

Transnational learning for drought adaptation: opportunities and bottlenecks for knowledge transfer

Joanne Vinke-de Kruijf

Postdoc researcher

Institute for Environmental Systems Research (USF)

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Background

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



BENEFIT OF GOVERNANCE
IN DROUGHT ADAPTATION

- PhD research
 - How effective are Dutch-funded knowledge transfer projects in Romania?
- Project management DROPP
 - How to adapt to droughts in Northwest Europe?
- Postdoc research Know2Adapt
 - What conditions lead to successful transnational learning in European water and climate change adaptation projects?

Introduction

- Droughts and water scarcity
 - Affecting 17% of the EU population and 11% of the EU territory (EU communication, EU Blueprint)
 - Early adaptation provides adaptation, not adapting involves high costs
- Contents
 - Example of EU drought adaptation project
 - Multi-level framework to analyse transnational learning
 - Opportunities and bottlenecks (theory and practice)
 - Outlook

DROP project: objective and actions



Enhance the preparedness and resilience of Northwest European regions to periods of drought and water scarcity

- Test and implement pilot measures for drought adaptation in agriculture, nature and freshwater
- Develop and apply a governance assessment tool in the regions of the pilot measures
- Draw transnational lessons and actively share them with others in meetings and through a handbook and guide

Duration: Jan. 2013 - June 2015



11 partners: 6 water authorities and 5 knowledge institutes

Nature pilot

Agriculture pilot

Freshwater pilot

Governance team



Drought adaptation in practice

Saltwater intrusion in France



Too little water in Twente



- Technical *and* governance issues:
 - Unclear division of roles and responsibilities
 - Conflicting interest
 - Lack of productive interactions, across actors and levels
 - Limited awareness

Transnational learning

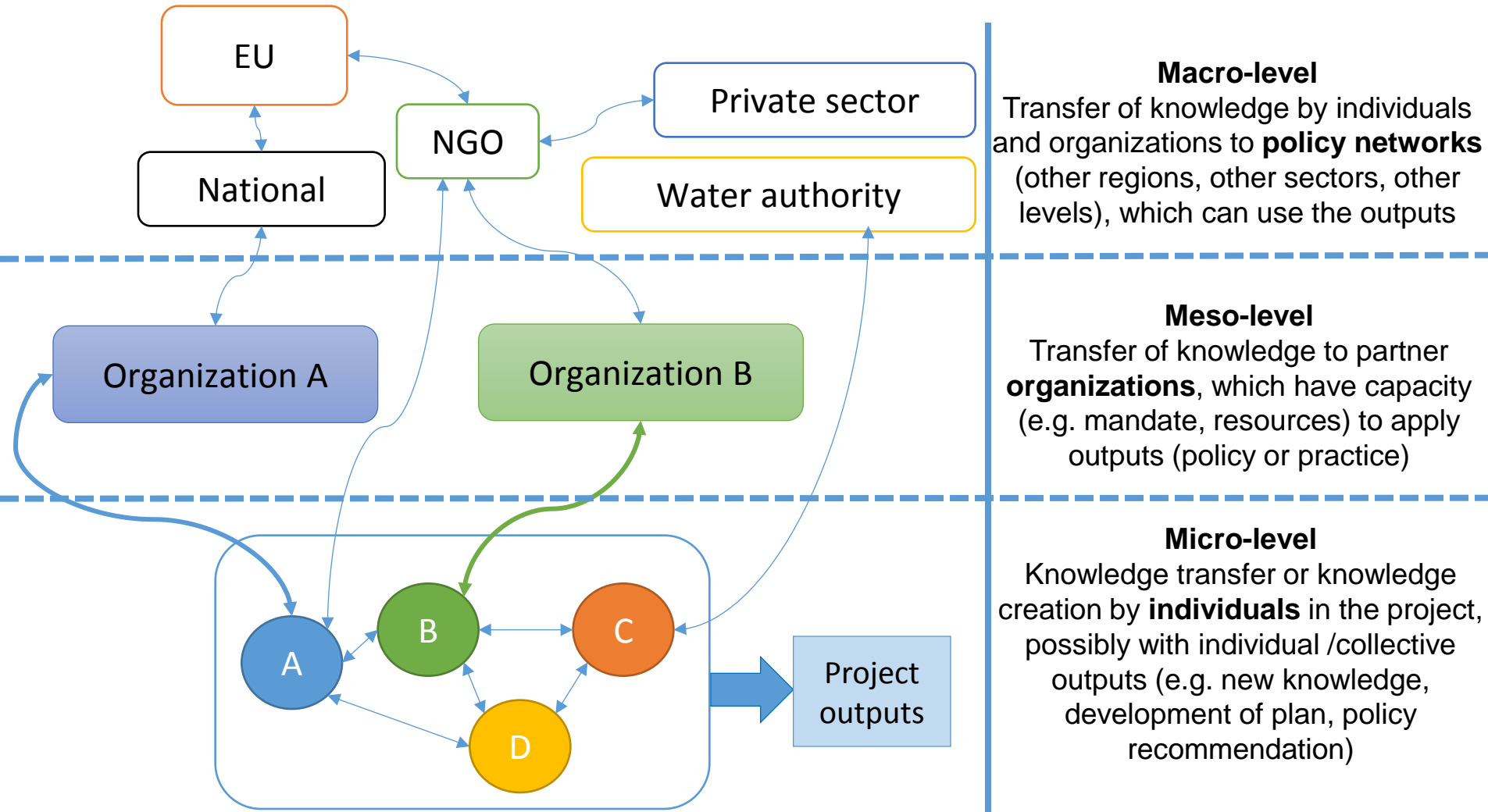
Learning environment:

