

Research Design Living Lab Future Perspectives IJssel River

RESEARCH ON FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF STAKEHOLDERS
ALONG THE IJSSEL RIVER



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Future Perspectives IJssel

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1 Research context

Stakeholder engagement and stakeholder management are important ingredients for successful project delivery, and yet are often regarded as a fringe activity or one that can be outsourced to business-as-usual functions (APM, 2015). A standard definition of a stakeholder is: ‘...anyone that can affect or is affected by what you are trying to achieve’. Another term for stakeholders therefore could be ‘the people that count.’ Stakeholders may not necessarily be people you personally believe are important or who have hierarchical power – in fact you may not even be aware of their existence (RICS, 2014). There are numerous kinds of stakeholders, but for this thesis the ‘invisible’ stakeholder in river development projects will be of particular interest.

A key issue in adapting a river system to the consequences of climate change and evolving economical activities is involving citizens, entrepreneurs, companies and civil society organizations in the process of visioning. Visioning is a tool that brings stakeholders together to develop a shared vision of the future (Brouwer, Woodhill, Hemmati, Verhoosel, & Vugt, 2015). The underlying idea is that early participation could improve the quality of visioning and thus policy choices. In addition, an active involvement and support of stakeholders are greater when they have influence on what takes place in their immediate environment.

To actively involve stakeholders, it is important to know with who and which stakes are being dealt with. Often it is known who the stakeholders are, but there are difficulties to actively involve them. Excluding of stakeholders due to inaccessibility, unwillingness and nescience of participation can lead to major setbacks. A way to avoid this and achieve active participation and reach the less prominent stakeholder is ‘remote participation’. In remote participation, the focus is on stakeholders who want to attend and contribute at decision making without appearing there physically. Although various methods to enable remote participation are already in use by students in higher education (i.e. VPA), little is known about the effect of film material on vision forming and choice processes in river development projects. With this research we want to address the effectiveness of filmed future perspectives of stakeholders on the process of visioning by policy makers.

This thesis is carried out for policymakers; so that they can make (policy) choices with more support, and for stakeholders; so that they are more actively involved in the process of policy making in which they are at the forefront of change.

2 Research purpose

The purpose of this research is to analyse how 'remote participation' can influence the process of vision forming and policy development in upcoming river development projects. An assessment will take place to test whether the medium video enhances the understanding between future perspectives of stakeholders to facilitate the development of actions. Capturing and visualisation of future perspectives on camera could contribute to a new way of 'remote participation' that can be used for vision development, which in turn is used as an instrument for policy making. By focussing on learning and change, awareness will be created with stakeholders that it is not about finding out one truth, but about experiencing personal versions and diverse framings of reality (Witteveen & Botden, 2019). By researching whether this method of remote stakeholder management works effectively, it contributes to creating greater involvement and a substantiated support base for the future challenges the IJssel is facing.

3 Results

Based on the request of the client and the purpose of this research a (1) stakeholder analysis in the IJssel delta will be conducted, (2) a 15 á 20 minutes documentary will be created in which stakeholders are portrayed and the characteristics of the river area are highlighted, (3) an analysis will be made if video has a more favourable effect on effective involvement of stakeholders and stakeholder management strategies than other mediums.

1. Stakeholder analysis

The stakeholder analysis will give insight into the present stakeholders who could and will be affected by future projects in the IJssel delta region. The analysis will outline the different perspectives on the future of the IJssel related to knowledge, interest and beliefs. Not only will there be an inventory of stakeholders and their perspectives, but also a critical review will be provided of the perspectives of all stakeholders to identify potential pitfalls and chances for transition processes. It will help future project developers to gain early alignment among all stakeholders on goals and plans and to help address conflicts or issues early on. The stakeholder analysis will consist of a desktop study supplemented by a series of interviews.

