Facilitation as a Governance Strategy: Unravelling Governments' Facilitation Frames

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Abstract: Governments increasingly choose facilitation as a strategy to entice others to produce public goods and services, including in relation to the realisation of sustainable energy innovations. An important instrument to implement this governance strategy is discursive framing. To learn how public authorities use discursive framing to implement a facilitation strategy, we conducted a comparative case study on two Dutch examples in which the government aims to facilitate non-governmental actors to exploit public waterworks for the production of renewable energy. Using content analysis, we identify ten 'facilitation frame' elements. We find two configurations of elements: restrained facilitation and invitational facilitation, which both have their advantages, ambivalences and drawbacks. It is often unclear what governments want to achieve and what they have to offer in terms of facilitation. The (discursively) offered support, ranging from 'giving space' to 'creating beneficial conditions', is often elusive. We conclude that, to avoid deadlock, false expectations and the inactiveness of external actors, the government's communication should both enthuse and inform these actors about what they can expect. If, however, the potential, non-governmental initiators just lack the necessary capacity to act, there is only so much discursive framing can do. Then authorities should reconsider their 'facilitative' role.

Keywords: government facilitation; governance; renewable energy; facilitation frames; discursive framing; non-governmental initiative; public–private collaboration; public policy

1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, the most encompassing shift in public administration in the last decennia is the shift from government to governance [1,2]. The shift includes a shift from 'hierarchies to networks' and from government 'command and control to negotiation and persuasion' [3] (pp. 1632–1634). In hybrid and dynamic network constellations, public agencies collaborate with a wide range of public and private actors to address today's 'wicked problems' [4–7].

In the wake of this development, governmental agencies also increasingly choose facilitation as a governance strategy [8,9]. Instead of producing public goods and services (commissioned) by themselves or in collaboration with others, governments try to entice non-governmental actors to take the lead in public service delivery. Authorities aim to 'facilitate' the actions of these non-governmental actors. This can be seen, for example, in governments' plea for 'active citizenship' and 'self-organisation' of societal actors [10]. Scholars speak of a 'responsibilisation' of non-governmental actors [11]. There is 'a shift in responsibility, a stepping back of the state and a concern to push responsibilities onto the private and voluntary sectors' [12] (p. 21). This shift is clear, for example, in then-UK Prime Minister David Cameron's plea for a 'Big Society' and for a state that solely acts to 'facilitate, support and enable' [13] (p. 43) [14].

The aim of modern states to give non-governmental actors a more prominent role in the accomplishment of public value and public service delivery is also visible in the fields of planning, infrastructure development and sustainability [15,16]. Public agencies increasingly turn to the market and to non-profit organisations for the creation of public goods [17]. They want to go beyond the traditional principal–agent relation in public–private partnerships (PPPs). Instead of procuring the public good or service, in our case sustainable energy generation at public waterworks, or commissioning market parties, governments want market parties to take the lead in the realisation and exploitation of such innovative infrastructure [18]. They expect 'initiating leadership' from non-governmental actors [4,17]. This leaves authorities in a rather ambivalent position: they want something to be done but do not want to do it themselves or (fully) pay others to do it.

There is not much research yet into these governance processes in which the government acts, or aims to act, as facilitator [17]. In a lot of the 'new' governance practices that are frequently studied, such as PPPs, the government still acts as initiator, principal and/or the main financier. The literature that comes closest to the phenomenon at stake is the literature on metagovernance. Metagovernance is an 'attempt to govern interactive governance arenas without reverting too much to traditional statist governing tools based on command and control' [19] (p. 2). Through metagovernance, the government ensures that 'self-regulated' actions of non-governmental actors are 'in line with the overall goals of the government' [19] (p. 8) [20]. However, besides rather general and theoretical descriptions of metagovernance, there is relatively little research into the exact strategies the government exploits as a facilitator and how successful it is in doing this.

The energy sector is one of the sectors in which authorities are searching for new ways to relate to non-governmental, private and societal initiatives, especially when they are striving for a transition towards sustainable energy. The sector is characterised by rapid technological developments and more bottom-up and regional action. National and regional authorities are searching for the right responses to these developments, sometimes leading to adjusted regulatory frameworks, new policy instruments and collaborations. In our study, we investigate two Dutch cases in which the government chooses the role of facilitator as it aims to facilitate sustainable energy generation at public waterworks. The government, the owner of these waterworks, is in favour of this kind of innovative energy generation but is not willing to realise it itself, and is not willing or able to enforce it by way of regulation. Instead, the government tries to activate private actors to take the lead in this and tries to suffice with creating the right conditions for these actors to enable these initiatives [21]. A government that aims to facilitate non-governmental initiatives can use different strategies. One of them is discursive framing: enticing non-governmental actors to take action and legitimising the government's own inaction. In our study, we analyse this strategy in more detail.

We are interested in the configuration of frames used by a facilitating government; the variety of frames that the government uses in different situations; and the potential inconsistencies and ambiguities within these frames in relation to the government's role and resources. How does the government 'communicate facilitation', how does it persuade others to take action and justify its own restraint? We formulate our research question as: *How do governments use discursive framing to activate non-governmental actors to produce public goods (in this case, energy from water)?*

We conduct a comparative case study of two cases in which the national government aims to facilitate non-governmental actors to generate energy at public waterworks. We systematically analyse the policy documents on this topic to learn about the discursive (diagnostic, prognostic and motivational) frames that the government uses to activate a non-governmental actor to take action and to legitimise its own (absence of) action. In the next section, we discuss the relevant literature on facilitation and discursive framing. In Section 3, we present our research design, followed by a description of our two cases in Section 4. Section 5 includes our (comparative) analysis. We end with a conclusion in Section 6 and a discussion in Section 7.

