

# Policy recommendations for climate adaptation in the province **ZEELAND & RIJNMOND**

## Why climate adaptation matters

Europe is already facing the cost of climate inaction. Between 1980 and 2023, climate-related economic losses totalled €738 billion – and that figure could rise to 4% of EU GDP annually by the end of the century without effective adaptation.

## The IMPETUS project

IMPETUS is an EU-funded project active across seven biogeographical regions – arctic, atlantic, boreal, coastal, continental, mediterranean and mountain. It aims to turn adaptation commitments into real-world actions that protect people, ecosystems, and infrastructure.

The project develops and tests tailored climate adaptation solutions, combining:

- technological and nature-based innovations,
- financing mechanisms,
- strong stakeholder and policy engagement.

## About the region

Zeeland and Rijnmond are low-lying, water-dominated regions of the Netherlands facing serious climate risks, including sea-level rise, heatwaves, and drought. Zeeland has a history of catastrophic flooding, while Rijnmond is home to the port of Rotterdam and Europe's largest petrochemical industry cluster. These densely developed and highly exposed areas are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts.

Adapting to these risks requires innovative solutions, coordinated governance across levels, and greater support for inclusive and data-driven climate action.



## Key recommendations for Zeeland and Rijnmond

### **Improve policy coherence and multi-level governance**

**Issue:** Fragmentation between EU, national, and regional adaptation policies hinders implementation of adaptation measures at local level.

#### **Actions:**

- Create multi-level task forces to align adaptation strategies (e.g. EU Green Deal, NECP, KasZ).
- Organise regular cross-level meetings to share best practices and streamline efforts.

**Outcome:** Clearer guidance and more consistent local implementation of climate adaptation policies.

## Strengthen SME support for climate adaptation innovation

**Issue:** SMEs developing adaptation tools face barriers to funding and struggle to connect with end-users.

**Actions:**

- Introduce regional “climate adaptation innovation vouchers” aligned with local adaptation strategies.
- Involve both SMEs and public end-users (e.g. municipalities) to ensure practical application.

**Outcome:** Greater innovation uptake and SME engagement in the adaptation ecosystem.

## Design industrial adaptation investment guarantees

**Issue:** Financial risks deter private investors from funding large-scale adaptation projects.

**Actions:**

- Develop hybrid investment guarantee models with shared roles:
  - National government provides guarantees through climate funds and EU instruments.
  - Regional authorities co-finance and manage project deployment.
- Financial institutions ensure oversight and risk management.

**Outcome:** Increased private sector participation in adaptation projects, accelerating climate resilience and boosting regional economic growth.

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## Integrate digital technologies in climate adaptation policies

**Issue:** Current adaptation policies focus largely on physical infrastructure and do not prioritise digital innovations like real-time monitoring and predictive analytics.

**Actions:**

- Update national and regional strategies to explicitly support digital technologies for climate risk management.
- Launch pilot projects in high-risk areas involving key stakeholders (e.g. Rijkswaterstaat, Ministry of Water and Infrastructure).

**Outcome:** Enhanced preparedness and local responsiveness through technology-driven solutions.

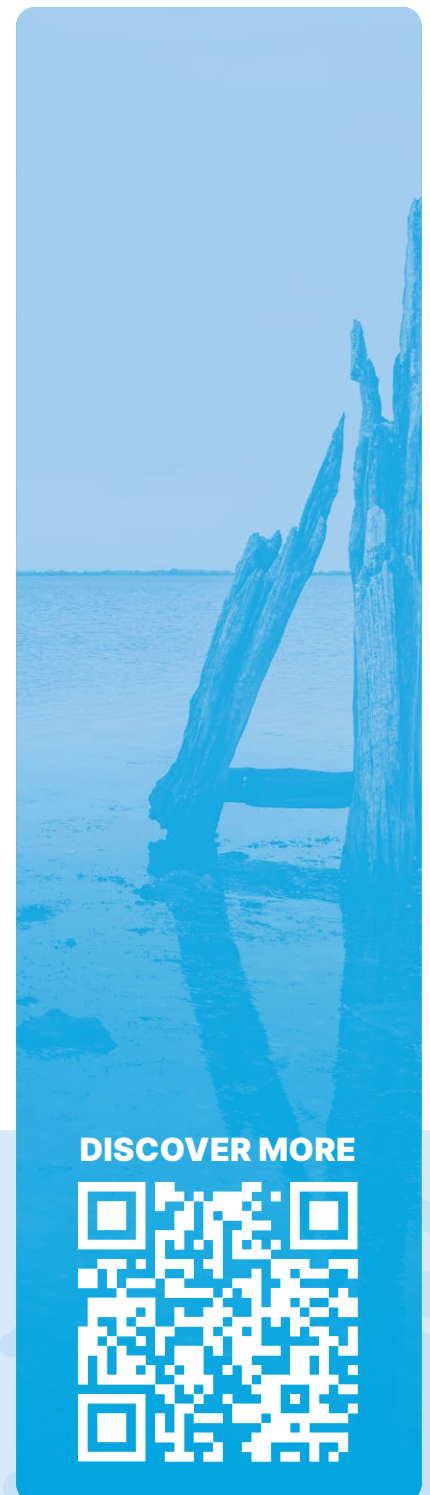
## Involve vulnerable communities in defining adaptation measures

**Issue:** Top-down policy approaches often fail to address the specific needs of marginalised communities.

**Actions:**

- Facilitate early and meaningful participation of vulnerable groups in adaptation planning.
- Establish inclusive working groups to ensure co-creation of solutions.

**Outcome:** More equitable, trusted, and sustainable adaptation strategies that reflect the lived experiences and needs of vulnerable groups.



DISCOVER MORE



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