

# VALUE PURSUIT: CREATING VALUE BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT (3933)

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## ABSTRACT

How can stakeholders concerned within water management policy-making facilitate the expansion of responsibility for water management onto a larger number of stakeholders? To show what a Design Thinking approach could mean for a dialogue about the water management of the province of Noord Brabant in the Netherlands, STBY in collaboration with the Design Academy Eindhoven, initiated a workshop exploring the possible roles stakeholders could take on in regards to policy making and policy implementation. The idea was that by involving the stakeholders in the planning, they could facilitate the expansion of responsibility for water management onto a larger number of stakeholders with the province taking a more facilitative role. For this workshop, STBY utilized the workshop tool ‘Value Pursuit’ (Rygh, 2014), a game board that can be used in workshops to clarify how stakeholders in a specific network can be of value to one another, thereby helping identify shared goals within the project. The results of the workshop has lead us to question two different approaches in policy making; negotiation and co-creation and this paper will discuss what implications this has for the design practice.

## INTRODUCTION

Early 2014, the Dutch province of Noord Brabant was in need of developing a new ‘Provincial Water Plan 2016-2020’, in which goals for the water management for the next five years were laid down. In the past, they had done this themselves, negotiating with a few key stakeholders, but now there was a need for this plan to

be developed in collaboration with a much wider range of stakeholders in order to explore what role these stakeholders could take in the implementation. Partially this need was financially motivated. The Province could no longer execute all aspects of the plan themselves and need help from stakeholders, which could be achieved only if these stakeholders had a bigger say in the policy itself. Secondly, the Province was keen to help create a so-called ‘participation society’ where government is collaborating with citizens and societal organizations to improve society. The idea was that by involving stakeholders in the planning, an expansion of the responsibility for water management onto a larger number of stakeholders would be possible, facilitated by the Province. Noord Brabant wished to try a new approach and asked STBY to facilitate this complex dialogue using a Design Thinking (Brown, 2009) approach.

To show what a Design Thinking approach could mean for a dialogue concerning the water management of Noord Brabant, STBY was asked by the Province to initiate a dialogue about one specific topic; groundwater management. This topic was put forward by the province as an interesting test case as it was one of the most complex topics, due to the many different stakeholders involved. A workshop was planned, focusing on the key stakeholders: water management companies, water boards, nature conservationists, city councils, a farmers’ interest group and the Province of Noord Brabant, to explore how these stakeholders could collaborate and what role they would like to take in the planning and implementation process of the Provincial Water Plan. For this workshop, STBY used the workshop tool ‘Value Pursuit’ (Rygh, 2014), a game board used to clarify how stakeholders in a specific

network can be of value to one another, helping identify shared goals within the project.

Value Pursuit is a project by Karianne Rygh, Research Associate at Design Academy Eindhoven and part of the PSS 101 project within CRISP (2011) (Creative Industry Scientific Programme). CRISP focuses on Product Service Systems (PSS), requiring designers to think and work more broadly and more strategically in response to large-scale societal challenges. These contexts require multidisciplinary approaches, but people within different professional fields often struggle to work together as a team, so the strategic role of the designer is to bring these people together in a way that enables them all to collaborate, in networks, and across and between organizations. Value Pursuit addresses these issues with a game board that structures conversations stakeholders need to have if they (prepare to) collaborate. The Value Pursuit tool has been used in several contexts, in industry as well as government (Rygh, 2014).

## BACKGROUND

Already for many years, business strategists and policy makers have been struggling with complex issues that designers call ‘wicked problems’ (Buchanan, 1992) such as the depletion of natural resources against a growing need of energy, and the growing older population that needs care in times of shrinking healthcare budgets and workforces. As a result publications with a clear design perspective, aimed at policy makers and the business community, have emerged, to explain what this new contribution of design entails (e.g. Brown, 2009; Kimbell, 2011; Merholz et al., 2008; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010; Viladas, 2011).

