

Shelter

Dordrecht Open Lab

Dordrecht is the oldest city in the Netherlands, rich in history and culture, located in the Rhine–Meuse–Scheldt delta (Western Netherlands) in the Dutch province of South Holland.



SCAN ME

Explanation

Dordrecht is an island bordered by rivers and surrounded by a dense network of dikes. However, more than 800 historic buildings are located outside the embanked area, which is prone to flood risks. Due to climate change and increasing river discharges and sea levels, these historical buildings will need increased waterproofing and adaptation measures. Most of these buildings are privately owned. The owners of the buildings outside the dike-protected area are responsible for their flood protective measures. The transfer of responsibility to private owners for these historic monuments outside the dikes creates a complex governance, as the government only takes responsibility for those buildings inside the embanked area.



Result

After the large Dutch flood in 1953, the country underwent a considerable shift in central-led delta management, where preventive systems were decided and organized from a national level (top-down). This top-down organization has been a very successful strategy and in a country where about 55% of its territory is below sea level or flood-prone, there have been no large floods since then. Furthermore, this security has boosted the trust of Dutch citizens in their government regarding the prevention of floods. Therefore, most people perceive the risk of floods as unreal. Nevertheless, water management in the Netherlands is facing pressing challenges, namely: (i) climate change, (ii) economic and demographic trends, (iii) socio-political trends, and (iv) innovation and technologies.

Consequently, the municipality of Dordrecht has been focusing more actively on a water safety policy and has developed a flood risk management strategy, including measures in spatial planning, protection of critical infrastructure, preparation for crisis management, and increasing the resilience of inhabitants, enterprises and local organizations.

The H2020 SHELTER project has contributed to developing this flood risk management strategy, using a higher level of understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on historic sites and buildings by linking disaster risk management and climate change adaptation with cultural heritage management. Moreover, the development of the IMMERSITE® tool under the project has contributed to greatly envision Dordrecht's water safety strategy by increasing awareness among its citizens.

