# The Rhine Meuse delta: an aspired UNESCO Global Geopark

Delta Facing global changes

Geo **Rhine Meuse delta** 

Park Visitor journeys through the delta

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#### Delta: facing global change

Low lying deltas are dynamic areas where major global issues are changing the landscape and the life of communities. New approaches are necessary to fundamentally deal with the issues at hand. The launch of the Rhine Meuse delta (aspiring) UNESCO Global Geopark echoes this in striving for:

- Involvement of local communities in coping with climatic change in the delta.
- Broadened comprehension of the delta as a geo-system, and learning about ways to deal with current challenges of global change.
- Raising awareness of the qualities of the delta and the contribution it can have to coping with climatic change, worldwide.
- Finding new ways for making a living for local communities in a way that enhances the qualities of the delta, i.e. delta-oriented sustainable tourism.

#### Geo: Rhine Meuse delta

The Rhine Meuse delta is a region with a common history and specific qualities on landscape, geology, geomorphology, ecology and heritage. Through the influence of human factors, the lowland delta of Rhine and Meuse has changed considerably, especially in the last 1,000 years. The pre-historic dynamic river landscape with sand, clay- and peat deposition, morphed into one where river migration was more controlled and people installed dikes, polders, towns and villages and flow control structures. The long history interaction of riverine and human dynamics in the densely populated country, make it an internationally, unique delta. The Rhine Meuse delta comprises:

A – abiotic qualities: geoheritage features in the Geopark that stretches over the full range of river valley (upstream end of the Geopark) - fluvial delta - estuary/lagoon tidal zone and beach barrier (downstream end of the Geopark)

B - biotic qualities: outstanding nature sites, that have internationally acclaimed (natura 2000) natural values of river associated nature

C – cultural historical qualities, that represent the constant struggle for, with and thanks to the river, such as UNESCO World heritage sites, national monuments and protected areas

D – the vast network of volunteers, local organisations and touristic companies that work with the delta

To substantiate the geopark, we work towards listing approximately 100 geo-sites (and as many natural and cultural heritage sites) in the geopark area, of which a considerable number (say 25) of internationally acclaimed value, with a good geographical and functional spread. Some of these pinnacles:

- Maasduinen
- Gelderse Poort
- Kop van Pannerden
- Millingerwaard / Erlecomse Waard

### Park: visitor journeys through the park

The initiative works towards a strong delta based economy, mainly in tourism. The visitor journey can take different kinds of forms. What visitors have in common is a true experience of the delta as a destination and a third space where they share experiences and learn about dealing with issues in a dynamic delta. This journey is customised to the needs of the specific visitor and catered for by local communities and/or businesses. The Destination Management Organisation (DMO) of the Rhine Meuse delta will connect:

- Knowledge of the Rhine Meuse delta and educational programs for primary/secondary education, interest groups, broad audience.
- Knowledge about the Rhine Meuse delta as a tourism destination, hosted by a large variety of tourism actors.
- Scholarly knowledge and scientific research (geology, geomorphology, ecology, history, engineering, geography, economy, etc.
- Management and governance knowledge, economically, politically, stakeholder interests (nature, culture, business), creative innovation and commerce.





- Fort Sint Andries
- Munnikenland (assimilation point Waal and Maas)
- Biesbosch
- Linge en Korne
- Landgoed Mariënwaard
  - South flank of Grebbeberg and Blauwe Kamer
- Kinderdijk
- Vechten (Fectio)
- Angstel and Vecht
- Montferland including Elterberg



#### WWIC18 conference: March 12-16 2018, Tiel

The fifth edition of the conference WWIC is scheduled for March 12-16 2018, at Tiel. Suggestions for contributions to this conference are most welcome. The Rhine Meuse Geopark DMO already receives strong support from many local organisations, entrepreneurs, and from government. The (aspiring) UNESCO Geopark engages the scientific community, represented in a vision & leadership team. It is to consist of representants of a wide variety of disciplines.



#### Platform for (international) visibility of scientific research

For the Dutch professional community on river engineering and geomorphology, the (aspiring) UNESCO Global Geopark would be a next platform and open livinglab to co-create new knowledge and helping to build out international visibility of their scientific research and leadership in knowledge development on river delta's worldwide.