2. Documentary

A documentary of approximately 15 à 20 minutes will be created as an in-depth and informative resource to create dialogue between direct stakeholders at stake and indirect stakeholders in policy and management positions. In the documentary a variety of stakeholders will be portrayed; their personal relationship and views on the future will be brought to light. The purpose of the documentary is to test whether depicting stakeholders' personal perspectives have a different effect on policymakers than traditional stakeholder management. The documentary highlights themes that relate to users of the IJssel delta region both in the current situation and in the future. A detailed approach can be found in **Error! Reference source not found.**

3. Research report

The findings of the study will be analysed and criticized on validity, after which a report with conclusions and recommendations is delivered to the client. The findings of the research will be substantiated critically and profoundly, and the actions taken will be described transparently.

4 Scope of the research

For both the research process and the documentary it is important to have clear boundaries in generating and processing information. The first boundary to the research is 'time'; the research takes place from the 9th of March until the 3rd of July. The main phase of research takes place from the 16th of March until the 19th of June. The second boundary is 'spatial demarcation', this research is focussed on the area of the IJssel river.

Furthermore, the focus of this research is on stakeholders with direct stakes (or use it in their daily lives) in the IJssel river system, with this we meant the citizens and entrepreneurs along the IJssel River. The fourth and last boundary of this research is the focus on 'remote participation method', which is defined as involvement of stakeholders on a distance and the opportunities of new forms of participation. In the current situation (3rd of April 2020) we have to deal with governmental measures due to COVID-19, wherein we are forced to conduct our research on a distance. The research approach had to be adapted to these circumstances by using remote participation research methods, wherein stakeholders are involved to share their perspective on the development of a vision of the IJssel river.

5 Research questions

Based on the problem definition and the described purpose and scope the following research question is formulated:

How could visualising stakeholder perspectives in a documentary, on the future of the IJssel delta, contribute to the development of a shared vision by policy makers?

To answer this main question the following sub-questions have been drafted:

1. Which stakeholders can be identified in the IJssel delta?
This sub-question is needed for creating an overview of relevant stakeholders and determining their different perspectives; to know with who and what we are dealing with.
2. What are their perspectives on the future of the IJssel?
This question gives input to showing different worldviews of the stakeholders in the documentary. Their perspectives are part of the shared vision.
3. What is the relationship between the different perspectives of stakeholders to issues at stake?
For the requested stakeholder analysis it is not only important which stakeholder are present, but also what the relationship is between them and their perspectives on issues at stake, referring to governance issues and social interactions.
4. What do stakeholders in policy or management positions need to develop a shared vision? *This sub-question will give insights into how shared visions are currently being developed and what is needed from stakeholders such as citizens and entrepreneurs to create a vision.*
5. What are the effects of visualising stakeholder perspectives on the development of a shared vision? *With this question an inventory is made of effects that are observed. This inventory is used to answer the main research question. It enables giving a recommendation to stakeholders with policy or management positions.*

6 Theoretical framework

To give substance to the theoretical framework, a literature review is conducted to collect research documents and information from the internet which are relevant for this Living Lab's research topic. The literature of the client-supplied information about VPA and what is found on the internet is reviewed on new interesting theories. In the first place, the research philosophy is described, afterwards the applied theories for this research are elaborated. At the end of this chapter, a conceptual model with the main concepts of the research and the relations between these concepts is elaborated.

6.1 Research philosophy

The term 'research philosophy' refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). In the report of Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) is stated that whether you are consciously aware of them or not, in every stage of your research you as a researcher will make a number of type of assumptions which could be about human knowledge (epistemological assumptions), the realities you encounter in your research (ontological assumptions) and the extent and ways your own values influence your research process (axiological assumptions). The assumptions made by the researcher shapes the understanding of the research question, the methods which are used and how interpretations of the results and actions are made (Crotty, 1998). In Kumar (2019) is stated: 'Your belief in a particular philosophy underpinning the mode of enquiry shapes your opinion (as a researcher) about the appropriateness of the methods for finding answers to your research questions' (Kumar, 2019).

