

# Towards transformative climate governance: Lessons from frontrunner cities New York City, U.S. and Rotterdam, Netherlands

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## Objectives

- Climate change as context for achieving urban transformations towards sustainability and resilience
- Transformations require long-term and systemic strategies and solutions
- What kind of climate governance enables to develop and implement integrated solutions for urban transformation?

## Methods

### Comparative case study

- Rotterdam: 27 interviews; New York City: 36 interviews

### Learning from frontrunner cities:

- **Integrated strategies:** goal and knowledge integration (climate mitigation & adaptation, sustainability, resilience)
- **Innovative solutions:** new operational practices
- **New governance approaches:** new types of partnerships, communication channels

## New York City



## Rotterdam



## Governance capacities for transformative climate governance

### Governance capacities =

*The collective abilities of actors to create, mobilise and put in use resources to achieve common goals*

#### Stewarding capacity: safeguard and restore (critical) system values

- Generating knowledge about system dynamics
- Strengthening self-organisation
- Monitoring and learning

#### Unlocking capacity: minimise drivers of risks and unsustainability

- Recognising drivers of risks and unsustainability
- Undermining vested interests
- Organising support for regenerating

#### Transformative capacity: create and embed novelties

- Enabling novelty creation
- Increasing visibility of novelty
- Anchoring novelty in context

#### Orchestrating capacity: coordinate multi-actor processes across scales & sectors

- Aligning actors and networks
- Mediating across scales and sectors
- Creating opportunity contexts for synergies

## Results: Governance processes for transformative climate governance

### Stewarding:

- Knowledge partnerships for knowledge generation and integration
- Public authority: infrastructure investments, regulatory measures
- Community-based visioning processes for social cohesion

### Unlocking:

- Incentives and mandates for information disclosure
- Showing co-benefits and awareness raising
- Lobbying for support from key actor groups

### Transformative:

- Political leadership and using opportunities for change (e.g. Sandy)
- Informal networks for experimenting
- Showcasing pilot projects and embedding in institutions

### Orchestrating:

- Integrated long-term agendas – integrated solutions, reveals synergies and trade-offs
- Formal and informal, cross-sectoral and cross-scale partnerships, connection nodes and channels for resource mediation, trust building

## Conclusions

**New type of governance:** based on experimenting, learning and collaboration

### Challenges

- Gap between governance 'regime' and emerging 'niche'

### Implications on actor roles

- **Central role of local governments:** oversight; top-down coordination; mandating and monitoring
- **Diverse types of partnerships:** knowledge partnerships; public-private partnerships; community networks
- **Research institutes and NGOs:** creation of trust and knowledge in depoliticised setting
- Roles of **community organisations** – limited outreach

### Recommendations for strengthening capacities

- Experimenting with new funding structures: long-term cost- and benefit calculations
- Investing in (top-down) coordinating capacities (skills, time, resources)



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