



Delta Programme 2018

Continuing the work on a sustainable and safe delta

Today, on *Prinsjesdag*, the state opening of Parliament, the eighth successive annual Delta Programme – Delta Programme 2018 – was presented to the House of Representatives, including the first Delta Plan on Spatial Adaptation. The Delta Programme thus currently comprises three Delta Plans: pertaining to flood risk management, freshwater supply, and spatial adaptation. The latter Delta Plan is intended to render the Netherlands resilient against extreme weather conditions by minimising the impact of waterlogging, heat, drought, and urban flooding. Weather extremes are increasing and their impact is already noticeable: this past summer, many locations in the Netherlands had to contend with waterlogging following severe downpours.

In the Netherlands, being a low-lying and densely populated country, climate change may have a major impact. For that reason, the Netherlands will need to respond adaptively to changing insights and developments in the climate. The new **Delta Plan on Spatial Adaptation** will yield additional measures to expedite the efforts as required. The Delta Plan features a systematic approach to developing measures at the local and regional levels, in order to render the spatial design of the Netherlands climate-proof and water-resilient in good time.

In recent years, the Delta Plan on Flood Risk Management and the Delta Plan on Freshwater Supply have laid a solid foundation for improving our flood protection and the availability of fresh water. Delta Programme 2018 demonstrates that the implementation of these Delta Plans is well “on schedule”. The measures have been largely realised within the timeframe and budget agreed upon. However, the work on a safe and sustainable delta is never finished. Recent insights into climate change only underscore the urgency of the timely implementation of the Delta Programme.

To open Delta Programme 2018, [click here](#). Delta Programme 2018 is also available on the Delta Programme Commissioner’s website, english.deltacommissaris.nl.

This Delta Programme is the first to present progress reports based on the “Analysis, Ambition, Action” methodology. This system, the engine of adaptive delta management, enables us to monitor how the Delta Programme is coming along, taking account of new social developments and new scientific insights. If need be, the course can be adjusted.

Recommendations by the Delta Programme Commissioner

In order to continue to make sufficient progress in the Delta Programme, upon presenting Delta Programme 2018 I submitted three recommendations to the Cabinet regarding the financial aspects of the Delta Programme. The first one ties in with the investment agendas of the local and regional governments’ umbrella organisations: to add annually a substantial sum to the Delta Fund earmarked for the implementation of the Delta Plan on Spatial Adaptation. My second recommendation is for the national government and other Delta Programme partners to set aside a substantial sum for river widening projects, thus contributing to the continuation of the successful Room for the River programme. My third recommendation is to set aside sufficient funds in the Delta Fund in the period from 2022 up to and including 2027 for the second round of freshwater supply measures.

Some other milestones and new developments are:

- The amendment to the Water Act, setting out the *new standards*, came into force on 1 January 2017. The first set of assessment instruments is available. The assessment of the flood defence systems based on the new standards has commenced; in 2023, it will yield a first picture of the state of the flood defence systems and the required dyke improvements.
- All the freshwater supply regions (and Rijkswaterstaat for the main water system) have embarked on the *Water Availability* instrument. The May 2017 benchmark shows that its implementation is on schedule and the first results are manifesting themselves. The authorities concerned are drawing up a roadmap to provide insight into the interconnectivity of the agreements on water availability, the updating of the bottleneck analysis, and the national freshwater supply targets, in preparation for the second phase of the Delta Plan on Freshwater Supply (2022-2028).
- The Netherlands is dependent on many IT systems governing vital processes, including in the fields of flood risk management and freshwater supply. The importance of *cyber security* must not be underestimated. The Delta Programme sets out the Delta Programme Commissioner’s recommendation to the water managers to press ahead with the protection of crucial water management IT systems against cyber-related threats, and raise the protection level of such systems.

Administrative realisation

This Delta Programme has once more been developed at the proposal of the Delta Programme Commissioner, through a Cabinet decision-making process, following administrative consultations with the provinces (IPO), municipalities (VNG), and district water boards (UvW), and careful, concerted preparation by the Delta Programme Steering Group, the regional consultative bodies, and the Delta Programme administrative platforms. NGOs have provided input in various ways, e.g., through the Infrastructure and the Environment Consultative Body.

National Delta Conference 2017

The National Delta Conference 2017, to be held in Leeuwarden on Thursday 2 November, is entirely focused on “Continuing the work on a sustainable and safe delta”. To register for the conference, go to english.deltacommissaris.nl/dutch-delta-congress.

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