

## Partners



## Strategy Lab: co-design strategies for delta and river areas

How to develop strategies for delta and river management that move away from business-as-usual solutions? The Strategy Lab offers a safe environment for policy-makers and planning practitioners to experiment and co-design alternative strategies. Strategies are produced in 5 steps, linking spatial design with strategic scenarios, actor analysis and implementation feasibility. Learn more about the Lab in this flyer, and find out how it can be tailored to your planning processes and needs.



## What is it? Safely experimenting and testing strategic options

Planning for long term strategies in delta and river areas is not easy. Problems and solutions related to land and water use are intertwined, multifaceted, and impacted by social-economic and climate changes. There are many voices, interests, and insights relevant when planners develop strategic plans for delta and river areas.

Whether or not a strategy is implementable depends on the ability of people to implement it.

“The Strategy Lab offers a unique mix: participants develop future scenario strategies through spatially explicit planning tools.”



IHE Delft is the largest international graduate water education facility in the world and is based in Delft, the Netherlands.

Since 1957 the Institute has provided water education and training to professionals from over 160 countries, the vast majority from the global south. Also, numerous research and institutional strengthening projects are carried out throughout the world.

IHE Delft works in partnership to strengthen capacity in the water sector to achieve global sustainable development. Through our overarching work on capacity development, IHE Delft aims to make a tangible contribution to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals in which water is key.

### CONTACT

Questions about the Strategy Lab?  
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# 5 Steps. Participatory. Local knowledge. Reality check

The Strategy Lab is a systematic, spatial design approach aimed at creating common understanding and familiarity among the participants with problems, solutions, the environment, and stakeholders' interests. It is designed in 5 steps, every step takes about 1 day.

## 1

### Problems & Opportunities

The first step focuses on sharing ideas on the issues (and possible solutions).

## 2

### Field visit

In the second step, participants go on an excursion to see and discuss the issues in the field.

## 3

### Scenarios & strategies

Future scenarios are developed that cover contextual developments, strategic options and solutions. Participants draw on maps and overlays, a proven means of universal communication between different cultures and expertise.

## 4

### Implementation

In step 4 the participants reflect on the feasibility of these solutions in relation to the impacted actors' interests, motivations and abilities to implement the proposed solutions.

## 5

### Presentation

Based on these reflections solutions will be designed, and presented to (invited) stakeholders.

## Adjustable to your planning



### When

- Visioning and learning when out of the box visions and strategies are desired for a delta or river area.
- Plan formulation when strategy options are "on the table".
- Project formulation when an option has been chosen and more detailed strategies should be designed in a "conceptual design stage".

### How

- Easy to use with low amounts of data (Google Maps, basemaps). Drawing and design as a universal language, understandable for everyone.
- Three facilitators with local partners could run a Strategy Lab with 50 participants.
- It can be run in one week or in a few days, over an extended period, so that facilitators and participants do research on strategies in between.
- Interactive tools: Spatial design, Dervis, mapping scenarios, Mota.

### Who

- Planning professionals (officials, consultants, development partners).
- Civil society representatives (NGOs, community leaders).
- Academia interested in local planning issues.

## Lessons learned from developing the Strategy Lab



1. The Strategy Lab produces out of the box strategies that are not yet mainstream in policies, plans, and other decision-making. In Bangladesh, Tidal River Management was strongly supported by the participants as a strategic option. The feasibility assessment revealed institutional constraints for implementation, and recommendations on how to cope with the constraints.

2. The Strategy Lab generates a range of land-water strategies for the design area as each group devises their own strategy to tackle a particular land-water problem, and future scenarios are developed that could be used in upcoming planning processes. Participants learn about different approaches to tackle a particular land-water problem. In Vietnam, different adaptation strategies were developed to cope with salinity intrusion in Tra Vinh province.

3. The Strategy Lab produces highly diverse outcomes. Participants not only exchange insights and experiences over consecutive days in a safe experimental environment. But they also value the networking (useful for upcoming plans and projects), the peer to peer learning (everybody brings unique and useful knowledge to Strategy Lab) and experimentation with participatory planning tools.

## Background

The Strategy Lab was applied in Bangladesh and Vietnam, by IHE Delft, Deltares, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, Bosch Slabbers, Center of Water Management and Climate Change, Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services and other partners of the Strategic Delta Planning project ([strategic-delta-planning.un-ihe.org](http://strategic-delta-planning.un-ihe.org)).

The project is running from 2014 to 2019 and focuses on strategic delta planning in Bangladesh, Vietnam and the Netherlands, and builds upon research activities of PhDs, postdocs and Consortium Partners. We take a reflective approach by placing delta planning, innovation and change in a scientific context. We aim to provide lessons learned to the delta (planning) community on planning approaches and tools, and encourage discussion amongst deltas and their planning professionals.

The project is funded by the Urbanising Deltas of the World Programme of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) under Project Number W.07.69.106.



*"I have learned how to apply the participatory tools in the strategic planning process of a delta. In the process, the bottom-up planning is more important for proper planning of a delta. The different opinions of different stakeholders is so essential in this active participatory process"*

(participant in Bangladesh Strategy Lab)



## Further information

Reports of the Strategy Labs, and other training sessions on Dervis and MOTA, are in the Online Repository <https://strategic-delta-planning.un-ihe.org/capacity-building-training>

A scientific paper of Evers et al. (2019) discusses the Strategy Labs and is freely available <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09640568.2019.1603843>