

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARITIME SCIENCE**  
**MASTER DISSERTATION**

*Academic year 2019 – 2020*

**Evaluation of the complex projects**  
**decree**

Maxim Gosseries

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of: Master of Science in Maritime Science

Supervisor: Professor Daan Schalck

Assessor: Professor Filip Boelaert



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Table of contents.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Aim of this dissertation .....	1
<b>2 Complex projects decree in general .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 History & background .....	2
2.1.1 Why a new approach?.....	2
2.1.2 Which projects?.....	2
2.2 How is a project facilitated? .....	3
2.3 Six principles of the decree .....	3
2.3.1 Open communication and transparency.....	3
2.3.2 Participation .....	4
2.3.3 Customization .....	4
2.3.4 Solution-oriented collaboration .....	4
2.3.5 Integrated approach.....	4
2.3.6 Process control in the hands of actors .....	4
2.4 Involved persons and functions and their role during the different phases.....	5
2.4.1 Projects leaders and members.....	5
2.4.2 Advisors .....	5
2.4.3 Political decision makers .....	5
2.4.4 Citizens .....	5
2.5 The route builder .....	6
2.5.1 Exploration phase.....	6
2.5.2 Research phase .....	8
2.5.3 Elaboration phase .....	10
2.5.4 Implementation phase .....	12
<b>3 Research questions .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4 Method.....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Questionnaire .....	15
4.1.1 The respondents.....	15
4.2 Interview in depth .....	16
4.2.1 The interviewees .....	17
4.3 Analysis .....	18

<b>5</b>	<b>Results questionnaire and interview complex projects decree in general .....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1	Questionnaire .....	19
5.2	Interview .....	24
<b>6</b>	<b>Expansion of the container handling capacity in the port of Antwerp.....</b>	<b>27</b>
6.1	Overview .....	27
6.2	The alternatives .....	30
6.3	Planning.....	34
6.4	Interview .....	34
<b>7</b>	<b>Nautical accessibility port of Zeebrugge .....</b>	<b>37</b>
7.1	Overview .....	37
7.2	Why a new lock? .....	37
7.3	Future of Zeebrugge and the Nx.....	37
7.4	Processed Approach complex projects decree.....	38
7.5	The alternatives .....	40
7.6	Preference decision.....	45
7.7	Planning and next steps .....	45
7.8	Interview .....	45
<b>8</b>	<b>Improving the quality of life in Little Russia .....</b>	<b>48</b>
8.1	Overview .....	48
8.2	Alternatives and alternative research Little Russia .....	49
8.3	Integrated research complex projects quality of life Little Russia .....	52
8.4	Preference alternative Little Russia .....	52
8.5	The draft preference decision .....	54
8.6	Interview .....	55
<b>9</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Attachment.....</b>	<b>62</b>
10.1	Questionnaire .....	62
<b>11</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>65</b>



# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Aim of this dissertation**

The aim of this dissertation is to research the complex projects decree via three big port related projects; the expansion of the container capacity in the port of Antwerp, the nautical accessibility of the port of Zeebrugge and improving the quality of life in Little Russia, Zelzate. These projects aren't finished yet, so it's not possible to discuss the entire procedure of the decree. A questionnaire about the decree is completed by a large range of stakeholders, involved in one of the projects and by experts of the decree in general. With four additional interviews in depth (one per project and one about the decree in general), there is a solid base to present an interim state of affairs regarding the complex projects decree in maritime related projects.

This dissertation starts with an overview of the functioning of the decree, followed by the results and interpretation of the questionnaires, a description of the three chosen projects supplemented with the four interviews in depth. The aim of this dissertation is to research every project in depth and to focus on the applicability of the decree specifically up to now, and not to compare the projects with each other or with previous projects before the existence of the decree.

Because the decree was founded in 2014, there is barely any literature about it. The procedure of the complex projects decree is explained on the website of the Flemish government. References to parts of the complex projects decree website are mentioned as an annotation, just like the consulted documents.

