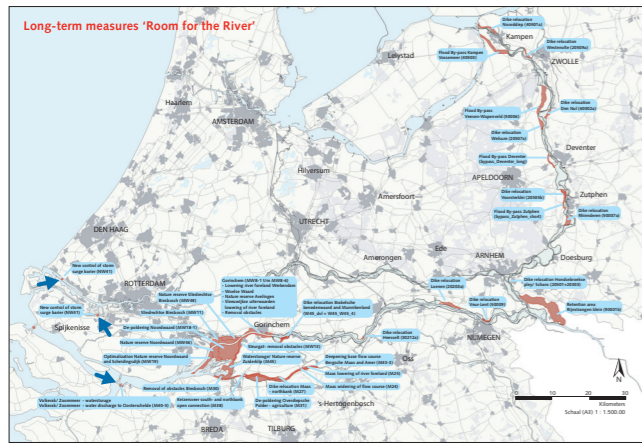


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Spatial Planning Key Decision 'Room for the River'



Long-term vision on the protection against extreme floods

The flood protection policy 'Room for the River' also presents a view on the spatial requirements for the long-term

accommodation of major floods. All measures to be implemented in the short term are of no-regret with respect to this long-term view. By the end of this century the river may have to safely accommodate 18,000 m³/s.

Objectives Project 'Room for the River'

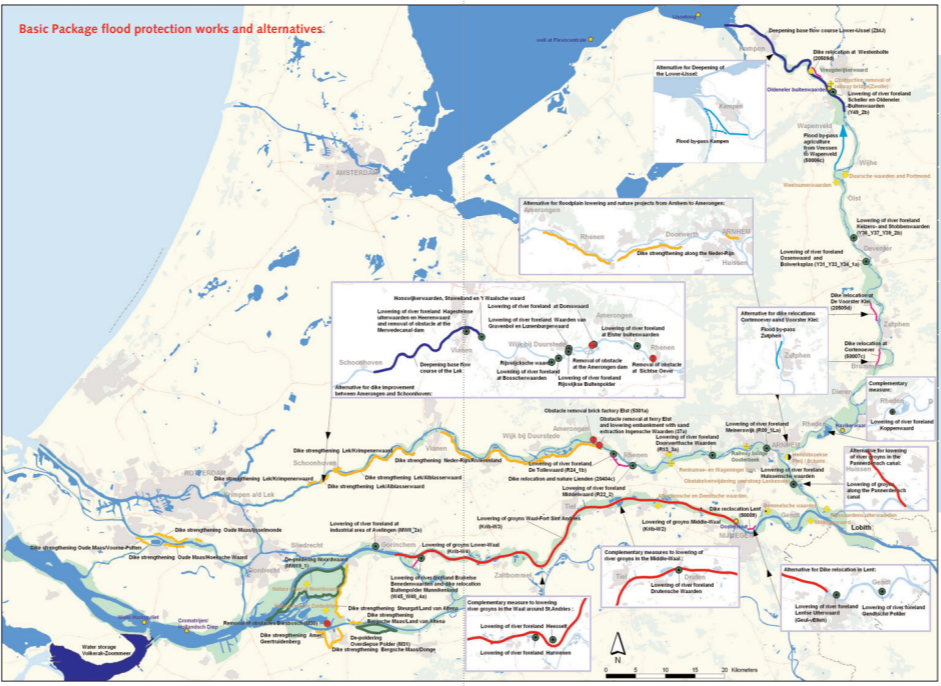
1 Safety against extreme river floods
 Due to anticipated climatic changes the Rhine delta river branches have to accommodate ever-higher extreme discharges. Until recently it was standard policy to raise the crest levels of the dikes to maintain the required level of flood protection. This centuries old policy was abandoned in 2000 in favour of 'Room for the River'. In the new policy, river cross sections are widened by situating the dikes further away from the river, or by lowering the river forelands. This will result in lower flood levels. By the year 2015 the river should be able to safely discharge 16,000 m³/s.

