



Summary of Management & Development Plan for National Waters 2016-2021

Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, Rijkswaterstaat

The new Management and Development Plan for National waterways and water systems (*Beheer- en ontwikkelplan voor de rijkswateren*, Bprw) describes the management of the national waterways and water systems in the Netherlands between 2016 and 2021 and was drafted by the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management (*Rijkswaterstaat*, RWS). The plan translates the National Water Plan 2016-2021 and the National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning into the management and maintenance of national waterways. The Bprw and the National Water Plan will be published simultaneously to allow policy and its implementation to be prepared cohesively and harmonised.

Through this Bprw Rijkswaterstaat is accountable in advance for the performance of its tasks over the coming six years. The plan describes what partners and users may expect, namely work on a robust water system and its sustainable usage. The plan has been discussed with regional water authorities, users of national waterways and interest groups. Rijkswaterstaat is accountable for achieving the intentions contained in the plan. A Strategic Environmental Assessment was drafted for the Bprw. The draft Bprw and the Environmental Assessment are open to public consultation.

Management vision

The Bprw brings cohesion to the management of the national waterways. It includes a vision of the role and tasks of Rijkswaterstaat and the method of management and maintenance. The objective is to achieve integral management as mandated in the National Water Plan. Rijkswaterstaat manages and maintains the national waterways based on a vision of river basins, transport corridors and national networks. Priorities are defined based on a national overview. Management and maintenance is a dynamic process, not a static one: Rijkswaterstaat responds to changing circumstances, user needs, new policy decisions, technological development, and opportunities for cooperation. The Bprw elaborates management, maintenance and construction into core tasks, uses and areas. The core tasks cover water safety, sufficient water, clean and healthy water, smooth and safe transport by water and a sustainable environment.

Core tasks

'Water safety' is about protecting of land against flooding from the sea, rivers, canals and large lakes and a safe discharge of water, ice and sediment. Without this protection a large part of the Netherlands would be flooded regularly. In the planning period (2016-2021) Rijkswaterstaat will work on the implementation of the Delta decisions, reinforcing primary flood defences that do not meet the standards and restoring and maintaining flood plains in order to ensure sufficient space for drainage. Sand nourishments maintain the coastline. To optimise the nourishment programme

Rijkswaterstaat will commission further research into sand movements in the coastal zone.

'Sufficient water' is about both the prevention of water shortages and (nuisance) flooding as well as the combating of salinization. Sufficient fresh water is obviously extremely important to societal and economic uses. Key issues in the planning period include the implementation of the Delta Programme Fresh Water, the Delta Programme IJsselmeer, maintaining the fixed distribution of water discharge of the river Rhine in the event of high water, and the combating of salinization. In this way the fresh water supply to the west of the Netherlands will be improved.

'Clean and healthy water' concerns the chemical and ecological quality of national water systems. Clean and healthy water is a precondition for an attractive human environment. Similarly, societal and economic uses would be impossible without water of sufficient quality. In the planning period, Rijkswaterstaat continues with the programme of measures for the European Water Framework Directive (WFD). The programme includes numerous restoration and development measures to improve habitats and fish migration. Realisation of the WFD programme also contributes to the goals of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Natura 2000.

Smooth and safe transport by water is about traffic management and managing and maintaining navigable waterways including locks, weirs and information systems. By facilitating good accessibility, safe navigable waterways and reliable travel times, Rijkswaterstaat contributes to efficient and sustainable transport of goods. This strengthens the competitiveness of the main ports and maritime sector. Management, maintenance and construction are based on national and international waterway corridors with priority for seaport access and main transport axes. Better use of the existing waterways – including through traffic management targeted at corridors – is priority. Professional and recreational vessels are fully-fledged traffic participants who can safely use the network of waterways.

'Uses' is about the societal and economic use of the national water systems. If the core tasks - water safety, sufficient water, clean and healthy water, and smooth and safe transport by water - are in order, favourable conditions for uses are created. Rijkswaterstaat wants to deliver added value to society while managing and maintaining the national water systems. Especially when it comes to the quality of the environment. Therefore, Rijkswaterstaat is actively seeking opportunities to create links between its own work and the societal goals and interests for which parties other than the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment are responsible.

