
Embassy of the North Sea

Plan 2023 – 2026

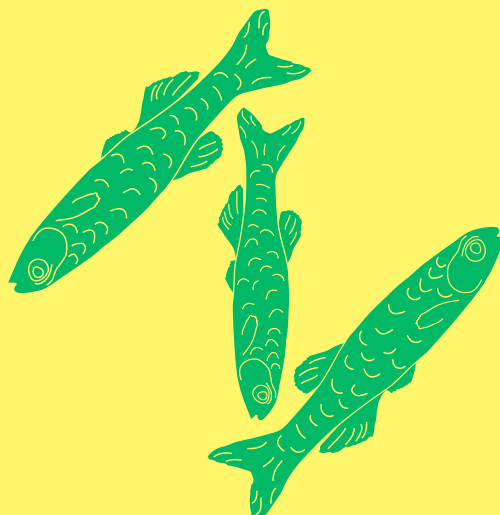
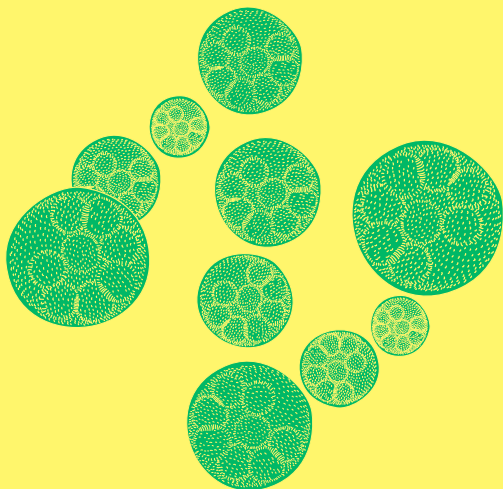


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Foundation Embassy of the North Sea in The Hague, 2018. Photo: Cleo Campert

“Every crisis is part of a storytelling crisis. This is as true of climate chaos as anything else. We are hemmed in by stories that prevent us from seeing, or believing in, or acting on the possibilities for change.”

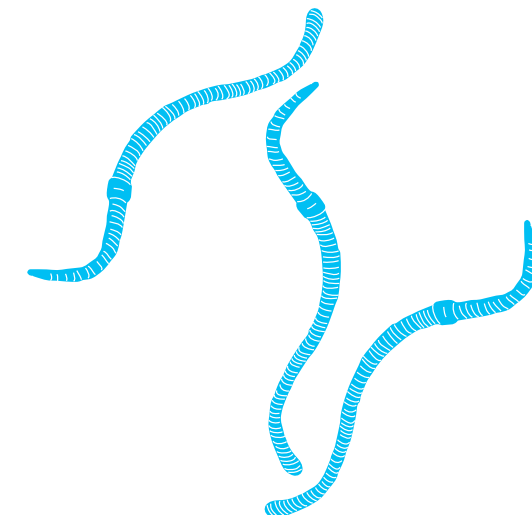
Rebecca Solnit, november 2022



Dive into the Oosterdok with policymakers from the City of Amsterdam. Photo: Marjolein Boterenbrood, 2022

TOWARDS AN ECOLOGICAL POLITICS

In the Anthropocene, nature and culture are inextricably intertwined. We as humans depend on the other 99.999 percent of life forms for our own survival. But, we are facing a representation crisis: plants, animals, things and microbes have no direct voice in our current political system. Therefore, we need new democratic tools, narratives and rituals to address complex problems like biodiversity loss, climate change and political polarisation. It is time for a new nature inclusive democracy in which non-human life forms are effectively represented.



“Natura2000 and the Nature Network Netherlands (NNN) have failed to counter biodiversity loss. This calls for a systemic approach that does justice to the dynamics of natural processes. This approach, and the resulting new structures should guide nature development into the 21st century.”

**College van Rijksadviseurs
/ Board of Government Advisors,
Toekomstateliers 2100 / Future Ateliers 2100**



Still from Ghost Reef / Underwater noise, Xandra van der Eijk, Sydney Biennial 2022

ABOUT THE EMBASSY OF THE NORTH SEA

THE SEA OWNS ITSELF

The Embassy of the North Sea was founded in 2018 by Thijs Middeldorp, Harpo 't Hart and Anne van Leeuwen, building on the experiences and knowledge gained from 2015 in representing non-humans in the Parliament of Things programme.

Problem analysis

The North Sea – and marine life – is not sufficiently present, nor effectively represented in the public, political and legal realm. This is caused by the fact that we live in a culture in which humans consider themselves not part of nature. Non-human life forms are too often seen as objects for exploitation, not as subjects with stakes and rights. We lack the imagination, words and practices for an “ecological politics”: a society in which the North Sea – and marine life – is a political player, owned by itself. The political presence and counter-power of non-human actors is too limited in our society.

Mission

To listen to the North Sea and to represent it as a full-fledged political-social player.

Vision

Representation is the central concept in our work. Our projects are about representation in the sense of (legal and political) representation, but representation is always also related to the notion of imagination or image.

To be able to represent the political voices of the North Sea, we need to think carefully about the representation of non-human voices. First, most non-human actors from the sea are not themselves present in our politics and public spaces. Second, most people in the Netherlands and Europe are not at all used to listening to non-human voices. Our society is not equipped for that either. So the challenge we face is about learning to listen and to interpret. Which methods of listening and which translations are needed to make the voices of the North Sea echo in courtrooms and in political, public and cultural realms, in a way that people can understand?

Practices

The Embassy provides an innovative, inspiring and leading free space for experiment and imagination in which independent thinkers and makers conduct interdisciplinary research into effective representation of non-human participants in and around the North Sea. This results in methods, forms of conversation, and ways of decision-making in which both human and non-human interests can be taken into account.

The Collective

The Embassy of the North Sea organisation consists of a core team: Thijs Middeldorp, Harpo 't Hart and Christiane Bosman, surrounded by a broader interdisciplinary collective of scientists, lawyers, artists, activists and designers. It follows from our mission and vision that our work has to be interdisciplinary. Representing non-human perspectives is a project that requires imagination, concepts and lived experiences, as well as scientific research and management practices.