In this research the different perspectives of stakeholders (especially citizens and entrepreneurs) on the future of the IJssel delta will be researched. Based on this purpose the central research philosophy is 'social constructivism'. In this philosophy it is necessary as a researcher to study a situation in detail (with historical, geographical and socio-cultural contexts) to understand how realities are being experienced and to be able to understand what is happening, considering the research topic (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Social constructivism is a version of 'Subjectivism' according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009): "subjectivism incorporates assumptions of the arts and humanities, asserting that social reality is made from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (people)" (p. 130). To be able to understand the future perspectives of the stakeholders living in the area of the IJssel delta, the historical, geographical and socio-cultural context must be clear. The aim is to have clear which different opinions and narratives are present on the future perspectives which can help policy makers in the process of spatial planning. In the subjectivism a researcher believes that using this data cannot detach themselves from their own values (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The requested result of the client, a documentary, requires that the researcher openly acknowledge and reflect upon their own values and incorporates these within the research process and final result.

6.2 Relevant theories and approaches

Different literature resources are reviewed on relevant theories and approaches for the research towards future perspectives of stakeholders in the IJssel. Core themes (key concepts) which are used in the literature review are: visualisation, stakeholder perspectives and river management. This subsection describes the theoretical boundaries of the research. Overview relevant theories (4/5)

Visual Problem Appraisal

Visual Problem Appraisal (VPA) is a film-based learning environment or communicative strategy which structures problem analysis of complex issues. It is a tool for 'virtual mobility' allowing policy makers, citizens, engaged communities and students to visit people in distant places and spaces whereby 'distance' can be conceptualised from diverse perspectives such as geographical, seasonal and socio-cultural distances. VPA creates space for social dialogue that enhances the inclusion of underrepresented stakeholders and provides access to powerful stakeholders who may otherwise be absent (Witteveen & Botden, 2019). The core of a VPA is based on 'mediated stakeholder consultations'. By the use of filmed stakeholder stories, space for dialog is created and stakeholders are being 'brought together' in a mediated way. This connection is important for participative and deliberative governance ambitions for further unravelling of diversity and nuance in opinions, views and social imaginaries of important actor groups. The theory behind VPA is that filmed narratives have a quality to represent overlooked and excluded stakeholders 'voices' and thereby allow sharing their narratives and the visualisation of their contexts. It believes that social (visual) imaginaries are strong drivers contributing to sustainable futures and social change (Witteveen & Botden, 2019).

The VPA approach can be an addition to this Living Lab's research because it focuses on social learning. Collective learning about social issues, problem framing and perceptions contributes to creating greater involvement and a substantiated support base for the future challenges the IJssel is facing. It supports participatory and deliberative governance, enhanced problem and policy analysis and increased commitment for concerned primary stakeholders. VPA is composed of a set of 15-30 interviews, two documentaries, a facilitators guide, a workbook with reflective forms for each stage of the VPA process and PowerPoint templates. A disadvantage of this broad VPA package is the time it takes for preparation. Due to the timeframe of the Living Lab's research, the VPA approach can be consulted for interviewing techniques and the design of the documentary.

Smart Rivers approach

Smart Rivers is an ecosystem approach that combines flood risk management with floodplain restoration. Its central idea is that projects in floodplain areas should always be executed in line with the unique 'DNA' of a river system, such as the geological make-up, morphology, and river dynamics (Peters & Willems, 2019). Working within the DNA of the river does not only result in a larger drainage of water, but also the returning of indigenous nature which forms a strong story for society. In addition, this sustainable way of organizing reduces management costs and generally offers economic development opportunities (Smart Rivers, 2019).

The overlap of this approach with this research is about making the right choices early on in the design process in order not to experience setbacks in future transition processes. Spatial planning projects are often subject to concessions in quality: visions rarely become reality. However, the concept of the Smart River approach helps steering concessions. By working with the DNA of the river, the acceptability of quality concessions can be tested and projects that are expected to result in future management problems and even societal damage are prevented from being realized. '*Which processes belong to this specific river trajectory?*' is a central question in the Smart River approach. By asking this question early on, the design process and the considerations afterwards often run considerably better. Where the Smart River approach mainly focusses on the usage of 'DNA of the river' early on in the

design process, the Living Lab’s research will focus on the importance of early involvement of the end users. Wrong choices in landscape adjustments have direct negative effect on the direct stakeholders. At the same time, if these stakeholders are not properly involved in the design of the landscape, these adjustments may not even get off the ground due to lacking carrying capacity. These two are intertwined and it is therefore important to learn from both approaches.

