Practical handbook to the Crossing Borders theory

Jan van der Molen & Hannah Ietswaart
Preface

The Kruger National Park is part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. A vast project which is being developed in the Southern region of Africa, involving three countries, i.e. South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe wherein are closely working together. As officer of the Kruger National Park, my day-to-day responsibilities involve many cross-border regional alliances. This is the reason I was one of the key note speakers in September 2011 during a symposium in Germany regarding cross-border cooperation around the river Vecht.

During the week preceding the symposium I became acquainted with the Crossing Borders theory. It immediately impressed me that this theory contains such potential added value for managers of these cross-border regional alliances. In many of the discussed topics I found direct links to specific issues from our daily practice.

For your information, in case of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park the harmonisation and integration of various policies to improve the cooperative management of the Transfrontier Park are under way. Processes such as standardising a fee and rate structure, introducing a border-crossing protocol and a tourism strategy that will optimise the Transfrontier Park’s tourism development opportunities, in particular cross-border products, are also far advanced.

The handbook which is published now, will further highlight the practical side of the theory in clearer and specific wording. This is most certainly a contribution to managers of cross-border regional alliances, for they will be able to benefit from this potential added value even more in their daily activities.

Dear Hannah and Jan, congratulations on publishing this unique book.

William Mabasa
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Beaver woke up with a strange sense of discomfort, something was wrong. Lately she experienced this feeling more and more, but today it was too strong to ignore. ‘Maybe I should try and find the cause today’, she thought. She scanned the surroundings she knew so well. Nothing. Although? Hidden between the reeds, she saw a brownish plant she had never seen before, it had a pointed flower. As she approached it, the pointed flower suddenly lowered. Piercing beady eyes looked at her. The plant was an animal, a bird! Beaver kept a few feet of distance, you never know.

‘Um, hello, I am Bittern’, the plant-bird said. He spoke a different language, but she could still make out his words. Beaver was silent, too shaken to answer. ‘Hi, I am Beaver. Where are you from and what exactly are you looking for?’ Bittern wasn’t used to all these questions from a stranger and stuttered: ‘Um, I come from far away, that direction I think (she pointed her wing) and I am travelling to find out why our food is running out’. Beaver was silent again. So that’s what made her so uneasy. She had the same problems with finding food in her neighbourhood. The water level was much lower than before and there were less and less water plants. Why hadn’t she noticed that before! Suddenly it dawned on her what the plant-bird came for: ‘So now you are here to eat the last of my plants?’ she bellowed, ‘that’s not how things are done around here, mister!’ ‘No, really, you misunderstood,’ Bittern said, ‘I don’t like to eat plants. We bitterns eat fish and frogs. But those have all gone in our neighbourhood and now we have to eat mice and insects, but they are difficult to catch. This is why we are laying less eggs and our brood is getting weaker.’ ‘Okay, the bird is a meat eater’, Beaver thought. Normally she did not like them at all, but now it felt as a relieve. Her food was safe. The strange bird has, in a sense, the same problem she encountered, albeit somewhat differently. ‘Is the water level in your neighbourhood lower as well?’, she asked Bittern. Bittern nodded. Beaver pondered for a while. In a sudden burst, she exclaimed: ‘I think I will join you!’ Bittern looked at her in amazement: ‘Join me? Where?’ ‘Finding why the food is running out, of course,’ Beaver answered. ‘We will cooperate!’ Bittern had a dubious look. He was silent for while and his brain was working overtime. Then he answered: ‘Well, why not. ‘Let’s cooperate!’
They travelled along the river to the East, without a goal, without a plan, scouting for possible causes for their food problem. While they were resting along the water, Pike's head suddenly protruded from the water. 'What are you two doing here in my territory', he growled. 'Actually, who are you two? I have never seen you around here.' Beaver was startled by the notorious animal she knew all too well from stories, but recuperated fast: 'You are Pike, right? We are Beaver and Bittern and we cooperate,' she said stately. Pike's face grimaced. 'Well, well,' he said, 'so you are cooperating? And what does that mean, this cooperating you do?' Beaver and Bittern looked at each other. They hadn't given it that much thought yet. 'Well, it's just that we work together,' Beaver quickly explained. Bittern nodded enthusiastic: 'Whatever she says! We just work together'. Pike laughed stammering. 'You really have no idea, do you? You just heard this fancy word, but you have no clue what it means'. 'Yes, we do!' Beaver said as she pointed her nose arrogantly. 'Oh yeah?' Pike said, 'give me a definition of cooperation, if you can'. Beaver was silent and Bittern pretended to be a plant again. Suddenly, a small voice sounded from the bushes. Loud enough to hear, but too soft to be able to understand. 'Hello, who is there, who spoke there?' Beaver called out. The voice was a little louder this time, 'It's me, Mouse. I am kind of afraid to come any closer. You see, I am somewhat at the bottom of the food chain here.' Beaver looked dismayed at Pike who was grinning and softly licking his lips, and to Bittern who scoured the bushes with his shiny beady eyes. 'They will not harm you, I'll make sure they won't. Just come closer'.

Mouse hopped closer, but kept her distance to the water. 'Well, what do you want to tell us', Pike growled. 'Out with it, or I will jump from the water'. Mouse shivered and squeaked: 'I gave you a definition of cooperation. I said: cooperation is any joint activity of two or more organizations, aimed at generating public value by working together in stead of separately of each other. That is the definition Barlach wrote in 2001'. The other three looked at Mouse with their mouths open. Even Pike...
was impressed. After a long silence, he asked: ‘How on earth do you know this?’

‘From a book’, Mouse said. ‘I live in an old satchel someone once left along the water. One of the books in there is about cross-border cooperation. And because I would like to see that happen, I read the whole book. About ten times.’

‘Well friends, this is your chance,’ Pike solemnly said, ‘Miss Professor here can explain to you what you are doing. Who knows, I might start cooperating too, once she has explained it all... but don’t count on it!’

‘Do you want me to get the book?’ Mouse said enthusiastically. ‘So we can read it together’. ‘Good plan’, Beaver said, ‘I will walk you there’.

When Mouse and Beaver returned, Mouse opened the book, cleared her throat and said: ‘Let’s start at the introduction’.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 WHY THIS PUBLICATION?

A book on cross-border cooperation

This book is all about cooperation between organizations in daily practice. Cooperation that does not end at the border of a country, but is specifically aimed at getting things done and achieving goals together with the organizations on the other side of the border. This could be based on the benefits for all parties involved, or on the pressure to achieve certain goals (problem pressure, judicial pressure) that all parties are experiencing. Whatever the underlying stimulus, development of a well functioning cross-border partnership is a complex process, in which various elements, often simultaneously, play a part. This book offers pioneers of these cross-border regional partnerships a practical theory of action with knowledge, strategies and tools to initiate, manage and design this partnership, taking into account the effects of state borders.

Cooperation increasingly important

Cooperation, including cross-border cooperation, is becoming an increasingly important part of organizational strategies. On one hand this is caused by the society getting more and more complex. Activities being deployed in this day and age are so multi-faceted that it has become impossible for a single organization to master these to perfection. Therefore, it often requires input from other organizations to be able to develop and execute all these activities. From local organizations, but also from organizations on the other side of the border.

Many potential themes for cooperation will impact different countries. Think of rivers that flow freely across borders. But also of issues such as crime fighting, transportation and education. Cooperation across borders in these themes can create additional quality impulses and a more effective approach. At the same time, this cooperation can become complicated as result of major differences between countries in the areas of public administration, sectoral approach, culture and language.

On the other hand there is new legislation, such as the European Water Framework Directive in the case of water management. These and other European laws obligate organizations on both sides of the border to work together. At least they have to align their policies with regards to cross-border issues.
New demands for managers

These developments pose new demands for managers who manage and coordinate cooperative processes. In the past expertise was the main requirement, but these days pioneers of cross-border partnerships have to possess other competencies, such as operating in networks, connecting parties, designing partnerships, bridging administrative and political differences, handling language and cultural differences, etc. More than before, the new manager is an active millipede with broad knowledge, excellent communication skills and a good feel for administrative and political relations.

Background of this book

The foundation of this book is formed by the Crossing Borders theory (Van der Molen, 2011), supplemented with practical experiences of the authors in the area of cross-border cooperation. Both authors work in the Netherlands at the Water Board Velt & Vecht in Coevorden, a regional governing organization entrusted with the care and control of surface waters in its region as core task. The authors have been involved in various cross-border regional partnerships. This book, the underlying theory and the Crossing Borders Academy are part of the capacity building program described in paragraph 1.3. The name of this program is ‘Flow in the Vecht valley, the art of cooperation without borders’.

Foundation for own personal interpretation

Not only practice, but also research has shown that managing cooperation between organizations is an inexact art form, which requires a great deal of personal interpretation. In order to provide managers with a foundation for their own personal interpretations, the Crossing Borders theory was developed in 2007 - 2010. The book, which now lies before you, has evolved from the desire of the authors to offer this theory in a clear, accessible and practically applicable form, to everyone who is involved or interested in cross-border regional cooperation.

Practical handbook at meso level

To this end, the theory has been partly stripped from its scientific justification, which is less significant for practical ends, and rewritten in more accessible language, along with many illustrating examples from daily practice. The practice-oriented theory of action as it is presented here, came about by actually combining theory and practice. Arguing from scientific models (macro level) and from cases in daily practice (micro level), we now have new knowledge at meso level.

This book is therefore primarily intended as foundation for the own personal interpretations of (future) managers of cross-border cooperative processes. In addition it offers these managers a mutual framework, including the appropriate jargon to communicate with their peers. Up until this time, there was no such opportunity.
1.2 **WHO IS INTENDED TO USE THIS BOOK?**

**Broad applicability**
When developing and researching the quality and applicability of the Crossing Borders theory, examples were used from daily practices in the area of cross-border regional water management. The knowledge and strategies offered in the theory however, are mostly based on research and publications that have no direct connection with water management. Knowledge sources were used from *change management* and *organizational management*, as well as theories regarding the *effects of state borders*. Together they offer a complete overview of the various aspects that play a part in developing cross-border cooperation. The tools offered in this book are often directly linked to the daily practice of the authors, but are of such nature that they can easily be translated to other contexts. The whole of this makes the theory of action broadly applicable.

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**Recurring theme: the cooperative partnership regarding the Vecht**

One subject will be recurring in the book as example: the creation of the Vision on the Vecht. This project, in which the authors were directly involved, is a somewhat recurring theme that is used as clarification for certain subjects. This project refers to the river Vecht. It originates in the German state North-Rhine Westphalia and runs down along the Lower Saxony state to the Netherlands. Below you will find a brief introduction on this project.

**Introduction**
In 2005 the Dutch water managing organizations (water boards) involved in the river Vecht, committed to establish a cross-border vision on the future of the Vecht. In light of these intentions, German parties were approached and in 2007 the *cooperative partnership for the cross-border Vision on the Vecht* was established. The intended cross-border Vision on the Vecht and the Vechtdal was actually established and completed mid 2009. After publication of the Vision, the cooperative partnership was renamed into *Cross-border cooperative partnership for the Vecht & Vechtdal*.

**The nature of cooperation**
The core of this partnership was formed by eight organizations. On the German side there were four districts ("Kreisen") from the states North-Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony: Borken, Coesfeld, Steinfurt and Grafschaft Bentheim, as well as the organization managing water, coast and nature in Lower Saxony: NLWKN. The Dutch participants were the province of Overijssel and the water boards Velt & Vecht and Groot Salland. This cooperation was aimed at development and not forced upon by legislation. The parties referred to were participating voluntarily, from an awareness of mutual opportunities.

For cooperation regarding the Vecht the so-called *embedded or nested approach* was chosen. This meant that the measures chosen to be executed were in line with what was happening in the rest of the river basin.

**The cross-border Vision on the Vecht**
In the Vision on the Vecht an extensive future view on the river Vecht and the Vechtdal area has been drawn up. Besides river-oriented and ecological elements, this view of the future also contains components linked to the way the population perceives recovery of the river and the contribution it offers to the socio-economic development of the area. Important consequences of the intended interventions are not only the emergence of a living, semi-natural river with a much better appearance, but also improved accessibility and recovery of cultural-historic structures.

Included in the vision document is also a document with river-oriented and ecological building blocks for the recovery of the Vecht and three implementation programs with projects and project ideas contributing to the future vision.
Application in other region’s
In this book the complete process of initiating the development of cross-border regional cooperation is treated as a whole for the first time. At the least, it offers a comprehensive overview of the most important aspects playing a part in this process, for anyone interested in this subject through daily practice, scientific interest or through study.

Up until now the quality and applicability of the theory were only researched for European settings. However, managers of cross-border partnerships outside of Europe will also be able to use the Crossing Borders theory as guidance, provided they use it wisely. As mentioned before, the reason for this is the fact that the better part of managing cooperation is based on own personal interpretation. Therefore, this book is not intended to be an ‘army manual’, but should be treated as practical support for reading situations and taking decisions. This makes its applicability not limited to certain regions.

In the text box below, the chairperson of a cooperative partnership in the southern part of Africa shares his experiences with the Crossing Borders theory.

**REMCO (Swaziland, South-Africa and Mozambique)**

The Incomati river runs through Swaziland, South-Africa and Mozambique. Many regional organizations are involved in management of this river. They work together in REMCO: the ‘River and Environment Management Cooperation’. Since 2008 REMCO collaborates with a number of Dutch and German organizations who are involved in the Vision on the Vecht, among which the Water Board Velt & Vecht, where the authors of this book are employed.

Marcus Selepe, chairman of REMCO, states his opinion on the African-European cooperative partnership and the use of the Crossing Borders theory.

*’Useful theory of action and excellent prompter for discussions’*

“The Incomati/Vecht partnership is a fruitful way to achieve joint capacity building. Discussing mutual progress and the related issues are extremely significant to discuss. Each year we schedule a week for this event. So far, the focus was aimed at the cooperative and institutional aspects of cross-border management of the Incomati and the Vecht.

Through the people at the Water Board Velt & Vecht, the other partners of the Incomati/Vecht partnership were exposed to the Crossing Borders theory in an early stage, as it was still in development. For other European and African partners is was a novelty to incorporate theories of change and organizational management, in the development of cross-border water management.

The usefulness of the incorporation of these theories is beyond dispute for me. Foremost it provides a great deal of insight in the way cross-border cooperation is established and what aspects play an important role in the various development stages. My experiences are that the theory developed by our Dutch colleagues is not only useful, but also an excellent prompter for discussions during our weeks together.

Does the Crossing Borders theory contain indications that can be used in cross-border water management on the African continent? Without a doubt. During our meetings there have not been any instances where parts of the theory were presented and our African partners responded ‘this is completely different in our way of working, this theory does not apply here.’ And if users do conclude that the theory is not completely compatible with their local circumstances, so what? Eventually the user will determine what they take out of the theory offered, what is useful for their specific circumstances.”
Application in other sectors
Particularly because the user will eventually determine what is taken out of the theory offered, the value it has in the water management sector is the same as it has in other sectors. Examples of other sectors where cross-border cooperation occurs are education, transportation, health care, crime fighting and external safety and disaster relief.

In order to show that the theory can also be applied in other sectors, we discuss an example below of a cross-border cooperation project in education (Van der Molen, 2011).

Cross-border Integral Student Support Services (Grensoverschrijdende Integrale Leerlingenzorg (GIL))

At the end of the nineties/early 2000 the secondary/middle school education system in Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium) and the Netherlands were in great need of broadening student support services. Certain categories of students had a hard time moving through the system and the percentage of drop-outs was growing. In order to improve these circumstances, many schools put more efforts in their student support services. To be able to perform this task to their utmost ability, the pertaining teachers took courses and training aimed at support coordination, support policies and handling students with educational and/or behavioural problems. Many teachers felt they increased their knowledge and competencies, but many of the schools did not consider themselves ready for the changes these teachers proposed (Kleijnen & Van den Broeck, 2004 en 2005). This resulted in disappointment and disillusion and involuntary continuation of the old style of working, and sometimes even in teachers leaving.

In order to change this situation, the GIL-project started in 2002. This was a three year cross-border project for support and development of integral student support services in Belgian schools for secondary education and Dutch middle schools.

In the years before, both in the Netherlands and in Flanders, various developments were introduced that contained many different approaches. One of the strategic choices in this project was to use these differences as foundation, so parties from both countries had the opportunity to learn from each other to the full extent.

‘Most certainly useful, a very clear and transparent story’
The GIL-project was led by a Belgian/Dutch duo: mrs. dr. Ria Kleijnen, scientific employee of the Opleidingscentrum voor Speciale Onderwijszorg (Training centre for special educational services) at the Fontys Hogescholen in the Netherlands, and mrs. Gerd van den Broeck, the current director of the Provincial Institute for Technical Education (PITO) in Stabroek, Belgium.

Regarding the Crossing Borders theory in general, mrs. Van den Broeck says “(…) I do not want to be belittling, they are often the best articles, not some unrelated story, but it certainly makes things clear and explicit although I intuitively knew of them beforehand. Most certainly useful, a very clear and transparent story that makes it visible: this is the way it can work, provided you take the rights steps.”

On the possible applicability of the theory in the GIL-project: “No doubt about it, all of it is so recognizable. Several of the strategies mentioned and their examples have actually been applied in the GIL-project.”
Appeal to the reader
Although this book is founded by solid research and comprehensive experience in practical situations by the authors, it does not aspire to be ‘the solemn truth’ in the area of cross-border regional cooperation. As in any research, certain choices were made when developing the theory and these were broadened deeper. These choices were congruent to the daily practice of the authors. Others might have opted for different choices according to their practice and these might—or might not—have worked as well. The authors are happy to hear about these experiences and any additional information. Not only to enrich their knowledge, but possibly to include in the next edition of this book so others can benefit from it.

Interaction through www.cb-academy.org
This is one of the reasons for not releasing this book as a bound book to the commercial market, but offering it for free through the website www.cb-academy.org. Through this interactive Crossing Borders Academy, the authors want to initiate interaction between international practitioners, scientific researchers and other parties who are interested in order to enable exchange of views and understanding, and to let others learn from experiences and research by peers—reaching further than the borders of country and specialization. We therefore cordially invite readers and users of this book to offer their comments on the forum of this site and to exchange experiences with us and other interested parties.

‘Not too theoretical, not too stilted, but with practical reminders’
During the research into the quality and applicability of the developed theory, a number of managers of cross-border partnerships were interviewed. We close this paragraph on the scope of applicability with a quote of one of these managers because his remarks say a great deal on how daily practice takes place and what the perspective for the developed theory could be:

“I think it is good, (…) useful. I think it has nice things in it. Not too theoretical, not stilted, but more practical reminders in the sense of “hey, it’s good to think about this or that.” One often acts intuitively, but it is not bad when these practical tips are on hand to look at and say, oh yes, where are we in the process, have we taken care of “that”? And it’s not super complicated, if it is too complicated it does not work anyway.”

