

Hensen, Rouwette & Katwijk (2009): The Role of Ecological Science in Environmental Policy Making: from a Pacification toward a Facilitation Strategy

This paper from Hanssen, Rouwette and Katwijk is expanding guidelines of coastal zone management. The authors suggest in this paper in case of environmental issues to use facilitation strategies rather than pacification strategies for problem structuring and dealing with scientific uncertainties in general. The advantage of the latter mentioned strategies include stakeholder interaction in an early stage and reduce uncertainties belonging to the implementation of different policy alternatives. Focus of this paper is the ecological evaluation program EVA dealing with mechanized shellfish fisheries in Dutch coastal waters.

- Failures to implement guidelines: Ecologists and scientists have their own rules, rationales and rewards. → Scientists want explanatory variables while policy makers want controllable ones.

EVA II

- Low shellfish stocks correlated with high shellfish eating bird mortality.
- EVA II is including many scientists, government officials and stakeholder representatives and tries to balance between the interests of fishermen and conservationists.
- Policy of food reservation for birds was implemented (evaluated in EVA I).

Evaluation

- Two coalitions (including scientists): Pro-fishery and pro-nature → Polarized discussion between economic and environmental stakeholders.
- Too much room for government officials and politicians ("policy space"). Large space, because of:
 - Coastal ecosystems are complex, studies and data is scarce → High scientific uncertainty.
 - Researchers had not enough time → no consensus in result interpretation.
 - No attempt to involve stakeholders and researchers in policy formulation ☒ No alternative policies of them.
- Two requirements for policy formulation: 1. Legal robustness. 2. Involvement of stakeholders and researchers.
- Environmental issues mostly characterized as an unstructured complex problem. → Use facilitation strategy instead of pacification strategy. → Early participation of stakeholders & scientists. → Robust policies.

Guidelines (List is not complete)

- Select all relevant key stakeholders and relevant scientific disciplines.
- Define perspectives, belief systems and visions of nature. → Create room for dialogue.
- Identify policy indicators and policy questions (involve stakeholders) → Role of facilitator.
- Formulate policy alternatives with stakeholders. → Assessment of scientists.
- Define policy goals and performance indicators. → Monitoring