

BAUHAUS OF THE SEAS SAILS

Impact of Future Tidal Architectures,
Living with Water and Zoöp
in the Flemish Dutch Delta

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Fig. 1: Future Tidal Architectures, conversations with Saeftinghe inhabitants. (Source: Vereniging Deltametropool - Floor Schepel, 2024). CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

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¹ See: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

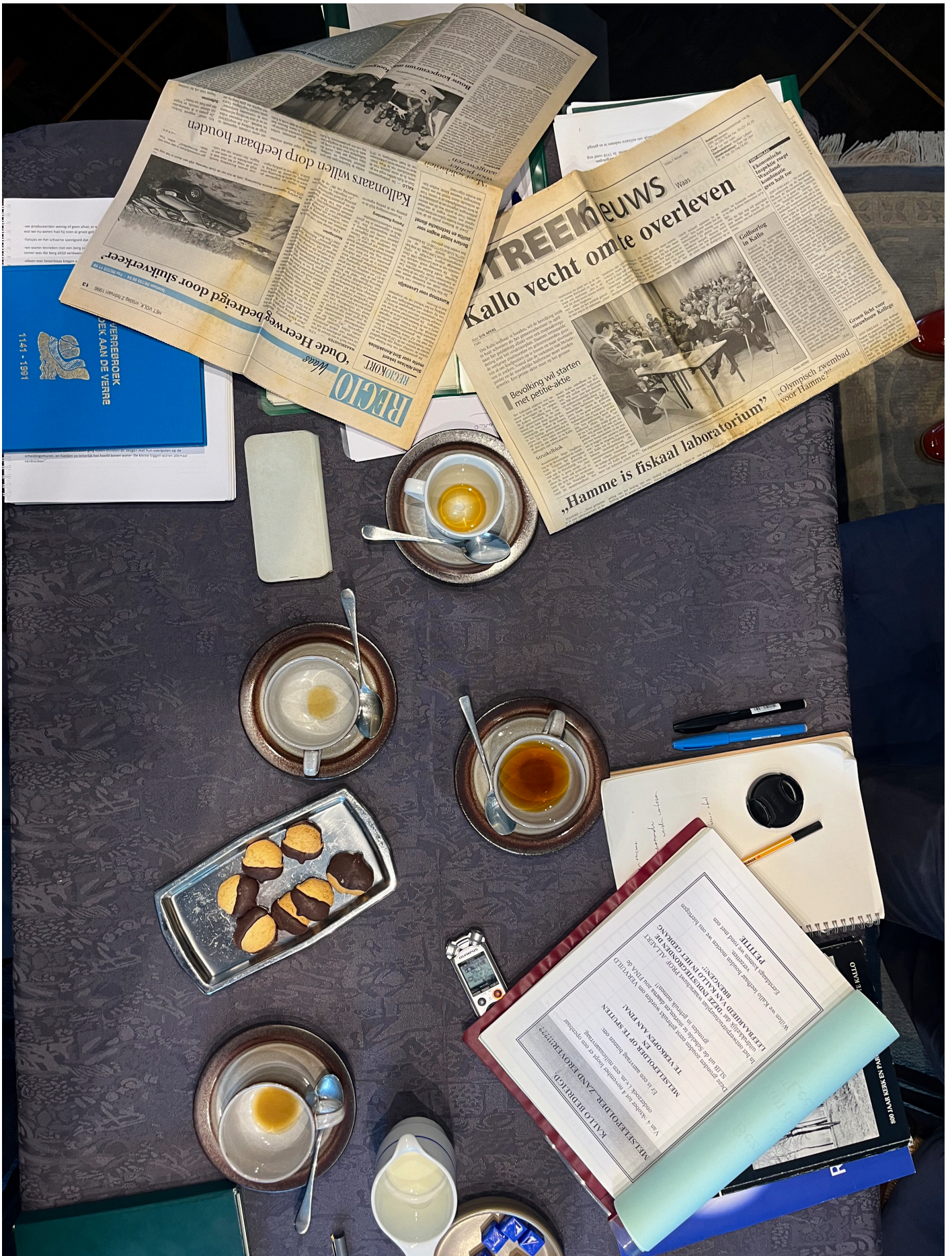


Fig. 2: Future Tidal Architectures, conversations with Saeftinghe inhabitants. (Source: Vereniging Deltametropool - Floor Schepel, 2024). CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Introduction

This report discusses the impact of a pilot project implemented in the Flemish Dutch Delta as part of the Horizon Europe project Bauhaus of the Seas Sails (2022–2025)². Bauhaus of the Seas Sails (TU Delft) is a New European Bauhaus (NEB) project that tests solutions for more beautiful, sustainable and inclusive cities and neighborhoods in Europe, with a focus on seven coastal and waterfront cities (Hamburg, Venice, Malmö, Rotterdam, Lisbon, Oeiras, Genoa) and a nature park straddling the Flemish Dutch border (Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe). Each pilot has tested innovative solutions (“drops”) that aim to create ripple effects (“ripples”) and ultimately generate long-term impact (“waves”) (fig. 3).

The Delta pilot was led by teams in EGTS Linieland van Waas en Hulst, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Vereniging Deltametropool and Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) and tested three solutions according to the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails typology: Future Tidal Architectures, Zoöp, and Living with Water (box 1).

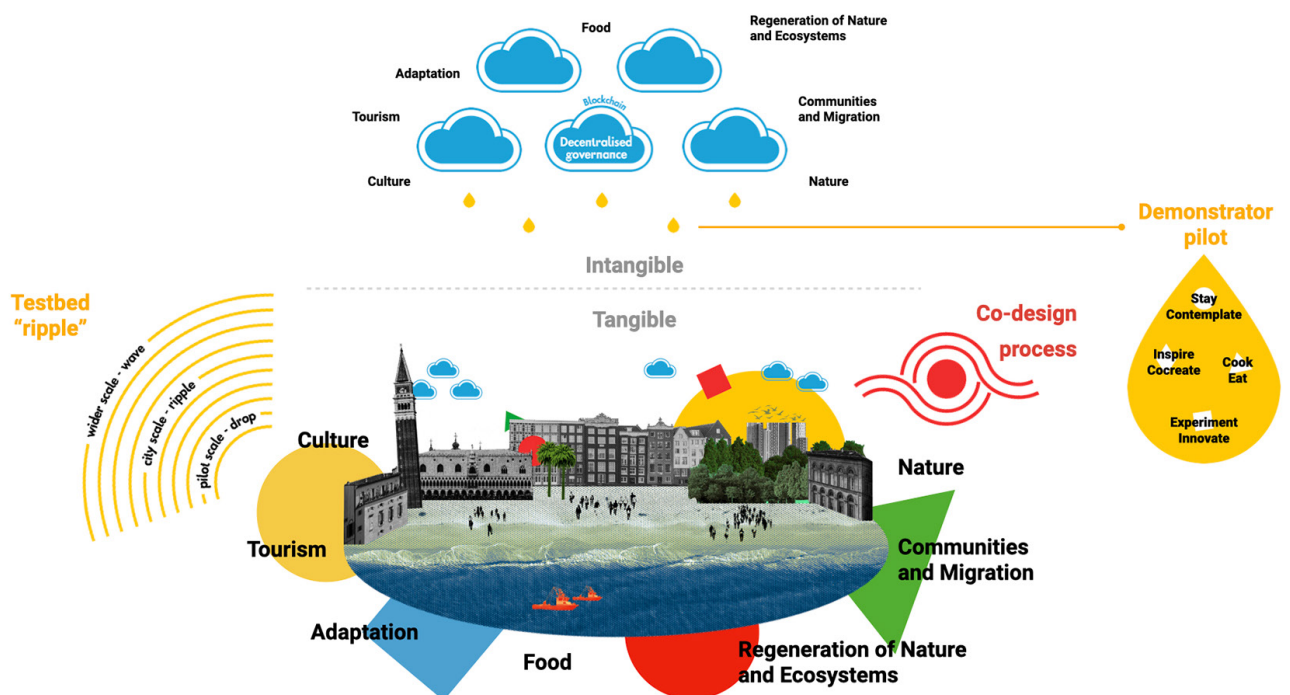


Figure 3: Visualization of the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails approach (European Commission, 2024; Visual identity ©José Albergaria), CC-BY-4.0

² More information can be found on the project website: <https://bauhaus-seas.eu>

Drop typologies

The drop typologies were defined at the beginning of the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails project, in the Description of the Action and other early-stage project documents.



The **Future Tidal Architectures drop** aimed to engage young architects and spatial designers in co-designing scenarios and adaptive strategies for coastal areas, deltas and wetlands impacted by climate change. The drop focused on coastal and port cities and their neighbouring rural areas and wetlands, and aimed to reconcile different groups and interests by building dialogue and collaborations with citizens and stakeholders of different scales and power.



The **Living with Water drop** “addresses the connection of water to a city’s identity and focuses on shared water knowledge that can shape the city’s vision of itself, and help design a resilient future.” It was developed with the context of Rotterdam (Netherlands) in mind and aimed to engage ways of knowing, coming from humans and other-than-human beings who live and work in the city.



The **Zoöp drop** (‘BoS-Zoöp’), created by Het Nieuwe Instituut and practiced by other consortium members, was initially defined in the project as ‘multispecies assemblies’. It was inspired by the ‘zoöp’ concept³ and organizational model which supports collaboration between human and other-than human life to safeguards the interests of all life. The model appoints an independent Speaker for the Living as a human spokesperson with ecological knowledge and the ability to empathize with the experiences of other-than-human life. This Speaker for the Living ensures that the interests of other-than-human life are included, and supports organizations or projects through a learning process with the aim to become increasingly life-supporting (regenerative) within the ecosystems they participate in. All BoS pilot teams adopted key elements of the Zoöp model.

Box 1: *The drop typologies Future Tidal Architectures, Zoöp and Living with Water*

³ Zoöp is short for Zoöperation and refers to a ‘coöperation with zoë’, the Greek word for life. See <https://zoop.earth/nl/>

The drop typologies were adapted to the context of the Flemish Dutch Delta (which we refer to as “the Delta”), a region that stretches from Rotterdam to Antwerp, crossing borders and encompassing a variety of landscapes, ecologies, rural areas, major urban centres and two globally connected ports. The pilot focused on two specific locations within this region, namely Rotterdam and Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe (see box 2 below for more context information).

- **The Future Tidal Architectures drop in the Delta** developed co-design activities involving local actors in Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe, TU Delft architecture students and regional practitioners, to create scenarios guiding long-term planning and climate adaptation in the region.
- **The Living with Water drop in the Delta** supported the integration of the Water School concept (developed by Studio Makkink & Bey) into the After Summer School public program of Het Nieuwe Instituut, to provide Rotterdam citizens with interactive learning opportunities about water in the city.
- **The Zoöp drop in the Delta** was applied differently than in other pilots because the Zoöp model was already being applied at Het Nieuwe Instituut, which started the first Zoöp in the world. Therefore, the BoS project provided opportunities to deepen the Zoöp method in Rotterdam, raise its visibility across the Flemish Dutch Delta region, and test it in Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe. The Zoöp method was also integrated in the After Summer School program and applied in new places of Rotterdam such as Buitenplaats Brienoord.

The body of this report provides an in-depth assessment of the pilot’s key results, lessons and impact. The report is structured along three main parts. First, it analyzes the process of the Delta pilot from drop, to ripples, toward potential waves (long-term impact). Second, it assesses the impact of the pilot on the four BoS themes: Aesthetics, Sustainability, Inclusion, and Local grounding. The third and final section about ‘Takeaways’ highlights key factors (context, stakeholders, resources) that influenced the pilot’s implementation and impact, and provides areas for improvement and future development.

Key facts about the Flemish Dutch Delta

The Flemish Dutch Delta is a crossborder region shaped by water bodies (the interconnecting systems of the Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt rivers and North Sea's tidal flows), large urban centers and global trade flows – due to the two major European seaports of Rotterdam and Antwerp – but also declining natural ecosystems. The region sharply illustrates the complex interplay between human activity and environmental preservation, and between local experiences and global trends. This results in land-use conflicts (between industry, agriculture, housing, conservation), environmental degradation from activities like dredging, and highlights the pressing need for transboundary adaptive systems to address sea-level rise, increased flood risks and ecological collapse.