1.3 Joint Capacity Building
The Crossing Borders theory and its presentation in this book are spin-offs of a capacity building program for the Water Board Velt & Vecht, aimed at management & governance of cross-border regional cooperative partnerships. Maybe you started reading this book because you or your organization wanted to become more proficient in initiating and managing cross-border cooperation between organizations. Below we will tell you how we have established this in our own organization.
The improvement circle (or: enrichment circle) above, is the starting point for our own capacity building program regarding the theme of cross-border cooperation. The program is based on our day-to-day practice of cross-border cooperation. We started by establishing in what way we do certain things in practice. This was recorded and set out by us (step 1, lower left). The next step was to enrich this documented knowledge in cooperation with the academic world by adding knowledge from literature and then researching the results (step 2). Subsequently, we made the enriched knowledge available to organizations who are involved in cross-border water management, just like us. Their experiences and remarks were then incorporated in the existing knowledge (step 3) and applied in our own daily practices (step 4) as far as this was feasible. This completed the cycle. By going through this cycle several times we make an effort to enrich our knowledge further and further, thus increasing our competencies.

This enrichment cycle has close resemblance to the Kolb learning cycle (1984) were our steps 1 and 2 resemble the ‘reflective observation’ and ‘abstract conceptualism’ phases and steps 3 and 4 would be the phases ‘active experimentation’ and ‘concrete experience’.

**Figure 1.1** The design of our capacity building program
CHAPTER 2

The Crossing Borders theory

2.1 CROSS-BORDER REGIONAL COOPERATION

The general term of cooperation
The concept of cooperation has been subject of many publications in the past decades. For a definition of the term cooperation we refer to Bardach (2001). He defines cooperation as:

‘Any joint activity of two or more organizations, aimed at generating public value by working together instead of separately of each other’.

This definition is broad enough to cover a comprehensive range of governmental and non-governmental organizations and specific enough to exclude other types of activities between organizations. In this book we will therefore work on the assumption of this definition.

The term cross-border regional cooperation
In cross-border regional cooperation we focus on the mutual cooperation between regional parties on both sides of the border. In this book we are focussing on cross-border cooperation between regional-oriented organizations. Not on cooperation between organizations with national or international orientation who are involved in cross-border cooperation between regions.

The term pioneer
The grounds for cross-border cooperation can be attributed to many causes. In later chapters we will revisit this assumption. Depending on the cause there usually is an organization or a person who feels responsible, or is made responsible, for the development of the cooperation. We will use the term pioneer in this book as a generic term for persons who not only (co-) drive and manage the development of these partnerships between organizations, but who are also ‘pioneering’ the road that needs to be taken.

Such a pioneer can be part of the partnership, but can also be hired by them or can be an external advisor. The latter can be the case when a pioneer is commissioned from national level. The generic term is therefore applicable to persons who are designated elsewhere as coordinator, director, manager or (project) leader of the cooperative
partnership. For the sake of readability, we will identify the pioneer in this book as a male person.

**Three levels of cooperation**

Imperial (2005) implies that within the cooperative relationship between organizations, there may be multiple forms of cooperation across multiple levels of cooperation. He distinguishes three levels of cooperation:

- cooperation at operational level
- cooperation at policy-oriented level
- cooperation at organizational level

When organizations on both sides of the border have comparable tasks and help each other with the execution of these tasks, then we define this as cross-border cooperation at operational level. When organizations on both sides of the border have comparable responsibilities in the area of policy-making and decide to align their policies or establish new joint policies, then we define this as cooperation at policy-oriented level. When organizations on both sides of the border decide to establish a new organization together in order to deploy cross-border activities aimed at the interests of both participants, then we define this as cooperation at organizational level.

The Crossing Borders theory is primarily aimed at the development of cross-border cooperation at policy-oriented level.

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**Example: three levels of cooperation in public transportation**

The three levels of cooperation can be illustrated with an example from the world of public transportation. In the example we have assumed that cross-border public transportation is feasible as far as legal and political premises are concerned.

Suppose we have cooperation between two regional bus companies on both sides of the border. Working together at operational level would mean that the companies allow each other to use the bus stops at major junctions just across the border, so the travellers can easily change buses or lines with the other company. We see mutual support without the need to adjust schedules or routes.

Cooperation at policy-oriented level would, for instance, enable the bus companies to align their mutual policy-making regarding the routes crossing the border. Such could be a joint schedule with connecting lines to the various destinations on both sides of the border and the option for travellers to buy a ticket to a foreign destination at their own local ticket office.

Cooperation at organizational level can even take things further. In that case the bus companies will choose to establish a joint new bus company, solely intended for the transportation of travellers going across borders.
2.2 DEVELOPMENT PATTERN OF POLICY-ORIENTED COOPERATION

Developing cross-border cooperation at policy-oriented level is a phased process. Within this process six typical phases of development could be distinguished. Together they form the development pattern or the development characteristics.

Figure 2.1 The development pattern of cooperation at policy-oriented level (Van der Molen, 2011)

Phase 0
Starting point of the developmental pattern is phase 0. This is the situation in which organizations on both sides of the border work completely separated from each other and therefore do not communicate about policy issues.

Phase 1
With the transition to phase 1 organizations on both sides of the border start to communicate and get acquainted with each other. By getting in touch with each other, for example through organising workshops on managing cross-border basins, topics come up that lead to questions and discussion. Often the question arises ‘Should we start aligning our policies on this subject?’ When agreement is reached that certain topics do need further alignment, then the following phase of cooperation, exchange of knowledge, will be used for this alignment.
Phase 2
In the knowledge exchange phase research will take place regarding relevancy of the topics selected in phase 1 and the method of further development. In order to obtain a comprehensive view on the subject, a considerable amount of information needs to be exchanged on both sides. Transparency with respect to their own problems and willingness to communicate about them, are important aspects of this phase. Once consensus is found regarding agreements on actions related to some of the topics, these topics will be placed on the administrative agenda in the next phase of cooperation, the phase of agenda setting.

Phase 3
The third phase, setting the administrative agenda, is a politically sensitive phase. When topics could have a negative impact on the organization or the local region, there will be objections against discussing these. That is why this is the phase where negotiations take place - the phase were interests are exchanged and topics are linked together until consensus between parties is achieved. As soon as the administrative agenda is completed, the topics that made it to the next phase will be transformed into joint policies.

Phase 4 and 5
The fourth and fifth phases of the development pattern, are phases for coordination and implementation, in which the standing policy of both sides of the border will be gathered at first and subsequently introduced as joint policy.

The idea behind figure 2.1 is that possible topics related to joint policies will not be addressed sooner than they have been discussed, and only when sufficient relevancy is established possible topics will become cause for implementation of new joint policies.

Increasing coherency in policy-making does not have to be the inevitable purpose - organizations or regions can also, deliberately, opt for more autonomy!

Success and failure factors
What are the factors that can make or brake the development of cross-border regional cooperative partnerships? Surely the answer to this question is of great importance for pioneers who want to initiate and manage cooperative processes. Huxham & Vangen (2006) have spent 15 years of research in everyday practice of wide ranges of cooperation and collaboration between organizations. In light of this research they have compiled an overview of the most important generally applicable success and failure factors in cooperation.
Major success factors are:
1. Selecting appropriate partners
2. Mutual trust
3. Honesty and reliability
4. Shared vision
5. Mutual interdependence
6. Support by the highest decision-makers
7. A skilled pioneer (project leader)
8. Involvement of stakeholders

Major failure factors are:
1. Personal agendas
2. Egos
3. Politicization
4. Poor relationships at management or board level
5. Geographic distance
6. Differences in organisational cultures
7. Significant differences caused by state borders

Since Huxham & Vangen have not included the cross-border aspect, item 7 of the failure factors was added. Cross-border cooperation tends to cause problems due to differences on both sides of the border, such as differences in language and culture, the structure of public administration or the differences in distribution of tasks and responsibilities in executive organizations.

Further details on the effects of state borders and the way these effects are handled, can be found in chapter 9.

The differences in organisational cultures mentioned in failure factor 6, should not be confused with cultural differences as a result of state borders (failure factor 7). One of the pitfalls in cooperative partnerships with multiple participants, is that the main focus lies on the cultural differences determined by state borders, while other cultural differences (between various sectors involved, between individual organizations, public organizations and social groups, etc.) sometimes have much more impact on the cooperation.

See for instance this example of cross-border cooperation on halting alcohol abuse by young people. The participants are, among others, the police, owners of drinking establishments and a group of concerned parents. These participants all have interaction with the same target group in daily practice, but have a totally different culture and way of working and therefore do not ‘speak each others language’. The impact of this premise can be at least as big as the effects of state borders.

In addition to the general applicable success and failure factors, there are also specific success and failure factors in cooperative processes that play a part (Van der Molen, 2011). These are different for each situation and are therefore not discussed further here.
2.3 THE CROSSING BORDERS THEORY

Practice-oriented theoretical framework
The Crossing Borders theory is a practice-oriented theoretical framework that is specifically developed for cross-border regional cooperation at policy-oriented level. Establishing, managing and designing this kind of cooperation is a complex and often unpredictable process that requires a well-thought out strategic approach. The Crossing Borders theory is a theory of action that offers useful support for pioneers in every phase of these processes.

The Crossing Borders Theory is not a conventional theory connecting cause and consequence. Nor does it posses predictive qualities. But what does it offer? In bigger projects it is not uncommon to use decision support systems when tackling contextual issues. When initiating and managing cross-border cooperative partnerships the issues are mostly of process-based nature. Why are things proceeding the way they do? What is the correct strategy to use when the process needs to be adjusted? What tools do we have available for this task? These are the questions that need an additional theory of action. Up until now, this was not available. The Crossing Borders theory wants to fill this omission.

The theory is not an ‘instruction book’, in the sense of: ‘If this is the case, then do that’. It is a flexible theory of action for various relevant aspects of the cooperative process, offering pioneers meaningful points of attention and options for each stage of cooperation. Accordingly the theory acts as an activity supporting system for complex and lengthy processes.

Global structure
The Crossing Borders theory is built around nine areas of attention among which the pioneer must divide his attention in smaller or greater amounts, during the development of the cooperative partnerships. These nine areas of attention are:

1. Determining position according to the stages described in figure 2.1;
2. Exploring and monitoring the context during the process
3. Initiating and managing cooperative processes
4. Establishing cooperative partnerships
5. Further developing cooperative partnerships
6. Addressing possible issues for joint policies
7. Handling possible impact of administrators
8. Handling the effects of state borders
9. Determining the appropriate legal form
The pioneer as a juggler

Areas of attention #2 to #8 are closely related to each other. They form, as it were, the different perspectives from which the main process is continuously monitored. For pioneers this means that they constantly need to keep focus on these themes during their work, as jugglers, who have to keep seven balls in the air at the same time. Sometimes emphasis will be placed on one ball, more than on others, but attention for the whole of these themes may never wither.

Themes #1 and #9 play a part on a different level. Theme #1 is more of a reference for the pioneers, whereas theme #9 is more of a derivative of themes #2 to #8.

Juggle, but with how many balls?

Is it realistic to say that a pioneer will have to focus on all areas of attention #2 to #8 on a continuous basis and to lesser or greater extent?

In cross-border cooperation it does happen that all seven areas of attention require attention at the same time. Most certainly in extensive, wide-scale and complex cooperative partnerships this can occur on a regular basis. And even in the development of the Vision on the Vecht, as described in this book, this was the case.

At first glance it might seem that an area of attention such as ‘establishing cooperative partnerships’ is completed at a point in time and does not require any more attention. Sometimes that will be the case, but in the case of the Vision on the Vecht it certainly was not. The cooperative partnership had been started with funding from the EUREGION and finalizing this could only take place after the vision document had been produced. In the case of the Vecht Vision process, area of attention #4 latently carried along during a longer period of time. Some organizations within the partnership had considered this area of attention as completed, while the pioneer was still actively working on finalizing.

During the cooperative process it regularly occurs that parties drop out and/or new participants enter the partnership. This is also a reason for the pioneer to have continuous attention for area of attention #4. Take for instance the situation where the pioneer is not sure if a strategically important participant in the cooperative partnership wants to remain involved. In that case he must be aware at all times that another organization might have to replace this partner. What organization would be suited to take this place? In what way and under which conditions could and would such an organization be willing to enter the partnership, on such short notice? The areas of attention remain latently present, because there are only a few absolute certainties within cross-border cooperation.

On the other hand there are also exceptions to this rule, where some of the areas of attention do not play any part (Van der Molen, 2011). One example would be the situation where all participants are obliged to participate in a cooperative partnership. In that case it could very well be that after all partners had entered the partnership, area of attention #4 no longer requires attention. The same could apply to area of attention #7 ‘handling possible impact of administrators’. When there are no administrators involved - as was the case in the GIL-project mentioned in chapter 1 - then this area of attention obviously is of no influence. But even in these exceptions it is possible that the situation changes and areas of attention could start being of influence later on.

In short: the number of balls that the pioneer needs to juggle can be different from situation to situation. Even a ball that does not seem to require attention, could in a later stage need all the attention it can acquire. A strategic partner who suddenly changes his opinion, an unexpected source of funding emerges with the opportunity to extend the programs, etc. etc. A well prepared pioneer will be able to tackle all this by continuously being alert for all areas of attention.
**Knowledge, strategies and tools**
This book offers pioneers of cross-border regional cooperative partnerships practical knowledge, strategies and tools pertaining to the 9 areas of attention mentioned above, in order to initiate, manage and design these partnerships, taking into account the effects of state borders. Some themes focus more on knowledge and others will be oriented more towards strategies and/or tools.

The first area of attention has already been elaborated in paragraph 2.2 and the others will be discussed in chapters 3 to 10.

**Ingredients for own personal interpretation**
The knowledge, strategies and tools that are provided do not present a ready-for-action manual for developing successful cooperative processes. After all, each process is dependent on the situation. This situation is determined by its specific context and influenced by change-oriented and organization-oriented aspects as well as the effects of state borders. The scenarios in which pioneers perform their work can therefore be very differentiated. Each scenario will require its own approach. The theory of action contains the ingredients, but the pioneer will have to interpret the situation and use their own insights to apply these ingredients in the right way and in the correct proportions.
CHAPTER 3
Exploring and monitoring the context

3.1 REGARDING THE DIAGNOSTICS

General
In order to initiate and manage cooperative processes it is important to first obtain the correct diagnosis of the situation. This diagnosis does not only contain establishing the cause, the objective and the issues at hand, but also exploring the context in which the cooperative process should be initiated and managed.

When diagnosing the cause it is of importance to have a clear view on the stimuli that form the basis of cooperation. Without these stimuli it is hardly possible to initiate proper cooperation. In general these stimuli can be found in awareness of opportunities or awareness of pressure (problem pressure, institutional pressure, legislation or policies). In chapter 4 we will revisit this theme.

The objective and the issue at hand are obviously different per project. Therefore we cannot make any remarks on them at this point.

Exploring the context is not a once-off activity
Contextual factors can play an important role in the development of cooperative partnerships. The influence these factors can have during initiation, managing and designing of cooperative partnerships, can be substantial, both in positive and negative terms. This is the reason why exploring the context should not be considered a once-off activity. Throughout the whole process there should be continuous attention for contextual influences.
3.2 STRATEGY FOR EXPLORING AND MONITORING THE CONTEXT

The strategy for exploring and monitoring the context is linked to the metaphor referred to in chapter 1, the juggler. Westley (2002) uses in her work the same metaphor and states:

“Extending the metaphor, surprise may act like a sudden wind, looping a ball into a new dynamic, or like a sudden shift in terrain, which causes the juggler to lose his footing and his balance. The trick is to keep the eye on these four balls and somehow, with peripheral vision, adjust to those surprises as they may unfold, or, even better, use them like a good golfer or tennis player uses the wind.”

Pike: ‘This is all becoming a little vague for me, looping balls and shifting terrain. pfff.’
Beaver: ‘Well, being able to see the whole context can only be done when you try to get a broad view: position yourself above the process and maintain a non-fixed view.

It reminds me of a story an old friend of mine from Japan told me once, about Aikido In this martial art they also feel connected to the core of themselves and that of the opponent. Only this way and with some kind of love for the other they are able to have a good fight.

Pike: ‘If you put it that way, I love little fishies and I am very good in waiting until they are close enough. Tell me something new...’
Bittern: ‘Yeah, I do the same but I think this is not the same they are talking about, its more than that. Come on mouse, let’s read on.’

The strategy Westley describes so illustratively in this metaphor conveys the fact that the pioneer needs to be prepared for sudden changes in context in order to give them the appropriate place within the cooperative process or, in an ideal situation, use it to his advantage.

Being ready for ‘windows of opportunity’
In practical sense this strategy means that the pioneers need to be ready for ‘windows of opportunity’. The capable pioneer will be aware that certain issues can only be achieved under certain conditions and that he will need to be prepared for these conditions. Only then will he be able to use this window within a short term at the moment it unexpectedly opens up. Without the proper preparation, the window will be closed by the time he is ready for it. And it could be years until it opens up again.
Pioneers who act in the manner described above, are working with adaptive management.
Adaptive management

As described above, adaptive management is making optimum use of windows of opportunity when they open up. The start of the cooperative process regarding the Vision on the Vecht can be seen as an example of this approach. Preceding the process that led to the Vision on the Vecht, there had been some form of latent consultation between the Netherlands and Germany regarding management of the Vecht. Since there were no actual stimuli for change, this consultation did not progress into active cooperation.

Both countries also had different visions on the future. The Dutch organizations managing the Vecht were aiming at a broad approach in which safety and technical control of the river were major components, but also re-development of the river with recovery of water quality and natural values. Germany did not find sufficient reasons to connect to this broad approach.

However, the introduction of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), a European law that dictates measures to improve the quality of surface and ground water, offered the opportunity to come closer together. The measures required by the WFD were very similar to the Dutch plans regarding the Vecht. Therefore a window of opportunity opened up. The Dutch organizations adequately responded and brought various parties from both sides of the border together and convinced them of the benefits of the broad recovery of the Vecht for everyone involved, particularly in light of the WFD. This form of adaptive management quickly led to the establishment of the Cooperative partnership for cross-border Vision on the Vecht.

3.3 TOOLS

In order to explore the context a pioneer can make use of the Contextual Interaction theory (Bressers, 2009). This theory assumes that complex interactive processes between actors within a cooperative partnership can be influenced from the context and that the results of these complex interactive processes can, partially, influence the context itself. Figure 3.1 shows a schematic representation of the Contextual Interaction Theory in case of cooperative partnerships.

