



Het Groninger
Landschap



Towards a Natural, Healthy and Living Ems-Dollard Estuary

Manifesto of the Dutch and German Non-Governmental Environmental and Nature Conservation Organisations working in the Ems-Dollard Estuary

The Ems-Dollard estuary is an ecologically exceptional estuary, not only for the Wadden Sea but also in a European context. Until a generation ago it was one of the most natural estuaries in Europe. Unfortunately its natural status has dramatically degraded because of, in particular, deepening of the estuary and constructions impeding the natural water exchange, resulting from developments in the adjacent region. As the boundary in the estuary is disputed between Germany and the Netherlands, a reinforced collaboration on all levels to reverse the degradation is required.

Through our engagement in the Masterplan Ems 2050, the Eems-Dollard 2050 Programme and the Integrated Management Plan, we, the Dutch and German Nature Conservation Organisations cooperating in the Ems-Dollard Region, have constructively contributed to developing proposals aimed at improving the environmental status of the estuary.

Our **Vision** is a natural, healthy and living estuary in the context of a sustainable Ems-Dollard region. We consider it our **Mission** to realize our vision by mutually supporting and aligning our activities in a trans-boundary context and supporting and critically following the constructive goals and efforts of our respective governments.

Our common **Goals** for the next three-year period are to continue to assist in

1. Improving the hydro-morphological quality of the estuary

We demand that hydromorphological studies are initiated on a common basis to determine effects of current activities and investigate possibilities and implement coordinated measures to improve the situation.

2. Improving the environmental quality of the estuary by using and implementing the Masterplan Ems 2050, the ED 2050 programme and the IMP

We will request the government to use the opportunities which the Masterplan Ems 2050, the ED 2050 programme and the IMP offer to advance a natural, healthy and living estuary.

3. Optimizing the nature protection status of the estuary

We will work for a moratorium for any further deepening of the shipping lanes of the estuary and in case new projects are launched in this field use all legal possibilities available to stop such undertakings. We further request the governments to implement the relevant European legislation into national nature conservation legislation. Also we urge the governments to include the nature conservation area into the Wadden Sea World Heritage in the context of optimizing the status of all Wadden Sea estuaries.

4. Improving and enhancing governance

We will actively, together with other stakeholders, assist the responsible authorities in improving the trans-boundary governance around the estuary. In this context we urge the authorities to establish the bilateral institute IEMEE, included as a measure in the IMP, and request that we as NGOs will be actively involved in these governance arrangements.

5. Improving public participation and awareness

We request the governments to explore whether the UNESCO MAB Programme can be used to further a sustainable Ems-Dollard region together with local governments, organisations and inhabitants. We will start activities to raise public awareness, in order to increase public support for restoring the Ems-Dollard estuary.