2 Improvement of overall environmental conditions

In giving 'Room for the River' care should be taken not to affect valuable features of landscape, nature and cultural history. More space can also be found by enlarging the river channel within the dikes. In the process, one should aim at a balance between present and foreseeable future spatial requirements, keeping an open eye for every opportunity to enhance safety as well as the master landscaping and the improvement of overall environmental conditions.

Cabinet proposal for Spatial Planning Key Decision 'Room for the River'

The Dutch cabinet recently proposed a Spatial Planning Key Decision in which the spatial planning for the entire area related to the Rhine delta is laid out. The document presents an integrated spatial plan with the main objectives of flood protection, master landscaping and the improvement of overall environmental conditions. Completion of a basic package of about forty projects is foreseen for 2015, with a budget of 2.2 billion.



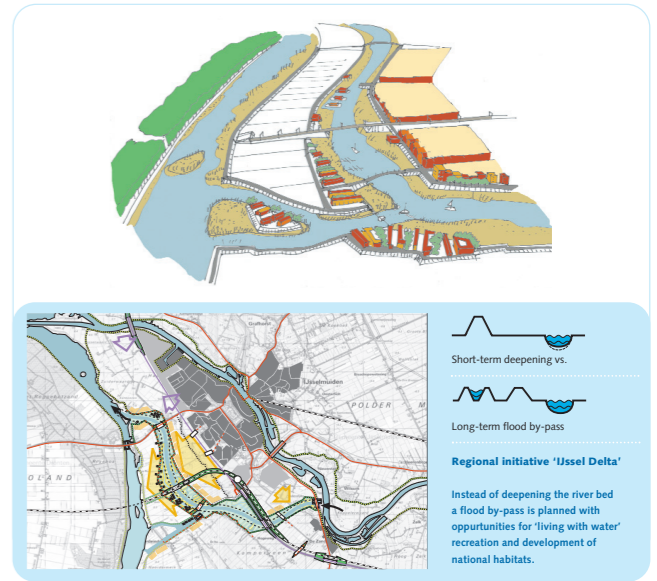
Spatial Planning Key Decision a national policy instrument

Three administrative layers exist in the Netherlands: municipality, province and state. Lands can be utilized or built-up only in accordance with a zoning plan decided upon by the town council. Once the plan is accepted by all parties, any construction plan that is contrary to the zoning plan will be denied a building permit by the local authorities. A zoning plan, however, is not

valid until it has been approved by the provincial administration. The province itself draws up a regional zoning plan against which to test the local plans. This means that town and country planning is first and foremost determined by local authorities, and then tested against overall schemes. Spatial planning is furthermore executed on a national scale; the result is referred to as Spatial Planning Key Decisions (SPKD). These are drawn up at ministerial level and have to be approved by parliament. A SPKD

describes general or specific spatial planning policy. A general spatial planning policy may deal with the key functions of town and country planning in the Netherlands, or with agricultural and nature areas, or transportation, or the providing of electricity. But a SPKD can also focus on a specific project at a specific location, such as building a rail road for the high speed train, or the construction of a harbour facility. Prior to publication of a SPKD, its effects on nature and the environment have to be

studied on a strategic level. A Spatial Planning Key Decision called 'Room for the River' will be submitted to Parliament in 2006. In this plan, the measures for flood control of the major rivers are outlined; they include the creation of additional space for the rivers. For each location, the local plans are described: e.g. the construction of secondary channels in the river foreland, the displacement of a dike further inland, or returning previously reclaimed land to the river.



Programmatic approach gives a chance to regional initiatives

The Spatial Planning Key Decision sets a flexible framework for realising the project's objectives. Various alternatives are, or will become available at a later stage, and will offer opportunities for regional development along the rivers,

such as waterfront housing, and recreational and nature developments. These measures were not selected as yet because of the higher cost and longer procedures involved. To achieve these additional goals, cooperation and co-financing in public-public or public-private partnerships are required. The national government will facilitate or

co-finance initiatives from private parties or regional governmental bodies such as municipalities. National procedures with supra regional and coordinating influence may apply to certain initiatives so the national government can smooth the often cumbersome path of public decision-making and of obtaining all required legal permits.