



Room for the River Waal:  
An Award  
winning design that  
integrates flood safety  
and spatial quality.

## Room for the River Waal

investing in the safety and vitality of the Dutch river basin region

In Nijmegen a 350 meters landward dike relocation will allow for increased river discharge, adapting the densely populated area to climate change while keeping the people protected from flooding. The construction of a secondary channel will create a new island right in the city centre. The waterfront of the city is enhanced, extended and serves housing, recreational and ecological purposes.

The new development will become an essential link in both the urban plans of the city - helping it to 'embrace' the river - and nature development, forming a valuable part of the natural river corridor. The integrated urban plan attracts international attention and is a successful example of integrating spatial quality and flood safety.

After river flood events in 1993 and 1995, in order to prevent flooding, the Central Government of The Netherlands has decided to create more space for rivers at 40 locations. These individual measures are to be implemented by 2016 and will cost approximately € 2.2 billion. Royal HaskoningDHV is currently involved in a significant number of Room for the River measures: the total cost of our involvement in terms of construction cost exceeds € 800 million of this total cost.

One of the main locations is in the centre of the city of Nijmegen, where the largest Dutch river has a narrow bend. For Nijmegen these measures imply that the dike at the side of Lent will be replaced. Additionally, a secondary channel is constructed in the flood plains of the river Waal. This will result in a new river island and a unique river park in the heart of Nijmegen, with room for people to live, recreation and culture, water and nature. The municipality was supported by a consortium led by Royal HaskoningDHV in developing a plan for the Room for the River Waal project.

Royal HaskoningDHV has taken on the task of developing several variations on how to utilise the land that is created by the dike replacement. The project consists of the design, Environmental Impact Assessment, engineering and permitting. A team of 250 enthusiastic experts has taken up the challenge to realise this project. Both the analyses and alternatives were finalised at the end of 2010. The solution will have a profound impact, but it will also be sustainable. Safety and the improvement of spatial quality are the key objectives. The dike replacement is scheduled to be completed in 2016.



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Altering a river system on the scale of the Room for the River scheme is unprecedented and as much a technical challenge as an emotional one: while the need for (sustainable) flood protection is generally accepted by the public, losing land surface to the river still requires a shift in thinking and gaining acceptance that can be achieved only through adequate and efficient stakeholder management and support.

The involvement of Royal HaskoningDHV with the Room for the River scheme is intense and involves many different disciplines and services. Our understanding of context and abundant skills in a technical and spatial manner, combined with a thorough understanding of strategic processes, legislation, project management and financial matters contributes to the success of the implementation of the measures. We are, will be or have been involved in what is probably the grandest and most complex river basin management & engineering project in the world.

The Room for the River Waal plan was winner of the Top Honor Award of the Excellence on the Waterfront competition in New York City in October 2011. The plan's scale, the complex multidisciplinary approach and the communication with the local community impressed the jury. The award puts the Room for the River Waal project among winning waterfront plans and projects in New York, Sydney and Hong Kong.

## Project characteristics

- Planning phase executed by Royal HaskoningDHV is commissioned by the City of Nijmegen
- Royal HaskoningDHV supports the municipality during implementation till 2016
- Project area: 250 hectares in centre of Nijmegen (pop.170,000)
- Local water level decrease during 1/1250yrs discharge: 34cm
- Secondary channel: 200m wide; high water discharge 1/3 of total discharge
- New waterfront length: 800m
- Construction budget: over 350 million Euros (approved January 2011)
- Design and planning: 250 staff in a 15 month period
- Completion Room for the River Waal: 2016

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