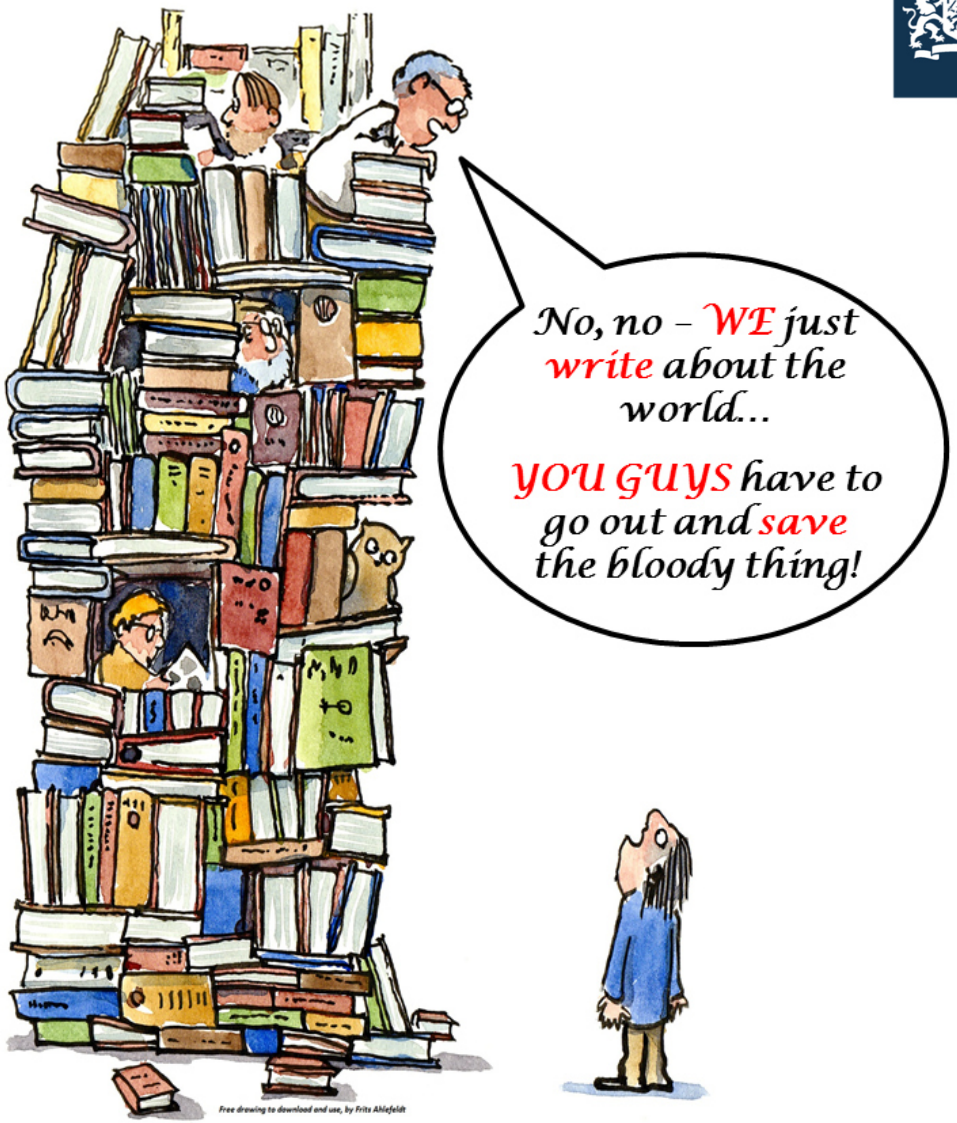



National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

# Stakeholder engagement at RIVM

## Why do we do it and what is the quality of current activities?

Jeroen Devilee

# Social amplification of risk (2009-2011)

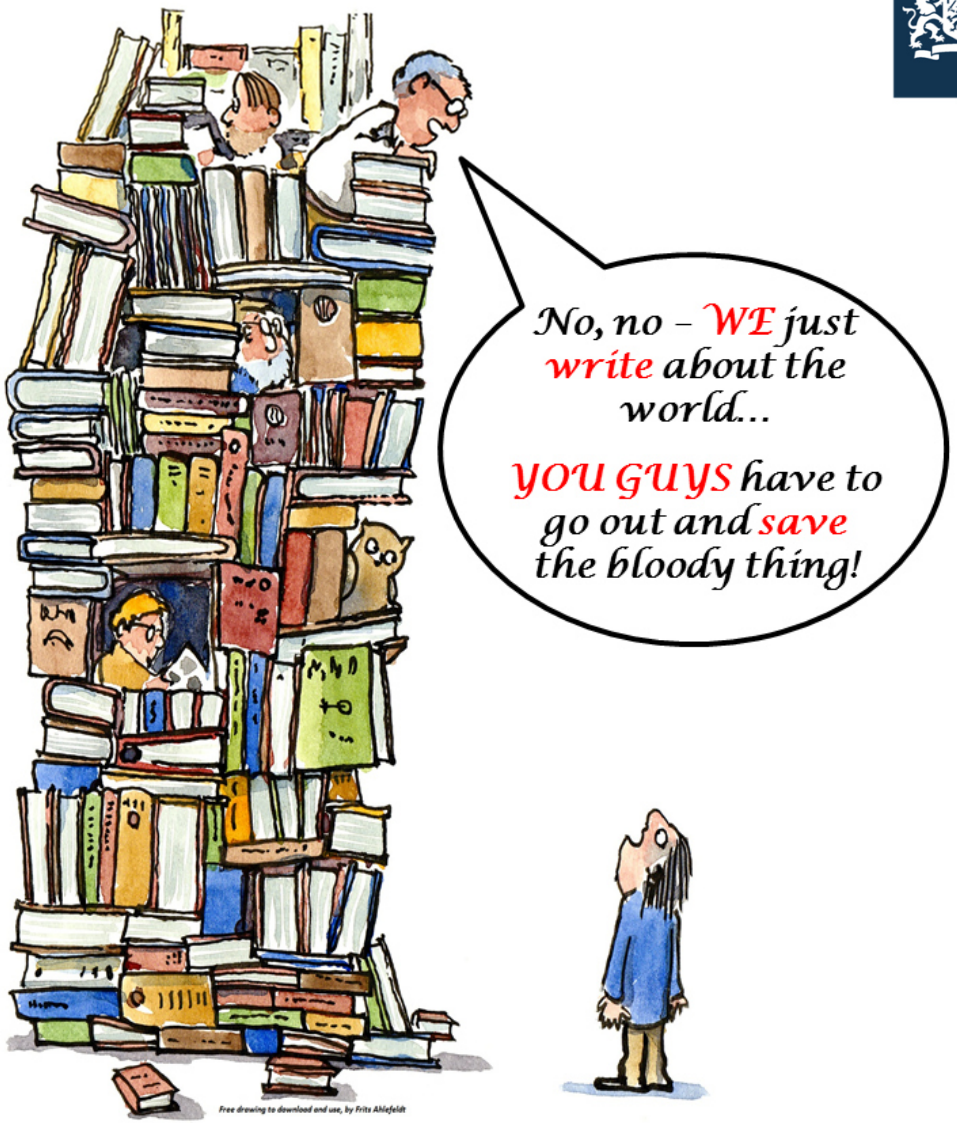
- Large industrial fire in a warehouse for chemicals at Moerdijk. Social amplification of risk by traditional media and jokes by cartoonists.

- Vaccination of 15 year old girls against HPV. Social amplification by social media. Impact on effectiveness of campaign.

