

Pilot projects and their diffusion: a case study of integrated coastal management in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Pilot projects are policy instruments mainly applied to introduce or test new practices, concepts or technologies. Pilot projects can lead to a broader policy transition. However, the diffusion process associated with the pilot projects is not well understood. In this paper, we investigate the diffusion of pilot projects, focusing on the nature of the diffusion (the innovation itself, cooperation, methodologies or institutional designs), the channels of diffusion (internal and external) and the patterns of diffusion (dissemination, expansion and institutionalisation). The analytical framework developed for pilot project diffusion is applied to the Saldanha Bay project in South Africa, yielding additional insights on the functioning of the pilot, its contribution to the diffusion of the innovation and so to a policy transition in South African coastal zone management. Finally, we identify types of pilot project and the accompanying design choices that are most suitable for transition management.