# Harmony or conflict? Analysing area-based collaboration in Overijssel

A qualitative research using the theory of collaborative governance to analyse the experienced tension between policies and bottom-up initiatives

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## Abstract

This master thesis creates a deeper knowledge of the dynamics of area-based collaboration within the theoretical context of crucial variables related to collaborative governance. The theory of collaborative governance, first used by Ansell & Gash (2007), is used, specifically the crucial variables, which consist of the starting conditions, institutional design and facilitative leadership. While the multiple case study researches bottom-up initiatives related to the policy terms area-based processes and area-based cooperations, a choice has been made to use the term area-based collaboration, as these are both collaborations between different stakeholders in certain areas. The cases used in this research are farmers uniting themselves in a cooperation in the municipality of Wierden and the collaboration between farmers and other stakeholders in the Baarlingerpolder. The cases are both located in the same province, ensuring a common regulatory background for comparability. Data collection involves semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in developing area-based collaboration, including participants such as, the municipality, the province, and other relevant stakeholders. While analysing these interviews through coding, attention is paid to the crucial variables. Concluded shortly, every crucial variable is related to trust, which makes this also crucial. Next to that, a weak institutional design and power and resource imbalances are important incentives to participate. Facilitative leadership is needed to minimise the knowledge gap. Additional findings were that the availability of funding is also seen as important in area-based collaboration, as is working with a long-term vision and being aware of broader solutions, regarding the public good.

**Keywords:** area-based collaboration, collaborative governance, bottom-up initiatives, trust, participation, institutional design and facilitative leadership.

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# Abbreviations

CAP = common agricultural policy

AES = agri-environmental schemes

CG = collaborative governance

ABC = area-based collaboration

CATB = cooperative agrarian terrain management (Wierden)

PPLG = provincial plan rural area

PiP = provincial integration plan

# Table of Content

# 1. Introduction

Collaborating in creating area-based integral solutions in the rural area in the Netherlands with different stakeholders? This might seem quite complicated, but it is needed, as bottom-up initiatives are growing rapidly, as are several problems in rural parts of the Netherlands. For example, farmers in Wierden, a town in the province of Overijssel, are determined to take back control of the agricultural transition and ensure the persistence of their farms (Janssen, 2022). The future of their farms is under threat due to multiple issues such as the designation of Natura 2000 areas near surrounding buffer zones and the extraction of drinking water in the area, all of which significantly impact agricultural practices. Instead of waiting for governance action, the farmers in Wierden have decided to work together, developing a plan in a bottom-up approach that involves various stakeholders. This unique pilot project, which aims to demonstrate how local farmers can collectively manage extensive farming within an area-based collaboration, holds great promise for the future (De Kleine, 2023).

## 1.1    Problem description

The municipality of Wierden is not the only place where farmers take ownership of long-term visions of future nature-inclusive, extensive agricultural activities (Vale, 2018; Voorhorst, 2022; Wouda, 2022; Langeveld & Westerink, 2020). As well as the need of a bottom-up approach to deal with combatting environmental problems and change of landscape.

As Buizer et al. (2015) mention, European landscapes have changed compared to the past, as the landscape has been adjusted to the changing agricultural expectations, with farms intensifying and specialising to be competitive and profitable on an economic level. To deal with environmental change, due to climate change, think of desiccation, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, air pollution and extreme weather conditions (European Commission, n.d.). These environmental hazards negatively impact (land-based) agricultural activities (NOAA, 2021). The European Commission acknowledges that the consequences of climate change are a serious threat that will impact different aspects of our lives. The European Commission started implementing common agricultural policy (CAP), where money is reserved for dealing with environmental issues in agricultural land use and implementing, e.g. agri-environmental schemes (AES), Buizer et al. (2015) describe AES as schemes that are constructed to take measures on farms to secure and maintain ecological qualities of the landscape. It is a subsidy provided by the European Union, but national policies can decide how to distribute the subsidies.

While creating subsidies to deal with environmental changes and their influence on agricultural land use, simultaneously another development is on the rise. Instead of focusing on formal governance and market parties, there is more focus on citizen initiatives (Buizer et al., 2015; Bessems, 2024). Cooperation is needed to deal with the consequences of climate change (Westerink et al., 2017). As Langeveld and Westerink mentioned in 2020 and Stimuland (n.d.), power relations are changing within the Netherlands. Where it used to be the governance and the free market, which had all the power, now more power is delegated to citizens, so working with these new power relations within our physical landscape services is important. The changing power relations in rural areas, described by Stimuland (2022) are in place, as CAP is implemented through local so-called farmers collectives, which has been broadly discussed in several research papers (Renting & van der Ploeg, 2001; Riley et al., 2018; De Vries et al., 2019; Barghusen et al., 2021). In general, these research papers contribute to our knowledge of the application of agri-environmental schemes in The Netherlands, and the Dutch approach is widely known as successful and a global example.

Apart from the implementation of subsidies in the Netherlands from a top-down point of view, local initiatives, contrary to governmental policies and market parties, are taking ownership, such as in Wierden. Previous research mentioned several incentives, such as that farmers don't feel

appreciated, have no future perspective, and feel like they are losing control of their companies (Walther et al., 2023). On top of that, farmers see their living environment changing (Elands, 2023) but don't know how to deal with this, as there are different transition paths, and it is uncertain which path is best (Walthers et al., 2023). Farmers might feel that something needs to be changed, as their main challenges are re-evaluating their social position as farmers, designing (area-based) processes, testing governmental designs to practical experiences, and providing a long-term vision (Walthers et al., 2023). This can achieved by creating bottom-up initiatives, a trend that has become more known in the Netherlands for the past few years (Bessems, 2024).

These bottom-up approaches follow a more integral attitude towards the problems stated above, looking at different aspects within their area. Different terms are used for these bottom-up approaches within the policies in the Netherlands. Rather than focusing on the technical differences within such bottom-up initiatives, it is important to research the relationships these bottom-up initiatives encounter. Different stakeholders unite within an area in these initiatives, and collaboration is established between local stakeholders and governmental policies. The term that will be used for the processes in which these bottom-up initiatives perceived will be area-based collaborations (ABC). This thesis will define area-based collaborations as 1) initiatives that initially started from a bottom-up approach, 2) different area-based stakeholders are involved in the process, and 3) the goal of the collaboration integrates multiple purposes. In this way, area-based collaboration includes different policies and examples regarding bottom-up initiatives in rural parts of the Netherlands.

Although area-based collaborations are not necessarily connected to the implementation of agri-environmental schemes in the Netherlands, previous research can be used in this thesis to create insight into collaboration regarding agri-environmental solutions. For example, the statement that within collaboration, it is hard to deal with integral solutions regarding water, climate and nitrogen use without collaboration, as every farmer only has a view parcel and, for success, must seek collaboration with other stakeholders (Barghusen et al., 2021). Furthermore, research from Westerink et al. (2017) shows that farmers and nature organisations are the providers, but the government and society benefit from landscape services. If the importance of these area-based collaborations has been proved, other mechanisms fail in this case. As mentioned earlier in this introduction, farmers miss a long-term vision (Walthers et al., 2023) and thus take action to create one themselves to secure their future. Due to the current situation, a long-term vision for agriculture is still on hold, which causes a lot of uncertainty among farmers. Other statements that shed insightful light on the processes of area-based collaborations will be mentioned in the context chapter.

Uncertainties, as mentioned in the paragraph above, can result in failing bottom-up initiatives, as emphasised by Bessems (2024) and Von Schönfeld & Tan (2021). While bottom-up initiatives encounter several societal problems (dealing with energy transitions or increasing liveability), they feel dependency on a helpful government and think that governments need to see that inhabitants are their partners instead of taking over the initiative or getting in the way of execution (Bessems, 2024). Good collaboration between stakeholders from a bottom-up approach and stakeholders within a governmental context is crucial for successful collaborative governance.

## 1.2    Objective and research question

The impact of self-organised area-based collaboration in uncertain times is still unclear, such as the situation mentioned in the problem description. Especially the mechanism by which collaboration between farmers and government work, during dynamic and complex situations has not been established. Further research needs to be executed on the crucial variables of area-based collaboration, which sheds new light on the future of landscape services in the Netherlands and creates a wider understanding of collaboration between governments and stakeholders in dynamic and complex situations. In understanding these complex mechanisms, further steps can be taken into

collaborative governance by Ansell & Gash (2007) within provincial and regional politics and how to establish successful collaborations in sustainable solutions. Area-based collaboration needs more insights regarding crucial variables surrounding a successful collaborative process within collaborative governance. This research will focus on the tension between governmental policies and self-organisation, researched through the crucial variables of collaborative governance by comparing two cases in the province of Overijssel. The levels of governance which will be focused on are the provincial and local levels. Therefore, the research question that will be answered in this thesis is:

*What is the influence of the crucial variables of collaborative governance on the tension between governmental policies and bottom-up initiatives in area-based collaboration?*

## 1.3    Reading guide

After this introduction, the context chapter will first elaborate on the current state of agri-environmental schemes in academic literature to establish the knowledge about comparable studies. Subsequently, the theoretical framework of collaborative governance will be further explained and developed using recent literature and the application of collaborative governance within comparable research. The main and sub-questions will be presented and operationalised in a scheme. The methodology will explain how the main question will be answered using the literature and the operationalisation scheme. The results will present quotes and an analysis of the interviews, along with highlighting key findings. After, these key findings and additional results will be discussed, while explaining the most significant outcomes using the literature cited in the theoretical framework and additional relevant literature. Building on these discussions, a new collaborative governance scheme will be presented and concluded with limitations of the research. The conclusion will answer the main- and sub questions and propose scientific and societal recommendations.

# 2. Context

The introduction stresses the importance of good landscape management to the whole society. However, there is tension between the self-governance of farmers and stakeholders in area-based collaborations and governmental policies. Research has been executed before regarding these contexts within AES. This is one of the policies that might influence the current tension in area-based collaboration and is essential to elaborate on, as the findings might be comparable to the findings of this thesis.

According to the European Environment Agency AES are "*government programmes set up to help farmers manage their land in an environmentally-friendly way. AES are important for conserving farmed environments of high nature value, for improved genetic diversity and protection of agro-ecosystems*" (European Communities, 2000). It is important to stress that the importance of these AES as AES are considered one of the main mechanisms for achieving agri-environmental policy throughout Europe and is thus widely researched (Burton & Paragahawewa, 2011). This means that it can lead to inspiration for agri-environmental policies elsewhere. Although it is mentioned as the main policy in Europe, it can create tension in the long-term vision of change (Burton & Paragahwewa, 2011). This can create tension between bottom-up initiatives and governmental policy, such as the implementation of AES in Europe. AES has been implemented through Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in Europe. Since implementing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the Netherlands, there has been more attention to AES implementation in the Netherlands (Barghusen et al., 2021). There is a long history of farmers working together, which resulted in collectives. These collectives got professionalised in implementing CAP money and boosting collaboration, so farmers were forced to work together regionally all over the country (Westerink et al., 2020). The collective way the Dutch implemented their CAP must be ideal, as in the Netherlands, it took decades to develop a culture of cooperation in agri-environmental management (Riley et al., 2018). The initial goal of implementing AES collectively is to improve the spatial coordination and targeting of agri-environmental measures (Barghusen et al., 2021). Barghusen et al. (2021) describe AES on page 1: "*AES are a key policy instrument to motivate farmers to implement more environmentally friendly farming practices to promote biodiversity and ecosystem services in agricultural landscapes*". These goals are similar as the example stated in the introduction, but the effectiveness of implementing AES through professionalised collectives is under pressure. Multiple researches regarding the implementation of AES in the Netherlands through agricultural collectives, state that these collaborations through collectives approach more of a top-down approach, instead of the longed bottom-up approach (De Vries et al., 2019; Barghusen et al., 2021; Dik et al., 2023; Alblas & Van Zeben, 2023; Westerink, 2020)**.**

First, it was stated that the individual way of implementing AES was not effective enough (De Vries et al., 2019; Barghusen et al., 2021). As De Vries et al. (2019) mention in their research, the AES were too heavily dependent on the management done by individual farmers, while to be effective a more collective integral approach has to be implemented. After this was discovered, collective agri-environmental schemes were designed, in 2016 in the Netherlands. In this new model farmers have to collaborate through regional farmer collectives. In this way measures could be taken on an area level, which increased the effectiveness of AES (De Vries et al. 2019). Although the 'improved' way of implementing the collective way of AES, new problems are arising. So Westerink et al. (2020) mention that the social capital is reducing (as it is more top-down than bottom-up). On top of that, Alblas & Van Zeben (2023) mention new governance risks that need to be considered, such as goal divergence between the collectives and public bodies and cases of prioritising social interests over ecological interests in AES. This is supported by Burton and Paragahawewa (2011), as they question the cultural sustainability of AES. The European Union is aware of this fact, as in the future, more focus will be on subsidies for area-based processes, which is a form of area-based collaboration.

# 3. Theoretical framework

To research the area-based collaboration and their crucial variables, it is important to first define these in the theoretical framework. As mentioned in the introduction, one way of doing so, is by using the theory of collaborative governance, first used by Ansell & Gash, in 2007, stemming from local governance by Lowndes (2005). Ansell & Gash (2007) describe the mechanism behind the practice, e.g. local governance described by Lowndes (2005). This can be achieved through collaborative governance, but this is not necessarily the only way to research collaboration between governmental bodies and bottom-up initiatives. Although there are other theories, collaborative governance brings public and private stakeholders together in collective forums with public agencies in consensus-oriented decision-making. The research of Ansell and Gash is based on several case studies, which resulted in crucial variables (starting conditions, facilitative leadership and institutional design) influencing the collaborative process, which will result successful collaboration (figure 1). This model is very relevant, as this framework can be used to identify key challenges and limitations to a collaborative strategy, such as area-based collaborations (see also: Alblas and van Zeben, 2023; Avoyan, 2022; Bianchi et al., 2021; Breaugh et al., 2023; Christensen, 2023; Waardenburg et al., 2020; Westerink et al., 2017).
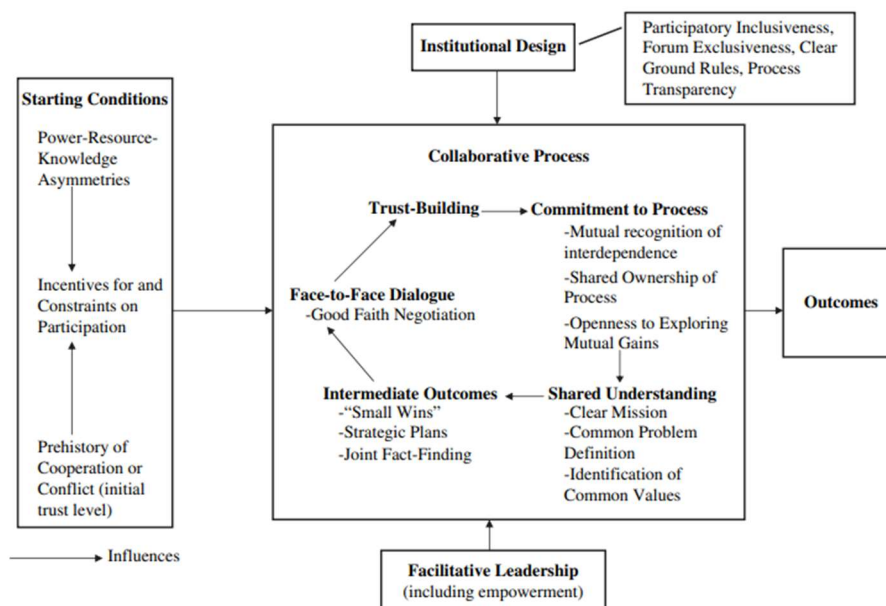


Figure 1: A model of collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007)

Using this model and these variables in this research will create a framework in which successful collaboration between government and land owners can be theoterised. Important to mention is that Ansell & Gash (2007) have six criteria for effective collaborative governance mentioned on pages 544 and 545: the forum is initiated by public agencies or institutions; participants in the forum include non-state actors; participants engage directly in decision-making and are not merely 'consulted' by public agencies; the forum is formally organised and meets collectively; the forum aims to make decisions by consensus (even if consensus is not achieved in practice); the focus of collaboration is on public policy or public management. This means that these six criteria are necessary within collaborative governance and must be present to meet the standards of collaborative governance, so the scheme of figure 1 can be applied to specific case studies.