# Impact on RIVM2020 strategy

- 'RIVM firmly embedded in society'. Includes:
  - More stakeholder engagement
  - More social sciences
  - A project on societal dialogue (Grenelle)

- In this Grenelle project different activities found their basis:
  - A stakeholder dialogue on graphene (nano)
  - A dialogue with the general public on new technologies
  - A self-assessment of the quality of different types of stakeholder engagement at RIVM (this presentation)

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# Contents

1. Intro (done that)
2. Quality of RIVM SE
3. But, why do we do it?
4. Deliberation in practice
5. Community of Practice (COP)

# Self Assessment of quality of SE

**Inventory of cases**

- By asking the managers of the three RIVM domains (Safety & Environment, Public Health, Infectious Diseases)
- No ‘old school, we allready do this for ages’ activities
- Between 2010 and 2015
- Organized (or at least a part) by RIVM

# Results of the inventory

| Domain | # | Type of activity |
|---|---|---|
| CIB | 4 | Interview, enquête |
| V&Z | 22 | Interview, enquête, focus group, workshop, citizen science, action research |
| M&V | 28 | Interview, enquête, focus group, workshop, citizen science, advice committee, knowledge platform, joint committee |
| **Total** | **54** | **9** |

# Selection of 12 diverse RIVM cases

| Domain | Project | Type activity |
|---|---|---|
| V&Z | Public Health Future Exploration 2014 | Focus group |
| V&Z | Public health screening bowel cancer | Focus group |
| V&Z | Network Plus | Focus group |
| V&Z | Off label | Focus group |
| V&Z | Action supporting research | Action planning |
| V&Z | Healthy Slotermeer | Citizen science |
| M&V | Knowledge platform wind energy | Focus group |
| M&V | Chrome containing paint and CARC | Focus group |
| M&V | Knowledge network Biocides | Workshop |
| M&V | Development RIVM smartphone app | Workshop |
| M&V | Pesticides and residents | Advisory committee |
| CIB | Lice at home | Enquête |

# Assessment by 8 criteria (Reed, 2008)

- Clear goal of the activity and consensus about this goal among stakeholders
- Conditions that stimulate fairness, trust and mutual understanding
- A stakeholder analysis has been executed
- A fit for purpose method for engagement has been chosen
- Timing (as early as possible and en continuous during the proces)
- High quality facilitation
- Both scientific and lay, local and traditional knowledge has been used
- Structural embedding in the organisation

Reed MS. 2008. Stakeholder participation for environmental management: a literature review. Biol Cons, 141 (10): 2417.

# Conclusions

- Strong points:
  - Clear goal of the activity and consensus about this goal among stakeholders
  - Conditions that stimulate fairness, trust and mutual understanding

- Possibilities to improve:
  - Do more and better stakeholder analyses
  - Acknowledge and appreciate stakeholders (don’t drop them)
  - Invest in the skills of facilitators
  - Bundle and share knowledge on stakeholder engagement

# But, why do we do it?

- 'I need to':
  - no stakeholder engagement will mean that I will not get funding for my proposal from our strategic research budget

or

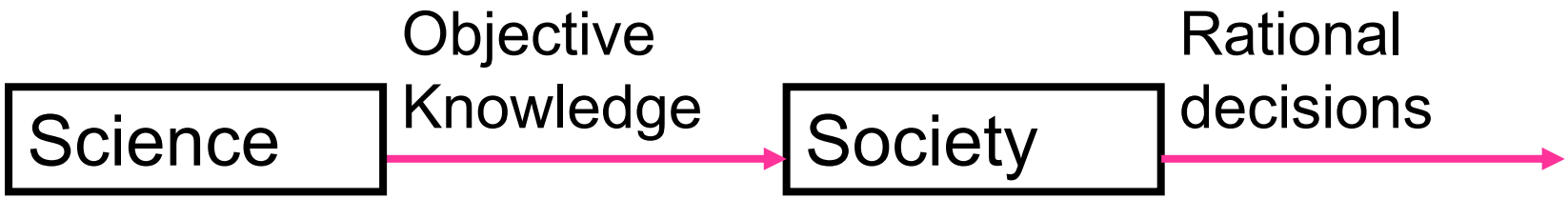
# But, why do we do it? (2)

- Responsible Research and Innovation:
  - Improve quality of products and communication by triangulation of different perspectives
  - Open up the research process to build on legitimacy, support, trust