2. Theory

The role of government in governance networks is generally described as 'metagovernance', literally meaning the 'governance of governance' [19] (p. 9). As metagovernor, the government mobilises the relevant actors, public and private, governmental and non-governmental, around a certain public problem and structures their interaction. The government creates a forum for horizontal interaction and collaboration between these actors and enables collaborative decision making and policy implementation. Metagovernance is a new 'light-touch form of government' [12] (p. 24), in which authorities do not revert to 'traditional statist governing tools based on command and control' [19] (p. 2). Instead, the government uses, for example, institutional design, coordination, subsidy schemes, network and process management, or framing and storytelling to achieve its policy goals [3,5,22]. The actual strategies employed by the government differ from case to case. In pragmatic terms, the government as metagovernor will be 'sometimes steering, sometimes rowing, sometimes partnering, and sometimes staying out of the way' [23] (p. 448).

The degree of government involvement in governance processes differs from case to case. One can make a distinction between hands-on and hands-off metagovernance [24]. When the government conducts hands-on governance, it participates actively in the governance process as, for example, network manager [5,25]. When the government chooses hands-off metagovernance, its involvement is limited to shaping the collaboration context by, for instance, formulating general policy goals or creating an institutional framework that is beneficial for the self-organisation of non-governmental actors [24,26]. If the government aims to 'responsibilitate' non-governmental actors to produce public goods and reduce its own role solely to facilitation, it has various policy instruments available, such as subsidies, open data and framing [17,18]. In our study, we focus on how governments use framing to realise their goals.

2.1. Discursive Framing as an Instrument of Power

Framing and storytelling are important instruments of hands-off metagovernance [22,25]. With 'persuasive' framing, the government mobilises relevant actors [27], [28] (p. 1084) and with 'political, legal and discursive' framing, it sets the interactive arena in which the governance process takes place [19] (p. 14). The government gives a certain meaning to a network of actors through framing and storytelling. It can influence the 'the main story underlying a network' and the way network members understand their efforts and goals [26] (p. 542). Framing thus serves as a forceful hands-off way to influence self-governing actors [24]. Many of the instruments and strategies that the government as facilitator uses are not new; they are just used in a new way. Subsidy schemes or institutional design, for example, are now used to activate non-governmental actors and support self-organisation for public value creation. This also holds for discursive framing.

Framing is a well-known instrument of power. Those whose frames are dominant are the ones in power [29,30]. Framing is sense making; through framing, a certain social reality is constructed: 'A frame is a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined, problematic situation can be made sense of and acted on' [31] (p. 146). Authorities use framing to achieve their policy goals. Through framing, authorities influence what is considered a public problem, how problems are cognitively defined and experienced by the public [32]. The frames that governments construct consist of 'a cluster of inextricably intertwined casual and normative beliefs' [32] (p. xiii). The frames give meaning and a normative direction to people's thinking and acting [32]. Government framing thus affects how people conceptualise an issue and act upon it [33], [34] (p. 1000). Paschen and Ison [28] (p. 1084) speak of 'persuasive' framing: the intentional use of language to influence opinion and behaviour around an issue.

A distinction can be made between diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing [35]. Diagnostic framing refers to the identification and classification of a specific policy problem in terms of possible and relevant causes [36] (p. 459). Diagnostic frames define what the problem is. Prognostic framing refers to the identification of possible and relevant solutions and

approaches [36]. Prognostic frames thus define how the problem should be dealt with. Motivational framing involves 'a rationale for engaging in collective action' [35] (p. 617). Motivational frames mobilise the actors that should deal with the problems defined.

2.2. Discursive Framing by the Facilitating Government

The kind of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames that authorities use depends largely on their policy goals. Both the preferred solution and the envisaged way to get there, including the task division between the different actors involved, influence the frames that authorities employ. When authorities, for example, take far-reaching measures to protect people from flooding, they will probably use diagnostic frames that stress the severity of the problem and prognostic frames that justify the measures taken [37]. If authorities choose not to act, they can use framing to downplay the issue at stake.

We expect authorities that aim for a facilitating role to use a particular way of discursive framing. Authorities whose aim is to facilitate perceive a public problem, an opportunity, any situation that might benefit from change. Instead of intervening themselves, they want other, non-governmental actors to take the lead in this change. The authorities themselves are willing to facilitate the actions of these external initiators. They do want something to happen, because they believe that it is in the public's interest, but they do not want to act as the main designer or financier of the action taken and do not fall back on traditional statist forms of government [22].

We therefore expect facilitating authorities to use framing to legitimise their own abstention from action and to mobilise external actors to take action. More specifically, we expect that, using diagnostic frames, authorities will identify a specific situation that needs or merits change. The frames might refer to a public interest but will send the message that it is not (solely) a government issue. With diagnostic framing, the situation can be presented as a great opportunity for external actors (e.g., for private actors to make money). We expect prognostic framing to be used to propose certain actions to be taken by non-governmental actors. The government's role in the proposed solutions will be facilitative. With motivational framing, the suggested task division is legitimised by, for example, presenting it as a matter of course, a natural way of doing things. We expect the motivational frames to further emphasise the benefits for non-governmental actors and the government's reasons to help. An overview of our expectations regarding facilitation frames is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Hypothesised characteristics of frames used by the facilitating government.

Type of Frame	Characteristics of Frame
Diagnostic frames	· Identify situation that will benefit from change · Present problem as opportunity for external actors
Prognostic frames	· Propose actions that could be taken by external actors · Propose facilitative, modest role for authorities
Motivational frames	· Emphasise benefits for external actors · Elaborate the facilitation external actors will receive from the government · Present public−private role division as a matter of course

We aim to unravel the facilitation frames that the government employs to realise its goals. A government that aims to solely facilitate is in a precarious position: it wants something to be done but does not want to do it itself or take full financial responsibility for others to do it. We wonder how the facilitating government manages the expectations of external actors about the government's input into the governance process. From previous research [17,18], we expect some ambiguity and inconsistency in the government's communication regarding its role and the resources it is willing to employ, and we try to unravel this in more detail.

