

Summary of the advisory letter '*Wadden en klimaat*' (Wadden and Climate; 2009/01)

2008 saw the publication of the report of the Second Delta Committee (*Tweede Deltacommissie*) on the protection of the Netherlands against climate change. On that basis the Wadden Sea Council has sent an advisory letter to the State Secretary for Transport, Public Works and Water Management setting out a first step towards the elaboration of the report for the Wadden Sea region. The advisory letter recommends incorporating the advice in the implementation of the 'Deltarapport' (*Delta Report*) in the National Water Plan (*Nationaal Waterplan*).

The continued existence of the Wadden Sea in its current state appears to have been secured up until 2050. With a view to making a well considered long-term choice regarding having the Wadden Sea grow in keeping with rising sea levels, the Council recommends making a start at this early stage with large-scale research and long-term monitoring of sediment movement and sand replenishments.

Mainland coast

The Council recommends looking into the Northern Netherlands' alternatives and opportunities for building broad, indestructible dikes. The local starting situation with regard to aspects such as economic activity, cultural-historical objects, population density and the morphology outside of dikes will need to be the determining factor for seeking the space for this towards land or towards the sea. Secondary barriers or secondary dikes could also contribute to meeting the safety standards.

There remains a lack of clarity about the actual contribution that salt marshes can make to the level of protection for the hinterland because there is still uncertainty about the contribution at high water levels and the contribution's permanence. Furthermore, extending the marshland acreage will lead to a decline in the acreage of high Wadden Sea flats and their natural values. The Council therefore takes the view that it is necessary to look into whether the active creation of salt marshes can in fact be regarded as a significant and permanent coastal protection measure.

Northeast Groningen plays an important role in the supply of gas and energy for a large part of the Netherlands. The economic significance of this area is not sufficiently expressed in the current safety standards, and the Council takes the view that it has not been sufficiently covered in the advice of the Second Delta Committee. For the setting of new standards the Council highlights the importance of correctly assessing the direct and indirect (consequential) damage for this specific area.

Islands and the Wadden Sea

Sand replenishments are currently being carried out to retain the basic coastline. In combination with admitting natural processes and dynamics on the islands, replenishments could also create opportunities for having the Wadden seabed and the parts of the islands outside of the dikes grow with rising sea levels and for the ecological improvement of dunes and salt marshes. To take full advantage of these opportunities the Council recommends the initiation of large-scale pilots aimed at gathering the knowledge needed to determine optimum replenishment quantities and locations. A closer look will need to be taken at the possible (undesirable) ecological effects of intensifying replenishments. It will also be necessary to consider which role could be played by 'biological builders' in constraining sediment, and how they respond to climate change.

IJsselmeer

The Council believes that the large-scale fresh water facility in IJsselmeer proposed by the Delta Committee has not been properly substantiated. Part of the future fresh water requirement could be met from the regional water system. Also, anticipated industrial, technological and socio-economic developments could reduce the future demand for fresh water. The Council recommends using the time between now and 2015 to seek an optimum structure for the Afsluitdijk, in which the functions and qualities of both IJsselmeer *and* the Wadden Sea are utilised and strengthened. A link between the two internationally recognised nature conservation areas could result in both being strengthened.

Raad voor de Wadden/Wadden Sea Council
P.O. Box 392, NL-8901 BD Leeuwarden
Lange Marktstraat 5, NL-8911 AD Leeuwarden
T 0031 58 2126015
F 0031 58 2120158
M info@raadvoordewadden.nl
W info@raadvoordewadden.nl