# But, why do we do it? (3)

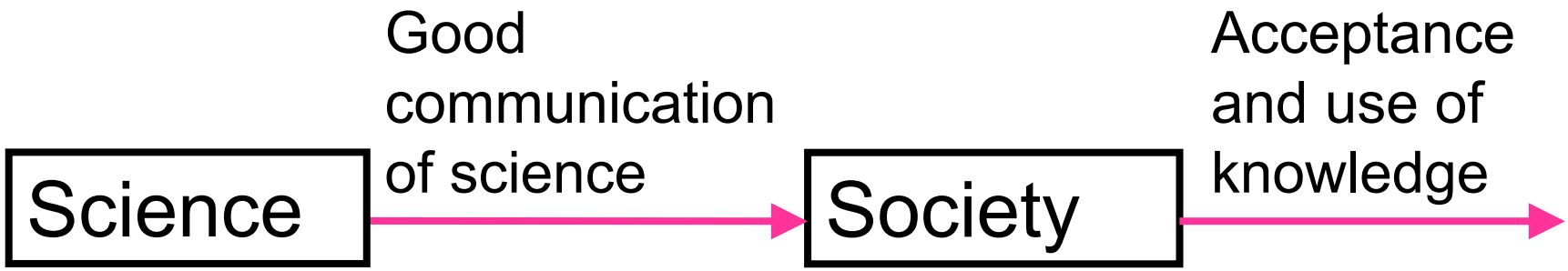
- Changing perspectives on the science-policy interface:
  - Expert roles: from science arbiter to participatory expert

## The lineair model




- Science and society are seen as separate
- Fact/value dichotomy
- Societal benefits optimized by leaving science alone

## Its twin: the information deficit-model



# Problems with these models

## Knowledge does not simply translate into action

- Uncertainties
- Competing and contested knowledge claims (ambiguity)
- Knowledge needs translation to be usable (which can never be neutral)

## Knowledge production and policy making are entwined

- Science is not produced prior to and separate from societal concerns (coproduction)
- Fact value dichotomy is untenable

# Problems with these models (2)

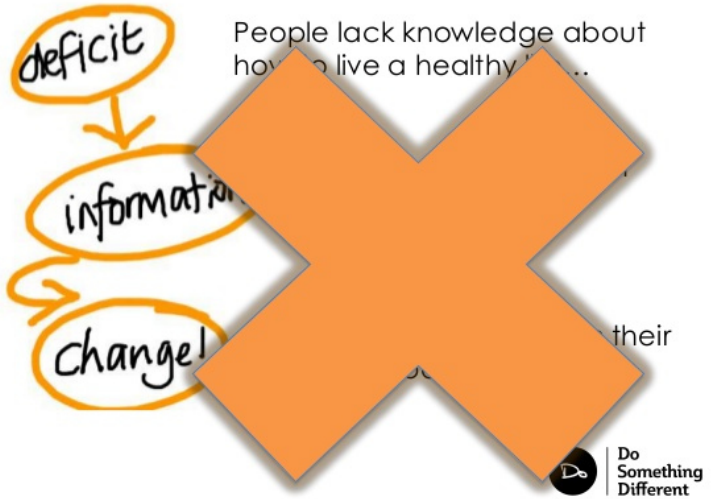
## They make knowledge far too important

- Decision making has to take into account a wide variety of factors
- The lack of information is not the cause of seemingly irrational decisions