Building on the research by Ansell & Gash (2007), Douglas et al. (2020) focuses on collaborative performance. In Ansell & Gash (2007), the focus is merely on achieving goals, but Douglas et al. (2020) mention the importance of supporting important stakeholders to survive and build resilience to sustain activities in future challenges. Douglas et al. (2020) also note that collaboration can follow different objectives to reach their main objective, which is also supported by Avoyan (2022), but Chirstensen (2023) adds that successful collaborative governance also relies on supportive institutional design and facilitative leadership, which is confirmed in researched by Breaugh et al. (2023). Avoyan (2022) mentions that different variables of the collaborative process need to be combined to achieve innovative solutions. Different leadership roles and institutional design features are required to pursue different values. Next, Bianchi et al. (2021) mention the importance of culture, history, and traditions in the design and implementation of collaborative governance initiatives. The sections below will establish the framework for analysing the data in this thesis, taking the different aspects described by Ansell & Gash (2007) as a basis, elaborated on with more recent literature. Using this concept is an important addition to participatory planning, as conflict is part of this model, and not only the positive examples of collaborations are the backbone of this model.

## 3.1    Starting conditions

In this scheme, starting conditions refer to the basic level of trust, conflict, and social capital that become resources or liabilities during collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2007, p. 550). The starting conditions consist of the broad variables: the imbalances between the resources or power of different stakeholders, the incentives that stakeholders want to collaborate, and past cooperation or history of conflict among stakeholders. These broad variables will be explained further below.

### 1.    Power/resource imbalances

Power or resource imbalances between stakeholders are a commonly noted problem. It can be described as if some stakeholders do not have sufficient capacity, status, organisation or resources to participate or there is a disbalance compared to other stakeholders, the collaborative governance process can be manipulated by stronger stakeholders. This problem can lead to distrust or weak commitment (Ansell & Gash, 2007).

The problem is merely present if the important stakeholders do not have the organisational infrastructure to be represented in collaborative governance processes. Especially in individual processes, this is the case, but area-based collaborations struggle with this problem. Next, not all stakeholders might know how to talk about highly technical solutions. The third and last problem stated by Ansell & Gash in 2007 is that some stakeholders do not have the time, energy or liberty to engage in time-intensive collaborative processes. The following conclusion is stated to resume:

*If there are significant power/resource balances between stakeholders, such that important stakeholders cannot participate meaningfully, effective collaborative governance requires a commitment to a positive empowerment strategy and representation of weaker or disadvantaged stakeholders.*

Sufficient organisational infrastructure is important for all stakeholders. The knowledge gap should be minimalised, and participants should have enough time, energy, and liberty to engage and should have sufficient resources to do so.

### 2.    Incentives to participate

Power/resource imbalances and differences among players influence their willingness to participate. Parties that believe their power is on the rise will unlikely want to commit to collaboration. Incentives increase as stakeholders see a direct relationship between their participation and concrete, tangible, effective policy outcomes. But they decline if stakeholders perceive their own input to be merely

advisory or largely ceremonial. Strong incentives to participate are crucial for collaborative performance, as Douglas et al. (2020) mentioned.

The following additions are made by Ansell & Gash (2007) to their contingency model (P. 553):

*If alternative venues exist where stakeholders can pursue their goals unilaterally, then collaborative governance will only work if stakeholders perceive themselves to be highly interdependent.*

*If interdependence is conditional upon the collaborative forum being an exclusive venue, then sponsors must be willing to do the advance work of getting alternative forums (courts, legislators, and executives) to respect and honour the outcomes of collaborative processes.*

This is also mentioned by Sibbing et al. (2021), as stakeholder commitment fosters interdependence and is crucial for collaborative performance. Regarding the collaboration of Dutch farmers in AES, Barghusen et al. (2021) defined the motivations of farmers to participate. These are, for example, economic considerations and positive personal norms regarding environmental measures. These are influenced by problem awareness, perceived responsibility, and a feeling of collective efficacy. In further development, maintaining communication, distributing knowledge, and cultivating long-term relationships among farmers and between farmers and other stakeholders are also perceived as important (Barghusen et al., 2021).

The most important matters around incentives to participate are willingness to participate, concrete, tangible outcomes within processes, motivations to participate, and the level of commitment of stakeholders.

### 3. Prehistory of antagonism and cooperation

Past history or conflict among stakeholders will hinder or facilitate collaboration. Although there are examples, high conflict is not necessarily a barrier to collaboration. A prehistory of conflict is likely to express itself in low levels of trust, resulting in low levels of commitment, strategies of manipulation, and dishonest communications. On the contrary, a history of successful collaboration will boost social capital, create high levels of trust, and produce a virtuous circle of collaboration. Ansell & Gash (2007) applied the following addition to their model (P. 553 / 554):

*If there is a prehistory of antagonism among stakeholders, then collaborative governance is unlikely to succeed unless (a) there is a high degree of interdependence among the stakeholders or (b) positive steps are taken to remediate the low levels of trust and social capital among the stakeholders.*

Waardenburg et al. (2020) mention that shifting from an antagonistic conflict to a constructive one is important to succeed in collaborative governance. This implies that participants' objectives need to be broadened, and thus, solutions can be improved. Hereby, gaining basic trust is very important, as is also mentioned by De Vries et al. (2019) and Waardenburg et al. (2020). The process around trust building will be further elaborated on in the collaborative process, but it is a crucial part of the process, when there is a history of antagonism (Ansell & Gash, 2007).

## 3.2 Institutional design

The second crucial variable of the collaborative governance model is institutional design. The institutional design refers to the basic protocol and ground rules in which collaboration will take place. This is critical for the procedural legitimacy of the collaborative process. When this variable is unclear, the most fundamental design issue is lacking and will influence procedural legitimacy and trust-building processes (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Trust is an important aspect influenced by institutional design, as a clear and consistent process reassures that the process is fair, equitable, and open. Clear roles and thus formalising governance structures and deadlines can also be important as a design feature (Ansell & Gash, 2007). This is important as meetings can be endless and clear objectives are effective, but this is also a risk, as it may undercut the natural flow of meetings, which is especially a

problem in long-term collaborations. Institutional design features are especially important at the initial stages of the project (Breaugh et al., 2023). Important aspects within the institutional design are, thus, explicit rules, respected rules, transparent decision-making, clear roles, clear objectives and clear deadlines.

Research by Douglas et al. (2020) shows the importance of a strong institutional design when strong incentives are present. Breaugh et al. (2023) confirm this; this research mentions that institutional design can be a structural component of collaborative projects. One of the reasons mentioned is that clear institutional design reduces insecurities surrounding complexity, risk perceptions and power imbalances. Although this is the case, strong leadership and process can also be crucial in their research, which will be explained in the paragraphs below. Important to keep in mind, as Breaugh et al. (2023) mention, is the risk that specific aspects are mentioned in policy documents but are not recalled in the development of projects, as documents are not always binding, which are differences between the implementation of institutional documents, and the pure institutional design.

## 3.3   Facilitative leadership

The third crucial variable that will be elaborated on is facilitative leadership. Facilitative leadership provides essential mediation and facilitation for the collaborative process (Ansell & Gash, 2007, p. 550). Leadership is critical in creating effective collaboration, as it can bring parties to work together, maintain clear rules, facilitate dialogues, build trust, and seek mutual gains. This is especially important when the starting conditions are lacking. Ansell & Gash (2007) conclude the following contingencies on page 555:

*Where conflict is high, and trust is low, but power distribution is relatively equal, and stakeholders have the incentive to participate, then collaborative governance can successfully proceed by relying on the services of an honest broker that the respective stakeholders accept and trust. This honest broker might be a professional mediator.*

*Where power distribution is more asymmetric or incentives to participate are weak or asymmetric, collaborative governance is more likely to succeed if a strong "organic" leader commands the respect and trust of the various stakeholders at the outset of the process. "Organic leaders are leaders who emerge from within the community of stakeholders. The availability of such leaders is likely to be highly contingent upon local circumstances.*

This contingency implies that the possibility for effective collaboration may be seriously constrained by a lack of leadership. Breaugh et al. (2023) confirm that leaders' skills in understanding and collaborative strategies are critical when handling project-related problems and moving towards the implementation of solutions. This can be done by reframing problems, harvesting opportunities or bringing new knowledge and stakeholders into the process. Breaugh et al. (2023) even mention the facilitative leader as a crucial link between the collaboration itself and the implementation of institutional design into reality. While institutional design and legitimate structures are needed initially, legitimate structures have limits and opportunities when the project evolves. Leadership skills are, in these cases, crucial to the success of the projects.

In conclusion, facilitative leadership is about bringing parties together, maintaining clear rules, facilitating dialogues, building trust, seeking mutual gains and the availability of local leaders.

## 3.4    Collaborative process

Based on several case studies and previous research about collaboration, Ansell & Gash (2007) represented the collaborative process as a cycle (collaboration is highly iterative and nonlinear), although it is a great simplification of reality. Collaboration is a virtuous cycle between communication, trust, commitment, understanding, and outcomes. The different processes are stated in Figure 1 and will be explained in the following paragraphs. As the research is about the crucial variables surrounding the collaborative process, the different aspects of the collaborative process will be explained less extensive then the crucial variables starting conditions, institutional design and facilitative leadership.

**Face-to-face dialogue**

Communication is at the heart of collaboration. Face-to-face collaboration leads to direct conversations between different stakeholders, which contributes to identifying opportunities for mutual gain in projects. Another possibility is reinforcing stereotypes or status differences through these conversations or increasing antagonism and mutual disrespect. Face-to-face dialogue is necessary but insufficient for collaboration, although it is hard to establish effective collaboration without it (Ansell & Gash, 2007).

**Trust Building**

The lack of trust is a common starting point for collaborative governance; thus, building trust among stakeholders is one of the major steps of the collaborative process. This is especially important if there has been a prehistory of antagonism between stakeholders and is quite hard to establish. Ansell & Gash (2007) mention on page 559:

*If prehistory is highly antagonistic, policymakers or stakeholders should budget time for effective remedial trust-building. If they cannot justify the necessary time and cost, they should not embark on a collaborative strategy.*

**Commitment to the process**

Stakeholders' level of commitment to collaboration is a critical variable in explaining success or failure. Commitment to the process means believing that good faith bargaining for mutual gains is the best way to achieve desirable policy outcomes. Commitment depends on trust that other stakeholders will respect your perspectives and interests. Also, clear, fair, and transparent procedures are critical for commitment (institutional design) (Ansell & Gash, 2007).

Collaborative governance shifts ownership of decision-making from the agency to the stakeholders acting collectively, but this is a tricky dilemma. Stakeholders can not only give critiques but are also responsible for decision-making. Trust is hereby again critical. You must believe your 'opponent' will not take advantage of your willingness to act in good faith. (p. 560).

Ansell & Gash (2007) formulated the following conclusions on page 560:

*Even when collaborative governance is mandated, achieving "buy-in" is still essential to the collaborative process.*

*Collaborative governance strategies are particularly suited for situations that require ongoing cooperation.*

This is also stated above, as Sibbing et al. (2021) mention key points of attention for successful collaboration, ensuring stakeholder commitment. String balance between sectoral and holistic focus, avoiding too abstract ambitions, fostering interdependence, and investing in political commitment.

**Shared understanding**

Stakeholders must develop a shared understanding of what they want to achieve together; this can also include a shared understanding of a definition of a problem. Some literature sees this as part of a larger collaborative learning process (Ansell & Gash, 2007).  Waardenburg et al. (2020) stress the importance of shared understanding in their research to form mutual gains and interests, as the lack of shared understanding creates different objectives within a collaborative process.

**Intermediate outcomes**

Collaboration has more chance to succeed when purposes and advantages are concrete and 'small wins' are possible. These small wins can feed into the collaborative process, encouraging a virtuous cycle of trust-building and commitment. Ansell & Gash (2007) draw the following conclusion on page 561:

*If prior antagonism is high and a long-term commitment to trust building is necessary, intermediate outcomes that produce small wins are particularly crucial. If stakeholders or policy makers cannot anticipate these small wins under these circumstances, they probably should not embark on a collaborative path.*

An important note that needs to be added is that small wins may not be an appropriate strategy for building trust where stakeholders have more ambitious goals that cannot easily be parsed into intermediate outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2007). In this situation, Ansell & Gash (2007) suggest that trust can be built by early joint exploration of the overall value of collaboration.

## 3.5    Conclusion

This short conclusion will mention the main issues mentioned in this theoretical framework and which are most important to elaborate on in this thesis. The scheme of Ansell & Gash first consists of crucial variables, which outcomes will lead to a collaborative process. The crucial variables mentioned are starting conditions, institutional design and facilitative leadership.  The starting conditions are further divided into the variables, power/resource imbalances, incentives to participate and prehistory of antagonism and cooperation. The power/resource imbalances consist of the knowledge gap that should be minimalised; participants should have enough time, energy, and liberty to engage and should have sufficient resources to do so. The most important matters around incentives to participate are thus willingness to participate, concrete, tangible outcomes within processes, motivations to participate and the level of commitment of stakeholders. To conclude the starting conditions, most of the prehistory of antagonism and cooperation are researched as the level of trust, communication, and interdependence between stakeholders. Important aspects within the institutional design are, thus, explicit rules, respected rules, transparent decision-making, clear roles, clear objectives and clear deadlines. To finalise the crucial variables, facilitative leadership is about bringing parties together, maintaining clear rules, facilitating dialogues, building trust, seeking mutual gains and the availability of local leaders.

The collaborative process can start when the crucial variables are clear and discussed between all stakeholders. Depending on matters mentioned within the crucial variables and what is needed based on these variables, according to Ansell & Gash (2007), the collaborative process consists of face-to-face dialogues, trust building, commitment to the process, creating shared understanding and intermediate outcomes. Important to keep in mind while using this theory created by Ansell & Gash (2007), is followed by research, e.g. by Douglas et al. (2020), who mention on page 650 that there is not one best way to achieve collaborative performance, but using the scheme as roadmaps providing an overview of the different possible pathway that could lead to successful collaborative governance.

# 4. Main- and sub-questions

Following the problem statement in the introduction and the information in the context chapter and theoretical framework about collaborative governance, insecurities around the collaborative process have a major influence on area-based collaborations. Not all aspects of the Collaborative Governance model of Ansell and Gash (2007) can be researched, but as explained in the introduction, it is clear that insecurities within the surrounding variables that lead to the collaborative process are crucial for success/efficacy and might be the biggest problem in failing area-based collaborations. Thus, this master thesis will focus on the crucial variables of the collaborative governance theory. As Bianchi et al. (2021) mention, focusing on implementation implies generating viable and sustainable outcomes from a governance network's design, implementation, management, and leadership.