Practice court in the Peace Palace The Hague: 1 of the Top 10 positive developments in 2022, according to De Groene Amsterdammer. Photo: Cleo Campert

OUR IMPACT

In the eight years between 2015 and 2023, momentum for the political and legal relationship between humans and nature accumulated enormously worldwide, as well as in the Netherlands. In this relatively short time, more than 410 initiatives emerged – mostly in the Global South – in which ecosystems – e.g. forests, rivers or mountains – were given legal personality. In 2022, the Spanish lagoon the Mar Menor became the first ecological legal entity in Europe. On 18 January 2023, members of the parliament from D66, Groenlinks, PvdA, Partij voor de dieren and SP, spoke out in favour of legal personality for the Wadden Sea. Despite the fact that the Wadden Sea has Natura 2000 and UNESCO World Heritage status, on top of many other treaties that should protect this ecosystem, the current protection framework on paper is insufficiently effective in the ‘watery reality’.

Agenda-setting

The Embassy of the North Sea has made an important contribution in prioritizing the topic of an ecological democracy in which non-humans have agency in culture, politics and law. We have done this through numerous research projects, artworks, designs, experiments, exhibitions, publications and presentations. Through this body of work we have also established a very extensive interdisciplinary network, around the North Sea in the Netherlands, in Europe and beyond.

Influence and recognition

The Embassy was mentioned in the Sustainable Throne Speech 2022 (Duurzame Troonrede 2022), our Moot Court (practice court) in the Peace Palace

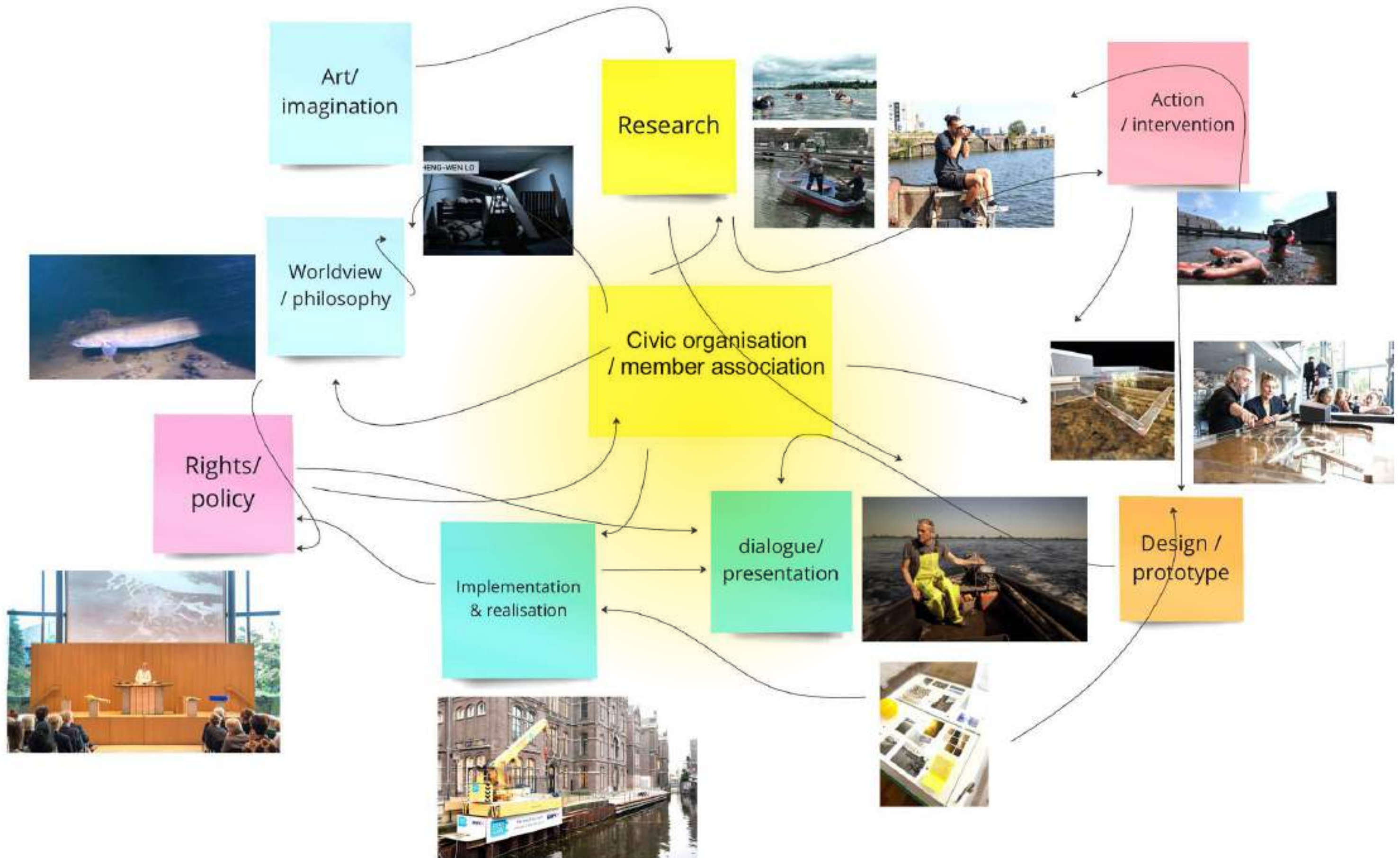
in the Hague was ranked in the Top 10 positive developments 2022 in the Groene Amsterdammer, and in 2020 we won the Groeneveld Prize. The Embassy was cited in the latest Harmony with Nature UN report as an example of a growing movement ‘working towards a non-anthropocentric or Earth-centered paradigm in law, policy and education’.

Outreach

Outside the Netherlands, our work finds resonance, as evidenced by the German translation of our Compendium Rights of Nature, various lectures and presentations spread across Europe, contributions to renowned art and design biennials (such as the Sydney Biennale and the Venice Architecture Biennale) and a joint symposium with Rights of Nature experts in Quito, Ecuador.