In public policy making the Design Council UK has played a key role in exploring and communicating the contributions design can make to solve wicked problems such as violence and aggression in hospital Accident & Emergency wards (Design Council UK, 2011) and the large contribution of private homes (25% in the UK) to carbon emissions (Design Council UK, 2010). This has resulted in the Policy Lab, set up by the current UK government in 2014 (Cabinet Office Open Policy Making team, n.d) to bring design practices into its policy making, addressing issues as diverse as police services and divorce counseling (to alleviate the judicial system), for instance. The Lab is based in the Cabinet Office and aims to work across all government departments. It is not the first of its kind. In other European countries labs have been set up already earlier, such as Mindlab in Denmark, SITRA in Finland and La 27ème Region in France, as well as labs on all

other continents (Puttick et al, 2014). The Netherlands does not have such an ‘i-team’ that advocates design methods as Nesta (ibid.) calls these labs, but several experiments in what is locally mostly called social design have emerged. The aforementioned CRISP programme houses several of these projects, also at Design Academy Eindhoven (Cadamuro, 2013; Daam, 2014), for instance. Waag Society in Amsterdam (Waag Society, n.d.) runs societal projects, sometimes in collaboration with local, regional or national governments. Capital D in Eindhoven, also organizer of Dutch Design Week, runs the EU-funded PROUD project (2012) on co-design with several European partners, all involved in supporting government with co-design approaches. The Eindhoven region is part of the Province of Noord Brabant, which is also one of the supporters of Dutch Design Week. The interest of the Province in using design as an approach to support its own policy development originated in this relationship.

## DATA AND METHODS

The Value Pursuit workshop tool was developed on the basis of the following success factors of networks producing PSS, defined by the PSS 101 research team:

- 1 — Each stakeholder involved must have an understanding of the value to be gained from the networked collaboration.
- 2 — They must be able to express their needs clearly.
- 3 — They must understand the other stakeholders’ expectations.

The tool provides a structure for dialogue to take place between stakeholders on the topics: expectations, contributions, and struggles, and how this could contribute to a thriving network. Moving inwards from the outside on the Value Pursuit board (Figure 1), participants are asked to write down on post-it notes what their expectations, contributions (experience, expertise, solutions) and struggles (challenges or obstacles) are, in developing a specific PSS, or in reaching the defined common goal. After placing their answers on their own slice on the board, participants are encouraged to take the notes with their contributions on and stick them on other participants’ struggles, showing how they can be of benefit to one another within the network. (In some cases this is also done by the use of stickers.) It is these connections that, through the use of this tool, become the new relations of value.



Figure 1: Value Pursuit game board

Before ‘Value Pursuit’ can be beneficial for a team of colleagues or for a group of partners collaborating, it is important that participants arrive with the right mindset to be able to contribute and receive input to and from one another. Trust within a network affects a person’s ability to convey experience and communicate how this expertise can be used. This, in turn, affects how resources are shared within a network. (Arets, Raijmakers, Rygh, 2014). Participants should therefore know what to expect prior to the workshop and arrive with a willingness to be honest (Wierda, 2014). ‘Value’ and common goals can have different meanings for different stakeholders.

By collaborating in a network, individual stakeholders represent a resource and therefore a ‘value’ for other network partners. It is important to realize that relations of value within networks producing PSS, are created by individual people as extensions of the positions they hold. One approach to building trust in networks is by expanding the stakeholders’ overview and understanding of how their individual efforts contribute to the success of a PSS.

In preparation for the workshop with the Province of Noord Brabant, one-on-one interviews with the “key stakeholders” were therefore conducted to explore their different perspectives. Following the core principles of the Value Pursuit tool, STBY interviewed each stakeholder on how they were related to the groundwater theme: what are their activities? What are they trying to achieve - both personally as professionally and with whom are they interacting to achieve this? Following the interviews, a first round of analysis was conducted by STBY to collect the necessary input to use in the Value Pursuit workshop: for each stakeholder a profile sheet and stakeholder map was created. In addition, the aims, contributions and struggles were formulated for each stakeholder and plotted on the Value Pursuit board. Through visualizing the interviews as stakeholder profiles and maps, it was possible to share and discuss the input in a manner that was understandable to everyone involved.



