



# NOW FOR THE FUTURE

**NATIONAL**  
DELTA PROGRAMME  
2024

OUTLINES



*“An urgent appeal to all parties in the spatial domain: look at the long-term consequences of today's choices.”*

Delta Commissioner Peter Glas

## The Deltaprogramme

Wet is getting wetter, dry is getting drier, hot is getting hotter, extreme is getting extremer. The low-lying Netherlands is vulnerable to climate change. In the Delta Programme, we are working on a safe and liveable delta:

- proper protection against flooding
- adequate supplies of fresh water
- climate-resilient spatial planning

What is the current status of the Delta Programme? Are the goals achievable? What do we need to focus on?

The Delta Commissioner reports on progress annually. The latest progress report is the 2024 Delta Programme. Click [here](#) for the detailed report.

The outline visuals below provide a brief overview of progress and the focus areas, primarily for administrators in The Hague and in the regions. As a basis for a healthy discussion.

The National Delta Programme brings together the national government, provincial and municipal authorities, and water authorities. Knowledge institutes and stakeholder organisations are also actively involved.

*Cover photo: Land use follows the water system on 't Medler estate (Gelderland), January 2023*



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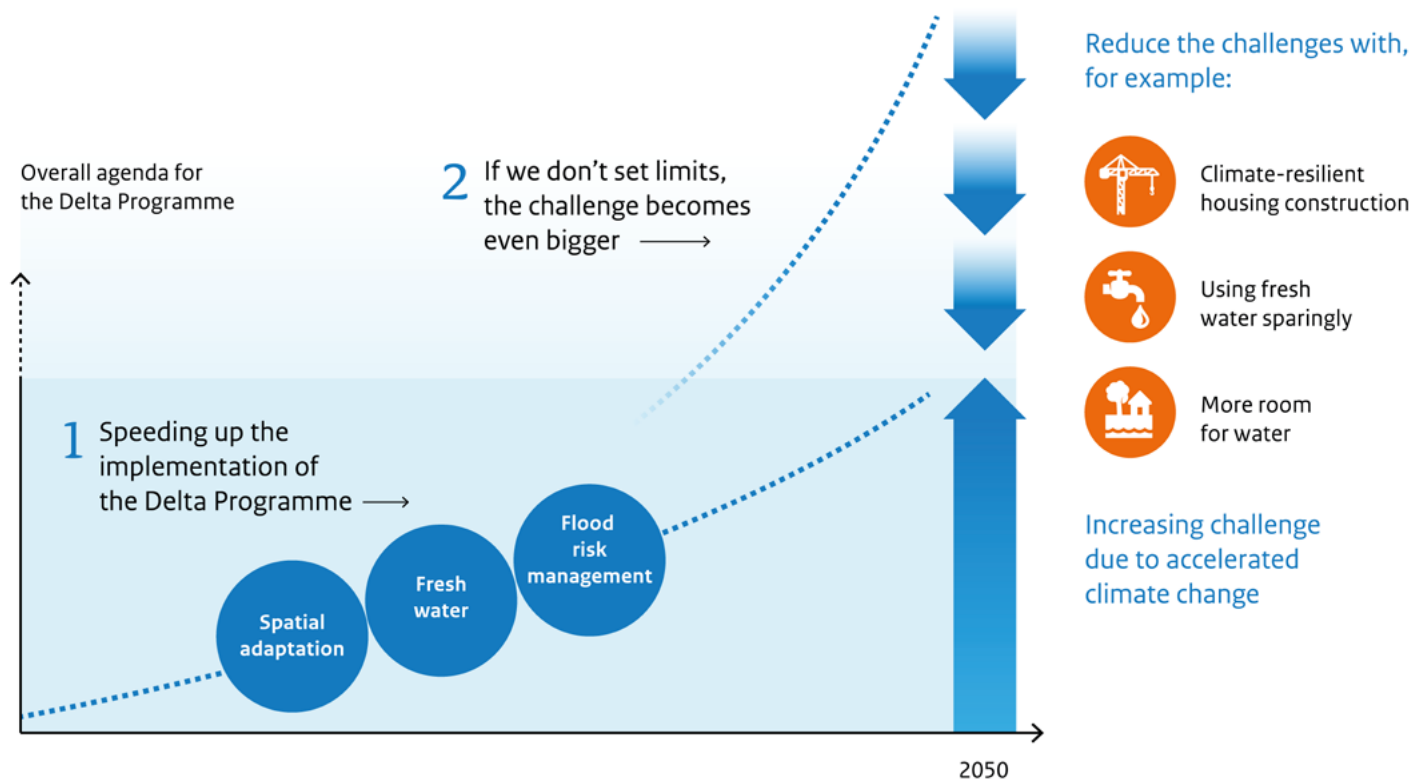
**Delta Fund**

