

Supporting flood and coastal erosion risk management through partnerships

Research project FRS17186/4
Flood and Coastal Research Team
Environment Agency

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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
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Project overview

Aim: to evaluate the effectiveness of current flood and coastal erosion risk governance in England and Wales

Objectives:

- I. Assess multi-level governance arrangements for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) to identify opportunities for enhancing effectiveness
- II. Examine governance arrangements within selected partnerships at the local scale to identify good governance practices and transferable lessons
- III. Create practical guidance on effective governance to support existing and future partnerships.

Methods: Interviews (x60); in-depth document analysis & literature review; x2 workshops

Project outputs

This presentation addresses objective II. These findings are reported in full in “*Supporting flood and coastal erosion risk management through partnerships*”.

A **separate presentation** summarises findings from the accompanying report “*Evaluating the effectiveness of flood & coastal erosion risk governance in England and Wales*”.

Guidance on implementing effective governance arrangements, includes:

1. Journey Planner: Legitimate partnerships
2. Journey Planner: Internal partnership dynamics
3. Journey Planner: Cross-sectoral coordination and integration
4. Governance self-assessment framework for partnerships

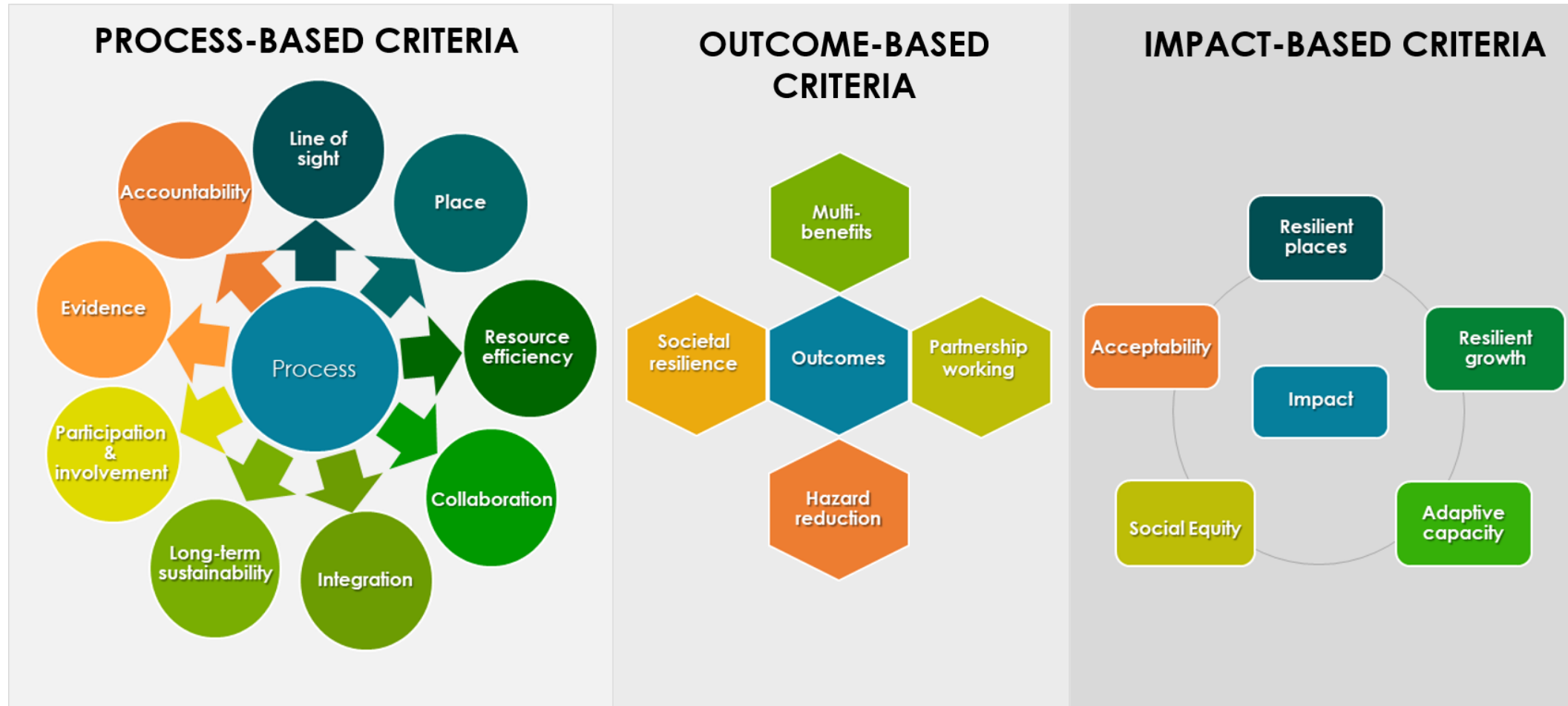
What is governance?

