

National Project: New Dutch Waterline, Board of the New Dutch Waterline

The New Dutch Waterline is a military line of defence designed in 1815 to protect the economic and financial heart of the Netherlands. The concept of inviting water into the land, using subtle engineering techniques, originates from the 12th century. During the Second World War the concept of a waterline as defence system proved to be useless and was abandoned. The redevelopment of this unique cultural landscape, consisting of 60 fortresses, 5 fortified towns and over 1 500 smaller buildings, all located in the central part of the country, was announced by the government as a national project in 1999. The New Dutch Waterline was chosen because of its unique character and the complex spatial and administrative task required. In order to transform the New Dutch Waterline into an identifiable spatial entity, new functions – related to leisure, water management, agriculture, nature and commerce – were identified and developed.



The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe acknowledged and praised the great value of the project presented for the 4th Session 2014-2015 of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention and recommended making it well-known to the general public for its exemplary value, and as a source of inspiration. The project has transformed a military line of defence, stretching a total of 85 kilometres, into a quality landscape highly valued by the population and visitors. It provides for multiple activities, including agriculture, leisure and tourism. The project is a very interesting and innovative example of landscape restoration by the reinstatement of old abandoned military structures and preservation of historical and cultural heritage.