At the right of figure 3.1, we see the arena in which a certain process takes place between two actors. Actors in this respect can be individual participants or participating organizations, but also ‘obstructors’ or external parties as investors. The Contextual Interaction theory assumes that all characteristics of these actors can be brought down to the three characteristics mentioned in the figure:

- **Cognitions**
  This implies subjective filtering of reality: how does the actor perceive a subject, what does he assume is true, how does he experience this? What can be a very favourable development for one party, can be seen as a major threat for others.
Motivations
These apply to what an actor really wants or does not want, and the reasons for this view. Is this proposition directly contributing to the objectives, does it improve the position within the group, is it profitable, could it harm future plans?

Resources
Resources are the elements that determine the amount of ‘power’ by an actor, the amount of influence he can exert. These can be physical resources, such as money, but also abstract elements, such as time to spend, social prestige, legal status, a large group of followers, etc. Even the degree in which an actor is respected can be seen as resource. After all, this also determines his degree of influence.

“These three characteristics cannot be seen separately. They influence each other, but cannot be reduced completely to one and other. We are selectively observing the world, under the influence of our motivations and these motivations are subsequently confronted with a world of opportunities and threats based on our cognitions. The existence or demise of an important resource such as trust, can only be understood from the interaction between the three characteristics mentioned here” (Bressers, 2010).

The Contextual Interaction Theory organises the context and distinguishes three layers, as seen on the left side of the figure:
Specific context
This inner layer contains for example the objectives of the cooperative partnership, the available tools, the available resources and the prevailing agreements on time.

Structural context
This middle layer consists of governance factors that influence a cooperative process. The whole of, as well as correlation between, these factors can be a major influence on the cooperative process. In the theory these factors are clustered according to the five elements in the elements-of-governance-model (Bressers & Kuks, 2001):

- Social and administrative scale levels (*Where*, at what social or administrative level is policy-making taking place and being influenced)
- Networks and its actors (*Who are the* actors in the governance process and network and what position do they hold)
- Problem perceptions and objective ambitions (*What* are the problems and objectives that arise from the policies and how do the actors perceive them)
- Strategies and tools (*the ‘how’ of policy-making: what is the strategy and what are the policy tools that are being applied*)
- Organizations and resources for implementation (*What* is deployed to implement the policies: the resources, organizations, responsibilities, authorizations etc.)

Broader context
This outer layer represents the factors that cannot be observed directly, as opposed to the factors in the other two layers. For example factors such as culture, economics, politics and the degree of technical advancement.

Each context influences the next one, but can also directly influence the interaction between the actors involved. The assumption is that the three contexts influence interaction between the actors along the line of cognitions, ambitions or resources, or combinations of these.

Detailed example
In order to provide insight in the different applications of the Contextual Interaction theory, we will end this chapter with a case. Below we have applied this theory on the context of the Cross-border Vision on the Vecht (GVV) project and provided comprehensive details.
Many roads to Rome...

**Beaver:** ‘Boy, that looks complicated, this context analysis.

**Mouse:** ‘We can do it much simpler. There are many roads that lead to Rome. This theory is just an example of a diagnostic tool. But we can also use other tools, even do a free-wheeling exploration. The point is that pioneers keep being aware of the diagnostics.

**Bittern:** ‘But why are they not doing a simple free-wheeling analysis?’ **Mouse:** ‘This contextual interaction theory is particularly inclusive. So you will not miss out on anything. In daily practice this is often used as a checklist. Only the topics that need more attention will then be elaborated in further detail.’ **Pike:** ‘So we have to read the whole story below even though we really don’t need to?’

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**The cooperative partnership regarding the Vecht**

**Context exploration with the Contextual Interaction theory**

**Specific context**

**Goals of the cooperative partnership**

The first goal of the GVV project was to achieve a cross-border Vision on the Vecht. A shared view of the future as framework for current and future projects and initiatives for the Vecht and the Vechtdal area. The second goal was to build and strengthen formal and informal networks across borders.

**Available tools**

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) was an important tool for the GVV project because the introduction of this directive imposed mandatory ecological goals, also on the Vecht. In short: the arrival of the WFD inserted ‘momentum for change’. Other tools were the national meetings of the accompanying work group, cross-border workshops with the German-Dutch steering group and a research on the river conducted by a consortium of three institutes.

**Available resources**

The available budget for this project was € 300,000 and was composed of INTERREG IV-A funds (program Germany-Netherlands), funds from the German federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony, funds from the Dutch Investment Fund Rural Areas (ILG) and contributions from the eight organizations behind the GVV project.

**Current agreements on time**

Initially the completion date for the Vision on the Vecht was to be determined in joint consultation. This starting point was revised when the new INTERREG program was introduced on which claims could be made. On those grounds, the GVV project was divided into two phases. In the first phase, without external funding, an inventory of existing plans and projects in the German-Dutch Vechtdal area was made, as well as an inventory of the institutional setting. In the second phase, with the help of external financing, the actual vision and its associated implementation program were developed. The Euregion agreement established that the Vision on the Vecht had to be completed mid 2009. The vision was presented on June 16, 2009.
**Structural context**

**Social and administrative scale levels**
Between Germany and the Netherlands considerable differences exist in the areas of public administration and the way the water sector is organized.

**Networks and its actors**
The major networks in this example are:

1. **The cooperative partnership behind the GVV project.**
   This cooperative partnership was described in the example on adaptive management. The board of principals, comprised of board members of the organizations involved, had final responsibility on the progress of the GVV project. Spokesperson on behalf of the principals were the Water Board Velt & Vecht, who also took care of coordinating the project, and the Landkreis Grafshaft Bentheim.

2. **The project agency for the GVV project.**
   The project agency supported the participating organizations with establishing the vision and its documents. The project agency was comprised of a German and a Dutch agency. Coordinating project leader was a German employee of the Dutch agency who had resided in the Netherlands for many years.

3. **The cross-border steering group**
The cross-border steering group had final responsibility for the contents of the projects. In this steering group over forty German and Dutch governmental and community-oriented organisations took part. The meetings often took place as workshops at inspiring locations. The project agency was in charge of preparations, guidance and follow-up of these workshops.

4. **The accompanying work group on the German side**
   In Germany there was an accompanying work group in which German steering group members and representatives of German governing and social organizations discussed topics from the cross-border steering group more elaborately. Sometimes they generated new ideas or the project agency would use them as incubator for new concepts. These meetings were organized by the German branch of the project agency.

5. **The Dutch consultative group and the Dutch cooperation program ‘Ruimte voor de Vecht’ (Space for the Vecht).**
The province of Overijssel took the initiative in 2007, to start a cooperation program called Ruimte voor de Vecht (Space for the Vecht) in order to be able to align all Dutch initiatives regarding the Vecht. In the first half of 2008 the Dutch consultative group for the GVV project and the Space for the Vecht.

![Figure 3.2 Process architecture of the GVV project (Renner et al, 2009)](image-url)
Vecht program team merged with each other, since most of the participants were the same.

**Problem perceptions and goal ambitions**
Indicative for the GVV project was that both problem perceptions and goal ambitions were very divergent. Both ends of the scale were occupied by ‘believers’ and ‘non-believers’. The believers were convinced that the river could become almost completely natural, that the costs would be acceptable, and that safety was not an issue. As opposed to the non-believers who would consider a semi-natural river - if indeed this was technically feasible at all - not only to be highly expensive but also irresponsible as far as safety was concerned.

**Strategies and tools**
The pioneers of the GVV project only had a small amount of tools to set the participants in motion and start drafting the joint cross-border Vision on the Vecht. In addition, participants in the project knew that they were able to raise peer involvement in the project among their peers. As already mentioned, this was successful and the project design, as well as the completion date for the GVV project were adapted for this sake.

**Organisations and resources for implementation**
The main executive organisations in the GVV project were the project agency and the leaders of the cooperative partnership behind the GVV project: the Water Board Velt & Vecht and the Landkreis Grafschaft Bentheim. The project budget was already discussed in the specific context section.

**Broader context**

**Politics, economics, culture and technology**
From the perspective of the GVV project, the research period could be considered a politically stable period. Economically, the research period was a period of relative prosperity. The credit crisis in the financial markets started already during the Summer of 2007, but did not escalate until the second half of the research period beyond September 2008 and was of little influence. The degree of technical advancement did not limit actions during the research period.

**Influence from the context**

**Cognitions**
Influences from the context along the lines of cognitions took place at two distinct occasions: in the beginning when awareness grew that there was ‘momentum for change’ as result of the introduction of the WFD, and after that in the first half of 2008, when the Space for the Vecht cooperative program had been initiated. This program was initially a disturbing influence on establishment of the cross-border Vision on the Vecht. The Dutch participants lost overview and even became irritated by the lack of alignment between the two cooperative initiatives. Partly because the agreements with Germany had already been established, it was difficult to get the GVV project and the Space for the Vecht cooperative program together on one page. This took almost a year to be achieved.

**Ambitions**
There were also influences from the context along the line of ambitions. Early 2008, a major Dutch participant announced the ambition for more involvement in the cooperative partnerships regarding the Vecht and therefore hired a process-oriented policy officer in the same year. This resulted in a positive impact on the GVV project.

**Resources**
Influences from the context along the line of resources also took place. Particularly the German participants were very keen on getting European funding. Partly because they were able to raise more commitment for participation in the project among their peers. As already mentioned, this was successful and the project design, as well as the completion date for the GVV project were adapted for this sake.

**Combinations**
The influences from the context along the three above-mentioned lines has not provided any combinations.
CHAPTER 4
Initiating and managing cooperative processes

4.1 CHANGE STRATEGIES

The concepts singular and multiple organizations
The concept of organization is very broad. Governing entities, social institutions, companies, representative associations... all of these are organizations. When two or more of them start working together, they constitute a cooperative partnership. In its turn, this is an organization as well, but because in this cooperative partnership different organizations are represented we refer to it as a multiple organization. The separate participating organizations in the cooperative partnership are therefore referred to as singular organizations.

Moreover, it is very well possible that a cooperative partnership of organizations that work together or need to achieve something together, will display characteristics of a singular organization to a certain degree because the parties involved are focused on the joint objectives more than on personal goals. This train of thought will enable strategies and tools that normally are deployed for managing further development of singular organizations.

Initiating and managing change processes
Initiating and managing a cooperative process can basically be approached as a change process. The change then consists of the transition of no cooperation to active cooperation, or the transition of a certain degree of cooperation to increased cooperation.
In order to initiate cooperation, stimuli for change (c.q. cooperation) are necessary prerequisites. Without these stimuli there is no cause for change. Generally speaking we consider the most important stimuli:

- Awareness of mutual opportunities
- Policy and institutional pressures
- Problem pressure
Basically we can manage cooperation by monitoring, adjusting where needed, monitoring again, etc. This adjustment will be done primarily by deploying change strategies.

**Change strategies**

There are different change strategies available to be deployed. Suitability of strategies or combination of strategies is not only determined by the topic at hand, but often also by the context.

There is no generally applicable framework for the question when which strategies are most suited to be applied. In addition, it is not always a matter of rational arguments that determine the choice of actual deployment or the way strategies are used in daily practice. Personal preferences of the pioneer often play an important part as well: some pioneers tend to aim more at structures and work processes, whereas others are more comfortable with esoteric terms as passion and beauty.

Pioneers tend to discard the use of strategies based on force as much as possible. Only in situations where there is no other option will they take these on and then preferably as indirect application. For instance, by enforcing pressure through a board of directors or a (government) ministry. On one hand we find in these cases that there is much less buy-in when cooperation is enforced. On the other hand we find that the repetitive character of mutual contacts does play a part: pioneers tend to avoid having to pay for successes they book today in next months meeting.

The most used change strategies are listed below, sorted according to approach:

- **Connecting strategies**
  Connecting strategies are aimed at obtaining connections between parties involved. In the event this is successful, it leads to contacts back and forth, working relationships, network connections and more.

- **Facilitating strategies**
  These are based on conditioning of processes. Facilitating strategies are often applied in conjunction with other strategies. When facilitation is exclusive, what matters is the ‘willingness’ and ‘ability’ of the participants and we find this is a typical ‘bottom-up’ strategy.

- **Inspiring strategies**
  Inspiring strategies focus on stimulating the imagination of participants and are often used to influence the ‘willingness’ of the participants and/or increase imaginative abilities. In essence, inspiring strategies are ‘bottom-up’ strategies.
Motivating strategies
Motivating strategies are aimed at motivating everyone involved to set things ‘in motion’ and/or to keep them in motion. Motivating strategies can have ‘top-down’ traits when parties involved are not able or do not feel they are able to refuse the requested actions in a decent way.

Convincing strategies
Strategies like these are intended to convince the people involved using facts and argumentation. Parties involved need to be convinced that the proposed steps are the correct course of action. This approach is ‘top-down’ and ‘tell and sell’.

Forceful strategies
Forceful or directive strategies are based on a strong concentration of power. These strategies involve direct management, ‘top-down’ and sanctioning.

Tools
Many tools can be deployed when managing cooperative processes. The choice of tools strongly depends on the underlying strategy. Below are listed some examples of tools to be deployed according to their strategy.

Connect
- send out summaries prior to the meetings
- build in networking moments during meetings
- purposely introduce people to each other
- vary table seating during dinner events
- organize social events
- set up web-communities

Facilitate
- ensure suitable locations for meetings
- send out papers in a timely manner
- have well-prepared agendas
- ensure sufficient moments for relaxing time
- make sure that food and beverages are available in time
- be available for questions

Inspire
- use storytelling techniques to make clear what options and benefits can be achieved
- present examples of successes in comparable projects
- organize excursions to one of these examples

Motivate
- address the participants sense of responsibility or honour
- appeal to the participants sense of time
- propose (financial) allowances for the participants
**Convince**
- use argumentation as basis for discussions
- ensure that the used arguments are valid and pertinent
- make clear that a thorough analysis was performed
- opt for analysis and collection of arguments by third parties

**Apply force**
- make direct enforcing demands for performing or not performing certain tasks
- when useful: inform participants of the sanctions that could follow in case of non-compliance

**Change strategies are sometimes inadequate**
The change strategies listed above are in some cases - and certainly in cooperations of larger size and scope - not adequate enough to guide the whole process on the right track. Once the cooperative process is started, adjusting can be very complex. In cooperation between organizations we have after all a network of different actors who all have their own interests. Yet, these actors are dependent on each other when it comes to achieving their objectives. In cooperative processes we often find no appointed supervisor, so joint decision-making is necessary to be able to take the next steps. Therefore we see that this form of decision-making often occurs chaotic, erratic and unstructured. Not only with regard to the contents, but also in term of the process.

Standard decision-making models mostly assume staged, organized processes which is quite unuseful in these situations. The change strategies deployed by the pioneer need to be able to handle these completely wilful characteristics of networks. The pioneer will also have to be subject to some demands.

Pioneers in large multi-scoped cooperative projects, in which many actors play a part and differences in interests are extensive, need to be able to control this complex and dynamic ‘game’ of managing in networks to a tee. They need to see the big picture and recognise and connect the most important actors. They need to be able to estimate the value of situations and daily developments and decide when influence is of importance and when it is better left untouched. They need to be able to translate threats and unforeseen turn of events to opportunities for the project. They need to know how to harvest appreciation with the appropriate actors and how to initiate subtle changes when they are needed. Insight in the influence others try to apply to them, but above all understanding of the strategy they need to play in this titan-game is of utmost importance, so favourable change or decision-making can be set in motion.

All of this implies that the pioneer in most cases will need to have knowledge regarding the more complex network-related strategies (see following paragraph 4.3) and the typical cooperation-oriented themes discussed in chapter 6, in addition to knowledge of the above-mentioned change strategies. But in any case they need basic knowledge on the way networks function.
Understanding the way networks function is of essential importance to pioneers in cross-border regional cooperative partnerships. This insight will allow the pioneers to anticipate and respond adequately to situations. Therefore it is important to understand what is happening around them and why actors behave the way they do.

In this paragraph we will illustrate this by describing a number of aspects that are relevant for the development of cross-border cooperative partnerships.

**Mutual dependency**

The structure of a network fundamentally contradicts the central concepts in hierarchical structures of subordinate and superiority. In hierarchy the superior will manage subordinates when he wants things changed. This superior possesses - as one may assume - information as well as authority to execute effective decisions.

Decision-making in networks is not so self-evident. An actor in a network who wants to change something, is after all dependent on collaboration of other actors. If the others are willing to support this change remains to be seen, and if this would be the case, the question is if they are willing to do so at the right time.

Multiple actors are involved in the decision-making process in networks. These have different interests but are also dependent on each other. They cannot solve problems independently. Cooperation is
therefore necessary to achieve their objectives. A decision-making process will only be effective if the decisions are made in agreement. Sometimes there will be major differences among the actors, thus complicating joint decision-making. At some point in time there will even be some actors who are not interested in cooperation during the decision-making process. In addition, the number of actors involved can change without warning. Actors will just as easily join or drop out.

**Unpredictability in content and process**
The most important consequence of this is that decision-making processes often follow erratic and unstructured paths. This applies to the contents as well as the process:

- **Unpredictability in content**
  The contents of a problem and its solution constantly shift as result of the input of different actors. In addition, we find that solutions determine the problem definition instead of the other way around. New problems and solutions can be brought in during the decision-making process, and existing problems and solutions can be discarded.

- **Unpredictability in processes**
  Decision-making does not follow a logical starting and ending point. The process takes place in rounds that take place in irregular frequencies. As opposed to many project-oriented models, there are no clear distinguishable stages. Neither can we find any logical sequences of problem detection - analysis - decision-making - implementation. Should we take the models as guidance, then the decision-making is a linear process, but reality in networks show that it often is a meandering or even cyclic process.

**Continuous analysis of actors**
Anyone who takes the initiative of making a decision in a network, is dependent on other actors for this decision. In order to estimate the outcome of the decision up front, the initiator will need to be aware of who he is dealing with. He needs insight in the most important actors and at least some knowledge of the following characteristics of these actors:

- What are their ideas?; What are their opinions?
- What are their underlying interests: why do they have these ideas?
- What are their sources of power: what means do they have to block or encourage decisions?
- How do their relationship networks take shape: who are the other actors they maintain relationships with?

It should be clear that in order for someone to take initiative for decisions, an actor-analysis as described above must always be performed. However, the problem is that actors in networks often act strategically. In summary, this means that the behaviour of an actor is not determined by content considerations, but it is aimed at strengthening his power position in the network. In addition we also encounter the problem of unknown ideas, interests, power sources and relationships.
Therefore we can say that the actor-analysis also has its limitations. The consequence is that the focus shifts from one-off actor-analysis to continuously maintaining relationships with as many actors as possible, in order to obtain insight in the characteristics of the various actors involved.

