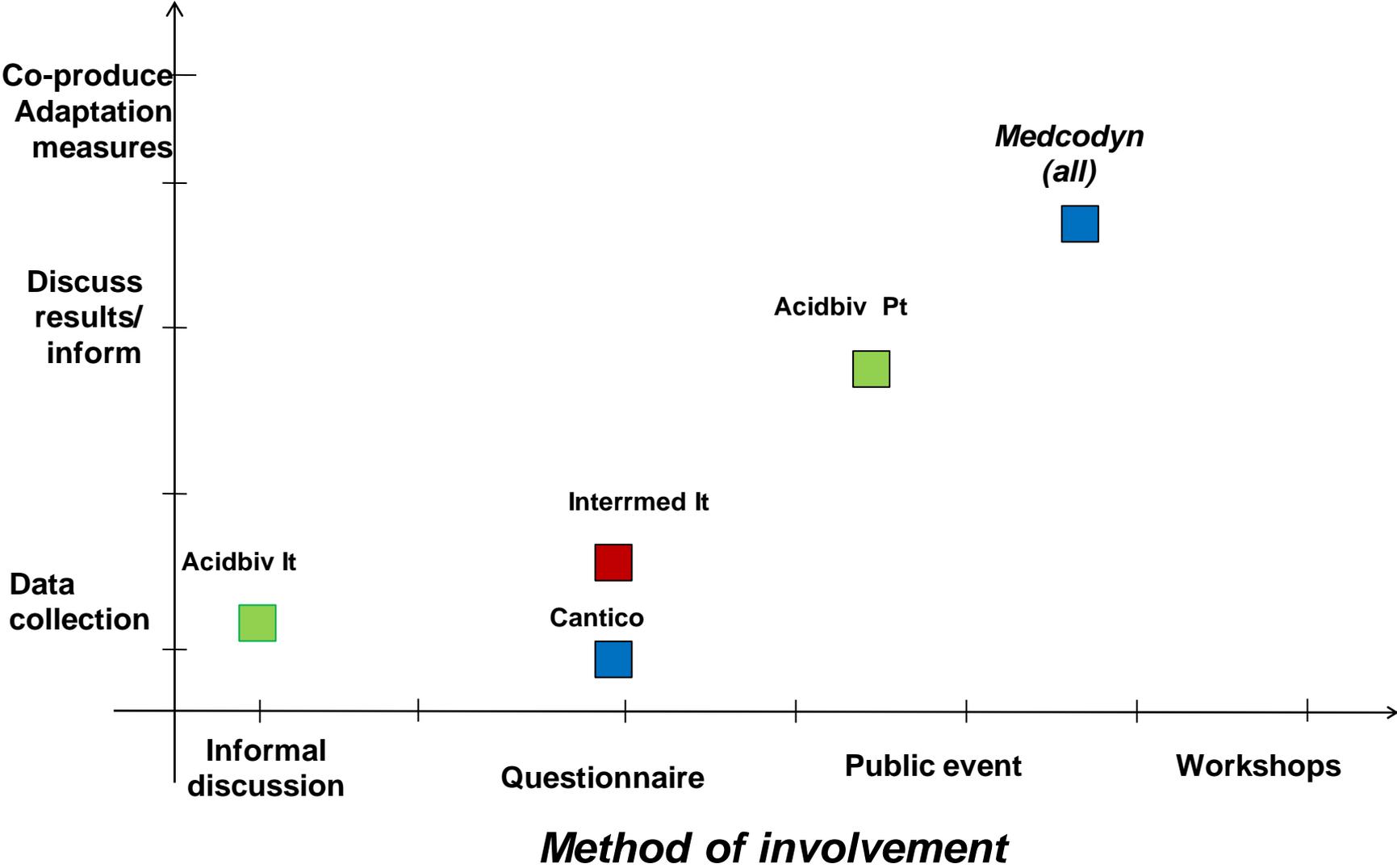


- **Document analysis + interviews**
- **ALL** researchers acknowledged the interest and need to collaborate with stakeholders
- **NO** research project formally included stakeholders in the research team
- **6 (in 21)** research teams engaged with the local administration
- **5 (in 21)** research teams engaged with the local actors (citizens, firms, associations...)