This publication provides a concise visualisation of the outlines of the 2024 Delta Programme. The full 2024 Delta Programme can be found at [www.deltaprogramma.nl](http://www.deltaprogramma.nl).

CORE MESSAGE

# Speeding up work on a safe and liveable delta *and* setting limits

- 1 The National Delta Programme protects the Netherlands against flooding, ensures that there are adequate supplies of fresh water and contributes to climate-resilient and water robust spatial planning. We must move faster: climate change is continuing and the effects are already clear to see.
- 2 At the same time, it is becoming increasingly evident that not everything is possible if we want the Netherlands to stay climate-resilient: we also need to set limits on the use of space and water.



# Delta Commissioner's recommendations

## 1 Generation test



Make clear the consequences of our spatial decisions for future generations. Develop a generation test in collaboration with young people. The Delta Programme will apply a generation test during the periodical evaluation of the Delta Decisions and preferred strategies in 2026.

## 2 Involve citizens



Enhance civic engagement and resilience: talk to citizens about climate adaptation and describe appealing prospects (for action). Seek new forms of participation such as a citizens' assembly. That includes strategy development for the long term.

## 3 Tough choices now



Keep pathways to a climate-resilient future open with clear decisions and conditions. For instance: earmark space for water retention during urban expansion, do not facilitate land uses that are not sustainable, be critical about new water consumers and so on.

## 4 Bridges between policy themes



In area processes, connect short- and long-term water agendas with other societal agendas. Give the Delta Programme the room to establish those connections itself. Use the consultation structure and operational capacity of the Delta Programme for this purpose.

## 5 Feasibility front and centre



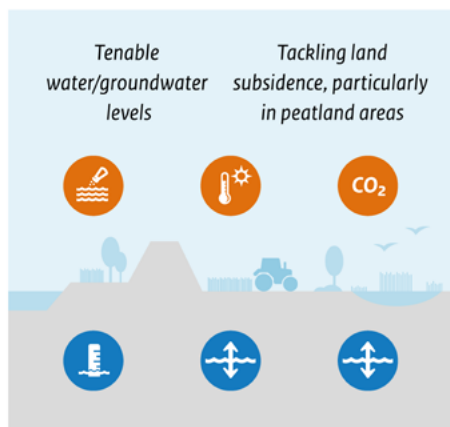
The agendas for nature restoration, housing, water quality and climate adaptation meet in the regions. The national government must support implementation with concrete frameworks (legal and otherwise) for Water and Soil as Leading Factors and structural funding to tackle heat stress, water shortages and problems with excess water.

**MORE ROUTES TO A CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE**

# The Delta Programme must speed up. That requires broader commitment

## Limits to water and soil

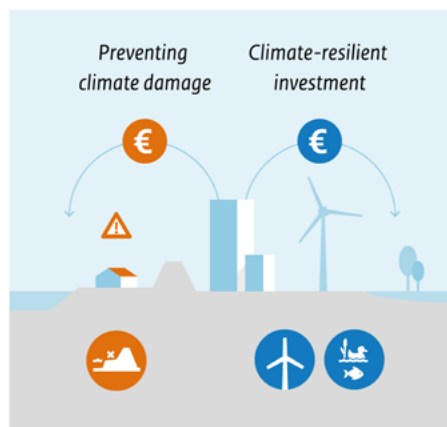
We are on the eve of major changes in land use. By choosing future-resilient solutions now, respecting the limits of water and soil, we prevent ...



... problems for future generations: social disruption caused by flooding, water shortages and land subsidence. For more grip on more erratic weather.