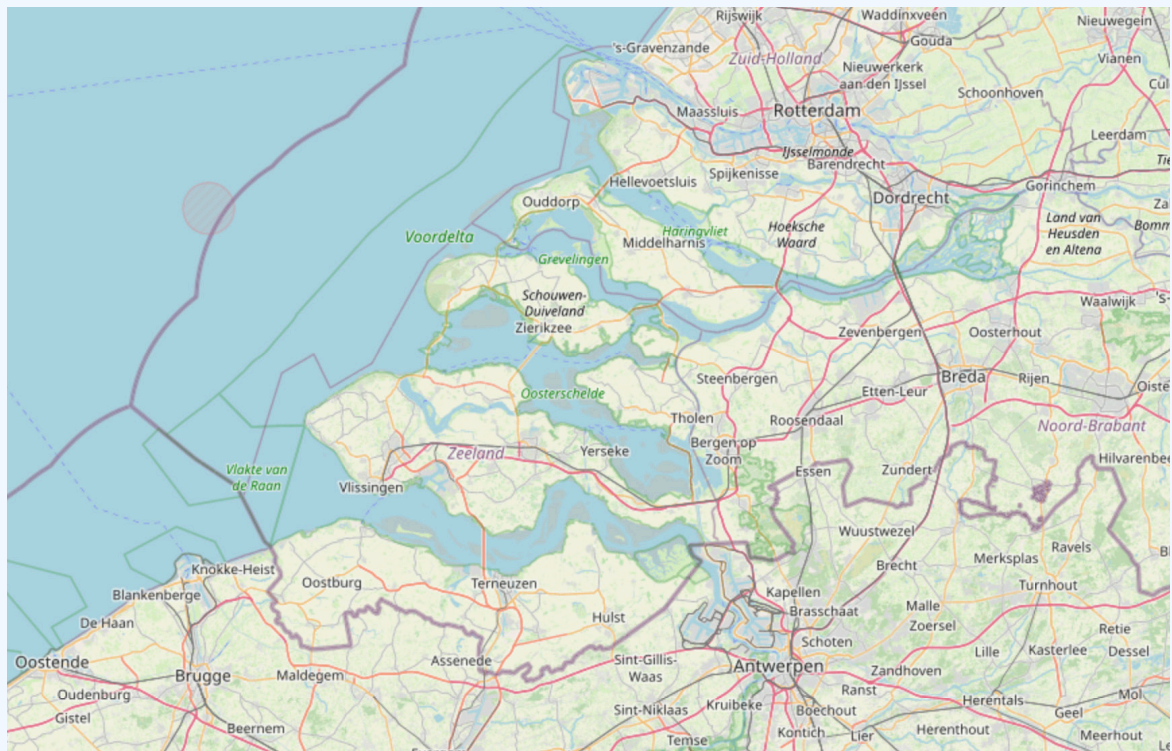


Fig 3: OpenStreetMap contributors. Accessed October 22, 2025. <https://www.openstreetmap.org/> copyright

Box 2: Context of the Flemish Dutch Delta

Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe

- Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe is a nature park straddling the Flemish Dutch border. The area includes The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe, the **largest salt marsh** area (3,500 hectares) in the Netherlands and one of the largest brackish-water marshlands in Europe.
- The area hosts agriculture, tourism, and conservation communities, with an **aging and declining population** of 135,719 (Municipality of Hulst 2026; Rijksregister 2026). Its proximity to the **second largest port of Europe**, Antwerp, facilitates global trade and industrial expansion into former nature, farming, and residential areas.
- In recent decades, **local conflicts and resistance to the depoldering** of the Hedwigepolder highlights the ongoing tension between ecological restoration and traditional economic interests in the area (Berkelder & Tuning 2025).
- The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe was reclaimed by Flemish monks in the 13th century but was destroyed by storm surges and deliberate dike breaches in the 16th century, leading to **permanent inundation** after 1585. In the 20th century, planned reclamation was abandoned due to World War II and later environmental conservation priorities.
- The marshland preserves a rich **cultural and historical heritage** that reflects centuries of human interaction with its estuarine environment. Evidence of lost settlements occasionally emerges as erosion exposes buried structures or artifacts.
- In the face of **climate change**, Saeftinghe demonstrates how nature-based flood management reduces flood risk, as its wide floodplains dissipate wave energy and lower pressure on dikes. The marshlands also help mitigate climate change by storing carbon through vegetation growth and sediment accumulation.
- As a biodiverse **Natura 2000 site**, it functions as a high-tide refuge for birds, a nursery for aquatic organisms, a natural flood-defense system and a habitat for specialized salt-marsh flora. It serves as a crucial breeding, foraging and overwintering area for coastal birds such as avocets, gulls, and terns, while also supporting characteristic vegetation including sea lavender and glasswort.

Rotterdam

- Rotterdam is located in a **delta**, at the intersection of the Rhine and the Meuse rivers. It grew from a small fishing village to a hub of trade, linked to the North Sea by the Nieuwe Waterweg shipping canal dug in the 19th century (van de Laar & Scholten 2023; Brandon 2017).
- Rotterdam is the **second largest city** in the Netherlands. Home to one of the world's largest ports as well as to over 170 nationalities, linked to its history of migration, Rotterdam is famous for its vibrant culture, postwar reconstruction and maritime heritage. Rotterdam is also faced with problems of inequality, poverty, gentrification and housing shortage (Arellano-Geoffroy 2020; Hulst & Hoff 2019; CBS 2022).
- The Port of Rotterdam, the **largest seaport in Europe** which expands over 40 km from the city into the sea, is an economic and logistics center and a hub of oil refineries (Hein & van de Laar, 2020). The port is a driver of the climate crisis, **responsible for over 15% of CO2 emissions** in the Netherlands (Nazaruk 2022; Engelke & Webster 2023).
- **Climate change** affects the City of Rotterdam and the larger region through water system change including drought and flooding, salt-water intrusion and land subsidence (sinking land). The sea level is predicted to rise by 14 – 47 cm by 2050 compared to 1995 levels (Nazaruk 2022). Maintaining and expanding port activities has long been a national policy, one that will conflict more and more with the need for a strong coastal flood defense system and impactful climate policies.
- Urbanization, densification, port and industry have led to **major biodiversity losses** in the area, notably in the biodiversity-rich intertidal zones (Brands 2022; Rijkswaterstaat 1995). Individually, actors promote sustainable practices and the city has successfully increased green spaces, but a comprehensive governance that prioritizes ecological restoration in both water and land ecosystems is lacking (Frantzeskaki & Tilie 2014).



Fig. 4: Delta pilot kick-off activities at Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, on June 8, World Oceans Day (Source: Delta Pilot - Jan Bruin 2024.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Methodology

The impact assessment of all Bauhaus of the Seas Sails pilots was conducted by a team at Delft University of Technology as part of the project consortium. We developed a unique analytical framework to assess the impact of the project. This impact framework helped translate high-level EU ambitions, rooted in the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Compass (2022) and its core values of aesthetics, sustainability and inclusion, into locally aligned impact tools and indicators (in line with the project-wide Bauhaus of the Seas Sails approach; fig. 5). It provided a strategy and mixed-methods approach to guide evaluation, learning and comparative analysis within the project.

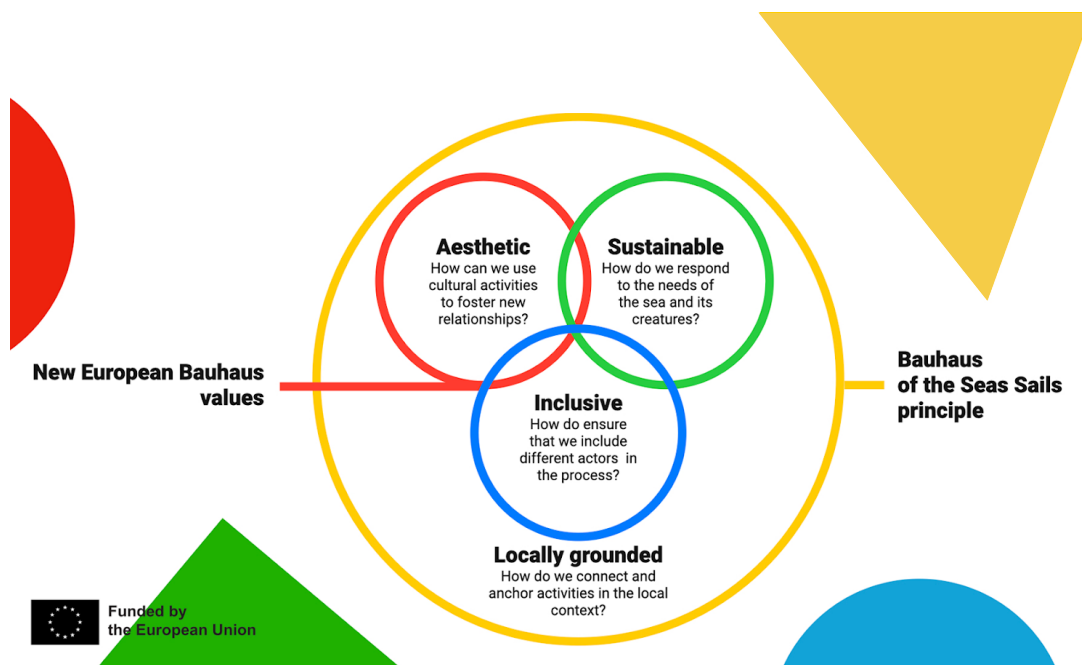


Fig. 5: Visualization of the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails approach to NEB principles (European Commission, 2024; Visual identity ©José Albergaria), CC-BY-4.0

The strategy and methodology considered current knowledge about impact assessment and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and the challenges involved in putting them into practice. Figure 6 shows the five key elements (in capital letters) that shape our analytical framework to impact assessment and the related concepts, approaches and tools (in blue) as well as challenges (in red) the team has reflected on and sought to address. The authors and references for the concepts, knowledge and tools mentioned in figure 6 are listed in annex 2.

Participatory

Our approach prioritized collaboration in the impact framework development, context analysis, data collection and comparative analysis. The team developed **participatory sessions with pilot teams and local partners** (online and in-person) that informed the development of context-sensitive impact tools and enabled collective learning and sensemaking.

Local value

Our approach sought to generate value for pilot teams and local actors involved in the impact assessment process. The team organized **learning and cross-exchange** moments for pilots, identified good practices and made recommendations for the projects' future development.

Dynamic and long term

The approach was rooted in the understanding that impact is a non linear, long-term process towards transformation. The team organized **Theory of Change sessions** with pilot teams to reflect on their impact pathways and scaling strategies to turn drops into ripples and waves. Considering the need for adaptive and context-sensitive approaches, the Library of Indicators provided a structured catalogue that pilot teams could use in a flexible and dynamic way to assess their impact over time.

Additionally, our work considered and connected with other concepts used in the project such as the 'Ocean Ambassadors' and 'Sea Forums' as actors who took part in co-designing, implementing and evaluating the work of the pilots (Seravalli, Light & Emilson 2022; Zumbrink et al. 2024). We considered the perspectives of these actors to be essential to assess the impact of the pilots.

- Ocean Ambassadors focused mainly on building bottom-up engagement for the ocean among citizens and grassroots actors, which helped disseminate the work of pilot teams.
- Sea Forums provided a collaborative platform for planning, evaluating and sustaining activities by building institutional commitment and mobilizing resources and knowledge across disciplines and organizations.

The following impact analysis follows the structure of the Library of Indicators (fig. 4) and focuses on criteria and indicators that were co-selected by the impact assessment team and the Delta pilot team. The analysis uses data collected by the pi-

lot team and BoS work packages, which organized participatory sessions with pilots (detailed in annex 1) and shared research results in project reports and academic publications⁴. We collected and triangulated useful information during the sessions on context analysis, theory of change (fig. 8), deep-dives into aesthetics, sustainability, inclusion and local grounding; as well as an in-person visit to Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe during which 10 local participants shared valuable insights.

The impact analysis also discusses the potential of the Delta pilot to generate long-term impact in the section “Toward waves? Hypotheses”. Considering the three-year duration of the BoS project, we focused on pilots’ ability to develop ‘seeds’ for long-term impact (waves). We understand seeds as elements that constitute a strong foundation for waves to unfold. Bennett et al. 2016 defined “seeds of a good Anthropocene” as ways of doing and thinking that are materialized in initiatives or prototypes, are not currently dominant or prominent, and that begin to have transformative impacts as they spread. We were also guided by the concept of ‘small wins’ that captures how relatively small changes, in the sense that they initially arise at the micro- or local level, can generate “deep” effects that alter routines, values, frames and logics (Argyris and Schon 1996, in Termeer and Dewulf 2019). Termeer and Dewulf (2019) stress the importance of using dedicated propelling mechanisms to ensure that small wins (or seeds) turn into transformative change (or waves). Our analytical framework and methodology for impact assessment are further detailed in upcoming publications.

⁴ See <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101079995/results>.

