

# Evaluating national coastline management policy - NL

## 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Managing impacts of climate change and safeguarding resilience of coasts/coastal systems
- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Improving competitiveness

## 2. Key Approaches

- Participation
- Knowledge-based

## 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

The Dutch government regularly produce coastal policy documents to provide a foundation for coastal management activities. In this case, the last policy document, dating from 2000, was evaluated for its effectiveness after seven years of implementation.

## 4. Overview of the case

A desk top study, together with a meeting and interviews with stakeholders, provided the basis for assessing whether the Third Coastal Policy document dating from 2000 was still relevant in 2007 and to what extent the objectives set out had been actually achieved.

## 5. Context and Objectives

### a) Context

The Third Coastal Policy document, brought out by the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management in 2000, gives a long-term perspective of dynamic coastal management in the Netherlands. It followed similar documents written in 1990 and 1995 but expanded policy options to include a broader range of coastal functionality e.g. spatial planning, nature and environment, economic issues and, of course, safety. As a policy paper, it has no legal basis for implementing authorities although any deviation from it during management of the coast needs to be justified.

In 2007, questions were being asked as to how relevant the document was and whether it was still applicable for the current coastal problems? Would the same policy choices be made in 2007 as were made in 2000? Therefore, it was determined to evaluation the effectiveness of the coastal policy being implemented as a result of the policy described in the document. This evaluation was also to have learning and agenda-setting goals. The main questions for the evaluation were:

1. To what extent have the goals described been achieved? (goal achievement).
2. To what extent is the achievement of these goals the result of the policy described? (policy effectiveness).
3. To what extent was the implementation of the coastal policy and the way the stakeholders were involved in it organised efficiently? (policy efficiency).
4. What lessons, based on the pursued policy, could be learned?
5. What problems have to be solved to secure a sustainable coastal policy in the future?

In order to perform the evaluation, these questions were operationalised into more specific ones.

## b) Objectives

The goal of the evaluation was to give an insight into how far the goals of the Third Coastal Policy have been reached and to the extent that these targets were reached as a result of implementing the policy contained in the document. Therefore, the focus of the evaluation lay in the effectiveness of the described policy.

## 6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)

### a) Management

The Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management led the evaluation. Under the supervision of the National Institute for Coastal and Marine Management and an inter-departmental committee, two consultancy bureaus Twynstra Gudde and Alkyon carried out this evaluation.

### b) ICZM tools

The evaluation was conducted by desktop research augmented by interviews with a range of stakeholders and one meeting of stakeholders. To conduct the work, a 'Goal Instrument Network' was formulated for every main goal in order to schematically point out which sub-goals were being pursued in order to achieve the main goals of the Third Coastal Policy Document. These were then linked to the efforts needed to attain them as mentioned in the policy document. In this way, it was possible to determine to what extent the (sub)goals had been achieved and whether this was the result of the policy described in the Third Coastal Policy Document. The efficiency in which the policy was carried out was also examined.

On the basis of this evaluation, it was concluded that:

1. The first main goal described in the Third Coastal Policy Document (sustainable protection of the low Netherlands (safety against flooding) has been achieved in the period to be studied. This achievement was the result of the pursued policy and the efforts described in the Third Coastal Policy Document have actually been executed.
2. The second main goal (the use of space in the coastal area in harmony with sustainable protection of the low Netherlands) has been partially achieved and is still 'under construction'. One of the reasons for this is the fact that policy with regard to spatial planning had still not been fully developed and officially endorsed. The building policy for the coastal zone remains controversial and although the national spatial strategy ('Nota Ruimte') now contains a paragraph about the coast, the government is still working on new environmental policy. Therefore, because there is no unambiguous national policy at this moment, the policy as described in The Third Coastal Policy Document has not been carried out everywhere. This is because, for many actors, it is still not clear what they are allowed and not allowed to do with regard to the use of space in the coastal area.

However, these two goals were considered to be formulated too implicitly. Furthermore, the judicial status of the Third Coastal Policy Document as well as of the policy instruments is weak. There is an awareness that spatial planning is only a subject of discussion when safety has been secured. This implies, in terms of integrated policy, that there is a hierarchy with safety foremost and only then spatial planning, nature and economy. Nonetheless, this is not explicitly formulated.

## 7. Cost and resources

The evaluation took place over a period of six months and cost ca. €100,000. It can be noted that the Netherlands, for the period evaluated (2000-07), had a national annual budget of ca. €45 million per year for coastal management measures.

## 8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)

With regard to the first main goal of the Third Coastal Policy Document, it can be concluded that it has been carried out in an effective and efficient way. The other main goal was carried out in a less effective and efficient way. This has to do with the fact that other (sub)goals are not formulated sufficiently concretely for realisation. Also, the complexity of governmental organisation and processes and the relatively weak instruments make the policy less efficient. Regarding policy

implementation, efficiency improvements can be made by bringing together governance and managerial matters for each inter-connected water system. The framework for decision-making about sand nourishment can be improved e.g. by combining with maintenance dredging or innovative tendering. Financing the implementation of the policies is still problematic. Local authorities expect financing from central government for specific policy matters whereas central government expects the financing to be taken from the spatial planning budgets of the authorities. These financial issues sometimes lead to opportunities of measures or new insights being lost.

The evaluation revealed visions that are, on the one hand, focused on small scale improvement and reinforcement and, on the other hand point, to the direction of large scale seaward developments. An overall vision and statement about the level of the interventions that should take place in the future is necessary i.e. will local interventions suffice or is intervention on a larger and higher scale required e.g. with artificial reefs, islands in front of the coast or coastal expansion? In this perspective, the Third Coastal Policy Document is rather conservative (holding the coastline of 1990). It focuses on preventing structural erosion and on landward expansion of the coastline and limits 'seaward expansion' and related ambitions. Opinions amongst stakeholders varied on the question whether the document would be more effective were it to be given a higher status than a policy document i.e. be grounded in law.

## 9. Success and Fail factors

The evaluation underlines the importance of the expertise of stakeholders. The responsibility for a fully integrated management of the coast lies within several different ministries viz. The Ministries of Transport, Public Works & Water Management; Traffic, Spatial Planning & Environment; Economic Affairs; and Agriculture, Nature & Food. Thus, there is no overall responsibility for (sustainable) development and no mechanism to couple it to a financial base.

## 10. Unforeseen outcomes

The evaluation pointed out several dilemmas and problems that still need to be solved e.g. whether building in the coastal zone should be allowed – a number of regional authorities allow building for economic reasons although central government does not always approve; the private sector feels that there are insufficient incentives to invest in the coast.

## 11. Prepared by

A.H. Pickaver, Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC), The Netherlands

## 12. Verified by

Rob Steijn, Alkyon.

## 13. Sources

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- Evaluatie Derde Kustnota (2007) B. Lubbers, J. de Heer, J. Groenendijk, M. van Bockel, M. Blekemolen, J. Lambeek & R. Steijn



3e kustnota (1.79 MB)



Evaluatie derde kustnota (1.03 MB)