- Governance refers to the range of **actors** (public, private, civil society etc.), **'rules'** (formal and informal), **resources** (financial, knowledge, technological etc.) and **discourses** that shape the decision-making process, as well as the outcome and impact of this process, in relation to a collective goal (i.e. effective FCERM).



- **Multi-level governance** refers to dependencies and interactions that occur between national, subnational and local scales – both within FCERM (*vertical governance*), and, between FCERM & other policy areas (*horizontal governance*)

Governance evaluation framework



Case study partnerships

- Implementing coastal adaptation and 'decommissioning' of Fairbourne
- Policy-triggered via SMP2
- Est. 2013

Fairbourne
Moving Forwards



- Cross-border governance
- Policy-triggered to develop SMP and maintain oversight
- Supported by Severn Estuary Partnership
- Est. 1993

Severn Estuary
Coastal Group



- Diverse representation (ca. 70 members), including community representatives
- Post-flood initiated
- Est. 2016

Cumbria
Strategic Flood
Partnership



- Cross-sectoral governance
- Aim to develop shared understanding of risks, with a narrow technical focus on drainage issues
- Est. 2011/formalised in 2013/14

Northumbria
Integrated
Drainage



- Facilitating coordination
- In response to Flood and Water Management Act
- Est. 2010/formalised in 2012

Lincolnshire Flood
Risk & Water
Management



Partnership typology

We designed a typology based on partnership origins, stage, purpose, membership and interactions.

1. Partnerships emerging following flooding
2. Partnerships established for cooperation or coordination of FCERM-related responsibilities
3. Bottom-up authority-based partnerships tackling specific issues
4. Partnerships initiated for strategic planning
5. Partnerships for implementing specific FCERM activities
6. Bottom-up citizen led partnerships

Specific lessons for each of 6 types of partnership are provided in the report “*Supporting flood and coastal erosion risk management through partnerships*”.

Structure and purpose

Key lessons:

- Clarifying partnership roles and responsibilities enables accountability and realistic expectations.
- Developing measurable goals can help work towards a shared vision.
- Using a terms of reference (or other mechanism) to formalise working arrangements can help with sharing resources, access to data and understanding of roles/responsibilities.
- Flexibility is needed to allow learning (e.g. 'living documents').
- Roles within partnerships may be unbalanced due to differing capacities.
- Leadership/steering roles are critical to help maintain strategy and momentum.
- There are a lack of tools available to estimate the added value of partnerships.



The aftermath of flooding from Storm Desmond in Carlisle, Cumbria. The Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership was set up following this event.

Actor relationships

Key lessons:

- The development of trust and understanding helps sustain commitment.
- Building relationships should be given the same importance as more tangible outcomes, especially in the early stages of partnership development.
- Active learning and self-reflection can maintain the relevance of collective ambition.
- Flexibility is key – points of reflection and adjustment should be built in to partnership working processes.



*Repairing a river bank after flooding in Corbridge, Northumberland.
Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership's commitment to building relationships has enabled collaborative action both within and beyond partnership activities.*

Resources and capacities

Key lessons:

- Resource(s) allocated should depend on complexity and aim of partnership.
- Dedicated personnel resources are an advantage and help to maintain partnership momentum.
- In-partnership capacity building helps develop tailored skills and knowledge.
- Attendance is needed from those with decision-making authority to be able to advance actions.
- Joining-up resources leads to efficiencies, but the value can be hard to measure.
- Resource constraints provide the greatest threat to the sustainability of partnerships.



Construction of flood alleviation scheme in Louth, Lincolnshire, delivered by the Lincolnshire Flood and Risk Water Management Partnership. Joined up working and promoting multiple benefits have created resource efficiencies.

Photo credit: Lincolnshire Flood and Risk Water Management Partnership

Accountability and legitimacy

Key lessons:

- Arrangements are needed for the inclusion of all stakeholders, beyond partnership members. Establishing buy-in is key to success.
- Effective deliberative processes should be established for managing a wide range of potentially opposing views.
- Mechanisms for scrutiny and transparency should be built into partnerships.
- Community involvement will vary. A dedicated community engagement contact should be established.
- Even when community members are included, do not assume that this equates to representativeness.
- Work with community members to establish their role and expectations.
- Independent members or Chair can help provide a scrutiny and accountability role.



The seafront in Fairbourne. Fairbourne Moving Forwards involves national and local stakeholders, including community members. Photo credit: Meghan Alexander

Alignment between governance levels

Key lessons:

- Partnerships are more effective when linked to other agendas and groups.
- Alignment can help unlock funding, resources, create buy-in and lead to multiple benefits.
- National governance can constrain local arrangements. Issues should be communicated to and resolved at a national level where appropriate.
- Alignment between planning cycles across different stakeholders is necessary for joined-up working.



*The Severn Estuary. The Severn Estuary Partnership operates in a cross-border policy context and considers wider agendas such as sustainable growth.
Photo credit: Severn Estuary Partnership.*

Further information

Research project FRS17186

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Project webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-research-reports/understanding-effective-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-governance-in-england-and-wales>

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