Level of Involvement with local /regional administration



Level of Involvement with local civil society



Some more results



- **NO** research project co-produced knowledge with stakeholders
- **ONE** project co-produced adaptation measures in participatory workshop context
- **The level of engagement** among researchers and stakeholders was **low** and accordingly the **methods most frequently used** for linkage with stakeholders were the ones requiring **smaller organizational effort** and **smaller demands from the stakeholder**

Science in the words of a stakeholder: what place in the table??

Pre-research

- Linkage to stakeholder:
- Request Formal letter + data

Research in the making

- Scientists proudly alone and with no time to waste : build models, get results and publish

Post research

- Linkage to stakeholder :
- member of audience of dissemination event (ritualistic)

Discussion : why is it so difficult to get stakeholders at the climate change table?

1) **The institutional aspects (or rules of the game) in the making of science**

- ✗ Lack of time and money
 - ✗ the so-called “socio-economic component of projects” is not a priority and can deviate researchers from the main objectives
- ✗ The structure of incentives in the scientific career : excellence of research is measured by narrow indicators and removed from societal concerns and societal relevance

Discussion : why is it so difficult to get stakeholders at the climate change table?



2) The competences /expertise argument

- ✘ Research teams lack competencies to conduct such dialog and/or conduct a dialog using the wrong methodologies

“Solution” : call the social sciences to take on that role (instrumental view of social sciences)

- ✘ Social science communicates to society the results/evidence produced by NATURAL SCIENCE
- + **But there are obstacles to the integration of social sciences**
- ✘ “we have different languages”
- ✘ “we lack time and resources”
- ✘ “ we do not know anyone from the social sciences”, etc

Discussion : why is it so difficult to get stakeholders at the climate change table?



3) The cultural argument

- Difficulty of dialog and collaboration with stakeholders due to different languages, knowledge, views of the problem , interests, time frames, etc

About the difficulty of dialog



- **with regional policy makers:** This was the worst part of my research... I am an evidence based scientist and if people want to use this knowledge they are free. But I want to sleep(..)I spent two years of my life hoping that this [research] could improve the quality of our life. .. Now I have my daughter ...I want to work.... I have my lab...
- **With local actors :** (...) any work and activity with local stakeholders is PAIN.. I would like to skip such activity:...They are just looking for their interest, usually lie and cheat. (...) The best results are when I use wine and food in research..so not appropriate EU methodology...ha Ha ha...

Discussion : why is it so difficult to get stakeholders at the climate change table?



4) **Last but not least : the** climate change thematic cause difficulties to this collaboration

- ✘ Climate change is ignored and /or a distant concern , if compared to other more pressing and important issues
- ✦ A *stakeholder from a regional environmental administration* approached by a researcher : “climate change? Hmmmm....please just let me go back to my work ! “

How can we get everyone to sit at the climate change table ?



- Reframe Climate change discussions and embed them in other more meaningful discussions with stakeholders
- Need to move beyond the
 - **The institutional obstacles**
 - Action must be taken at the policy level (science, higher education and public administration)
 - political will is needed to reframe what is “excellence” in science
 - ✦ DIFFICULT

How can we get everyone to sit at the climate change table ?



- Need to move beyond the
 - **The cultural obstacles**
 - easily done given the right institutional context ; there is interest from part to part and it also exists awareness of complementarities
 - Methodologies exist and are well known to approximate both worlds
- What can we as (tenured) researchers do:
 - Call for science policy interaction and interdisciplinarity : in our own research , in review pannels, etc
 - Civic/political intervention



Thank you for you attention !

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