

Dikes and sluices in the North Sea



Summary

When protecting inland coastline against sea level changes and storms, it is common to build dikes and sluices. In the Netherlands, much of the country is protected by dikes, as a part of a national network that prevents the country from becoming flooded. The Government defines key impact levels and the practicalities are taken care of by the Water Boards. Both funding and responsibilities are well defined. On the other side of the border in Germany, the flood protection systems, sluices and dike networks are jointly built and maintained at the regional and national level. In Denmark, coastal defences facing the North Sea are handled at the national level, while other areas are handled by local municipalities and these areas are not systematically managed. The management of dikes and sluices calls for a more unified effort.

Main Benefits

General aspects of dikes and sluices

- » Dikes and sluices protect communities and maintain the area's societal value
- » They are manmade structures that effect the aquatic and terrestrial habitats
- » Joint protection and common standards can ease administration

Economic/job creation

- » Preventing flood events can be a substantial economic benefit
- » By unifying our effort, we can share know-how and save labour

Innovative aspects

- » A dike that creates a natural habitat or an urban space with recreational value
- » We can adjust the aims to cover more than one challenge
- » Mapping the current status of the dikes can be carried out using innovative survey equipment

Boosters for Implementation

- » A clear and delegated national strategy involving all of the responsible parties and linked to neighbouring countries around the North Sea.
- » By increased focus on the maintenance of the dikes and sluices at the EU level, national level stakeholders will be forced to take a cross-border approach.

Barriers for implementation in Denmark

- » The legislation does not clearly delegate responsibility for their protection. The result is that nothing happens
- » Maintenance and new constructions are costly
- » Coastal protection has a rather low priority

How to overcome barriers

- » Increased focus from the EU level on the challenges and possibilities in order to reach common level of protection across borders - because water does not respect borders
- » Showcases, indicating the economic value of having a high level of protection

Policy Recommendations

- » Start a discussion on the policies relating to the dikes and sluices around the North Sea and the rest of Europe to ensure a unified effort
- » Compare the legislation and management of dikes and sluices in Europe
- » Prepare a funding regime to ensure the cooperation between countries in this matter

More Information

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