## **2 COMPLEX PROJECTS DECREE IN GENERAL**

### **2.1 History & background<sup>1</sup>**

#### **2.1.1 Why a new approach?**

##### **2.1.1.1 The old approach**

The old approach of complex projects wasn't efficient enough. The different investigations and procedures are conducted after each other instead of a simultaneously approach. Furthermore, those procedures are linked to a series of decision moments on different levels of administration and five public analyzes. This is an enormous limitation on the process time of a complex project.

##### **2.1.1.2 The new approach**

The new approach is based on a procedure with four phases (exploration phase, research phase, elaboration phase and implementation phase), three decision moments (starting decision, preference agreement and project agreement) and two public enquiries. The different investigations and procedures proceed in an integrated way with the route planner, which will be explained more in depth later on. Participation, openness and deliberation are key items in the new approach for complex projects.

#### **2.1.2 Which projects?**

The key question isn't which projects can be conducted with the processed approach of the route planner. Some of the aspects of the route planner can be useful for all kinds of projects like the simultaneous progress of investigations, the integration of different point of views and the final decision of the case. But the new procedure with the route planner applies to considerable social and spatial-strategic importance projects, which require an integrated allowance and spatial planning process.

It's important to notice that the projects either can be private as public, and on the three different levels of government (municipal, provincial and regional)

---

<sup>1</sup><http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Historiek>, consulted on November 30, 2019.

## **2.2 How is a project facilitated?<sup>2</sup>**

Different actions are being taken to accelerate and facilitate complex projects, which are listed below.

- Early in the process, informal deliberation between the different actors, stakeholders, advisers and political decision makers takes place. This creates a fundamental basis for the project.
- After the start decision of a project, necessary investigations are conducted, departing from the same fundamental starting base with a permanent interaction between the researches.
- The results of the different investigations and the diverse opinions are converted to one public inquiry and presented to the public.
- There are only three decision moments; starting decision, preference agreement and project agreement. The last two agreements have a point of no return, to speed up the project.
- It's important to gain knowledge of the financial resources in the beginning of the process to make the credits available at the right time.

## **2.3 Six principles of the decree<sup>3</sup>**

### **2.3.1 Open communication and transparency**

Open communication is a central theme in the new approach. All stakeholders need to exchange information on every level. Decisions who have been taken must be communicated in an understandable and logical way to sustain the confidence between the different stakeholders and to provide everyone the same project information. Secondly, a transparent way of working is essential. All made choices need to be motivated and argued adequately.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Hoe-projecten-versnellen>, consulted on November 30, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Principes>, consulted on November 30, 2019.

The whole process needs to be documented and be available for all stakeholders and the general public.

### **2.3.2 Participation**

All relevant actors need to be involved during the whole process. Participation provides a broad support for the policy, and increase the likelihood that decisions in a further stadium are accepted. Furthermore, participation benefits the general knowledge of the project, requires an open mindset and is essential in every phase of the process of the route builder.

### **2.3.3 Customization**

Customization is a project specific item. There are some general principles, but the route builder is a flexible instrument, which needs to be applied on every project. Not every step can be defined in advance, so flexibility is required.

### **2.3.4 Solution-oriented collaboration**

All actors work in a solution-oriented way. The actors search to possible solutions in an active and constructive manner. So, the starting point isn't a combination of problems and bottlenecks, but a mix of possibilities and chances. The route builder requires an integrated and exceeding collaboration between the domain and administrative levels.

### **2.3.5 Integrated approach**

The researches who are sequentially conducted with the old approach, are now handled in a parallel and integrated way. To reach this, a permanent interaction between the different studies is essential. This results in a time gain during the research phase and elaboration phase. The results of the different investigations and assessments are made public by two public researches to provide to public all information about the project.

### **2.3.6 Process control in the hands of actors**

The involved actors have an input in the outlined process. The complete approach and the different steps that need to be taken are written down in the process notes, a paper which is actualized during the whole process with all the actors. This participation increases the thrust in the new approach, which benefits the functioning of all the actors.