## Bottom line

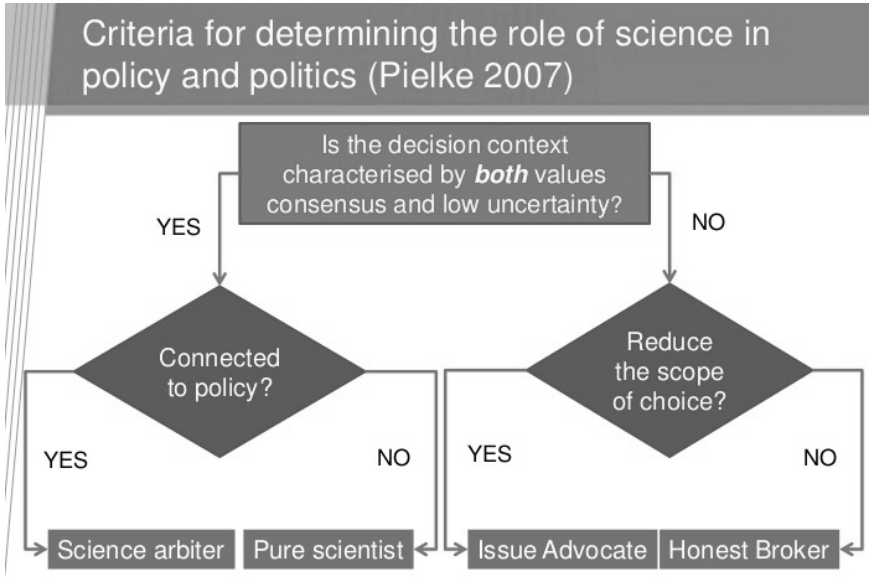
If lack of knowledge
is not the problem, more knowledge
or better communication are not
the solution

Behaviour change has been dominated by the information deficit model:



# Risk institutes often act as a science arbiter

- Policy questions answered by means of knowledge based solutions
- Relatively strict separation between science and decision making
- Limited interaction with decision makers to learn about their needs, produce relevant knowledge and communicate this knowledge
- Often relatively well structured problems
- Consensus about values, about the relevance of scientific information to address the issue, and about the kind of knowledge required



# And even science arbiters are not neutral!

- The uncritical acceptance of dominant framings  may be safe but is not neutral
- An element of advocacy can not be avoided[1]
- In a way, to be policy relevant is to be policy prescriptive
- Taking a stand against dominant framings can be legitimate and crucial for a functioning democracy (but risky)

[1]Huitema, Turnhout, 2009. Working at the science-policy interface: A discursive analysis of boundary work at the Netherlands environmental assessment agency. Environmental Politics

# But wicked problems ask for participatory experts

**Brokers (Pielke)**

- Including multiple perspectives
- Providing policy makers with options
- Intensive interaction with a variety of stakeholders to jointly define the problem, formulate questions, and develop knowledge

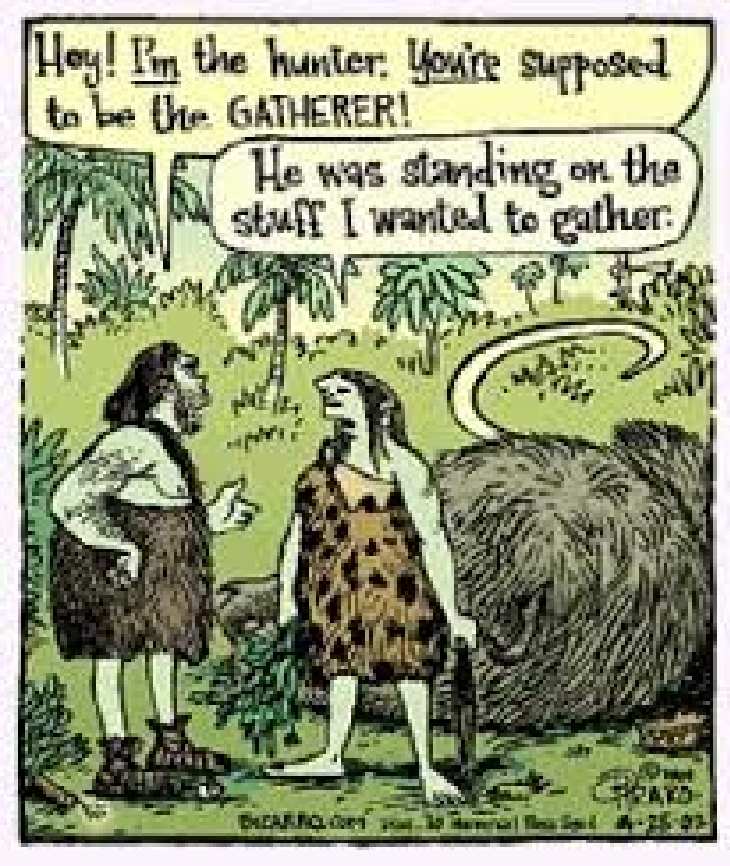
**Participatory experts (Turnhout)**

- Do not separate knowledge production and knowledge use
- Abandoning the linear model
- Recognize that scientific knowledge alone is not sufficient
- Acknowledge and value lay, local, or experiential knowledge (not as values, or perspectives, but as knowledge)