The main question, therefore, is:

**What is the influence of the crucial variables of collaborative governance on the tension between governmental policies and bottom-up initiatives in area-based collaboration?**

This question will be answered through the following sub-questions:

1. What influence do starting conditions have on the collaborative process within area-based collaborations?

2. How does the institutional design influence the collaborative process within area-based collaborations?

3. How does facilitative leadership influence the collaborative process within area-based collaborations?
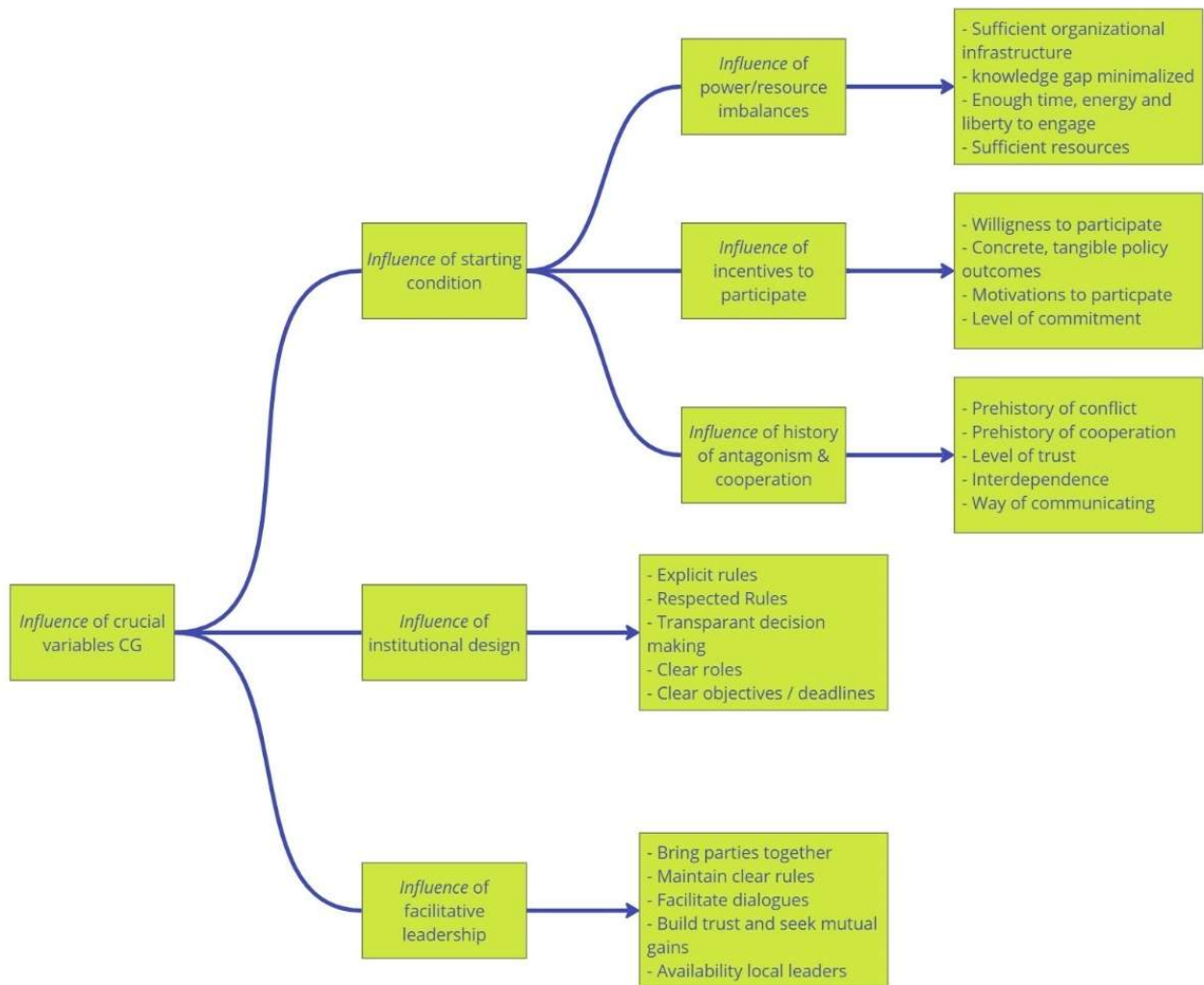
## 4.1 Operationalization



Figure 2: Operationalisation scheme, based on Ansell & Gash (2007), Douglas et al. (2020) and Breaugh et al. (2023)

# 5. Methodology

As this research aims to describe in depth the complexity of area-based collaboration and to understand the importance of context around what exactly takes place, a qualitative research design fits this master thesis best (MacCallum et al., 2019). This qualitative research was executed by doing a multiple case study approach, where two cases are compared to each other.

## 5.1    Case study selection

As mentioned above, a multiple case study approach is chosen for this research. Area-based collaborations occur in particular settings, which can't be simulated. Also, the research problem considers different issues affecting each other in ways that can't be predicted (MacCallum et al., 2019). This means that to create comparable results, two cases were chosen that were 1) initially started from a bottom-up approach and 2) experience or experienced tension with governmental policies. To increase the validity of this research, a specific choice was made to choose two cases within these conditions in the same province, as they deal mostly with the same regulations, which means that there tensions might be comparable.

The case mentioned in the introduction, CATB Wierden, is very typical and has struck attention. According to MacCallum et al. (2019), this makes it a valid reason to start with this case, which is the first case mentioned in this research. In Wierden, the CATB aims to achieve area-based collaboration, as they are now in the preliminary exploration of an area-based process. The second case is an area-based collaboration in the Baarlingerpolder, northwest of Overijssel. The Baarlingerpolder was one of the first area-based processes of the province of Overijssel. Both initiatives have experienced some struggles with the regulations regarding plans for their area and are started on behalf of the area's farmers. In the results, a more elaborate description will be given to these two cases.

With using the multiple case approach, the outcomes in similar situations can be compared. In area-based cooperation, socially-based motivations are present and as Barghusen et al. (2021) mention, these motivations are less uniform and thus it is necessary to use multiple cases to validate the data of this research. Next to the motivations, both cases are in different phases of their collaboration, which causes different attitude toward collaboration, which is interesting to consider for the future regarding the collaborative process.

## 5.2    Data collection and data analysis

To research the area-based collaborations and to illustrate the crucial variables of collaboration with government, in depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several area-based stakeholders. A semi-structured interview is suitable, as it allows for focusing on predetermined information but also leaves room for capturing information that is not expected. It is nice to be open-minded about information and have your context prepared.   Within the two cases, similar stakeholders were compared. In table 1, the interviewed stakeholders are mentioned. To ensure privacy regulations, only the function or company of the stakeholders are mentioned, instead of specific names. In both cases, the facilitative leader was interviewed first to get the most neutral view of the specific collaboration. These are the gatekeepers of the process and had an complete overall view of the ABC.  With snowball sampling, the facilitative leader knew which person to contact, which helped in contacting persons to interview. After the area-based stakeholders were interviewed, extra stakeholders involved in area-based collaborations elsewhere were interviewed, as these stakeholders were mentioned often by the interviewees of the selected case area-based collaborations.

| Wierden | Baarlingerpolder | Other interviewees |
|---|---|---|
| Farmer/initiator | Farmer/initiator | Project manager food and agri Rabobank |
| Facilitative leader and policy employee municipality Wierden | Facilitative leader | Project manager ABC with ASR (retirement fund) |
| Policy employee of the province of Overijssel | Policy employee municipality Steenwijkerland | |
| | Policy staff member of the province of Overijssel | |

Table 1: Interviewees in this research.

To prepare the interviews, the interview guide was prepared, which can be found in Appendix A. Most interviews started with some small talk to introduce each other, but these results were not related to this thesis subject. After these formalities the following structure was used and can be found in the interview guide:

1. In the first formal question the interviewee is asked to tell or draw (depending on the preference of the interviewee), the approximate timeline of the process of the discussed ABC. With asking interviewees about the timeline, their personal highlights will be explained and mentioned. When comparing different interviews, the experienced highlights and pitfalls can be easily spotted. Next to that, the main events can be documented based on the compared timelines.
2. Questions were asked based on the crucial variables mentioned in the theoretical framework, regarding the starting conditions, institutional design and facilitative leadership. The operationalised definitions of the variables were used to make specific questions. Important to note is that these questions differ per stakeholder 'group'. Differentiations were made between initiators, governmental bodies and facilitators.
3. Questions based on remarks made in policy documents or news articles, where the cases were mentioned.
4. Questions based on remarks made in previous interviews or asking in depth-questions based on the answers given on the questions asked earlier. These questions were not structured and asked during the interviews, but can not be seen in the interview guide.

After taking the interviews with the structure as stated above, transcriptions were made by using the automatic transcribing tool of Microsoft Teams, Word and listening back at the recordings and transcribing the data personally. Following the transcribing phase, the transcriptions were uploaded in the data management program Atlas.Ti. In this programme the transcriptions were coded. The codes used can be seen in Appendix B, in a coding table. The codes are based on the operationalised definitions. Next to the predetermined codes, inductive coding was used based on recurring themes, such as insecurities around financing projects and politics and the power of market parties.

After the transcriptions were coded, a code-occurrence analysis was run through the data management programme. By using the coded data and analysing this, new lights can be shed on the scheme of collaborative governance and especially the role of the crucial variables. Because of coding through terms of this theory, it became more clear which variables are most important and which variables, were less important. Next to that, missing variables can be found through this analysis. This resulted in result tables, which can be seen in appendix C. The results will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

## 5.3    Trustworthiness and validity

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of this research, it is important to note that the selected cases are not a quantitative sample, as they are not representative of an entire population (MacCallum et al., 2019), but are representative for the mechanism (tension in ABC) researched in this thesis. They do gain a deeper knowledge of the mechanisms of crucial variables in CG and thus gain insight into how these influence our understanding of collaborative processes. With purposeful sampling, results are carefully chosen. In this way, different stakeholders have been interviewed in this thesis. A risk that should be considered while transcribing interviews and coding is quantifying qualitative data. This might be a risk as important data could be lost, but with careful consideration and using quotes, this risk can be minimalised. Another risk of interviewing one-on-one is that building trust while interviewing is important. This made it sometimes hard to ask harsh questions, while still making optimal use of the situation. This could mean that the interviews are subjective, but with the use of coding and good preparation of the interviews, a holistic approach to the cases are effectuated. Next to keeping an holistic approach with handling data, triangulation has been executed in this research through reading policy documents and news articles regarding the cases. By reading these documents, a broader point of view is present while analysing the data.

## 5.4    Ethical issues and data management

In research, ethical issues can arise in different stages of the process. In the research executed in this specific master thesis, the main ethical issue is dealing with real problems, which can cause emotional reactions in stakeholders. The discussion around agriculture in The Netherlands has peaked, and action needs to be taken. However, as a person and researcher, I agree that I can't solve this problem with this research alone. It is important to clarify to interviewees what this research's goal is, how data will be handled, and to ensure the data is dealt with anonymously. The recordings will be deleted after transcribing. As MacCallum et al. (2019) describe on page 233: *"Participants should always be given the right to withdraw from a research project at any stage, even after giving formal approval and signing an ethics consent form"*.

Conducting the methodology described above made the mechanisms of crucial variables in area-based collaboration clear. Using the collaborative governance theory, crucial variables can be analysed in following area-based cooperation. The results will be discussed in the next chapter if some of these parts are missing. In this way, the essential problem is clarified. Ideally, some steps can be added to the collaborative cycle, or clearer requirements or outcomes for collaborative governance can be determined in the discussion.

# 6. Results

This chapter will provide detailed information about the results of interviews conducted with various stakeholders from both cases, mentioned in table 1. Each case will first be introduced with general information, such as the stakeholders interviewed and the approximate time frame. The analyses of the cases will be presented based on the themes in the operationalisation scheme, including the starting conditions, institutional design, and facilitative leadership. This will be followed by the notable case findings. After explanations of Wierden and the Baarlingerpolder, the interviews with other parties will be analysed, and the results of all the interviews will be compared. The tables with the exact numbers of appearances by subcode will be shown in appendix C.
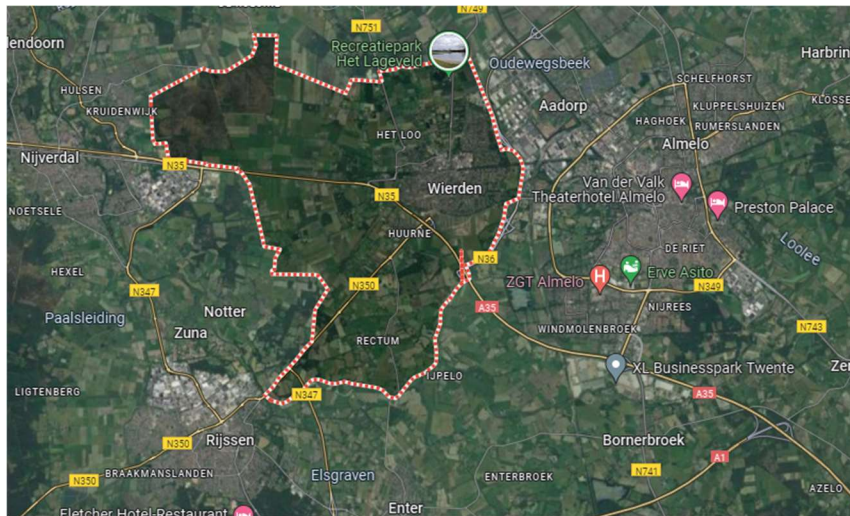
## 6.1    Wierden



Figure 3: Map of the boundaries of the municipality of Wierden



Figure 4: Collage of pictures taken in the rural areas of the municipality of Wierden
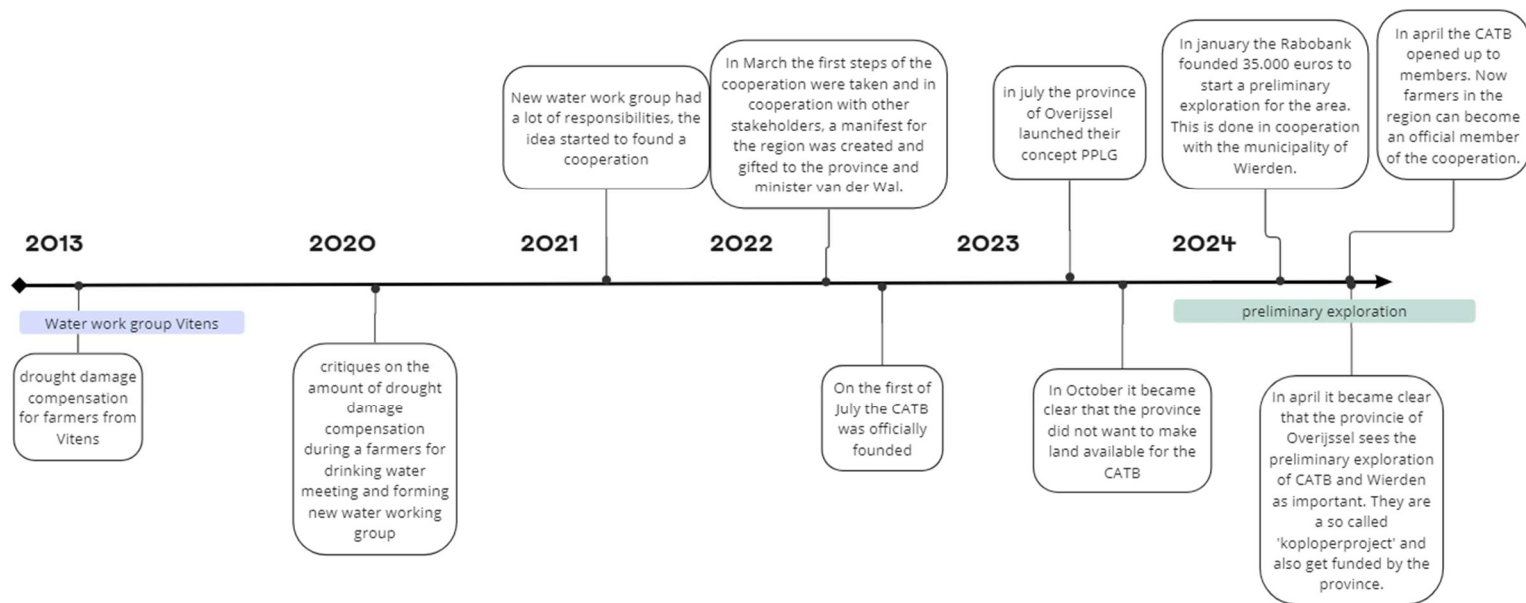
Figure 5: Timeline of the area-based collaboration in the municipality of Wierden

Wierden is a small town in in the region of Twente, west of Almelo. The municipality of Wierden consists of high sand grounds, with a typical 'coulissenlandschap', an impression the landscape can be seen in figure 4. Next to the 'coulissenlandschap', the Natura 2000 site, the Wierdense Veld is present in the municipality of Wierden. In figure 5 an approximate timeframe is sketched, based on the interviews with several stakeholders in the municipality of Wierden. It follows the path on how the Cooperation Agrarian Terrain Management (Beheer in Dutch), abbreviated to CATB, has developed. The availability of water for farmers in the municipality, is the backbone of the existence of the cooperation. In Wierden there has been a long history regarding water availability in the area, as the area is close to a Natura 2000 area and a water win area, from the company Vitens. Farmers felt like the drought damage compensation they received, was not sufficient. A new water workgroup with area-based farmers was founded, and the damage compensation got higher. As the years passed by, the farmers in the water workgroup, had a lot of responsibilities, crossing other themes then water availability, such as the future of the rural area of Wierden. The idea started to from a cooperation. The first steps of this cooperation was to publish a manifest, with several area-based stakeholders, an example of an area-based collaboration. The manifest was given and presented to the province and the minister of Nature and Nitrogen in that current period. After the presentation of this manifest, the cooperation was officially founded on the first of July in 2022. The CATB now consists of a board supported by Stimuland and paying members. After their foundation, the board of the CATB worked on a plan to manage land from the province surrounding the Natura 2000 area. Until now, the province has not yet approved the plans submitted by the CATB.

