



NATIONAL
DELTA PROGRAMME
2026

OUTLINES

Choosing, sharing and adapting

The next chapter in
our water tradition



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This publication provides a concise visualisation of the outlines of the 2026 Delta Programme. The full 2026 Delta Programme (in Dutch) can be found at dp2026.deltaprogramma.nl

Cover photo: Hoogwatergeul Reevediep. Photo: Tineke Dijkstra



Afsluitdijk.
Photo: Nationaal
Deltaprogramma

About the Delta Programme

Wet is getting wetter, dry is getting drier, hot is getting hotter, and the weather is getting more erratic. 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 2025 Delta Programme. See www.deltaprogramma.nl for the detailed report.

This outline brochure provides a concise 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.

“We are opening a new chapter in our water tradition. That means making tough decisions to adapt. With each other and later generations in mind.”

Delta Commissioner Co Verdaas

How can we organise implementation? And how will we finance it? Recommendation from the Delta Commissioner: initiate a governmental review.

It is becoming increasingly clear what we must do to maintain climate vitality in the Netherlands and which administrative decisions will be required for that purpose. The main question now is how to organise the necessary interventions.

How can we find
the best solutions
for society?



How will we pay for a
climate-vital Netherlands,
now and later?



With which actors
will we form
coalitions?



The time to get to work is short. A joint administrative exploration of these, and other, implementation questions will help to take the right steps in time. This requires commitment from administrators inside and outside the Delta Programme: the issues are located in both the water domain *and* the spatial domain.

Core Message

We can cope with too much, and too little, water. But only if we adapt.

The weather is becoming more erratic. Extremes of wet or dry weather at present will be normal in the future. That is why we need to manage water differently. *And* use and plan our country differently: to live and work in climate-resilient ways. Things must change.

Examples of adaptation:

Earmarking space for dike upgrades



Making space to accommodate rainstorms



Both agriculture and nature have to follow climate change



Distributing water efficiently across the Netherlands



Keeping villages and towns cool in extreme heat



Why is this important?

A failure to act will have major consequences: cloudbursts and drought cause damage and disruption. Clear decisions will open up new perspectives. Decisions about adapting water systems, and planning our towns, cities and rural areas. The regions are working out the options.

Why does this suit the Netherlands?

Dutch water management is world-famous. We constructed the Delta Works and developed Room for the River. Now we face a new chapter in our water tradition: making our country resilient to extreme rainfall and prolonged drought.

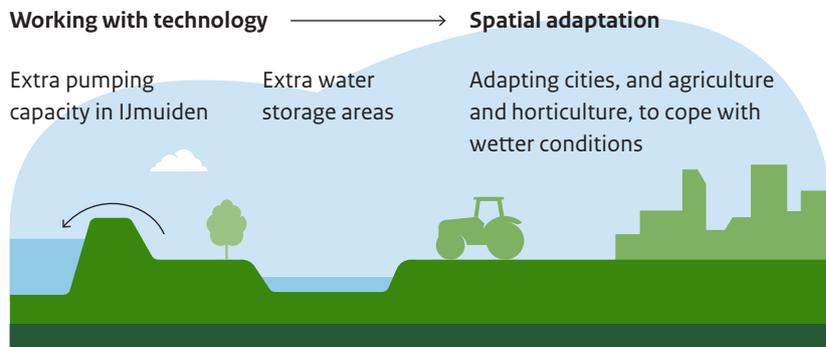
Coordinated decisions

To live and work in climate-resilient ways: selecting the appropriate combinations in conjunction

We must take advantage of all the options to live and work in climate-resilient ways: it's a question of doing this *and* this *and* that.