Figure 2: One-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, an example of a profile and stakeholder map

In the workshop with the key stakeholders, the participants were first invited to view and acknowledge each other’s information: profile posters, stakeholders maps and the information from Value Pursuit board (aims, contributions and struggles). Although some of the stakeholders had known each other for several years, the material brought out new insights and led to new, more personal conversations. It also served as a quick introduction for new stakeholders who didn’t yet know each other.

The participants were asked if they agreed with the information presented and were also given the opportunity to add additional information if it was required. After this initial round of getting acquainted, participants were asked to take a closer look at each other’s struggles and reflect over what they could contribute to the networks. By having the data readily available, the participants could immediately start to make connections between participants’ contributions and struggles, discovering opportunities for new collaborations.



Figure 3: Picture of the stakeholder workshop: making connections with the Value Pursuit

In order to gain an overview, these connections were counted and placed on the second Value Pursuit game board resembling a radar. Each participant indicated with a large playing piece, the number of potential contributions they gained from other participants and with the small playing piece, how many contributions they offered to others. The large and small playing pieces should in theory be as much in balance as possible, as people should gain as much as they contribute, leading to a sustainable network. While the first game board of Value Pursuit was centered around expectations, contributions and struggles and intended

to collect information about how participants in a network could benefit from each other, the second game board, through its visualization of the balance of gains and contributions, was aimed at triggering further discussion through seeing how everyone was positioned in relation to each other. The radar clearly indicated each stakeholder's intention regarding how they wished to actively participate in the network, what they had to offer and what they could expect to gain.

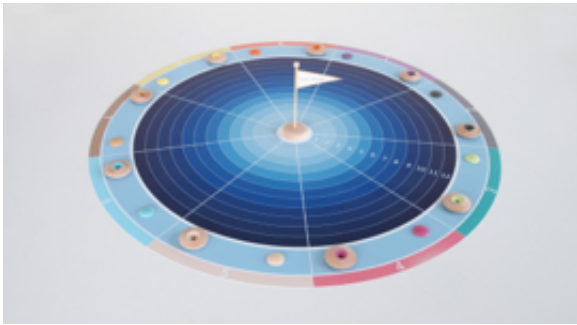


Figure 4: Value Pursuit 'real time radar'

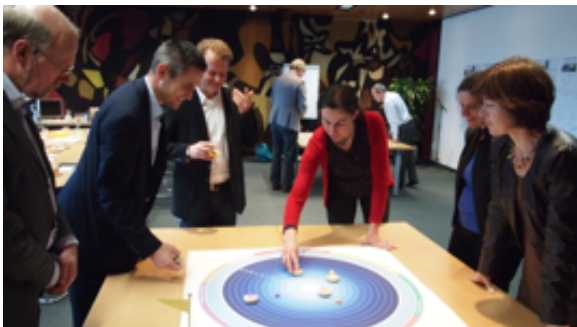


Figure 5: Participants interacting with 'radar' triggering discussion

After making the connections, it was time to make them concrete. The clusters of connections were translated onto a flip board and discussed, making the potential collaborations and new relationships visible to all. Sub themes emerged from this exercise, such as "groundwater quality" and the involved stakeholders had to indicate how they would see themselves contributing to that theme.

At the end of the workshop, after experiencing the type of discussion and results this design thinking approach could bring, the participants were asked to share other themes that, next to groundwater quality, should be picked up and would benefit from a similar dialogue and approach. These results were clustered and visualized by STBY to be able to share and discuss them a few weeks later with a broader group of stakeholders on the "Waterday", an event organized by the province. During this day STBY organized a second workshop wherein the approach, the themes and initial collaboration networks created during the stakeholder

workshop were presented. The attendees were then asked to actively participate in this dialogue. Were there any themes they would like to participate in? Or did they know other stakeholders that would need to be involved? Why was this theme interesting to them and what could they contribute? In addition, participants were asked to indicate and suggest which other themes they would like to see discussed.