Another development on a provincial level, occurred a year later then the foundation of the CATB and simultaneously during their development. The province of Overijssel developed a provincial plan rural area, abbreviated as PPLG in Dutch. In this PPLG several environmental challenges in the rural area of the province of Overijssel are processed in a integral plan. After the publication of this PPLG the province of Overijssel and area-based stakeholders, such as the CATB decided to start an preliminary exploration to see how the goals of the PPLG and the goals of the CATB can meet each other. First the Rabobank funded the CATB and now, because the province of Overijssel decided to see this preliminary exploration as a frontrunner, the area-based collaboration is funded by the province. Also the CATB has been further developed their cooperation and the farmers surrounding the Wierdense Veld can become a paying member of the cooperation.

### 6.1.1   Starting conditions

If we turn to the first crucial variable mentioned by Ansell & Gash (2007), the starting conditions, there is a division between the influence of the history of antagonism and cooperation, the influence of incentives to participate and the influence of power and resource imbalances. When analysing Wierden's interviews, the influence of the history of cooperation and antagonism is the most important part among the different starting conditions. Within the history of antagonism and cooperation, variables such as the level of trust and the prehistory itself are mentioned often and will be elaborated on below. Within the influence of power and resource imbalances, problems were experienced regarding a sufficient organisational infrastructure, which will be elaborated on. The results regarding the influence of incentives to participate are remarkable. Explicit incentives to participate were not mentioned, though the history of conflict and cooperation were the main reason to participate in an area-based collaboration.

**Power and resource imbalances**

***Sufficient organisational infrastructure***

The influence of sufficient organisational infrastructure was mentioned most by interviewees regarding the power and resource imbalances. Different participants mentioned that finding a suitable construction for cooperation in a certain area is hard. As mentioned, it is hard to make a difference as an individual, but you can't be ignored when gathering several individuals with the same goal.

*"If you are not organised, you go to the field, and you get sent back, but if you keep going, they can't deny you. You are just an organisation that can constantly jump in" – facilitative leader*.

The key to sufficient organisational infrastructure in Wierden is seen in choosing the right form of collaboration; in the case of Wierden, it has been chosen to form a juridical cooperation. With this form, many juridical and practical manners must also be considered. For example, the time and energy it takes for *board* members to be a part of the cooperation and the future of cooperation. They needed professional help to deal with these aspects within their cooperation and are now considering work groups to solve different aspects, such as manure processing.

**History of conflict and cooperation**

As the timeline above shows, a water workgroup was assigned for several years in a specific area. Mentioned in the interviews is that the breaking point was that the drought compensation was not enough, and a new plan was made for this, and a new water work group was established. After this had been done, more questions came to the workgroup, and another way of collaboration was thought of, which resulted in the CATB. The prehistory of antagonism and cooperation thus had a big influence on creating cooperation. The history of the Wierdense Veld as a water win area had a lot of influence on the area, mentioning all interviewed stakeholders, so it can be seen as a prehistory of conflict.

***Level of trust***

The level of trust is mentioned most out of all different categories regarding the starting conditions by interviewees regarding the area-based collaboration in Wierden. There is a complicated relationship with trust in this case, as is illustrated by the quotes below:

*"the truth will become clear in the end, but for some farmers, that will be too late. We are cheated on before our noses; I am convinced about that" – A farmer in the area.*

*"The role of trust is very big, not only between farmers and government but also between different layers of government." – facilitative leader.*

*"The atmosphere has changed over the years; people seem to think that there are hidden agendas, but this is simply not the case (..) I try to be as transparent as I can be." – policy staff member province of Overijssel*

All interviewees stated the lack of trust within this area, which is probably related to the prehistory of conflict and cooperation mentioned above. The level of trust also influences the area-based process, as interviewees have different opinions, as shown in the quotes above. As the facilitative leader mentions, trust is better than before, but it is crucial for a successful area-based cooperation or process.

### 6.1.2  Institutional design

In the interviews with stakeholders from Wierden two categories within the institutional design dominated this variable. The category of explicit rules and the category of transparent decision making.

**Explicit rules**

The province echoed what is mentioned in the introduction about the insecurity of the explicit institutional design. The interviewee of the province indicated that the framework is clear, with lowering the nitrogen in Overijssel and the 'kaderrichtlijn water', but how, how much and where is not clear, and  this framework is not clear for participants in area-based collaborations. In contrast, this framework is not seen as 'definitive' in other interviews. Next to that, stakeholders outside of the province think the province has to be more flexible with certain explicit rules, as they mention that the province is 'stuck' in their own explicit rules. The CATB is an outsider, which does not fit into existing policies. This is contradicted as there is a call for a more specific framework and a need for more flexibility, as followed by the statements above.

This conflict also shows in the following quote, mentioned by a policy staff member of the province of Overijssel:

*"Some farmers say to me, just give me the frameworks in which I can operate, and I will take care of it. That is tough because I also don't know in which way we are headed, but then I say, use this time to prepare well, and when the time is there, you have a plan to present."*

A farmer agrees to this as he mentions:

*"The ideal perspective would be to give us your framework. We will keep this in mind, give us your money, and together we will achieve the goals, but the disadvantage is that this needs much trust, trust that is not already there."*

**Transparent decision making**

Next to the aspect of explicit rules, the process around transparent decision-making strikes when coding the interviews in Wierden and is mentioned most frequently by interviewees regarding the institutional design. As mentioned above, there is a conflict between different participants about the decision-making. As seen in the timeline in figure 5, the CATB have already made requests to the province to manage land surrounding the area of Wierdense Veld. The answers regarding transparent decision-making are based on this experience. Important to mention is, as described above, that the prehistory of antagonism influences the answers given regarding this topic. Some interviewees mentioned that the province is not transparent in their decisions, while the province mentioned that they are transparent in their decisions when they can or when frameworks are clear to them. They are aware of the accusations made to them but reject them. There is a conflict within this code between different stakeholders. Next to that, the province mentions that when a specific plan is rejected at this moment, it does not mean that it will be rejected in the future; regarding participants, this does add to the uncertainty and lack of transparency.

### 6.1.3  Facilitative leadership

Facilitative leadership is slightly higher ranked than institutional design in terms of the number of appearances in the interviews. Within facilitative leadership, the categories availability of local leaders, bringing parties together, and seeking mutual gains were most prevalent and will be further explained.

**Availability local leaders**

The availability of local leaders is mentioned in the interviews regarding area-based collaboration and the CATB. Members of CATB are all farmers who live in the area and took responsibility for being the contact person for outside parties, such as the province. As farmers mention, it is essential to have people involved who are close to the people in the area, as they are more close and aware of specific problems. Next to available leaders in the bottom-up process, the municipality and province stress the importance of having someone 'rooting' for you within the provincial board to stress the importance of the plans made and 'guide you through' laws and regulations.

**Bringing parties together**

The farmers of the CATB mentioned the importance of including all farmers, neglecting their backgrounds. They mention it works for them. This is contrary to what the municipality mentioned, as they mention the fact that people on other ends of the 'normal distribution' are hard to reach. It is better to focus on little steps for 80% of the farmers than on significant steps for only five per cent. Next, the importance of involving other inhabitants and letting people work together in challenging conditions is mentioned. This will be elaborated on in the next paragraph.

**Seek mutual gains**

The facilitative leader/municipality and the province especially mention the subcode seeking mutual gains. Both of them mention that this is the key to successful area-based processes. As the facilitative leader mentions, it helped the CATB process enormously by creating more support for its plans as he experienced it. The province supports this view and couples this to the level of trust in the area:

*"The mutual trust is very important in area-based processes, but this cannot be gained easily. I would say that you have to search for mutual gains, which complies with everyone. (..) if everyone can peg down to the same problems and goals, everyone will see the importance of certain topics. I think this is most important in area-based processes. The mutual trust and finding commonality."* - policy staff member of the province of Overijssel

### 6.1.4  Additional findings

In addition to the findings above, some points mentioned in the interviews that do not fit into the scheme of collaborative governance were mentioned. In the case of Wierden, these were the lack of long-term vision, the power of banks, availability of funding, the influence of retirement companies, the influence of market parties, political insecurity, and the importance of speaking for the common good/public interest. Feasibility regarding funding, the influence of political insecurity and speaking for the common good/public interest were mentioned most, thus will be highlighted in this paragraph.

**Availability of funding**

Next to finding public support for the plans made by the CATB, they also mentioned the importance of feasibility regarding availability of funding in the interview. To increase the plan's feasibility, the CATB and the municipality mentioned that they are looking for funding through Rabobank or a retirement fund like ASR; that is why these subcodes were also mentioned quite often. The reason for looking at these kinds of market parties is that they are independent of the government in achieving their plans. Next to the variables of getting a loan are mentioned as they mention:

*"free money is never free (..) the governance has a small role can only guide what market parties want, as who has money, decides in the end."– facilitative leader.*

Next, the farmers mentioned that they wanted to be part of the solution regarding agricultural and natural management, but there is a price tag related to this subject. What is meant by a 'price tag' is that farmers are willing to participate in e.g. AES, but before this is considered, it first needs to be profitable for them. There has to be a substantial reward in managing your land different in comparison to 'normal' management. This also relates to the subcode of sufficient resources under the influence of power/resource imbalances in the starting conditions. If not enough financial resources are available, the incentives to participate, weakens among several stakeholders.

**Influence of political insecurity**

Another topic all interviewees in Wierden mentioned is the influence on the collaborative process through political insecurity. After the province denied requests of the CATB, the municipality of Wierden started an area-based collaboration in the province of Overijssel. The province of Overijssel labelled this process as a frontrunner. During the interviews, there was not yet a new coalition within national politics in the Netherlands. As funding was granted to frontrunners within another coalition, it was unsure if the funding would be elongated by the new coalition. The status of frontrunners was unclear, and neither was the future scope of these projects. This gave unclarity for the municipality and the farmers working on the project and for the province in giving guidance, as mentioned by employees. The main problems experienced by several interviewees was on how to solve problematic situations regarding nitrogen surpluses, or the future of integral problem solving.

**Safeguarding the common good/public interest**

As mentioned above, the province has denied requests, regarding the plan of managing land surrounding the Natura 2000 by the CATB, in advance. The province cited the scope of CATB as too narrow and focused on agricultural perspectives. Next, the province mentions the importance of making integral plans instead of plans only regarding nature or agriculture.  The facilitative leader mentions being aware of the public interest, having a varied group within your area-based process, and ensuring cooperation is crucial. Next, the facilitative leader mentions the public interest within governance, as it is better to focus on a bigger group than on a small delegated group in which policies will be executed.

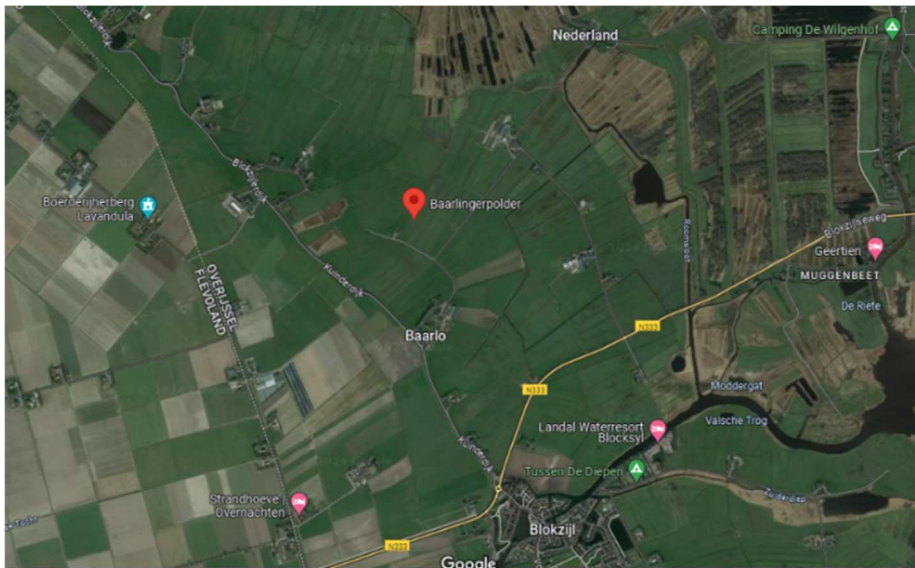## 6.2    Baarlingerpolder



Figure 6: Map of the Baarlingerpolder



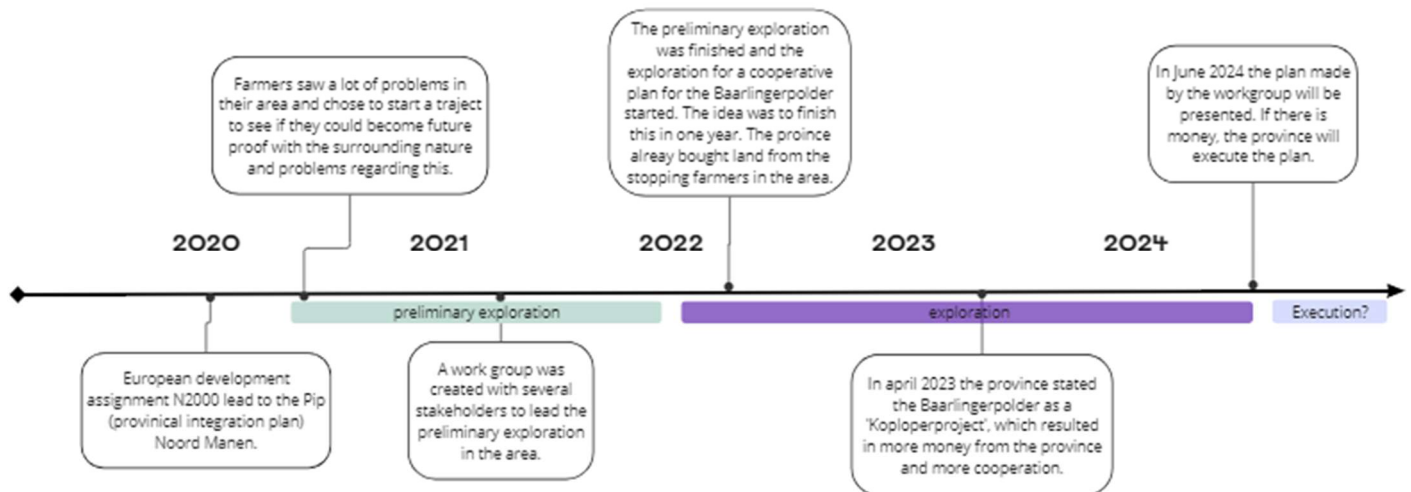Figure 7: Collage of pictures taken in the Baarlingerpolder

Figure 8: Timeline of the area-based process in the Baarlingerpolder

The Baarlingerpolder is situated in the Northwest of Overijssel. The typical landscape in the Baarlingerpolder is are peat-meadows. The polder is situated at the edge of the national park and Natura 2000 site the Weerribben-Wieden. An overall view of the landscape can be seen in figure 7.