Teachers and scientists use our case studies in lectures and workshops. Our research A Voice for the Eel, including the design for an Eel Park in Amsterdam, was also acknowledged by the City of Amsterdam. This resulted in an invitation to design and implement interventions in the interest of under-world ecologies as part of the large-scale quay reconstruction project in Amsterdam.

Beginning of 2023, our effective and innovative research and presentation methodologies were acknowledged by the College of Government Advisors (College van Rijksadviseurs), which led to the invitation to design a series of Future Ateliers (Toekomst-ateliers) for future spatial design in the Netherlands. In short, we receive many invitations from all kinds of organisations, enthusiastic reactions to our presentations and good reviews in various newspapers and magazines. To sum up, our work inspires, is seen, recognized, appreciated and followed, and contributes to other people’s opinions, research and projects.





Theun Karelse. Fieldwork in seaweed suit – what its like to be a seaweed in the Oosterschelde, 2020



Thijs de Zeeuw at ARCAM with the Eel Park scale model. Photo: Maarten Nauw, 2022

STRATEGY

Phase 1: Listening / 2018 – 2022

Starting from the research question “What does the North Sea do?”, the Embassy has tried to listen to the sea as carefully as possible. In teams composed of artists, scientists, storytellers, marine biologists and policy makers, we listened to the North Sea in four case studies: A Voice for the Eel, Underwater Noise, Future of the Delta and Offshore Wind Farms.

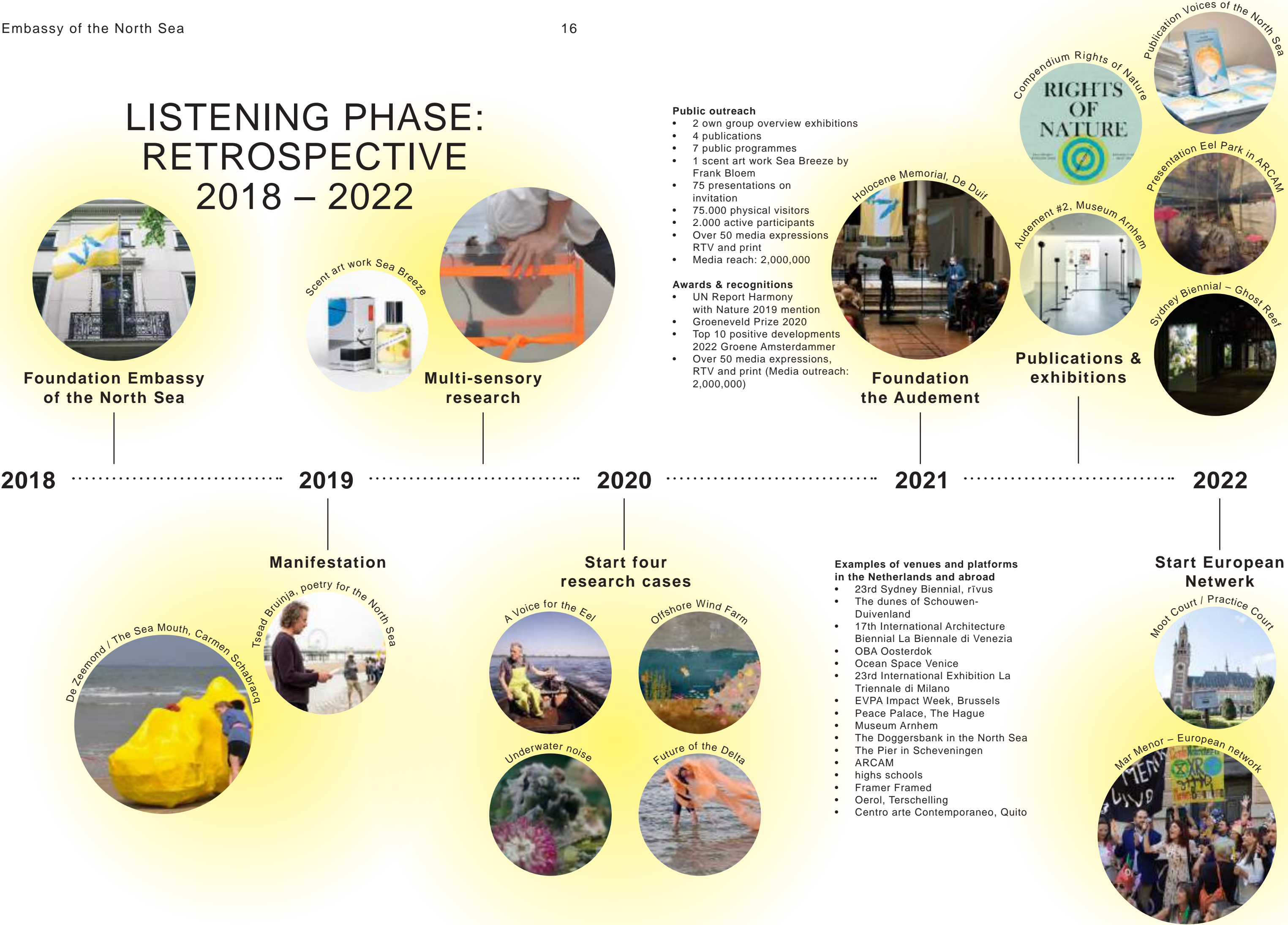
Phase 2: Speaking / 2023 – 2026

The listening methods developed in phase 1 enable us to better see, hear, feel, smell and taste the North Sea. The second phase focuses on representing the North Sea and increasing its’ presence in politics and society.

Phase 3: Negotiation / 2027 – 2030

After the speaking phase, the Embassy will work diplomatically on a more North Sea-inclusive democracy. An important part of this phase is demonstrating the insights, methods and rituals gained in various social and political contexts.

LISTENING PHASE: RETROSPECTIVE 2018 – 2022



SPEAKING PHASE: PROGRAMME 2023 – 2026

In the period 2023 – 2026, the Embassy is in its second phase: that of speaking.