## **2.4 Involved persons and functions and their role during the different phases<sup>4</sup>**

### **2.4.1 Projects leaders and members**

The new approach offers the project leaders and members a tool to handle complex projects in a more efficient and qualitative way. The route builder provides a framework, but the content needs to be fulfilled for each project specifically. Projects leaders and members have a role in the first three phases of the route builder; the exploration phase, research phase and elaboration phase.

### **2.4.2 Advisors**

Advisors have their role in the research phase and elaboration phase. The route builder aims to offer coordinated advice to save time and to run the process more efficiently. Advisors must realize which impact they have on the project with their advice.

### **2.4.3 Political decision makers**

The new approach requires more involvement of the political decision makers. Their role is to get everyone on the same line so that the advisors takes a faster decision. Furthermore, political decision makers have the jurisdiction to take decision in the complex project process.

### **2.4.4 Citizens**

Citizens have their role in the first three phases of the process. There are three moments of importance to ask the opinion of the citizens; about the problem, the solutions and the consideration of the solutions. Those possibilities need to be made public for everyone. The route builder provides the citizens information about how and when they can apply their opinion.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Voor-wie-is-dit-nuttig>, consulted on December 1, 2019.

## 2.5 The route builder

### 2.5.1 Exploration phase<sup>5</sup>

A complex project starts with an opportunity or a problem. The exploration phase has a dual purpose; in the first place to obtain a univocal problem definition and project plan and on the other hand to map out the main lines of the process. The exploration phase leads to the effective startup of a project, so no formal consultation is linked with this phase. Informal deliberation is suggested to construct the problem definition in a proper way. In the exploration phase, the following steps need to be taken.



*Figure 1: Exploration phase*

#### 2.5.1.1 Description of the complex project

The first question that needs to be tackled is if the problem or opportunity can be translated to a complex project. Therefore, the project needs to be a project of major social and spatial-strategic importance that requires an integrated permit and spatial planning process. This is a very important process, because this determines whether or not the procedure of the complex projects can be followed.

#### 2.5.1.2 Exploration of policy task and area

Starting from the problem or opportunity, the next step is to get a view on the different factors that characterize the situation. Thinking out of the box, exploration of the environment and finding synergies are possible actions that can be taken. The aim is to form a policy statement which needs to be translated to integrated project objectives, essential for the starting decision.

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Verkenningfase-startbeslissing>, consulted on December 13, 2019.

#### **2.5.1.3 Delineate the process structure in a process note**

First, a stakeholder analysis needs to be conducted to get an overview of the different actors and their interests. Afterwards, a multidisciplinary project team has to be formed, and is responsible for the elaboration and progress of the process. When the team is formed, a project leader has to be assigned and a process note needs to be prepared. The process note contains the approach of the process if the starting decision has been made. It doesn't have a formal status, but is an informative document for the citizens and involved actors. Furthermore, it is not a fixed document, and it needs to be actualized throughout the process. When the starting decision has been made, the process note needs to be announced as well.

#### **2.5.1.4 Estimation of budgetary and other resources with regard to the project and the process**

The project leader has the task to estimate the necessary capacity for a project. It's important to make an estimation of the necessary financial resources related to the process and related to the implementation of the project. When the starting decision has been taken, budget needs to be immediately available for costs related to the process. Relating to the implementation, it's impossible to have a precise overview of the total cost price, but an estimation can be helpful to have an overview of the financial feasibility.

#### **2.5.1.5 Which government takes the starting decision**

At the end of the exploration phase, a government (the Flemish government, the provincial council or the municipal council) will judge if a project responds to the requirement of a complex project and will decide whether or not to take a starting decision. This decision contains the engagement of that specific government to investigate a problem in function of a suitable solution. More than one government can be involved in the process. If so, one government will take the decision, and the engagement of the others is determined in the starting decision.