In figure 8 a timeline is sketched of the area-based collaboration in the Baarlingerpolder, which led to an area-based process. In 2020 the province of Overijssel had to execute the European development assignment, regarding Natura 2000. This lead to the provincial integration plan Noord Manen, close to the Baarlingerpolder. One of the main components of this PIP, was that the ground water level would be elevated. Farmers in the Baarlingerpolder foresaw problems regarding this intervention and chose to collaborate in making the Baarlingerpolder futureproof. With this an preliminary exploration started, with help from two external facilitators. A workgroup was created and after a while other area-based stakeholders, such as the municipality of Steenwijkerland and the province of Overijssel became involved. After the preliminary exploration it became clear which farmers wanted to stop and the farmers remaining in the polder wanted to think of an cooperative plan.  In between the preliminary exploration and the exploration, the province already bought land from the stopping farmers. After the PPLG of the province of Overijssel was published in 2023, it became clear that the area-based process, establishing an area-based collaboration, became a frontrunner in the province of Overijssel, resulting in extra funding from the province. Next to that, the collaboration was elaborated, as the goals of the PPLG were researched in the collaborative process. In June 2024 the plan was presented by the workgroup of the Baarlingerpolder. If there is enough funding, the plan will be executed from June 2024 onwards, by the province.

### 6.2.1  Starting conditions
In the case of the Baarlingerpolder, the same categories have been considered, as in the case of Wierden. When focusing on the starting conditions of the area-based process of the Baarlingerpolder, it stands out that the influence of a history of antagonism and cooperation, incentives to participate, and power/resource imbalances have been mentioned in approximately the same amount. Within the power and resource imbalances the categories of sufficient organisational infrastructure and sufficient resources were mentioned most. Within incentives to participate, the categories of concrete and tangible policy outcomes stood out (as this increases the incentive to participate) and general incentives to participate. Within the starting condition history of conflict and cooperation, the prehistory of conflict was mentioned remarkably often. These categories will be elaborated on below.

**Power and resource imbalances**

*Sufficient organisational infrastructure*

Important matters mentioned within the variable of sufficient organisational infrastructure are: first, create a workgroup with area-based stakeholders, such as inhabitants, province, municipality and an independent leader. Make everyone responsible in this working group and discuss your expectations and goals for the working group in advance. Farmers are paid to take a seat in this workgroup so they can hire an assistant for their farm when they are working on the plan of the area-based process. Creating a cooperation, just like the CATB in Wierden, isalso mentioned in the organisational infrastructure, as this can be a juridic form in which they can manage lands and distribute these among farmers in the Baarlingerpolder. Area-based cooperation is thus an organisational infrastructure in which the plan made in the area-based process can proceed and area-based collaboration can be executed.

*Sufficient resources*

Money is needed to fund the process of creating an area-based plan. As mentioned, farmers in the working group and the facilitative leaders are paid for participating in the process. Apart from costs relating to the area-based collaboration, the province also made costs in buying farmers out of the area. The lands that are part of this are in the so-called 'anticipated grondfonds', but these plots of land have less value due to differing their destination, which costs the province money. This money should first be paid to the transition fund. However, at the time of taking these interviews, the future of this fund was still very unclear, which made them look at alternative ways of funding through area-based cooperation (mentioned above and the same structure as in Wierden), as is mentioned in this quote:

*"If you want to succeed with your plans, you need someone with a lot of money, but probably also has its interests ... You do not want the government to be your only source of money, as you never know what is going to happen." – facilitative leader*

**Incentives to participate**

*Concrete and tangible policy outcomes*

Regarding concrete, tangible policy outcomes, different interviewees mentioned that when starting the process, it was not clear what the outcomes should be, and there has been said:

*"The government cannot do anything and is unwilling to do anything. That is how it looks like from the outside" – facilitative leader.*

Interviewees also stress that the government can make decisions but will not feel them personally, which might be the case for the farmers involved. They stress the importance of not influencing policies but feeling the consequences. The participants mention the stress of not knowing what the future might hold for them, even after making a plan that should be future-proof.

*General incentives to participate*

With different stakeholders in this area-based collaboration, different motivations to participate are mentioned in the interviews. As mentioned in the paragraph above, the PiP was the main reason to start an area-based process, mainly for the farmers. Next to that, the farmer mentions that society expects many farmers these days, and he wants to fulfil this expectation, but he wants to explore if he can do this, and at what costs, or what the compensation should be. The municipality mentions that they do not have a specific event that struck their involvement but want to maintain balance within their municipality and create a sustainable living environment for their inhabitants. The province also mentioned the PiP as the main event that started the area-based events, but in comparison to the

farmers, he already foresaw problems with the plan. At the same time, this was not communicated with the farmers as they looked back at the PiP. Next, it is mentioned that financial resources are not the primary motivations, but that farmers with successors feel a stronger intrinsic motivation, which the interviewees believe is that intrinsic motivations are the most important. These intrinsic motivations might differ per person. The province mentions it is crucial for them that stakeholders are on board, as is mentioned in this quote:

*" Within our province, we want to secure subsidies for areas with a lot of energy from bottom-up processes. That is why we have frontrunners. Then, it is to the area-based process itself to see if people want to come along. At this moment, we say as a province, energy from the bottom-up is most important," – a policy staff member of the province of Overijssel.*

**History of antagonism and cooperation**

***Prehistory of conflict***

The facilitative leader in the Baarlingerpolder mostly mentions the prehistory of conflict. This person first mentions the prolonged tension between farmers in the area, which was caused by the 'ruilverkaveling' several years ago. The farmers in the area also mention the conflict and how it still influences the present. Talking about the issue of previous conflicts, another interview mentions that the area-based collaboration was created from a conflict in the area. As mentioned above in the timeline, the provincial integration plan regarding Natura 2000 caused a stir in the area, which led to the preliminary exploration of the future of the Baarlingerpolder. The facilitative leader mentions the importance of being clear to each other about previous conflicts so it can't 'poison' the process, as within these processes, the same people are involved within the province.

### 6.2.2  Institutional design

It is crucial to examine the institutional design surrounding process of the area-based collaboration to gain insight into the collaborative governance process within the Baarlingerpolder. The categories mentioned the most regarding the Baarlingerpolder are the subjects of clear roles and clear objectives/deadlines, which shall be further explained below.

**Clear deadlines**

There is a wide variety, looking at the different subjects mentioned by the stakeholders in the area-based process of Baarlingerpolder regarding clear objectives and deadlines. Firstly, different opinions regarding clear deadlines will be discussed. The facilitative leader of the process started with a strong experience regarding clear deadlines, saying they do not work in these kinds of processes. As mentioned, out-of-the-box thinking is needed to solve such integral problems, which, following this opinion, takes time, and firm deadlines do not meet the standards for these solutions. The province supports this, as they mention that transition takes time and can't be solved by a 'quick fix'.  Although the habitants from the Baarlingerpolder agree with the quote that transitions take time and it is better to think of an integral solution, they struggle with the time it takes to make decisions in government. The facilitative leader is aware of this irritation but does not necessarily think this annoyance is fair, as the government has to deal with public money.

**Clear objectives**

The conclusion that can be taken away from the clear objectives is that these differ between the different stakeholders, which can lead to the conclusion that the objectives were unclear. The idea was to start the process by exploring the objectives together, as the initiators mentioned, while the province mentioned there were already objectives from the start. This was not clear, which led to misunderstandings from both sides. This is shown in the quote below, mentioned by one of the farmers:

*"The decision-making does not feel transparent at all; every time we seem finished, another rule is added to what we have to achieve in our area (..). Is it to bully, unwillingness or ignorance?"*

Interestingly, this is correlated as positive as well as harmful. While initiators would like to have variables in which they can operate, they would also like to have the freedom to deviate when needed. While this is the preferred position for initiators, the stakeholders within governance, name the political insecurity as a reason. This makes it hard to give variables within which initiators can operate. Also, the benefit of clear objectives has no clear consensus. While some governance stakeholders mention that having some freedom within policies is beneficial, but other stakeholders mention the relevance of rigid boundaries to meet, such as European goals. They do agree on the transition; this should not only be made in areas, but is also needed in governance, although they do agree this will take time.

**Clear roles**

The interviewees mention the importance of clear roles, as several stakeholders have widely mentioned this subject. Opinions differ on how these roles were distributed, and conflicts occurred within the workgroup regarding this topic. One interviewee mentioned that their biggest tip regarding this theme was to give the people in the workgroup a mandate for decisions. In contrast, other participants mentioned that this was not possible. Eventually, when this conflict occurred, the workgroup talked with each other, and participants felt like the roles were now clear. However, interviewees mentioned this should have been mentioned in the beginning. This correlates with the clear objectives, as they mention that things need to be made clear from the beginning instead of during the area-based process.

### 6.2.3  Facilitative leadership

Facilitative leadership was mentioned less in the interviews with Baarlingerpolder stakeholders. Although this might seem less important, the availability of local leaders and seeking mutual gains were mentioned and seen as important and will be elaborated on below.

**Availability local leaders**

Just as in the case of Wierden, the initiators of the area-based collaboration praise the work of the facilitative leader and even mention it as one of the main reasons why their area-based process has led to a final plan. In this case, there were two facilitative leaders, one of them a farmer who does not live in the particular area but does live very close to the Baarlingerpolder. Several participants said this created a strong foundation upon which mutual trust could be built. Other responses regarding the topic of local leaders led to the availability of a local leader within governance, as they mention it is essential for the project's feasibility that people 'stand' for the Baarlingerpolder and help make them possible, policy-wise. This shows that local leaders should be available within an area-based process and within governance. The facilitative leader of the Baarlingerpolder also mentions this:

*"You need a leader in local politics, who might be little, who will stand for you and your plans, but now we are still in the phase of transition that creates chaos."*

**Seek mutual gains**

Seeking mutual gains is very important, especially for the facilitative leader and the farmers. A quote from the facilitative leader that suits this category is:

*"We only created win-win situations at the moment. We didn't make irreversible choices, and people who made changes are very happy with these changes. This helps to loosen it all a bit; that is also my role. In this way, we lower the tension a bit." – facilitative leader.*

A farmer mentions this as well as was said during the interview:

*"We need the province, and the province needs us; it is as simple as that: when we did a scenario study and moved all the farmers, the municipality begged us to stay."*

The municipality adds that they want to mention their agenda but try to connect this with the plans that are made in the area-based process, which was also mentioned by the participating farmers. In this way, they experience less tension, as people are more involved in the project and mention that they feel more responsible for the plan's success.

### 6.2.4 Additional findings

In addition to the results regarding the crucial variables of collaborative governance, some additional findings were mentioned in the interviews in the case of the Baarlingerpolder. These additional findings were grouped, and the subcategories that were mentioned most were (lack of) long-term vision, availability of funding, and political insecurity. How they are mentioned will be explained next.

**Availability of funding**

In comparison with the case of Wierden, all of the interviewed stakeholders mentioned the importance of feasibility regarding funding to them. As one of the participants mentioned:

*"If every area-based process will be as ours, a lot of extra money is needed" – farmer in the Baarlingerpolder*

As mentioned above, there is a lot of insecurity about confirming money to execute the plan. Other financial matters like retirement funds are researched to deal with this insecurity. This is shown by the following quote, mentioned by the facilitative leader of the Baarlingerpolder:

*"When you want to avoid the tension between bottom-up processes and government, it might be smart to think of solutions outside of governmental power. Sometimes, the way we work now is not logical."*

Also, participants mentioned the power of money, for example, the reasons for giving or not giving a loan by banks. They mention market parties to give some certainty regarding funding and to be independent of the government, just like in the case of Wierden.

**(Lack off) long term vision**

The lack of a long-term vision and the differences between stakeholders within their long-term vision relate to the unclear objectives within the area-based collaboration in the Baarlingerpolder. Participants mentioned that crucial decisions are delayed because of the lack of long-term vision. Next to that, the differences between their long-term visions create tensions, as they don't discuss their ideal long-term vision, resulting in unclear objectives. Another response worth mentioning is the experience that the government makes policies for short-term solutions, while farmers in the Baarlingerpolder long for policies that have a more long-term perspective. A quote that suits this perspective from the facilitative leader from the Baarlingerpolder confirms this attitude:

*"Although regulations may change, the problems we are dealing with are not changing" – facilitative leader.*

**Political insecurity**

Related to the paragraph above is the political insecurity experienced in the Netherlands, which also influences the stakeholders of the Baarlingerpolder. The changes within the provincial political field caused changes in provincial policies, and while taking these interviews, the national policies were insecure as a new coalition was formed. Because of the uncertainty regarding the future, stakeholders have mentioned the difference in the level of trust.

*"We had a lot of trust in the province while creating this plan; we gave the land to the province and thought we could use it; we don't have trust right now that this will happen (..) The trust used to be bigger then it is now, (...) the trust is just gone, it has really decreased the last period"* – farmer Baarlingerpolder.

As they mentioned, the trust started out quite high, but the uncertainty regarding the feasibility of the plan resulted in a decreased level of trust. This is remarkable, as it is the other way around in the case of Wierden.

## 6.3   External Stakeholders

As mentioned in as well Wierden, as in the Baarlingerpolder, certain external stakeholders were involved in area-based collaborations or might be important in the future of area-based collaborations. Especially the power of market parties, as they have money to invest, became clear in the interviews with area-based stakeholders. To further deepen this striking suggestion, interviews were conducted with representatives of Rabobank and another area-based process, Junne, which was executed on behalf of the ASR retirement fund. The Rabobank was interviewed, because they invested money in the CATB, when the province of Overijssel did not want to fund the cooperation. The project manager of Junne, works on behalf of the ASR retirement fund and was asked to compare area-based collaboration, that started from another scope and with external funding.

First the findings of the Rabobank will be explained. The Rabobank confirms the struggle between the execution of bottom-up initiatives and the availability of sufficient resources from policies, especially within area-based collaborations, which started from a bottom-up approach. The Rabobank wants to invest in these initiatives but does not want to interfere with laws and regulations regarding the design of the rural parts of the Netherlands. They could be the missing link between these struggles and see this as their responsibility to take care of the rural parts of the Netherlands. Next to that, they want to support bottom-up initiatives with feasibility studies so farmers can decide, based on feasibility, how they want their initiative to develop. However, they do think the lack of long-term vision and the indifferences between different layers of government are the current problems which cause delays in the execution of bottom-up initiatives within governmental policies. The pilot is nationwide, so the conclusions are based on multiple area-based processes in which they are involved and are thus important to confirm the findings of the research executed on Wierden and the Baarlingerpolder.

However findings from the interview with Rabobank, has a lot in common with the findings found in this case study, the area-based collaboration managed by the ASR retirement fund was different. Retirement funds such as the ASR in the case of Junne have a long tradition to invest in real estate. These buildings and estates, like Junne, an agrarian estate, have sustainable positive efficiency. To finance these estates, developments are made, and subsidies are used. Sometimes, an area-based process collaboration, but this is mainly from a top-down perspective. They are prepared to make sustainable changes, but it should still have a positive efficiency, for example, by buying extra grounds (e.g. in Wierden or the Baarlingerpolder) and having extra financial carriers to create more efficiency. Although they might have differences with the researched cases they do confirm findings regarding the crucial variables within collaborative governance. They affirm that the government needs to be more flexible regarding strict policies if they agree with the goals a specific area will meet regarding integral area-based solutions. Next the hypothesis that a local leader within governmental policies is vital for successful collaboration in local initiatives, is confirmed in this specific area-based collaboration.

## 6.4    Overarching results

Preliminary conclusions based on the appearance of different crucial variables in the results will be mentioned in this paragraph, and the results will be discussed in the next chapter. Regarding the general overview of both cases, the starting conditions were mentioned the most. The prehistory of antagonism and cooperation, which is related to the level of trust and the power and resource imbalances mentioned, includes shared understanding. A quote that suits this conclusion well is the following: *"If a person has bad contacts with the governance, that is what we call poison the process (..) you have to separate group interests and individual interests",* mentioned by the facilitative leader of the Baarlingerpolder. There is a difference between the crucial variables 'facilitative leadership' and 'institutional design'; in the Baarlingerpolder, the institutional design is mentioned more, while in Wierden, facilitative leadership is mentioned more. Categories regarding the institutional design which appeared most are clear objectives and deadlines, clear roles (mainly in the Baarlingerpolder), and transparent decision-making. The most mentioned categories within facilitative leadership were bringing parties together and seeking mutual gains. Within the additional findings, the availability of funding, political insecurity, and the need to speak for the common good/public interest are mentioned most. These additional findings suggest that there might be an association between the availability of funding, political insecurity, and tensions between bottom-up initiatives and governmental policies.