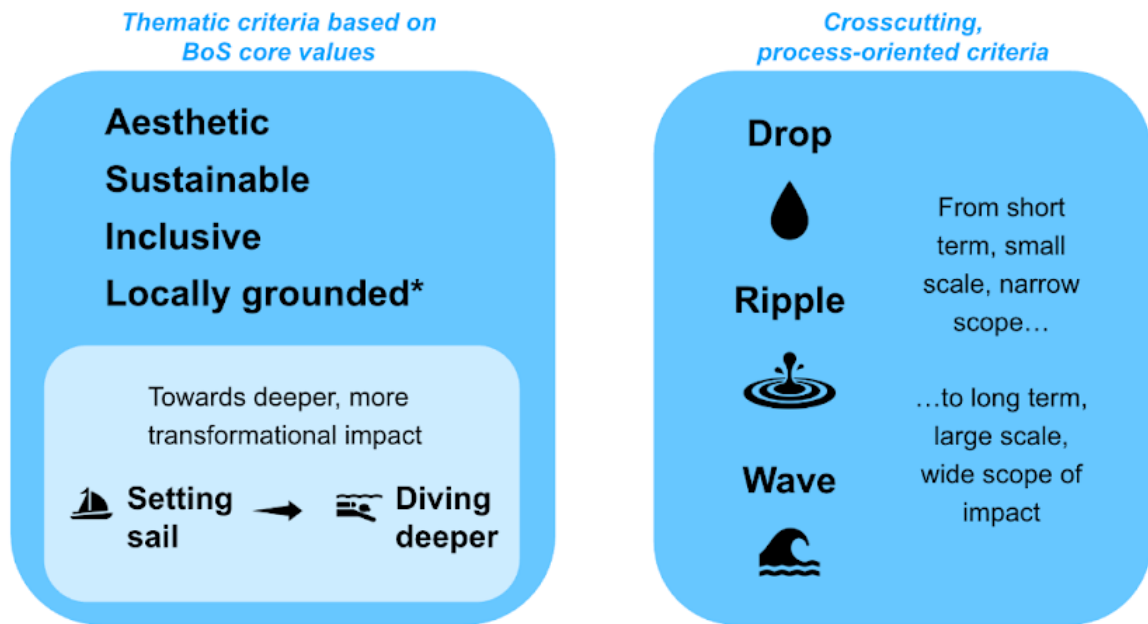
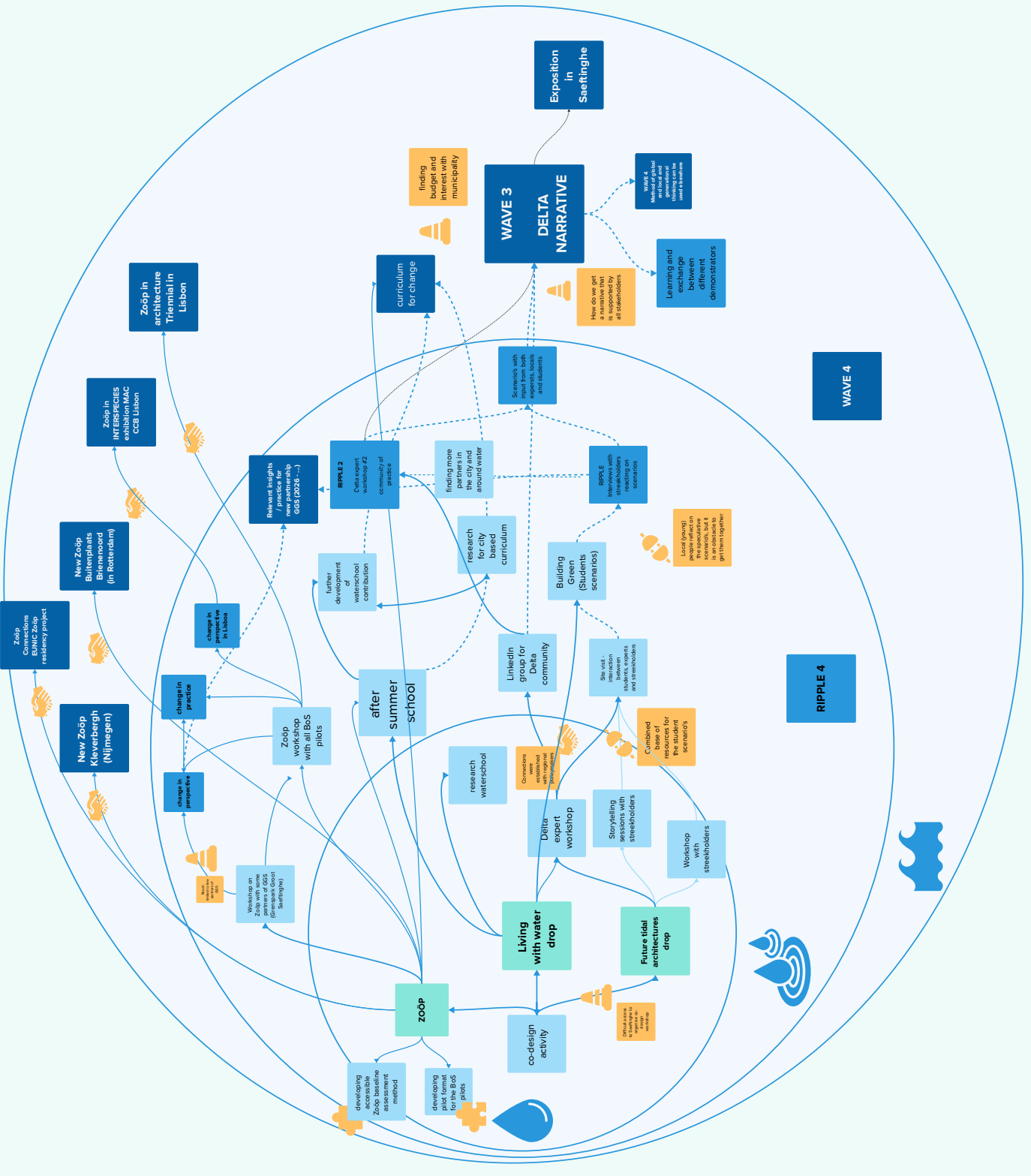
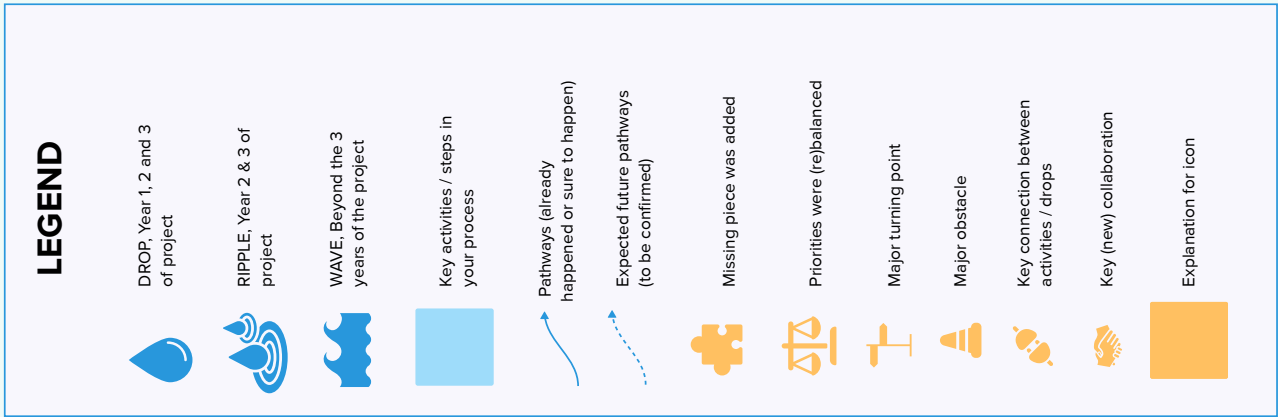


Fig. 7: Snapshot of the Library of Indicators' structure, CC-BY-4.0⁵

Fig. 8 : Theory of Change mapping for the Delta pilot, as of 14 March 2025.⁶ CC-BY-4.0

⁵ Local grounding, or "locally grounded" was added as a fourth core value by the BoS project. It is a crosscutting value, meaning that it applies across the three themes of Aesthetics, Sustainability and Inclusion.

⁶ This infographic was co-developed with the pilot team, using Mural. The information was collected on 14/03/2025. The pilot activities and long-term plans have evolved since. This figure should be seen as a step in the reflection and evaluation process, rather than a definite Theory of Change of the Delta pilot.



Part 1

Process towards impact: drop, ripple, wave

This section discusses the process toward impact of the Delta pilot and its three drops. It summarizes the **key outcomes** of the drops, assesses their **ripple effect**, and formulates **hypotheses about their long-term impact** based on available evidence. The impact categories (Drop, Ripple, Wave), criteria and indicators used for this analysis come from the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails Library of Indicators. The text below is a summary of the more detailed analysis that was conducted per criterion and indicator by the impact assessment team in collaboration with the Delta pilot team.



Fig. 9. Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe - Sven Dullaert, 2021. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.1 Drops



The criteria we analyzed focused on the extent to which the pilot:

- considered and used existing processes
- engaged and connected relevant local actors
- imagined, developed and tested solutions

For each criteria, we used detailed indicators to guide the analysis.

Key insights from developing & testing the drops

The three drops share goals to build **learning and governance models about ecology and water cultures** that can be refined and used in the long-term. The pilot team stressed the importance of iterative design processes, feedback loops and learning from citizens as key methods to progress toward these goals.

Future Tidal Architectures

This drop developed a **co-design methodology that produced educational and community engagement benefits** while generating insights for foresight and long-term planning to address climate change- induced water challenges in the Flemish Dutch Delta region.

- It involved several cohorts of architecture students from Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) in the context of one Master course: Building Green⁷. Within this course, students developed scenarios for different port city territories including Saeftinghe (12 students in 2024, 20 in 2025), Scheveningen (12 students), as well as Dordrecht and Moerdijk (12 students).
- Architecture students, citizens of Saeftinghe and experts from different disciplines (working at local or regional level in the Flemish Dutch Delta) took part in co-design activities facilitated by a regional think tank (Vereniging Delta-metropool) with the goal of crossing perspectives, scales and temporalities.
- **This expanded the network of Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe** locally and at the Delta level with experts from different professions. 29 “streekholders” (stakeholders working together for the future of the region) of Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe (GGS) were involved actively in the local process while 17 members of the youth network were involved at specific moments. The drop generated exchanges of information and ideas, especially between students and Saeftinghe-based citizens and experts.
- The 2024 course included a visit to Saeftinghe on 13 March 2024 that allowed

⁷ <https://www.tudelft.nl/bk/over-faculteit/afdelingen/architecture/organisatie-1/secties-en-groepen/history-form-and-aesthetics/history-of-architecture-and-urban-planning/education/building-green>

students to exchange with 6 streekholders. Student projects reflected on the different values and interests between agriculture, nature and industry in Saeftinghe as well as their implications for a climate-resilient future in the area, and developed scenarios to visualize these dilemmas. They learned to take on the perspective of different stakeholders (human and other-than-human) and to **understand the complexity of negotiating priorities for local climate adaptation.**

- The drop team members from Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe noted that working with creatives (students, designers in Vereniging Deltametropool) required time to learn about the local context, and freedom for the creatives to shape the process and outputs.

The drop involved **students from other Eurodelta universities** alongside TU Delft, via the Next Generation Podium for Eurodelta⁸ universities alongside TU Delft, via the Next Generation Podium for Eurodelta (2025 edition) which has been organized since 2021 by the SURE Network (including Vereniging Deltametropool and TU Delft). The symposium invited future urban planners and designers to develop scenarios for the Eurodelta region, drawing on the Future Tidal Architectures methodology, with a focus on climate change and rising sea levels. It gave students access to diverse perspectives from practitioners and researchers across the transnational region. The drop reinforced this existing initiative with additional resources, creative methods and cross-disciplinary connections, which supported the visibility and outreach of the symposium.

Further, part of the drop team in TU Delft co-organized the Future Tidal Architectures workshop of the Venice pilot with IUAV University of Venice, helping to shape the programme, speaker selection, concepts (e.g. the value-based approach) and perspectives shared to the 16 participating students. This supported the long-term collaboration between the two universities and **their research on land-water interaction in cities impacted by climate change**, with the involvement of two PhD researchers focusing on this theme.

Living with Water

The Living with Water drop developed an **alternative way of learning about water** and how to live with water in the big port city of Rotterdam. The Water School, an ongoing initiative by Studio Makkink & Bey to rethink water education through design⁹, became part of this drop, executed by Het Nieuwe Instituut, and included in the development of its After Summer School program.