In addition to the approach, Smart Rivers translated the DNA of the IJssel into posters with practical design concepts. These design concepts can be used for river basin planning and decision making, and for actual design and implementation of floodplain restoration projects.

PSIR framework

The PSIR framework (Pressure, States, Impact and Response framework), provides a simplified overview on the interaction between the water system, such as the IJssel river system, and the social system. The original PSIR diagram is applied to water management by A. Hoekstra (1998) and adapted by Valkering et al. (2008b) (Haasnoot, 2013). The PSIR framework contributes to describing the interaction between the water system (geological/physical processes) and the social system in the form of an effect chain, according to Haasnoot (2013). The framework is presented in Figure 1. Environmental pressures which are expected in the future, for example climate change with more extremes in high and low water discharges and possible change of land use increase the pressure on (fresh) water availability and enough water for shipping. The socio-economical aspects of a region determine the pressure on the water demand and spatial claims of different stakeholders. This leads to an increasing pressure on the system state (water quantity and quality), this new state has impact on social, economic and ecological services of a river system (freshwater availability, drinking water supply and shipping). These impacts may lead to societal responses as a changing perception and valuation of the environment and a river system, and an inherent policy-driven water management response, as described by Haasnoot (2013).

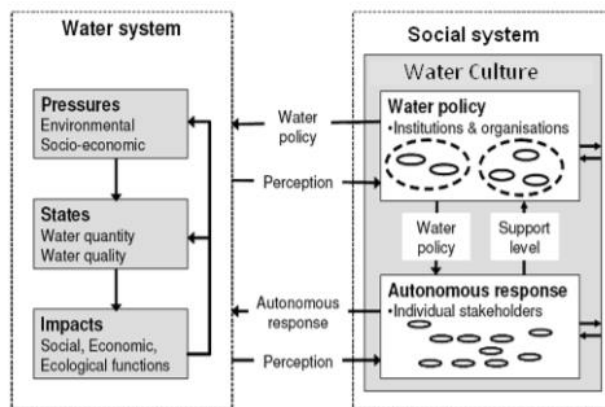


Figure 1 PSIR framework (Valkering, et al., 2009), the original diagram is from Hoekstra (1998b) (Haasnoot, 2013)

The PSIR framework gives insights in the interaction of the complex water- and social systems, the effect-chain is dynamic and changes over time (new circumstances because of new scientific insights on for example climate change or spatial planning occur). This is shown in Figure 2, due to the uncertainties about the pressures (climate change impact over time), multiple forms of pressure, impact and responses are possible for in the future (Haasnoot, 2013). Scenarios can be used to describe the pressure over time, in this research the focus is more on vision forming by policy makers considering the perspectives of stakeholders (citizens and entrepreneurs) on the river system of the IJssel (socio-economical aspects and water systems). In the PSIR framework as presented in Figure 1, this focusses more on the autonomous response of a group of individual stakeholders on the water

policy institutions and organisations. This potentially gives input on the scenario-thinking process which will be more important for policy makers in river management in The Netherlands, considering the new Environment and Planning Act which will be implemented in 2021 (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom relations, nd).