# 7. Discussion

In this chapter, the results of both cases will be interpreted and divided by sub-questions, thus starting conditions, institutional design, and facilitative leadership. These results further support the crucial variables of collaborative governance and will be processed within a new scheme of collaborative governance. After the interpretation of the results, the limitations of the research will be discussed, followed by the validity of the results.

## 7.1    Starting conditions

Within the starting conditions, just as in the theoretical framework and results, a distinction will be made between power and resource imbalances, incentives to participate and a history of antagonism and cooperation.

**Power and resource imbalances**

The most striking results regarding the power and resource imbalances in current literature is that in Wierden, as in the Baarlingerpolder, the organisational structure and the sufficiency of financial resources are mentioned as endeavours. Although this might be the case, Ansell & Gash (2007) considered the imbalance within organisational structures in their research. The results indicate that governments involved in the cases of Baarlingerpolder and Wierden pay attention to this hazard and support the  organisational structure for bottom-up initiatives. Looking at the lessons learned from earlier area-based processes from the province of Overijssel (Rekenkamer Oost, 2023), this is what they encountered and thus implemented. One of the recommendations based on this report is to allow stakeholders to hire external experts to assess the province's cost.

The problems regarding sufficient resources are also already mentioned in Ansell & Gash, but what is striking is that while Ansell & Gash (2007) mention the importance of looking at governments to deal with these kinds of problems, as does Rekenkamer Oost (2023), practice looks at other parties, to be more independent. This finding has not been mentioned in the current literature regarding collaborative governance within comparable cases to area-based collaborations and should be further explored.

**Incentives to participate**

There are several reasons for stakeholders to collaborate in area-based collaborations. The literature review focuses on the willingness to participate, concrete, tangible outcomes, motivations to participate and the level of commitment. Reasons that are summed up in the literature review were level of power, economic considerations, positive personal norms, problem awareness, perceived responsibility, collective efficacy, communication, distributing knowledge and cultivating long-term relationships among farmers and between farmers and other stakeholders.

This is in line with the incentives mentioned in this research, although the insecurity of the future seems to be the most important motivation for farmers. In contrast, in the literature, research found that farmers are more likely to participate if they already have a positive attitude (Barghusen et al., 2021). One of the reasons for this might be the difference in perceptions of the interdependence of the outcomes of the cases studied in this thesis. While farmers mention that the outcome depends on their personal future, they feel this is not the case for external stakeholders, such as facilitative leaders and policy employees of involved governments. This is part of the problem awareness, but what is striking is that different stakeholders differ in the necessity for solving area-based problems (regarding nitrogen and n2000 measures).  Interdependence between stakeholders is very important for effective collaborative governance, but this is not experienced everywhere, which pressures the efficiency of the incentives to participate.

Barghusen et al. (2021) mention the need for further development, maintaining communication, distributing knowledge and cultivating long-term relationships to create more insights within the different incentives to participate and create successful collaborative governance between stakeholders with different incentives to participate. This research does add to this view that maintaining communication and distributing knowledge is essential, when incentives to participate are not high. However, the influence starting conditions and institutional design, influences the incentives to participate and how strong stakeholders feel the need to participate within area-based collaborations.

**History of antagonism and cooperation**

The most important matter regarding the starting conditions is the history of antagonism and cooperation. Regarding the previous paragraph on incentives to participate, an experienced conflict between governmental stakeholders and initiators can be a powerful incentive within collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007), which is the case within Wierden and the Baarlingerpolder. To change a hostile conflict into a constructive level of conflict, with a chance of success for successful collaborative governance, steps must be taken to remediate the low levels of trust and social capital among the stakeholders (Ansell & Gash, 2007). De Vries & Voogd mentioned in 2022 that prehistory greatly influences the area. In the Baarlingerpolder, the interdependency between the stakeholders is high, which will result in a better chance of successful collaborative governance. However, the level of trust is also under pressure. Just as Barghusen et al. (2021) mention, Fisher et al. (2019) mention lessons learned regarding conflict resolution within collaborative governance, which are the importance of project design in partnership with stakeholders and joint implementation of programmatic activities to build trust and cooperation among actors in the area, adapting to a dynamic context, such as area-based collaboration, as the timelines and priorities of each stakeholder might not match and to design for a lasting impact, to assure the long-term perspective.

De Vries et al. (2019) mention the level of trust as one of the critical elements of this research is creating institutional designs that reflect trust so that trust has a chance to grow. Strikingly, in the Baarlingerpolder, this backfired into a lack of trust, which is remarkable and might be because of problems regarding the institutional design, which will be explained below.

## 7.2    Institutional design

Douglas et al. (2020) and Breaugh et al. (2023) stress the importance of a solid institutional design within collaborative governance. This relates to the importance of a strong institution, which is wished for by many stakeholders. Remarkable is that a strict institutional design is also wished for, but the compartmentalisation of governance is seen as one of the main problems. The need for the governance to take courage and to differentiate from their rules is also mentioned by several stakeholders. This is remarkable, but both means that an integral long-term vision is needed to solve this problem. The problems that are dealt with in area-based collaborations are too complex to solve within one level of governance. Thus, more cooperation between governance is needed as well. This is also mentioned by Moroni et al. (2018), which states that due to the growing complexity of society, complex legal rules are on the rise. The article explores the opposite: using simple rules to deal with complex land-use issues. This might be advice in the case of area-based collaboration, as clear and consistently applied ground rules reassure stakeholders that the process is fair, equitable and open (Ansell & Gash, 2007, p. 557). There is, thus, a contradiction between clear rules and flexibility within the longed institutional design.

Next to institutional design itself, the level of trust relates to institutional design, mainly because of the clarity of the institutional design.  Within the Baarlingerpolder, there were some unclarities about who should do what, damaging the stakeholders' trust. As Kuindersma et al. mentioned in 2022, clear

goals are important to have in ABC; lack of this leads to conflicts and misunderstood expectations between governments and stakeholders of the area, and even within layers of government.

This remarkable finding can indicate, as the history of conflicts is one of the main incentives to participate conflicted interests, that a weak institutional design fosters why the Baarlingerpolder and Wierden started their area-based collaboration. This is noteworthy, as a strong institutional design is one of the indicators for successful collaborative governance; as De Vries et al. (2019) mentioned, they influence uncertainties and disappointments. De Vries et al. (2019) conclude that more emphasis on mutual learning-guided interactions towards a dialogue between different actors is needed in this case. In this case, interpersonal trust can foster institutional trust. The institutional design should thus be a crucial variable. However, it is, in this case, one of the incentives to participate, and it is hard to work with, as it should foster a fair, equitable, and open process. However, this is made impossible as the ground rules are not clear. A mutual problem realisation is also needed to involve agrarians and foster collaboration instead of forced law enforcement (Kuindersma et al., 2022).

## 7.3 Facilitative leadership

Remarkable findings regarding facilitative leadership were found regarding the availability of local leaders within ABC, the importance of finding mutual gains, and the ability to bring parties together. These results can be confirmed based on the information stated by Ansell and Gash (2007). In addition, the added value of a facilitative leader within your process is confirmed in Wierden and the Baarlingerpolder. This does not necessarily mean that a local leader must be the facilitator, but local leaders must involve several area-based stakeholders.

Regarding the availability of local leaders, the notable outcome in comparison to the theoretical framework is the need for not only a local leader within a community but also the availability of a local leader within the political field. As mentioned in the paragraph about institutional design above, policies are not yet designed to meet the needs of ABP and ABC, which need to be resolved by a local leader who helps to guide the way within regulations; this confirms different research (Breaugh et al., 2023; Christensen, 2023; Douglas et al., 2020), that indeed facilitative leadership and institutional design are interconnected, as an facilitative leader is the crucial link between collaboration itself and the implementation of institutional design into reality. It is important to note that there is a difference between facilitative leadership and overall leadership.

An outcome of this research where this distinction is made clear is the lack of shared understanding in many cases, often leading to a misunderstanding of facts. The facilitative leader can play a role in this. However, an independent leader is needed to gain stakeholders' trust and see where the most significant differences are in a preliminary exploration. This hypothesis is supported by the studies of Ansell & Gash (2007) and Breaugh et al. (2023), which state that effective collaboration is thus seriously constrained by a lack of leadership. This is also mentioned in this thesis, where the statement mentioned that there might be room for implementation within the institutional design. However, bold leadership is needed to decide on the implementation.

The last remark about facilitative leadership within collaborative governance is the mutual gains necessary within ABC and ABP to create a more durable collaboration (De Vries et al., 2019). This is confirmed in the results looking at the theoretical framework, but there is a finding in this research that is worth mentioning here. Although mutual gains are significant, to implement these mutual gains, there should be a basic level of trust between the stakeholders and an agreement on the mutual gains; this is also confirmed by De Vries et al. (2019). This might be a challenge in some cases and thus should be handled carefully. The importance of an independent facilitative leader is, in this case, necessary.

## 7.4 Collaborative governance scheme

Based on the discussion above, the relationship between the crucial variables within collaborative governance is illuminated in a new light for area-based collaborations. With defining the scheme for the research objective of area-based collaborations, it becomes clear which variables need to be highlighted and which relationships need to become more clear within collaborative governance within area-based collaborations. Discussing the finding above, results in scheme below, figure 9.
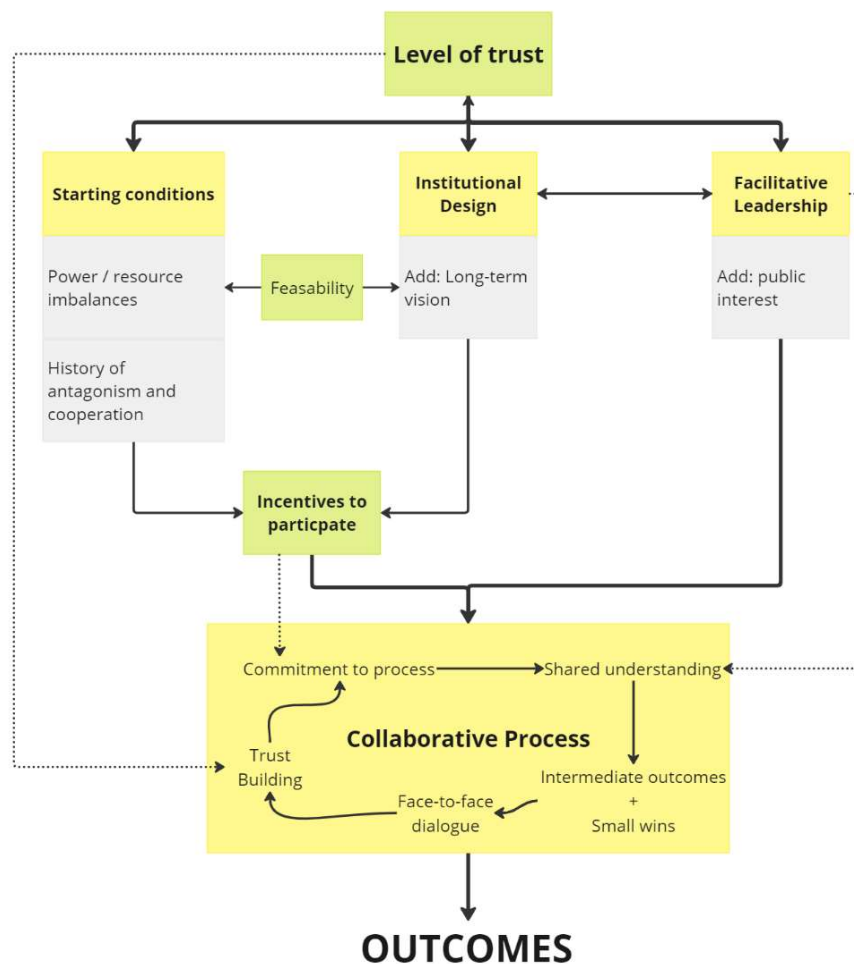


Figure 9: Scheme of Collaborative Governance

First, trust is one of the most crucial variables within collaborative governance. Within collaborative governance, each stakeholder should be aware of the influence of this variable within the crucial variables and should be on top of the scheme, also mentioned by De Vries et al. (2019) and Waardenburg et al. (2020).

Next to trust, the feasibility influences the power/resource imbalances and the institutional design. The uncertainty regarding the feasibility of plans made in ABC and ABP adds to hesitation to participate. Next, the uncertainty regarding financial resources within bottom-up initiatives creates a more considerable power and resource imbalance than governmental bodies. This might be solved by other parties than the government and is thus worth mentioning in the new scheme. Concerning the institutional design, new structures in ABCs and ABPs are not always feasible within the current structure. Not only is facilitative leadership needed, but strong leadership is also needed, as well as the ability to make choices within the institutional design. Therefore, the institutional design must be

rethought to secure feasibility. A sense of long-term vision must be added to the institutional design to support this view.

In the original scheme of Ansell & Gash (2007), incentives to participate are one of the three subcategories. Several studies, such as Breaugh et al. (2023), show the importance of strong incentives to participate in successful collaborative governance, which can relate to problems regarding the history of cooperation or conflicts, power/resource imbalances and institutional design. This is also the case within these two cases and thus should be addressed. These incentives to participate strongly relate to the shared understanding within the collaborative process.

Facilitative leadership is crucial, as the stakeholders interviewed in this thesis mention. In addition to the original scheme, this research adds that within facilitative leadership, the public interest should not be ignored within bottom-up initiatives and should be mentioned by the facilitative leader to have a bigger chance at collaborating with multiple stakeholders. This also strongly correlates with the findings that support the importance of shared understanding, which can be seen as being aware of different perceptions of problems and bringing these divergent views closer together.

## 7.5    Limitations

Although the trustworthiness and validity of the results were considered in the methodology, these results may be limited. Limitations regarding the influence of being a frontrunner, the quick change of regulations and the phase of transitions were illuminated while executing this research.

First, one of the interviewees mentioned the risk of using the frontrunner projects as a case, also mentioned by Frankowski et al. (2021), which name frontrunners, a generative metaphor. This term indicates that next to frontrunners, there are also stragglers. This creates the image of two separate groups and fosters contradistinction between farmers (Frankowski et al., 2021). It is possible that these results may underestimate the role of other collaborations, which don't have the label of 'frontrunner' and the attached funding abilities.

In addition to the limitations regarding the use of frontrunner projects, there is an influence regarding the time frame in which this research has been done. Regulations change quickly, and the political insecurity regarding national politics and changes made within regulation regarding different kinds of area-based collaboration were constantly changing. Although this might be the case, the information is mostly about the tension between bottom-up initiatives and governmental policies, and both cases do show the interaction between these two mechanisms.