3. Research Design

3.1. Case Selection

The aim of our study is explorative because not much is yet known about how authorities in their new metagovernance role as facilitator use discursive framing. Because we want to gain in-depth knowledge about the specific configuration of frames, we conducted a comparative case study of two cases [38,39]. We selected two Dutch cases in which the national government aspires to the role of facilitator of external initiatives in the field of sustainable energy production: the Afsluitdijk and Brouwersdam Tidal Power Plant. The facilitation of energy generation at public waterworks fits in the trend towards multi-functionality of public infrastructure. Solar panels, for example, can be added to dikes or sound barriers alongside highways.

Compared to the wider population of multi-functional use of public infrastructure, our cases can be considered as extreme cases for different reasons. Non-governmental initiatives are not a matter of course in this sector. As further elaborated in Section 4, the envisioned places of action are publically managed and owned waterworks, with a legally anchored function to guarantee safety against floods. Renewable energy has never before been generated at these works on this scale in the Netherlands. The techniques used are innovative and not yet commercially exploitable. Such projects thus cannot be realised without government support. The government is not willing, however, to initiate these projects by procuring the technologies. It does, however, acknowledge the importance of developing such innovations and using the world-famous delta works to showcase these technologies to a wider audience. The facilitation of energy generation is thus not a straightforward act is these cases.

In the Netherlands, there are a couple of comparable energy-from-water projects at national level and multiple projects at local level conducted by the regional water boards. Our two cases can be considered exemplary for this population of projects in which energy from water is generated at public waterworks. We deliberately selected two cases that are comparable but different, making them fit for a search for differences in framing in differing situations. The sort of actors involved and the project content in the two cases are alike; the relation between the public and the private actors is one of the things that differ. Obviously, the design of our research does not allow for drawing generic conclusions. It will, however, enhance our understanding of the facilitating government and its use of discursive framing.

3.2. Method: Content Analysis of Policy Documents

To analyse the authorities' discursive framing in our cases, we conducted a qualitative content analysis of the relevant policy documents [40], thus performing case study research in the form of in-depth desk research of written material [41]. Content analysis of policy documents is recognised as an adequate method for analysing the use of frames and framing by authorities [28] (p. 1084) [42]. In January and February 2016, we selected all the national government's documents that mention energy generation at the waterworks and give any information about the problems or opportunities at the sites and/or the actions that could be taken by different actors. Our selection consists of 24 documents: 13 from the Afsluitdijk case, eight from the Brouwersdam case and three documents that contain information about both cases. The documents were issued between 2007 and 2016 by the Cabinet of Ministers; the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment that serves as asset owner of the waterworks; the executive organisation that serves as the asset manager of the waterworks; and the project organisations comprised of national authorities and local authorities. See Appendix A for an overview of the selected documents.

Between February and August 2016, we carried out an inductive, qualitative coding process using the software ATLAS.ti (ATLAS.ti, Berlin, Germany). We read the documents closely and selected all the text that refers to energy generation at the sites. In the first step of our analysis, we then identified the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames in the selected text. Text that identifies a certain situation as a problem or opportunity (either for governmental or non-governmental actors),

we coded as 'diagnostic frame'. Text that mentions possible solutions or actions that can be taken, we coded as 'prognostic frame'. We made a distinction between text referring to the role or actions of non-governmental actors and text referring to the role and/or possible actions that authorities (will or can) take. Text that explains why actors should or should not take certain actions, we coded as motivational frame.

In the second step of our analysis, we coded the selected diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames for a second time. Analysing the content of the text fragments, we identified ten facilitation frame elements—more about these in Section 5. See Appendix B for an overview of the number of text fragments coded.

In addition to the content analysis, we attended several public meetings and conducted 13 semi-structured interviews between February 2014 and June 2016. We selected respondents involved in one of the two cases working at the national water authority, regional authorities or private companies. See Appendix C for an overview of the respondents' affiliations and interview specifics. In the interviews, we discussed the motives, goals and ways of working of each respondent's home organisation and the collaboration with the other stakeholders involved. With the private actors, who are the target group of the authorities' discursive framing, we additionally discussed how they find the government's position and (lack of) action, the way the authorities frame and fill their role, and how they act upon that. We used these last interviews to learn more about the effects of the authorities' use of discursive framing.

4. Case Description

4.1. Energy from Water at the Afsluitdijk

In the first case, the Afsluitdijk, the national authorities are preparing a large renovation of the dam because, since 2006, the dam no longer meets the safety criteria. The asset owner, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, and the executive asset manager, Rijkswaterstaat (RWS), want to give external actors the chance to seize the opportunity of this renovation to add functions, including energy generation, to the dam. Since 2005, local firms have had pilot installations for the generation of tidal and osmotic 'blue' energy at the dam, and they have the ambition to extend these installations. The national authorities support the local initiatives because they believe that this will secure local and national goodwill for the renovation. They facilitate the projects by, for example, joining the private initiators in thinking about the possibilities and easing the permit procedure. However, requests from the external initiators for more help and support—by the national authorities buying the generated energy or adjusting the planning of the renovation, for instance—go unanswered.

4.2. Brouwersdam Tidal Power Plant

In the second case, Brouwersdam Tidal Power Plant, national and local authorities including asset manager RWS plan to make a breach in a dam for water quality reasons. They see an opportunity for the installation of a tidal power plant in this breach. If turbines are installed in the water at the breach, energy can be generated from the tide. This plan has been in existence since 2010. At the start of a formal investigation in 2013, the authorities' hope was that the breaching procedure, a very costly undertaking, could be financed with the revenues from energy generation. Research showed, however, that this is not possible. The construction of a tidal power plant will rather cost extra money. Despite this, the authorities are in favour of a power plant. The asset manager has the ambition to contribute to sustainability and innovation with its asset. The authorities further believe that a power plant will boost the local economy and the reputation of the Netherlands as a forerunner in delta technology.

