

Schouwse Horizon

Ecosocial Network Schouwen-Duiveland

Project & Analysis

The project presents a spatial vision for Schouwen-Duiveland's central zone, the Platte van Schouwen, aimed at strengthening ecological and hydrological resilience by 2040. The report focuses on three interrelated themes: biodiversity, agriculture and recreation. Based on literature research, spatial analysis, interviews with stakeholders and a co-design session, a multifunctional Toolbox was developed with 37 spatial- and policy tools. These tools encourage an integrated green-blue infrastructure: a network of nature and water elements that strengthens ecological connections, future-proofs regional agriculture and supports spread of recreation. The final design is based on a "fishing net" concept. This brings together ecological corridors, nature-inclusive agriculture and recreational routes in the design of the eco-social centre 'Schouwse Horizon'. The report emphasises the importance of an integrated approach to achieve a resilient future to strengthen both the ecological and social sustainability of the island.

The analysis focused on the three themes and looked into existing biodiversity and opportunities for agriculture in salty conditions. Possible larger distribution of the tourism intensity was part of the recreation analysis. Field visits and interviews delivered additional information to the landscape analysis.



Agriculture

Biodiversity

Recreation

Co-Design

On the evening of June 17, 2025, we organised a co-design session at the municipality building of Zierikzee, with stakeholders who are experts in different fields. Around 10 stakeholders were present in total. In the group were representatives of each of the three themes, biodiversity, agriculture and recreation. The evening started with a presentation and Mentimeter. In the presentation, the assignment was explained to the stakeholders, and the initial Toolbox was presented. The Mentimeter, in combination with small discussions, was used to get some general ideas about the stakeholders' opinions about the area and its challenges and opportunities. The biggest challenges that were discussed are the availability of fresh water for the different sectors, vulnerable biodiversity due to recreation and agriculture, growing recreation and the takeover by large tourism corporations, thus disconnection with the residents, increased traffic issues, loss of authenticity and losing touch with the youth. The main discussed opportunities are nature-inclusive farming (with emphasis on the voluntary basis), the unique biodiversity, and recreation as an economic driver.





The Toolbox

After the co-design session, the preliminary Toolbox was revised with the new insights in mind. This resulted in different changes. Spatial and non-spatial tools were removed and added to the Toolbox and small content changes were made. This is based on the feedback of the co-design regarding the feasibility of the tools and how realistic implementation is in the context of Schouwen-Duiveland. After the evaluation and adjustments of the Toolbox, the final Toolbox includes 37 tools. The isometric tiles are practical implementations, and the icons in circles represent management or policy tools. In our report, every tool from the Toolbox is mentioned and shortly explained. Although the tools are categorised within different themes, it is not excluded that tools



can overlap with each other or belong to multiple categories at once. It is more of a rough organisation for a clear overview, than a rigid division. Certain tools are applicable for all three main themes (biodiversity, agriculture, recreation) since many challenges are connected. Other tools are focused on one or two of these themes.

In addition, the applications of the specific tools are broad. The Toolbox also leaves room for implementation in different forms regarding scale, shape or usage.

Adapted agriculture		Nature inclusive agriculture		Agroforestry		Improved ecological structures					
A1		B1		C1		D1		D4		D7	
Salt tolerant crop variety		Biodiverse field boundaries		Hedges		Biodiverse field boundaries		Biodiverse dikes		Greening private property	
A2		B2		C2		D2		D5		D8	
Transition crops to cattle		Strip cultivation/intercropping		Alley cropping		Biodiverse ditch banks		Change mowing policy		Bird fields (Vogelakker)	
A3		B3		C3		D3		D6			
Halophytes		Perennial crops		Food forest		Biodiverse road verges		New nature areas			
A4											
Aquaculture											
Improved hydrological structures				Technical solutions		Recreation network					
E1		E4		F1		G1		G4		G8	
Raise groundwater levels		Wadis		Aquifer storage (creek ridges)		Hiking network		Cycling network		Farm shops	
E2		E5		F2		G2		G5		G9	
Shallow ditches		Water basin (non-natural)		Import fresh water		Culinary route		Agri-tourism route		Farm camping	
E3		E6		F3		G3		G6		G10	
Double drainage		Water basin (natural)		Filter grey water		Cultural-historical route		Protected areas		Local foods	
		E7						G7			
		Bulging fields						New nature/education centre			

Framework

The idea of a reinterpreted fisher net holding starfishes and oysters is used as inspiration for the network of green-blue infrastructure that is holding several measures and tools from the Toolbox. Just like the fisher net, the green-blue network exists of some anchor points and larger structures and many smaller structures and nodes. An overall framework for the design area was drawn taking into consideration existing nature areas and larger landscape structures. While Plan Tureluur is building the main foundation for the extension of natural habitat in the site, the network structure is bundled in this spot along the