#### **2.5.1.6 The effective starting decision**

When the starting decision has been made, the different actors need to agree with the process note, so it is a binding agreement. This starting decision needs to be made public on the

website of the government who takes the decision. Those two documents (the process note and the starting decision) are a solid base for the research phase of the route builder.

### **2.5.2 Research phase<sup>6</sup>**

The research phase commences when the starting decision has been taken. The purpose of the research phase is to select the best solution, which forms the preference decision and is the beginning of the elaboration phase. Several steps need to be taken in this research phase.



*Figure 2: Research phase*

#### **2.5.2.1 Realizing the process structure in the process note**

The first step of the research phase is to concrete the process note. This document needs to be updated with all the changes since the end of the exploration phase. Also, the multidisciplinary team with all the different roles that has been formed in the exploration phase, needs to be reviewed.

#### **2.5.2.2 Advising**

This advisory bodies needs to be involved in the beginning of the process. It's essential that they have the opportunity to participate and give feedback. The decree provides some administrative bodies, entities or officials who belong to the bodies that advise on the project decision. So, it's appropriate to involve those bodies in this moment of the process to already discover potential problems.

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Onderzoeksfase-voorkeursbesluit>, consulted on December 14, 2019.



### **2.5.2.3 Participation**

During the whole process, participation is essential and creates social support for a project. In the exploration phase, participation was planned, in the research phase, the participation is conducted, just before the preference decision. Participation comes from the citizens, the stakeholders (proponents and opponents), political government and private parties.

### **2.5.2.4 Assessment of budgetary and other resources related to the process**

In the research phase, a more realistic estimate of the project and process costs must be conducted. This needs to be completed when the preference decision is made. There are three strategies to fulfill this; create a financial business case, investigate the possibilities for a public - private collaboration and research about the ratio between the planning and tendering procedure. A good business case provides more information about the funding and financing of the project, taking into account the different parties and the implementation variants. A public – private collaboration can offer an added value compared to a traditional tender.

### **2.5.2.5 Government that is authorized to adapt the preference decision**

Equal to the starting decision, the preference decision is established by a political government (the Flemish government, the provincial council or the municipal council). The choice of the ‘unique competent government’ is determined by the context. The government that is authorized to deliver the environmental permit, becomes the competent government.

### **2.5.2.6 Design of the preference decision**

The preference decision needs to contain several aspects, like:

- A justification why a complex project is eligible for the decision-making procedure regulated by this decree.
- The alternative chosen at a strategic level.
- A justification for the choice of that alternative, compared with other investigated alternatives.

### **2.5.2.7 Public inquiry**

The project team decides, when the public inquiry starts. The draft preference decision with the draft synthesis notes and the draft research reports, are made public by a public inquiry which takes 60 days.

### **2.5.2.8 The effective preference decision**

The effective preference decision is the main goal and the end of this phase. It contains the decisive choice for one alternative of the project. This alternative is decisive when the authorized government approve the decision. This alternative is further elaborated in the next phase of the project, in function of the project decision.

### **2.5.3 Elaboration phase<sup>7</sup>**

The elaboration phase of a complex project starts when the preference decision is taken. The purpose of this phase is to concrete the preference decision into a feasible project and to determine the method of implementation. The result is an integrated project decision which contains all permits, authorizations and the action program, which leads to the implementation phase of the complex project.



*Figure 3: Elaboration phase*

#### **2.5.3.1 Updating the process structure in the process note**

Equal to the first step of the research phase, it's essential to concrete the process note in the beginning of the elaboration phase. This document needs to be updated with all the changes since the end of the research phase.

#### **2.5.3.2 Projects research note**

On the one hand, this note describes the project and the provisions of the preference decision, on the other hand, it determines which alternatives need to be investigated. This note has a

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Uitwerkingsfase-projectbesluit>, consulted on December 14, 2019.

dual purpose; to notify all involved parties about the project and its effects, and to grant advice to the governments about the further development of the project.

