

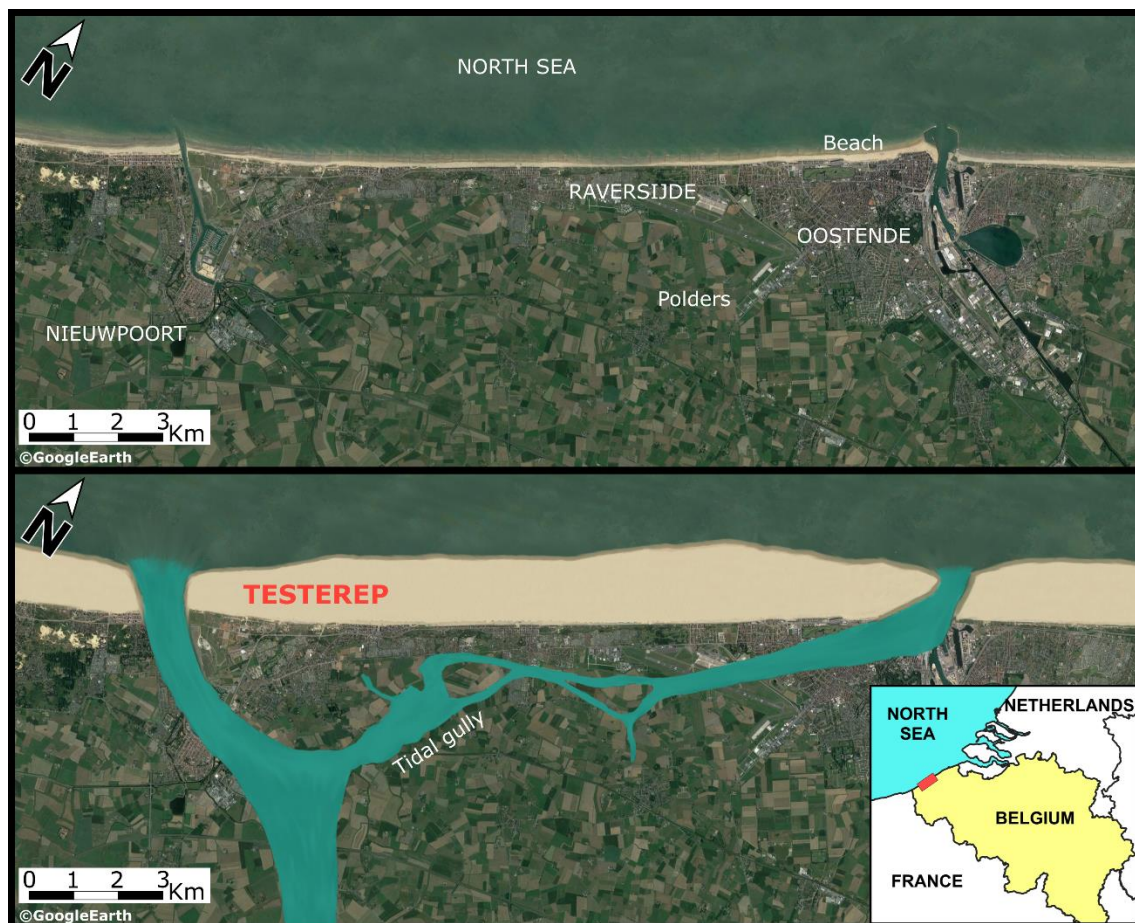
Introducing the TESTEREP project: the evolution of a former peninsula along the Belgian coast as a case study in the development and sustainable management of the coastal landscape

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Preference for poster presentation: YES/ NO



Satellite image of the current Belgian Middle Coast and a hypothetical reconstruction showing the medieval location of the former Testerep peninsula and tidal gully in this landscape.

This presentation will give a general overview of the TESTEREP project, studying 5000 years of Belgian coastal evolution. Geological, sedimentological, and paleoecological research as well as historical and archaeological studies have led to a general understanding of the Holocene evolution of the Belgian coastal plain and the way people have interacted with this changing landscape. However, existing research usually concentrates on either the onshore or the offshore.

Questions about the interaction between on- and offshore geomorphological changes and the human impact on the landscape remain unanswered both on short- and long-term scales. With the TESTEREP project, we aim to address these shortcomings through novel interdisciplinary research across the land-sea border. Testerep was a peninsula located off the middle part of the Belgian coast, separated from the mainland by a broad tidal gully from the Iron Age until the gully's embankment in the Middle Ages. Today, the gully is silted up and the landward part of the peninsula has become part of the polders and beach, while the seaward side is submerged. In order to study the evolution and eventual demise of Testerep over the past 5000 years, existing data on historic natural (e.g. palaeo-gullies) and artificial (e.g. embankments) features will be supplemented with new on- and offshore data, including LiDAR, geophysical surveys, coring and excavations. All information will be integrated through GIS analyses and will form the basis for morphological and hydrodynamic modelling. This will result in palaeogeographic maps and give insight into the driving factors behind landscape change. The project includes a large outreach component, leveraging the multidisciplinary knowledge to raise public awareness about coastal dynamics and current threats through innovative virtual landscape reconstructions, to stimulate blue tourism, support heritage management, and inspire sustainable coastal management strategies for the future.