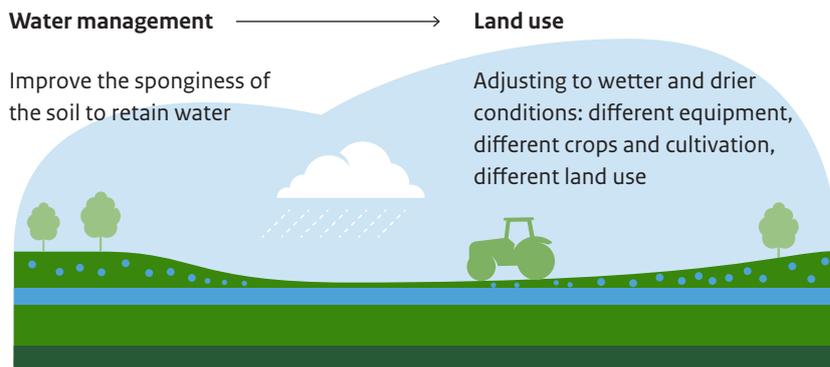
Technical and spatial

For example: Central Holland is already vulnerable to problems with excessive water after peak rainfall. Any failure to act will aggravate the situation.



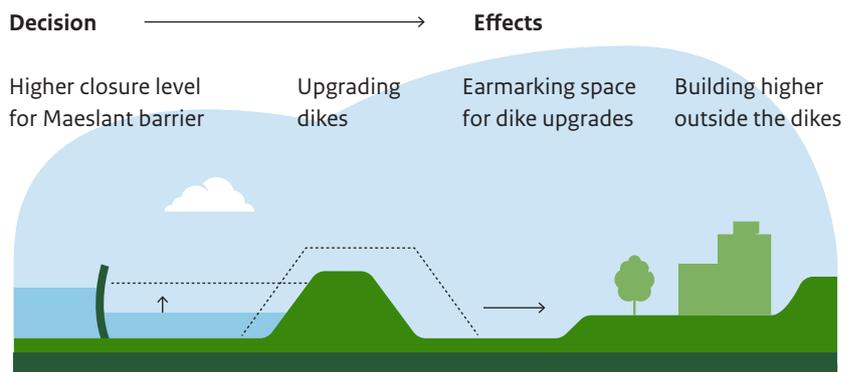
Water management and land use

For example: in the high-lying areas with sandy soils, less and less water is available.

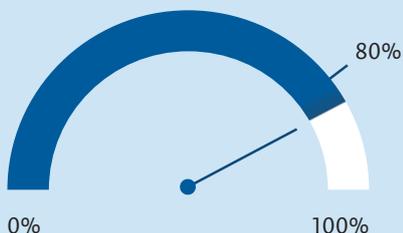


Decisions and effects

For example: sea level rise means the Maeslant barrier will close more and more often.



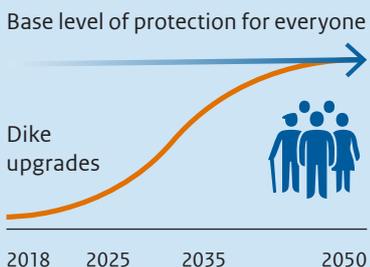
Flood risk management is about flood protection



The aim: by 2050, everyone will have the base level of protection. The likelihood of large groups of victims and major economic damage will therefore be very low. In 2020, 80% had the base protection level; by 2030 this will increase to 83%. This means that approximately 251,000 people more will have the base level of protection.

Moving ahead with dike upgrades

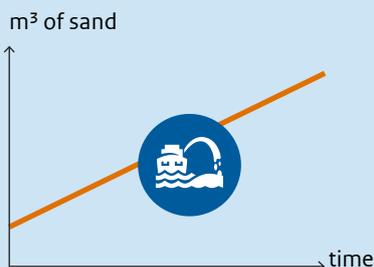
The national government and water authorities are investing more money in the Flood Protection Programme (HWBP) to keep up the pace of dike upgrades.



The water authorities and the national government are also working on improvements in the implementation of the HWBP.

Stockpiling sand for the coast

We keep the coastline in place with sand nourishment. In that way, the dunes stay tall and strong. This is very effective for flood risk management.