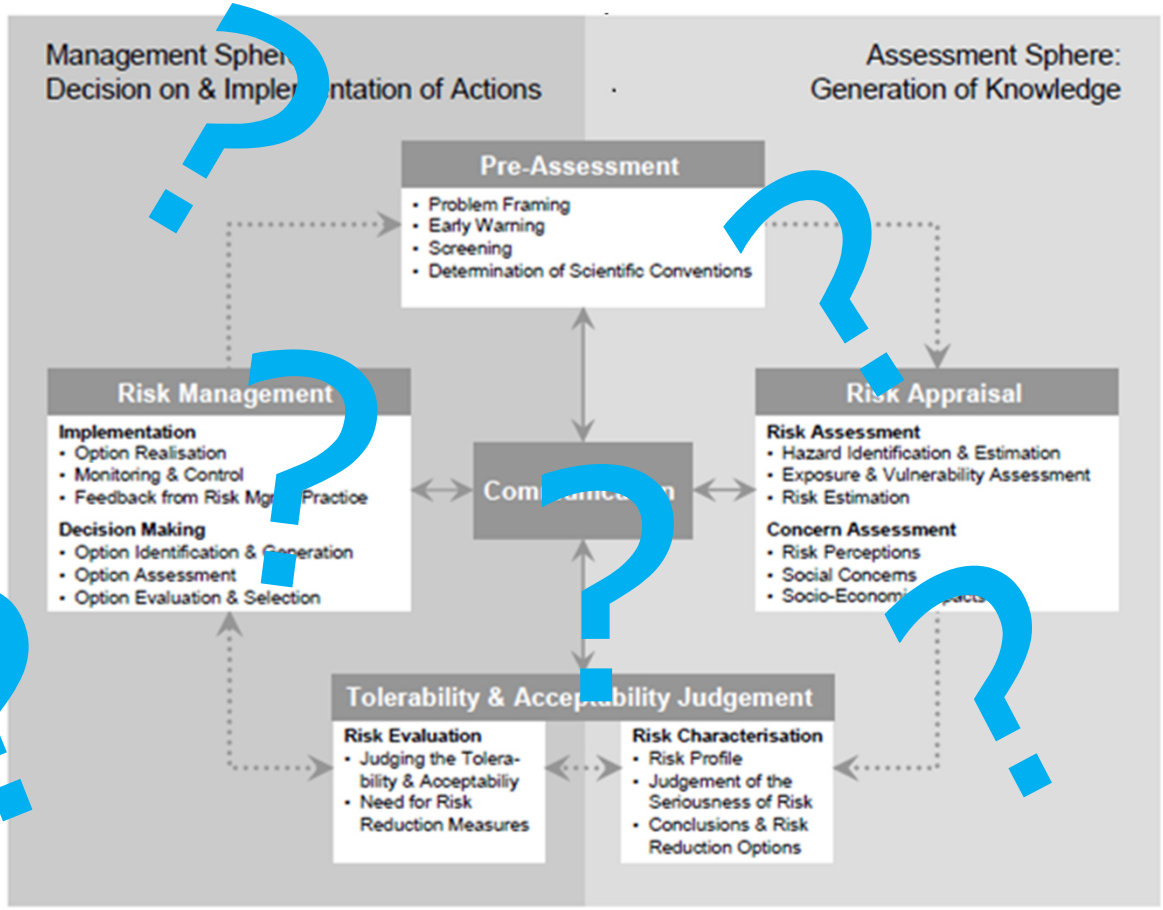
# Deliberation in practice

The linear model is culturally embedded as a powerful ideal:

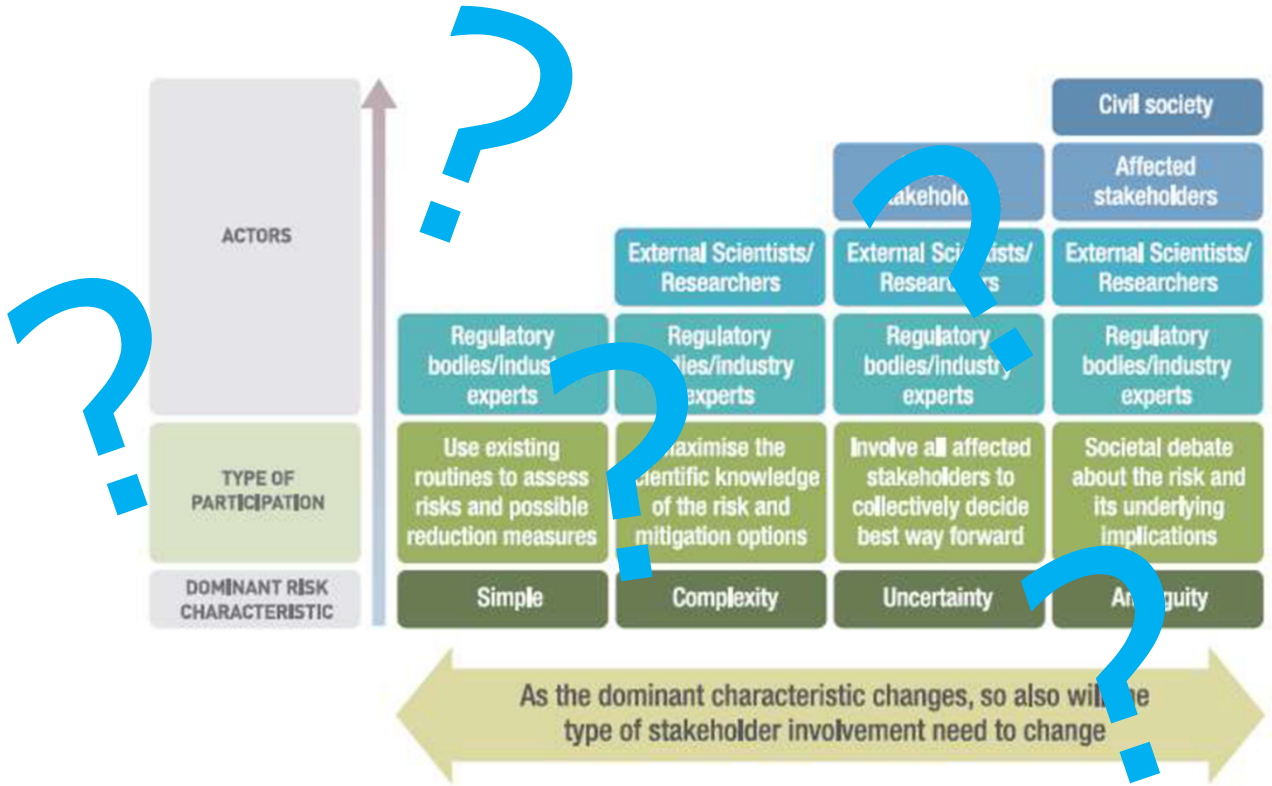
- Radically breaking away from the linear model is difficult
- Scientific authority, financial incentives, expectations from users (PBL examples)
- It structures expectations and divisions of labor