Asset manager RWS collaborates closely with two local municipalities and two provinces. They together set up a project bureau and conducted an extensive research programme and market consultation to involve possible partners and explore the technological, financial and organisational possibilities. Despite all their efforts and ambitions, the authorities are not willing to finance,

commission and/or exploit a power plant themselves. They aim for non-governmental, private initiators. The authorities are now (October 2016) preparing an integrative tender; they hope to attract a private commissioner that will construct both the breach and the power plant. The authorities will, however, only pay for the breach; the additional costs and risks of the power plant will be the responsibility of the private commissioner.

In both cases, the national authorities are thus in favour of sustainable energy generation at the waterworks but do not want to design, build, finance or operate the generation itself; instead, they want to facilitate external actors to do so. The cases thereby form a good example of the government in its new metagovernance role as facilitator. Discursive framing is one of the tactics used by the facilitating authorities to realise their goals. In the Brouwersdam case, the authorities are adopting a more active approach in searching for private initiators. We expect that discursive framing in this case is used mainly for the mobilisation of external actors. In the Afsluitdijk case, the authorities are more passively facilitating existing external initiatives. Our expectation here is that discursive framing is used mainly to justify their own facilitative role.

5. Analysis

After the first round of analysis in which we selected the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational text fragments on energy generation on the waterworks, we conducted a second round of qualitative, inductive coding. In this second round, we searched for the elements, or building blocks, of the authorities' facilitation frames in the two cases. By an inductive process, going back and forth between the text and the codes and merging and splitting codes, we identified ten facilitation frame elements, presented in Table 2. The majority of these frame elements are present in both cases, but frequency and dominance differ. In Sections 5.1 and 5.1, we discuss the identified discursive framing in the two cases, followed by a comparison of the two in Section 5.3.

Table 2. Facilitation frame elements.

Type of Frame	Frame Element	Characteristics
Diagnostic	Visualisation	Visualises options; sums up possibilities and opportunities for development, e.g., sources of energy that could be produced; sketches (mostly bright) image of future situation.
	Promotion	Promotes the location and/or situation as extraordinary and unique; great chance; not-to-be-missed opportunity for external initiators.
	Consolidation	Describes established partnerships/collaboration between government and non-governmental actors and its achievements; refers, e.g., to a good spirit or willingness to act.
Prognostic	Presentation	Factually presents the authorities involved and their agenda; sets out (past and future) process and role distribution. What the authorities have done and what the next process steps will be.
	Invitation	Explicitly invites or asks non-governmental actors to take initiative or become process partner; 'from shareholder to stakeholder'; possibly referring to mutual dependence.
	Demarcation	Explicitly demarcates authorities' capacity and/or willingness to act; draws a boundary around government action; e.g., by stating that government 'will solely facilitate'.
	Designation	Designates or assigns certain tasks or actions to non-governmental actors; e.g., by stating that something is a task for the market or a private actor's 'own responsibility'.
Motivational	Offer	What does facilitation offer to potential non-governmental initiators?; authority offers, e.g., free use of the location, a specific service, assistance or cooperation by the government.
	Lure	Sums up concrete, private revenues for non-governmental actors in taking action; e.g., referring to growing opportunities to sell their product abroad if they realise this Dutch project.
	Justification	Justifies public–private role distribution; gives arguments or reasons for the previously formulated demarcation and/or designation; e.g., stating that 'market is better in innovation'.

5.1. The Afsluitdijk

Table 3 gives an overview of the occurrence of the different frame elements in the documents on energy generation at the Afsluitdijk.

Table 3. Facilitation frame elements in the Afsluitdijk case.

Type of Frame	Frame Element	Number of Text Fragments
Diagnostic	Visualisation	32
	Promotion	8
	Consolidation	8
Prognostic	Presentation	48
	Invitation	7
	Demarcation	10
	Designation	23
Motivational	Offer	9
	Lure	5
	Justification	10
	Total	**160**

The dominant diagnostic frame element used in this case is visualisation. With visualisation, the government presents the opportunities of the situation. It sums up all the things that could be done (if somebody takes the initiative to do them), such as generating energy from wind, the tide or the salinity difference between salt and fresh water. The words 'can' and 'could' are repeatedly used in sentences such as 'The iconic status [of the dam] could be enhanced by adding sustainable and innovative initiatives' ('De icoonwaarde kan worden versterkt door het toevoegen van duurzame en innovatieve initiatieven' (Structuurvisie Toekomst Afsluitdijk, p. 6)). The government further promotes the Afsluitdijk as a location by stressing its uniqueness and suitability for the realisation of innovative projects by, for example, stating that 'The Afsluitdijk is an icon of the past, present and future with potential for sustainability and innovation' (De Afsluitdijk is een icoon van verleden, heden en toekomst met toekomstpotentie voor duurzaamheid en innovatie' (Afsluitdijk Samenwerkingsovereenkomst Duurzame Energie, p. 3)). A future Afsluitdijk is sketched, accommodating highly innovative projects for renewable energy generation. In this vision, the current pilots have evolved into large-scale projects that contribute to the country's supply of sustainable energy.

The dominant prognostic frame elements in the Afsluitdijk case are presentation, designation and demarcation. The authorities involved and the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among them (who does what) are presented. The planning of the dam restoration is set out, as are the deadlines for external initiators to submit their projects so that their wishes can be taken into account in the planning process. The government's ambitions concerning energy generation are virtually absent in the texts, however. There is hardly any mention of the government's demands or desires. Both presentation and explanation are quite plain. The situation and the plans are presented as facts. Why things will happen in a certain way or who will benefit from this are not mentioned.