Currently, the first 'Rights of Nature case' in Europe is a fact (the Mar Menor lagoon in Spain) and the Dutch government is debating about a new law to make the Wadden sea area a legal person. We see it as our task to feed this debate with research and imagination, and provide it with critical notes. At this stage, it is important to practice the new ecological politics we are striving for.

We do this by the following activities:

- 1 – Researching discussion methods;
- 2 – Developing new research and case studies;
- 3 – Founding a members' association;
- 4 – Founding a European Network of Water Bodies;
- 5 – Publications.

1 – Discussion methods

In the new speaking phase (2023 – 2026), we will conduct research with various groups on speaking with, and on behalf of non-human actors. In the first four years of the Embassy, we conducted experiments with conversation methods and rituals. For instance, we collaborated with Building Conversation, platform for Dialogical Art, to design the conversation method 'The Parliament of Things'. We later developed this model into a discussion method for elementary and high school classes in 2020. We also designed the

Memorial for the Holocene, together with performer Ibelisse Guardia Ferragutti. Through these ceremonies and rituals, people could give space to their feelings of grief over climate change. The Moot court (practice court) in the Peace Palace in The Hague is a third example of an experiment in which the sea itself spoke and was present in various ways in a court room.

From these experiences, we will further concentrate on new methods of conversation. We are now in conversation with Guy Ben-Aharon of the Boston-based organisation The Jar. Their method is very inspiring because it allows people with different backgrounds and world views to work and speak with each other. We are working on a collaboration in which we can learn from The Jar's method, while feeding it with images and ideas about the human-nature relationship. In having a democratic conversation about ecology, it is important not only to practice speaking with, and on behalf of non-humans, understanding other person's worldviews is also a challenge. Because, even though we may speak the same language, sometimes the culture caps are tremendous.

2 – New research and case studies

In the speaking phase 2023 – 2026, we will continue with research and development on representation, using new research questions on the ways in which the North Sea can speak in the public, political and legal domain. We will, apart from research teams consisting of policy makers, artists, lawyers, designers, scientists and storytellers, also cooperate with NGO's and partners related to the North Sea area. All the research trajectories will include several moments of presentation to the public through publications, exhibitions and workshops.

Topics we will research in the upcoming period include:

1. Eels and the underwater world in Amsterdam

How can we represent the eel and the underwater community in the city of Amsterdam? We are going to found an Eel Trade Union, and develop further the realization of an Eel Park in Amsterdam.

2. A new future for obsolete oil drilling rigs

While the North Sea seabed has become a barren desert due to fishing and other human activities, abandoned oil rigs have become ecological hubs for biodiversity. Do we allow these to be dismantled or is new life possible?

3. Future of the Delta

Together with local partners, we develop an agenda for 2100 for the delta in Zeeland from a non human perspective.

4. Legal protection against fishing on the Doggersbank

Together with the Doggerland Foundations we work on the political, legal, cultural and ecological resilience of the (international) Doggersbank.

5. Climate justice and wind farms

What is the impact of the renewable energy transition in the Netherlands and the related extractivism on vulnerable ecologies and societies in the Global South?

6. Underwater noise in the North Sea

What is the impact of noise pollution on underwater ecologies in the North Sea? And how, via measurements and underwater recordings, can we better understand the underwater soundscape?

7. Eating from the North Sea

Intimate relations with the underwaterworld are often linked to food cultures. How can we create new relations through taste and smell that are sustainable?

3 – Founding a members' association

In 2024, we will establish an experimental members' association. This association will position the Embassy as an active movement and political player in civil society. When speaking about ecology, it is important to realise who is speaking and from which cultural context. Within our members' association, we will practice speaking experiments with a group of dedicated people.

We will also experiment with decision-making processes in relation to human and non-human conflicts of interest. Members commit with their membership to the 'free experimental space', the mission and research of the Embassy of the North Sea. They can participate in various activities, practice ecological politics, and support the Embassy through their membership.

With this member association we aim to:

1. Create an experimental basis for learning about forms of discussion and ways of decision-making in which both human and non-human interests will be represented;
2. Offer a growing group of individuals tools, instruments and a perspective to raise their voice in the public debate, and to act, speak and negotiate on behalf of non-humans;
3. Expand our outreach, impact and visibility by engaging with individuals, existing practises and social movements;
4. Research and test various types of effective civic grass roots organization models for political participation;
5. Develop a sustainable financial model.

Various activities for members

Members of the association will be invited on a regular basis to various activities, for instance:

- Workshops with targeted groups where speaking and decision-making models about human and non-human conflicts of interest will be rehearsed;
- Activities in the field like counting, observing and helping species and beach clean-ups in collaboration with various NGO's;
- Lectures, debates and presentations by experts;
- Exhibitions and performances.

Example — The Eel Union

Within the member association there will be clusters focussing on the specific research cases. An example of such a cluster is the Eel Union, which is a spin off initiative from the research case A Voice for the Eel. The members of the group will advocate the interests of the underwater world in the IJmuiden-Amsterdam region. Together with the Amsterdam municipality, we are also investigating the possibilities of creating an Eel Park as a meeting place for people and the underwater world. This will be presented as a gift from the citizens to the underwater world on the occasion of the city's 750th anniversary.

Another topic the Eel Union is working on is the large-scale implementation of design interventions as part of the massive quay renovations in Amsterdam. [see model page 12/13]

Along 2022 we will develop and fine tune the members' association and start collecting aspirant members. They will be our testing- and monitoring group while we further develop the financial model, the programme, the promotion and campaign. In January 2024, the association will be officially launched. We aim for 1.000 members by the end of 2026, with an average contribution of 5,00 euro per month.



Gaphic: Eva van Bemmelen, Europe from a waterperspective

4 – European dialogue between waterbodies

Important pillar of our 2023 – 2026 programme is the establishment of a European network for representation of water bodies and, in a broad sense, the strengthening of international ties, including outside Europe. On 22 March 2023, World Water Day, we announced the launch of a new multi-year project, called the Conference of European Waters.

