



THE WATER CHALLENGE EVERY DROP COUNTS



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Green Week 2012

Urgency and timing:
key-pillars of the
science-policy bridge

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Deltares

Enabling Delta Life



a personal,
practical experience
in trying to influence the
Meuse river basin management
policy agenda



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Once I was involved in a EU-project ...

One of its conclusions in 2008:



Flooding will mobilize historic contamination from river banks and floodplains



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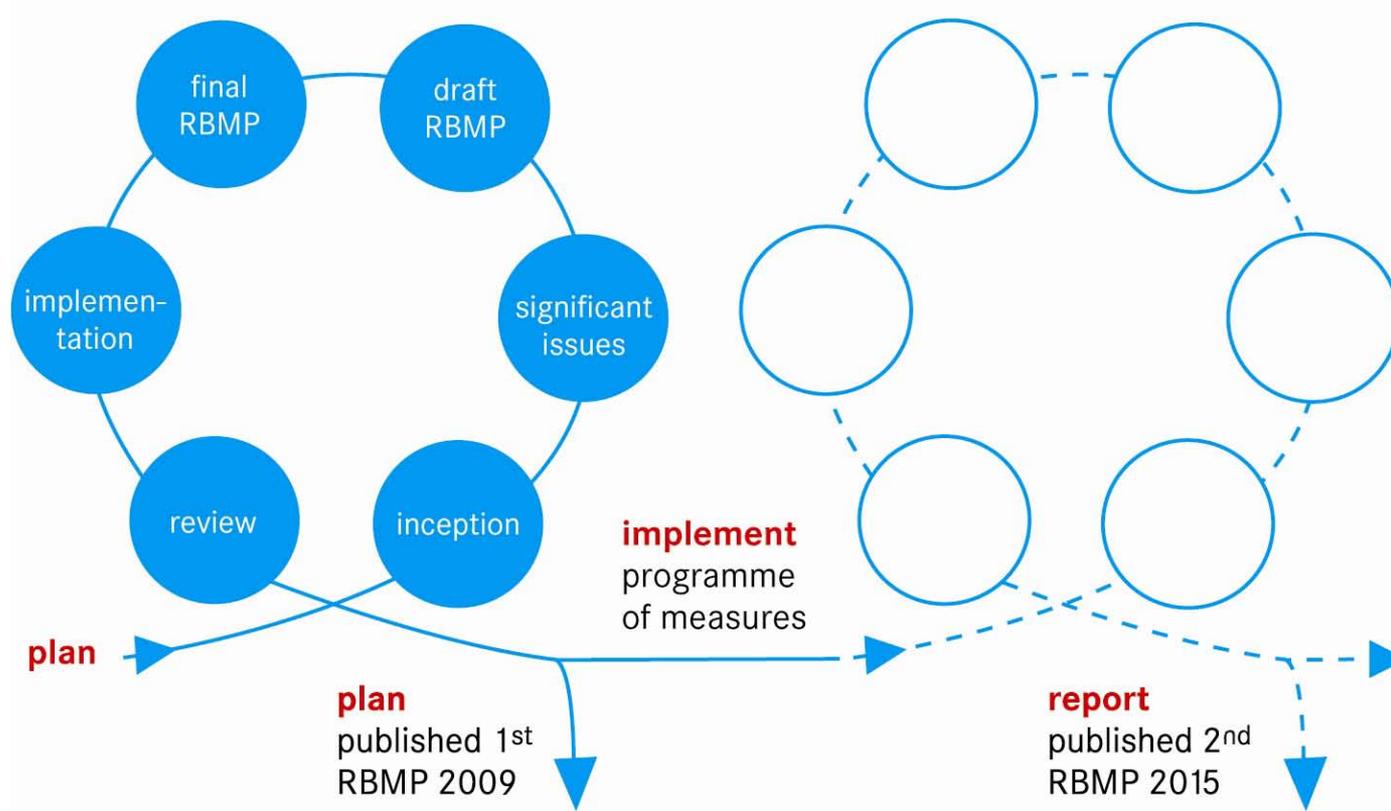
Also in the Meuse river basin ...

such contaminated river banks occur:



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I was aware of ...



Brils & Harris, 2009 (inspired by Crilly, 2007)

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Thus presented results to the IMC ...