**Selective activation and dominance**

Involving other parties in decision-making is inevitable. The major question on this issue is which parties to involve and what amount of dominance they should have. Involving all actors or stakeholders rarely is an option due to the high interaction expenses. This is why selective activation of a network is a more common option. Selection of parties requires strategic choices, in which dominance play a key role. Positions of dominance are distinguished in three varieties (De Bruin & Ten Heuvelhof, 2007):

- **Production power**: an actor can provide a positive contribution to the realization of an objective
- **Blockade power**: an actor is merely able to stop something from happening
- **Diffuse dominance position**: this means that it is not clear for the initiator what the degree of dominance of the actor is, or that this position can change or that it is unclear if the actor will utilize his sources of dominance or relationships.

Parties who posses *production power* are of course a necessity. The sources of power they posses are necessary to make decisions and subsequently execute them. An important question in this respect would be to assess if more parties posses the same source of power. In the case of an initiator being completely dependent on one party for financing or funding, this would render this party with a substantial position of dominance. For this reason the initiator must pose an important strategic question regarding possibilities for *multiple sourcing*.

Parties with *blockade power* are not contributing to the decision-making process in a positive way. However, support of these parties is necessary because they have the power to block decision-making. This poses an important dilemma. Excluding these parties will increase the risk of them exercising this blockade power. Including these parties will increase the risk of taking in a ‘Trojan Horse’. This dilemma will result in a shift in demand with regard to these parties. The most important question will not be if they should be involved in the process, but under which conditions they will behave cooperatively.

Regarding parties with *diffuse dominance positions* it is not clear yet what their degree of dominance is and what means they have available. They could develop into parties who can provide unique facilities, parties with powerful blockade capabilities or parties who posses no powers whatsoever. Therefore it is of importance to offer these parties access to the process while it is already running.
4.3 NETWORK-RELATED STRATEGIES

Knowledge of network-related strategies is important for pioneers, for two reasons. Firstly to be able to apply these strategies themselves. But secondly to be aware of what is happening around them. Why do actors behave the way they do? De Bruin & Ten Heuvelhof (2007) provide an overview of a large number of network-related strategies. In this paragraph we will describe some of them. These are all typical network-related strategies that can be deployed instead of or in addition to more common change strategies for initiating and managing cooperative processes.

Influencing problem perceptions
An actor defining a problem will have to be aware that this is ‘merely’ his own perception of the problem. In other words: the problem only depicts the perspective of the actor himself. The question will be if other actors have the same problem perception. And if they do, they might have other ideas on the urgency of the problem. Maybe there are many other problem perceptions, all fighting for priority.

When problem perceptions are under central focus, actors will have to influence problem perceptions of other actors. Problem analysis aimed at the contents could play a part here. When this analysis conveys that the problem is urgent, then this will influence the perceptions of many actors.

Sometimes analysis of the contents is not sufficient. The focus will then shift to strategies that can influence the problem perception of the actors. An example would be the strategy of priming, literally: applying primer. The objective of the strategy is to have better ‘coverage and adhesion’ of the problem perception. The objective of priming is to deliberately create context that will sensitize parties for certain problem perceptions. In order to influence the problem perception of other actors, for instance, the initiator could present a video on the environmental damage of fossil fuels, in order to support his efforts to cross over to green energy.

Increasing complexity
Intuitively we would assume that reduction of complexity has a positive influence on the decision-making process. However, isolated one-issue yes/no-situations are not conducive to efficient decision-making in the complex reality of networks. The more problems and solutions play a part, the simpler it is to connect and disconnect them. Creating package deals will also be simpler in that situation. Therefore it can be a sensible strategy to increase complexity in a network environment. It will make the decision-making process more attractive for actors and it will increases their room for actions.

Connecting or disconnecting problems
Knowing the problems other actors have and knowing what they need, will enable connecting solutions to problems of others. De Bruin
and Ten Heuvelhof present the example of the harbour company that wants to develop a new industrial area. The harbour company needs the support of a minister, but he has other priorities. One of them is a burdensome shortage in airport capacity which the minister wants to resolve as soon as possible. The harbour company can now connect the problem of the minister to its own solution, by proposing to reserve space for a landing strip in the new industrial area. Then the new industrial area will offer a solution to the problem of the minister. The chance of him offering support has now increased significantly. Problems are connected to solutions - the issues are linked - if they would bring forth support of other parties. Disconnecting of problems is also possible, if connecting will hamper the course for solutions.

**Waiting for the ‘window of opportunity’**
The moment chosen to define the problem, is a strategic choice. Various situations can be depicted where a problem will have a greater chance or none whatsoever of being solved. Some examples:

- There are many competing problems and the problem at hand does not get the attention is needs. The only way is to wait until the agenda is less crowded. The window of opportunity is closed.

- Or things can go the other way: because of many competing problems there is not a lot of attention for the problem at hand and therefore not a lot of resistance against the proposed solution. The window of opportunity is open.

- The *sense of urgency* in other parties in the network is limited. The window of opportunity is closed. Maybe we need to invest in a sense of urgency with the other parties, by applying the strategy of priming.

- The problem is not ‘sexy’. It does not appeal to the spirit of times or the prevailing strategic agenda. Any pleas for privacy protection will have less chance of support in a period where fear of terrorist attacks is present then in times where all is quiet. Putting problems concerning safety on the agenda around the same period of time, will have a good chance of the window of opportunity being wide open.

So it is always wise to wait - and be prepared! - for the window of opportunity to open, the moment in which support for problem definition is most likely.

**Stretching goals or objectives**
Objectives should be defined as broad as possible, so they are recognizable for the ‘critical mass’ of actors. If this is not the case then *goal stretching* could be a desired strategy. Because the broader the objective is, the bigger the chance that it contains attractive elements for the stakeholders involved. Goals and objectives are therefore not solely related to the problem definition but also to the stakeholders.
These need to be able to recognise sufficient elements in the objective definition.

In *naming and framing* we are trying to find the ‘language’ that is used for defining the objective. The terminology that is used will strongly determine the overall image and thus influence the behaviour of actors. This way ‘naming’ the objective ‘On our way to a cleaner environment by reducing emissions’ will generally speaking appeal more than ‘Placing soot filters on exhaust pipes’.

In the network environment *framing* of the objectives will mostly be determined by the question how support can be gathered from other actors. Take the example of replacing an old climate control installation which is very polluting. In a network it is all about the question how to gather support, as said before. Suppose there is an economical recession and pollution is not high on the agenda. At that time it would be strategically wise to frame the intended action in the context of cost reduction.

The strategy of *multi-targetting* is in this respect similar to the previous approach. Should it be possible to connect the same action to multiple objectives (cost reduction and improved working conditions for instance) than the chances on support will increase. The objective could then become: ‘Cutting down expenses while increasing comfort. Better climate control with considerable lower cost of ownership by reducing energy usage and minimal maintenance costs’.

**Using open decision-making**

In a project within a singular organization it would be favourable to ‘close up’ a decision from top to bottom. A detailed decision which offers only little room for deviation, will most likely guarantee that the execution will take place exactly according to the decision. In a network environment this is different. Decisions are often package deals, basically with a win-win character. This means that for all parties the benefits are bigger than the losses. This win-win character is the guarantee that execution is done according to the decision because all parties benefit from this approach.

Sometimes decision-making can be a win-lose situation, in which certain parties are not obtaining benefits. When the decision in such a win-lose situation is ‘closed up’ then the losing parties would be deprived of any possible perspective of benefits in a later stage. This could be a stimulus for these parties to undermine implementation or execution. In a network it is therefore wise to keep certain options open. This is referred to as open decision-making. In those cases there are still chances in the future for each party. Open decision-making in networks has positive connotations. It is a stimulus for cooperative behaviours.
Creating points of no return

A ctors who will benefit from the implementation of a packet of decisions, can be hesitant with regards to the strategies mentioned above. When other actors utilize a packet of decisions as start of a new round of negotiations, or when they try and diminish these decisions, it could undermine their own interests. Moreover, the risk for these other actors to be successful will be limited if sufficient actors are interested in the implementation. The actor who will try and negotiate again, will jeopardize his relationship with a great number of actors.

Should an actor want more certainty on the actual implementation of a decision that was taken, he would be wise to create points of no return in the implementation process. De Bruin and Ten Heuvelhof illustrate this with the example of the decision to establish a railroad track from A to B. This track can be implemented along C or D. Despite a great deal of resistance, the decision was made - after extensive negotiations - to run the track along C. At that point in time it would be strategically wise - even if from operational perspective it would not be completely logical - to implement a fast start of building the route to C. As long as there are no building activities at C, chances are that the choice for the track will be put up for discussion again. Starting the building activities at C will then be the point of no return, preventing further negotiations.
CHAPTER 5

Establishing cooperative partnerships

5.1 COOPERATION MODELS

In the area of cooperation between organizations, we distinguish four basic forms (Kaats et al 2005):

- **Transactional cooperation**
  In this basic form, transactions are the core of cooperation. The intention is to improve a production process or chain by efficiently exchanging people, products, services and information. The parties involved structurally exchange ‘forecasting’ information, align production and stock data and manage inventory control. This type of cooperative partnerships is often seen in networks of wholesalers and buyers.

- **Functional cooperation**
  Functional cooperation entails one partner servicing the management of a business function for the other partner. This often takes place when the particular business function is not considered a core activity. By outsourcing management to the partner, who performs these activities as core business, it becomes possible to improve the business function. The partners have a high degree of commitment to each other and constitute specific agreements on the way their processes are mutually aligned.

- **Entrepreneurial cooperation**
  In entrepreneurial cooperation, cooperative partnerships aim at discovery and development. When organizations conclude that they are not able to achieve strategic renewal with their own means and need other complementary parties to support them, we define this as entrepreneurial cooperation. It will lead to intensive cooperation in which partners share competencies and skill at high levels. Parties do demand full commitment from each other because of higher interests. This often includes the introduction of information, technology and knowledge that is of strategic importance to
the partners. The parties involved are considered equal within the cooperation. This means that they might not be the same in size, but they are with respect to competencies.

An example of entrepreneurial cooperation between different parties (water management, care facilities, educational institution) is the development of a farm along a river, where buildings are established as nursing care facility with restaurant and occupational daycare for handicapped. The land along the river is reshaped into a natural area with room for water. The main channel of the river has been stripped and was relocated to connect to an old meander. By relocating the channel and emphasizing the old shape of the landscape, the history of the area has become visible again. The restaurant and part of the terrain is maintained during the occupational daycare activities by handicapped. They are guided by students from a local college for the terrain maintenance.

- **Exploratory cooperation**
  This last basic form applies to organizations who have a joint or comparable assignment for renewing their knowledge levels. By exchanging experiences and knowledge the organizations learn from each other and are able to create sound conditions for executing the assignment. Parties are not exclusively connected to each other and are equal when cooperating. In this case it is also not a matter of being the same size, but being equal authorities in the area of cooperation.

- **Mostly hybrids**
  The basic forms mentioned above should be considered as archetypes. In daily practice most cooperative partnerships are hybrid forms with features of two or more of the basic forms. These hybrid forms can change over time.

In cross-border cooperation at policy-oriented level we often see forms of cooperation ranging between exploratory and entrepreneurial. Look at the water management example: if we take the joint cross-border regional management of river basins, we see a form close to exploratory cooperation. Organizations that receive such an assignment find each other, exchange information and come to agreements on the way they address certain facets of their policies. In case the assignment is extended to more that just management and the cooperation will also involve more stakeholder organizations in the region, then the hybrid form of exploratory and entrepreneurial cooperation emerges. This is the case, for example, when cross-border regional water management and area development go hand in hand because all participants see opportunities ahead.
5.2 **DESIGNING COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

**Principles for design**
In table 5.1 some of the most important principles for setting up exploratory and entrepreneurial cooperation are given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>EXPLORATORY COOPERATION</th>
<th>ENTREPRENEURIAL COOPERATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do we handle mutual relationships and what would be the best distribution of roles?</td>
<td>Parties find each other based on issues that can be stimulating or conditional for the way they function and where they could reinforce each other.</td>
<td>Parties are able to handle / develop / realize and/or sell certain matters together in a smarter / better / cheaper way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can we organize joint housekeeping?</td>
<td>Cost-effective input to stimulate and drive cooperation.</td>
<td>Division of risks and results, joint budgeting and balance keeping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can we organize decision-making?</td>
<td>Mutual influence. Negotiation on by-laws with various parties. Anyone coming in 'late' will need to accommodate.</td>
<td>Joint decision-making and determination of procedure for decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What performance indicators do we use?</td>
<td>The degree in which parties want to continue their contributions.</td>
<td>1. Adding value (balance input / output in wider sense) for each of the parties. 2. The flow of new initiatives and the ease with which they can be made operational. 3. Low transaction cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the roles we will determine as key role within the cooperation?</td>
<td>Facilitating professionals. Explorers and designers.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurs and marketeers. Creators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What management style will fit the cooperation?</td>
<td>Facilitative management style: the result will be produced by interaction.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial, creative and space creating management style: 'idea leads to opportunity leads to success'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what degree will we exchange information?</td>
<td>Open exchange of information, aimed at optimizing knowledge exchange.</td>
<td>Closed exchange of information, aimed at developing c.q. protecting joint initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the essence of the working processes within the cooperation?</td>
<td>Organizing communication and interaction processes, and knowledge management.</td>
<td>Managing the development and marketing process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.1** Important designing principles for exploratory and entrepreneurial cooperation (after Kaats e.a., 2005)

**Design structures**
Designing cooperative partnerships can take on many forms. Yet, we do see some **basic structures**. These consists of **three layers** of organizations.

- **The strategic core**
The members of the strategic core are the driving force behind the cooperative partnership. They develop the vision, determine the strategy, define the rules for inclusion or exclusion, the rules of the game and the code of conduct, and develop mutual knowledge. The strategic core can consist of one or more parties. In public settings the dominant party often derives its position of institutional agreements and/or legislation.
Having a position in the strategic core does not always constitute a good position for an organization. Operating in the strategic core entails also many responsibilities. In addition, flexibility is limited and it often requires a considerable amount of diplomatic talent to be both decisive and reliable.

■ **The complementary rink**
Members of the complementary rink fill up the strategic holes of the core group. They follow the strategy of the strategic core and adopt rules of the game and codes of conduct. The actors in this rink have access to knowledge and information of the cooperative partnership, but as opposed to the parties in the strategic core they do not have full possession of all knowledge and information. Members of the strategic core determine which information they can use and which not.

■ **Free space**
Organizations in free space fill up the operational holes of the cooperative partnerships. They are the ones that provide capacity, infrastructure, services and parts. These parties are not strategically bound and are involved in the partnership on a transactional basis. They only share knowledge and information for their specific contributions.

### 5.3 **SETTING UP COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

The pioneer may to utilize the model in figure 5.2 as supporting principle for driving the establishment of cooperative partnerships. This models is a combination of models from Van der Molen (2001) and Kaats et al 2005). In the model five more or less autonomous phases are distinguished in which activities are closely related to each other. The different phases are not necessarily following each other in analogue timing. Future phases can already be started without the preceding phases being completed. In order to complete a phase, it usually is necessary to obtain the results of the preceding phase as input.

Per phase the model will display the underlying activities for two of the basic forms of cooperation as described in paragraph 5.1: exploratory cooperation (in cursive text) and entrepreneurial cooperation.

**The ‘exploratory cooperation’ variant (Kaats e.a., 2005)**

■ **Phase 1: Orientation**
In exploratory cooperation, organizations who have mutual or comparable assignments will find each other in the orientation phase. Subsequently they will try to assess if existing cooperative partnerships are already working on this task.
Phase 2: Partner search
Should another active partnership already exist, then inclusion is sought. If there is no active partnership, or inclusion to an existing one is not possible, then phase 2 is used to determine which organizations are crucial to successful cooperation. An initiating consultation is then set up with these parties.

Phase 3: Design
During the design phase extensive dialogue will take place in which joint vision and objectives are discussed. This is followed by drafting an agenda with activities and projects aimed at achieving objectives of the cooperative partnership.

Phase 4: Fundraising
In this phase agreements are made with respect to who is taking their part of the cost of implementation for the items on the agenda.

Phase 5: Realization
In the implementation phase, the agenda with activities and projects is actually executed. The cooperative partnership now has the role of spider in its web, to facilitate, organize, guard the process, enhance social relationships and hold meetings and joint study trips, monitor the process, adjust it and periodically evaluate objectives.
The ‘entrepreneurial cooperation’ variant (Van der Molen, 2001)

- **Phase 1: Orientation**
  In the case of entrepreneurial cooperation, the orientation phase is used to brainstorm an idea. Is this a good idea? Is it technically feasible? Could it be financially viable? Who are the partners we need to develop this further?

- **Phase 2: Partner search**
  In this phase potential partners are questioned and the decision can be made to start working as preliminary cooperative partnership on the deeper development of the project definition.

- **Phase 3: Design**
  In the design phase plans are organized in projects and the final feasibility is determined as near as possible.

- **Phase 4: Fundraising**
  This is the phase for collecting financial means. Own capital and possible funding. It is also possible that ‘investment risk’ will have to be taken. In other words, investments might have to take place of which it is not clear that they will deliver the results required.

- **Phase 5**
  Once every green light is on, the realization can be started.

**Look before you leap**
This saying is applicable in many aspects of cooperative partnerships. When approaching potential partners, it can be prudent to investigate upfront what the true value of these potential partners is. Should this be difficult to ascertain, then first contact should be aimed at approaching these organizations as intermediary or reference for truly potential partners. Speaking and associating with non-potential partners for too long could lead to the risk that desired partners that are contacted at a later stage feel overtaken and it might be difficult to convince them to enter the partnership when the time is right.
CHAPTER 6
Further development of cooperative partnerships

6.1 TOOLS PROVIDING DIRECTION TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

In this paragraph we present the model of *internal alignment*. A tool that commonly is used for further development of singular organizations, but in many cases also can be used to provide direction to reasonably well-balanced further development of cooperative partnerships. The model has been described in various publications in different varieties. The version in figure 6.1 is from Korringa & Van der Molen (2005).

![Figure 6.1 The model of internal alignment](image)
The key message conveyed by the model is that further development of an organization is founded on four pillars, with different elements/factors underneath. Further development can only be stable when development of the separate pillars is thoroughly aligned.

The four circles in the figure represent the four pillars:

- **the Future**
  what direction is desired by the cooperative partnership and how should it be achieved?