⁸ See: <https://deltametropool.nl/projecten/next-generation-podium-for-eurodelta/>

⁹ See: <https://smb-waterschool.nl/en/home>

- The After Summer School is a program of public classes with around 20 partners throughout Rotterdam that present **the city as a hub for knowledge and a testing ground for developing more just and sustainable ways** to coexist. It gives visibility to the Curriculum for Change under development by Het Nieuwe Instituut (Francien van Westrenen and Ania Molenda) and philosopher Rosi Braidotti. Together they create a New Academy where horizontal lifelong learning takes place and fills a gap in conventional education systems¹⁰.
- As part of the After Summer School program, the Water School developed new design research and learning experiences focused on areas of Rotterdam where land and water intersect. In 2024, **an interactive walk and workshop in Het Park** (a park located near the river Nieuwe Maas) was developed with Michou de Bruijn to engage participants in learning about past and present ways of living with water, delving into social and environmental questions surrounding Het Park. Participants were also invited to discuss future possibilities for change in the park and its pavilion (a former convalescent home) under restoration (Makkink & Bey re-designed the interior of the pavilion in 2024-2025).¹¹
- The Walks in Het Park took place twice during the After Summer School 2024 (30 September - 4 October 2024)¹² and were attended by 21 participants, giving **increased visibility** to the park and the influences of the nearby river (which is not very visible), the pavilion as a restored public space, and to the work and learning methods of the Water School.

Zoöp

The Zoöp drop was based on the existing Zoöp model developed by developed by Klaas Kuitenbrouwer and teams of Het Nieuwe Instituut and later the Zoöconomic Institute.¹³ The drop further developed the Zoöp method as a **learning process that can be adapted to different audiences** including citizens, grassroots activists, practitioners in food, art, culture and the built environment, organizations, and policymakers.

The Delta pilot kick-off event and the After Summer School 2024 included a Zoöp “Detour”¹⁴ in its program that **raised awareness about the needs of other-than-human lifeforms** (e.g., insect, duck) and the possibilities for collaborations between humans and other-than-humans, through immersive role-playing activities with a Detour guide. The After Summer School program also included a session about the Zoöp model and its potential for regenerating public spaces in Rotterdam. It took place at Buitenplaats Brienoord, a tidal park and artist residency on an urban is-

10 See: <https://nieuweinstituut.nl/en/projects/de-nieuwe-academie>

11 See: https://www.studiomakkinkbey.nl/list/projects/interior_design_the_park_pavilion_rotterdam

12 See: <https://nieuweinstituut.nl/en/projects/de-nieuwe-academie/after-summer-school-2024>

13 See: <https://zoop.earth/nl/>

14 See: <https://zoop.earth/nl/page/718/omleiding>

land of Rotterdam in the Meuse river (which later became a Zoöp, see Ripple).

These public activities demonstrated **the possibility of adopting new governance models** that generate mutual value for human and more-than-life life in the city. The Detour showcased the visible results of this approach in the garden and pond of Het Nieuwe Instituut, which has been formally a Zoöp since 22 April 2022. The After Summer School 2024 Zoöp activities were attended by 30 participants. Some attendees in the Delta pilot kick-off expressed an intention, via a written feedback form, to take follow-up actions such as using the Zoöp in a non-profit organisation (Salzinger et al. 2024).¹⁵

During Bauhaus of the Seas Sails, **the Zoöp model was tested in all seven pilots** (Venice, Lisbon, Oeiras, Malmö, Hamburg, Genoa, Delta), each of which identified a “Speaker for the Living”¹⁶ to support this effort locally. Within the Delta, the Zoöp model was presented to the streekholders of Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe.

- The drop team developed and refined Zoöp presentation and guiding documents (e.g., manual) as well as methodologies to align with the needs and contexts of the project and its diverse consortium members (Kuitenbrouwer, Zoete and Nutma, 2023).¹⁷
- In particular, they **reinforced their collaborative workshops for baseline assessment**, including format, and methodology, for instance by developing new worksheets and a relational map. The workshops helped projects and organizations look at their ecosystem differently and identify regenerative relationships they could strengthen locally, with the support of the Speaker for the Living.
- These developments gave the Zoöp model **increased room for experimentation and amplified its visibility**, directly contributing to its consolidation and expansion in the Flemish Dutch Delta region (see Ripple).

¹⁵ <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/news/testing-new-ways-of-living-with-water-in-the-delta-bauhaus-of-the-seas-sails-delta-kick-off>

¹⁶ <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/news/testing-new-ways-of-living-with-water-in-the-delta-bauhaus-of-the-seas-sails-delta-kick-off>

¹⁷ <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/news/testing-new-ways-of-living-with-water-in-the-delta-bauhaus-of-the-seas-sails-delta-kick-off>

1.2 Ripples



The criteria we analyzed considered whether the pilot:

- reinforced and expanded existing processes;
- monitored and replicated solutions to aid learning.

Main ripples generated by the pilot:

During 2025, the three drops identified synergies between their activities that experiment with new learning and governance models and foster collective knowledge on ecology and water cultures.

Future Tidal Architectures

During the Ripple phase, additional co-design activities were conducted with streekholders (stakeholders working together for the future of the region, such as community leaders, local policymakers, nature guides, farmers, entrepreneurs, citizens), Delta practitioners and a new cohort of Master architecture students, to develop scenarios for the future of the Saeftinghe area with more inputs from citizens and experts.

- As part of this process, Saeftinghe citizens shared personal stories¹⁸ of living with water in the past four decades, offering testimonies of how global and regional changes (flood, depoldering, port expansion) impact individual lives. Storytelling sessions took place in August 2024, November 2024 and January 2025 and involved 11 locals. They helped reconstruct a **bottom-up history and timeline of the interactions with water in their area**, identifying turning points.
- The drop team learned about the limited agency that citizens felt in past events (e.g. being forced to move away from their homes and land). In response, they formulated the new aim of supporting the increased agency of local actors affected by global trends such as climate change.
- Local experts from Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe (e.g., nature guides, local politicians, active citizens), and practitioners from different disciplines (urban planning, agriculture policy, culture and heritage, education, adaptation to climate change, port-city-territory perspectives) working in the Delta region shared insights on current and future sustainability challenges.

¹⁸ See Open Call for stories: <https://streekholders.grensparkgrootsaeftinghe.eu/actueel/nieuws/2912851.aspx?t=Verhalen-gezocht>

- The Delta expert workshop, held in December 2024, was attended by 26 participants including members of each drop within the pilot team. The workshops **helped build a shared interdisciplinary understanding of water challenges** in the crossborder Delta that includes spatial, policy, cultural and social dimensions of adaptation to climate change. It enabled practitioners working in different parts of the region to connect and expand their network (a LinkedIn group was created to ensure participants can stay in contact).

Based on inputs from citizens and experts as well as a visit to the Saeftinghe area, TU Delft students developed **scenarios about the future of the area** (up to 2100) that were presented to ten Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe streekholders in June 2025 to foster discussions about long-term planning. The scenarios focused on different scales and types of solutions (e.g., salt-resistant agriculture, bio-barges, housing and community revitalization, cautionary tales). They sparked reflections about how scenarios might contribute to shifting the mindsets of people in the area, to prepare for the changes that long-term climate adaptation entails. The workshop also highlighted differences in perspectives between generations, such as the importance of nature-based solutions and other-than-human needs in the students' scenarios.

The project introduced 50+ students to scenario-making, speculative design and to the importance of considering water and water-related sustainability challenges in their work as future architects and spatial designers. According to feedback provided by 9 students in April 2025, they have gained **increased knowledge and capacities to address water challenges** holistically (taking into account social, cultural, historical dimensions), flexibly (through designs that can adapt to tidal dynamics and sea-level rise such as modular buildings) and in a context-sensitive manner.

Student feedback also suggests that students have embraced a **new mindset** that recognizes the value of living with water and adapting to its natural, changing, dynamics ("It [the project] has taught me that designing with water means accepting change"; "We are now designing with more flexibility"). This contrasts with conventional approaches to water management and flood protection that mainly aim to keep water away through hard infrastructure like dykes. Their feedback suggests an intention to apply what they have learned to their future architecture or design practices.

The pilot held a workshop to build a shared Delta narrative on 13 October 2025, under the initiative of the Future Tidal Architectures drop team. Each drop shared results of their work and speculated about desired futures, from the perspective of different actors in the region (government, municipality, province, citizen, river, farmer, Speaker for the Living, EU) as part of a roleplaying exercise. Deltametropool plans to analyse results to develop a Delta narrative, potentially in the form of a Manifesto or action points that could promote the agency of local actors as well as policy changes within the region.

The drop team organized a **well-attended public exhibition** to share the results of the co-design process and the student scenarios with Saeftinghe inhabitants and streekholders. The exhibition was launched at Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe's streekholderbijeenkomst (streekholder meeting) on 13 November 2025. Approximately 120 people were present, and the drop team organized a session with 25 people to dive deeper into the Future Tidal Architectures activities and displays. The exhibition aimed to deliver a tangible output back to the community and further aims to "travel" to other places in the Delta region, such as Delft and Rotterdam.



Fig. 11: Future Tidal Architectures final exhibition launched at the streekholderbijeenkomst in Saeftinghe, 13th of November 2025. (Source: Vereniging Deltametropool - David de Boer, 2025). CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Living with Water

In the ripple phase, the drop team continued to develop the Curriculum for Change of the New Academy and **incorporated ecosystem regeneration and living with water as key themes** for the long-term. The After Summer School 2025 was organized again on 18-21 September 2025¹⁹ and included a Zoop workshop (see below) as well as two Water School activities. The full program attracted 400+ participants.



Fig. 12: Live Action Role Play in M4H area in Rotterdam by Mathilda Patuelli en Roberta di Cosmo (WaterSchool, Studio Makkink & Bey), Rotterdam, 20-21st September 2025. (Source: Francien van Westrenen, 2025.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The Water School activity “The Silver Diplomat”²⁰ took place on 20 and 21 September in a former harbour area of Rotterdam in transition (Merwe-Vierhavens or “M4H”), set to become a residential area where water is presented as an aesthetic quality to attract new residents. Through a Live Action Role Play (LARP), participants **explored different perspectives about water and other-than-human species** (e.g. seaweed, crab) by roleplaying “unwanted” species (i.e. non-native species) brought to the area by boats and migratory water channels.

19 See: <https://nieuweinstituut.nl/en/projects/de-nieuwe-academie/after-summer-school-2025>

20 See: <https://www.studiomakkinkbey.nl/>

Facilitators Mathilde Patuelli, Roberta di Cosmo and Chester Chuang developed participatory methods supported by objects, stories and rituals to guide participants into adopting different behaviors and ways of understanding. This created an **embodied learning experience** for participants who experimented with new ways of interacting with the ecosystem.

The Silver Diplomat also supported and showcased research and designs about invasive species and river fisheries, including the movie 'Invisible Arrivals' by Di Fang and the sound installation 'Echoes of the Nets' by Anastasia Eggers. The LARP experience had 22 participants of the After Summer School and 20 young participants at the Wasteland Festival.

The LARP activities supported the Water School's long term goal of changing narratives about water as a living entity that can be transformed by human agency and cultures. It allowed the After Summer School to **consolidate its partnership with the Water School**, expand to another part of Rotterdam, and bring in additional partners such as researchers and artists.

Zoöp

The increased flexibility of the Zoöp model to different contexts and actors enabled by Bauhaus of the Seas Sails, as well as the increased visibility provided by the project and the After Summer School in 2024 and 2025, helped Zoöp to **gain traction and expand rapidly** in the Netherlands and Belgium reaching a total of 12 Zoöps as of October 2025 (Nutma and Kuitenbrouwer, 2024; Zoöp Newsletter, autumn 2025).²¹

- The first Belgian Zoop (Rif!) has begun in Mortsel, near Antwerp, and five new Zoöp (four in the Netherlands, one in the United Kingdom) are set to start in October or December 2025. Three of the current and upcoming Zoöp include a focus on water.
- The Zoöp has also been disseminated widely through features in major Dutch media outlets such as the Volkskrant and NRC newspapers (Zoöp Newsletter, autumn 2025) as well as the academic Journal Futures (Cristiano Pedroso-Rousado et al, 2025). The academic publication, as well as the new page "Instruments and Methods" on the Zoöp website, incorporate experiences and methods that were part of Bauhaus of the Seas Sails, such as the Working groups and Detours.²²

21 See: <https://zoop.earth/nl/page/591/op-weg-naar-12-zo%C3%B6ps-in-2025>

22 See: <https://zoop.earth/en/page/709/instruments-and-methods>

- The new Zoöps follow different formats and scopes, as some organizations formally commit to becoming a Zoöp while others adopt a “lighter” Memorandum of Understanding to test the model first. This second option was used in Malmö, while in Amsterdam two full contractual forms of the Zoöp model were adopted: (1) Zoöp Ground for Wellbeing in Amsterdam Noord where the municipality is working with 10+ partners (technical, social, cultural, ecological) on the regeneration of Pleiadenplein and Kometensingel; (2) and Zoöp Amstelpark.
- The Zoöp’s positioning strategy as a “learning process”²³, which has been reinforced during the project, facilitates local-level policy experimentation and gradual buy-in from organizations like public entities.