Together with our partners from the ILP Mar Menor (ES), Ocean Space / TBA21 (IT) and Natural Contract Lab (TU, PT, SW and BE), we started a conversation about the representation and participation of water bodies in democratic procedures in Europe. With new stories and artistic concepts, we investigate, listen to and imagine the common voices of European rivers and seas. The participating waters are: the Mar Menor, the North Sea, the Venice lagoon, Tejo river, Rhone and Senne River.

Conference at the Mar Menor

The first milestone is a multi-day conference at the Mar Menor in September 2023. The participating water bodies will jointly investigate here how the representation of water can be designed in European politics. Next: a meeting in 2024 in Brussels where the waters will cause a collective wave in the public European debate.






Presentations in several European countries

Apart from the presentation of the waters in 2024 in Brussels, we are invited by the Goethe Institute to develop an artistic diplomatic gathering with the collaborating waters in the form of a series of exhibitions, traveling past several countries where the Goethe Institute is represented (160 in total).

5. Publications

Together with the research teams we have built up a lot of experience and network which also leads to new spin off projects in the coming period, such as publications and collaborations. In September 2023 we will publish the Workbook: Listening, Practising Ecological Politics. In this publication we will reflect on the listening research, methods and practices from the past four years, including the cases – A Voice for the Eel, Underwater Noise, Future of the Delta and Offshore Wind Farms. By the end of 2023, we will also publish the Atlas Onzichtbaar Zeeland (Invisible Zeeland), in which we will present the often overlooked, but important political relationships between human and non-humans stakeholders like porpoises, eel, dunes, drowned villages, ocean & economy.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Input	Activities	Output	Outcome	Impact	SDG's
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 160K basic costs per year for a dedicated and experienced core team• About 200K per year additional funding for projects and activities• An interdisciplinary collective of artists, designers, scientists, policy makers, lawyers and philosophers• Portfolio 2018-2022• Network of supportive partners, commissioners and audiences• An Embassy of the North Sea office space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 research cases & field work• A new members' association (1000 members in 2026)• Conferences and presentations within the European network of water bodies• Presentations & exhibitions on invitation by (international) partners• Several art works• Various Workshops• Publications (among which the Workbook Ecological Politics and the Atlas Invisible Zeeland in 2023), new translations & several articles• Experimental law cases & hearings• Campaigns• Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 publications per year• 7 prototypes for ecological politics & representations• 50 media appearances (RTV & print)• 2 million people reached by (social)media• 75.000 visitors• 2.000 active participants in programmes & workshops• 5 newsletters per year• 80 invitations per year (by universities, museums, cultural platforms, governments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New rights of nature court cases / experiments in court• Schools & universities implementing methodologies• Several spin off projects in culture, design, law and politics• (local) governments implementing nature inclusive design methods• 'Diplomatic' climate action opening doors to companies, organisations and individuals• Shift in perspective on the underwater world, leads to more nature inclusive decisions on political level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovation in law, new rules and regulations• A blueprint for an ecological politics• New interdisciplinary models for non human representation• New stories and perspectives in the art world• Nature inclusive healthy cities / nature inclusive spatial design• Co-design with citizen• A growing network / movement of non human representatives• Agenda setting in politics in NL, EU and worldwide• Underwater biodiversity quality increases	<div><p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p></div> <div><p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p></div> <div><p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p></div> <div><p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p></div> <div><p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p></div>

TARGET GROUPS & STAKEHOLDERS

The field of activity of the North Sea Embassy consists of the following target groups and stakeholders:

Collective of makers & thinkers

- Peers, other initiatives and individuals engaged in non-human representation in NL and abroad – such as initiatives for rights for the Wadden Sea, Zoop,
- Maas in de Wet, Garn, Ecocide, Gaia Foundation
- Artists, designers, architects and theatre-makers
- Scientific institutions, academics and researchers
- Anthropologists, political scientists, lawyers, philosophers, biologists, historians and institutions such as NIOZ and WUR

Professionals & peers

- NGOs – such as Stichting Doggerland, Stichting de Noordzee, Ark, Ravon, Stichting Bruinvis, Waddenacademie, Milieudefensie
- Industry and business – such as Amsterdam Port, offshore wind farm developers
- Politics and public administration – Municipality of Amsterdam, Board of State Advisors, Waterschappen
- Funds and philanthropy

Public & citizens

- Citizens
- Cultural venues, debate platforms and museums in NL and abroad – fi Framer Framed, Oerol, Museum Arnhem, De Balie, Ocean Space Venice
- Civil society initiatives – such as klimaatberaad, Network Democracy, the Water Festival, burgerberaad
- & Civil society – members of trade unions, interest groups, environmental federations and NGOs
- Media / journalists



- Starting points**
- Interdisciplinary
 - Experimental
 - Independent
 - Collective
 - Inclusive

FUNDING APPLICATION

We are seeking partners that are willing to support the Embassy of the North Sea financially on a perenial basis from 2023 – 2026 to cover the base cost of EUR 160K per year.

Budgets 2018 – 2022

The Embassy has a core team (executive board) of three members that curates and coordinates the work of the research teams and the collective of makers and stakeholders. In the founding (listening) phase of the Embassy of the North Sea (2018 – 2022), annual budgets around 300K were used to fund all activities, including the fees for the core team, researchers, production team, materials and production costs. In this phase we were largely dependent on short-term project grants and commissions, and a huge dose of start-up energy.

Basic budget + additional project funding

The basic budget of 160K consists of project costs and overhead. In the period 2023 – 2026, we plan to raise EUR 175K to EUR 225K additional funding annually.