Rijkswaterstaat regulates water usage and discharges of wastewater by a permitting system and uses regular compliance checking to avoid a situation where usage is prejudicial to defined core tasks. However, usage also imposes requirements regarding safety, quantity and quality of surface water. Rijkswaterstaat is given additional statutory management duties in order to safeguard specific water functions, such as drinking water production and bathing water. First priority lies with core tasks and, in doing so, the safeguarding of specific water function will be optimized. The Water Management Centre and the Shipping Traffic Centre have a key role in maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Rijkswaterstaat crisis organisation and provide specific training, information and guidance on crisis management. The Rijkswaterstaat crisis organisation operates in close cooperation with regional authorities.

Management tasks for 2016-2021

Continuity is an important requirement for managing and maintaining national waters. The Bprw 2016-2021 builds on previous management plans. Key developments include elimination of maintenance backlogs through retrenchment and efficiency improvements, and the Delta decisions on water safety and fresh water supply. In this planning period,

Delta decisions will have limited consequences and just for safeguarding water supply measures will be already implemented. Rijkswaterstaat is actively involved in elaborating the Delta decisions by offering its specific knowledge and expertise on operational water management. Society is changing, and as a consequence, so are the requirements that Rijkswaterstaat must meet. The security of vital assets and information management are matters that now require more attention. Good environmental quality and sustainability are prerequisites for modern and robust management, maintenance and construction.

As for the period 2010-2015, management tasks will gradually increase from 2016 on. This is due to autonomous developments like soil subsidence and erosion. Completion of major construction projects and the Water Framework Directive will increase the total area managed by Rijkswaterstaat. For effective flood management Rijkswaterstaat needs to increase the area of land under its jurisdiction. The Bprw contains area-dedicated elaborations with a programme of measures for managing and developing the national waters.

Rivers are the central axes of the national water system. In the planning period, long-running programmes to improve both water safety and environmental quality will be completed. Rijkswaterstaat will get the management of vegetation into good shape. Work will be undertaken to improve the Meuse route for shipping and to renovate the lock complexes.

Canals exist for shipping, but are also used to supply and discharge water. Core items include improving flood defences that do not meet the applicable requirements and improving the utilisation of the available water, together with the regional (water) authorities. Increasing the height of bridges, or widening navigable waterways, sometimes in combination with replacement and renovation, will upgrade various waterways. This will increase mobility.

The **Wadden Sea** is the world's largest intertidal zone. The objective is to cooperate as a single authority according to a single management plan, including German and Danish authorities. Rijkswaterstaat will assure the accessibility of the Wadden Islands and will widen the Eemshaven-North Sea fairway.

The **North Sea** is a busily navigated sea with numerous user functions. Rijkswaterstaat serves as a coordinating manager and fulfils a crucial role in weighing up and controlling these functions, in particular offshore wind energy. In the planning period, Natura 2000 management plans and measures under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive will be laid down and a start will be made on implementing them. The emphasis will be on managing navigable fairways and on providing operational services, such as notifications as well as search and rescue.

The **IJsselmeer lake area** is Western Europe's largest fresh water area. The IJsselmeer is the strategic fresh water supply for a large part of the Netherlands. At the same time it accommodates major nature values. In the planning period, the water level management will be made more flexible, the 'Afsluitdijk' and 'Houtribdijk' will be reinforced and the management of the Ramspol storm surge barrier will be optimised.

The **South-west Delta** consists of the mouth of the Scheldt, Meuse and Rhine rivers and has a great diversity of waters, with transitions from fresh to salt water, as well as river and tidal dynamics. Major port and industrial complexes are located along the borders. The area includes the access to seaports and their connections with the hinterland. In the planning period, Rijkswaterstaat will optimise the management of the Delta Works and the storm surge barriers. Similarly, the management of the Haringvliet sluice gates will be modified to allow for a more natural fresh-salt water transition.

Management in progress

Rijkswaterstaat manages numerous storm surge barriers, dikes, dams, navigable waterways, river foreshores, lock chambers, pumping stations, bridges, weirs, fish traps, radar stations, lighthouses, beacons and buoys. Some of these assets are located in the North Sea and in the Caribbean Netherlands. Rijkswaterstaat is the principal executive organisation of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and has the status of an agency. Work is performed to the extent permitted by resources, funding and staffing.

Rijkswaterstaat is actively looking for cooperation: in the catchment areas and transport corridors with neighbouring countries and other water managers, in the regions with regional authorities and private sector parties, and in alliances with knowledge institutions. Cooperation with other water managers on the joint management of data and ICT will be continued and expanded. In all of these activities Rijkswaterstaat wants to make greater use of the possibilities offered by technological advances.