#### **2.5.3.3 Actualization and activation (financial and policy)**

In the research phase, a realistic estimation of the project and process costs was made up. This estimation needs to be activated and actualized by finding the necessary financial resources to realize the project. To tackle this, the financial funding needs to be further elaborated, the financial business has to be actualized and the possibilities of a public-private collaboration needs more attention.

#### **2.5.3.4 Synthesis note and preliminary draft of the project decision**

The synthesis note is an initiative towards the project decision. This note contains the results of the integrated impact studies. Based on the results, several effects are compared to each other and one method of implementation is chosen. To realize this, the multidisciplinary project team creates a global file with all the sub-aspects to which the project decision must comply (summary of the investigations, permits, authorizations, etc.).

#### **2.5.3.5 Design of the project decision**

One of the three political governments needs to decide when the design of the project decision is ready for the public inquiry. The design of the project decision needs to contain several aspects which can be found in article 23 of the decree of April 25<sup>th</sup> <sup>8</sup>.

#### **2.5.3.6 Public inquiry**

When the public inquiry starts, several documents are made public; the design of the project decision, the synthesis note and the research reports. The public inquiry offers the possibility to the public to give feedback.

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Regelgeving>, consulted on December 14, 2019.

### 2.5.3.7 The effective project decision

The effective decision is made by the authorized government. They decide about all permits, authorizations and the action plan to enable the right instruments. The project decision also contains aspects of management, monitoring and evaluation of the project. So, when the project decision is determined, the authorized government has to make a publication in the Belgian ‘Staatsblad’. This publication offers all actors a clear view which solution will be conducted. When the project decision is approved, the implementation phase is about to start.

### 2.5.4 Implementation phase<sup>9</sup>

The purpose of the implementation phase is to execute the work as efficient as possible and to conduct necessary steps about the management, monitoring and evaluation of the project.



*Figure 4: Implementation phase*

#### 2.5.4.1 Renewing the process structure in the process note

A solid structure remains essential in the implementation phase. This is conducted by the project team, who let the works run in a proper way. The composition of the project team, who normally stays more or less the same during the first three phases, can change in the implementation phase. Although it is important to preserve the acquired expertise of the first three phases. Participation and communication remains two important elements in this phase of the project.

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Uitvoeringsfase>, consulted on December 16, 2019.

#### **2.5.4.2 Implementation of accompanying policies**

Together with the execution of the project, a series of other measures are approved or realized, which are linked to each other with the preference decision and the project decision. It's important to implement the measures of the action program in time.

#### **2.5.4.3 Formulate a management plan**

Quality management starts when the project decision is designed in the elaboration phase. The purpose of a management plan is to retain the quality in the project. This plan consists of an inventory of tasks and responsibilities, including the necessary commitments, about financial and employee matters.

#### **2.5.4.4 Monitoring and evaluation**

The realization of an investment project requires a long preliminary process. Lots of research and adjustments have been made during the process. Once the project is realized, it's important to evaluate those effects. For example, it can be useful to question if the project answers to the original goals. The project decision contains several clauses to take additional measures if certain effects should manifest themselves in a wrong way. The authorized government who took the project decision decides to activate those measures.

### **3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main goal of the complex projects decree is to facilitate and accelerate the process of complex projects. A logical question would be to research if the chosen projects are effectively faster constructed. This isn't possible because the chosen projects aren't finished yet. It can be interesting to compare phases of the projects to similar projects who are constructed without the complex projects decree, but it's difficult to compare different projects, and it's even more hard to compare different stages of a project.

The decree is invented to gain time in the process, so it will be investigated if there is a real time gain in the three projects.

Furthermore, the decree encourages to more consultation and cooperation. So, another research question is if the decree really contributes to more participation.

Moreover, the decree is a general instrument, and not applied to the projects specific. There are many external factors that play their role in a project. The political situation, the spatial planning, and the interests of the different stakeholders for example. So, the application of the decree for each specific project and its consequences is an important topic in this dissertation.