Within the Delta, **a new Zoöp was created at Buitenplaats Brienoord** which hosted an After Summer School Zoop workshop in 2024. This Zoöp, which is also a tidal park and artist residency, is strongly connected to the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails themes and can draw from the experiences of the project. It was visited by the Ocean Ambassadors of each pilot on 24 June 2025 as part of a project meeting in Rotterdam.

The Zoöp has also **expanded its collaborations with the New European Bauhaus project Convivium (2024-2027)**²⁴ that supports regenerative and community-based food systems in Rotterdam, Flanders and other locations in Europe. Zoöp has been embedded in the project’s methodology.²⁵ Zoöp and Convivium co-organized a workshop on Regenerative Urban Foodscapes at the After Summer School 2025 attended by community activists, educators, architects, artists and researchers. The workshop explored ideas and connections between actors such as community kitchens and urban gardens in Rotterdam, to develop a socially just approach to regenerative food that considers socio-economic inequalities in the city. This is part of a wider reflection by the Zoop team on how to adapt their methodologies to the different hierarchies of needs within unequal urban contexts where ecosystem wellbeing may not be seen as a priority.

23 See: <https://zoop.earth/nl/page/401/wat-is-een-zo%C3%B6p>

24 See: <https://convivium-neb-project.com/>

25 See: <https://convivium-neb-project.com/about/>

1.3 Toward waves? Hypotheses



The criteria we analyzed considered whether:

- **the pilot sustained and upscaled existing processes;**
- **relevant actors took over and sustained efforts;**
- **solutions were disseminated widely.**

Hypotheses about potential waves from the pilot in the coming years

The long-term vision of the pilot has evolved throughout the project to incorporate the vision of each drop team. In the Future Tidal Architectures drop, the focus on developing future strategies that combine nature, agriculture and industry, through strong community engagement, has remained constant. The drop team has **refined its long-term vision** by highlighting the importance of strengthening local agency to adapt to regional and global changes, and by driving pilot efforts to develop a shared Delta-scale narrative. The pilot has planted several seeds that support these long-term goals.

Key connections have been established between practitioners and researchers working in different parts and on different topics within the cross-border Delta region. In particular, the collaboration between Greenspark Groot Saeftinghe and Vereniging Deltametropool-TU Delft has been strengthened and has exposed the streekholders to **new contacts, perspectives and ways of working** (creative methods to engage community and youths, storytelling, Zoöp methods, scenario-making and speculative design) that they plan to **include in their future partnership** as of mid-2026, as reported by the drop team in Saeftinghe. The drop team demonstrated a clear conviction that the methods applied by the drop can strengthen their participatory approach with community members. Going forward, the Greenspark Groot Saeftinghe team and streekholders could make explicit references to the drop methods they aim to reuse when formulating their new strategy (likely a five-year duration) and action plan. They could pursue efforts to foster the participation of young people in the area by supporting youth-led initiatives and intergenerational dialogue about the future.

The group of participants in the Delta expert meeting of June 2025 could form the basis of **continued collaboration at the Delta scale**, for instance via an active Community of Practice. As next steps, the drop team plans to translate the co-design activities tested in the project into a replicable methodology that could be adapted to other contexts in the Delta (and beyond), especially where existing local knowledge networks are active. They also plan to develop and disseminate a shared narrative for sustainable development and living with water in the Delta that integrates the stories and scenarios developed with citizens and students. Further, the drop team

aims to identify action points for policy changes and for strengthening local agency within the Delta region. Currently, the role of Vereniging Deltametropool seems key to sustaining this network beyond the end of the project. Alankrita Sarkar, who works at Deltametropool and pursues a PhD at TU Delft that focuses on crossborder climate adaptation in the Delta, could support this effort to an extent, in the medium term. Going forward, an important consideration would be to ensure that both urban and rural contexts, along with ecocentric perspectives and embodied knowledge, continue to be strongly embedded in the Delta-scale work.

The development of **Future Tidal Architectures as a co-design and educational model** embedded in a Master course and in the Chair History of Architecture and Urban Planning (led by Carola Hein) at TU Delft also shows promise for further use. The drop incorporated key concepts that the university focuses on in its long-term research and educational activities, such as land-water interaction in space, adaptive strategies to climate change and water challenges, the use of historical perspectives for future-oriented design, value-based approaches, port-city-territory perspectives, and creative methods of stakeholder engagements (storytelling, serious games²⁶, scenarios). This collaboration offers multiple avenues for dissemination of the drop insights and methodologies, including future activities with students (e.g. courses, design studios), academic conferences and publications, as well as the Blue Papers Journal, PortCityFutures network and PACT COST action.²⁷

Living with Water

The Living with Water drop was rooted in the long-term vision and project of the New Academy and the Curriculum for Change. As of October 2025, the project is set to run for the coming four years and the drop team has planned to **embed Water and Ecosystem Regeneration as key themes in the curriculum**.

In support of these plans, the drop has **consolidated its collaboration with the Water School by Makkink & Bey and the Zoöp** while supporting them in experimenting new approaches and disseminating their methodologies throughout the city. The LARP experiences developed in 2025 will become a permanent class in the Curriculum for change and be incorporated in the Water School's practice, as reported by the drop team. It will also be featured in the Worldglimpsing exhibition that Het Nieuwe Instituut will host in the fall of 2026. The After Summer School program has built increased visibility for the knowledge of the Water School and the Zoöp teams, the new types of learning experiences they promote, and the places and partners (human and other-than-human) they collaborate with. The program has also built new connections between different local actors, such as between Zoöp and Buitenplaats

26 <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/unesco-chair/water-values-a-serious-board-game>

27 See: <https://bluepapers.nl/>; <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/>; <https://www.pact-costaction.eu/>

Brienoord which has become a Zoöp after the After Summer School 2024.

In the coming years, the drop team in Het Nieuwe Instituut aims to continue increasing their partners and locations in the city, explore ways to give credits to participants in the curriculum, and mobilize institutional support (e.g., from the city of Rotterdam) to **establish the New Academy as a long-term endeavor**. In the future, the team could experiment with embedding horizontal decision-making and leadership structures of the New Academy where knowledge partners and citizens shape, decide and evaluate the curriculum, its use of resources and its impact. This could further help entrench the principles of the “distributed university”²⁸, sustain the participation of partners and increase their sense of ownership over the initiative.

Zoöp

The Zoöp drop was based on the preexisting Zoöp model which has the long-term goal of supporting healthier ecosystems through new governance models. In the course of the project, the Zoöp model has expanded by testing different formats and methods with new partners and by increasing the flexibility of its model. It has consolidated itself into a strong model for collaboration, learning, and policy experimentation as shown by the two new Zoöps with the Amsterdam municipality. The Zoöp team has also set new objectives to adapt its model to account for socio-economic inequality and different hierarchies of needs, forging new relationships in regenerative food and community kitchens. This effort has potential to increase the reach and impact of the Zoöp. Therefore, **the strengths of the model, along with its growing visibility and range of partners**, show strong promise for sustainability and long-term impact. The Zoöp has already mobilized several funding streams for the coming years, including within the New European Bauhaus. In the future, continuing to share open access methods and tools online, and setting up national branches of the Zoöconomic institute to support non-English speaking actors, could support further dissemination of the Zoöp model across Europe.

Going forward, the Zoöp team plans to continue growing their partnerships, within a distance reachable by train. An important consideration will be to **balance the growing flexibility of the model with maintaining its level of ambition**. This could be done by formalizing different levels of commitment (as tested by the drop team with institutional partners such as universities and municipalities) and characterizing them with clear objectives and indicators. An incremental learning journey could be developed, supported by a dynamic set of methods for assessing progress, and with a long-term orientation toward becoming a “full Zoöp”.

²⁸ <https://nieuweinstituut.nl/en/projects/de-nieuwe-academie>

Part 2

Impact on the Four Themes of Bauhaus of the SeaS Sails

This section discusses the impact of the Delta pilot and its three drops on four key dimensions: Aesthetics, Sustainability, Inclusion and Local grounding. These dimensions are based on the New European Bauhaus and were recognized by BoS consortium partners as the **core values** driving the project's design, implementation and evaluation (Zumbrink, Seravalli, Emilsson and Light, 2024). As in the previous section, the impact categories, criteria and indicators used for the analysis come from the BoS Library of Indicators. The text below is a summary of the more detailed analysis that was conducted per criterion and indicator by the impact assessment team in collaboration with the Delta pilot team.

Fig. 13: Live Action Role Play in M4H area in Rotterdam by Mathilda Patuelli en Roberta di Cosmo (WaterSchool, Studio Makkink & Bey), Rotterdam, 20-21st September 2025. (Source: Chester Chuang, 2025). CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

2.1 Aesthetics



The criteria we analyzed considered whether the pilot had:

- sparked pleasure, wonder or connection;
- enabled sensitization and learning.

For each criteria, we used detailed indicators to guide the analysis.

Key achievements of the pilot

The drop developed **engaging ways to involve students and Saeftinghe community members** through the field visits, storytelling and scenario-making processes.

- Students visited Saeftinghe, met streekholders and interacted with them, for instance by playing the Water Values Game at the Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe venue.²⁹
- The co-design of scenarios engaged students and community members into a new creative foresight process they had not experienced before, and amplified local lived experiences, memories as well as the creative energy of students and designers from TU Delft and Deltametropool.
- Students' scenarios helped visualize future options and dilemmas in an engaging way (with images, 'manual' style booklet, etc.) that can help make this knowledge accessible to citizens.
- According to students' feedback from April 2025, the course encouraged creative thinking, "innovative and unconventional solutions" as well as provided freedom for each group to develop "their own focus and presentation style, making the outcomes more personal and diverse."

The pilot team members from Saeftinghe emphasize that the creative process gave their participatory approach with the community "a new dynamic" that they aim to reuse. The storytelling process with Saeftinghe citizens and streekholders reactivated individual memories of living with water and experiencing larger changes, while the workshop that engaged citizens in reconstructing a timeline of past events in the area **enhanced the collective memory**.

By connecting this local memory with the speculative design work of students, the pilot fostered intergenerational exchange. This process increased students' awareness of the many dimensions of living with water (historical, social, cultural, ecological, technical) while sensitizing Saeftinghe streekholders to student perspectives that place more importance on nature-based solutions and ecological health. As

²⁹ <https://www.portcityfutures.nl/unesco-chair/water-values-a-serious-board-game>

such, **the scenarios provided useful conversation starters with streekholders to engage in difficult conversations** about how to negotiate different interests and values in the area in order to develop a shared future vision. The Saeftinghe drop team members aim to reuse the scenarios as conversation starters in the future.

According to stakeholder feedback, the creative process of the drop contributed to shifts in mindsets. Engaging in the co-design process, including rebuilding the long history of living with water in the area and discussing students' scenarios, has enabled streekholders to **adopt more long-term perspectives** that consider the well-being of future generations ("what I can do for new generations and the generations after that").

TU Delft students report gaining a new understanding of **the importance of considering water when designing landscapes and buildings and of designing more flexibly** to accommodate future uncertainties related to water and climate change. See examples of students' feedback from April 2025: "This experience has shown me that water needs to be integrated into design strategies in more diverse and proactive ways (...); "[The project] has taught me that designing with water means accepting change"; "Through the process (...) we had an opportunity to consider adaptable structures that respond to the changing sea level rise. A possible modular design which can be quickly disassembled during emergencies is a viable design option as well as houses on stilts and structures with buoyant features that can rise and fall".

Living with Water

The drop aimed to develop new ways of learning about water in the city, through the use of participatory artistic and design methods that emphasize the tacit knowledge of Rotterdam inhabitants. The 2024 and 2025 Water School activities, as part of the After Summer School program, were highly interactive and engaged participants in dialogue and roleplay of different characters ("Water Guardian, Wellness Specialist, Flow Architect and Transhuman Ambassador") and species (e.g., seaweed, crab). These activities fostered **participants' agency and collective sense-making** about the urban environment (urban park, former port area in transition) and how to interact with it.