- **the Hard Side**
  how are things designed and organized?

- **the Soft Side**
  who are the participants and what are their cultures?

- **the Resources Side**
  Which financial means are available and what are other resources such as databases, translation programs, face books, technology?

In order to obtain stable development of cooperative partnerships, pioneers need to direct towards balance in the development of the four pillars. How this is done partly depends on the personal preferences of the pioneers. Pioneers who see development of cooperative partnerships mostly as a process between people, tend to start at the soft side. Many large organizational consulting agencies will start at the top of the figure, the vision and strategy, while IT-oriented pioneers will choose the means side as starting point. In fact, the order that is chosen is of less importance. The essence is that in all cases balance should be the main objective.

One of the pitfalls is that participants think from the different pillars and then are lost in conversation. The pioneer must remain aware of this risk. The diagram is a tool that can offer support in this situation.

The use of the model is illustrated below with reference to the Cross-border Vision on the Vecht project.
Further development of the Vision on the Vecht project

As the Vision on the Vecht emerged, the left pillar in the model, the soft side, was chosen as starting point for further development of the cooperative partnership. Finding persons and/or organizations who were able to ‘carry’ the cooperation was the first step. The idea behind it was that in the end ‘the pawns’ had to get the job done, had to be able to do it and be willing to keep doing so.

When the right people were found, the next hurdle was the upper pillar, where vision and strategy had to be addressed. From the question ‘Where do we want to go and how do we think we can get there?’ the development of the Vision on the Vecht was started.

After that, the hard side was developed. The project architecture of the establishment of the Vision on the Vecht was already shown in figure 3.2, with the case in paragraph 3.3. The speedy finalization of the vision document was strongly depending on financial means, among which the INTERREG funding, as depicted in the lower pillar.

In this project balance between the four pillars was well sought after. The balance that allows achieving objectives if nothing major changes.

As soon as change occurs in one of the pillars, it is necessary to run by all patterns again to find new balance between the pillars.

6.2 COOPERATION-RELATED THEMES

Collaborative advantage theory

The above described model of internal alignment could in many cases be a useful tool for further development of cooperative partnerships. Sometimes the situation is of such complex nature that an additional different approach is necessary. In these cases knowledge regarding the Collaborative advantage theory could be of use to the pioneer.

In their book ‘Managing to collaborate; The theory and practice of collaborative advantage’ (2006) Huxham & Vangen present their theory of collaborative advantage. This theory is based on fifteen years of research into all kinds and forms of cooperation between organizations:
from partnerships, alliances and joint ventures, to various types of networks, contracting & outsourcing varieties and joint work groups. In this paragraph parts of this book are used to provide insight in the way further development of cooperation can be additionally managed and what benefits organizations can obtain from working together - the collaborative advantage.

Huxham & Vangen constructed their theory around a number of overlapping themes that emerged during their research as important themes for cooperation in practical sense: the *themes of collaborative practice*. These may play a part when the cooperative process has been initiated. Beneath the surface of these themes are *deeper issues*. Since the themes overlap, the deeper issues could be related to multiple themes. The latter makes cooperation between organizations a complex matter. Improvements in one theme, could worsen things for another theme, through these deeper connections. This may cause tension.

In this paragraph the theory is presented by means of seven perspectives on cooperation between organizations. This also entails matters from daily practice, such as managing objectives, power, trust, ambiguity, complexity, dynamics of cooperation, leadership media and leadership activities. Some of the *themes of collaborative practice* mentioned earlier, are somehow ‘wrapped’ in these seven perspectives. Other themes are discussed in the text frames.

**Perspective 1:**
**We must have common goals, but we cannot agree on them**

According to general opinion one needs to have a clear sets of goals as a starting point in cooperation. Preferably this takes shape of joint objectives, but the least that is required are separate goals that can be linked. Practice however shows that the divergent character of agendas usually presents the parties involved with difficulty in reaching agreement on objectives and goals.

There are multiple causes (read deeper issues) that we can find for this problem:

- *Differences in reasons for participation*
  
  Organizations will enter resources and expertise into the partnership which in turn creates the potential for collaborative advantage. Yet organisations have different reasons for being involved. Take for instance cooperation in which new ways of renewable energy are researched, and where knowledge supplier A is mainly focused on a cleaner environment, and producers B and C only want to get profitable innovative products on the market as fast as possible. Actors are therefore focused on achieving different forms of output. Sometimes the difference in objectives lead to *conflicts of interest* between organizations involved.
Differences in motivation
For some organisations the joint objectives for the cooperative partnership is perceived as central to achieving organisational purposes, whereas others are less interested in this. Perhaps they only participate - even reluctantly - as result of external pressure. This may cause tension. Some organisations are very interested in influencing and controlling the joint agenda, and some are reluctant to commit resources to it. If producer C in the previous example only participates because he feels he cannot stay behind due to public opinion and he would much rather develop the product at his own pace and with his own resources, then this could quickly lead to tension.

Differences in expectations, ambitions and insights
Representatives of organizations involved will join the cooperation with different expectations, aspirations and understandings of what is to be achieved jointly. At first glance it may appear that partners are mostly concerned with joint objectives, in reality organisational and individual objectives can prevent agreement because they cause confusion, misunderstanding and conflicts of interest. When the representative of producer B is for instance hoping to gain a position at competitor C, this might influence his behaviour in the cooperation.

Hidden goals
In addition, only some of these various goals may be explicit. The other part is often not so distinct. They could be taken for granted (assumed) by one partner but not necessarily recognized by another. Or they could be hidden deliberately. Producer B’s goal might be to use the expertise of knowledge supplier A to refine his product and then try to take over the position of competitor C in the European market. This goal will obviously stay hidden purposely.

Managing goals in practice
Figure 6.2 depicts a framework that can be used for understanding the various goals of a participant. Of course, not all goals are known, but there is no objection to ponder about other people’s hidden agenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSPECTIVE PER PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>EXPLICIT</th>
<th>ASSUMED</th>
<th>HIDDEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.2 A framework for better understanding of goals (Huxham & Vangen, 2006)
By filling out the framework for the various participants we can see the myriad of goals involved in this cooperation process. Often the conclusion will be that it is difficult to comply with the desire for clear common goals. This produces an important management dilemma: clarity of purpose provides much needed direction, yet open discussion can unearth irreconcilable differences. Difficulties that arise out of the need to communicate across different professional and natural languages and different organisational and professional cultures are unlikely to assist the negotiation process. Likewise, concerns about accountability of participants to their own organisations or to other constituents are unlikely to make it easy for individuals to make compromises.

Often, the only practical way forward is to get started on some action without fully agreeing the objectives. All following the device: ‘find a way of stating the aims so that none of the parties can disagree’.

**Beaver:** Aren’t we a lot simpler. Pike, Bittern and me, we have a mutual goal: finding out why we have less food. And you Mouse, you joined because you know many things. Right?

**Mouse:** At first glance it would seem that way. In the cooperative partnerships they mention in the book, it often is the same. But do you know all hidden goals Beaver?

**Beaver:** Well, I can see we are different, but once we get over that we are a pretty good match. You know many things, Pike can check out what’s going on under water, Bittern can scout the skies and I can build things. We might not think alike, but if we compromise we can do many good things between the four of us.

**Mouse:** The hidden goals I was referring to was that Pike and Bittern are competitors and fish in the same pond. And me, I am a potential prey for them so I have to be alert at all times. And do you think that these carnivorous partners are actually interested in your water plants? What we have here is the issue described in perspective 3: a lack of trust...

**Pike:** … and the fact that I do not really care for any cooperation!

**Mouse:** That too. This is mentioned in perspective 4. And if you read thoroughly, all perspectives apply to us.”
Differences in language and culture

As well as different goals, the parties will also bring different working cultures, ideologies and procedures into the cooperation. Participants are used to perform tasks in their own ways. Because this implies that cooperation needs to comply with the standards of different organizations, various practical problems may arise. Even apparently trivial or routine-like things such as agreeing on fee levels for staff members could take more time than necessary.

Cultural and ideological differences can also cause communication problems because ‘facts’ are interpreted in different ways. This problem can even be increased due to language problems. It is obvious that difference in mother tongue can cause problems in cross-border cooperation. But even when parties from both countries speak each others language fluently, there is still a chance that sensitive messages - for instance regarding goals or culture - could come across differently.

Less conspicuous, but not less important is the fact that participants from the various professions often use their own professional jargon. An example is the cooperation between police, social workers and pedagogic professionals. These three parties need to align their work on a regular basis, but have very different professional jargon. In addition, they also have very different goals, cultures and procedures.

Comparable problems also occur in cooperative partnerships between participants from different industrial sectors. These differences can sometimes be the basis of problems in industrial take-overs.

Other public-private-voluntary forms of cooperation can be equally sensitive to these problems. The way parties interpret interventions performed by the other is directly influenced by the above mentioned factors. Many of these cooperative processes are therefore - not unexpectedly - stretched out much longer due to the need of clarification on both sides. In the negative event of things, it can also lead to confusion and stagnation.

Perspective 2
Sharing power is important, but people behave as if it’s all in the purse strings

The saying ‘the power is in the purse strings’ suggests that those who do not have control of the financial resource are automatically deprived of power. These perceptions quite often seem at odds with ‘reality’. Most parties do, minimally, have at least the ‘power of exit. However, people often act like the saying above is the true reality. And in some cases this actually goes with defensive and aggressive behaviour.

In reality the power within cooperative partnerships is continuously shifting. Within the process of final negotiations and implementing activities many points of power - occasions where power can be exercised - can be identified. Many of these points occur at a micro level in the cooperation. They are often not particularly obvious to those involved. Some examples:

- **Naming the cooperative partnership**
  The name of the cooperative partnership often influences the activities that are undertaken, or not, by the partnership. Those who are involved in the naming process are therefore in a powerful position at that time.
Inviting parties
Other examples concern invitations to join a cooperation; those who choose who to involve are obviously powerful, but those who choose the process of whom to involve are even more so. In the theme ‘democracy and equality’ of Perspective 6 the subject of selecting parties will be revisited.

Meetings
Arrangements regarding meetings can also be connected to different examples of points of power. Any person taking the role of chair or facilitator in a meeting is in a position of power whilst the meeting is in place. But those who get to choose which facilitator to appoint are more subtly and perhaps more significantly powerful. Even those who choose the location of a meeting may be in a powerful position. Particularly if they can determine whether or not the meeting will take place on the premises of one of the participants. Those who choose the timing of the meeting are also powerful.

An important characteristic of points of power is that they are not static. In cooperative partnerships, power shifts in each phase. In a pre-startup phase those who get to draw up contracts or write bids for funding may be powerful. In a start-up phase however, once money is available, those who are given the task of administering the cooperation may be highly powerful in determining many parameters concerned with direction and ways of working. It may only be at later stages that the actual members become active and have the chance to exert power.

Less obvious, but very significant, are the continuous shifts of power once the process is started. For example, network managers are often in powerful positions between meetings because they are the only people formally employed by the network— and hence the only people who have its agenda as their main concern. They may also have access to the network funds. During meetings, however, members can shift many of the points of power in significant ways, often determining new members, times and locations of meetings as well as influencing agreements about action. Those less centrally involved, such as facilitators or consultants, can be in powerful positions for short periods of time. External influences, such as those from government, can sometimes be extremely powerful in a short-term way as they make demands for reports or responses to initiatives.

Managing power in practice
Issues concerned with control of purse strings are significant, but there are many other points at which power is, in practice, enacted in cooperative settings. All participants have power at one time or another and may frequently have the option to empower themselves. The positions of power were addressed in paragraph 4.2. Understanding and exploring the points of power can enable assessment of where and when others are unwittingly or consciously exerting power, and where and when others may view them as exerting power. On the other hand,
insight in the points of power also gives participants the opportunity
to deliberately exert power. Responding to these insights, however,
requires a willingness to accept that manipulative behaviour is appro-
priate, which some would argue is against the spirit of cooperation.

Compromises

Preparedness to agree on compromising with regard to the different agendas is of essential im-
portance when trying to make progress in coop-
erative partnerships. Besides this, there is often the need to engage in compromising on differences in working methods, organizational cultures and per-
sonal working styles.

The need to come to compromises is due to the fact that organizations are different in many respects. Besides various objectives, they also have different cultural values and standards. This could mean that something considered trivial or routine in a certain organization, could take a lot of time in a coopera-
tive partnership because compromises have to be found in order to please all participants.

Many difficulties arise in cooperative partnerships because many people from various disciplines are required to work together. People who work in child services have completely different values for instance, as police officers, health care professionals, educators or local governments. Yet, in daily practice they work together on a regular basis.

The same problem occurs when cooperation be-	ween knowledge institutes and commercial busi-
nesses has to take place. For one party the ‘higher goal’ is science and for the other striving for profits is the main point on the agenda. Compromising is then inevitable.

Perspective 3

Trust is necessary for successful cooperation, but we are suspicious of each other

The common wisdom seems to be that trust is a precondition for suc-
cessful cooperation. However, while the existence of trusting relation-
ships between partners probably would be an ideal situation, the
common practice appears to be that suspicion, rather than trust, is the starting point. Often participants do not have the luxury to choose their partners on the basis of trust. Either imposed (e.g. government) policy dictates who the partners must be, or the pragmatics of the situation dictate that partners are needed, even though they hardly know each other and trust is weak.

This suggests that it is appropriate to pay attention to trust building between partners. One way of thinking about trust building is through the loop depicted in figure 6.3.

This argues that two factors are important in getting started in a trust-
ing relationship. The first is concerned with the formation of expecta-
tions about the future of the cooperation; these will be based either on reputation or past behaviour, or on more formal contracts and agreements The second starting point involves risk taking. The argu-
ment is that partners need to trust each other enough to allow them to take a risk to initiate the cooperation. If both of these initiators are
possible, the loop can be set in motion. Trust can gradually be built through starting with some modest but realistic goals - certainly not too high in the beginning - that are likely to be successfully realized. This reinforces trusting attitudes between partners and provides a basis for more ambitious cooperation.

![Figure 6.3 The loop for building trust (Huxham & Vangen, 2006)](image)

**Managing trust in practice**

The practical conclusion from the trust-building loop is very similar to that concerning the management of mutual or joint goals and objectives: sometimes it is better to get started on some small but tangible action and then to allow trust to develop slowly.

In practically all cases this incremental approach to trust building can be recommended, but it would obviously not be relevant if an immediate need to attain a major objective is paramount. In those situations, expectation forming and risk taking would have to be managed simultaneously, supported by other trust-building activities.
Communication

The theme of communication is directly related to the theme of compromises. Most people with experience in cooperative processes will emphasize the need for good communications. There are three communication channels to distinguish in this respect. See also chapter 7.2:

- communication within the core of the cooperative partnership
- communication between the core group and other organizations involved
- communication between the cooperative partnership and the outside world

An important issue concerning communication within the core group is language. Normal language for one person may sound as jargon to others or as incomprehensible use of words. This may apply between professionals from different disciplines, but also between professionals and volunteers or between professionals and representatives of social engaged groups. When it would concern representatives of ethnic groups, this may be caused by insufficient control of the language used. In all these cases communication problems could arise quickly.

Even if there are no serious problems with jargon or language, we can still be faced with communication problems. People from different backgrounds can interpret the things said during a meeting in a completely different light. This is why it is important for the members of the core group to check among themselves and others whether everyone is on the same page regarding what is being discussed.

Good communication within the core group is not always self-evident. The same applies to communication between the core group and other organizations involved. This communication is often time-consuming but at the same time of essential importance since early signs of disagreement or obtaining trust, commitment, support and resources can be spotted and addressed.

For cooperative partnerships at local levels, good communication between the cooperative partnership and the local community can be of vital interest. This way the partnership will stay informed of what is going on in the community and will be able to obtain and / or maintain good relationships with that community.

Perspective 4:
We are partnership-fatigued and tired of being pulled in all directions

One of the most surprising observations about cooperation, is the frequency with which clarity about who the participants are is lacking. Different participants often list different partners from each other. Even staff who are very centrally involved in managing collaborations often cannot name partners without referring to formal documentation. Two deeper lying issues are the cause of this problem. The first is related to the commitment people or organizations have with respect to the cooperative partnership and the status they occupy within it. The second issue pertains to the question if someone is partaking as individual, on behalf of an organization or on behalf of the cooperative partnership.

The last option will enhance the lack of clarity as to who the partners are. Since many companies are participating in many cooperative relations, this could be very complex. Huxham & Vangen mention the example of a major electronics manufacturer who is said to be involved in around 400 strategic alliances. In the public sector these numbers may be less, but there too we see many cooperative relations in different settings. Therefore it is not uncommon to see an increase of part-
nership fatigue due to the large amount of consultations associated with these cooperative partnerships.

Involvement in multiple cooperative partnerships also brings about efforts to link the agendas across the initiatives, because (presumed) links or overlap could be there, without keeping the whole in perspective. Another consequence is that it is hard for any individual to judge when another is inputting the views of their employing organisation or bringing an agenda from another partnership.

Reality becomes even more diffuse as result of the complexity of networks of cooperative partnerships between organizations. The extreme case of the municipality, for instance, taking part in cooperative partnerships A, B, C and D, while A, B and C also take part in D. Many networks of cooperative partnerships will maintain a hierarchical character. This means that the cooperative partnerships are also members of other ‘higher ranked’ partnerships. Examples: joint ventures may be members of strategic alliances, trade associations may represent their members in policy networks, and so on.

Managing ambiguity and complexity in practice
It is hard for managers to agree on objectives, build mutual understanding and manage trust and power relationships with partners if they do not unambiguously know who their partners are. Equally, it is difficult to manage cooperative partnerships in complex systems in which different elements must be affecting each other but there is little clarity on the nature of the inter-relationships.

Mapping these different relations and connections can be useful, but obviously this cannot remove the ambiguity and uncertainty completely. In the end there is only one solution left for managers to use in light of perspective 4: they will need to learn how to identify ambiguousness and complexity, live with and progress.

From responsibility to collaborative inertia

Autonomous acting is one of the conditions to be able to act fast within the cooperative partnership. The downside - continuously being accountable to the own organization - is the central cause of collaborative inertia.

The obligation for members of the core group to account for all their actions will influence their willingness to agree to certain actions. Often consultation with the constituents and underlying organization must take place before a decision can be made.

Another issue can be that organizations taking part in a cooperative partnership are no longer free to act when it comes to the objective of the partnership. In these cases the organizations want to consult with other parties in the cooperative partnership first, before they are ready to take action. This creates a lack of autonomy for the individual organizations as well as for the cooperative partnership. Eventually this can lead to collaborative inertia.