## Financial sector

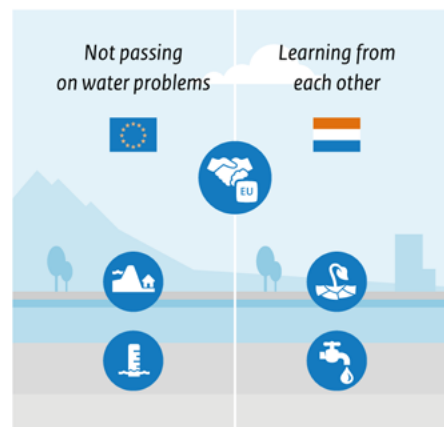
Banks, investors and insurers can provide incentives for climate-resilient investment. For example through premiums, conditions for financial products and policies.



This provides a big boost for 'every new development climate-proof'. The sector itself benefits as well: the risk of declining value due to climate damage is reduced.

## International approach

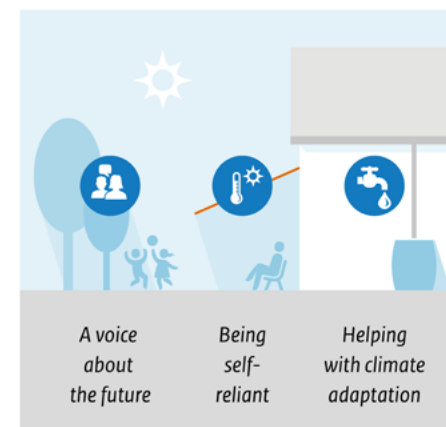
Rivers know no borders. How other countries cope with climate change may alter the challenges of high and low water in the Netherlands, for better or for worse.



The same applies to transboundary groundwater stocks. So a joint approach is needed. And countries can learn from each other.

## Social engagement

How do we shape the Netherlands to cope with extreme weather? We need to involve citizens more in that decision. And particularly young people because it's their future.



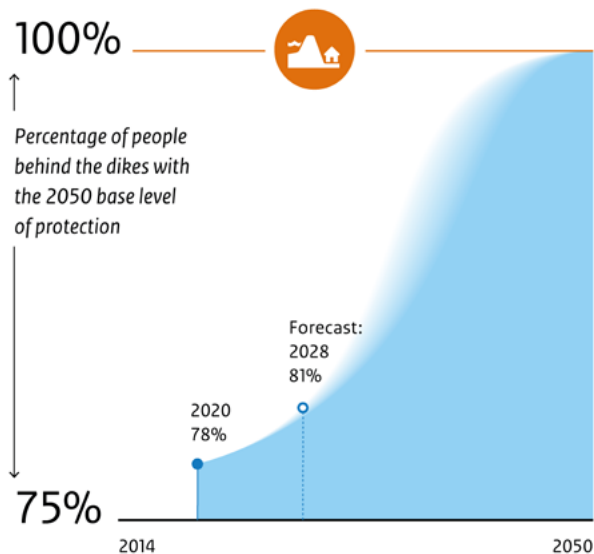
In addition, it is important for people to know what they can do themselves during heat waves, droughts and floods.

AGENDAS > FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

# By 2050, everyone in the Netherlands will have the base level of protection

## What is the goal and what is our current position?

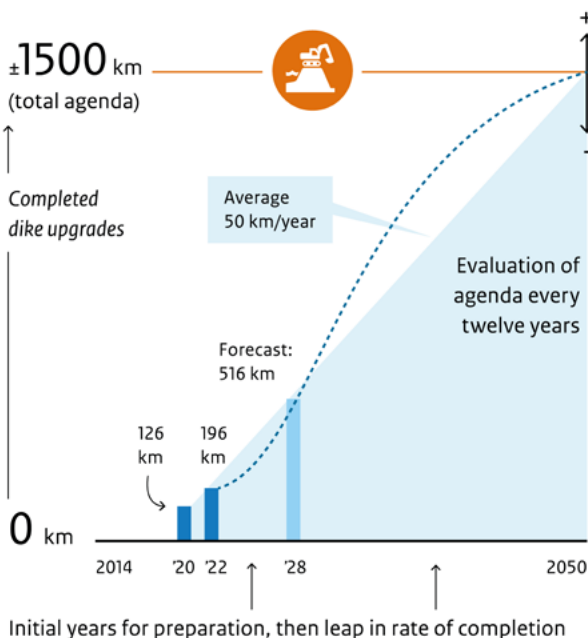
Policy goal: by 2050, everyone behind the dikes will have the base level of protection\*



\*probability of mortality due to flooding must not exceed an average of once in 100,000 years