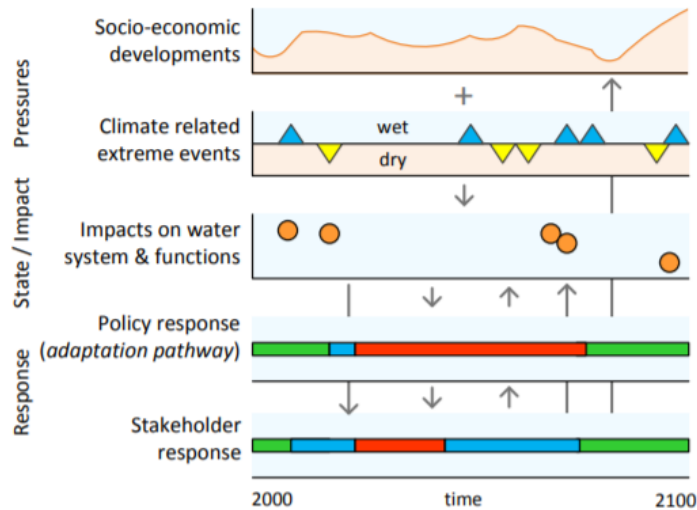


Figure 2 dynamics of the system (PSIR framework) (Haasnoot, 2013)

To be able to define perspectives the definition must be clear, in the report of Offermans (2012) is referred to a research of van Asselt, (2000) to give substance to a definition of perspectives: "Perceptual screens through which people interpret the world (world views) and which guides them in acting" (Offermans, 2012). In the perspectives method of Offermans (2012) is referred to the 'Cultural Theory' with three active, stereotypical perspectives: the Hierachist, Egaliatrian and Individualist, which is applied to water in the literature, see Figure 3 (Hoekstra, 1998b; van Asselt et al., 2001; Middelkoop et al., 2004; Valkering et al., 2008b).

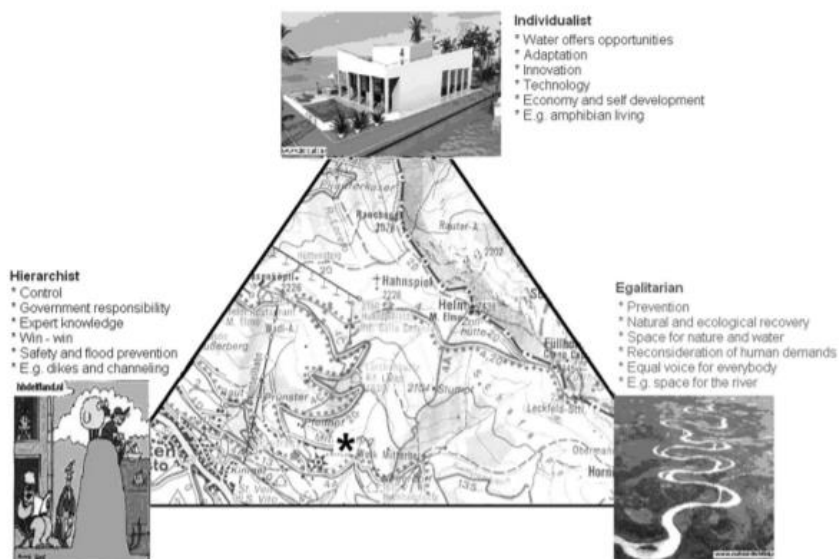


Figure 3 The perspectives triangle (Offermans, 2012), (Hoekstra, 1998b; van Asselt et al., 2001; Middelkoop et al., 2004; Valkering et al., 2008b).

According to Offermans (2012), the Hierachist believes in controlling water and nature which is het responsibility of governmental organisations who make decisions which are based on research and expert knowledge. Sustainable water systems highlight safety and flood prevention, because water is seen as a threat, and leaves space for economic and natural development (Offermans, 2012).

An Egalitarian prioritize ecological recovery and natural development by creating more space for nature and water. Decisions should be based on a process of participatory decision making process, wherein there is a more equal voice for each individual stakeholder in the area. Thereby, the needs of animals and plants should be seriously be considered, according to Offermans (2012). In the report of Offermans (2012) is stated: "A sustainable water system focuses on strong sustainability with space for natural and ecological processes and reconsideration of human demands."

The Individualist is described in the report of Offermans (2012), as a more opportunistic point of view. In their point of view, water is not a threat for safety but offers changes for economy, recreation and creativity. The adaptation approach is more important for an individualist, they have great trust in technology and the liberal market, Offermans (2012).

