Successfully building with nature

The growth of the global population and rising sea levels are increasing the pressure on ecosystems. Low-lying delta regions are most impacted by these developments. *Building with Nature* is a sustainable and cost-efficient method for solving ecological problems by using natural processes as building blocks.

Sand engine
IMARES, Wageningen UR's knowledge institute for applied maritime ecological research, is a recognised authority in the application of Building with Nature concepts. These concepts are typically supported by a consortium of companies, government and research institutes. An example is the 'sand engine' off the Dutch coast; a hook-shaped man-made peninsula of 21.5 cubic metres of sand. Due to the influence of wind, currents and waves, the sand spreads, causing the coast to replenish itself naturally. This ensures better protection of the land, while providing more space for nature and increasing biodiversity.

Oyster banks
Another example can be found in the Dutch province of Zeeland, where the storm surge barrier in the Oosterschelde waterway is causing a rapid widening of the tidal area. Forming new, natural oyster banks on a substratum of dead oyster shells prevents erosion of the sand bars.

Process-oriented
Typical for the approach is its process-orientation. This means that the question of which stakeholders will be involved in a project and how communication will be realised is answered at the initial stage to avoid solutions that cannot be realised in practice.

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