## How are the measures progressing?

Dike upgrades are the most important measure for achieving the base level of protection everywhere



## Key issues and opportunities

-  Set aside space around dikes for future dike upgrades
-  Do not allow any new construction in the riverbed
-  Where possible, combine the flood risk management agenda with other spatial agendas such as nature and infrastructure
-  Work on multi-layer safety, including in regional waters: also by raising awareness and resiliency

AGENDAS > FRESH WATER

# The Netherlands will be resilient to water shortages by 2050

## What is the goal and what is our current position?

The resilience goal is being worked out in concrete terms. Measurable targets apply from 2028 onwards. The current strategy is:

1. Water and soil lead spatial planning

*With Water and Soil as Leading Factors, the trend shift has begun*

2. Economical use of water

*More commitment is needed. Otherwise, water use will actually increase.*

3. Better water retention

*Plans for rural areas contribute to higher groundwater levels*

4. Smart allocation of water

*We are traditionally good at this but even more intelligent approaches are possible*

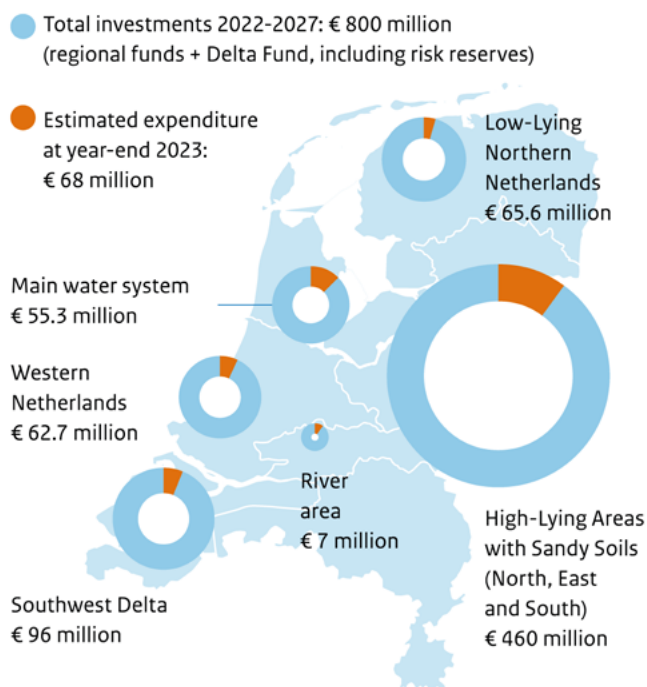
5. Acceptance of damage/residual damage

*Is still rarely an explicit choice*

Progress towards goal (expert judgement)

## How are the measures progressing?

All the regions are working on resilience to water shortages; the emphasis is on water retention.



## Key issues and opportunities

- Water shortages are an urgent transnational problem, look for ways to work together
- Water allocation when river discharges are low affects agendas throughout the country
- The limits are being reached of what can be achieved in water management with technological measures: start the transition
- Integrate the freshwater agendas in the National Programme for Rural Areas and the National Spatial Policy Document
- Encourage all sectors to become resilient to water shortages themselves



AGENDAS > SPATIAL ADAPTATION

# The Netherlands will be climate-resilient and water-robust by 2050

## What is the goal and what is our current position?

Policy goal: by 2050, the Netherlands will be resilient to heat, water shortages, problems with excess water and the effects of floods

First round of stress tests-risk dialogues-implementation agendas

Second cycle starts in 2024 on all scales

Climate-resilient/water-robust in environmental visions of:

provincial authorities in 2022

municipal authorities in 2024

Embedding now in work processes and regulations

National vital and vulnerable functions: stress tests in 2021 and ambitions in 2023

Detailed picture has been developed, clear follow-up approach needed

Always act in climate-resilient/water-robust ways

Administrative will is there, money and time are limited

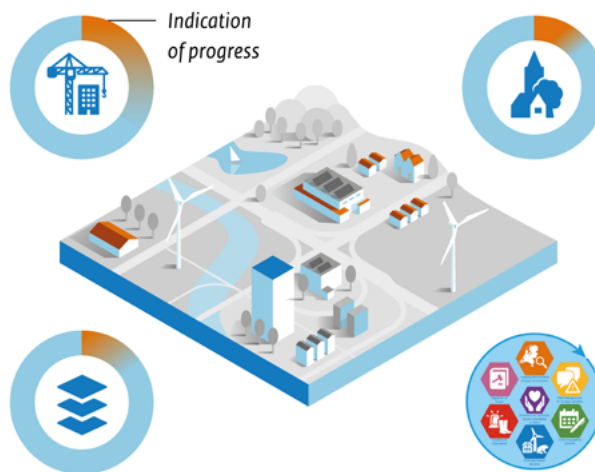
Progress towards goal (expert judgement)

## How is spatial adaptation progressing?

Many measures are being implemented but we are still in the early stages. Water and Soil as Leading Factors provides support.