After combining the input from this workshop with the earlier results, nine important themes were formulated for which further dialogue was desired. Additionally, for each theme several stakeholders indicated what they would be willing to contribute. This gave the Province a good starting point for further dialogue with these particular stakeholders, wherein their contributions would be concretized. Later, a third workshop was run with a selected group of stakeholders to further explore one of the themes that came up in the second workshop: Health and Water management.



Figure 6: Stakeholders engaging in the themes during the 'Water day'.

## EVALUATION OF DATA

In this project, the Value Pursuit tool has been used and explored in several ways. Already in the interviews, the core principles of the Value Pursuit were used as a structure. The tools used and themes discussed in the interviews were chosen with the Value Pursuit canvas already in mind, revolving around the topics of expectations, contributions and struggles. It was important for the interviews that stakeholders were not only asked directly about these topics, but that they were also encouraged to come with concrete examples and activities that would provide the necessary input for the workshop. Organising the input from the interviews on to the Value Pursuit canvas allowed a first round of analysis. This was done in a discussion by the STBY team who conducted the interviews. The Value Pursuit assisted in giving structure to analysing and discussing what the aims, contributions and struggles of the stakeholders really were, in relation to groundwater management.

Having the Value Pursuit game board already filled in at the start of the workshop, allowed for a quick start of

the workshop activity, getting participants up to speed on the content in a short amount of time. Stakeholders were still given the opportunity to check, add or adjust the input, but only minor changes and additions were made here. The tool also gave new stakeholders an overview of the current situation of the network they had entered. Moreover, the analysis and visualisation of its results on the board created commitment because stakeholders saw that STBY was not merely facilitating but also creating new insights they could build on.

Having this data readily available, made it possible to immediately start making connections between participants' contributions and struggles, making it possible to uncover opportunities for new collaborations. The precious time of the participants was thus spent constructively, actively engaging them in activities triggering conversations and discussion, which appeared to be quite new for all of them. The province was especially surprised by the level of concreteness achieved in the Value Pursuit workshop. As one of the stakeholders phrased it: "We have never been able to get so 'deep' into the important topics in such a limited amount of time."

Organising and visualising the information on the Value Pursuit appeared to be very helpful not only for the workshop, but also as a reference for the Province. The filled-in game board gave the Province a combined visual and manageable overview of all the main stakeholders' aims, contributions and struggles relating to the complex groundwater theme. The Province was very keen on keeping this poster to use it for other purposes.

The Value Pursuit ultimately helped the involved stakeholders in getting acquainted with a new "designerly" approach. By participating they were able to see what this approach could bring, how it differed and what it could add to existing approaches. It became clear for what type of themes or dialogues this approach was well suited, but also, for which themes a different approach is needed. A reflection about this is to be found in the discussion section of this paper.

## RESULTS

Introducing the Value Pursuit tool in a context of water management policy-making disrupted the well-established routines and practices that civil servants are accustomed to having in their meetings with stakeholders, and created an environment where new approaches could be introduced and discussed. The workshop tool didn't only get people moving physically by getting everyone out of their seats around a traditional 'horse-shoe' table setting, and over to a circular board where they were all facing one another, but the tool also engaged the participants to discuss

topics in a visual manner. While one person was speaking, another was reading and observing what had been placed on the board, allowing them a moment of reflection, to then later comment on. A workshop participant stated: "As a new stakeholder in the network, this workshop provided us with an overview and easy access to the key topics of interest of the other stakeholders."

## OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY FOR CO-CREATION

STBY identified that the Value Pursuit is well suited for the development of new networks – particularly where Design Thinking is used in order to address an unfamiliar topic or theme; when dealing with a larger complex problem that requires the aspects that urgently need change to be identified; when innovation is greatly needed; or when new stakeholders come into the network. The Value Pursuit tool and the co-creative approach works very well in these situations because openness and transparency are required and valued. The tool gets new stakeholders up to speed on the current situation of the network they have entered. Furthermore, by structuring their conversation and stimulating reflection, the Value Pursuit tool assists stakeholders in gaining an overview when new themes come into the picture or when new themes need to be identified.