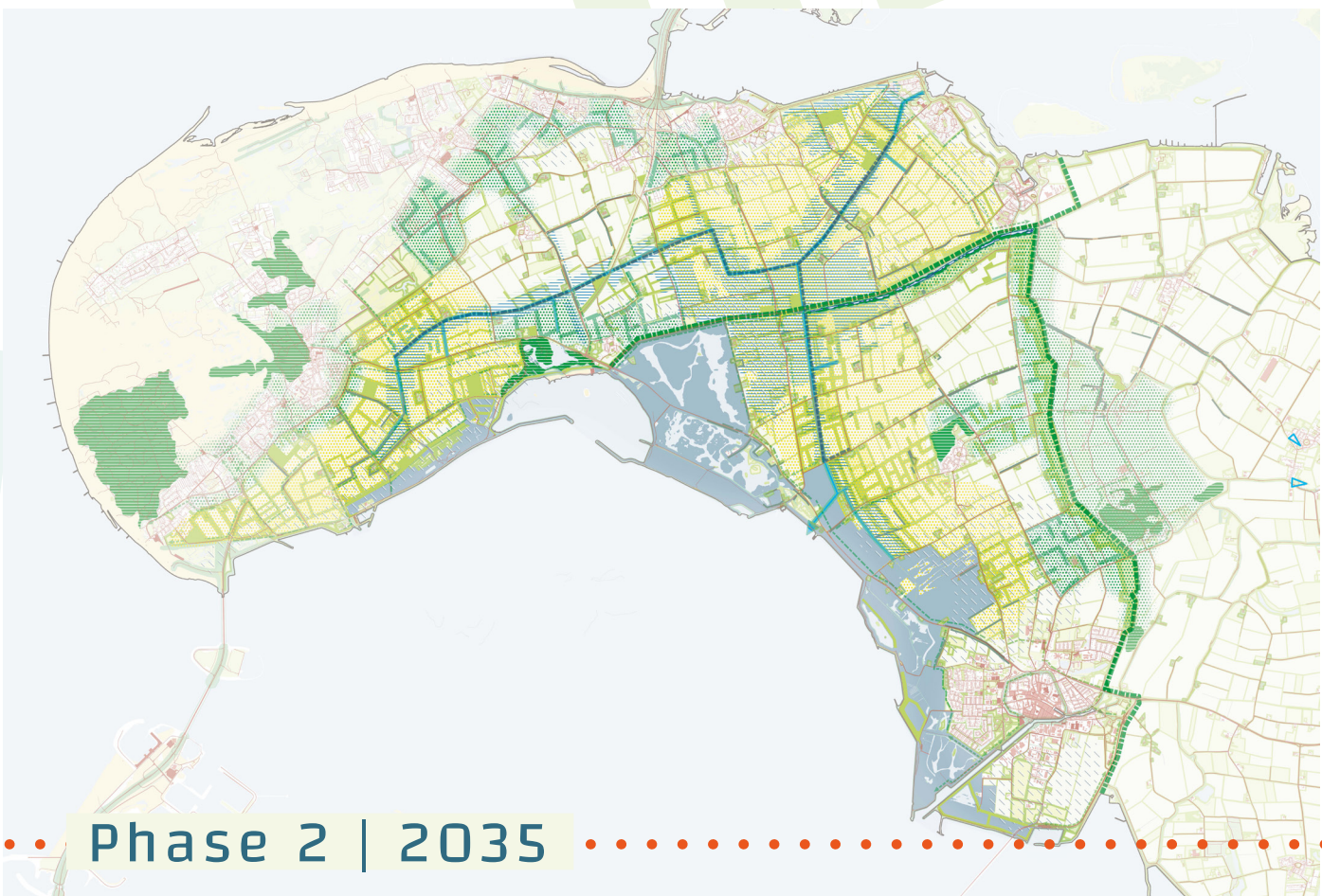
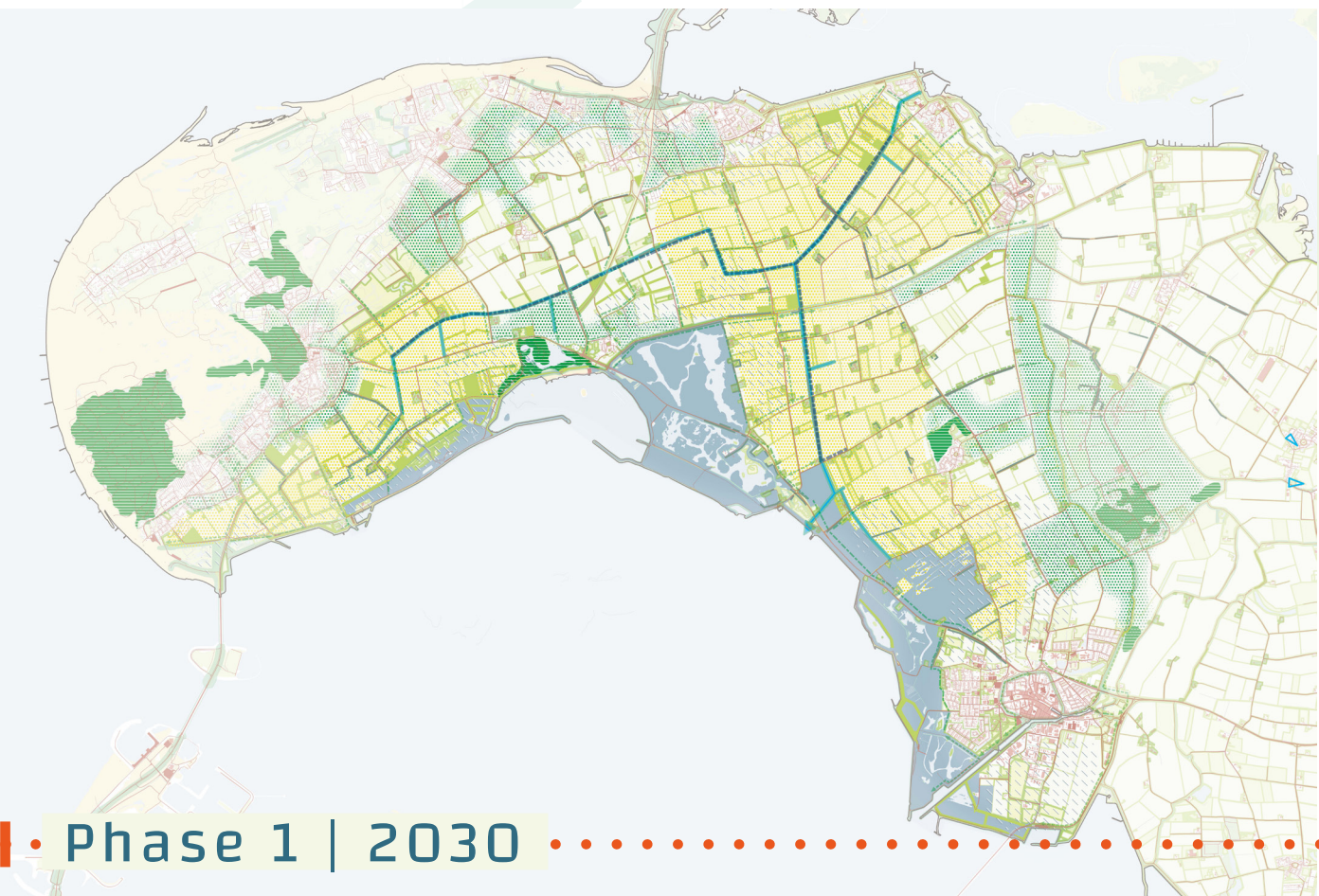
southern edge. From there, a buffer zone reaches into the agricultural area and spreads out in the displayed arrows towards existing valuable natural habitats. The overall shape of the concept aims for an east-west connection as well as a north-south connection, fitting the central location of the Platte van Schouwen on the island.