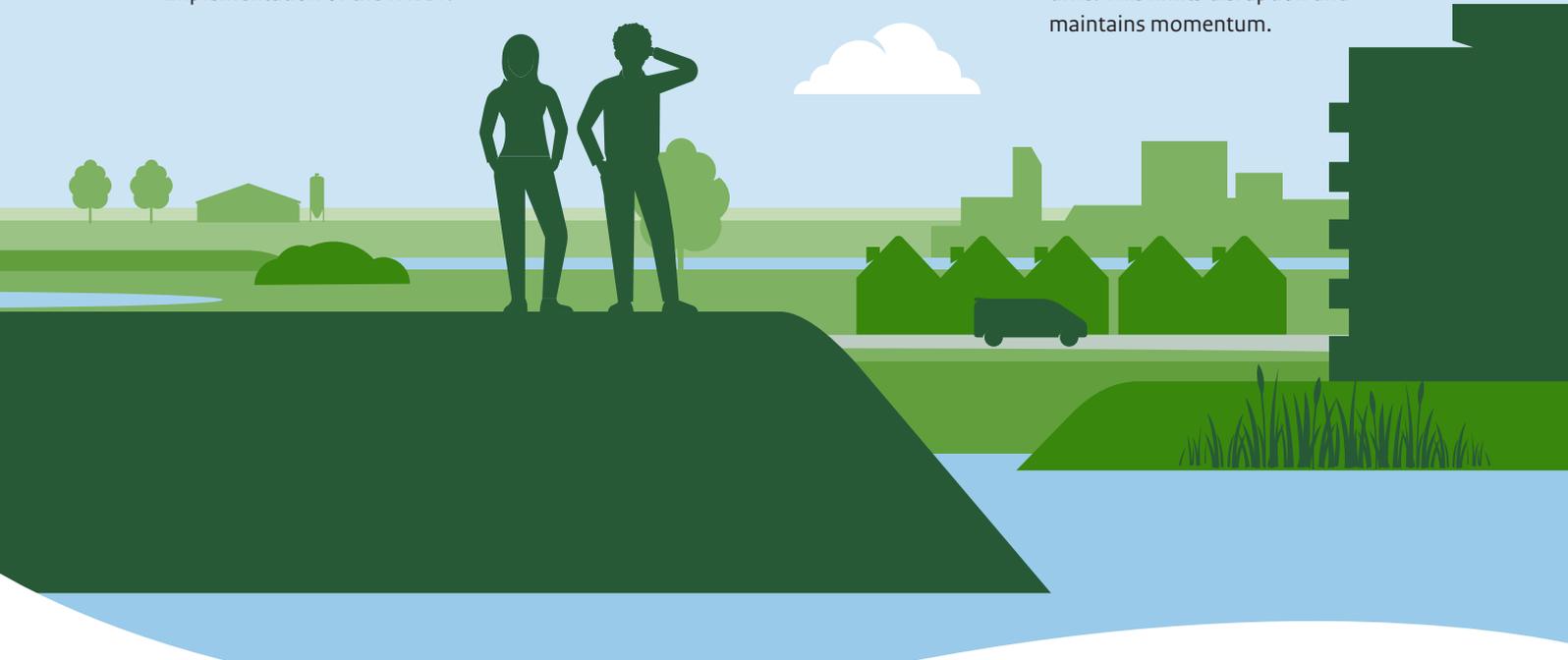
We need to save North Sea sand for coastal maintenance and preserve access to extraction locations.

Looking for connections proactively

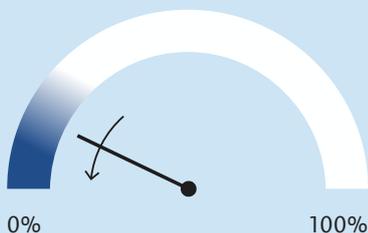
We can link the agenda for flood risk management to widening rivers and other spatial agendas.



Water authorities and other government authorities are looking for integrated solutions in good time. This limits disruption and maintains momentum.



The freshwater agenda is about resilience to water shortages

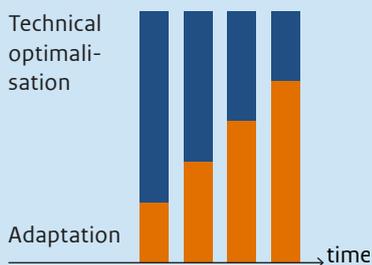


The Netherlands will be resilient to freshwater shortages by 2050.

The objective is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve. The water system, land use and business operations must change.

Optimise and adapt

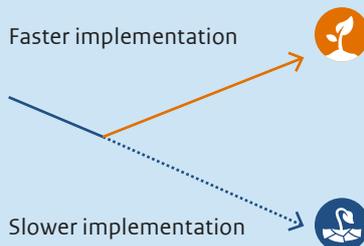
The Netherlands is facing more frequent dry periods. We can optimise the water system in technical terms to limit water shortages.



