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Comment on hess-2021-404

Anonymous Referee #3

Referee comment on "Barriers to mainstream adoption of catchment wide Natural Flood Management, a transdisciplinary problem framing study of delivery practice" by Thea A. J. Wingfield et al., Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss.,
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This was a really nice paper to read. It illustrates how to engage different stakeholders in the framing of NFM in the UK through the use of group concept mapping and Ketso methods. The study addresses a very important topic of mainstreaming. It offers practical insights for structuring discussions on mainstreaming issues in NBS and other management and/or domains also. In general, the manuscript is well structured and clearly written. Below are a few comments and questions:

Methods:

The methodological choices can be more explicit in a number of areas (and may be included also in fig. 1). For example:

Section 3.1 describes the participant identification more broadly in terms of the two practitioner groups. What was the criteria for selecting participants from these two groups in each phase? It would help to describe the participants/workshops in section 3.2.1 onwards by referring to the two practitioner groups they belong to. For example, was workshop 1 with flood risk authorities and workshop 2 with catchment partnership members? Also, in some phases the groups are mixed? Were the participants in the three phases the same? The numbers differ over time but were they (a subset of) the same participants from the 1st phase? Similarly, phase 3 uses snowball sampling techniques to recruit other participants- please explain this design choice and what added value it had in phase 3? I also assume the initial statements generated from both practitioner groups were combined and then qualitatively sorted and ranked separately by the flood risk authorities and catchment partnerships? Is this correct? If so, please clarify this somewhere in the text also.

Practitioner groups:

Section 3.1.2 (pg 8). Some additional details about the catchment partnerships would be helpful. Is there is a single catchment partnership "network" that exists in the UK with regards to integrated water management or are they specific to different regions/watersheds etc.? This is somewhat unclear from the text. Some examples of the types of actors that are part of these catchment partnerships, aside from the host NGO

organization would also be helpful.

Results: I would like the authors to reflect on the following

- Section 3.1.2 refers to the strategic potential of the catchment partnerships in leading and influencing NFM. At the same time, the authors recognize financial, organizational shortcomings. Does this research reveal new insights on the role of catchment partnerships in mainstreaming NFM?
- What is the role of the group concept mapping technique in the mainstreaming problem. Is it a useful first step in identifying barriers from different perspectives or, does it also offer insights for exploring how the practitioner groups could identify solutions (based on their own strengths or resources of example) to help overcome some of these barriers?
- How does this method (group concept mapping) compare to other participatory research methods like for example Q methodology with regards to examining mainstreaming problems?

Overall, I think this paper is a very nice addition to this special issue.