Individual organizations will sometimes try to break this inertia by making contact with other participating organizations outside of the core group. When communications are good and there is sufficient trust, this could be an effective way to make progress.
Perspective 5  
Everything keeps changing

The dynamics of cooperative partnerships  
Cooperative partnerships are commonly talked about as though stability among its members can be taken for granted. In daily practice this is not always the case. Multiple issues play a part here:

- **Changes in policies**  
  Policy influences, which may be internal but are frequently imposed externally, often generate restructuring of member organisations. Merger and de-merger, new start-ups and closures, acquisitions and sell-offs, and restructurings are all commonplace. In turn, these imply a necessary restructuring of any cooperation in which organizations concerned participated. Policy changes of individual participants can also influence the objective of the cooperation. These changes may be generated internally, for example, as the result of a revision of strategic direction. Or they may be generated externally, for example, as a result of new government policy or major market disturbances. Either way, this in turn implies a shift in the relevance of the cooperation to its members. Sometimes other working methods are required of the cooperative partnership. New members may join and others may leave.

- **Changes in position**  
  Another source of dynamic change comes with individual movements. The relationships between individual participants in partnerships are often fundamental to getting things done. This makes cooperative partnerships highly sensitive to changes in individuals’ employment.

- **Inherent dynamic**  
  Finally, even if all of the above stood still there is often an inherent dynamic in cooperative partnerships. If an initial objective of the partnership is achieved, there will usually be a need to move to new cooperative agendas. As a rule, these are likely to imply different membership requirements. All organisations are dynamic to the extent that they will gradually transform. But cooperative partnerships are extra dynamic since they are sensitive to transformations in each of the partner organisations and therefore may change very quickly. In one example, a cooperative partnership with an ambiguous structure involving many partners went through three identifiable reincarnations over a three-year period and ended up as a very controlled partnership between two organisations. The final stated objective of this partnership substantially changed over the years, but was still related to the original one.
Managing cooperative dynamics in practice
The dynamic nature of cooperative partnerships makes the trust-building loop shown in figure 6.3 extremely fragile. Effort put into building mutual understanding and developing trust can be shattered, for example, by a change in the structure of a key organisation or the job change of a key individual. The practical conclusion, therefore, for managers who want the cooperation to be successful is that the nurturing process must be continuous and permanent: ‘Treat jointly managed schemes as fragile plants which need careful nurturing until they have taken organizational root.’

Perspective 6
Leadership is not always in the hands of members

People, but also structures and processes are leading
Looking back on the possible problems cooperative partnerships may encounter, we could conclude that the issue of leadership seems highly relevant. Because traditional hierarchies do not exist in cooperative partnerships, it is appropriate to consider leadership in a general sense, rather than as specifically the realm of senior executives or prominent public figures. Huxham & Vangen consider leadership as being concerned with the mechanisms that lead to the actual outcomes of a cooperation. In essence, they focus on the question ‘What makes things happen?’ This way they arrive at the formation and implementation of the partnership’s policy and activity agenda.

Structures
Looked at from this perspective, leadership, interestingly, becomes something that is not only enacted by people. Structures and processes are as important in leading agendas as are the participants involved in the cooperation. Thus, for example, a structure in which two organisations only are involved in partnership should allow both organisations good access to the agenda, but clearly excludes others. This is very different from the cooperative partnership where any organization can become a member and all members have wide access to the agenda. In this last example, it can be difficult for any representative to influence the agenda.

Processes
Somewhat the same applies to processes. A cooperative partnership for which a major form of communication is through open meetings is going to allow a very different form of access to the agenda from one whose principal mode of communication is through e-mail and/or telephone. Thus, agendas may be led by the type of structure that is in place and the type of processes used.

Participants
Agendas can, of course, also be led by participants, though generally these are emergent, informal leaders rather than those who lead from a position of authority.
Media for collaborative leadership

Structures, processes and participants can be thought of as different media through which collaborative leadership is, in practice, enacted. An important point about these media is that all three are largely not controlled by members of the cooperative partnership.

Structures and processes are sometimes imposed externally, for example, by government, a corporate headquarters or a funding body. Even if this is not the case, structures and processes often emerge out of previous action rather than being explicitly designed by members. Even in the context of ‘participants’ as the leadership medium, leadership is not solely the role of members of the cooperative partnership. External stakeholders such as customers or local public figures often strongly direct the territory of a partnership or alliance. A strong lead is often also given by support staff who are not strictly members.

Managing leadership media

This perspective demonstrates the ease with which cooperative partnerships can move out of the control of their membership. Recognizing the at least partial inevitability of this and working around it is part of the practical response required. Mapping the various relational connections may be helpful in exploring the nature of the structure. This is a first step towards gaining an understanding of its leadership consequences.

For managers who wish to lead more actively, the implication of Perspective 6 appears to be that part of their activity must be concerned with the design of structures and processes that are effective for the particular purpose, and with monitoring their performance and evolution. We look further at active leadership in the next and final perspective.

Democracy and equality

The term democracy contains a number of important aspects within the setting of cooperative partnerships:

Selection of participants

The essential question pertaining to cooperation is who to get involved. Everyone who has some form of interest would be very democratic, but do they all have time to be a good participant? In addition, if there are many participants it can be difficult to communicate and take decisions effectively. Finding the right balance between the size of the group and appropriate representation of all interests is an important issue.

In practice, very few community-oriented cooperative partnerships have been well-thought-out in their composition. From research we find that there are three main questions applying to the composition. Who is crucial for achieving objectives? Who will be affected by the effects of achieving these objectives? Who can be potential saboteurs? In a completely democratic setting all three groups must be involved. Pragmatic considerations usually lead to a different choice.

Stakeholders can be divided into internal and external parties. Internal stakeholders are part of the cooperative partnership, external stakeholders...
are not included. Internal stakeholders should be asked to participate. They often want to negotiate the objectives of the cooperative partnership. External stakeholders also need to be involved, for example by means of a consultation process (sounding board groups, etc.).

**Decision-making**

The second aspect applies to the actual cooperative process. Members of community-oriented organizations are often worried that decision-making in the cooperative partnership is not really democratic. This can only be the case if everyone is always present. In practice it usually is the case that the participants who benefit most from the outcome of the decision are present. Besides, most participants are very sensitive to other members who want to put their mark on a certain discussion. Yet, someone will have to be the leader. Both these point indicate that completely democratic decision-making is difficult to realise. The price for purely democratic processes could very well be that no-one will take responsibility for the cooperation.

**Distributing credits**

Another point of concern in cooperative partnerships is equality and credits. When joint successes are achieved, recognizing contributions of each member and sharing credits is seen as an important issue. The consequence of this approach is that the members who actually achieved the success, in fact do not receive enough credits. Yet, it is important to (re)distribute credits among all members of the cooperative partnership. By sharing this with all members, the cooperative partnership will become manifest and that will serve as a benefit for future financing of the partnership. In addition, it also contributes to the morale of the staff.

**Responsibility and representation**

Participating organisations in cooperative partnerships are represented by individuals. These are limited in their action by what their own organization wants and sometimes also by what their constituents want from their organization. This highly restricts the freedom of cooperative partnerships to act at their sole discretion. We pointed out earlier the importance of good communication between the core group and the other organizations. On the other hand, this could seriously delay the output of the cooperative partnership.

Another aspect of accountability is the representativeness of a representative. Representatives of community-oriented organisations often decide on views outside the immediate sphere of interest of their constituents. For other participants the question remains to what degree the views of the respective representative can be seen as representative.

**Perspective 7**

**Leadership activities continually meet with dilemmas and difficulties**

Organizations or persons initiate leadership activities in order to move a cooperation forward in ways that they regard as beneficial. This does affect the outcomes of joint initiatives. However they are frequently thwarted by difficulties, so that the outcomes are not as they intend.

In practice, much of what is done by those who aim to take a lead in moving a cooperation forward may be said to be fundamentally within the spirit of collaboration. Activities of this sort are highly facilitative and are concerned with embracing, empowering, involving and mobilizing members. However, the same people are also engaged in activities that are much less collaborative. Many of them are adept at manipulating agendas and playing the politics. Activities characterized by Huxham & Vangen as ‘towards collaborative thuggery’, in other words of the lowest sort.
Managing leadership activities
Does this, then, suggest a dilemma between the ideology of cooperation and the pragmatism needed to get things done? Not necessarily. Without hard evidence it seems that successful leaders carry out both types of leadership in the same act. So not only in the spirit of cooperation but also towards collaborative thuggery. They continually switch between styles, and also use them simultaneously.

In conclusion
The collaborative advantage theory offers pioneers of cross-border regional cooperative partnerships insight in the processes pertaining to cooperation between organizations. Just as the Crossing Borders theory, this theory cannot offer precise recipes for managerial action, but was not intended as such. When managing cooperation between organizations Huxham & Vangen feel that personal interpretation is the biggest part of the approach. Understanding the nature of cooperative situations should be an important basis for this interpretation, according to the authors. The conceptual handles in this theory are meant to serve as basis for thoughtful action.
CHAPTER 7
Addressing possible topics for joint policies

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Cooperation is okay, but what are the themes?
The Crossing Borders theory is primarily aimed at the development of cross-border cooperation at policy-oriented level. In general this cooperation will take on the intention of joining standing policies on both sides of the border and then putting in efforts to implement these.

But what are these policies we are talking about? What policy topics should be the central focus of this cooperation? Anything goes? Even topics that could diminish positions? Those will meet with an immediate amount of resistance. When certain topics need to be excluded from joint policy-making for that reason, who will be responsible for that decision? And will that be a straightforward decision or are complex decision-making processes at work, as described in paragraph 4.2? Below we will present a tool that should provide more insight in these questions.

7.2 TOOLS FOR MANAGING TOPICS FOR JOINT POLICIES

In order to drive the way possible topics for joint policies are handled, pioneers will be able to use the growth model described below. This model distinguishes five distinct phases for developing joint policies. In figure 7.1 the different phases are depicted by ovals. The text on the right describes the accompanying goals.
The idea behind this model is that possible topics for joint policies are only addressed when they have been discussed, and only when they are deemed sufficiently relevant they will give rise to implementation of new joint policies. This process takes place in five phases:

**Phase 1: Communication**
This is the phase in which the topic is discussed in a joint setting for the first time. Should it become apparent in this phase that it is not suited or wanted for joint policy-making, then it will ‘fall back’ to the level in which relevancy for joint policies equals zero. As of that moment the topic will no longer be a theme for joint policies. In the figure this is depicted by a downward arrow beneath the communication phase. If, on the other hand, the conclusion is that it would be useful to further investigate the topic, then it will move on to the next phase.

**Phase 2: Knowledge exchange**
This is the phase in which data is used to investigate if it is actually useful to develop joint policies on this topic. Should this not be the case, then it still can fall back to the level of zero relevancy. As the arrow beneath the knowledge exchange phase indicates. If, on the other hand, the conclusion is that it would be useful to ‘further’ the topic, then it will move on to the next phase.
Phase 3: Administrative agenda setting
The third phase is the process in which the topic is placed on the agenda of the administrators, in order to obtain their approval on further development of the policy. At this administrative level the conclusion may very well be that on contextual or political grounds it is not wanted to pursue joint policy-making on this topic. Again it can fall back to the level in which relevancy for joint policy-making is zero. If, however, the administrators agree and authorize development of these joint policies, then the topic moves on to the next phase.

Phase 4: Aligning
Once the topic enters this phase, relevancy is acknowledged at administrator level. It will not fall back, as in the previous phases, to a level of zero relevancy. In this phase the standing policies on both sides of the border will be gathered and alignment will be set in motion with regards to the shape and form agreed upon. The topic will move to the final phase when this agreement has been achieved.

Phase 5: Implementation
The fifth and final phase of the model is the introduction of the joint policy on the pertaining topic.

Suggested topics do not always lead to policies!
The message of this model is clear: any topic that is brought to the table is not necessarily a prelude to joint policy-making. As mentioned before: when topics fall back to the level of zero relevancy, than we can assume that these topics will not be a theme in further development of new joint policies. This does not imply that these topics can be important themes for the individual participants who initially put it on the table. And there is no objection to them introducing them again after a while. For instance, when the composition of the participants group changes, or the setting, or the social context.
How can we use this model?
Pioneers of cross-border regional cooperative partnerships can use the model in figure 7.1 in two ways:

- **As control tool**
  They can deploy this model as a tool to drive the way possible topics for policy-making are handled within their cooperative partnership.

- **As organizing tool**
  The model can help to provide an overview of the different phases in which the different topics within the cooperative relationship are situated. Order is essential when many possible topics are presented and joint policy-making involves multiple organizations. In some sectors it is not uncommon to have up to fifty to one hundred possible topics. Obviously it is important in those cases to be able to maintain order.

### Topics and stakeholders during establishment of Vision on the Vecht

Involved in the German-Dutch Vision on the future of the Vecht and its neighbouring Vechtdal area, were eight initiators and no less than 47 German and Dutch organizations.

In various, wide-ranging sessions, 50 possible topics for joint cross-border policies were discussed, varying from water safety to fish passage, from sailing the river to horseback riding along the river, from realigning city centres to the river right up to marketing agricultural products from the Vechtdal area.

Because of this immense variation in topics it became clear that not all organizations involved were interested in all of those 50 topics. Yet the number of positions in the process of establishment was large. Assuming an average of 5 interested organizations per topic, it would lead to at least 250 different positions.

When dealing with these numbers, organizing is very important. In what phase are the topics? Did each of the stakeholders have sufficient input in the topic? If this is not taken care of, then chances are that parties who missed out on important discussions regarding their subject will be slowing things down - if they still have a chance to do so. Once this is no longer possible there is bound to be frowning and unrest which could damage the overall process.
CHAPTER 8
Handling possible impact of administrators

8.1 THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS IN COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Administrators are of major importance for engaging in, establishing and maintaining cooperative partnerships. In the study by Kaats en Opheij (2008) we see that their role is not always rational and without interest. Often they create manoeuvring room for themselves, based on their own vision and personal impulses. Within this room they take initiatives that contribute to personal goals and the objectives of their own organization. In addition, they contribute to their own interests: within the cooperative partnership they do things that are of importance to them. Below we will elaborate on this conclusion.

Personal reasons
Administrative reasons for cooperation often consist only for a small part of rational arguments. Administrators are mainly driven by personal reasons. These apply to many divergent aspects such as power, competitiveness, autonomy, strive for performance, engagement, fear, regret, trust, personal connection, wanting to be seen and personal reputation. In addition each administrator has their own dilemmas when engaging and acting in cooperative partnerships. These are connected with their vision on cooperation, personal positioning, style of operating in a cooperative context and relationships with partners.

Rational arguments usually take the lead ‘on stage’. Administrators know that the ‘story’ needs to be told in rational terms out there. In public the story needs to be ‘finished’ because the stories are reality.

Personal manoeuvring room within the context
When administrators are involved in cooperative partnerships, they expressly make sure their part is noticed. Partly this is also for their own good. This is the way they influence the context. On the other
hand there is the context - both the sector’s and the organization’s - that influences the administrator and the position he or she takes. The characteristics of the sector will be seen in motives, practical models and preference styles of the administrators. So there is mutual influencing between the administrator and his environment.

Within their context (sector, geography, governance, etc.) administrators demarcate - more or less explicitly - their own room for manoeuvring in which they can ‘do their thing’ and ‘do fun things with nice people’. This is their way of contributing to personal ambitions and organizational objectives. Within this room they are able to take initiatives and decisions based on personal reasons and these can subsequnently be introduced into the spotlight in rational terms. Outside their freedom of action is limited, because they are bound by the rules and norms of the context.

**Giving meaning to self-interest**

Administrators often take actions that have personal meaning for them. They do not cooperate without interest. Within the realm they operate in they take a stand for personal interests and those of the organization. From there they try and gain power and influence. This is done in various ways: they develop a large relationship network, concentrate on development of knowledge, skills and education and take every effort to make their organization benefit from it in social, cultural and economical capital. This distinguishes the administrators from **collaborative leaders** who bring parties together as intermediaries, without formal authority or position of power.

Their own interests are served because administrators have pleasure in cooperation. Cooperation is a major attraction for them. Interaction with potential partners creates an environment where strategy and execution, thought and action, pioneering and achieving are found closely connected. Cooperation also enables them to create new environments with other administrators.

### 8.2 **PRESENTED TOOLS**

The pioneer is not only interacting with the individual participants in his cooperative partnership. Organizations behind these persons, cultures in these organizations and the norms and standards applying there are also part of the whole. And **last but not least** there are administrators in these organizations who exercise major influence on the development of the partnership. Two models are presented to help pioneers on their way with this final issue: how to handle the impact of administrators. The first model is seen in figure 8.1. This model assists pioneers in assessing the expectations they might have from the administrator.
The key message in this model is that administrators are dependent on the degree and the way in which they are informed and that they react based on administrative reality, but possibly also based on personal priorities.

**Figure 8.1** Model for assessing the position of an administrator (Van der Molen 2011)

The three circles in this model represent:

- **Administrative reality**
  This includes anything that is administratively relevant and any possible issues at administrative level.

- **Personal priorities**
  This concerns the personal interests of the administrator and any possible issues at personal level.

- **Information delivery**
  This has to do with the degree and the way in which the administrators are informed.
The model in daily practice

Pioneers who want the administrator to approach their cooperative partnership in a positive way, first need to investigate if the administrative reality and/or the personal priorities of the administrator are of such nature that a positive attitude can be expected. If this is not the case, then influencing by the pioneer is generally difficult. Often this is a matter of ‘keeping a foot in the door’ until the occasion arises that could change the status.

If a positive attitude can be expected, the next question would be if the administrator involved has been properly and sufficiently informed. Should that also be the case, then the pioneer may expect a positive impact by the administrator. However, if the administrator has not been properly and/or sufficiently informed, then the pioneer needs to adjust this. An important question would then be if the administrator is directly or indirectly involved in the cooperative partnership.

- **Direct involvement**
  We see direct involvement of the administrator when he takes part in a steering group for instance, to which the leaders of the cooperative partnership - and also the pioneer - periodically report their accountability. In those cases adjustment of information provision is relatively easy because of the direct contact between the pioneer and the administrator.

- **Indirect involvement**
  The administrator is indirectly involved when the steering group does not consist of administrators, but of administrative officers who keep their administrators informed. In that case the pioneer will face more difficulty when adjusting the provision of information, because he would not be in contact with the administrator on a regular basis. In that case the model in figure 8.2 may offer some support.
Influencing provision of information to indirectly involved administrators

The model below offers pioneers insight in the connection points that can be used to influence provision of information to the indirectly involved administrators. The figure displays the information channels along which the administrator can be informed. The circled numbers indicate the connection points for the pioneer as possibilities to influence the provision of information.

