

Netherlands

Adaptive water management



TYPE OF TOOL
Plan



MAIN SECTORS
Water



THEME
*Green;
Resilience*



INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNANCE PILLARS
Long-term strategic vision

In a nutshell



OBJECTIVE: The Netherlands' adaptive planning approaches allow for accommodating uncertainty and a greater degree of flexibility to cope with climate change impact and future challenges related to water safety and freshwater supplies.



Agency in charge
Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management



Levels of government
National



Year of implementation
2012



Current status
Fully operational

Overview

The Netherlands has a long and robust tradition of living with water. Located in a delta, more than half of the country's territory and population and two-thirds of its economic activity are flood-prone. Safety against flooding and the management of excess rain have long been the foundation of water management in the Netherlands. Centuries of concerted action and investment helped build and maintain the country's extensive system of primary and regional flood defences.

A new paradigm towards adaptive water management has put thinking about the future and long-term sustainability at the heart of Dutch water policy. This shift began with the programme "Room for the River" and culminated with the adoption of the Delta Act in 2012. The act established the Delta Programme, the Delta Commissioner, and the Delta Fund to advance an adaptive water management approach that places primacy on a long-term perspective (up to 2100) and flexible strategies to cope with future challenges related to water safety and freshwater supplies.

Adaptive management is seen as a structured, iterative, learning-based process involving the fundamental features of learning and adaptation leading to both improved understanding of the (resource) system and to improved management based on that understanding. This entails integrating a long-term perspective into water management planning with iterative decision making, considering how decisions in the short term potentially enable or foreclose future options, and the use of nature-based solutions, which can avoid or delay lock-in to capital-intensive, conventional "grey" infrastructure.

REFERENCES:

- Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, *National Delta Programme*, <https://english.deltaprogramma.nl/>