The 2025 Live Action Role Play (LARP) activity **challenged participants to shift perspectives and empathize with other-than-human lifeforms** in Rotterdam, with a focus on "unwanted" non-native species brought through waterways. Guided by the facilitation of artists/researchers Mathilde Patuelli, Roberta di Cosmo and Chester Chuang, who used objects, stories and rituals as support, participants experimented with new behaviours and ways of understanding (e.g. looking for food, moving differently, communicating without spoken word) to explore the environment. As reported by a participant, "By giving human beings specially made tools can really change their behaviors, point of view, and ways of navigating the world. I guess this shows the power of design." This, together with the film by Di Frang and the soundscape by



Fig. 14: Live Action Role Play in M4H area in Rotterdam by Mathilda Patuelli en Roberta di Cosmo (WaterSchool, Studio Makkink & Bey), Rotterdam, 20-21st September 2025. (Source: Francien van Westrenen, 2025.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Anastasia Eggers, created a sensory, embodied learning experience for participants who reported feeling more connected to the environment. The LARP tested a different way of sharing information and research about rivers and non-native species, through lived experience.

Zoöp

According to the drop team, artistic methods are at the core of the Zoöp model and are essential to **building empathetic relationships** with the ecosystem and other-than-human species. Zoöp workshops and Detours use participatory empathetic exercises like roleplaying different members of the ecosystem (e.g., an insect, the municipality, the local beach, the community kitchen) to help participants shift perspectives, realize that humans and other-than-human lifeforms have a lot in common (e.g. the need for food, a healthy habitat) and are interdependent.

The Zoöp exercises of Identifying, Sensing & listening, and Characterising,³⁰ and the use of a relational map in Zoöp workshops (during the After Summer School and with other pilot teams) helped participants identify relationships between different parts of the ecosystem and possibilities for agency, to reinforce positive relationships or weaken negative relationships. Workshop participants, such as the Speaker for the Living of the Genoa pilot, reported a **shift from an “ecosystem services” perspective toward a more empathetic perspective** where humans can position themselves as part of the ecosystem, understand the needs of other lifeforms, and generate mutual value. According to the Speaker for the Living in Genoa, this was a more effective way of communicating about the value of the ecosystem.

These creative participatory methods, embedded in a flexible Zoöp model, create **new possibilities to engage in difficult conversations** adapted to different contexts and audiences. This can be particularly valuable in contexts of socio-economic inequality and urban segregation where prioritizing ecology may seem counterintuitive for grassroots actors and decisionmakers. At the After Summer School 2025 Zoöp and Convivium workshop about regenerative food, the Zoöp facilitators framed the workshop in terms of creating shared value and reinforcing relationships between grassroots actors such as community kitchens and urban gardens. The importance of the ecosystem (water, soil, insects) was highlighted as the foundation for life and for food to be produced and consumed. A solution-oriented approach, along with participatory methods that allowed participants to share perspectives and voice needs, helped convey how ecosystem regeneration and human livelihoods are not mutually exclusive but can rather reinforce each other. Participants highlighted the need for follow-up engagement and action to ensure that workshop results generate concrete local benefits.

30 Zoöp article in Futures.

2.2 Sustainability



The criteria we analyzed considered the extent to which the pilot:

- embedded regenerative and climate-resilient approaches;
- raised awareness and enabled learning.

Future Tidal Architectures

The Future Tidal Architecture methodology **increased the preparedness of TU Delft students and Saeftinghe streekholders to climate change and water-related challenges**, with the goal of strengthening their agency in meeting future challenges. Student feedback from April 2025 reveals their shift in mindset toward adapting their architecture and design practices to climate- and water-related uncertainties (“We are now designing with more flexibility”).

Moreover, the drop built students’ capacities to analyse local contexts with a focus on land-water interaction, and to understand how nature and sustainability objectives may conflict with other values and interests locally, such as port, industry and agriculture. Students were introduced to the complexity of negotiating different interests and making decisions that impact different scales (including crossborder) and themes (“I gained a deeper understanding of the critical role ports play in our society, both economically and socially, and how they shape entire regions.”)

Through the process of co-designing scenarios with students, the drop developed a **framework for imagining adaptive architectural solutions** to rising sea levels and tidal dynamics that combines the creativity of future architects with the perspectives of citizens and multidisciplinary experts. This framework used a historical and locally rooted understanding of land-water relations to show how living with water has been shaped by culture and evolved over time. Connecting past stories and current perspectives to future scenarios (for 2050, 2100) has trained students in speculative design while raising streekholders’ awareness of long term impacts of climate change and adaptation strategies. Scenarios were used as conversation starters by streekholders to discuss nature-based solutions, climate-adaptive architecture and salt-resistant farming, to cite a few. According to the drop team, the scenarios pushed streekholders to consider radically different ways of living with water and supported a shift toward long-term thinking, with **more consideration for the needs of future generations**.

The co-design process involved students, citizens and experts in a process of knowledge integration and mutual learning (mediated by a think tank), which helped **progress toward a shared understanding of sustainability and climate resilience** among participants. According to the facilitators of the co-design process, these shared narratives emerging from the project can support cultural change in Saeftinghe, to accompany and perhaps accelerate the transition.

Living with Water

The Living with Water drop has established water and ecosystem regeneration as core elements of the Curriculum for Change, within the long-term project of the New Academy. This supports more **prioritization of ecology and water education among Rotterdam citizens and decisionmakers**. These two themes highlight the ecological value of water and other-than-human lifeforms, as well as their cultural value in terms of the meanings, beliefs, habits and daily practices associated with water in the city.

During the After Summer School 2024 and 2025, the partnerships with the Water School and Zoöp were consolidated and provided opportunities for experimenting with new learning methods and behaviours that support healthier ecosystems and relationships with water. The activities shed light on the changes that global trade and climate change bring to local environments, especially “in-between spaces” of land and sea, and the need for alternative narratives about rivers and other-than-human species. As expressed by one participant who gave feedback on the 2025 LARP experience, “Even the most boring-looking landscapes are homes to many many many other species. We tend to forget that all the time (...).”

The new learning methods of the Zoöp and Water School activities, as well as their reframing of conventional models, have the **potential to disseminate transformative ideas and shift mindsets** of participants from different parts of Rotterdam. Moreover, by valuing and amplifying the tacit knowledge of Rotterdam’s grassroots actors, including their knowledge of the ecosystem and other-than-human species, the Zoöp and Water School activities support the agency of participants to contribute to the ecological transition of their city. More broadly, the After Summer School dispels the narrative that local actors need more knowledge before they can start making a change.



Fig. 15: Live Action Role Play in M4H area in Rotterdam by Mathilda Patuelli en Roberta di Cosmo (WaterSchool, Studio Makkink & Bey), Rotterdam, 20-21st September 2025. Source: Chester Chuang, 2025.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Zoöp

The Zoöp model, which was consolidated and expanded during the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails project, is centered on **regenerative principles and cooperation between species**, human and other-than-human. Ecosystem regeneration reaches the highest level of ambition of the New European Bauhaus Compass on the core value of sustainability, due to its potential to deliver a transformative impact for nature and the climate.

The Zoöp Detours and workshops held at the After Summer School and with the different pilots raised awareness of the possibilities for regenerative governance models, and helped participants identify and reinforce regenerative relationships with their ecosystem. Already during the kick-off event of the Delta pilot which included a Zoöp Detour, one participant who provided written feedback expressed an intention to use the Zoöp in an NGO as a follow-up action.



Fig. 16: Delta pilot kick-off activities at Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, World Oceans Day, 8th June 2024. (Source: Jan Bruin, 2024.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. <https://flic.kr/p/2qc8jkg>

The dissemination of the Zoöp model and methods have equipped citizens, activists, practitioners and policymakers (in Rotterdam, Saeftinghe, and in the other pilots) with **tools, learning processes and governance frameworks to learn about other-than-human lifeforms and put ecosystem regeneration into practice**. The model makes knowledge and methodologies more accessible while providing facilitation and support to aspiring partners, new Zoöp organizations, and Speakers for the Living connected in a network.

The adaptation of the Zoöp model to the different pilots brought **new insights about the role of Speaker for the Living**. The drop team identified that knowledge about ecology, pedagogical skills, community ties and a commitment to learn were important qualities for a Speaker for the Living. The collaboration with the pilots also revealed the positive impacts that the role can bring for committed environmental actors, by bringing them increased recognition, legitimacy (e.g., when entering into dialogue with institutions) and visibility. Further, the Zoöp approach enhances the agency of Speakers for the Living by strengthening their capacities to learn, emphasize with, and advocate for the needs and perspectives of other-than-humans.

The increased flexibility gained from applying the Zoöp model in different pilot contexts (such as by developing “lighter” Memorandum of Understandings and adapting the scope of the Zoöp) directly supported the **expansion of the Zoöp in Netherlands and Belgium**, with its increased ability to meet the needs of different actors such as policymakers and community activists. As a consequence, the Zoöp team has become engaged in new topics such as food (as part of the NEB project Convivium) with the goal of making urban sustainability initiatives more accessible and socially just for different groups in society.

2.3 Inclusion



The criteria we analyzed considered the extent to which the pilot:

- **connected with diverse groups;**
- **valued and integrated alternative forms of knowledge;**
- **advanced democratic participation.**

Future Tidal Architectures

The drop followed an inclusive approach by engaging and connecting different groups, in particular Saeftinghe's network of streekholders (stakeholders working together for the future of the region, such as community leaders, local policymakers, nature guides, farmers, entrepreneurs, citizens), architecture students, and experts working in multiple disciplines locally or regionally. The drop developed a **continuous engagement with around 30 streekholders** via a co-design process that included 10+ activities in Saeftinghe. The process culminated in a public exhibition of the co-design outputs and student scenarios on 13 November 2025. The exhibition was attended by 120 Saeftinghe inhabitants and streekholders, and was a way for the drop team to make results visible and "give back" to the community.

The drop team opted for a combination of open activities (such as the storytelling open call with Saeftinghe's citizens which was viewed 338 times)³¹ and invitation-based meetings (Delta expert workshops) to ensure **a diverse and balanced representation of disciplines and viewpoints**. As an example, 26 practitioners, researchers and policymakers in culture, agriculture, ecology, education, spatial planning, port and regional development took part in the expert meeting of 13 December 2024.

By connecting streekholders with TU Delft students and multidisciplinary experts in the cross-border Delta region, **the drop filled two gaps in the current approach of Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe: youth participation and Delta-scale collaboration**. In addition to the 32 TU Delft students that designed scenarios based on inputs from Saeftinghe citizens and Delta experts, the drop also involved a local youth network and think tank of around 17 people (18 to 30 years old) and students from 20+ universities as part of the Next Generation Podium 2024 and 2025. The participation of students and the use of historical methods (storytelling and reconstructing a timeline of living with water in the area) led to a shift to more long-term perspectives among the streekholders who paid increased attention to the needs of future generations.

The contributions of these different stakeholder groups were discussed in various workshops and activities that **enabled new professional connections, dialogue**

31 <https://streekholders.grensparkgrootsaeftinghe.eu/actueel/nieuws/2912851.aspx?t=Verhalen-gezocht->

and knowledge integration between generations, disciplines and scales. This contributed to building a shared narrative and vision for a climate-resilient Flemish Dutch Delta that better integrates rural and citizen perspectives, which are usually underrepresented in Delta-scale discussions. It also sensitized Saeftinghe streek-holders to other-than-human perspectives (e.g., scenario from the perspective of a bird) and nature-based solutions, which were often highlighted in student scenarios and sparked dialogue about radical spatial transformations and mindset shifts in the area. According to the drop team, “The civil servants [in Saeftinghe] looked beyond their ‘traditional’ role. Instead of making major spatial decisions, they saw it as their main task to involve citizens in this process and to support them during major changes.” In line with this learning, Vereniging Deltametropool which facilitated the storytelling activities and expert workshops stresses the importance of strengthening the agency of local actors for more climate-resilient futures, as a takeaway from the co-design process.

Living with Water

The drop contributed to the development of a public program for the city and inhabitants of Rotterdam, the After Summer School. This is part of the Curriculum for Change of the New Academy, which aims to “enable more systematic exchanges between locally rooted groups or individuals representing minoritarian forms of knowledge production and the city authorities and mainstream agents of knowledge and information production” as explained by the drop team. The two classes supported by Bauhaus of the Seas Sails in 2024 and 2025, Water School and Zoöp, were open and cost 3 euros per session, as for the rest of the After Summer School classes. The public program, attended by 400+ participants in 2025, gave increased visibility to the efforts of local partners, such as Zoöp and the Water School (developed by Makkink & Bey), and **positioned them as key knowledge actors in the city.**

The two classes, and the After Summer School more broadly, **amplified alternative forms of knowledge and horizontal ways of learning.** Indeed, both classes encouraged Rotterdam citizens to engage in participatory learning experiences, question current societal models, and empathize with other-than-human lifeforms. Both used unconventional, creative methods such as roleplay to guide participants into new learning experiences. The “Silver Diplomat” initiative challenged the way non-native beings (human migrants, non-human species deemed “invasive”) are seen and treated in port cities like Rotterdam. The initiative brought attention to the dire social situation of the 1,500 status holders living on a cruise ship in the M4H area.