At last, the decree is a new instrument. Which topics and decisions need to be maintained? Are there certain phases who needs to be changed? This dissertation can help to discover certain pain points of the complex projects decree.

## 4 METHOD

### 4.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was conducted by using Google Forms to get an overview of the vision and opinion of the different stakeholders involved in a complex project. The questions of this questionnaire can be found in attachment. The questions were prepared in consultation with Mr. Daan Schalck, my supervisor. Every stakeholder received the same questions about the complex projects decree, regardless of which project the stakeholder was, or is, involved in. This method was chosen to compare the vision and opinion of all stakeholders in an as clear way as possible. The aim was to question as many facets of the decree as possible with the survey. It took about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A Likert Scale<sup>10</sup> from one to five was used to answer almost all questions. The following meaning was given to the values:

- 0 = Does not apply
- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Undecided
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

For each question, there was a possibility to insert a comment to indicate the answer. Also, special remarks or notes in general could be left behind.

#### 4.1.1 The respondents

The respondents were guaranteed to complete the questionnaire anonymously, so none of the respondents will be mentioned in this dissertation by name. Together with Mr. Daan Schalck, a list of stakeholders was composed, and the survey was sent to them by email in December. In the beginning of February, a reminder has been sent by mail as well. During the beginning of March, a last reminder has been conducted by phone to fill in the gaps. At the end of March the survey ended and the analysis was conducted.

In total, 11 respondents answered the questionnaire. The list of respondents contains a wide variety of involved persons and stakeholders in the projects and the decree in general. The

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.simplypsychology.org/likert-scale.html>, consulted on April 5, 2020.

mayors from the cities where the three projects are located were asked to complete the questionnaire. If the mayor wasn't able to answer the questionnaire, someone from the cabinet was asked to perform the survey. The mayor of Bruges declared by email that he has the same opinion as the management of the port of Zeebrugge, so he didn't fill in the survey. Several reminders have been sent to the mayor of Zelzate, but unfortunately, the questionnaire hasn't been filled in, due to the Corona crisis. Furthermore, the project leaders (or a member of the team) from the projects completed the questionnaire. Also, action groups against the projects have been queried. The action group about the project 'Little Russia' did respond to this question, in contrast to the action group of Zeebrugge. In the context of the project in Zeebrugge, someone from 'De Lijn' filled in the survey. In function of the project 'Little Russia', the housing company CVBA Zelzate completed the questionnaire. At last, experts about the decree in general, someone from real estate heritage, an employee of living environment ('Bond Beter Leefmilieu') and a legal advisor conducted the survey.

Although there is a limited number of 11 respondents, the variety in people who answered the survey, offers a solid and valid base to make provisional and validated conclusions about the progress and functioning of the complex projects decree in the different projects based on the questionnaire.

## **4.2 Interview in depth**

To gain more knowledge in depth, four interviews were conducted by main stakeholders. One for each project and one interview to discuss the general aspects of the decree. The questions were forwarded in advance to the interviewees, and every interview took nearly one hour.

The purpose was to perform the interviews on location. Two interviews were planned before and after the board of directors of the NV Flemish Ports on March 20, 2020 in Ghent. Another interview would take place in the Port of Antwerp, and the last interview at the project desk of the Gentse Kanaalzone, all during the end of March. But due to the Corona virus, all interviews were executed by Skype or What's App. This didn't have an impact on the quality of the interviews. All interviews were recorded and typed out afterwards. The answers were sent back to the interviewees to give them the opportunity to check the interpretation of their answers.



