

Integrated Water Management – Case River 21: Vision-building for Transboundary River Management

Organising institution:

University of Antwerp

Faculty/Department/Programme/External partners:

Institute for Environment & Sustainable Development
(IMDO)

Programs:

- Master of Environmental Science (University of Antwerp) – Course ‘Integrated Water Management Case River 21’
- Advanced Master Technology for Integrated Water Management (Universities of Antwerp & Ghent) - Module ‘Integrated Water Management-Case River 21’

Organisation:

IMDO (inter-faculty) in cooperation with Université de Lille and University of Ghent and with external stakeholders

Abstract:

This international educational project enables students from different disciplines and countries to jointly explore the international aspects of water management and to develop a transboundary vision for the Scheldt Basin.

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Description:

Each year, the University of Antwerp organises an international education project 'River 21 project: vision-building for transboundary river management'. The education project enables Master students to develop a transboundary vision for the Scheldt basin together with international students (from France and the Netherlands, among others). The students come from different universities and disciplines. They have a varied expertise in water management: some have expertise in river ecology, others in river hydrology, land use, water infrastructure, water treatment, integrated water management, socio-economic aspects and legislation. One of the challenges they are faced with is to integrate all these elements into an international context.

The students acquire insight, knowledge and skills with regard to (systematic) vision-building for transboundary river management. They do so by (1) gaining an understanding of the complex coherence and interaction of the river ecosystem of the Scheldt with the relating socio-economic aspects, (2) working together in an international context around integrated water management, in this case of the Scheldt, and (3) developing skills to work out a joint, transboundary vision for the management of the Scheldt.

River 21 lasts two weeks. Each partner university is responsible for part of the organisation. During the first weeks excursions are planned along the Scheldt. This offers students the opportunity to meet stakeholders and experts from the different countries and regions. During the second week the students work in teams on a vision for the Scheldt basin and develop scenarios for a sustainable management of the Scheldt.

The education project is structured as follows:

- On the basis of a literature review the students build up knowledge of the Scheldt basin and the relevant national interests.
- During the excursions to and the explanations about the Scheldt the students get to know the interests and objectives of the stakeholders which they are to critically reflect on.
- The students work in teams to develop an integrated vision on the Scheldt management, with the accompanying action plans (a programme with possible pathways for sustainable water management) and strategies (setting priorities in the pathways). Methodologies are made available for that purpose.
- The developed integrated vision on (sub-aspects of) the Scheldt management is laid down in a report and presented in the presence of the lecturers and interested stakeholders.

The intensive education project succeeds in its aim and is innovative because of the conceptual development where theory and practice come together in a reality-bound matter (Scheldt management) and international context (European Water Framework Directive), the student-centred nature of the project with the application of activating work methods, the interdisciplinary cooperation between lecturers and students, the system analysis and integrated approach to water management, the development of skills to arrive at a joint transboundary vision on integrated water management, the motivation and commitment of lecturers and students, the intercultural exchanges and the excellent cooperation between the partners. All these elements contribute to the

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building of SD-relevant competences.

Website:

Master of Environmental Science:

[https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/education/
education-and-training/
e-master-in-de-milieuw/programme-info/](https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/education/education-and-training/e-master-in-de-milieuw/programme-info/)

Advanced Master of Technology for Integrated Water
Management:

[https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/education/education-
and-training/
advanced-master-of-t/profile/](https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/education/education-and-training/advanced-master-of-t/profile/)