# Special Issue in Journal of Environmental Planning and Management

**Work title: Strategic delta planning: launching new ideas, and their travels along actor coalitions, deltas, and implementation timelines.**

Popular title: Strategic Delta Planning as a mind changer in delta planning

Aim: between 7-14 articles, 50-50 mix of Northern and Southern lead authors

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**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

Strategic delta planning is a relative new planning phenomenon that is conducted in parallel to conventional, regular planning. It is undertaken to regain a more sustainable development of delta areas. Strategic delta planning is defined as a public sector led process through which a long-term vision (the strategic delta plan), as well as the actions and means for its implementation, are presented as a strategic policy and development goal that shape and frame what a sustainable delta is and may become in future. This goal is set to define the means that are required to reach that goal (e.g. policies and infrastructural investments).

Globally, delta areas are subdued to pressures of urbanization and climate change. Due to their geographic location, deltas are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Addressing these issues requires strategic choices on the future of these deltas. Responses to the pressures can be spatially, economically or infrastructural. As the impact of climate change is relatively new and affecting the very natural resources base, question arise whether one should preserve existing land and water uses by protecting them against the impacts of climate, or whether one can anticipate on the impacts by adapting the future uses of land and water to accommodate the changes.

Strategic delta planning thus offers opportunities to introduce new ways of thinking on how the delta should be managed. Yet there is a stark difference between offering opportunities and actually influencing thinking and decision-making on how deltas are managed. Vested interests, actor coalitions and preferred technologies may constrain the impact of strategic delta plans in influencing decisions, policies and projects. In this special issue we aim to explore to what extent strategic delta planning can act as a mind changer in delta planning and management. We invite authors to reflect within strategic delta planning processes on one or more of the following topics:

1. Launching new ideas. Strategic delta planning presupposes that changes are necessary in the way a delta is managed. How and to what extent are new ideas and strategies incorporated in a delta plan? Examples of new ideas could be technical (tidal river management, room for the river, flood based agriculture, increasing fresh water storage) but also institutional (regional collaboration, Delta Act).
2. Formation of innovative actor coalitions and governance arrangements. Strategic delta plans aim to provide delta-wide solutions, thereby crossing sectoral plans and institutions. This does require new forms of collaboration, that cross-cut existing institutional arrangements. How are the ideas appreciated by various actor coalitions and are new coalitions formed?
3. Comparing deltas. Deltas worldwide are under influence of similar trends and developments; however, there are major differences in the problem analysis and the accompanying strategic choices that are made to address these challenges. What can we learn from adopted approaches, and how does the approach of strategic delta planning travel across deltas?
4. Implementation of strategic plans. The implementation of strategic delta plans requires a conversion from strategic, innovative plans into specific changes in practices at local and regional levels. How do strategic delta plans evolve into implementation? How are strategic choices reflected in regional decisions?

In addition to these focused contributions, positioned within a strategic delta planning framework (Seijger et al., 2016), we welcome contributions by authors who address topics that are closely related to (strategic) delta planning, such as incorporating uncertainty in delta decision-making, bottom-up planning and historical analyses from implementing iconic master plans in the past. We furthermore welcome contributions that propose alternative (planning) initiatives that also aim to address a solution to the vulnerability of deltas under conditions of climate change. These contributions can focus on the full process from delta planning to implementation or to specific elements hereof.

We will ask all authors to reflect in their contributions on how their work contributes to better understand the intricacies and pitfalls of delta planning – from their inception, design and negotiation; from politicising, policy formation to implementation; and technological innovation, “grand-designing” to stakeholder bonding. We look forward to receive contributions that provide a reflective overview to detailed case studies of delta planning elements, as well as comparative studies across time and geography.

**Planning:**

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| Activity | Timeframe |
| Define Synopsis | March – April 2017 |
| Invitation ‘external contributions’ | April 2017 |
| Deadline Abstracts (400 words max) | 14 June 2017 |
| Discussion of abstracts & final invitations | July – August 2017 |
| Deadline Full paper to Guest Editors  | 1 December 2017 |
| Discussion & Cross-checking contributions  | 31 January 2018 |
| Revising papers  | Feb – March 2018 |
| Deadline submission papers to Journal | 01 April 2018 |