The government further clearly designates certain tasks to external actors by, for example, stating that 'the generation of sustainable energy is a task for private actors' ('Het opwekken van duurzame energie is een taak van marktpartijen' ('Voet aan de grond', duurzaamheids-ambities Rijkswaterstaat, p. 6)). In discussions about what the government will do with regard to the facilitation of sustainable energy generation, the most recurring phrase is 'giving space'. Often, it is not specified to/by whom and how this space will be given. In the text fragments, the subject is often unclear or the infrastructure itself is put down as the subject in, for example, stating that 'the dam offers great opportunities'. In a few documents, the national government's restoration work is put forward as creating certain opportunities. The formulation is vague, however, as in the sentence: 'The restoration possibly offers

the opportunity for an approach in which there is a place for a wide range of ambitions' ('dat deze opknapbeurt mogelijk kansen biedt voor een aanpak waarin een breed scala aan ambities tot zijn recht komt' (Nota van antwoord Structuurvisie Toekomst Afsluitdijk, p. 9)).

Furthermore, all the proposed government actions are reactive; they presuppose action by external actors. The authorities will, for example, 'facilitate', accommodate', 'make possible', or 'create beneficial conditions for' the actions of others. The actions range from passively 'not making external action impossible' to more actively 'stimulating'. Overall, the authorities' stance is quite reserved; one of the text fragments states that the government will 'do its best to cooperate' ('inspannen om medewerking te verlenen' (Afsluitdijk Samenwerkingsovereenkomst Duurzame Energie, p. 4)). The government also clearly demarcates what it will not do, that is, generate energy, make financial investments or become a partner in exploitation.

The facilitation frame in the Afsluitdijk case is not very motivational. Some benefits for private initiators are sketched: with their projects on the Afsluitdijk, the companies will increase their international reputation and competitiveness. As stated, however, the authorities refrain from a clear 'facilitation offer' to support external actors in doing this. The most dominant motivational frame element is justification, but the government mostly does not go beyond just stating that generating sustainable energy is 'a task for private actors' or that the development of the Afsluitdijk is 'not just a government task'. In a number of documents, there is reference to an RWS management decision not to make financial investments in sustainable energy projects a justification. Table 4 shows the configuration of the different frame elements in this case.

Table 4. Configuration of the facilitation frame in the Afsluitdijk case.

Type of Frame	Frame Element	Characteristics
Diagnostic	Visualisation	Summing up all the innovative things that could be done on the dam.
Prognostic	Presentation Demarcation Designation	Presenting authorities, ambitions, planning, procedures, deadlines. Demarcating governments' support for sustainable energy generation. Designating sustainable energy generation to external actors.
Motivational	Justification	Assigning public and private tasks, referring to management decisions.

The image that we deduce from the documents resonates with the interviews with the actors involved. The project manager from the national water authority speaks of a clear task division between national authorities, local authorities and non-governmental project initiators. The renovation is clearly the national government's first priority. Adding functions such as energy generation is allowed only if it does not interfere with the renovation process and the accompanying narrow budget and time schedule. The minister, however, repeatedly speaks of the Afsluitdijk as becoming an 'icon of the future', including innovative energy projects, but this does not result in a greater mandate or financial resources for the asset manager. The discrepancy between the expressed ambitions and the government's limited willingness to actually contribute to them leads to frustration on the private initiators' side. One of our respondents says about his interaction with the authorities: "I constantly have to keep their minds on the matter. I recently asked [the local governor]: 'Do these public ambitions still apply and, if yes, can you please act according to them?'".

5.2. Brouwersdam Tidal Power Plant

Table 5 gives an overview of the occurrence of the different frame elements in the documents on the governance of the Brouwersdam Tidal Power Plant.

The dominant diagnostic frame elements in this case are visualisation and consolidation. The visualisation of opportunities is focused on the realisation of a tidal power plant (in contrast to the frame elements in the Afsluitdijk case that mention a wide range of ways to generate energy). The future Brouwersdam area is visualised as an icon of Dutch delta technology, with an 'appealing appearance for the region, the country and the world'. Again, the word 'could' is repeatedly used to

indicate both opportunity and conditionality (the presented options will take place only *if* somebody takes the initiative). The Brouwersdam and the surrounding area are promoted as a perfect location for the realisation of an innovative 'low tide' tidal power plant. The national and local governments conducted an extensive market and stakeholder consultation, and the results of this project are stressed to consolidate what has been achieved already. The existing energy generation and the willingness of non-governmental actors to participate in the realisation of a tidal power plant is repeatedly referred to, for example by stating that 'private actors already formed a consortium' and that there are 'multiple initiatives' for energy generation. The shared responsibility is made clear by sentences such as 'There has been an intensive collaboration process (co-creation) between private constructers and the public project bureau. It turned into a shared search for viable solutions' ('Dat gebeurde in een intensieve samenwerking (cocreatie) tussen waterbouwers en het projectbureau Getijdencentrale Bouwersdam. Het werd een gezamenlijke zoektocht naar haalbare oplossingen' (Verslag van de precompetitieve fase Getijdencentrale, p. 2)).

Table 5. Facilitation frame elements in the Brouwersdam case.

Type of Frame	Frame Element	Number of Text Fragments
Diagnostic	Visualisation	33
	Promotion	9
	Consolidation	23
Prognostic	Presentation	29
	Invitation	13
	Demarcation	5
	Designation	10
Motivational	Offer	19
	Lure	11
	Justification	9
Total		**161**

The dominant prognostic frame elements in the Brouwersdam case are presentation and invitation. The different authorities involved and their collaboration in the project bureau are presented, as also the past and future process steps. In contrast to the Afsluitdijk case in which external actors are invited to realise energy projects themselves, in this Brouwersdam case, external actors are invited to join the government in exploring the possibilities for energy generation by stating, for example, that 'The private actors are all very knowledgeable. They are asked to join in thinking about public conditions and a viable business case' ('De marktpartijen hebben allen veel kennis in huis. Aan hen wordt gevraagd om mee te denken over de publieke randvoorwaarden en over een haalbare business case' (Verslag Marktconsultatie Getijdencentrale Brouwersdam, Hoofdrapport, p. 13)). The invitation thus takes the form of a partner proposal; government and non-governmental actors are presented as equal partners.