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 8.2** Connection points for influencing the provision of information (Van der Molen 2011)

The model in daily practice

The most continuous information channel for the indirectly involved administrators are their representatives in the cooperative partnership. These representatives are also of crucial importance to the pioneers when handling the impact of administrators. The representative does not only inform his administrator, but is also the designated person to inform the pioneer on the administrative reality and personal priorities of this administrator. Of great importance is the ‘angle’ this representative chooses: does he see himself as defender of interests for his organization or constituencies, or does he prefer the role of co-designer of the cooperative partnership?

The pioneer has two connection points to deploy if and when he wants to influence the provision of information through this representative:

- **Dosed information (connection point 1)**
  When the provision of information to the representative runs through the pioneer, then he can decide for himself how much and which information to provide to the representative.
Influencing the representative (connection point 2)
The pioneer could try to influence the representative, persuading the representative to provide the administrator with information in such a way that it will benefit the cooperative partnership. In this option the mind-set of the representative is crucial. Will his priority be placed at the organization or at the cooperative partnership? The pioneer will be able to adjust to a certain degree, for example by increasing involvement of the representative, by ensuring a good position or granting him extra responsibilities.

Moreover it is also possible to influence the provision of information without involving the representative:

Information transfer through regular information channels (connection point 3)
Regular information channels can be considered media such as newsletters, brochures, websites and more. The pioneer is able to influence these to a certain degree. Even direct conversation between administrator and pioneer to get him up to speed - in close consultation with or per request of the representative - can be part of this.

Remaining are the two non-regular forms of provision of information, often indicated as ‘along the top’ and ‘along the bottom’.

Providing information along the top (connection point 4)
In the ‘top wise’ option, the pioneer asks a well-minded administrator - in the model indicated as ‘sponsor’ - to inform the administrator in question. This could be useful when the pioneer is under the impression that the representative in the steering group does not ‘see through’ the political game.

Providing information along the bottom (connection point 5)
In the ‘bottom wise’ option, it is the pioneer himself who gets the administrator up to speed, without knowledge of the representative in the steering group.

These last two forms are often used for more than merely influencing the provision of information. Trying to win the administrator over for a suggested approach or view, is more likely the objective. The activity therefore shifts from provision of information (lower right in figure 8.1) to administrative reality (at the top of the figure).
CHAPTER 9

Addressing the effects of state borders

9.1 THE BOUNDARY WORK CONCEPT

Introduction

So far in this story there is one aspect that has not been discussed at all: the fact that all parties in the cross-border regional cooperative partnership originate from different countries. This aspect plays a crucial role in each phase of establishing, managing and designing cooperative partnerships. The most conspicuous effect of state borders is obviously the difference in language. Even if the pioneer can speak the language of the other country more or less fluently, there could still be confusion and misunderstanding because of differences in interpretation or association. Other effects of state borders might be less obvious, but have at least the same impact on the development of the cooperative partnership. Cultural differences for example, but also the differences in administrative structures and organizational aspects.

In order to provide pioneers with insight in the effects of state borders in cross-border regional cooperative partnerships and its consequences, we will use the boundary work concept in this chapter.

Boundary Work

Boundary work is a kind of collective term referring to ‘dealing with various kinds of borders’. These could be the abstract borders between areas of knowledge or social sectors, but also concrete boundaries between states. In the boundary work concept the term dealing with borders can be approached as neutralizing or overcoming the effects of borders, and sometimes as deliberately maintaining them.

In this concept the boundary spanner has a main role. This is the person or a group of people, sometimes even an organization, who ensures that the effects of borders are neutralized or bridged or sometimes deliberately maintained.
The effects of state borders

Passing the border of a country is not only a topographic transition to a different country. Crossing the border also involves many other transitions: a different language area, another culture, a different organization and work method within sectors, different structures of public administration, other political realities, etc. The boundary work concept provides two important principles concerning this subject:

- Some of these transitions can be critical for cooperation between organizations on both sides of the border.
- The cooperation can be (partly) forestalled when certain critical transitions cannot be neutralized or bridged.

The indication ‘critical’ already indicates that it is of crucial importance to put effort in these transitions. When neutralizing or bridging differences cannot be achieved than the cooperative process could be partially forestalled. The opposite applies when the differences can be neutralized or bridged and there is no delay to be expected as result of this transition.

Whether or not a transition should be considered as critical depends on the context, such as the sector or region. As an example we will discuss the critical transitions for cross-border regional water management below, together with the consequences these transitions might have. For other sectors, critical transitions could be completely different.

Pike: ‘Hmm... put in all this effort when there are so many differences. That’s never going to work!’

Mouse: ‘Don’t listen to him. He is only right if you are going to sit and wait until the differences will go away by themselves, but that is not what it says?!’

Bittern: ‘Take it easy mouse, don’t get exited. Can you give me an example?’

Mouse: ‘Well, there is a lot of difference in what is politics and what isn’t. Without knowing what is what, there are lots of promises made during elections regarding the process. And before you know it, in your country it will also be a political topic. The more you know up front about these things, the better for the process.’
Complete or partial stagnation
An important starting point in the boundary work concept is that cooperation can be forestalled (partially) at a moment when a critical transition cannot be bridged. Distinguishing partial and complete stagnation is due to the fact that cooperative relationships often have multiple dimensions. Whetten (1992) maps out seven different dimensions within cooperative relations:

- **Multitude**
The number of different forms of cooperation connecting two organizations.

Critical transitions in cross-border regional water management
In cross-border regional water management the following seven transitions are considered critical (Van der Molen, 2011):

- **Structure of public administration**
The structure and functioning of public administration can say a lot about the way things are done in a country. When organizations from two or more countries are starting their cooperation and have no knowledge regarding public administration on the other side of the border, there is a considerable chance that they are not able to stand in each others shoes and therefore are not capable of thinking along with the other party. This can lead to problems in establishing efficient cooperation or to a great deal of irritation which in turn could lead to disintegration of the cooperative process.

- **Organization of water management**
When an initiator does not have any knowledge regarding the organization of the sector on the other side of the border - water management for example - chances are that there will be a fair amount of time lost in the initial phase because consultations take place with parties who are not the final partners. In addition, it is possible that parties who are relevant for the cooperation are feeling overtaken, because they were not contacted in the early stages. And that is not a good start for cooperation.

- **Knowledge of administrative issues**
Regional administrative issues on the other side of the border often are not received through own regular information channels. This makes it difficult to stay informed. This lack of information can lead to misunderstanding and can cause badly founded steps in the process leading to even worse consequences.

- **Applied methods and techniques**
In cross-border cooperation within the area of water management, measuring methods, analysis techniques and interpretation frameworks are not always interfaced, because each individual party will have to comply with their national or federal regulations. This makes it difficult to compare measured and/or interpreted values.

- **Budgets to be spent**
When available budgets on both sides of the border vary considerably, this could become a problem for a well-balanced partnership.

- **Culture**
Even if organizations on both sides of the border may look similar, there can still be huge differences in culture. Cultural differences are often deeply rooted and can have an extensive (negative) impact on the cooperation.

- **Language**
Language problems do not only cause misunderstanding between people. They can also cause people to be hesitant in maintaining necessary contacts. Multilingual cooperation requires more time in any respect, and often extra funding for translations, etc. as well.
Stability
The extent to which certain types of relationships continue unchanged.

Standardisation
The degree of standardization of agreements between partners.

Formalization
The extent of formalization of the interaction between partners.

Intensity
The relative size of the resources spent on the relationship.

Reciprocity
The degree in which the relationship is symmetrical or reciprocal.

Redundancy
The extent to which the objective of the organization is unique or redundant.

If stagnation occurs within one of these dimensions, then this can be mitigated by the other dimensions. Therefore we can achieve partial stagnation of the cooperative relationship.

9.2 THE ROLE OF THE PIONEER

The pioneer as boundary spanner
As mentioned before, there is an important role for the boundary spanners in the boundary work concept. They will need to prevent partial or complete stagnation of the cooperation. Should this happen, then they need to be able to get the cooperative process on the road again.

In case of cross-border cooperation between organizations, the pioneer is the designated person to take on the role of boundary spanner.

In order to function as boundary spanner, it is of importance that the pioneer is accepted in that function on both sides of the border. Since the pioneer will serve ‘multiple masters’ he will have to keep these masters happy to the very best of his ability. General opinion on his functioning will be determined for the better part by the way both sides of the border talk about him (Guston, 2001).

The correct attitude for inter-cultural communication
As a boundary spanner, the pioneers will have to deal with matters in the area of inter-cultural communication. After all, they need to communicate with participants from different countries and simultaneously keep tabs on the way cross-border communication is progressing. In inter-cultural communication the pioneer does not need to be aware
of all the exact aspects of the other culture. What is more important is the development of the correct attitude towards cultural differences. This statement by Tennekes (1994) is clarified below.

Each view on another culture, however nuanced it may be, will always be an over-simplified version of the real complexity of that culture. Having the right information on the other culture is of course indispensable when an expectation pattern needs to be established regarding the people in this culture. But we are always dealing with people here, not the culture. Expectations regarding a certain culture that were based on substantive information often do not reflect reality when we actually deal with the people from that culture. That is the reason why the correct attitude with respect to the cultural differences is of major importance.

This attitude consists of the pioneer taking into account that the other person could have a very different view on the world than he has. He needs to be constantly aware of the ‘non-apparentness’. In other words, he needs to be constantly aware of the possibility that the other person considers different things as being completely apparent. Successful communication is only possible from an attitude of openness - ideally even curiosity - regarding the way people from other cultures experience and sense the world. From this attitude the pioneer will swiftly become aware of the cultural differences that are relevant to certain situations. Furthermore, he can use this attitude to optimally utilize the cultural information he already posses. This way he can prevent misunderstanding and incomprehension or at least keep it within manageable limits.

**The Duende approach: utilizing the effects of state borders**

The ideas of Tennekes are a nice bridge to the Duende approach in cooperation by Ietswaart (2008). Premise of the Duende approach is that cooperative partnerships can be developed while working on them. Central focus are 5 core concepts:

- attention
- focus
- expertise
- confidence
- passion

By flowing the energy put into the cooperative partnership along these core concepts, moments emerge in which cooperation is reinforced, similar to the moments of Duende in the Flamenco dances. Differences and contrasts between authenticities, such as cultural differences, can provide extra energy in the process. For pioneers this means that the effects of (country) borders do not need to be neutralized or bridged at all expense, but that they can also be deployed to strengthen the development of cross-border cooperative partnerships.
Curiosity from passion

The point made by Tennekes on curiosity about what people from other cultures ‘know’ of the world, and the ways they experience and feel this, also is addressed by Mikhaylova (2010). She concurs with the statement that developing cross-border regional cooperative partnerships is not a simple task. In order to professionally manage this development, the pioneers need to possess knowledge, skill and passion, according to her. She talks about passion for the region to which the cooperation applies and/or passion for the processes involved in cooperation and/or passion for other cultures and the people who are part of it.

Colouring the truth according to circumstances

Boundary spanners are known for their ability to colour their messages according to various occasions, depending on the receiving party (Guston, 2001) The motto ‘truth has many faces’ is the foundation for this approach and it’s also in analogy with the famous quote by Einstein ‘ Be as honest as possible, but don’t be more than that’. This phenomenon comes close to what Huxham & Vangen see in paragraph 6.3 as ‘towards collaborative thuggery’.

Strategy for boundary spanning

This strategy can be summarized in three steps ‘providing transparency, neutralizing and bridging where possible’. In other words, the pioneer cannot allow the consequences of a critical transition to happen. Instead, he needs to provide transparency and subsequently aim at neutralizing the consequences. Where possible he needs to bridge or overcome these, thus rendering the transition no longer critical.

In the example below we have applied the strategy above in an example.

In the example elaborated in 9.1 regarding the critical transitions in cross-border regional water management, the transition ‘available budgets’ is seen as potentially critical. When available budgets on both sides of the border vary considerably, this could become a problem for a well-balanced partnership. Hereafter, in paragraph 9.3, tools are provided to neutralize or bridge critical transitions. For ‘budgets to be spent’ a solution in four steps is suggested. Step 1 concerns providing transparency: The pioneer clarifies the difference in available budgets and funding and makes this open for discussion. Step 2 and 3 apply to neutralizing the differences: the pioneer could for instance try to compensate the difference by deploying extra hours of the participant with the smallest budget (step 2). He could also put in effort to obtain additional financing, such as grants, to reduce the impact of the differences (step 3). Step 4 is aimed at the actual bridging of the problem, by supporting the participant with the lowest budget through administrator sponsoring at higher levels in order to obtain extra resources.
9.3 TOOLS
In paragraph 9.1 we discussed the critical transitions in cross-border regional water management. For the better part, these problem issues will also occur in cross-border cooperation in other sectors. In this paragraph we provide tools to neutralize these critical transitions and bridge them where possible.

These tools must be seen as courses for solutions pioneers could use when these problems occur. The solutions offered are more or less generic, but partly dependent on the context. Pioneers in other contexts than water management will have to find their own solutions to neutralize or bridge critical transitions. The following tools should be a source of inspiration on that path.

Critical transition 1: structure of public administration
For knowledge regarding the structure of public administration four suggestions for solutions are presented:

- **Offering or making an overview available for the participants**
  The advantage of this solution is that the pioneer can ‘customize’ the message and can transfer it at an early stage. Disadvantage could be that information obtained (too) easily could be less sustainable.

- **Having participants inform each other**
  Premise for this approach is that there needs to be a certain degree of cooperation. The major advantage is that participating colleagues from the same field (across the border) can find out how things work and ask each other about it directly. But is also has a disadvantage: The subject is often complex and difficult to understand, while the counterparts in the same field are not specialized in transferring this kind of knowledge. Besides the fact that language plays a significant part. Colleagues from the same field prefer to present in their own language.

- **Having participants find their own information**
  The advantage is that involvement can be increased with this approach. An obvious disadvantage is that it could be counterproductive if participants get entangled. After all, it isn’t their daily work to research and map these matters. This option can be used when cooperation is not yet official, but participants are already starting to ‘warm up.’ The success of this approach is strongly dependent on the motivation of participants and the question if there are suitable candidates to perform this research.

- **Combined approach**
  In this variant the first three options are deployed according to the situation.
Critical transition 2: organization of the sector
Again we offer four suggestions for solutions for this critical transition, where the first two and the last one are very comparable with the tools for the first critical transition: ‘structure of public administration’:

■ Offering or making an overview available for the participants
  See explanation for ‘structure of public administration’.

■ Having participants inform each other
  See explanation for ‘structure of public administration’.

■ Personnel exchange
  Important pro: the participants will discover in a practical setting how the sector on the other side is organized. Additional advantage is that people of different organizations get to know each other and each other’s organizations more thoroughly. The con in this approach is that transfer of knowledge remains limited when people engaging in the exchange do not promote their experiences within their ‘home’ organization.

■ Combined approach
  See explanation for ‘structure of public administration’.

Critical transition 3: knowledge of administrative issues
This critical transition also presents various suggestions for solutions. Each of the approaches presented will at least partially offer a solution. The pioneer will obtain the best results when he combines attention for all four approaches.

■ Locating new information channels
  The pioneer could start reading local newspapers from the other side of the border or use relevant sites on the Internet.

■ Networking on the other side of the border
  Gathering information by visiting meetings, getting to know people and being present in relevant communities.

■ Managing relationships on the other side of the border
  A good way to obtain internal information from organizations is to manage relationships: maintaining contacts outside formal meetings and extend these to different levels within the organization. Informal consultations at administrative level can also be very profitable.

■ Being alert during regular meetings
  Even during the regular meetings of cooperative partnerships, participants often - consciously or subconsciously - make remarks related to their own administrative situation. The pioneer who keeps his ears open will increase his knowledge very rapidly.
Critical transition 4: applied methods and techniques

The solution course to take on this issue is aimed at cross-border water management. In other sectors the same steps can be taken to neutralize or bridge differences in methods and techniques.

- **Providing transparency**
  The first step in the direction of a solution is the question: ‘What exactly is going on, where are the problems?’ This must be answered in consultation with the participants. Only when everyone has a clear view of the problem, it will be possible to search for a solution.

- **(Optional:) executing a joint pilot project**
  In a joint pilot the influence of the various work practices can be investigated. This will provide more clarity on the differences and possible associated problems.

- **(Optional:) comparing the two work practices**
  For example: in cross-border water management, certain points at or along the border can be sampled, measured or interpreted in two different ways. This will also provide additional clarity regarding the consequences of the different methods and techniques being used.

- **Taking it to a higher level**
  Informing the appropriate authorities of these differences, and hoping this will (eventually) lead to harmonization.

Critical transition 5: budgets to be spent

The four steps for this transition were already explained in paragraph 9.2 as an example.

- **Providing transparency**
  Make clear what the differences are in budgets to be spent. Put this on the agenda as fast as possible and do not let it stay in the background.

- **Searching for compensation**
  Could the participant with the lowest budget offer something in return? Maybe an extra investment in hours or lower rates for services to be hired? With the right arguments differences in budgets can sometimes be made more acceptable.

- **Searching for external resources**
  Maybe there are grants available which would make the difference in available budgets less of an issue.

- **Agenda setting on a higher level**
  Would it be possible to support the participants with the lowest budget by providing them with more funds through the ‘top approach’ and the aid of other partners?
Critical transition 6: culture
Cultural differences can be deeply rooted and therefore very stubborn. The pioneer has the task of neutralizing these differences and look for opportunities to make use of them in a positive way.

- **Putting things in the open and positioning them in a positive way**
  It is wise to put cultural differences out in the open at an early stage, and position them in a positive way. The message to the participants needs to be that cultural differences are nothing special. They occur everywhere where organizations work together, therefore also along the border. Make sure to clarify that they can contribute positively to the cooperative partnership. In the ideal case, the result is that cultural differences are not seen as annoying, but as an extra stimulus to learn from each other, innovate or - not unimportantly - laugh with each other.

- **Working on acceptance from within**
  A pioneer could recruit persons in the participating organizations up front for their sincere interest in dealing with other cultures. This might be apparent from hobbies or vacation destinations. They do not necessarily need to be people who take part in the cooperative partnership, but they should be able to influence the ones who do participate in the partnership. During the process the pioneer might use them as ‘anchor’ point when cultural differences seem to become critical for further development of the cooperative partnership.

- **Choosing the lesser of two evils**
  When cultural differences are truly persistent, the pioneer will often have no other choice but to accept the solution that is agreeable for the participants but could be (sometimes) very impractical for the pioneer.

