The Rhine Meuse delta: an aspired UNESCO Global Geopark

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 (growing) UNESCO Global Geopark achieves this in strong form:

- 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 contributions 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.

Delta: Facing global changes

The Rhine Meuse delta is a region with a common history and specific qualities of landscape, geology, geomorphology, ecology and heritage. Through the influence of human factors, the lateral delta of Rhine and Meuse has changed considerably especially in the last 2,000 years. The dynamical dynamic between landscape with sand, clay and peat deposition, flanked by river where river migration was more controlled and people installed dikes, polders, and villages and few natural processes. The long history of interaction of climatic and human dynamics is the densely populated country (northern and internationally unique delta. The Rhine Meuse delta comprises:

- rocky outcrops: geological features in the Geopark that stretch over the full range of river valley systems and of the Geopark (e.g. delta – inter-estuarine tidal flat and beach barrier (downstream end of the Geopark);
- birds qualities: Outstanding natural sites that have internationally accepted selected values of river associated value;
- cultural historical qualities: that represent the constant struggle for with and against the river, such as UNESCO World Heritage Site, cultural and protected areas.

- the vast network of volunteers, local organisations and tourist companies that work with the delta;
- To substantiate the geopark, we work towards finding approximately 130 geosites (as many natural and cultural heritage sites in the geopark area, of which a considerable number (say 25) of internationally accepted value, with a good geographical and functional spread. Some of these geosites:

WWIC18 conference: March 12-16, 2018, Tiel

The fifth edition of the conference WWIC is scheduled for March 12-16 2018. At this conference the contribution to the conference website the Rhine Meuse Geopark DMO already received strong support from many local organisations, entrepreneurs, and from government. The upcoming UNESCO Geopark engages the scientific community, represented in aabin & leadership team. It is in consist of representatives of a large variety of disciplines.

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 matters here is content: 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 to consist of the specific visits to specific sites and oriented for by local communities and/or businesses. The Destination Management Organization (DMO) of the Rhine Meuse delta will connect:

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

Platform for (international) visibility of scientific research

For the Dutch profession community on river engineering and geophysics, the growing UNESCO Global Geopark would be a great platform for experts to discover new and helping to build out international networking of their scientific research and leadership in knowledge development on river delta's worldwide.

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