The dominant motivational frame elements in the Brouwersdam case are offer and lure. The government's financial investments in water quality are presented as the generator ('flying wheel') of non-governmental actors' initiatives. The government offers to create 'beneficial conditions' for private initiators and says that it is willing to 'contribute' to the realisation of a power plant by, for example, providing a suitable location. As in the Afsluitdijk case, however, the government does not really explicate this facilitation offer to external actors. In some documents, the offer is even formulated as a question to potential external initiators: 'What can the involved authorities do so that private actors can create a viable business case? What conditions should be met?' ('Hoe kunnen de betrokken overheden er voor zorgen dat marktpartijen aan de Brouwersdam een goed project met een robuuste business case aan hebben? En in het bijzonder: aan welke randvoorwaarden moet [worden voldaan]?' (Marktconsultatiedocument Getijdencentrale Brouwersdam, p. 8)). External actors

are lured into participation by the enumeration of some private benefits, such as the development of a successful product for exportation and other commercial gains: 'The potential realisation of a tidal power plant contributes to the technological development of sustainable energy supply. In this case, private actors have direct revenues from selling energy. In addition, there are "green" investment opportunities for individual and institutional investors' ('Een eventuele uitvoering met een getijdencentrale, draagt bij aan de technische ontwikkeling van duurzame energievoorzieningen. Private partijen kunnen in dat geval directe baten uit de verkoop van energie genereren en er ontstaan "groene" beleggingsmogelijkheden voor particuliere en institutionele investeerders' (Ontwerp Rijksstructuurvisie Zuidwestelijke Delta, p. 36)). Table 6 shows the configuration of the different frame elements in this case.

Table 6. Configuration of the facilitation frame in the Brouwersdam case.

Type of Frame	Frame Element	Characteristics
Diagnostic	Visualisation Consolidation	Enumerating tidal power plant options and additional benefits. Stressing established cooperation, enthusiasm and willingness to act.
Prognostic	Presentation Invitation	Setting out path followed and steps to come. Inviting external actors as partners in exploration and exploitation.
Motivational	Offer Lure	Offering facilitation, beneficial conditions, accommodation. Summing up some commercial gains for private actors.

The interviews confirm the findings of our content analysis. The national water authority's project manager admits that the government had difficulty formulating its own goals regarding energy generation after it became clear that a power plant would not generate money to finance the restoration but rather cost extra money. The authorities repeatedly had to adjust their expectations about the private actors' capacity to finance, realise and exploit a power plant. They had to alter their ideas about the potential amount of generated energy, possible revenues and the private sector's willingness to run this project. Even now that an extensive subsidy scheme has been set up, it is uncertain whether private actors can take up the role the government envisages for them. The private actors involved display some frustration about the absence of clear public goals and about the mismatch between the authorities' exhibited enthusiasm and their willingness to contribute financially. A private sector representative says in this regard: 'I want to say to the government: "find the necessary budget (...) show your greatness and do it!" Private actors are not able to finance this. The matter is being shuffled back and forth. What we need is government steering, facilitation is not enough'.

5.3. Case Comparison: Afsluitdijk versus Brouwersdam

To some extent, the discursive framing in the two cases is alike; in both cases, for example, the government uses visualisation to highlight the opportunities in the situations. However, especially in the prognostic and motivational frames, there are significant differences between the cases. Table 7 gives an overview.

The facilitation frame in the Afsluitdijk case is built mainly upon the elements visualisation, presentation, designation, demarcation and justification. We call this form of facilitation 'restrained'. The authorities are in favour of the realisation of renewable energy projects at the location; they show this by mentioning the different opportunities in their policy documents and depicting a future in which these projects figure. They present their own work on the dam as a unique opportunity to help potential external initiators to plan their activities. What the authorities are willing to contribute to the energy projects is limited, however; they act somewhat aloofly towards the initiatives. The authorities clearly demarcate their own limited willingness to act and, through designation, they make clear that non-governmental actors should take the lead in the realisation of energy projects or nothing will happen. Through justification, the government explains why this division of responsibilities is chosen.

Table 7. Comparison of the facilitation frames in the two cases.

Type of Frame	Afsluitdijk	Brouwersdam
Diagnostic	Visualisation	Visualisation Consolidation
Prognostic	Presentation Demarcation Designation	Presentation Invitation
Motivational	Justification	Offer Lure
	Restrained facilitation	**Invitational facilitation**

The facilitation frame in the Brouwersdam case is constructed with the elements visualisation, consolidation, presentation, invitation, offer and lure. We call this form of facilitation 'invitational'. The authorities express their enthusiasm about a tidal power plant through visualisation of opportunities and a bright future including such a power plant. In this form of facilitation, the authorities present themselves as more cooperative; they actively invite non-governmental actors to join the governance process. Private actors are invited to share their knowledge, ideas and desires to come to a shared understanding of what is feasible at the Brouwersdam. Consolidation is another indicator of the collaborative character of this form of facilitation. By stressing the partnerships already established and enthusiasm generated, the authorities consolidate the collaboration. They make a facilitation offer to potential initiators and further try to mobilise them by spelling out possible gains for them if they take action.

