



Delta Programme 2019

Continuing the work on the delta: adapting the Netherlands to climate change in time

Today, on Prinsjesdag, the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management presented the Delta Programme 2019 to the States General.

To open DP2019, [click here](#). DP2019 is also available on english.deltacommissaris.nl.

This summer, the Netherlands was faced with an unusually long period of drought, which impacted nature, agriculture, shipping, and the economy. In spring, large sections of the country were affected by torrential rain, causing waterlogging at multiple locations. In January, some severe storms disrupted our country, prompting the – first ever – closure of all five storm surge barriers. We have experienced the reality that weather extremes may have a major impact on our low-lying country. We must continue to look ahead to the taskings that are facing us and to respond adaptively to new developments and extreme weather. Since 2010, we have been doing so in the National Delta Programme that is published annually.

In 2017, I announced a study to explore the potential impact of an accelerated rise in sea level. Deltares conducted this study in the past year and this year, the report is appended to Delta Programme 2019 as a background document. According to the study, an accelerated rise will not be noticeable until 2050 at the earliest. The study also illustrates the vital importance of complying with the Paris climate agreements. It demonstrates that even if we comply with the Paris climate agreements, the sea level may rise at an accelerated pace vis-à-vis the current assumptions; however, the Delta Programme Preferential Strategies provide a sound basis for keeping our delta liveable and habitable at least until 2050. In the event of a more extreme rise in sea level, more fundamental choices regarding the protection and planning of our delta seem inevitable. In the meantime, we need to give impetus to further research in order to reduce the uncertainties in processes and effects. We must widen and deepen our knowledge base.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the recommendations by the second Delta Committee regarding the strategy we are now pursuing under the Delta Act. Delta Programme 2019 shows that we are steadily achieving results and that we are well on schedule. The Delta Fund provides the financial resources required to pursue the proposed strategy. With the measures set out in the Delta Plans on Flood Risk Management, Freshwater Supply, and Spatial Adaptation, we have set developments in motion to climate-proof our delta. However, the work is never done; we must continue to work energetically to make and keep our delta safe, liveable, and climate-resilient. Continuation of the work is vitally important. In November, I will retire and resign as the (first) Delta Programme Commissioner. I am happy that a successor will be appointed.

During the Delta Congress on 1 November in the IJsselhallen convention centre in Zwolle, I will take my leave of the delta community. This year's theme is, once more, adapting the Netherlands to climate change in time. You are cordially invited to attend. This year, as in previous years, I would like to shake your hand once more, but now it will also serve as a personal goodbye. The ninth National Delta Congress is a co-production of all the Delta Programme partners: the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Rijkswaterstaat, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, the Association of Provincial Authorities, and the Association of Dutch Regional Water Authorities. To register, go to <https://english.deltacommissaris.nl/dutch-delta-congress/ninth-dutch-delta-congress>.

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Government Commissioner for the Delta Programme