There is a fourth perspective in the Cultural Theory, the Fatalist, according to (Douglas, 1970; Thompson et al., 1990 and mentioned in the report of Offermans (2012). Fatalist can be described as a person who is not concerned about the future and sees live as a lottery, which means that destiny cannot be influenced by human interventions, Offermans (2012). In their perspective policy does not change the course of life and sustainability is not worth to be discussed. In the research of future perspective of stakeholders towards the IJssel delta, the purpose is to determine what the value is of visualising perspectives in the process of vision development in policy. Herein everyone's perspective could be in valuable in this process. Therefore is decided to include the Fatalist perspective, if there are stakeholder views which can be considered as a Fatalist perspective.

The 'cultural theory' with its four perspectives could be used in the research to be able to frame the different perspectives of the stakeholders (citizens and entrepreneurs). Besides that, it gives insights in opportunities and threats for river management projects in an early phase. This because, the stereotypical perspective can be connected to what kind of measurements in river management will be supported by the different stakeholders and which would not be favourable in the perspectives of the citizens and entrepreneurs.

6.3 Conceptual framework of the research

Based on the described relevant theories and concepts in this research, a conceptual model can be made to visualise the relations between these concepts. The conceptual model can be described as a framework for the elaboration and structure of the research and is a result of the description of the research problem, research question and theoretical framework. In Figure 4, the conceptual framework of this research is presented.

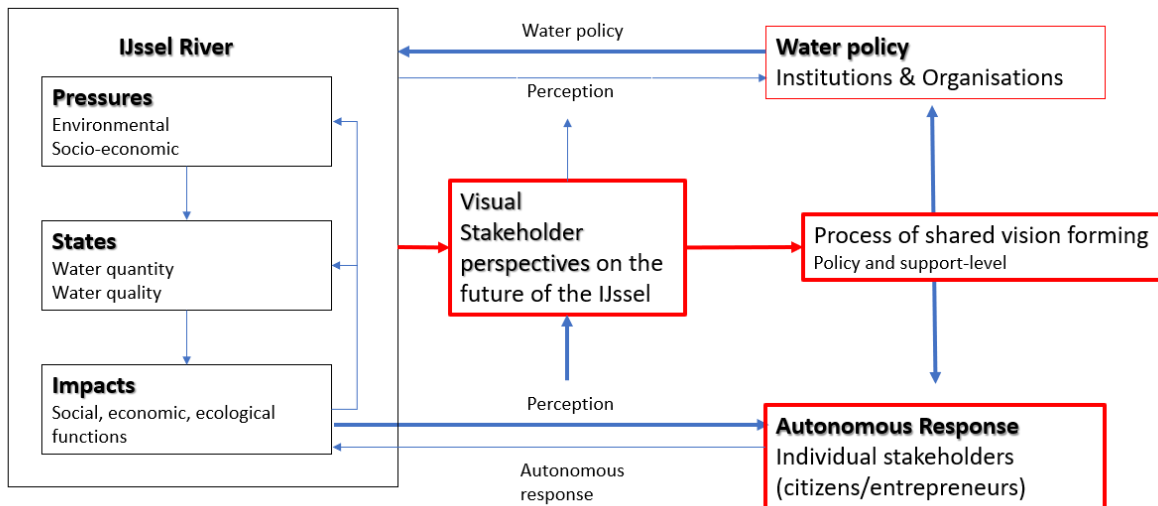


Figure 4 Conceptual framework 'Future perspectives IJssel River', based on PSIR (Haasnoot, 2013) and (own source)

In the conceptual model the IJssel River is the water system which is considered in the research process. The perceptions made by institutions and organisations on the water system could differ from the perceptions of individual stakeholders (citizens and entrepreneurs) about the future of the IJssel river which can be influenced by the current and future pressures, states and impacts. In the social system will be researched what the effect of visualising stakeholder perspectives in video, influenced by perceptions of the autonomous response, potentially has on the process of shared vision forming in water policy.