- Diverse disciplines, countries, organizations
- Common interest that link partners together

Increase of knowledge, insights and skills/qualities (substance and relations)

- Who learns through a transnational project?
 - Individuals in a project (e.g. knowledge transfer)
 - Project group as a collective (e.g. knowledge development)
 - Organizations or policy network (e.g. dissemination)
- Key challenges:
 - Move beyond individual learning
 - Change of adaptation policies and practices (move towards application of knowledge)

Multi-level perspective on transnational learning



Enablers of transnational learning

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Micro | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality interaction process (e.g. small teams, mutual trust, reflection-in-action)• Good relationships at personal level (e.g. presence of actors with relational and interactional qualities)• Motivated group with clear common interest (not too diverse)• Project scope and knowledge being shared is relevant (relevant to own context, not too abstract nor too specific) |
| Meso | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants have a strong position inside their own organizations• Organizations have the resources to directly apply knowledge• Project outputs fit organization needs (scale and type of output) |
| Macro | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of a pro-active dissemination/diffusion strategy• Project involves policy entrepreneurs with a large network• Windows of opportunity or sense or urgency in policy network |

Bottlenecks for transnational learning

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Micro | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactions get stuck in misunderstandings (i.e. actor backgrounds are too different, no one can translate)• Actors do not know and trust each other (i.e. too few interactions)• Actor interests are too diverse (i.e. too heterogenous group) |
| Meso | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project outputs are never transferred and integrated into the organizations involved (i.e. limited attention for project)• Project outputs do not match organization needs (i.e. too abstract, too innovative, beyond organization scope) |
| Macro | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of strategy or means to reach external actors• No actors who are able and willing to share the project outputs• Project outputs are not relevant to others |

Findings related to the DROP project

	Enablers	Potential constraints
Micro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons are used to work internationally • Various partners worked with each other before • Enthusiastic and diverse group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of implementation (prepared in advance) • Learning limited to subgroups • Diverse contexts (governance, organization, language)
Meso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various organizations can directly apply lessons learned • Strong support in organizations due to previous projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought is not perceived as an issue • Mismatch between scientific analysis and practical needs
Macro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of partners with large international networks • Pro-active communication plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message does not fit needs (too general or too context-specific) • Failure to get the message across

Research outlook

- How to measure the process, outcomes and impacts of learning? How to define success?
- How does context (project, organization, institutional, natural) matter? Which contexts really matter?
 - Social system and natural system
- How to develop generalizable findings while doing justice to specific circumstances and contexts?
 - Systemic cross-case comparison of conditions (pathways) and outcomes of an intermediate number of cases (Qualitative Comparative Analysis)

Thank you!

- Involved in any EU water/adaptation project?
- Interested in thinking along?
joanne.vinkedekruijf@uni-osnabrueck.de
- For more information about my research and publications:
www.usf.uni-osnabrueck.de/
- For more information on the DROP project
www.dropproject.eu