Further, the Water School **shed light on the work of young researchers and artists** through its collaboration with Mathilde Patuelli, Roberta di Cosmo and Chester Chuang, who facilitated the Live Action Role Play (LARP) workshops in 2025. The 2025 workshops also supported and showcased research and designs about invasive

species and river fisheries, including the movie 'Invisible Arrivals' by Di Fang and the sound installation 'Echoes of the Nets' by Anastasia Eggers. The LARP was developed as a way to disseminate the research they conducted and make it accessible to diverse audiences. It attracted 22 participants of the After Summer School (designers, policy makers, advisors working for the municipality, artists, and students), and 20 young participants of the Wasteland Festival.

By involving diverse local partners and encouraging activities to take place in different parts of Rotterdam, the After Summer School included different social groups while **promoting dialogue, knowledge exchange and social cohesion**. The New Academy project that supports the After Summer School public program will run for the coming four years (as of 2025). This provides local partners with promising perspectives for continued dissemination and network-building.

Zoöp

The Zoöp drop is **centered on regenerative and more-than-human perspectives**, which are marginalized forms of knowledge. The Zoöp model makes these perspectives more visible through Zoöp workshops and Detours (in Rotterdam with the After Summer School 2024, in Saeftinghe, and other Bauhaus of the Seas Sails pilots) but also helps translate them into concrete actions that organizations or projects can take in their context.

The Zoöp model approaches the role of the Speaker for the Living as part of democratic decision making and social exchange, according to the Zoöp team. As spokespersons for other-than-human interests, **Speakers for the Living create a level playing field for more actors to advocate for ecosystem regeneration**. They facilitate the inclusion of other-than-human lifeforms into democratic systems by voicing their needs and values within the ecosystem. Through the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails project, the Zoöp model and the number of Speakers for the Living expanded, which reinforced the capacities, agency and legitimacy of local environmental actors while embedding ecological knowledge in the co-design and implementation of the pilots.

The Zoöp baseline workshops, held in each pilot location, brought different pilot stakeholders together and created additional moments for co-design, as reported by certain pilot teams such as Genoa. In pilots where co-design had been limited, the Zoöp contributed to filling this gap.

2.4 Local grounding (crosscutting value)



The criteria we analyzed considered the extent to which the pilot:

- **engaged and connected local actors;**
- **valued and integrated local knowledge.**

Future Tidal Architectures

The drop built on, and **reinforced the existing local network, participatory approach and culture of dialogue** of Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe.

- Embedding a bottom-up approach with streekholders was essential considering the recent local history of the area. Policy decisions to depolder the Hedwige and Prosper polders in the early 2000s were perceived as top down and met with resistance, while reconciling local interests between nature, port and agriculture is an ongoing challenge.
- The drop developed scenarios in close collaboration with around 30 streekholders over a period of two years, which ensured that their local knowledge was valued, shared with students, and integrated into the final outputs, i.e. the scenarios.
- Students learned about local value conflicts and dilemmas while engaging into creative foresight about climate resilient futures for the area.
- The drop team members from Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe noted that working with creatives (students, designers in Vereniging Deltametropool) required time to learn about the local context, and freedom for the creatives to shape the process and outputs.
- The drop aimed to build local ownership for the scenarios by focusing on local knowledge holders and the lived experiences of inhabitants. The co-design process put a specific emphasis on the historical relationship with water and citizen's perspectives through a storytelling process with 10+ inhabitants of Saeftinghe.
- The personal stories revived the local memory of key events ("turning points" in the relationship with water) in the past four decades, and deepened the drop team's understanding of how global or regional changes (e.g., flood, port expansion, depoldering decision) impact individual lives. As a takeaway, they aim to strengthen the agency of local actors to adapt to future climate- and water challenges.
- In its renewed partnership as of 2026, Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe aims to reuse student scenarios and integrate ways of working from the drop in its horizontal engagement approach with the community.

The drop also established **new connections between actors working at different scales** (local, regional, crossborder), facilitating dialogue and knowledge exchange between Saeftinghe and the wider Delta region. The Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe pilot members report that their professional network has expanded, bringing new ideas and perspectives to their local work. At the same time, insights from the drop's locally grounded work in Saeftinghe, with key contributions from streekholders and students, have shaped the development of multidisciplinary narratives and scenarios for the crossborder Delta region, via the Next Generation Podiums 2024 and 2025 as well as the Delta expert meetings organized by the drop team. This two-way exchange is a key benefit of the Future Tidal Architectures methodology developed in the drop. Regional-scale approaches are particularly relevant in light of the crossborder nature of seas and rivers and the need to rethink water management approaches in the Delta to ensure long-term resilience.



Fig. 17: Discussion about student scenarios with Saeftinghe streekholders and evaluation session, 25th June 2025. (Source: Vereniging Deltametropool - Floor Schepel, 2025). CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Living with Water

The drop contributed to the development of the After Summer School which **partnered with 20+ grassroots knowledge holders in Rotterdam**, such as community activists, artists, think tanks and NGOs. As part of Bauhaus of the Seas Sails, the drop consolidated the partnership with the Zoöp and the Water School and embedded their knowledge on ecosystem regeneration and water (as priority themes) in Curriculum for Change of the New Academy for the next four years (as of 2025).

In 2024 and 2025, the After Summer School **raised the visibility of local change-makers and connected them in a local knowledge network**. It enabled the Zoöp team to build relationships with new partners such as Buitenplaats Brienenoord in 2024, which later became a Zoöp, and with community actors working on food (community kitchens, urban gardens, educators, researchers) in 2025 as part of new collaboration between Zoöp and the NEB project Convivum. In the longer term, the New Academy aims to ensure that the knowledge of Rotterdam's grassroots actors is better recognized, valued and used for the sustainable development of the city.

In 2024 and 2025, the Zoöp and Water School classes **enabled participants to (re) discover different parts of the city** (Het Park, Merwe-Vierhavens, garden and pond at Het Nieuwe Instituut, Buitenplaats Brienenord, De Hillevliet) where water and land interact (creating special ecosystems and water cultures) and where new forms of local cooperation have emerged. The Zoöp and Water School classes used participatory methods that encouraged learners to share their experiences of living in the city and to shape their own relationship with the local environment. The Water School also raised participants' awareness of the local impacts of global trends, such as trade through the port of Rotterdam which has brought new "unwanted" species into the city.

Zoöp

In the past two years, the Zoöp drop forged **new partnerships in Rotterdam**, where the first Zoöp was established at Het Nieuwe Instituut, and gained more visibility in the city. The Delta pilot kick-off event and After Summer School program in 2024 and 2025 helped disseminate the Zoöp model in Rotterdam by demonstrating the benefits it has delivered (garden and pond at Het Nieuwe Instituut) and could deliver to different areas and topics in the city (e.g. tidal parks, public foodscapes). Within the Delta, the Zoöp team also shared their approach with TU Delft, Grenspark Groot Saefthinghe and Vereniging Deltametropool while contributing to regional-scale discussions. The Zoöp has also tested its model in other Bauhaus of the Seas Sails pilots, gaining new insights and developing **flexible formats that can adapt to different local contexts and audiences**. This, in turn, has contributed to the consolidation and expansion of the model in the Netherlands and Belgium.

The Zoöp model works mainly at the local level, with organizations, projects and individuals, to **experiment with scalable approaches fit for the local ecosystem**. The Zoöp team noted that “starting small”, for instance by testing the Zoöp model in one space of the city (e.g. two new Zoöps in Amsterdam focused on Amstelpark, and on Pleiadenplein and Kometensingel in Amsterdam Noord, as a Ripple of the project), helps build trust and learning experiences within a low-risk environment (especially for institutions such as municipalities), which supports future Zoöp expansions and increased formal commitment.



Fig. 18: Delta pilot kick-off activities at Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, on June 8, World Oceans Day (Source: Jan Bruin, 2024.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. <https://flic.kr/p/2qc8jkg>

Part 3

Takeaways

This section summarizes the key factors – including context, stakeholder situation and resources - that shaped, enabled or hindered the pilot's ability to create impact. These factors played a role in the co-design and implementation of the pilot and its drops, but also have implications for its sustainability and long-term impact. Such factors should be considered when examining possibilities to replicate, or draw inspiration from the work of the pilot for other contexts. We identified three main types of factors, related to the regional context (box 3), to social conditions in Rotterdam and Saeftinghe (box 4), and to the stakeholder ecosystem and setup of the drops (box 5).

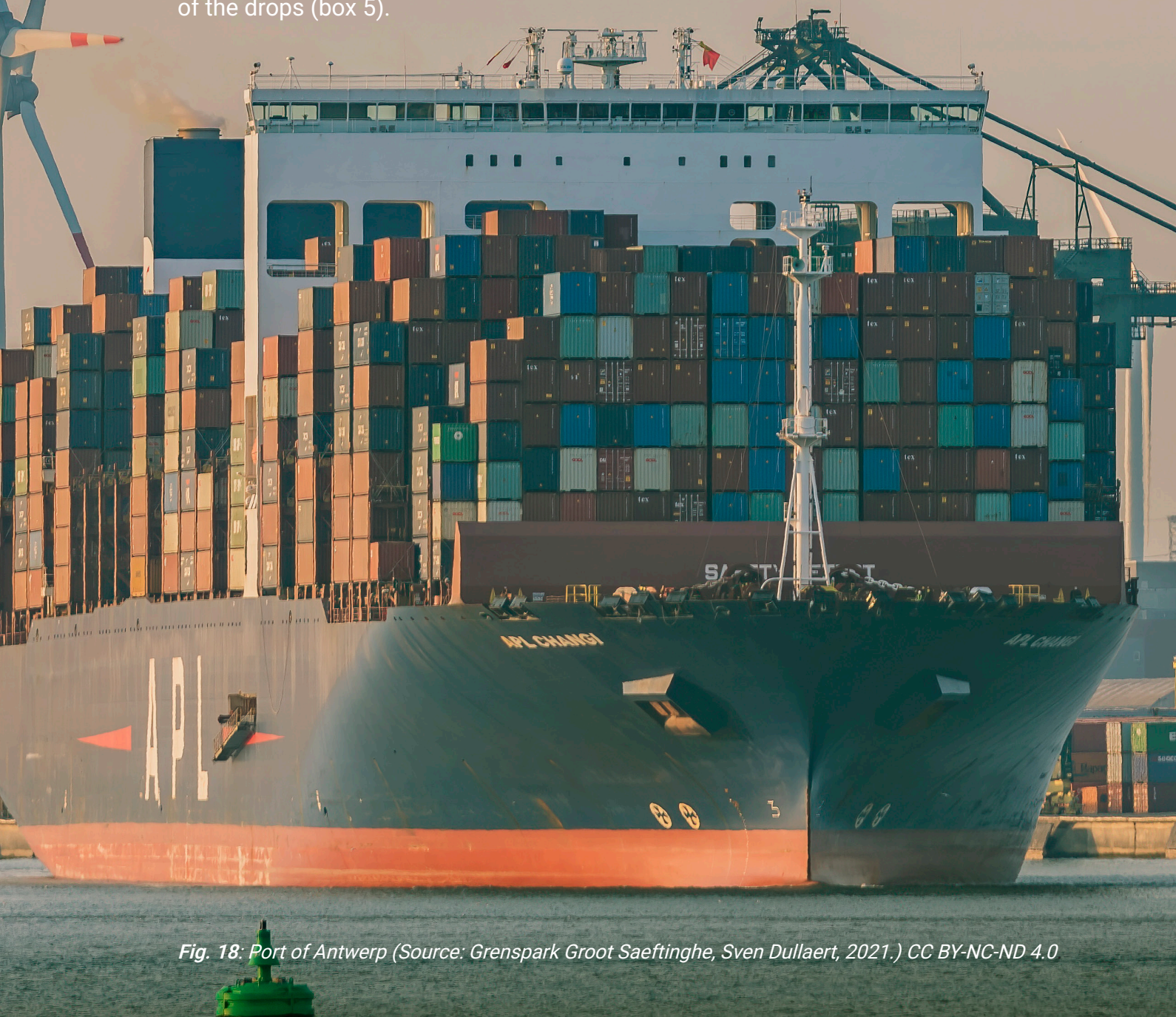


Fig. 18: Port of Antwerp (Source: Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe, Sven Dullaert, 2021.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

3.1 Key factors that influenced pilot impact



Regional context: geography, ecology and economy

The Delta pilot focused on a **large, complex, cross-border region** with very different local contexts, including big port cities and low-density rural areas in proximity to one another.