But that is not enough. We will also have to prepare for different ways of doing business and changes in spatial planning.

Priority for implementation

Many planned measures have been delayed due to a lack of capacity, inflation and the complexity of implementation.



The risk of damage caused by water shortages is increasing as a result. We maintain momentum by making implementation a higher priority.

How should we allocate the water?

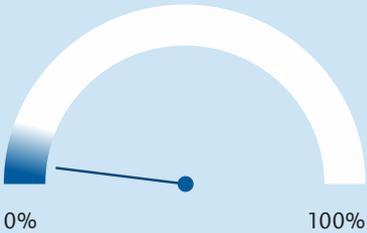
The country as a whole and the regions want more fresh water for homes, businesses, energy, etc. But there is less fresh water to supply in the summer.



Government authorities are making the risk of increasing water shortages and salinisation clear to users.



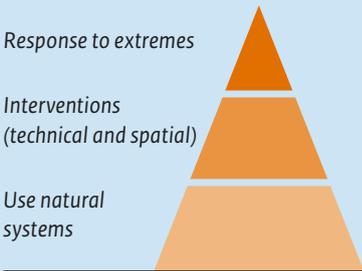
Spatial adaptation is about climate-resilient spatial planning



The Netherlands will be climate-resilient by 2050. We must get to work now to minimise damage as a result of problems with excessive water, flooding, drought and heat. We are only at the beginning of the transition required.

Looking for the balance

A lot is needed at the local, regional and national levels to become climate-resilient. That requires commitment on three levels:



Extreme rainfall is an urgent problem that we must address in conjunction with drought and heat.

Room for green and blue

More green and blue makes our environment climate-resilient, healthy and beautiful. That requires decisions about spatial planning.



Climate adaptation must be a part of everything we do in spatial planning.

Assuming responsibility

Climate resilience requires commitment on a broad front: from local residents, the financial sector, business, vital infrastructure, municipal health departments, agriculture, nature etc.



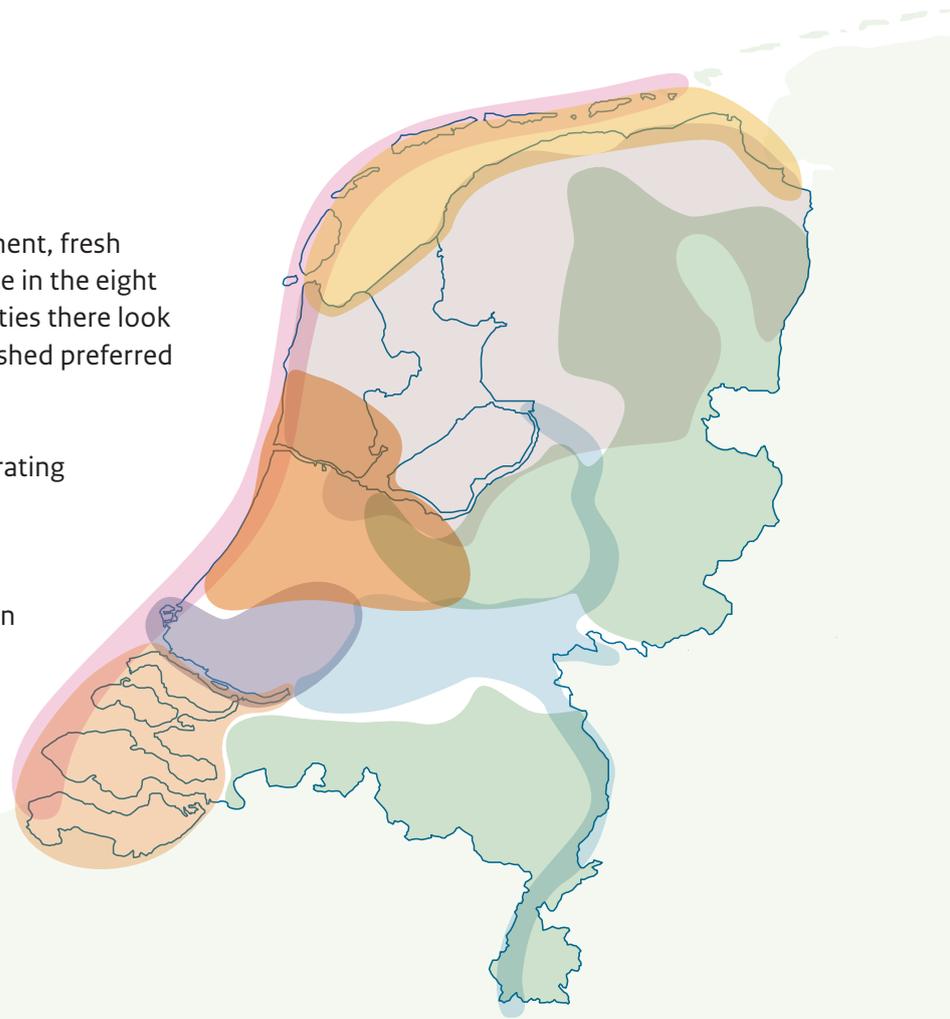
Climate resilience requires both public and private efforts and funding.