Landscape Design

The regional design shows a green-blue infrastructure network with smaller and larger structures. Two main ecological corridors are going through the landscape: one along the main ditches and one along the inland dikes. The Delingsdijk is integrated with new freshwater basins that provide room for nature and a new bicycling and walking route. In the centre of the Platte van Schouwen, which is also the lowest-lying area, a blue connection is made between Plan Tureluur and the Grevelingenmeer by a landscape with wet agriculture (paludiculture and aquaculture) and wet nature patches. Private properties (erven) and nature-inclusive patches of agriculture (vogelakkers, food for-ests and wet agriculture patches) will serve as smaller and larger stepping stones in the landscape, connecting the most important nature areas.

Timeline

a general indication is given on in which order the design can be implemented. It shows that the first steps (before 2030) are to implement only the smaller interventions, such as changing mowing policy, creating biodiverse field edges and planting hedges. The first routes can be set out along existing highlights and the newly implemented measures. This phase is also the time to start setting up a policy that stimulates the implementation of the tools with subsidies. Larger measures and the Eco-social centre are implemented in the second phase. The last phase then builds the final interconnected ecologic and social network.

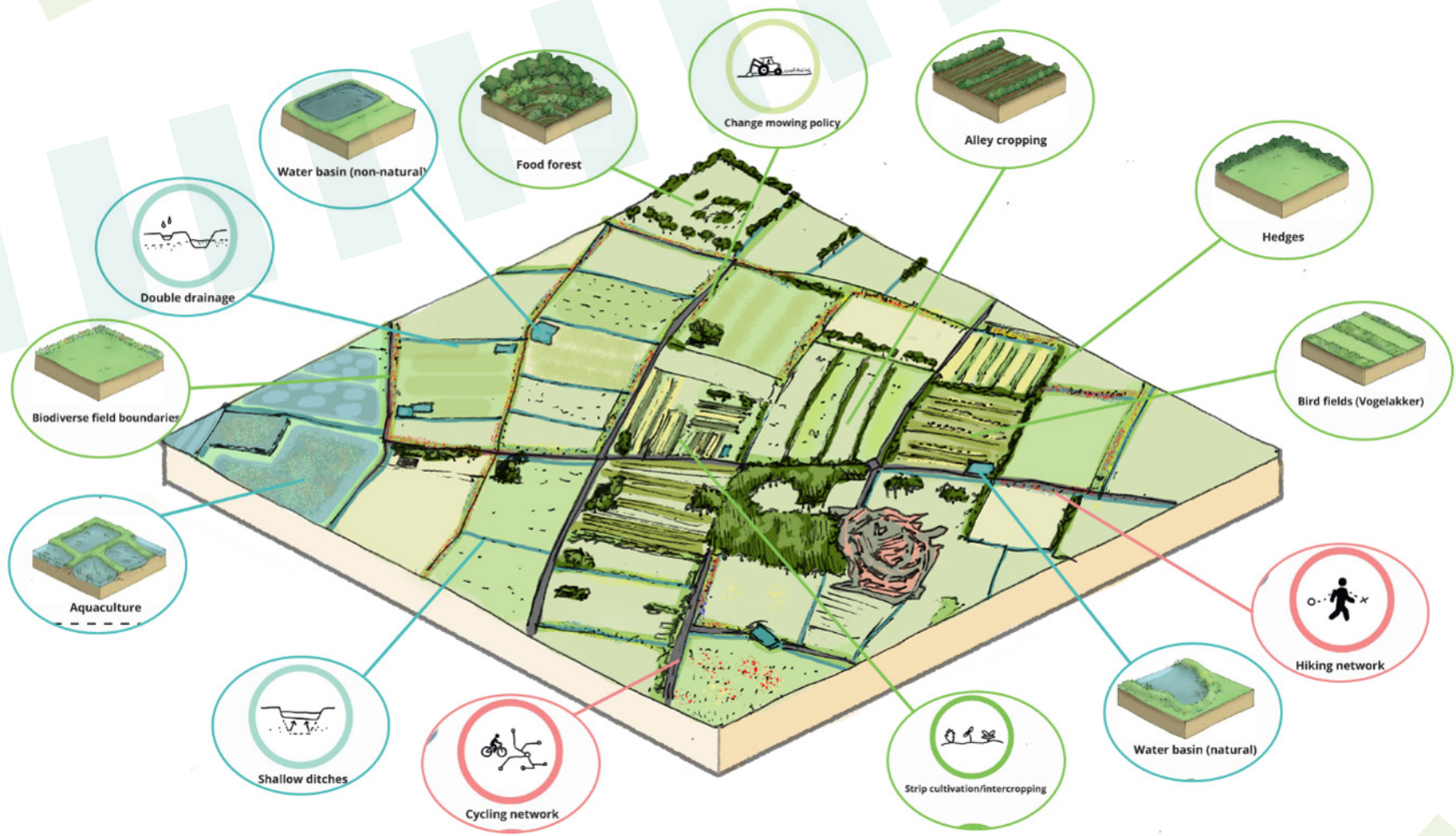


Phase 1 | 2030

Phase 2 | 2035

Eco-Social Centre

Due to a growing need for more connection between residents, recreationists and the character of Schouwen-Duiveland, a recommendation is to develop a multifunctional eco-social centre: Schouwse Horizon. It integrates the island's open landscape with nature, agriculture and recreation, with many linking opportunities, such as knowledge sharing, innovation, strengthening authenticity and interactions between residents among themselves, but also with recreationists. The centre can work bottom-up and support initiatives by locals to foster cooperation and understanding.



Routes

From the centre, several biking and hiking routes cross the island. These routes are design to spread tourist more to the Platte van Schouwen. There are three biking routes and two walking routes. At the centre, they can have a break or receive information. Most routes are designed to mainly pass by the blue-green infrastructure on the island. This way, the identity of Schouwen-Duiveland comes out much more for recreationists and the connection with the island's inhabitants is much more present.