The landscape of the Delta region has been shaped by port expansion and water management practices that are no longer sustainable in a context of climate change and ecological loss. Knowledge actors are **searching for new paradigms** about economic prosperity and ways of living with water. This academic context supported the framing of the pilot and its ability to foster interest among researchers and policymakers who attended pilot activities, although port authorities were less present. The growing traction of the Rights of Nature discourse in the Netherlands, too, provided a supportive environment for the Zoöp to grow

Architecture students from Delft, Netherlands conducted projects about Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe and discovered the local context largely remotely. Students from each cohort had a site visit with opportunities to discuss with locals, but the course timeframe and **physical distance** to Saeftinghe did not allow for a deeper engagement with the place and its communities.

Box 3: *Regional context: geography, ecology and economy*



Social conditions in Rotterdam and Saeftinghe

Rotterdam is a large multicultural city with a sense of local identity but also **urban segregation and socio-economic inequality**. The After Summer School program enabled Rotterdam citizens to get to know other parts of their city through the perspectives of grassroots actors that work for a more sustainable and just city. It also helped connect these grassroots actors through a program which brought them increased visibility and could help them form future collaborations.

As several of these **grassroots actors do not feel heard** by the Rotterdam Municipality, having collective platforms that amplify their knowledge and practices provided them with new possibilities to reach local policymakers, several of which attended the After Summer School.

The Future Tidal Architectures drop benefitted from a dynamic student population in Delft. In Saeftinghe, however, **the youth population is declining** and Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe has been struggling to build a regular engagement with them. The drop team was able to involve the local youth in Saeftinghe in co-design activities at certain moments rather than continuously.

Saeftinghe is also characterized by an **aging population and limited intergenerational dialogue** around water, heritage, sustainability and urban planning. The Future Tidal Architectures drop helped initiate dialogue between youths, policymakers and practitioners by amplifying the perspectives of architecture students and creating moments of feedback. However opportunities for direct dialogue between groups remained limited and largely mediated by the drop team.

Box 4: *Social conditions in Rotterdam and Saeftinghe*



Stakeholder ecosystem and setup of the drops

As the Future Tidal Architectures drop was launched, **Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe was an established partnership** which had built trust, collaborative networks and a culture of dialogue among streekholders. Such collaborations had been direly needed due to the conflictual situation around the depoldering of the area, and took several years to build. The fact that Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe was already engaging in horizontal dialogue and co-design activities with the community made space for introducing new ideas from students and designers during BoS.

The Future Tidal Architectures drop also benefited from the participation of the well-connected regional think tank Deltametropool, which had been co-organising Next Generation Podium for three consecutive years before the start of Bauhaus of the Sea Sails. This enabled the drop team to tap into a **network of 20+ universities across the Eurodelta region** to further develop and disseminate the Future Tidal Architectures methodology among future architects and designers, increasing its visibility and outreach.

The Port Authority was not a partner in the Future Tidal Architectures drop in the Delta (in contrast to the Future Tidal Architectures BoS drop in Venice) and the work was led by Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe/EGTS Linieland, a semi-governmental partnership. Delft architecture students were introduced to useful concepts to understand complex stakeholder relationships, but it remained challenging for students to reflect on the future role of the port in their design scenarios.

In Rotterdam, the municipality has not committed to supporting the New Academy and the After Summer School financially (as of late 2025). This creates uncertainties for the long-term life of the initiative, even though their sustainability has been secured for the four coming years. The Water School currently lacks the resources to carry out independent research and produce physical outcomes without external funding.

Box 5: Stakeholder ecosystem and setup of the drops

Het Nieuwe Instituut and TU Delft benefited from their large networks, (relative) institutional stability and ability to mobilize several funding streams, allowing them to embed BoS activities within larger long-term educational initiatives (New Academy, recurring Master courses). However, for the Zoöp drop which worked with a small team, the project demanded a lot of administration which reduced the time available for planning and conducting activities.

Box 5: Stakeholder ecosystem and setup of the drops

3.2 Areas for improvement and future development

This section provides potential avenues to improve and further develop the work of the Delta pilot in the future. These suggestions and ideas are based on the in-depth analysis conducted above, and combine reflections from the impact assessment team, the pilot team and pilot partners. Overall the suggestions point to different ways that the pilot team could continue improving drop methods and clarity for participants (box 6), deepen dialogue and collaboration across sectors, generations and countries (box 7), increase pilot-level coherence and communication (box 8) and build and nurture long-term local relationships (box 9).



Continue improving drop methods and clarity for participants

The activities of the Living with Water drop increased the visibility of urban areas that tell alternative stories about living with water, by revealing salinization phenomena and fostering empathy towards “unwanted” beings. These included both non-native species introduced through global trade and marginalized human groups, such as asylum seekers being housed on a cruise ship in the M4H area in poor conditions. However, because some of the topics addressed were largely “invisible” or little known, participants’ feedback raised the need for **more guidance, framing and collective reflection** during or after activities in order to understand their meaning and their connection with water and marine species.

Focusing on **transitional areas between land and water** is a promising element of the Water School approach that could be further developed in the future, conveying to participants the special characteristics of these urban environments.

In Saeftinghe, streekholders were exposed to new perspectives about other-than-humans and ecosystem regeneration, however a shift to regenerative mindsets has not happened yet. **A Zoöp workshop could be organized again, with more prior preparation** to ensure a higher number of participants and respective clarity about the goals of the workshop. Involving streekholder(s) with knowledge and passion for ecology as well as pedagogical skills (such as local guides) would help identify who could act as a Speaker for the Living in the new Grenspark Groot Safetinghe partnership starting in mid-2026.

Box 6: Continue improving drop methods and clarity for participants

Feedback from Delft students suggests that they could have benefited from clearer guidelines and expectations in the early stages of the course, more time for engaging with the community in Saeftinghe (they had one visit), and more time for designing the scenarios. Saeftinghe streekholders also expressed an interest in **more in-depth scenarios** to address technical implications of students' ideas and in possibilities to give more feedback to the students (e.g. several rounds). The drop team noted that the drop's budget was not sufficient for a design studio resulting in an architectural output.

Box 6: *Continue improving drop methods and clarity for participants*



Deepen dialogue and collaboration across sectors, generations and countries

The Future Tidal Architectures drop aimed to create feedback loops between three main stakeholder groups, students, citizens and experts. The contributions of each group were mediated by design researchers, who shared citizens' and experts' inputs with students and presented selected student scenarios to Saeftinghe streekholders for feedback after the end of the course. As such, direct dialogue and feedback between the three stakeholder groups was limited and students could not adapt their scenarios based on feedback from streekholders and citizens. In the future, developing co-design activities where **different stakeholders directly meet, enter into dialogue and give mutual feedback** could enable increased intergenerational collaboration and learning.

Delft students stressed the importance of involving young people in projects like BoS to include the perspectives of future generations and address real-world challenges with creative ideas. Saeftinghe streekholders appreciated the student scenarios, which sparked lively discussions and new ideas for long-term planning in the area. Such **collaborations between students and local knowledge networks** should continue within university courses and climate adaptation projects.

The Delta expert meetings created new opportunities for interdisciplinary exchanges, although they saw a larger representation of Dutch practitioners (especially designers, planners, architects and policymakers) and researchers in contrast with Belgians. The meetings could have also benefitted from an increased representation of port and civil society representatives to **ensure a diversity of perspectives**.

At the level of the Bauhaus of the Seas Sails project, more interaction among pilot sites, especially among universities, could have enabled **more student exchanges and cross-context learning**. This could have enhanced the development of the Future Tidal Architectures method by testing it in more contexts and embedding a comparative dimension.

Box 7: Deepen dialogue and collaboration across sectors, generations and countries



Increase pilot-level coherence and communication

Pilot team members and their Sea Forum faced challenges to meet regularly, including physical distance between locations, workload, staff turnovers and subcontracting decisions. The differences in the three drop teams' goals and ways of working also did not create sufficient incentives to meet regularly. Establishing clear **shared goals** from an early stage in the project and working toward a **shared output** (such as a joint final exhibition or publication), in line with the interests and strengths of each drop team and related to the regional Delta scale, might have stimulated more continuous collaboration.

Regular communication channels, such as meetings, would have fostered more coherence and mutual understanding between pilot partners. It could have enabled discussions about attendance in project-wide meetings and activities, to ensure that the pilot team was consistently represented and that efforts were distributed among drop partners, for instance via a rotating participation.

The Living with Water drop organized learning activities about water with citizens through the Water School, facilitated by the subcontracted design firm Makkink & Bey. More regular communication between Makkink & Bey, the pilot team and the impact assessment team, as well as gathering feedback from participants in the 2024 and 2025 After Summer School, would have enabled a better understanding of the goals and progress of the drop throughout the project. This understanding improved after feedback was collected from participants in the 2025 LARP experiences.

Box 8: *Increase pilot-level coherence and communication*



Build and nurture long-term local relationships

In the Delta pilot, Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe partnered with a think tank, a university and a cultural centre that have different ways of working and that are based several hours away, in Rotterdam and Delft. According to the Saeftinghe team, this posed challenges to communicate the project to community members and to highlight its tangible benefits for the area. In the future, including **partners located closer by** (e.g., Antwerp or nearby localities) and achieving more **balance between knowledge and practical partners** (e.g. NGOs) could enable more regular in-person exchanges and hands-on activities about the local ecosystem.

The Zoöp is expanding to new topics, including regenerative foodscapes, where Zoöp has built new connections with community activists. **These new connections in Rotterdam should be carefully nurtured and followed-up on**, considering grassroots actors' expectations that the Zoöp workshop from September 2025 will deliver concrete action. The Zoöp team should ensure that its internal resources are not stretched too thin, so that it is able to build trust and show long-term commitment to local food partners.

Box 9: Build and nurture long-term local relationships

Annex



Fig. 19: Streekwandeling (Source: Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe, Sven Dullaert, 2022.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Main data collection activities

This impact assessment used data collected via various activities in collaboration with, or led by, the Delta pilot team. These include activities organized by the impact assessment work package (WP5) led by TU Delft as well as other work packages focusing on co-design (WP2 led by Malmö University), implementation (WP3 led by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary) and replication (WP4 led by Ca' Foscari University of Venice) within the BoS consortium. TU Delft took part in the activities organized by other work packages, as co-organizer or attendee.

Activities used to gather data and analytical insights:

- Feedback from 11 participants in the Delta pilot kick-off event, in-person, 8 June 2024 (led by the pilot team and WP5)
- Feedback from the Delta expert workshop and roundtable, in-person, 13 December 2024 (led by the pilot team and WP5)
- Benchmarking session 'Building with water', online, 28 January 2025 (led by WP4)
- Session on pilot Sea Forums, online, 17 January 2025 (led by WP2)
- Benchmarking session on context, in-person, 13 February 2025 (led by WP4 and WP5)
- Theory of Change (ToC) session, online, 14 March 2025 (led by WP5)
- Session to update the Delta implementation report, online, April 2025 (led by WP4)
- Feedback forms completed by 9 students (out of 20 students that worked on Saeftinghe during the 2025 Building Green course), April 2025 (led by the pilot team)
- Matrix activity, online, 09 May 2025 (led by WP4)
- Reflection session on aesthetics and impact, online, 09 May 2025 (led by WP5)
- Reflection session on sustainability and impact, online, 20 May 2025 (led by WP5)
- Exercise 'From pilots to policy: our golden rules,' online, 20 May 2025 (led by WP4 and WP5)
- Zoöp discussion with WP5, online, 17 June 2025

- Zoöp discussion with WP5 and WP2, in-person, 23 June 2025
- Evaluation session in Saeftinghe with 10 streekholders, in-person, 25 June 2025 (led by WP5 and the pilot team)
- Ocean Ambassadors meeting in Rotterdam, in-person, 23-24 June 2025 (led by WP2)
- Reflection session on inclusion and impact, online, 04 July 2025 (led by WP5 and WP2)
- Reflection session on local grounding and impact, 05 September 2025 (led by WP5 and WP2)
- Attendance of the After Summer School 2024 (30 September - 4 October 2024) and 2025 (18-21 September 2025), in-person (led by the pilot team, WP5 participated in BoS-supported classes)
- Seminar on replication proposals, online, 8 October 2025 (led by WP4)
- Concluding workshop on the BoS Delta Narrative, 13 October 2025, in-person (led by the pilot team)

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