

Sand Motor Delfland

In partnership with the OECD Studies on Water: Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance

An innovation provided by

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Organisation: Rijkswaterstaat - Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment

Country: Netherlands

Level of government: Regional/State government

Sector: Environmental protection

Type:

Launched in: 2008

Overall development time: 3 year(s) 6 month(s)

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

In the Netherlands, an “Ambition Agreement” was signed in 2008 between representatives from the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Safety, the province of South Holland, several municipalities, the regional water authority, an environmental NGO, research centres (Deltares and the Ecoshape Innovation Programme), academia (Delft University of Technology) and consultancy firms.

The objective of the agreement was to work on the realisation of the “Sand Motor,” a multi-functional and large-scale sand nourishment infrastructure project aiming to protect the area from flood by compensating for sand losses from coastline erosion, to create recreational and natural areas, and to contribute to natural dune formation.

The project was co-designed by the signatories throughout workshops and its location was commonly decided to avoid any negative impact on the stakeholders engaged. Beyond the parties to the agreement, civil society was also consulted and had the possibility to ask questions and formally object through legal procedures, especially during the planning phase.

The agreement for the implementation of the Sand Motor had agreed-upon goals and ambitions and led to broad commitment across stakeholders, without any delays and additional expenditures. The Sand Motor was successfully completed in 2011 following close monitoring and resulting in a positive nourishment of adjacent coasts.

Why the innovation was developed

- This approach serves multiple functions: it contributes to flood protection by compensating for sand losses from erosion processes along the coastline; it creates temporary recreational and natural areas; and it contributes to natural dune formation. The project was set-up as a ‘pilot’ - or put in different words: an experiment – and contributes to knowledge development and learning. The Sand Motor ‘experiment’ is being monitored intensively and first observation show that the nourishment is indeed feeding the adjacent coasts
- The implementation process of the Sand Motor can be regarded as quite successful: after signing an ‘ambition’ agreement among nine interested stakeholders in April 2008 in which the goals and ambitions of the project were agreed upon, it took about three and a half years, without significant delays, until the Sand Motor was fully realized in 2011.
- A number of drivers can be identified that triggered the engagement process. The multi-functional nature of the project (i.e. its four project goals) triggered a broad involvement of stakeholders.
- The open attitude of the project team. In case individuals or groups were interested in the project (in the innovation, such as WNF), they were welcomed to be involved and get informed about the project's activities. Also critical parties (at some point drinking water companies had concerns about possible impact on water quality), were then invited to the project team and sometimes became part of it.
- The engagement process was facilitated by a process of co-designing the Sand Motor designs. In workshops in which both stakeholders and experts participated designs were developed. As such there was ownership and commitment for the ideas.
- The location of the Sand Motor was carefully chosen so that it would avoid any possible negative impact on stakeholders.
- Governments
- Water institutions
- Regulators
- Civil society
- Science, academia and research centres
- Advisors
- NGO's

Results

Efficiency

- Cost-saving: The project stayed on budget, which was related to the way the tender was organised. Contractors were asked how much sand they could provide for the budget of EUR 70 million.
 - In addition, the initiators of the project agreed that the project could not continue when the costs would exceed EUR 70 million. As the project was an experiment, the position of the project was rather favourable. It was an experiment and thus not a necessary project. They could stop the project without too much consequence. While in a necessary flood protection project, this could never be possible as this would be at expense of the flood protection level, which is absolutely not allowed.
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Effectiveness

- Broader economic development: the involvement of researchers was very important for advancing morphological, ecological and governance insights regarding this type of solutions. There have been already a large number of publications, conference presentations and media reports on the projects. In addition, the Sand Motor has a worldwide effect. People came to visit the project from many parts of the world. Moreover, this positively affected the Dutch industry and was consequently hired to provide advice on similar approaches abroad.
 - Capacity-development: the design workshops were very positive for capacity development. Everybody learned about the possibilities of the Sand Motor and from other stakeholders and experts. One morphological expert reported that the process enabled him to better understand ecologists.
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Service quality

Responsiveness:

- Acceptability/ownership of stakeholders involved: there was broad commitment for the project. This was the result of the broad involvement of the stakeholders.

Development

Design

Two parties, Rijkswaterstaat (RWS) and the province of South Holland (Zuid-Holland or PZH), joined forces in 2007 to work on the realization of the 'Sand Motor'. RWS had been working on ideas for large scale nourishments as part of their responsibility for long-term coastline maintenance.

PZH, dealing with increasing spatial pressure and a significant lack of green recreational areas, had an interest in expanding their land-area seawards. PZH was leading the planning phase, initiated the design workshops and commissioned (research) reports to consultants. RWS was leading during project execution (2010-2011), while in the planning phase their role was much less prominent.

Testing

- The project objectives were formulated in a rather vague manner without being specific on for example the type or amount of nature, recreation or flood protection that the project needed to achieve.
 - As such it was rather easy to achieve the objectives and there was not much discussion on uncertainties on whether an objective was feasible or not. The project was designed as an experiment. As such it was the project could not 'fail' and could only be learned from.
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Implementation

Tools used:

- In April 2008 an ambition agreement was signed among nine parties. They all committed to the development of a Sand Motor like an idea for achieving flood protection and recreational use of the space. This formal agreement committed the parties to the project.
- The project team was a platform where involved parties decided on the processes and the project. These were collective decisions. Moreover the project team was not restricted to the nine parties signing the ambition agreement. In fact new parties entered and left the project team depending on the issues at hand and the needs of the project. As such this made the project team very flexible to changing circumstances.
- Workshops Design workshops were organised in which a broad range of stakeholder and experts were involved. This collective designing exercise resulted in 'ownership' of the designs by the stakeholders.
- In the planning phase of the project, there was a stakeholder platform where anybody having an interest or stake in the project could ask questions and get answers; it was an online platform open to the public. After the finalization of the planning phase of the project, this platform was shut down. This is a disadvantage in terms of stakeholder participation. There is another platform at the moment which although not public, it is accessed by a broad array of stakeholders such as sport groups and other types of users, local governments, the PZH etc.

Resources used:

- Money for the project was provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (RWS is part of this Ministry) and the Province of South Holland (PZH), they also initiated the participatory process.
 - All parties were involved on their own account, except for the consultants who were hired to do their work.
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Challenges and solutions

- There were hardly conflicts, although there were sometimes disagreement or perspectives. But these could be solved relatively easy in the project team. For example, RWS did not agree on the knowledge about recreation, then this knowledge was adjusted.
- There were no particular bottlenecks hindering the various steps of the stakeholder engagement process.

Lessons Learned

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- Invite and work with stakeholder that have possible issues.
 - Design your project as an experiment, this is less threatening and even attractive for many stakeholders.
 - Adjust your design according to the concerns of stakeholders.
 - Develop designs together with stakeholders and experts, as this generates ownership and commitment for the designs and the project. Use the setting of design workshops.
 - Organise commitment in a formal manner, such as the ambition agreement in this project.
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Conditions for success

- Be flexible: change the actor coalition according to the issues or concerns at hand.
 - Organise co-decision-making: discussions can be worked out and conflict is prevented.
 - Collective knowledge development to achieve commitment for knowledge.
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Other information

It should not be too difficult to replicate this experience. As some of the more generic principles can be copied to other projects as well. Organise your project as an experiment. Lessons can be learned and directly applied and the project becomes a relatively low-risk exercise. This requires however some form of adaptive management as outcomes of the experiment may directly affect management. Start with a broad actor coalition and organise a formal commitment. Be generous and flexible in inviting stakeholders to the project team. Organise design development in a multi-actor and multi-expert setting.

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