- **Being alert for cultural differences not determined by borders**
  One of the pitfalls in cooperative partnerships with multiple participants is that attention is mainly directed at the cultural differences between organizations along the sides of the border, while cultural differences within the country (between individual organizations, public organizations and social groups etc.) can even have more impact on the cooperation.

Critical transition 7: language
Differences in language are the most critical transition in cooperation ‘across borders’. Yet this transition is not the cause of the most problems provided it receives sufficient attention.

- **Giving serious attention to the problem**
  Problems due to languages can be avoided to a certain degree when they receive sufficient attention. For example by issuing - thoroughly translated - bilingual documents and providing interpreters during meetings.
- **Making use of each other’s knowledge of language**
  In border regions people often have a feel for each other’s language or speak dialects that resemble each other. In those cases it could be convenient to have everyone speak their own language or dialect.

- **Not letting language problems interfere with making contact**
  If language problems cause people to be hesitant in maintaining necessary contacts, then this needs to be addressed immediately. Is it truly the language that is causing this or are other issues playing a part? When the language is the true cause then the first action to be taken needs to be a joint search for solutions.

- **Speaking the language is not always enough**
  Mastering a language is more than just knowing the right words. Even someone who is able to speak a foreign language rather fluently, will not be able to think in this language. The pioneer needs to be constantly aware of this. For hired external process leaders the same applies in that it is of fundamental importance to be able to know how participants think. A combination of process leaders from different countries involved could be a solution in that respect.
CHAPTER 10
Determining the most appropriate legal form

10.1 THE SEARCH KEY

The question regarding the most appropriate legal form for cooperative partnerships cannot be answered unambiguously. This is due to the fact that the legal forms are partly dependent on the joint legislation of the countries involved regarding cross-border affairs, and for the other part of the present challenges of the cooperative partnership.

The context of the Crossing Borders theory can therefore not offer a direct answer to the question, but it can offer a search key to support pioneers in their search for the most appropriate legal form per situation. In figure 10.1 the search key is depicted as a framework.

Figure 10.1 Search key for finding the most appropriate legal form(s) (Van der Molen, 2011)
Working with the search key
At the top of the figure, the two most important starting points for using the search key are listed:

1  *Laws between countries:*  
   the applicable law between countries concerning cross-border affairs.

2  *Present challenges:*  
   the objectives the cooperative partnership wants to or must achieve.

In the layer below the legal forms emerging from 1 and 2:

1a *Legal forms to be deployed:*  
   from the laws between countries available legal forms follow, from which the cooperative partnership can make a choice.

2a *Desired legal forms:*  
   from the present challenges the *desired legal form* follows, in other words the legal form that will offer the cooperative partnership the most optimum possibility for achieving the present challenges. It is possible that multiple legal forms are eligible here. It may also be that *multiple concurrent legal forms* are desired, or even that over time *changing legal forms* are wanted. For determining the desired legal form, literature may offer some light. In the alternative case, the present challenges and/or comparable situations should be taken as starting point for a reversed search.

At the bottom of the figure we find the final outcome of the search process:

3  *The most appropriate legal form:*  
   by mirroring the desired legal form in the available legal forms it becomes clear which legal form is *most appropriate* to achieve the present challenges.

In paragraph 10.3 the search key is applied to an actual case of cross-border cooperation.
In cross-border regional cooperation between countries there are three different legal foundations:

A legally non-binding cooperation
B cooperation under private law
C cooperation under public law

### 10.2 LEGAL FOUNDATION FOR COOPERATION

In cross-border regional cooperation between countries there are three different legal foundations:

A legally non-binding cooperation
B cooperation under private law
C cooperation under public law

#### A Legally non-binding forms of cooperation

In case of legally non-binding cooperation, we find various forms of cross-border cooperation. Since these forms are ‘legally non-binding’ they cannot be considered ‘true’ legal forms. Therefore, the cooperative partnerships do not posses any legal status. The most divergent variants of legally non-binding cooperations are **fully informal cooperation** and cooperation based on **fully documented agreements**.

- **Fully informal cross-border cooperation**
  This is a variety of cooperation across borders that is stuck in a phase where juridification of processes is not or only slightly possible. Personal contacts are often leading. Therefore, the cooperation can be very flexible. There may be ad hoc cooperation and new projects can be started continuously. Because of the ad hoc character there is no guarantee for structural cooperation.

- **Cooperation based on fully documented agreements**
  This form has more structure than fully informal cooperation but is neither legally binding. Cooperation cannot be enforceable, as opposed to cooperation under private or public law, where this does apply.
In many cases legally non-binding cooperation is aimed at mutual exchange of information and consultation, and sometimes at coordination of intended measures.

**B Cooperation under private law**

In cross-border cooperation under private law, the legal forms are serving the private laws in the countries involved. An example of this form of cooperation is the oldest cooperative partnership between the German and Dutch border regions, the EUREGIO.

**EUREGIO, just legal entity in Germany**

Since 1958 EUREGIO works on building and enforcing cross-border structures in the German-Dutch border region. The cooperative partnership has grown into a collaboration of more than 130 German and Dutch local and regional governmental authorities.

The EUREGIO has a legal form under German private law as a so-called ‘eingetragener Verein’ (eV) - the German version of the Dutch ‘stichting’ (foundation). In this eV the Dutch partners (mostly municipalities) are formally not a member. They do have right of speech because they occupy half of the administrative functions in the ‘Vorstand’ (daily management) and in the Euregio council (general board), and because they are represented in the general meeting. The EUREGIO as such is not a cross-border legal entity. The eV basically serves as an umbrella entity, but according to the law this only applies in Germany.

**C Cooperation under public law**

Sometimes cross-border cooperative partnerships can be working under public law. This depends on the question if these countries have joint legislation concerning cross-border affairs.

If this is not the case then cooperation under public law is not possible. Legally non-binding cooperation and cooperation under private law would then be the only possibilities.
10.3 THE SEARCH KEY APPLIED

In this paragraph the previously described search key is applied to determine the most appropriate legal form for achieving the cross-border Vision on the Vecht.

Finding the most appropriate legal form for the Vision on the Vecht

1. Legislation between countries (figure 10.1 top left)

The Netherlands and Germany have mutually agreed on cross-border legal matters. The Anholt agreement from 1991 is the most important legal foundation for cooperation between German and Dutch regional and local authorities under public law. In addition there is a regulation established in 2006 by the European grouping of territorial cooperation who enables cross-border cooperation within the European Union under public law.

1a. Legal forms to be deployed (figure 10.1 centre left)

Cooperation under public law between German and Dutch governments and authorities is theoretically possible, just as legally non-binding cooperation and cooperation under private law.

The Anholt agreement

On grounds of this agreement most organizations are authorized to cooperate in the partnerships surrounding the Vecht. Based on the Anholt agreement the following legals forms are possible:

Public entity

The public entity is the only one of the three possible forms that possesses legal authority. The law of the country in which the public entity has its domicile will be the applicable law. As independent legal entity, the public entity is allowed to control real estate and capital as well as hire staff. The public entity consists at least of a general and a daily board. The public entity is not authorized to impose binding provisions or obligations to third parties (such as civilians, companies, etc.). Decisions are binding for the participating governing entities, who should execute these under their own national laws.

Because of the elaborated governing structure and regulation, the public entity is able to provide structured form and content to cross-border cooperation in the public sector.
Common body
The common body does not possess any legal authority. Neither can it impose binding decisions on participants or third parties. The common agreements of a common entity under the Anholt agreement, should contain provisions on task areas, the method of cooperation within the common entity and the location of domicile. The location of domicile determines the question of which domestic law applies.

Administrative agreements
As the last variant the Anholt agreement offers the option for administrative agreements. This mutual arrangement is particularly cut out for situations where one participant is taking care of certain tasks on behalf of and per instruction of other participants. Taking care of tasks on behalf of others in their own name is explicitly excluded. The administrative agreement is in fact a mandate from government servants in one country to be able to act in a certain area on behalf of the government of another country. The area in question could for instance be: compliance with environmental regulations along the border. This is only possible if the domestic laws have provisions to allow these actions.

Regulation by the European grouping of territorial cooperation
Besides the Anholt agreement, Dutch and German governing entities and authorities also have the option to work together under public law through the regulation of the European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTS). This additional form of cross-border cooperation under public law was established to encourage cooperation within the European Union. Premise for cooperation under the EGTS Regulation is that the cooperative partnership in question must be aimed at spending European funds or at a specific implementation project.

The EGTS Regulation is a novelty, in the sense that governing entities and authorities within the European Union for the first time have the opportunity to unite without having national parliaments to sign a ratified agreement. However, the member states must give their approval for the members originating from their home countries.

2. Present challenges (figure 10.1, top right)
In the cross-border Vision on the Vecht, a view on the future was designed for the river Vecht and its surrounding area, the Vechtdal. This vision on the future was already described roughly in paragraph 1.2. The official summary of the vision text reads:

‘High water and water discharge must be guaranteed, but at each possible location, the Vecht will be restored to a lively, semi-natural lowland river. This semi-natural lowland river will have the opportunity to flow freely in the winter flood plain, where ever possible. Distinctive river processes such a meandering, erosion and visible flow will be present.

The German and Dutch population of the Vechtdal has expressed their connection to the Vecht. This river is once again being established. Besides this, the Vecht can be more directly experienced due to its new features and improved access options, combined with preservation of the valuable cultural and historic structures. The recovery of the Vecht as semi-natural river, will in this case contribute to the socio-economical development of the Vechtdal.

In 2050 the Vecht will once again flow as a central river through the area, and everyone will be aware of the value of the Vecht and the Vechtdal. The German-Dutch Vechtdal, an area with charisma, authenticity, culture and history, is an area of profound storytelling.’

Key stakeholders are citizens, agriculture, recreation, nature and water, as well as local and regional authorities on both sides of the border.

2a. Desired legal form(s) (figure 10.1 centre right)
In the case of the German-Dutch Vision on the Vecht literature has offered the solution for determining the desired legal form. Realization of the Vision on the Vecht as a process can in fact be considered as a type of transition process for which Rotmans (2006) developed his theory on transition management.
**The transition theory**
Rotmans considers transitions to be *structural changes* in society, originating from interacting and mutually reinforcing developments in economy, culture, technology, institutions and nature and environment. Transitions, or *societal transformations*, are *gradual changes* spanning longer periods of time (25-50 years). This prolonged time is needed because existing borders, barriers, institutions and relations need to be broken down. Transition processes therefore contain a number of distinguishing characteristics:

**Control and influence**
Transitions cannot be controlled in terms of complete control and management. This is due to the extent of insecurities. But they can be managed in terms of influencing, adaptation and adjustment. The direction and speed can be influenced. In practical sense this means creating a climate in which societal innovation can flourish through the right initiatives at the right time. In the theory a kind of ‘road map’ is presented. Not as a blueprint of steps to be taken, but more as guidance for the search process that needs to be followed.

**Network-driven**
Transition processes are not institutional processes but network processes. Since renewal processes tend to have less buy-in if they are projected for long term, it makes more sense and is more effective to start them with the so-called ‘sympatics’ who are open to these processes. This will allow faster results and the practical applicable results can be communicated to a broader audience. Developing a broader buy-in will then occur more gradual and will only gain importance once the transition process is well under way.

**Compact core group**
Initially, transitions processes are often managed (guided) by a small core group, because of the network character and the lack of buy-in. After a while organizations will drop out and others will join. During the entire process, the composition of the core group will alter and could even grow.

**Transition processes do not benefit from legal constraints**
From the foregoing we can conclude that long running transition processes (20 - 50 years), such as the realization of the cross-border Vision on the Vecht, have a dynamic and unpredictable course and therefore do not benefit from legal constraints. They thrive - *at least for the short term* - with legal forms that offer optimal flexibility. In the ideal case, the participants will sign a *transition agreement* or an *ambition statement* (Rotmans, 2006).

3. **Most appropriate legal form(s)**
Previously we described the basic seven legal forms the cooperative partnership may use to realise their cross-border Vision on the Vecht:

- legally non-binding informal cooperation
- legally non-binding cooperation based on documented agreements
- cooperation based on a legal entity under German or Dutch private law
- cooperation based on a public entity
- cooperation based on a common body
- cooperation based on an administrative agreement
- cooperation based on the EGTS Regulation

Based on the conclusion in the final paragraph of the section on the transition theory, one legal forms can be seen as the most appropriate legal form for the cooperative partnership regarding the Vecht:

*legally non-binding cooperation based on documented agreements.*

In this case, the Vision document will serve as the ambition statement for the cooperating parties. We can however not rule out that in a later stage of the transition, when the buy-in has increased and the cooperation is more institutional, a different legal form will be needed.
Mouse: “There, this was the last chapter. What did you think of the book?”
Bittern: “Well... some parts are very clear and some were pretty difficult. I am not sure I understood everything. Somehow I don’t think all that information fits into my head.
Beaver: “This is what I felt too. When you want to cooperate across borders, you need to take many things into account. I am not picturing myself juggling all those balls. There would probably be a few I would drop instantly.”
Mouse: “You know friends, it may sound strange but I think you figured out the essence of the book. If you would have told me you were now full-fledged pioneers, I would have laughed at you. Developing a cooperative partnership is not something you learn in one day, no matter how clever you are. It really is like juggling - you need to practice a lot, make mistakes, learn from them and perfect your technique. That is not something you learn from a book, even if you have read it 100 times.”
Pike: “That’s what I thought, this book is no good.”
Mouse: “Ho there! That is not what I said. You might not be able to learn a trade just like that, but it does offer support when you are putting the trade to the practical test. Many things are like that - the more experience and understanding you gain, the more complicated it gets. At that moment, the book will prove its value to you.”
CHAPTER 11

Epilogue

Bittern and Beaver are sitting along the water. It has been a few years since they read the book with Mouse. They have been on the road and had many adventures together.

‘Remember how we started Bittern, after we read the book?’, Beaver asks. Bittern nods: ‘Yeah, your King just sent you out and off we went. And I even remember you quoting this saying, what was it again?’ Beaver laughs: ‘Boy, I sure changed a lot. I lived my life after that old saying: if you do what you did, then you get what you got. For generations that was the reason we built dams in the right places. And what was it you said?’ Bittern starts to laugh as well. ‘I think it was: Just stay put and don’t move. That was the first time we started to understand each other.’

‘Yes, and boy I was so nervous about that bull, King Remco, and his questions.’

‘Well, I must admit, your answers pretty much impressed me,’ Beaver says. Bittern can still see the picture. The King who found out that he went on the road, without a plan, to an unknown area, to ask around if they still had some food. ‘He sure was surprised and I was so nervous when the administrators started asking questions. I told them I didn’t go on the road just like that and then I did not even want to, until my President Water Buffalo showed me something that made me change my mind. Your King was so interested and asked me what it was. Then I confessed it was not something tangible. It was an image of what could happen in the future. I had to close my eyes and think about how I wanted our swamp to look like. Not just for me, but for all the living creatures around us. King Remco knew exactly how difficult it was to form that image first before deciding who does what.’ ‘Yep, and then we went. Mouse went ahead. Fortunately we knew it was about juggling, otherwise we might not have made it. That is something Mouse taught us well. Although we had no idea what these balls were.’
‘The best support I had in the beginning was the analysis on one hand, but taking a broader view and follow our own ways and feelings was the best way to go’, Beaver says. Bittern thinks: ‘Personally, the story about the distant cousin of King Remco from the Mediterranean did the most for me. That was a story about passion, rhythm and beauty and how you can use these to find trust, focus and direction.’

‘Yes, and that was something I did not know how to handle’, Beaver says. ‘Yet, we both learned to use a mix of strategies.’

Again, they sit silently together and think of what they encountered. ‘What really surprised me is that Pike came out as an excellent partner eventually’, Bittern says. ‘In the beginning I thought he was so stubborn and cynical. But once he understood that it would benefit him as well, he came about 360 degrees. Then we found out he knew many things and he could really help us ahead.’ ‘Remember when Mouse cited that theoretical essay and then Pike added a story from daily practice?’ ‘Yes, that was the first time we really came to a useful approach’, says Bittern. ‘I think that also had to do with us being together and truly listening to each other. That is how we found out new things, just by combining stories and deep thoughts. The newness was somewhere in the middle.’

‘And you kept asking direct questions, and I kept trying to figure out how I actually did things. I was not quite used to that’, says Bittern. ‘Gee, I did not even know that’, Beaver says, ‘give me an example’. ‘Well, I remember well when you asked me how I came to your place. All I could say then was: I flew, bit by bit. And then you asked me how I knew I was going in the right direction, and if I knew where to find food on the way, and if my President would let me fly that far. All these questions.’ ‘Oh yeah. I remember. And then you said that you knew the question, and you therefore knew where to look. For me that was all abracadabra. It could not have been so simple and vague. Without food and on the road with no structure. I actually thought that you were a bit simple, but that was just your way.’

‘Remember when you and Pike ran into that kingfisher?’, Beaver asks. ‘The three of you had this long conversation about how to catch fish. It looked so different, but in the end it came down to the same thing. That was really a breakthrough for me. You even went fishing together! That taught me to be curious all the time and keep on asking questions, even if it all seems alike or very different from what we do.’

‘I sure was sad when your King told my President that we were making a mess of it. They went and grazed together and arranged all kinds of things, and we were the ones that had to execute these things’, Bittern says. ‘Yet, we learned a lot from that. About how to bring information at the right time and in an effective way’, Beaver says. ‘You learn best from your mistakes, although it’s no fun. And yet Mouse did read that to us, from the book. It sounded so simple then, but we fell for it.’

‘What I think about most from back then’, Beaver says, ‘is that there were thresholds between our regions. How many did we get rid off?’ ‘Yes, like the one time when we forgot to ask the district council for approval and we went ahead. It really took a while before we did get a chance to really go ahead. Mouse was really angry at that time.’ ‘But I honestly did not know! Our rules are different for those things.’ ‘It’s okay, we came out fine. Mouse did come around quickly too. Remember what he said later on?’ ‘Yes, differences can be a good inspiration for great cooperation. And if you talk about them openly, you can also laugh about them together.’
Literature


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**Hannah Ietswaart** is employed as program manager for the same water board within the cross-border (Netherlands and Germany) executive program for the river Vecht. Furthermore, she conducts the knowledge enrichment program on cross-border cooperation Flow in the Vechtdal. The theory itself and the Crossing Borders handbook both emerged from this program as tangible results. She started her career as an expert on water and soil science and developed her project and process management skills while working for a national government body and a consulting agency. She expanded her knowledge on managing change and is now also a certified management consultant and member of the Dutch Order of Organizational Experts and the global CMC network. She uses this knowledge and these skills when managing cooperative processes for the river basin.