Implementation in the areas

The actual work on flood risk management, fresh water and spatial adaptation takes place in the eight areas of the Delta Programme. The parties there look for measures that fit in with the established preferred strategy for the area.

Increasingly erratic weather and accelerating sea level rise add to the challenges. The periodical evaluation of the Delta Programme will be completed in 2026. All areas expect changes to be needed in their preferred strategy. The direction that will take can be seen below for each region.



Coast

Actively commit to the rise of the Dutch coastal landscape in line with sea level rise: for the protection of our densely populated and capital-intensive hinterland, drinking and fresh water supplies, and high-quality nature and leisure.

Central Holland

Prevent social disruption resulting from extreme rainfall. This requires both technical solutions and enough room for water, with water storage, the smart use of space and climate-resilient spatial planning.

Rhine Estuary-Drecht Towns

Spatial developments should always be linked to flood risk management for the future.

Southwest Delta

We are working to make the Southwest Delta resilient now and in the future, with strong land-water transitions, healthy nature and enough fresh water for future generations. We have an area-based and adaptive approach for that purpose.

Wadden area

Move towards flood-resilient landscapes while considering the region's functions and values, and while looking for combinations with spatial adaptation and fresh water.

IJsselmeer area

Which future will we choose? Better freshwater availability and discharging water for longer, but additional dike upgrades and major consequences for areas outside the dikes and the drainage of the region? Or a lot of pumping on the Afsluitdijk barrier and less fresh water for eight provinces?

High-Lying Areas with Sandy Soils

The transition to a robust water system and appropriate water use is an imperative: this is the only way to maintain resilience to dry periods and peak rainfall. The transition has already begun and it requires a steady course in subsequent stages, in conjunction with the other agendas.

Rhine and Meuse

Tough spatial decisions now, inside and outside the dikes, for flood risk management and the availability of fresh water until 2100.