## **4.2.1 The interviewees**

### **4.2.1.1 Decree in general**

To discuss the decree in general, Freddy Aerts was asked to perform an interview. Mr. Aerts is Department Head Maritime Access of the department Mobility and Public Works at the Flemish government. Furthermore, Mr. Aerts is chairman from the Task Force for the project ‘expansion of the container handling capacity’ in the port of Antwerp. Because of this involvement, Mr. Aerts used a lot of examples and applications of the project in Antwerp in the interview. Mr. Aerts was involved in the construction of the Deurganck dock, a dock in the port of Antwerp at the left bank of the river Scheldt. The building of the dock started in 1999 and was finished in 2005 without the complex projects decree <sup>11</sup>. So, Mr. Aerts is able to compare the evolution of a project built with, and without the decree. This is an enormous added value for this dissertation.

### **4.2.1.2 Expansion of the container handling capacity in the port of Antwerp**

Manu Vandamme gave the permission to conduct an interview about the project in Antwerp. Mr. Vandamme is program manager in the port of Antwerp. He is part of the project team of the complex project in Antwerp and represents the port authority of Antwerp and its interests in the project. Up to now, Mr. Vandamme was involved in the construction and elaboration of the alternative research of the project. Because of that strong involvement, Mr. Vandamme gave strong and clear insights in the complex project in Antwerp.

### **4.2.1.3 Nautical accessibility port of Zeebrugge**

The person who has been interviewed about the project in Zeebrugge wanted to stay anonymous. The person has an enormous expertise about the project and Zeebrugge in general for so many years. So, it has been the right choice to interview this person to get more insights in this project.

### **4.2.1.4 Improving the quality of life in ‘Little Russia’**

Carl Dejonghe has been asked to explain the project in Zelzate more in depth. Mr. Dejonghe is coordinator of the project desk of the Gentse Kanaalzone. This project desk involves

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deurganckdok>, consulted on April 8, 2020.

several projects in North Sea Port; a sustainable port as an economic engine, projects about accessibility, nature and landscapes, and projects about livable villages and neighborhood. The project 'Improving the quality of life in Little Russia' is situated in that last part. As coordinator of the project desk, Mr. Dejonghe is able to give an objective overview of the situation about Little Russia with all the involved actors.

### **4.3 Analysis**

The results of the questionnaire have been exported to a spreadsheet. The distribution of each answer has been calculated and analyzed in combination with the additional remarks.

The typed-out interviews are researched and elaborated. The most important and interesting parts are used on discussion level per project and to support the findings of the questionnaire.

## **5 RESULTS QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW** **COMPLEX PROJECTS DECREE IN GENERAL**

### **5.1 Questionnaire**

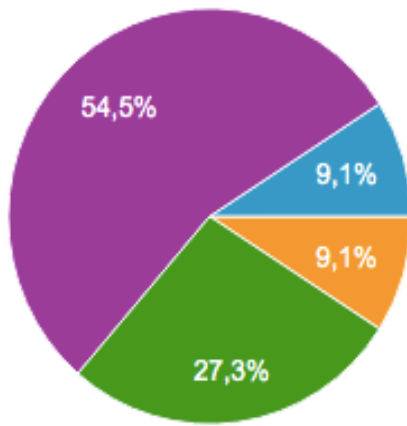
The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions and had 11 respondents. The first two questions investigated the involvement and function of the respondents in the listed complex projects. Some respondents are involved in more than one project. For instance, some persons are involved in the complex project in Antwerp and in Zeebrugge. Four respondents do have a general involvement in the complex projects decree. Six of the 11 respondents are involved in the complex project ECA, five respondents in the project in Zeebrugge and four respondents in the project Little Russia. So, every project is well represented. The second question examined the function of the respondents in the projects. This is already discussed in the method section.

The results of the other questions are relative to the group total of 11. For every question, the relative numbers are mentioned, followed by the most important and interesting comments. The next multiple-choice questions were examined with the legend below and illustrated on pie diagrams.