Strong focus on climate-adaptive new construction, in part because of the yardstick

Existing built environment: primarily local measures (partly due to stimulus scheme)



Linkage to spatial agendas

All government authorities very active and the seven ambitions for spatial adaptation

## Key issues and opportunities

-  Make climate adaptation mandatory, end non-committal approach
-  Water and soil as leading factors: link spatial adaptation more to water shortages and land subsidence
-  Heat is receiving more attention but not yet enough: it is causing fatalities
-  Vulnerabilities on a supra-regional scale should also be considered, include them in risk dialogue
-  Provide structural funding and capacity for spatial adaptation

## IMPLEMENTATION IN THE AREAS



## Regional emphases

Each area has a tailored approach for the agendas of the Delta Programme. The main areas of concern for each area are shown here.

The objectives for flood risk management would appear to be feasible everywhere; integration with other agendas requires attention. Freshwater availability is already under pressure in several areas due to both climate change and rising demand.

### Coast

Combine major spatial agendas in the coastal zone with water agendas (including flood risk management) where possible

### Central Holland

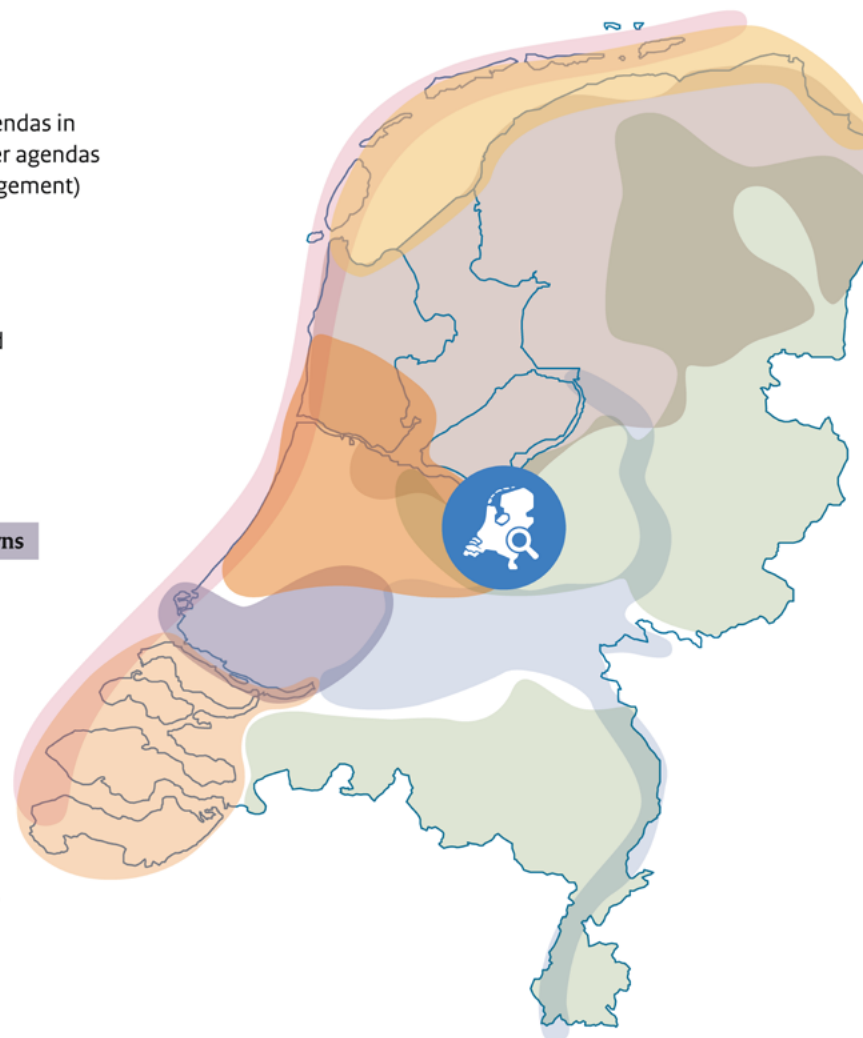
Ensure that we keep ahead of crises: we already have to take extra measures in wet conditions to keep the area dry