Member association

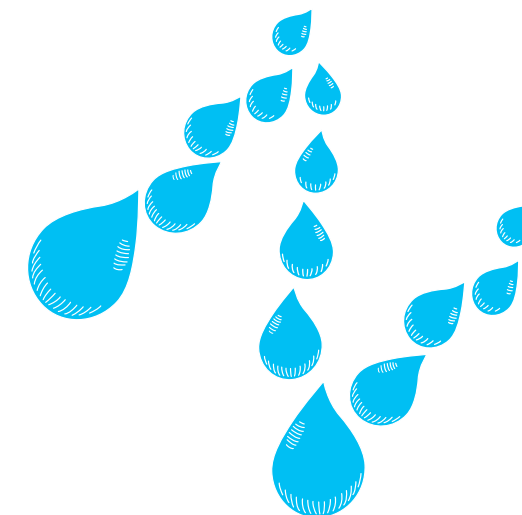
We are seeking funding for the start-up of the members' association. This is 75k to be spent on the development and campaign working step-by-step towards a number of 1,000 members. Membership should be both low-threshold and give space to people who want to support financially.

Urgency 2023

We consider the year 2023 organisationally and financially a transition year. We currently have a coverage of EUR 115K with which we can implement our programme for the first half of 2023. In the coming months, we will recruit for projects and reach out to potential partners for the multi-year funding of the basic organisation.

After 2026

For the third phase (2027 – 2030), a plan will be ready in 2025 to also join the four-year governmental funding schemes. In this phase, strategic cooperation with (North Sea) partners is especially important to demonstrate the Embassy's work and methods in practice. The next few years are already being presorted for those collaborations, both with national and European partners.



Innovation in law Moot court at the Peace Palace, The Hague

On 6 October 2022, the Embassy of the North Sea experimented with the representation of non-human voices in court. During a Moot court, a practice court at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the North Sea asked the court for a declaration of law that it is currently not adequately represented in the Netherlands. The Dutch State was represented during this experimental court case by Mr Thomas Rammelt, the Embassy of the North Sea by Mr Laura Burgers.



Moot court in the Peace Palace, The Hague. Photo: Cleo Campert, 2022



Moot court in the Peace Palace, The Hague. Foto: Cleo Campert, 2022

1 — MOOT COURT PEACE PALACE

“Your honour, by letting you see and hear the North Sea and feel the sea bed, the Embassy of the North Sea wanted to free you from the paper reality of law. The North Sea is not a dry paper reality, but a wet ecosystem connected to other ecosystems and home to numerous species.”

**Lawyer Laura Burgers at the Moot court plea,
Peace Palace The Hague, 6 October 2022**

“This is what a reef sounds like.”
The Embassy of the North Sea is conducting a test case in which the sea is a legal person. Crazy?

A corporation also has its own voice.
**De Groene Amsterdammer, Jaap Tielbeke
30 November 2022, appeared in No 48**

2 — THE HOLOCENE MEMORIAL



Holocene Memorial in De Duif. Photo: Casper van der Linden, 2019

“When it comes to the climate crisis, feelings of despair, hope and alarm come together. The Holocene Memorial, organised by the Embassy of the North Sea recently shows how essential it is right now, to share feelings of mourning and grief.”

**How do you say goodbye to a geological era?
Zoë Dankert in Metropolis M, 13 December 2019**

How to say farewell to a geological era

On 14 November 2019, the Embassy of the North Sea organised a mourning ritual at De Duif: the Holocene Memorial. With the Holocene, we lose not only something as abstract as a geological era, we also lose landscapes, and relatively unconcerned way of living. During this ritual, we collectively said goodbye to the Holocene and entered the Anthropocene, a world in which man has become a force of geological proportion.



Holocene Memorial in De Duif. Photo: Casper van der Linden, 2019

3 — THE AUDEMENT



The Audement #2 in Museum Arnhem. Photo: Eva Broekema, 2022

“In the corridor just before the exhibition Tenminste Houdbaar Tot (Best before date), a sound system of the Embassy of the North Sea has been installed. It is an ‘Audement’, a parliament, not for speaking, but for listening. A collection of speakers should help you hear “from the perspective” of the plants, animals and things right next to you. Often these voices are invisible, and remain unnoticed.

We both love the idea of Embassy of the North Sea – I imagine how the bark of a tree sounds, how the footsteps of a beetle move, how the fragile twittering of an endangered bird might just tip my entire perspective.

**Verbeelding in een crisis / Imagination in crisis,
Thomas van Huut about The Audement in the
exhibition ‘Tenminste Houdbaar Tot’
/ Best before date, at Museum Arnhem,
Metropolis M, 13 December 2022**

4 – A VOICE FOR THE EEL



Still from: A Voice for the Eel, an underwater film by Maarten Erich and Thijs de Zeeuw

“Only then do you discover how dark it is on the ground, how muddy, how noisy. You get closer to the experience animals have of the city. I don’t mean anything mystical by that. You don’t hear me saying you have to ‘become an animal’. We can’t do that, we will always remain locked into our human interpretations. But such a physical rapprochement in a different biotope gives me the hubris to claim things about animals. Sometimes it is correct, sometimes not. But we are always having a dialogue.”

**Thijs de Zeeuw in conversation with Paul de Vries
“Meet the eel in the underwater park of Amsterdam.**

‘Yes, your feet will get wet.’”

Trouw, 29 July 2022

The Audement at IABR

A nature-inclusive democracy also requires new political spaces. This is why the Embassy of the North Sea is building a political arena called the Audement. Unlike in parliaments where talking to people is central, the Audement is about listening to non-humans: the water, the sand, fish and seagulls. An edition of the Audement, designed by Studio Ossidiana, was on show during the International Architecture Biennale in Rotterdam (IABR), from 22 September – 13 November 2022.



The Audement at the International Architecture Biennial Rotterdam, 2022

“Perhaps we, products of our time, have indeed never been modern, as Bruno Latour claims. Our beliefs and precepts, more left or right of the spectrum, more progressive or conservative, are trapped in the current, prevailing narrative that humans matter more than non-humans, as trapped as eels in a barrel – or on their way to the Sargasso Sea. Even more than an Amsterdam citizen, eels are endangered, and if we don’t make an effort to broaden our perspective to include non-humans, we will soon have lost a much-loved citizen of Amsterdam.”