By compiling a comprehensible overview of stakeholders' expectations, contributions and struggles and actively discussing these, the activity of the workshops revealed to everyone involved that new policies do not always have to be negotiated, they can also be co-created.

## BUILDING AND MAINTAINING TRUST

Introducing this new approach required all participants to have the right mind-set during the workshop in order to be able to take such a new concept into consideration and see its potential. Through conducting one on one interviews with each participant prior to the workshop, STBY began early on, to lay the groundwork for establishing a level of trust and fostering the right state of mind for participants welcome new ways of working. Meeting participants one-to-one, facilitated conversations that can often prove to be difficult in a group setting. Every individual conversation/interview was analysed and represented in a visual manner during the workshop. It was possible to reveal this information to the larger group of participants because of the trust that had been built between the individual participants and STBY through the interviews that had more the character of empathic conversations (Raijmakers et al, 2009) 'over a coffee'. The information that was then conveyed to the larger group about every individual stakeholder, in turn created a new level of trust between

the stakeholders, as their value and values, their expectations, contributions and struggles were made transparent for everyone to see, something which they unanimously agreed to.

In this way, the preparation prior to the workshop became equally important as the tools and activities used during the workshop, and should therefore be considered part of the larger design of the workshop.

#### THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

As the importance of the preparation of participants was discovered, we also became aware that the very first step of planning a workshop such as the ones we conducted, starts with the crucial decision-making about *who* should participate. Choosing the right people for the right questions is a determining step in regards to hosting a workshop aimed at producing outcomes that can immediately be set into action. The constellation of the topic or question of the Value Pursuit activity and who is put in the position of answering to it is up to the initiator to orchestrate in order to produce the desired outcome. Certain attributes that we have learned contribute to a successful co-creation of new approaches, is enthusiasm, curiosity, a confidence and willingness to try something new when there is a potential of failing, and the attribute of supporting the network when such necessary failures occur in order to learn from them and in turn, develop new approaches. The interviews helped to explain this to potential participants and assisted in bringing them into the right mind-set for co-creation in the workshops.

#### DISCUSSION

The results the workshops produced have several implications in regards to governance and policy-making. Through the use of the Value Pursuit tool, we could more clearly define the context in which we were operating.

A key insight from the first workshop was that the Value Pursuit tool assumes that propagating openness and transparency is always good, which is not necessarily true in all policy-making. In networks such as these, the stakeholders have to negotiate certain elements of the policy that are already familiar to all, but where interests differ between parties. In such negotiations, transparency and openness can work against you and it can be wise to keep your cards close to your chest. Stakeholders who know each other very well, and know the issue they are negating about very well, give and take in a controlled way during negotiations, and they don't want to lay all their cards on the table from the beginning, as the Value Pursuit

tool (and a co-creation approach more in general) requires them to do as that can work against them later.

However, through the course of the workshops, participants also came to learn that the development of a new policy doesn't only need to rely on negotiation. It can also be co-created by several parties. A major advantage of co-creation is that stakeholders can together explore what the issues are around certain new or complex topics that are not yet understood very well by the stakeholders involved. What implications does this have for practices of policy development within governance?

Hiroshi Tamura stated in his in his PIN-C 2012 keynote that "*Innovation is when many people change their practices*". Through our experience with the workshops and the Value Pursuit tool we have described, we have found that innovation occurs even before practices are changed, it happens from the moment a traditional mind-set shifts to see the potential in a new approach. The 'closed-door' practices of negotiation in government are not always successful. Where it fails, open and transparent co-creation using Design Thinking principles can create a completely new state of mind for every individual involved. Collaboration takes over from opposition. In societies that are in great need to increase participation of citizens beyond voting, such approaches are greatly needed. Design practices can contribute by creating environments and cultures where such shifts can take place. Our experience with the Province of Noord Brabant has delivered some early results that make clear there is still a lot more potential in co-creation and Design Thinking in government.

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