Their (unofficial) response:

- Interesting
- But need a more convincing story:



LA COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MEUSE

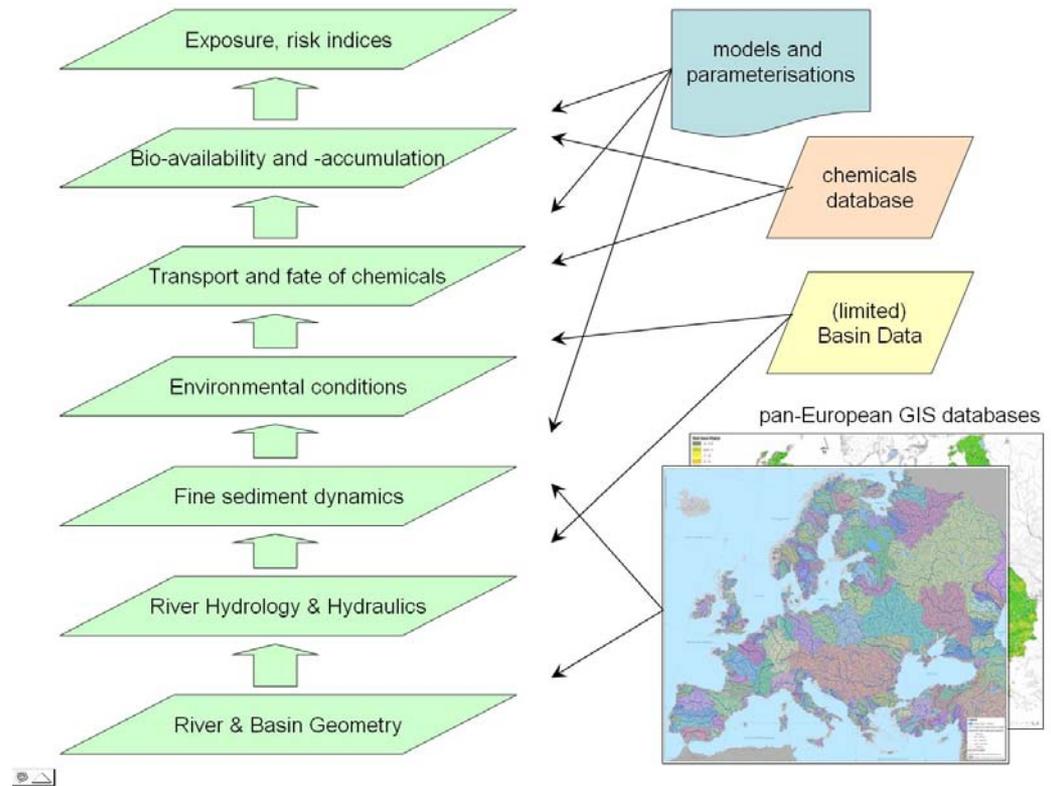
“elaborate an appealing example, where clearly quantified downstream risks result from remobilized contaminants from upstream Meuse riverbanks”



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Thus we did ...

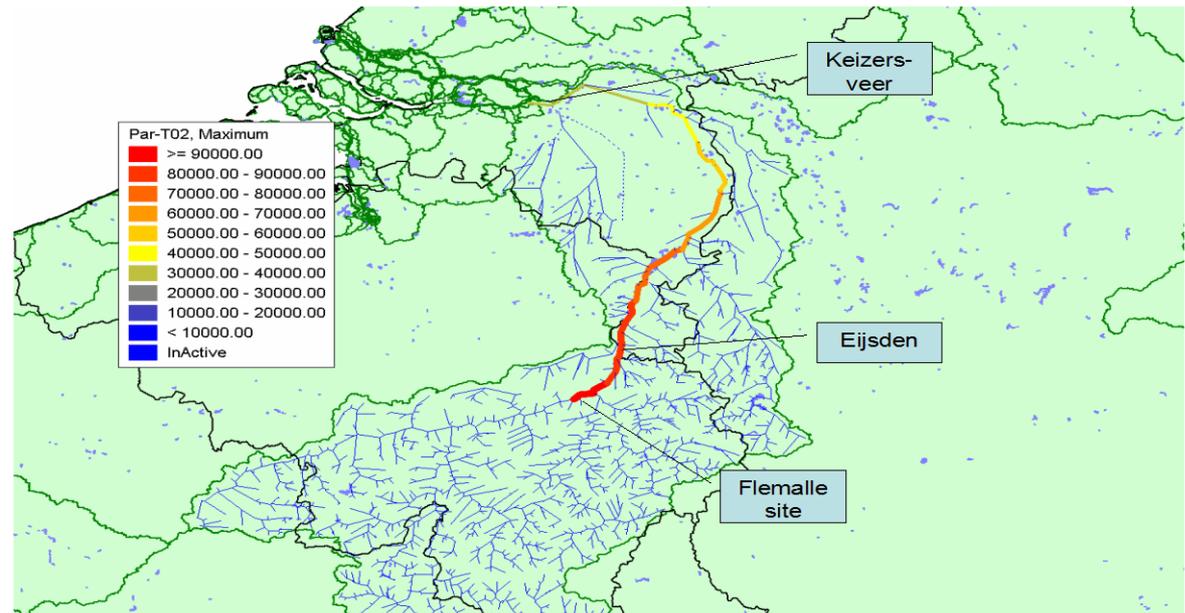
- Flémalle site
- Hypothetical, but realistic, severe flood event simulation
- Using **EXPOBASIN** →
- Benzene, fluoranthene and cadmium as representative contaminants
- Funded by Deltares



Outcome was ...