5.4. Two Facilitating Logics: Restrained and Invitational Facilitation

There are different reasons why governments would want to facilitate the actions of external, non-governmental actors. External—public or private—actors can bring resources into the governance process that the government lacks, such as knowledge or money, especially in times of austerity [16]. Facilitation of external initiatives can in this way foster the delivery of public goods; public goals can be met that could not have been met otherwise [43] (p. 589). Facilitation of non-governmental initiatives can also lead to more innovative solutions to public problems [44]. It can further increase stakeholder involvement and strengthen (local) support for governmental measures [43] (p. 574).

To profit from these potential benefits of facilitation, both the authorities that employ restrained facilitation and the authorities that employ invitational facilitation try to entice private actors to take the lead in project realisation. The first part of the facilitation frame that they employ is therefore the same. The authorities inform external actors about the situation and the actions they themselves are undertaking in the region; they promote the location and try to engage external actors by visualising opportunities. The authorities build their framing upon the unique possibilities that they, as the owner of public waterworks, have available for other actors to realise. They further communicate their public task as an opportunity for other actors to join them in order to create more public value together. The subsequent prognostic and motivational frame elements differ, however, depending on the form of facilitation. In Table 8, we summarise the two frame configurations.

In the case of restrained facilitation, the authorities emphasise their limitations in what they are able or willing to contribute. Unambiguously, they designate certain actions and responsibilities to non-governmental actions; through justification, they give an explanation for the envisioned role division. An advantage of this approach is that potential initiators know what they can expect. A possible downside of this restrained form of facilitation is that it is somewhat aloof; that external actors do not feel invited, nor sufficiently enthused or convinced about what the government has to offer to them in terms of support. Authorities might choose such an approach if they have little interest in project realisation. Another possibility is that they believe that external initiators will show

up and succeed anyway; if authorities believe that private actors will realise their project without their discursive encouragements or support, the authorities can afford to adopt a restrained stance.

Table 8. Context and characteristics of restrained and invitational facilitation.

	Restrained Facilitation	**Invitational Facilitation**
Context	There is a general opinion that the government has to enable public value creation, although there are no formal policy goals that oblige public actors to help private initiatives to succeed.	There is a public ambition to realise a certain goal that cannot be realised without private help.
Storyline	Private initiatives are welcome but the public contribution for realising them is necessarily limited and the focus of the public actors is upon their own task.	Private initiatives are indispensable for realising the public task, thus as much public facilitation as possible will be made available.
Structuring elements	Initiatives are primarily private actors' own responsibility. Limited public role is unavoidable due to legal and policy constraints.	Public and private actors share a common interest. It is necessary to strengthen each other where possible, because of the innovative character of this endeavour.
Narrative validity	The narrative gives actors hope for public support, but the emphasis on its limited character generates doubts.	The narrative remains unclear about what public actors can actually do because the limitations are not defined.

In the case of invitational facilitation, authorities are more involved, less aloof, but also less clear about their own ambitions and limitations. With this form of facilitation, authorities will probably arouse non-governmental actors' interest and willingness to participate. A possible danger is the emergence of a deadlock, in which government and non-governmental actors both expect the other to take the lead, as witnessed in the Brouwersdam case. Invitational facilitation can result in high transaction costs and false expectations, and can even harm the government's reputation as a trustworthy and reliable partner.

6. Conclusions

In the practice of politics and public administration, 'the narrative of collaboration between stakeholders' is becoming more dominant [43] (p. 573). Societal actors' self-organisation and a more modest, reactive, facilitative role for the government are hot topics [14,23]. Despite this, however, there is relatively little research into governance processes in which the government assumes this facilitative role [17]. Our study shows that facilitation is not such a straightforward, easy act for the government as it might seem. Partnerships between government and non-governmental actors are not all about 'mother love and apple pie' [45], [46] (p. 103).

Using content analysis of relevant documents, we identified ten facilitation frame elements: visualisation, promotion, consolidation, presentation, invitation, demarcation, designation, offer, lure and justification. We find that these frame elements combine into two forms of facilitation: restrained and invitational. The forms are constituted by a different set of frame elements and have their own origin, advantages and downsides. The two frame configurations can be seen as illustrations of more hands-off (restrained) and more hands-on (invitational) forms of facilitation.

We can conclude that facilitation and communication about facilitation is a balancing act between, on the one hand, enthusing external actors, consolidating the achieved collaboration, and enticing external actors to take the lead in public good production by summing up potential benefits and, on the other hand, being clear about what is expected from external actors and what the authorities themselves are willing or not willing to do; in other words, what the facilitation offer exactly entails. Too often it remains unclear what exactly the government has to offer to external actors. This facilitation offer, ranging from 'giving space' to 'creating beneficial conditions', is often elusive. Equally indefinite

is what the authorities hope to achieve. Often, there is hardly any mention of what their goals are and what they are willing to do to reach these goals. Consequently, both restrained and invitational facilitation can cause unrealistic expectations on the external actor's part about what the government is actually willing and able to do to support their initiatives. Private actors' standard response is 'in for a penny, in for a pound'.

We conclude that, although not easily done, if governments aim to mobilise and facilitate non-governmental actors in the production of public goods, they have to communicate in both a restrained and an invitational way. Before that, however, an accurate assessment of the private actors' capacity to realise the envisioned public goals is essential. Discursive framing and an appealing facilitation offer, no matter how enticing, will not automatically lead to private action. If the potential initiators just lack the necessary capacity to act, there is only so much discursive framing can do. The government's facilitative role then needs to go hand in hand with more 'traditional' government roles, such as those of provider, contractor and/or financier.

7. Discussion

Today's authorities increasingly explore new ways to collaborate with other actors to deal with pressing societal issues. The energy sector is one of the sectors in which the importance of bottom-up initiatives (both private and societal) is growing. Authorities search for ways to relate to these initiatives and to develop a new repertoire to deal with them. In our study, we analysed how authorities use discursive framing to invite non-governmental actors to generate energy at public waterworks. We explored new forms of public–private collaboration at the project level. In the envisioned task division, private actors initiate, realise and finance projects; authorities 'solely facilitate'.