### Rhine Estuary-Drecht Towns

Flood risk management is certainly safeguarded until 2070: prepare for decisions after that time

### Southwest Delta

We are working on innovative solutions to improve freshwater and drinking-water availability in the *entire* region



### Wadden area

Link objectives for the Wadden area to objectives for the hinterland

### IJsselmeer area

Declining freshwater supplies, increasing demand: make administrative decisions and regional agreements

### High-Lying Areas with Sandy Soils

Involve all water users on an equal footing in the establishment of resilience to water shortages

### Rhine and Meuse

Be an ambassador for the river area: opt for a future-resilient river area in all spatial decisions

## IMPLEMENTATION IN THE AREAS

# Water and Soil as Leading Factors

The policy letter for Water and Soil as Leading Factors provides direction for spatial developments and future-resilient measures for flood risk management and fresh water in all areas. Putting that direction into practice is still often problematic.

### Coast

Anticipate the effects of sea level rise on the basis of insights from the Sea Level Rise Knowledge Programme

### Central Holland

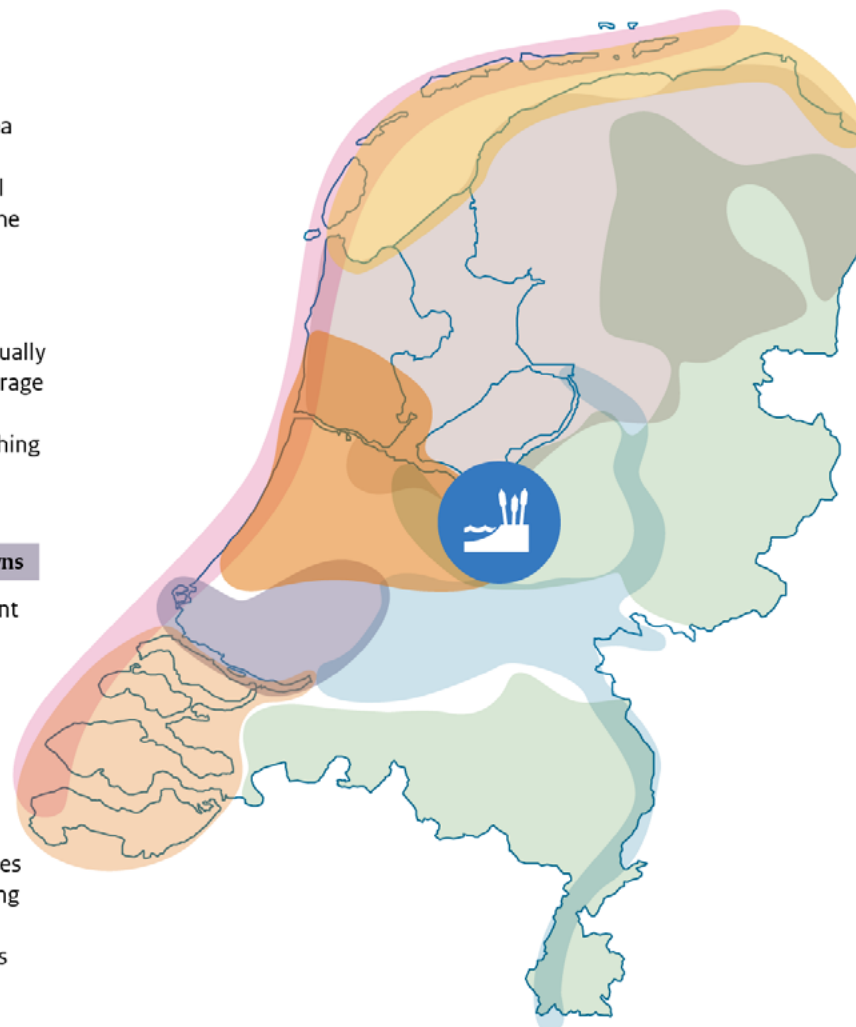
Allow water and soil to actually lead the way: have the courage to make difficult decisions and accept that not everything is possible everywhere

### Rhine Estuary-Drecht Towns

Implement climate-resilient spatial developments: Water and Soil as Leading Factors!