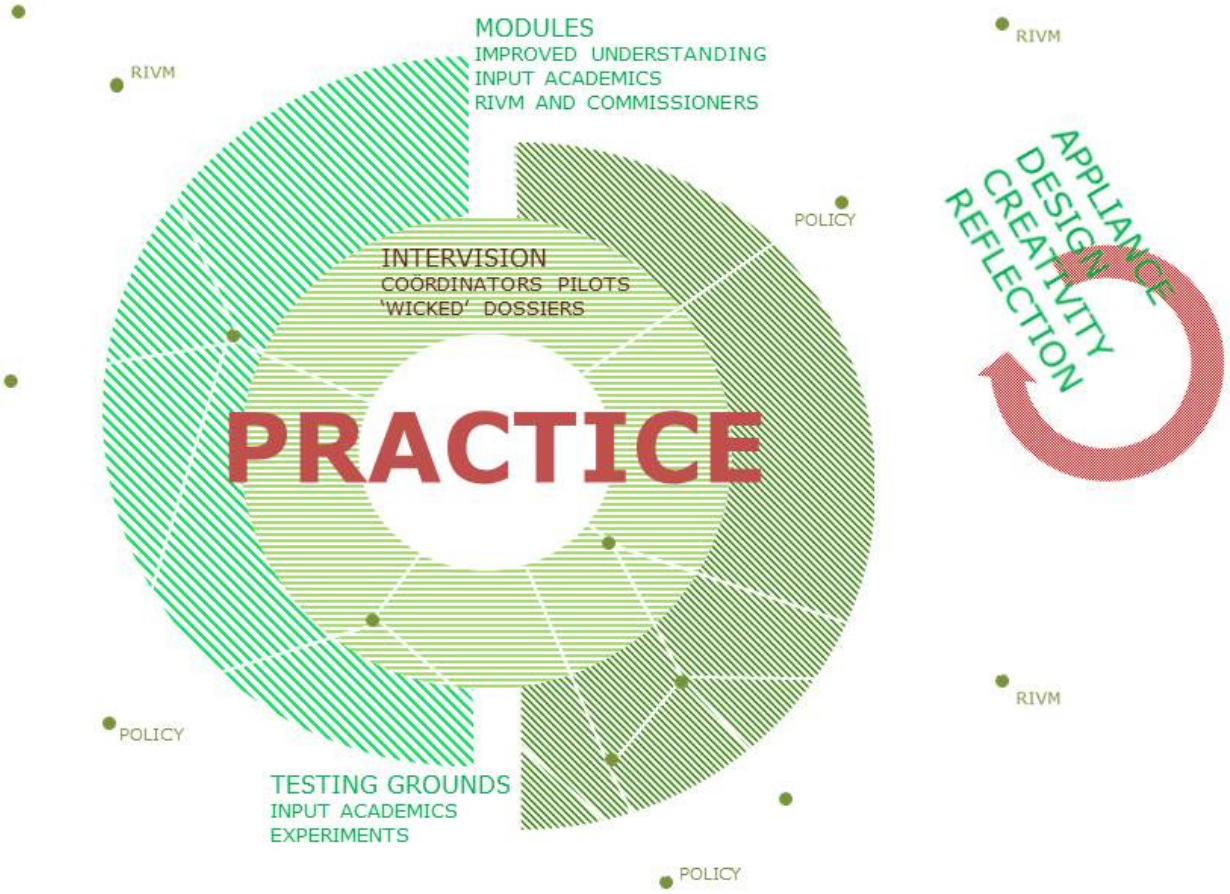
# Risk governance & deliberation in practice



# Risk governance & deliberation in practice (2)



# Community of practice wicked problems



# From best practice to a next practice

- Objective: joint learning about tackling wicked problems; based on 'best practice' to a 'next practice'
- Focus on five case studies. Including managements support. E.g. Antimicrobial Resistance, SafeBBE, synthetic biology
- Moderated by an experienced facilitator of communities of practice
- Consultant science-policy interfaces included
- Dynamic learning and knowledge agenda

# From best practice to a next practice (2)

- Modules: risk communication, risk governance, expert roles in policy interfaces, and other needs that might pop up
- Experiments: 'discursive' (policy Beliefs), Joint Fact Finding, Serious gaming, Frame analysis
- Group preliminary consists of RIVM & Policy Makers. Other stakeholders involved later
- Meetings at a location that is attractive to all network partners

Thanks for listening!!
Any questions?
Jeroen.devilee@rivm.nl