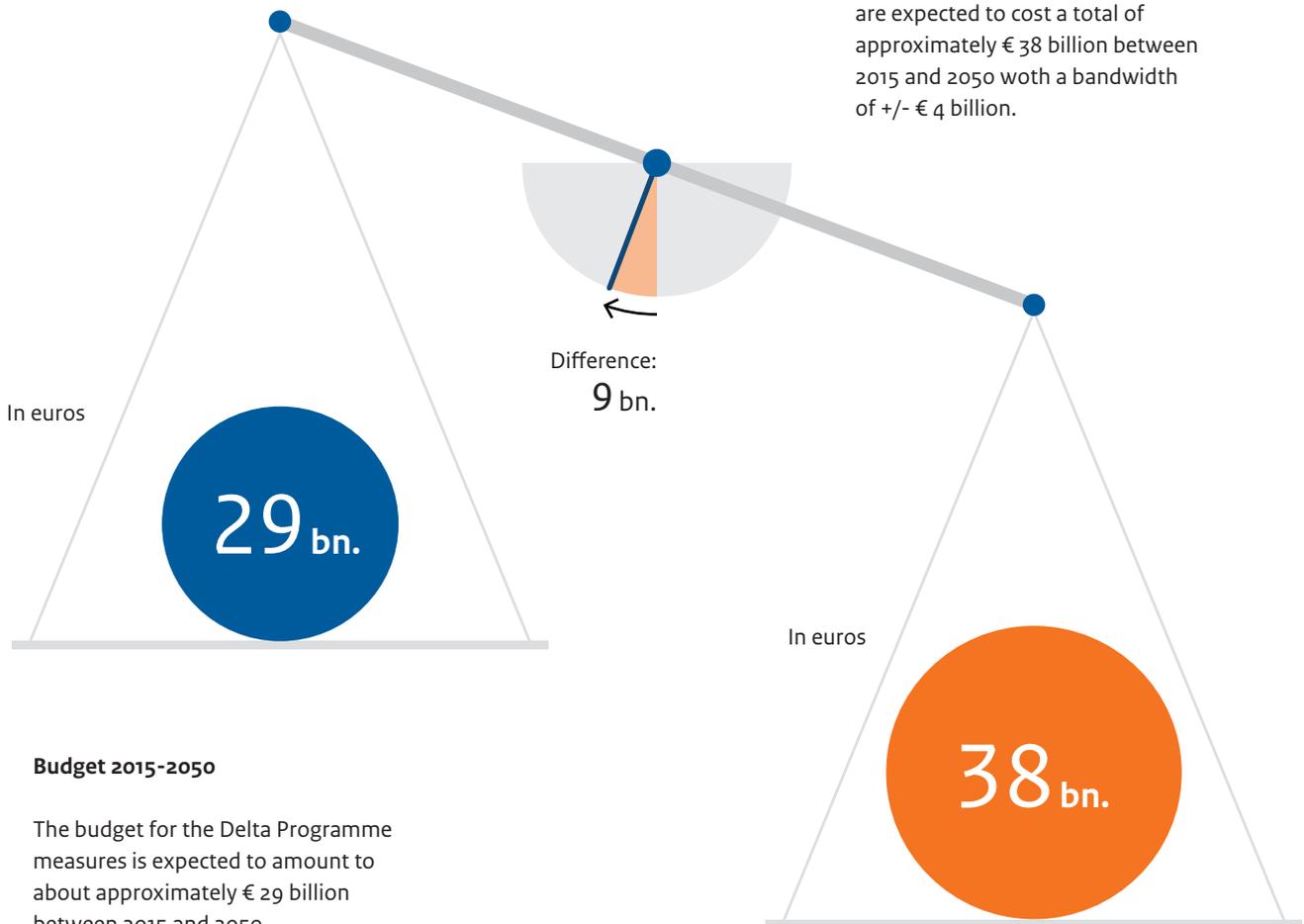
The Delta Fund: the financial cornerstone of the Delta Programme

The Delta Fund contains the financing provided by the national government to pay for some of the measures in the Delta Programme. Other government authorities contribute as well. In 2026, € 1.9 billion will be available in the Delta Fund, with € 0.7 billion of that amount being available for the objectives of the Delta Programme.

A total of € 29 billion – for the entire duration of the Delta Programme between 2015 and 2050 – is expected to be available for the measures. The cost of the required measures is lower than estimated last year. Even so, there is still a deficit. The implementation of measures depends not only on money, but also on factors such as capacity, and administrative and legal possibilities.

Costs 2015-2050

The Delta Programme measures are expected to cost a total of approximately € 38 billion between 2015 and 2050 with a bandwidth of +/- € 4 billion.



Budget 2015-2050

The budget for the Delta Programme measures is expected to amount to about approximately € 29 billion between 2015 and 2050.

Colophon

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The Netherlands is a low-lying country with a lot of water. 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. The website of the national Delta Programme has more information about the work on our delta.

The national Delta Programme brings together the national government, provincial and municipal authorities, and water authorities. Research institutes, stakeholder organisations, the general public and business are also actively involved.

[ENGLISH.DELTAPROGRAMMA.NL](https://www.english.deltaprogramma.nl)

This is a publication from:
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Ministry of Housing and Spatial Planning

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ALL OUT FOR A SAFE AND LIVEABLE DELTA