Last, I want to mention the different phases of transition, explained in Figure 10 below. As different interviewees mentioned, we are now in the chaotic transition phase. This is not the main research element in this thesis, but it is worth mentioning while interpreting these results. The indication that there is a clear route for transition is not fair, as the transition has a point on the horizon, but no clear pathways (Frankowski et al., 2021). The facilitative leader mentioned the phase this transition is, is marked as chaotic, as is confirmed by Rotmans (2021).
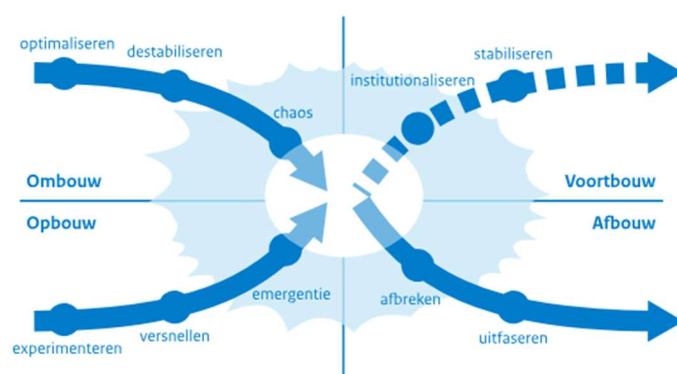
Figure 10: different phases of transition (Ministerie van infrastructuur en waterstaat, 2022)

# 8. Conclusion

The current study aimed to examine the influence of collaborative governance on the tension between governmental policies and bottom-up initiatives. This was done through a qualitative research design involving interviews with stakeholders from two cases in the province of Overijssel in the Netherlands. Previous researched mentioned comparable tensions between AES and governance in the past, but as the transition of rural areas in the Netherlands is broader, the relation between ABC and tension regarding policies were chosen as the main objective of this multiple case study. To compare both cases on the same framework, the framework of collaborative governance, first mentioned by Anell & Gash (2007), is elaborated on in this thesis, with more recent and case-related literature. As this is quite an extensive framework, the focus is on the crucial variables of collaborative governance surrounding the collaborative process. The influence of these variables needs to be researched regarding ABC to see what their influence is on the collaborative process of ABC, as they seem to be the reason ABC's are not successful. The following research question suits this narrative:

**What is the influence of the crucial variables of collaborative governance on the tension between governmental policies and bottom-up initiatives in area-based collaboration?**

Following the formulated sub-questions, the answer to this will be given by examining the influence of the starting conditions, institutional design, and facilitative leadership.

*What influence do starting conditions have on the collaborative process within area-based collaborations?*

The starting conditions consist within the theoretical framework of the incentives to participate, the influence of power/resource imbalances between stakeholders and the history of antagonism and cooperation within a certain area. Based on the interviews with several stakeholders and the discussion of these findings, the conclusion can be drawn that the prehistory in an area and power/resource imbalances have a major impact on collaborative processes. The power/resource imbalances can create uncertainty regarding the feasibility of plans made with the help of a collaborative process and can create polarisation. The history of especially antagonism can 'poison' the collaborative process and should be dealt with very carefully. The incentives to participate, however, are broader and mostly consist of problems within these two aspects and experienced struggles with an unclear institutional design. Next to this finding, the level of trust was seen as a starting condition. It is important to note at the start of the collaborative process that trust is influenced by many factors and is thus also influenced by the variables of institutional design and facilitative leadership.

*How does the institutional design influence the collaborative process within area-based collaborations?*

As mentioned in the starting conditions, institutional design influences trust in collaborative processes. The research cases show that an unclear institutional design negatively affects the collaborative process. This uncertainty includes multi-level governance, as national policies are vague, this results in vague policies on regional and local levels. It creates uncertainty, which can delay the process and give much tension, which can be an incentive to participate. It is useful to add long-term vision into categories within the variable of institutional design, as this influences the feasibility of area-based collaborations and will result in a positive effect on the collaborative process. In conclusion, institutional design is related to effective leadership, as Breaugh et al. (2023) mention and as mentioned by interviewees in this research. Sometimes, the institutional design within area-based collaboration is designed for implementing transitions, but effective leadership is needed. By showing leadership, the institutional design is implemented in practice, which causes a positive effect on the efficiency of the collaborative process. Next, the institutional design must be rethought to

create more efficient collaborative processes. This is a major change and calls a transition within all governmental levels.

*How does facilitative leadership influence the collaborative process within area-based collaborations?*

As the hypothesis in the theoretical framework states, good facilitative leadership is crucial for a successful collaborative process. Based on the results of this thesis report, the relationship between institutional design and facilitative leadership becomes clear, as explained in the sub-question above. Next to this relationship, the influence of the opinion of public interest is added to the subjects within the crucial variable of facilitative leadership. One of the reasons why bottom-up initiatives do not succeed within collaborative processes is a too narrow view or only paying attention to personal problems. By mentioning this result and making facilitative leaders aware of this problem, one of the main problems can be resolved. Next to that, a local leader within politics is needed in the context when only a local leader within an area might not be enough when the institutional design is not sufficient within collaborative processes. The last noticeable mention within the relationship between facilitative leadership and the collaborative process is the influence on the part of shared understanding. In this research, it became clear that a shared understanding of facts might be an understatement; a whole knowledge gap is experienced. This experienced knowledge gap was experienced between initiators and higher levels of governance regarding the need for certain integral solutions. The facilitator should be aware of the possibility of these different objectives when facilitating a collaborative process. Important to note is that the facilitator should be independent and supported by the initiators of the Area-based collaboration.

Taking the answers to these sub-questions into consideration, the answer to the main question:

**"What is the influence of the crucial variables of collaborative governance on the tension between governmental policies and bottom-up initiatives in area-based collaboration?"**

can be concluded as follows:

The crucial variables of starting conditions, institutional design and facilitative leadership are crucial to creating efficient collaborative governance to resolve tensions between bottom-up initiatives in area-based collaborations. Additions must be added to the established theory of collaborative governance to be fully adequate to this specific case.

First, it is important to mention that failures within the institutional design, strong power and resource imbalances, and a prehistory of conflict foster incentives to participate, which is crucial for a collaborative process to be efficient and thus solve tensions.

The problems regarding the feasibility of plans (regarding availability of funding and clear rules) made in area-based collaborations are dealbreakers within incentives to participate and, important to discuss before entering a collaborative process. This also implies a clear long-term vision. Including the public interest can be crucial to resolve tension from a governmental point of view.

On top of the findings above, the role of trust within collaborative processes to resolve tensions is undeniable. All crucial variables influence the level of trust, which makes this the most crucial variable within area-based cooperations and processes.

Finally, it is important to mention that these additions are not a solid road to success. Different roadmaps will lead to efficient collaboration, as transitions are chaotic.

## 8.1    Scientific recommendations

As a scientific recommendation, there are three recommendations for other research. First it is important to be aware of the fact that this research is based on cases which are frontrunners. To get a complete view of the problems regarding the tension between bottom-up initiatives and governmental policies, look at cases that are not marked as frontrunners. The same counts for the use of other provinces in the Netherlands and other countries in the EU, as Overijssel is marked as quite a frontrunner within the Netherlands and the Netherlands as a frontrunner within the EU. The results and discussion can be validated using the same framework but with different cases. Apart from the cases regarding area-based collaboration, looking at the tension between bottom-up initiatives and governmental policies within other transitions is essential. As mentioned in the discussion, the agricultural transition within the Netherlands is in chaos (Rotmans, 2021). Other transitions might be further in the stages of transition, with a clearer road ahead. When research is executed on these transitions, these results can be compared, validated, or rejected. The last recommendation will be to combine this research with the crucial variables and other research about the collaborative process. When combining this study regarding the crucial variables and future research about using these variables how to build a sustainable collaborative process, the efficiency of collaborative governance will significantly grow.

## 8.2    Societal recommendations

Societal recommendations can be made regarding three categories. There is advice for initiators of area-based collaborations, governmental stakeholders involved within ABC and facilitative leaders within ABC.

**Initiators**

The first recommendation for initiators of bottom-up initiatives regarding ABC is to involve different parties within your collaboration. With involving several stakeholders, different opinions will be brought forward, resulting in a more integral approach to your problems. Next, it is important to stress the current issues you are dealing with in your area; in this way, you create mutual understanding and even support in the most pressing problems to other stakeholders. To improve trust between different stakeholders, it is important as an initiator to think of certain rules and crucial variables you need as an initiator to work with other stakeholders. The opportunity to meet these rules might not always be secured, however, by writing down problems regarding different relationships with different stakeholders, the tension becomes tangible, as will be the opportunity to work on better collaboration. The last recommendation regarding initiators is to think of a suitable organisational structure for area-based collaboration. By thinking about a main workgroup and the financial compensation related to that, it becomes clear who is the contact person for other stakeholders and who is responsible for keeping inhabitants up-to-date. Find an independent, facilitative leader who can help you within this process.

**Governmental stakeholders**

Recommendations regarding governmental stakeholders is mostly about building trust and creating clear roles and expectations. Be transparent in ABC's in what is possible within the current institutional design, and be clear about what your role can be as a governmental stakeholder. Create crucial variables in which the ABC can move, but also be clear about regulations that might be easier. Look at what initiators and other stakeholders need to gain trust and build your process around this. At last, it is important to also give trust to initiators so they experience the freedom to create ABC within a clear institutional design. Next to that, it is easier to work with a long-term vision, which stretches longer than the maximum of four years, to establish less chaos within dynamic contexts, such as the transition of the rural area.

**Facilitative leaders**

For facilitative leaders, the first recommendation is to be independent. Try to let the ABC look at goals for the common good and try to focus on what the main problems are stakeholders want to solve, instead of focusing on solutions. Stakeholders can blindsight to certain solutions, while other solutions might be more suitable for the problem, but might not be thought of yet. Try to lead initiators through different levels of governance and try to be their adviser. Very important to note is that the energy to participate must still come from the initiators and let these people come to you for advice. As mentioned earlier, goals of different area-based collaboration might differ, but the process might overlap with other ABC's, so try to support different initiatives to exchange experiences and information. At last I want to stress the importance of facilitative leaders in building trust after hostile conflicts. As a facilitative leader it is important to stress the importance of prehistory and resolving conflicts, as there is a risk of poisoning future collaboration. When changing hostile conflicts, into constructive conflicts, there is a higher chance of creating a successful collaborative process.

In conclusion, solutions regarding transitions might be unique to each area, but the process of these area-based collaborations is similar to other bottom-up initiatives within areas in transition and thus should be taken seriously. By being aware of pitfalls that happen before entering a collaborative process, the collaborative process could be designed so that problems can be solved before entering it, which might resolve unnecessary conflicts and thus lower the tension between bottom-up initiatives and governmental policies.

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# Appendix A: Interview guide

In this interview guide, a distinction is made between guides for initiators, governmental stakeholders and facilitative leaders. As the interviews were done in Dutch, the preparation of the interviews were also in Dutch. When needed, the interview guide can be sent to you in English. If this is the case for you please send an email to lottekist@hotmail.nl.

**Initiatiefnemers**

Eerst wordt een introductie gedaan, waarin ik mijzelf voorstel en het doel van het onderzoek. Daarnaast vraag ik toestemming voor het opnemen van het gesprek. Daarnaast leg ik ook uit waarom ik juist de bepaalde persoon wil spreken voor dit onderzoek en waarom de casus belangrijk is.

Wil je je kort voorstellen?

Zou je een algemene tijdlijn kunnen schetsen of vertellen over hoe jij betrokken bent geraakt bij deze gebiedsgerichte samenwerking en wat over het algemeen hoogte en diepte punten zijn?

Daarna ga ik in op de randvoorwaarden van een samenwerkende overheid. De volgende vragen kunnen gesteld worden, wanneer deze nog niet besproken zijn gedurende het vertellen van de tijdlijn / de vragen die hierop zijn doorgevraagd.

Startvoorwaarden:

- Macht / middel / hulpbronnen onbalans
    - Organisatie structuur
        - Van welke organisatiestructuur wordt er gebruik gemaakt binnen de coöperatie / gebiedsproces?
    - Kennisgat
        - Hoe zorg je er voor dat iedereen op het zelfde niveau qua kennis zit?
    - Tijd en energie en vrijheid om mee te doen
        - Hoeveel tijd / energie zijn leden / vrijwillige deelnemers / jijzelf kwijt aan deze vorm van samenwerking?
        - Is dit goed vol te houden voor jou?
    - Genoeg middelen
        - Wordt je hiervoor betaald door provincie of deelnemers?
        - Krijgen deelnemers een vergoeding?
        - Plan financieel haalbaar?
- Drijfveren om te participeren
    - Bereidheid om te participeren
        - Is iedereen nog steeds aangehaakt?
        - Wat is de grootste drijfveer om mee te doen voor jou / andere deelnemers?
        - Ging het opzetten van samenwerking gemakkelijk?
    - Concrete, tastbare uitkomsten
        - Zijn deze uitkomsten haalbaar op lange / korte termijn?
        - Zijn er 'small wins'?
    - Motivatie om te participeren
        - Grootste probleem dat opgelost dient te worden?
        - Grootste motivatie om mee te doen?
    - Niveau van inzet
        - Is iedereen nog gemotiveerd om het plan door te zetten?
        - Is huidige inzet genoeg? Of dient er meer worden gedaan?
        - Idee voor de toekomst?
    - Geschiedenis van onderlinge strijd en samenwerking

- o Voorgeschiedenis van conflict
    - ▪ Zijn er problemen geweest in het verleden? Zowel onderling als tussen overheid en burgers?
- o Voorgeschiedenis van samenwerking
    - ▪ Is er met deze groep eerder samengewerkt?
    - ▪ Is er eerder samen gewerkt met provincie?
- o Onderlinge afhankelijkheid
    - ▪ In welke mate zijn de deelnemers van het gebiedsproces afhankelijk van elkaar?
    - ▪ Is provincie afhankelijk van dit gebiedsproces?
- o Niveau van vertrouwen
    - ▪ Is er sprake van vertrouwen tussen jou en deelnemers? Tussen deelnemers? Tussen deelnemers en overheid?
        - • Wanneer nee, hoe komt dit?
- o Manier van communiceren
    - ▪ In welke manier worden keuzes gecommuniceerd?

Institutioneel ontwerp:

- - Expliciete regels
    - o Zijn er in het begin expliciete (spel) regels opgesteld bij oprichting coöperatie?
    - o Hoe werd hier door verschillende partijen op gereageerd?
- - Nageleefde regels
    - o Zijn deze regels tot nu toe nageleefd?
- - Transparant beslissing proces
    - o Worden keuzes tot nu toe transparant genomen?
- - Duidelijke rollen
    - o Is het duidelijk wie welke rol aanneemt binnen het gebiedscoöperatie?
    - o Wat is de rol van Jan?
    - o Wat is de rol van de gemeente Wierden?
- - Duidelijke deadlines & doelstellingen
    - o Zijn er duidelijke deadlines en doelen gesteld vanaf het begin?
    - o Hebben deze aanpassing nodig op het moment?

Faciliterend leiderschap:

- - Brengt partijen samen
    - o Na samenwerking, zijn er nog partijen die jij hebt geopperd om aan tafel te laten zitten?
- - Behoud duidelijke regels
    - o Wanneer regels niet worden nageleefd, wat is jou rol om deze regels wel te behouden / mensen laten na te leven?
- - Faciliteert dialoog
    - o Wanneer samenwerking moeizaam gaat, hoe faciliteer je het gesprek zodat dit wel alsnog plaats vindt?
- - Bouwt vertrouwen
    - o En hoe bouw je op deze manier vertrouwen op?
- - Zoekt wederzijdse belangen
    - o Zijn er genoeg wederzijdse belangen? Hoe vind je deze / hoe breng je deze in kaart?
- - Beschikbaarheid lokale leiders
    - o Bij organisatie structuur, wie neemt de leiding van de deelnemers?

Als afsluiting wordt de vraag gesteld:

Wat is de ideale uitkomst als het ligt aan jou?

Wat is de grootste tip voor andere initiatief nemers die een gelijksoortig proces aangaan?

Daarna kunnen de initiatiefnemers nog vragen aan mij stellen. Als laatste bedank ik hen, vraag ik of ik bij vragen nogmaals contact met hen mag opnemen en dat ze bij vragen ook contact met mij mogen opnemen. Tenslotte beloof ik dat wanneer het verslag af is, ik deze met hen deel.

**Betrokkenen vanuit overheid**

Als eerst worden de eerste vragen en introductie herhaald, zoals deze bij de initiatiefnemers staat. Daarnaast is het belangrijk bij gesprekken met betrokkenen vanuit overheden dat er ook focus wordt gelegd op de rol van het gebiedsproces of gebiedscoöperatie in regionaal verband en wat de verwachtingen van de provincie zijn bij dit project. Zo worden de startvoorwaarden waarop zij dit traject zijn aangegaan ook een stuk duidelijker.