7 Research approach

To give answer on the formulated research question the following approach will be applied. The research is structured in three stages: scoping, production and testing.

Scoping stage

In this stage of research will be determined which stakeholders are interesting to involve for an overview of future perspectives from different stakeholders in an area.

1. Stakeholder analysis

Connecting stakeholders starts with gaining insight into who these stakeholders are and why they matter. At the beginning of this research it will be effective to make a quick scan, and then conduct more focused and in-depth follow-up research based on this.

After the stakeholders are identified the interests (stakes), possible contribution and power in decision making process can be determined. As the example below:

Stakeholders	Interests – stakes in MSP	Contributions to successful outcomes of MSP (knowledge, money, time, labor)	Decision-making power (influential or not)
1			
2			
3			
4			

After the stakeholders are described by determining their characteristics, the role of the stakeholders in the research process can be defined. As the example below:

Role	Stakeholder
Partner	
Contractor	
Influencer / Champion	
Disseminator	
Funder	
Informer / Consultation	

2. Semi-structured interviews stakeholder perspectives (video)

After knowing who the stakeholders are, semi-structured interviews will take place. These interviews will be prepared with an interview guide which contains four or five topics which could be discussed during the conversation with the interviewee. The topics have to trigger participants to think about future perspectives of the IJssel river on several themes (i.e. transport, mobility, recreation, nature, etc.). Additional unplanned questions based on direct observations during the interview will be asked to reach the deeper layer. The strategy in the interview guide is to start with small talk by exploring the current connection with the river, later in the interview the topics of the interview guide on the future of the IJssel river give direction to the topics we as researcher are interested in.

The interviews will mainly be recorded preferably on video by using a camera or an online recording programme in for example Skype, but if it is requested by an interviewee only sound recordings are also a possibility (AVG). The duration of each interview will be 30-60 minutes. In total, at least 10-15 interviews have to be held with multiple stakeholders (citizens and entrepreneurs) which have a relation with the IJssel river. These interviews lead to captured multi-stakeholder perspectives on video (portraits).

The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews can be found in [Error! Reference source not found.](#)

Production stage (developing intervention)

In this stage of research, the different future perspectives of the stakeholders are documented and translated into a documentary.

3. Video stakeholders perspectives

The filmed interviews (portraits) will be translated into a documentary which will be used in the testing stage to study the influence of video on the process of visioning. All the recorded perspectives have to be documented in a short report of each interview session. The stories of the different interviewees will lead to an overview of their perspective on the future of the IJssel. Along the interview process a storyline for the documentary will become clear, therefore a storyboard of the documentary will be created. The most relevant perspectives/ quote's from the interviewees will be translated into a documentary which can trigger the audience to think about the future of the IJssel. The documentary will have a duration of 15-20 minutes in total.

- *Document perspectives of interviewed stakeholders in a short report and create an overview needed for the storyline.*
- *Create storyboard and combine clips and narratives to form documentary.*

Testing stage (monitoring of intervention)

In this final stage will be researched what the influence is of the different portraits of stakeholders in the IJssel on the vision forming of future perspectives by indirect stakeholders in management and policy positions.