Our cases reflect public authorities' more general search for public value creation [23,47]. The Dutch national water authority tries to enable value creation by choosing a rather safe role, based upon facilitating non-governmental initiatives. Despite the shortcomings of this strategy, it sticks to this strategy because of legal, financial and political constraints. The cases that we studied reflect the need for public value pragmatism [48]. In this approach: 'the organization is open to the utilization of any of a variety of means to achieve program purposes, with the choice of these means focused on what is most appropriate to the circumstances, consistent with the important values at stake' [48] (p. 131).

From our analysis, the question arises as to whether the context in which public asset managers have to work allows for this form of pragmatism. After all, there are many regulatory barriers that make private involvement difficult; and, for public water authorities, it is difficult to provide a stimulating context for these types of initiatives because of their rather strictly delineated role and responsibilities. Regulatory adjustments to give asset owners and asset managers the incentive or even the responsibility to contribute to energy transition, and regulatory innovation to simplify and broaden the possibilities for private actors to use public works, seem to be logical steps to overcome the permissiveness of facilitation and to enable more pragmatism in facilitating bottom-up initiatives.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A. Data Selection, Documents for Content Analysis

Energy from Water Afsluitdijk

1.   Kabinetsvisie 'Nederland veroveren op de toekomst', 2007.

2.   Nationaal Waterplan, 22 December 2008.
3.   'Dijk en meer', eindrapportage verkenning Toekomst Afsluitdijk, Maart 2009.
4.   Bestuursovereenkomst Toekomst Afsluitdijk, December 2011.
5.   Structuurvisie Toekomst Afsluitdijk, Ministerie van I&M, December 2011.
6.   Nota van antwoord Structuurvisie Toekomst Afsluitdijk, Ministerie van I&M, 23 December 2011.
7.   Startdocument planuitwerking Afsluitdijk, 1 August 2013.
8.   Deltaprogramma 2014, September 2013.
9.   Nota van antwoord bij Startdocument planuitwerking Afsluitdijk, 10 December 2013.
10. Afsluitdijk Samenwerkingsovereenkomst Duurzame Energie, 16 April 2015.
11. Deltaprogramma 2016, September 2015.
12. Troonrede, 15 September 2015.
13. Afsluitdijk, Realisatieovereenkomst Duurzame Energie, 2016.

Brouwersdam Tidal Power Plant

14. Green Deal Provincie Zeeland-Rijksoverheid, 2011.
15. Marktconsultatiedocument Getijdencentrale Brouwersdam, 20 September 2013.
16. Verslag Marktconsultatie Getijdencentrale Brouwersdam, Hoofdrapport, 28 Januari 2014.
17. 'Gebiedsontwikkeling Nieuwe Stijl', Ministerie van I&M, Maart 2014.
18. Verslag openbare informatiebijeenkomst Getijdencentrale, 12 Maart 2014.
19. Ontwerp Rijksstructuurvisie Zuidwestelijke Delta, Oktober 2014.
20. Brochure Getijdencentrale Brouwersdam, 11 Maart 2015.
21. Verslag van de precompetitieve fase Getijdencentrale, 4 Februari 2015.

Afsluitdijk and Tidal Power Plant combined

22. 'Voet aan de grond', duurzaamheidsambities Rijkswaterstaat, Juni 2011.
23. Waterinnovaties in Nederland, Ministerie van I&M, Maart 2014.
24. Deltaprogramma 2015, September 2014.

Appendix B

Table B1. Number of Coded Text Fragments.

Coding	Number of Quotations
Diagnostic frame	58
Prognostic frame	11
Prognostic frame for authorities	100
Prognostic frame for external actors	60
Motivational frame	28
Motivational frame for authorities	19
Motivational frame for external actors	23
Total quotations	**299**
Total unique quotations	**198**
Coding	**Number of Quotations**
Visualisation	65
Promotion	17
Consolidation	31
Presentation	77
Invitation	20
Demarcation	15

Table B1. *Cont.*

Coding	Number of Quotations
Designation	33
Offer	28
Lure	16
Justification	19
Total quotations	**321**
Total unique quotations	**224**

Appendix C

Table C1. Interviewed Respondents.

	Respondent Function	Organisation	Time	Location
1	Project manager, Energy 'The New Afsluitdijk'	Energy Valley	February 2014	Erasmus University Rotterdam
2	CEO 'Blue Energy'	REDstack	February 2014	Redstack, Sneek
3	Project manager, Afsluitdijk	Rijkswaterstaat	March 2014	Rijkswaterstaat, Utrecht
4	CEO	Tocardo Tidal Turbines	March 2014	Tocardo, Den Oever
5	Project manager, 'The New Afsluitdijk'	Province Friesland	March 2014	Province Hall, Leeuwarden
6	Advisor 'The New Afsluitdijk'	Province North-Holland	April 2014	Province Hall, Haarlem
7	Stakeholder manager project, Afsluitdijk	Rijkswaterstaat	April 2014	Rijkswaterstaat, Utrecht
8	Project director, Tidal Power Plant Brouwersdam	Rijkswaterstaat	May 2014	Rijkswaterstaat, Utrecht
9	Project manager, 'Sustainable Energy'	Strukton	May 2014	Strukton, Utrecht
10	Project manager, 'Tidal Energy Afsluitdijk'	Tocardo	June 2014	Tocardo, Den Oever
11	Project manager, 'The New Afsluitdijk'	Province Friesland	December 2014	Province Hall, Leeuwarden
12	Project director, Tidal Power Plant Brouwersdam	Rijkswaterstaat	May 2016	Rijkswaterstaat, The Hague
13	Project member, Tidal Power Plant Brouwersdam	Province South-Holland	June 2016	Province Hall, The Hague

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