De vragen van collaborative governance kunnen op de provincie / gemeente als volgt worden toegepast:

Startvoorwaarden:

- Macht / middel imbalans
  - o Organisatie structuur
    - ▪ Hoe kan als overheid deze vorm van gebiedsgerichte samenwerking worden ondersteund? Wat is jullie rol in deze gebiedsgerichte samenwerking?
  - o Kennisgat
    - ▪ Hoe zorg je er voor dat iedereen op het zelfde niveau qua kennis zit?
  - o Tijd en energie en vrijheid om mee te doen
    - ▪ Hoeveel tijd en energie stoppen jullie als overheid in dit proces?
  - o Genoeg middelen
    - ▪ Genoeg middelen binnen jullie niveau van overheid beschikbaar om te faciliteren?
- Drijfveren om te participeren
  - o Bereidheid om te participeren
    - ▪ Is de overheid bereid om te participeren in het huidige proces?
  - o Concrete, tastbare uitkomsten
    - ▪ Wat is de ideale uitkomst als het ligt aan jou?
    - ▪ Zijn deze uitkomsten haalbaar op lange / korte termijn?
    - ▪ Zijn er 'small wins'?
  - o Motivatie om te participeren
    - ▪ Grootste probleem dat opgelost dient te worden?
    - ▪ Grootste motivatie om mee te doen?
  - o Niveau van inzet
    - ▪ Is iedereen nog gemotiveerd om het plan door te zetten?
    - ▪ Is huidige inzet genoeg? Of dient er meer worden gedaan?
    - ▪ Idee voor de toekomst?
- Geschiedenis van onderlinge strijd en samenwerking
  - o Voorgeschiedenis van conflict
    - ▪ Zijn er problemen geweest in het verleden in dit gebied?
  - o Voorgeschiedenis van samenwerking
    - ▪ Is er met deze groep eerder samengewerkt?
    - ▪ Is er eerder samen gewerkt met met andere overheden?
  - o Onderlinge afhankelijkheid

- In welke mate zijn de deelnemers van het gebiedsproces afhankelijk van elkaar?
- Is provincie of gemeente afhankelijk van deze samenwerking?
  - o Niveau van vertrouwen
    - Is er sprake van vertrouwen tussen jou en deelnemers? Tussen deelnemers? Tussen deelnemers en overheid?
      - Wanneer nee, hoe komt dit?
  - o Manier van communiceren
    - In welke manier worden keuzes gecommuniceerd

Institutioneel ontwerp:

- Expliciete regels
  - o Zijn er in het begin expliciete (spel) regels opgesteld?
  - o Hoe werd hier door verschillende partijen op gereageerd?
- Nageleefde regels
  - o Zijn deze regels tot nu toe nageleefd?
  - o Zijn deze regels haalbaar?
- Transparant beslissing proces
  - o Worden keuzes tot nu toe transparant genomen?
- Duidelijke rollen
  - o Is het duidelijk wie welke rol aanneemt binnen dit samenwerkingsproces?
  - o Wat is de precieze rol die provincie of gemeente hierbij?
- Duidelijke deadlines & doelstellingen
  - o Zijn er duidelijke deadlines en doelen gesteld vanaf het begin?
  - o Hebben deze aanpassing nodig op het moment?

Faciliterend leiderschap:

Provincie zou moeten financiën moeten faciliteren, maar goed navragen of dit gebeurd. Ook vragen wat de gemeente kan betekenen binnen facilitaire rol.

- Brengt partijen samen
  - o Na samenwerking, zijn er nog partijen die jij hebt geopperd om aan tafel te laten zitten?
- Behoud duidelijke regels
  - o Wanneer regels niet worden nageleefd, wat is jou rol om deze regels wel te behouden / mensen laten na te leven?
- Faciliteert dialoog
  - o Wanneer samenwerking moeizaam gaat, hoe faciliteer je het gesprek zodat dit wel alsnog plaats vindt?
- Bouwt vertrouwen
  - o En hoe bouw je op deze manier vertrouwen op?
- Zoekt wederzijdse belangen
  - o Zijn er genoeg wederzijdse belangen? Hoe vind je deze / hoe breng je deze in kaart?
- Beschikbaarheid lokale leiders
  - o Bij organisatie structuur, wie neemt de leiding van de deelnemers?

Tenslotte wordt het gesprek afgesloten, zoals ook bij de initiatiefnemers het geval is.

**Faciliterend leider**

Als eerst worden de eerste vragen en introductie herhaald, zoals deze bij de initiatiefnemers staat. Daarna worden de vragen betreft de randvoorwaarden van collaboative governace toegpast op de rol

van de faciliterend leider. Veel vragen zijn al beantwoord gedurende de vraag over de tijdlijn, maar staan hier voor de zekerheid wanneer dit niet het geval is.

Startvoorwaarden:

- Macht / middel imbalans
    - Organisatie structuur
        - Van welke organisatiestructuur wordt er gebruik gemaakt binnen deze gebiedsgerichte samenwerking?
    - Kennisgat
        - Hoe zorg je er voor dat iedereen op het zelfde niveau qua kennis zit?
    - Tijd en energie en vrijheid om mee te doen
        - Hoeveel tijd / energie zijn leden / vrijwillige deelnemers / jijzelf kwijt aan deze vorm van gebiedsgerichte samenwerking?
        - Is dit goed vol te houden voor jou?
    - Genoeg middelen
        - Wordt je hiervoor betaald door provincie of deelnemers?
        - Krijgen deelnemers een vergoeding?
        - Plan financieel haalbaar?
- Drijfveren om te participeren
    - Bereidheid om te participeren
        - Is iedereen nog steeds aangehaakt?
        - Wat is de grootste drijfveer om mee te doen voor jou / deelnemers?
        - Ging het opzetten van samenwerking gemakkelijk?
    - Concrete, tastbare uitkomsten
        - Wat is de ideale uitkomst als het ligt aan jou?
        - Zijn deze uitkomsten haalbaar op lange / korte termijn?
        - Zijn er 'small wins'?
    - Motivatie om te participeren
        - Grootste probleem dat opgelost dient te worden?
        - Grootste motivatie om mee te doen?
    - Niveau van inzet
        - Is iedereen nog gemotiveerd om het plan door te zetten?
        - Is huidige inzet genoeg? Of dient er meer worden gedaan?
        - Idee voor de toekomst?
- Geschiedenis van onderlinge strijd en samenwerking
    - Voorgeschiedenis van conflict
        - Zijn er problemen geweest in het verleden? Zowel onderling als tussen overheid en burgers?
    - Voorgeschiedenis van samenwerking
        - Is er met deze groep eerder samengewerkt?
        - Is er eerder samen gewerkt met provincie?
    - Onderlinge afhankelijkheid
        - In welke mate zijn de deelnemers van het gebiedsproces afhankelijk van elkaar?
        - Is provincie afhankelijk van dit gebiedsproces? En andere stakeholders?
    - Niveau van vertrouwen
        - Is er sprake van vertrouwen tussen jou en deelnemers? Tussen deelnemers? Tussen deelnemers en overheid?
            - Wanneer nee, hoe komt dit?
    - Manier van communiceren

- ▪ In welke manier worden keuzes gecommuniceerd?

Institutioneel ontwerp

- Expliciete regels
  - o Zijn er in het begin expliciete (spel) regels opgesteld bij het begin van de samenwerking?
  - o Hoe werd hier door verschillende partijen op gereageerd?
- Nageleefde regels
  - o Zijn deze regels tot nu toe nageleefd?
- Transparant beslissing proces
  - o Worden keuzes tot nu toe transparant genomen?
- Duidelijke rollen
  - o Is het duidelijk wie welke rol aanneemt binnen deze samenwerking?
  - o Wat is jou rol hierin?
- Duidelijke deadlines & doelstellingen
  - o Zijn er duidelijke deadlines en doelen gesteld vanaf het begin?
  - o Hebben deze aanpassing nodig op het moment?

Faciliterend leiderschap

Dit is eigenlijk wat deze persoon op het moment doet. Door de bovenstaande vragen te beantwoorden, hoop ik dat dit meegenomen wordt. (het zijn dan ook vooral 'doorvraag vragen' op het proces.

- Brengt partijen samen
  - o Na samenwerking, zijn er nog partijen die jij hebt geopperd om aan tafel te laten zitten?
- Behoud duidelijke regels
  - o Wanneer regels niet worden nageleefd, wat is jou rol om deze regels wel te behouden / mensen laten na te leven?
- Faciliteert dialoog
  - o Wanneer samenwerking moeizaam gaat, hoe faciliteer je het gesprek zodat dit wel alsnog plaats vindt?
- Bouwt vertrouwen
  - o En hoe bouw je op deze manier vertrouwen op?
- Zoekt wederzijdse belangen
  - o Zijn er genoeg wederzijdse belangen? Hoe vind je deze / hoe breng je deze in kaart?
- Beschikbaarheid lokale leiders
  - o Bij organisatie structuur, wie neemt de leiding van de deelnemers?

Als afsluiting worden dezelfde vragen gesteld als bij de initiatiefnemers en betrokkenen vanuit de overheid.

# Appendix B: Coding table

| Document Group ▼ | Code ▼ |
|---|---|
| collaborative process | face-to-face dialogues |
| | intermediate outcomes |
| | shared understanding |
| | trust building |
| facilitative leadership | availability local leaders |
| | bring parties together |
| | facilitate dialogues |
| | maintain clear rules |
| | seek mutual gains |
| Institutional design | clear objectives / deadlines |
| | clear roles |
| | explicit rules |
| | respected rules |
| | transparant decision making |
| Starting conditions | concrete, tangible policy outcomes (incentives to particpate) |
| | level of commitment (incentives to particpate) |
| | motivations to participate (incentives to particpate) |
| | willingness to participate (incentives to particpate) |
| | enough time, energy and liberty to engage (power/resource imbalances) |
| | knowledge gap minimalized (power / resource imbalances) |
| | sufficient organizational infrastructure (power/resource imbalances) |
| | sufficient resources (power / resource imbalances) |
| | interdependence (history of antagonism and cooperation) |
| | level of trust (history of antagonism and cooperation) |
| | prehistory of conflict (history of antagonism and cooperation) |
| | prehistory of cooperation (history of antagonism and cooperation) |
| | way of communicating (history of antagonism and cooperation |
| Remarkable (inductive coding) | (lack off) long term vision |
| | banks |
| | feasibility - money |
| | insurance companies |
| | market parties |
| | politicial insecurity |
| | speak for common good / public interest |

# Appendix C: Result tables

**Wierden:**

Starting conditions:

| | | Wierden 3 ⊚ 119 |
|---|---|---|
| ● 🗀 influence of history of an... | ⊚ 37 | 15 |
| ● 🗀 influence of incentives to... | ⊚ 29 | 8 |
| ● 🗀 influence of power / reso... | ⊚ 29 | 9 |

| | | Wierden 3 ⊚ 119 |
|---|---|---|
| ● ◇ concrete, tangible policy... | ⊚ 7 | 1 |
| ● ◇ level of commitment | ⊚ 6 | 2 |
| ● ◇ motivations to participate | ⊚ 11 | 2 |
| ● ◇ willingness to participate | ⊚ 5 | 3 |

| | | Wierden 3 ⊚ 119 |
|---|---|---|
| ● ◇ interdependence | ⊚ 1 | |
| ● ◇ level of trust | ⊚ 12 | 7 |
| ● ◇ prehistory of conflict | ⊚ 9 | 3 |
| ● ◇ prehistory of cooperation | ⊚ 8 | 4 |
| ● ◇ way of communicating | ⊚ 7 | 1 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ● ◇ enough time, energy and... | ⊚ 7 | 2 |
| ● ◇ knowledge gap minimali... | ⊚ 1 | 1 |
| ● ◇ sufficient organizational i... | ⊚ 11 | 4 |
| ● ◇ sufficient resources | ⊚ 10 | 2 |

Institutional design:

| | | Wierden 3 ⊚ 119 |
|---|---|---|
| ● ◇ clear objectives / deadlines | ⊚ 21 | 3 |
| ● ◇ clear roles | ⊚ 23 | 3 |
| ● ◇ explicit rules | ⊚ 12 | 5 |
| ● ◇ respected rules | ⊚ 7 | 1 |
| ● ◇ transparent decision mak... | ⊚ 14 | 6 |

Facilitative leadership:

| | | Wierden 3 ⊚ 119 |
|---|---|---|
| availability local leaders | ⊚ 14 | 5 |
| bring parties together | ⊚ 10 | 5 |
| facilitate dialogues | ⊚ 8 | 3 |
| maintain clear rules | ⊚ 6 | 1 |
| seek mutual gains | ⊚ 16 | 5 |
| | | 19 |

Additional findings:

| | | Wierden<br>📄 3  💬 119 |
|---|---|---|
| (lack off) long term vision | 💬 16 | 1 |
| banks | 💬 8 | 3 |
| feasibility - money | 💬 19 | 6 |
| insurance companies | 💬 5 | 3 |
| market parties | 💬 6 | 2 |
| politicial insecurity | 💬 17 | 6 |
| speak for common good / public interest | 💬 14 | 7 |

**Baarlingerpolder:**

Starting conditions:

| | | Baarlingerp...<br>📄 4  💬 186 |
|---|---|---|
| 🔴 📁 influence of history of an... | 💬 37 | 17 |
| 🟢 📁 influence of incentives to... | 💬 29 | 17 |
| 🔵 📁 influence of power / reso... | 💬 29 | 17 |
| **Totals** | | **51** |

| | | Baarlingerp...<br>📄 4  💬 186 |
|---|---|---|
| 🔴 ◇ interdependence | 💬 1 | 1 |
| 🔴 ◇ level of trust | 💬 12 | 4 |
| 🔴 ◇ prehistory of conflict | 💬 9 | 6 |
| 🔴 ◇ prehistory of cooperation | 💬 8 | 2 |
| 🔴 ◇ way of communicating | 💬 7 | 4 |

| | | Baarlingerp...<br>📄 4  💬 186 |
|---|---|---|
| 🟢 ◇ concrete, tangible policy... | 💬 7 | 5 |
| 🟢 ◇ level of commitment | 💬 6 | 3 |
| 🟢 ◇ motivations to participate | 💬 11 | 7 |
| 🟢 ◇ willingness to participate | 💬 5 | 2 |

| | | Baarlingerp...<br>📄 4  💬 186 |
|---|---|---|
| 🔵 ◇ enough time, energy and... | 💬 7 | 4 |
| 🔵 ◇ knowledge gap minimali... | 💬 1 | |
| 🔵 ◇ sufficient organizational i... | 💬 11 | 7 |
| 🔵 ◇ sufficient resources | 💬 10 | 6 |

Institutional design:

| | | Baarlingerp...<br>📄 4  💬 186 |
|---|---|---|
| 🔵 ◇ clear objectives / deadlines | 💬 21 | 16 |
| 🔵 ◇ clear roles | 💬 23 | 14 |
| 🔵 ◇ explicit rules | 💬 12 | 6 |
| 🔵 ◇ respected rules | 💬 7 | 5 |
| 🔵 ◇ transparant decision mak... | 💬 14 | 6 |
| **Totals** | | **47** |

Facilitative leadership:

| | | Baarlingerp...<br>🗋 4   💬 186 |
|---|---|---|
| availability local leaders | 💬 14 | 7 |
| bring parties together | 💬 10 | 3 |
| facilitate dialogues | 💬 8 | 4 |
| maintain clear rules | 💬 6 | 4 |
| seek mutual gains | 💬 16 | 7 |
| | | 25 |

Additional findings:

| | | Baarlingerp...<br>🗋 4   💬 186 |
|---|---|---|
| ● ◇ (lack off) long term vision | 💬 16 | 10 |
| ● ◇ banks | 💬 8 | 3 |
| ● ◇ feasibility - money | 💬 19 | 9 |
| ● ◇ insurance companies | 💬 5 | 1 |
| ● ◇ market parties | 💬 6 | 3 |
| ● ◇ politicial insecurity | 💬 17 | 10 |
| ● ◇ speak for common good / public interest | 💬 14 | 4 |