

INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SCHELDT ESTUARY

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A common research and monitoring programme was established between Flanders and the Netherlands in the framework of the long-term vision for the Scheldt Estuary (LTV O&M) (Directie Zeeland, Administratie Waterwegen en Zeewezen, 2001). The project 'Indicators of Sustainable Development (ISD) for the Scheldt Estuary' was selected for the work programme 2008, to be developed 2009-2010. The election and development of a set of ISD underpins current integrated policies both at the local, national and EU level and intersects with current and planned projects for the Scheldt Estuary (e.g. MONEOS).

Indicators are increasingly recognized and used as instruments for the exploration, planning, monitoring and evaluation of policy measures. They also help to bridge the gap between policy, science, and the wider public. In the Scheldt Estuary, different administrative levels, authorities and the private and public sector operate on both sides of the border (Flanders-Netherlands) and coherent spatial planning and integrated management is needed to allow sustainable use and land-water interactions. A set of ISD can be used in this context for a variety of (policy) objectives such as monitoring of policy relevant processes in space and time, providing transparent and objective scientific information to target groups and stimulating and supporting an integrated management of the Scheldt Estuary.

This project aims to develop a set of ISD for the Scheldt Estuary, building on prevalent views on sustainable development and proposals for indicators for the Estuary, current initiatives for ISD in comparable estuaries. The set will be aligned with the long-term vision for the Scheldt Estuary. Key actors in the network of stakeholders, academic and scientific institutes will provide input and expertise in different phases of design and development of the instrument (1st semester 2009). The data collecting and processing will follow data policy and standards of the Flemish Marine Data Centre (VMDC-VLIZ) and the calculated data and metadata descriptions will be made available on the Internet. Dynamic visualisation tools (webGIS), graphs, downloads and Information Sheets by indicator will be available from the ScheldeMonitor website (www.scheldemonitor.be). User organizations (Flanders and NL) will be closely involved in the design and content of the final products (webpages and webtools).

References

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