“crustaceans will be affected at downstream areas where the remobilized sediments settle again”

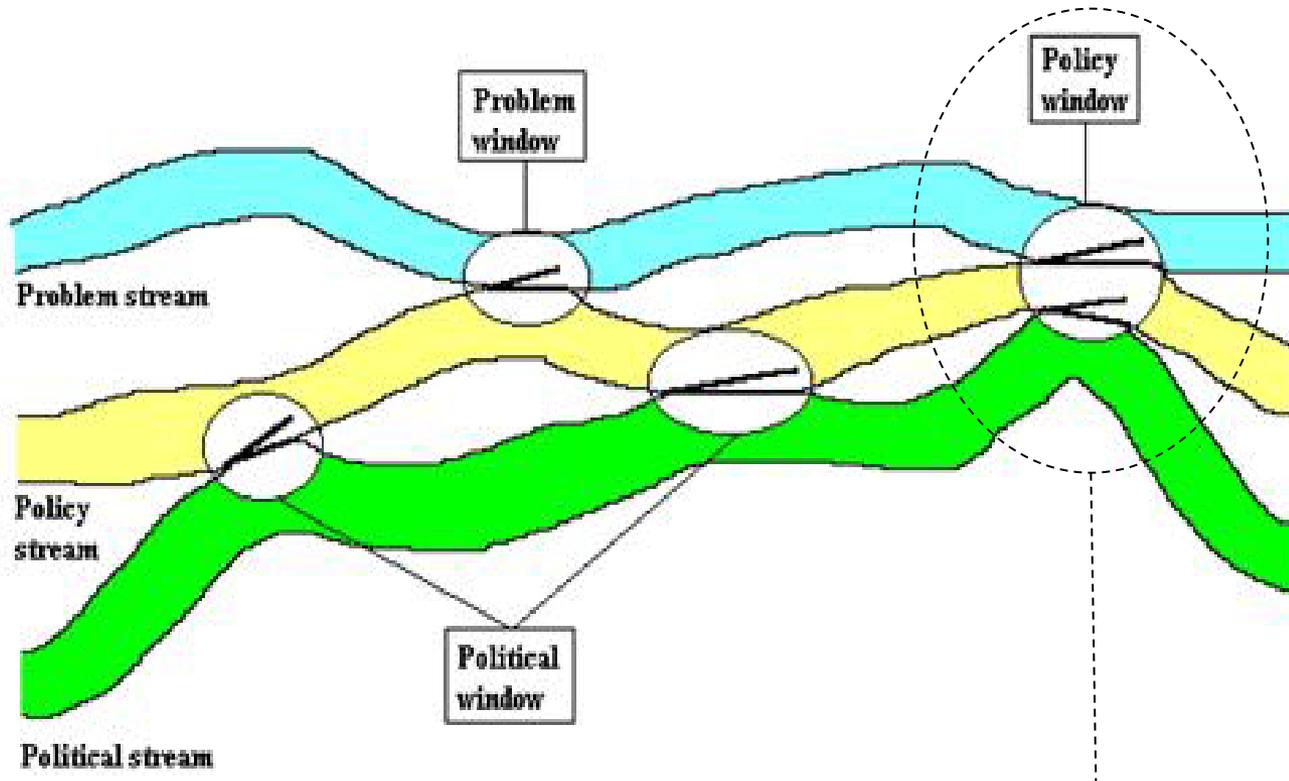
(February 2011)



quality of deposits (fluoranthene, $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg dw}$).



Then window of opportunity opened ...



Kingdon, 1992.
model used by:



sediment at agenda of IMC annual
plenary meeting (week 48, 2011)



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Outcome was ...

“after an orientating discussion
of the theme 'sediment'
it is decided to let the theme rest due to
lacking capacity and other priorities.”



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My conclusions ...

- It may take quite a lot of endurance to get scientific evidence noticed at policy making levels
- Timing is very important (and think our timing was right)
- However, 'sense of urgency' is probably more crucial

What can we do more
– or hope for –
to get mobilization of historic contamination
perceived as 'urgent' and thus
to get it addressed in RBMPs?



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