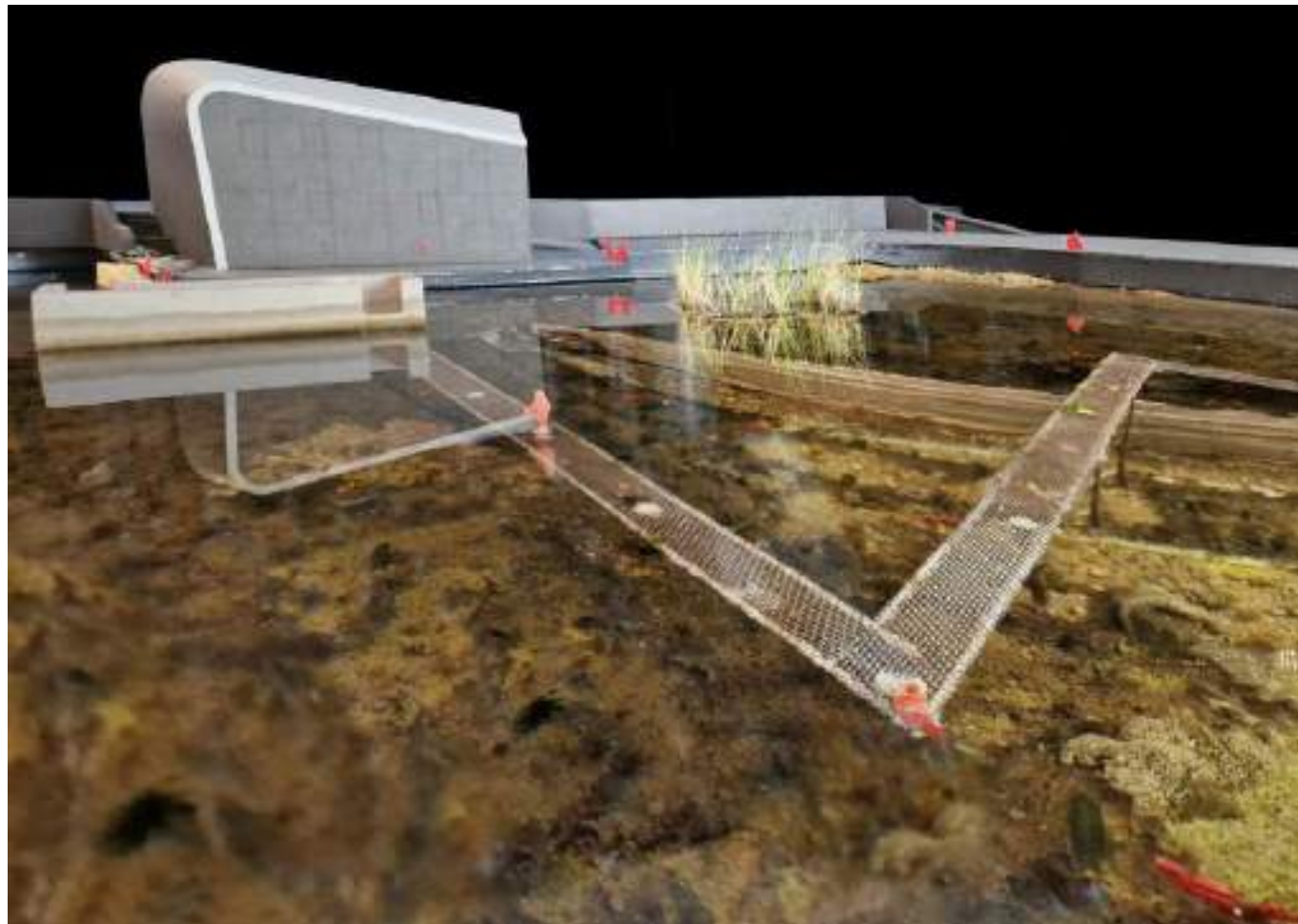
**What it feels like to be an eel for a while,
Sophie van der Stap
NRC, 26 November 2020**



F/EEL, Eel Obstacle Course by Sheng-Wen Lo & Yi-Fei Chen, Marine Terrein, 2020

Eel Park Amsterdam

“If we want to represent eels in the city, we have to find a way to communicate. The key to this dialogue may lie in our shared space”, says landscape architect Thijs de Zeeuw. This is why he proposes an Eel Park, a meeting place for people and the underwater world. The model for this underwater park in Amsterdam’s Oosterdok was on display at ARCAM during the exhibition Fluid Matter – Designing with water in Amsterdam / De vloeibare bouwsteen – ontwerpen met water in Amsterdam, from 9 July – 27 November 2022.



