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## SANDY STRATEGIES IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

### INTRODUCTION

All over the world, climate change and sea-level rise are forcing societies to take action. They need to develop new and innovative approaches to adapt. But such technological innovations do not develop in a social vacuum; they are often closely linked to finding solutions to social challenges. The successful introduction of technological innovations, such as the Sand Motor, depends on whether a range of political and societal parties are willing and able to commit themselves to this solution. Considering the unprecedented scale, and thus potential social impact, of a project like the Sand Motor, it should come as no surprise that its introduction was not without challenges. In this chapter, we discuss why many political and societal parties came to support the Sand Motor pilot project.

We look at the social context of the Sand Motor from three related viewpoints. First, we place the Sand Motor in its social and political context. To understand the societal acceptance of the Sand Motor, we have to begin with the social and political background (Page 30), the history of Dutch coastal management. A specific set of spatial planning challenges along the west coast of the Netherlands guided the choice of location for the Sand Motor. In addition, Dutch coastal management reflects the democratic traditions in the country. This means that policy actors at many different levels can influence decision making, with citizens also having ample opportunity to participate.

Next, we consider aspects that affected the acceptance of the Sand Motor by organizations involved in the decision-making process. The second viewpoint explores how positive storytelling (Page 34) can become contagious and has contributed to the success of the Sand Motor. People tell stories all the time. The simple structure of a story – problem-development-solution – is a typical way of organizing our thoughts. We often communicate through stories, and so did decision makers and organizations dealing with the Sand Motor. The story element of multifunctionality linked the stories of many actors involved in the development of the Sand Motor.

The third viewpoint looks at how multifunctionality became an important argument, a successful frame to convince parties that did not yet support the idea of a Sand Motor (Page 38). These insights help us understand the importance of multifunctionality in coastal management as well as technological innovations in general. This multifunctionality, the fact that the Sand Motor had different perceived advantages that were appreciated by different groups

of people, became important. It began to play a central role in how supporters talked about the Sand Motor, even though their stories were all slightly different. The Sand Motor's multifunctional character became its most important advantage, and multifunctionality became a key argument to convince others of its usefulness. Finally, our story would be incomplete without a view of the future (Page 42). It looks like multifunctionality as a frame or storyline is here to stay in societal and political discussions about sandy strategies and beyond.