### Southwest Delta

The Southwest Delta connects the main principles of Water and Soil as Leading Factors, the National Programme for Rural Areas and the Area Agenda



### Wadden area

Widen the perspective to extend beyond flood defences to an integrated coastal protection zone (inside *and* outside the dikes)

### IJsselmeer area

Water levels are going to change, possibly even before 2050 in the case of the summer level: keep the options open

### High-Lying Areas with Sandy Soils

Support Water and Soil as Leading Factors with national instruments in addition to regional instruments

### Rhine and Meuse

Allow water and soil to lead plan development

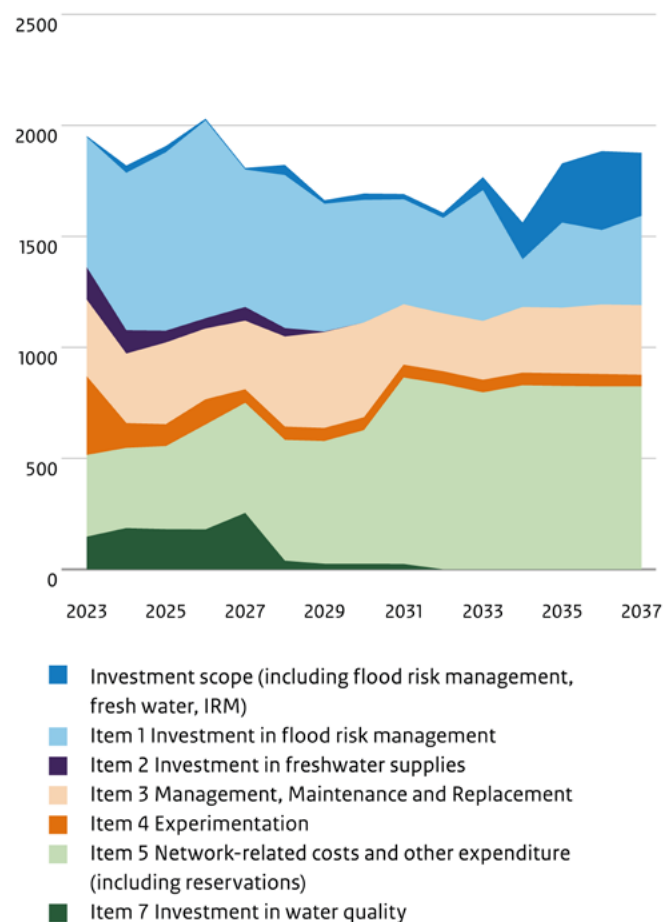
## DELTA FUND

# In the Delta Programme, we are working on a safe and liveable delta

The national government finances the measures in the Delta Programme from the Delta Fund. Other partners also contribute. Until 2050, the Delta Fund is expected to have € 27.4 billion available for the Delta Programme, while € 30.8 billion is needed.

The agendas for a water-robust and climate-resilient country are expanding and the costs are following. The Delta Commissioner is concerned about the rising budgetary tension, not least because it puts further pressure on operational capacity. If the budgetary pressure continues to increase in the years ahead and/or operational capacity in the market continues to be an obstacle, potentially drastic decisions may be needed with a negative impact on the effectiveness of the Delta Programme.

Delta Fund, in millions of euros





The Netherlands is a low-lying country with an abundance of water. The national Delta Programme is in place to protect the Netherlands from flooding, to safeguard adequate supplies of fresh water, and to help render the Netherlands climate-resilient and water-robust. More information about the work on our delta can be found on the website of the national Delta Programme. The Programme involves concerted efforts by the central government, the provincial and municipal authorities, and the water authorities, with active participation from research institutes, stakeholder organisations, residents, and businesses.

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**[WWW.DELTAPROGRAMMA.NL](http://WWW.DELTAPROGRAMMA.NL)**

This is a publication from:

Delta Commissioner

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management

Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

September 2023

# NATIONAL DELTA PROGRAMME

GIVING IT  
OUR ALL  
FOR A SAFE  
AND  
LIVEABLE  
DELTA