Eel Park Scale Model at ARCAM. Thijs de Zeeuw, 2022

5 – THE EMBASSY OF THE NORTH SEA AT THE SIDNEY BIENNIAL



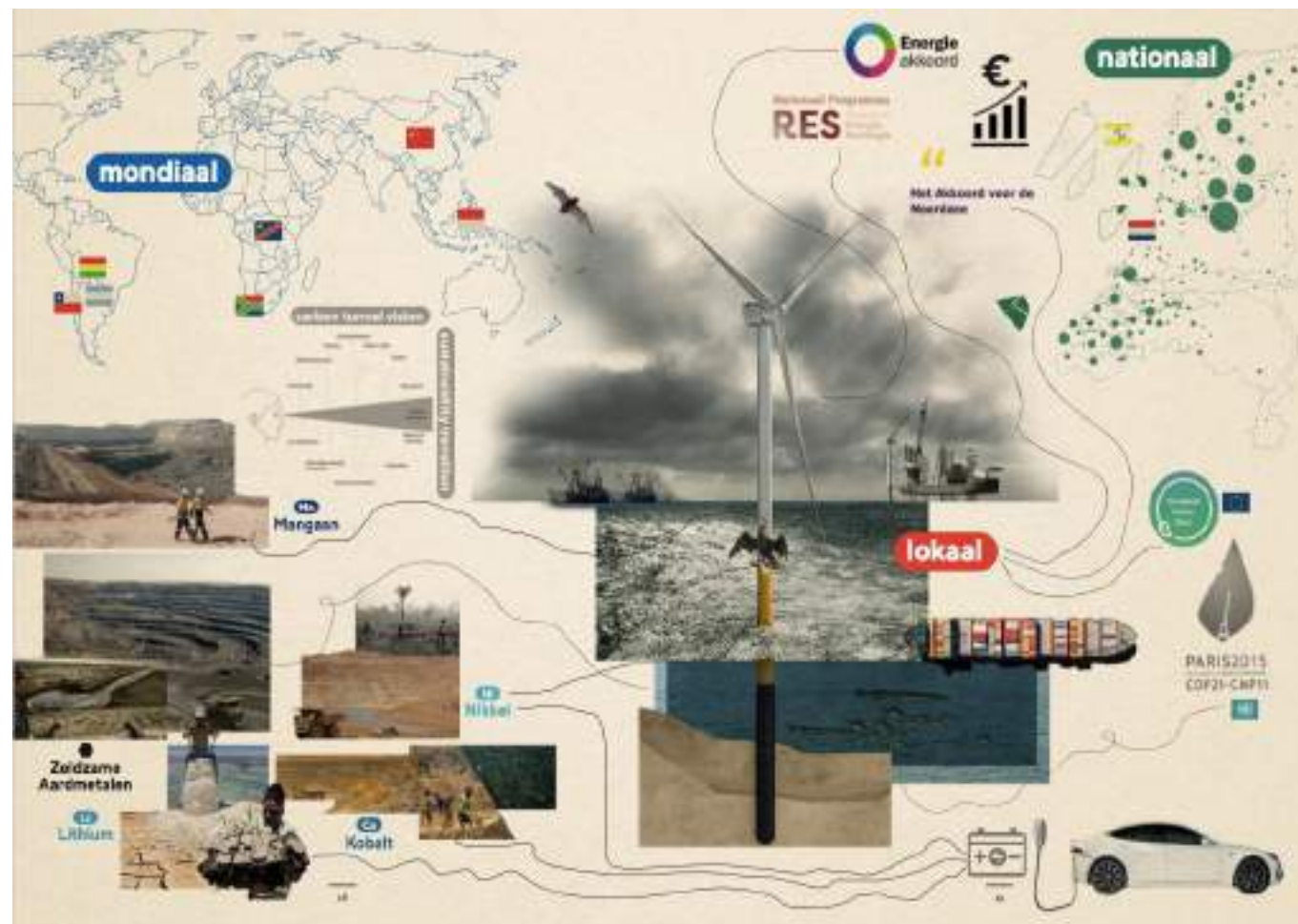
Installation view Ghost Reef – Xandra van der Eijk at the Sydney Biennial, 2022

Ghost Reef

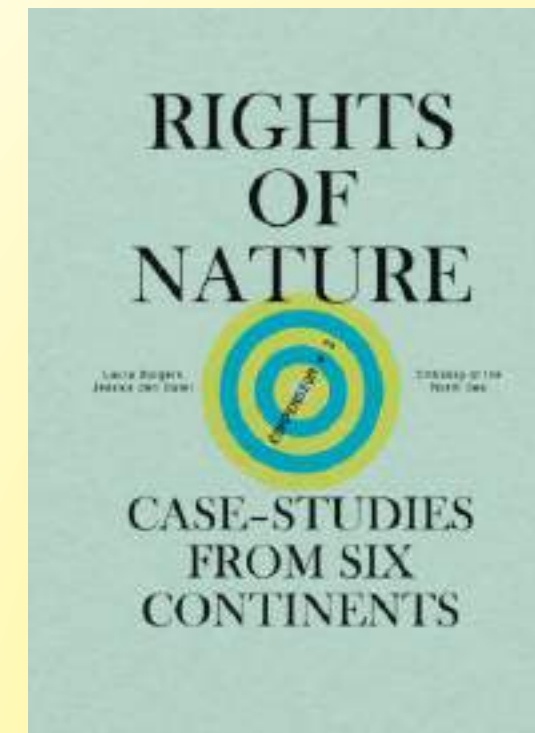
On the thousands of ship and aircraft wrecks, oil and gas platforms and wind turbines on the seabed, new underwater communities are growing. These anthropogenic structures are hotspots of biodiversity, playing an important role in the larger ecosystem. With Ghost Reef, artist Xandra Van der Eijk speculates on how we can listen to the voices of these cold-water reefs in the North Sea. Ghost Reef was on view at rīvus, the 23rd Sydney Biennale, from 12 March – 13 June 2022.

6 – OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

The Embassy of the North Sea submitted an alternative proposal for the tender wind farms Hollandse Kust West VI & VII on 12 May 2022. A multidisciplinary team consisting of Bruno Vermeersch, Darko Lagunas, Halima Tantawy, Maarten Erich, Susan Arts, Thijs Middeldorp and Ziega van den Berk researched the human and more-than-human voices and interests around offshore wind farm development at three scales: (1) the global resource chain level, (2) the Dutch energy transition and (3) the underwater world of wind farm Hollandse Kust (west) Lot VII.



Offshore Wind Farms portfolio



Compendium Rights of Nature, 2021
Design: Corine Datema



The Audement on Oerol. Photo: Paul Vermeulen, 2022



Swimming in the Anthropocene, Het HEM Zaandam. Photo: Allard Faas, 2019



Publication Stem van de Noordzee / Voice of the North Sea. Photo: Nichon Glerum, 2020



“You are certainly right to stress that the sciences are a powerful tool for amplifying the voices of non-humans, especially when you think of the oceans, which by their very nature are harder to listen to than, say, mountains or tigers. It is good to think of the word “aesthetics” as “that what makes us sensitive”. Because then we can merge the three different aesthetics: the sciences with its fantastic instruments; the politics with its countless procedures for listening to voices that otherwise remain unheard; and finally that of the arts, which, as you suggest in your question, offer a collection of feelings, impressions and bodily knowledge to properly absorb the new information being heard.”

Bruno Latour
In conversation with the Embassy
of the North Sea