4. Stakeholder session

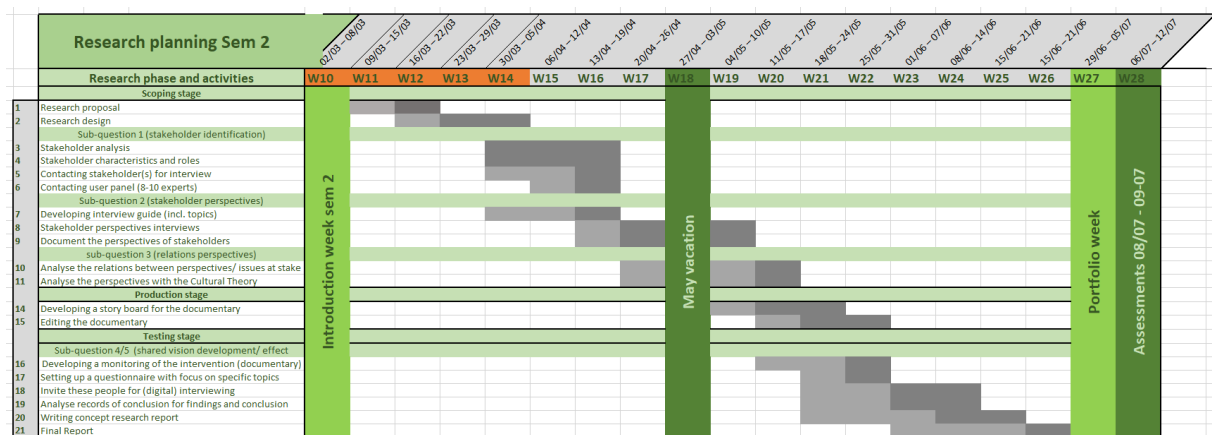
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8 Planning

The second semester of the fluvial system has a duration of 18 week. The main phase of the research takes place from the 16th of March until the 26th of June. In the table below important deadlines are presented. Furthermore, based on the research approach as described in chapter 7, a research planning is developed.

Week in Semester 2	Calendar week	Data	Deadline activity
2	11	09/03 – 15/03	Research proposal
5	14	30/03 – 05/04	Research design
6	15	06/04 – 12/04	Stakeholder analyse phase
12	22	25/05 – 31/05	Documentary
13	23	01/06 – 07/06	Research phase (Stakeholder session)
15	25	15/06 – 21/06	Concept Research report
16	26	22/06 – 28/06	Research report
17	27	29/06 – 05/07	Portfolio week (final assessment second week)
18	28	06/07 – 12/07	Final assessments of second semester (08/07-09/07)

Based on the research activities and considering the deadlines as mentioned above, the following research planning is developed.



*A better overview of the planning can be found in Appendix III

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Appendix I Research planning

Research planning Sem 2		02/03 – 08/03	09/03 – 15/03	16/03 – 22/03	23/03 – 29/03	30/03 – 05/04	06/04 – 12/04	13/04 – 19/04	20/04 – 26/04	27/04 – 03/05	04/05 – 10/05	11/05 – 17/05	18/05 – 24/05	25/05 – 31/05	01/06 – 07/06	08/06 – 14/06	15/06 – 21/06	22/06 – 28/06	29/06 – 05/07	06/07 – 12/07	
		W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15	W16	W17	W18	W19	W20	W21	W22	W23	W24	W25	W26	W27	W28	
Research phase and activities																					
Scoping stage																					
1	Research proposal																				
2	Research design																				
Sub-question 1 (stakeholder identification)																					
3	Stakeholder analysis																				
4	Stakeholder characteristics and roles																				
5	Contacting stakeholder(s) for interview																				
6	Contacting user panel (8-10 experts)																				
Sub-question 2 (stakeholder perspectives)																					
7	Developing interview guide (incl. topics)																				
8	Stakeholder perspectives interviews																				
9	Document the perspectives of stakeholders																				
sub-question 3 (relations perspectives)																					
10	Analyse the relations between perspectives/ issues at stake																				
11	Analyse the perspectives with the Cultural Theory																				
Production stage																					
14	Developing a story board for the documentary																				
15	Editing the documentary																				
Testing stage																					
Sub-question 4/5 (shared vision development/ effect																					
16	Developing a monitoring of the intervention (documentary)																				
17	Setting up a questionnaire with focus on specific topics																				
18	Invite these people for (digital) interviewing																				
19	Analyse records of conclusion for findings and conclusion																				
20	Writing concept research report																				
21	Final Report																				

***Attention:**

1. week 15/16 – Easter (from the 10th of April until the 13th)
2. week 19 – National commemoration/ Celebration of freedom (from the 4th of May till the 5th)
3. week 21 – Ascension Day (21st of May)
4. Week 23 – Pentecost (from the 31st of May till the 1st of June)