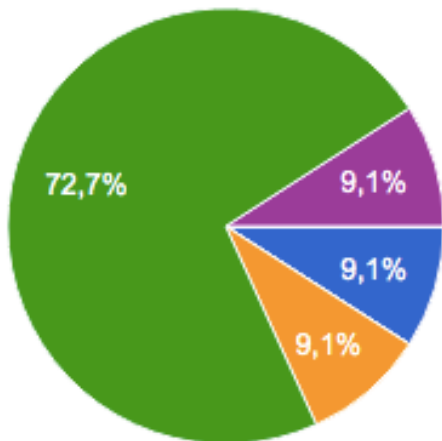
*Figure 5: Legend of the multiple-choice questions*

54.5 % of the respondents agree with the proposition that the complex projects decree is an improvement for a project. 9.1 % or one respondent strongly agrees, and one other respondent disagrees. 27.3 % remains undecided. All comments on this question highlight two important aspects. First of all, it is too soon to agree, it can only be considered when the effective realization of a project is able to start. The positive comments indicate that the decree is able to present a strong and integrated structure to prevent problems in phases later on. Also mentioned is the fact that different stakeholders may participate from the very beginning which should create a better platform to come to reasoned decisions on delicate projects with more alternatives being invested.



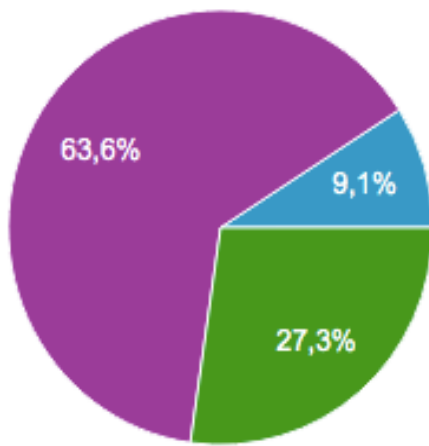
*Figure 6: decree as an improvement for the project in general*

72.7 % of the respondents remains undecided about the statement that major problems have occurred which wouldn't have happened without the decree. 9.1 % or one respondent agrees with this statement, one respondent disagrees, and for one person doesn't this statement apply. One of the respondents clarifies that there is a greater risk of misinterpretations and legal problems. Furthermore, it is stated that it takes more time to elaborate final decisions. The respondent who agrees with this statement comments that the long lead time of the procedure increases the absence of a decision which leads to limited investments for protective heritage.



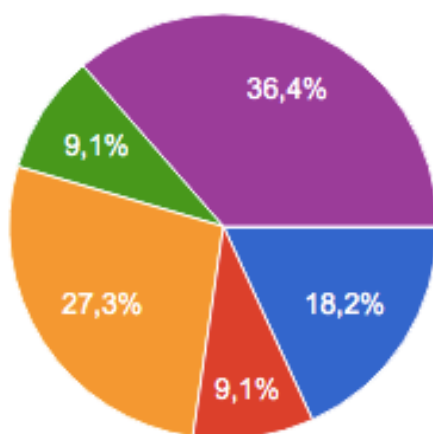
*Figure 7: Major problems occurred because of the decree*

One of the claims of the complex projects decree is that the processed approach would be more transparent and solution oriented. 63.6 % do agree with this statement, 27.3 % stays undecided and 9.1 % strongly agree with this statement. All comments have the same trend; because of the early participation and the route planner, the procedure is more transparent and solution oriented.



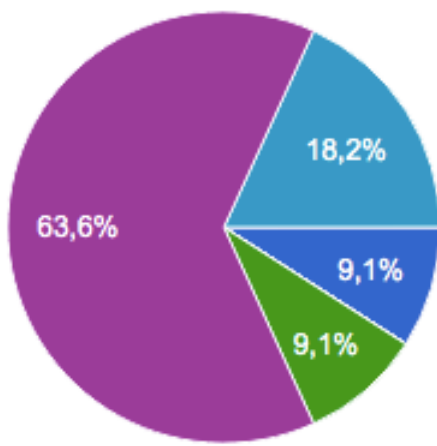
*Figure 8: More transparent and solution oriented approach because of the decree*

The respondents answered very diverse on the statement that if you as a stakeholder, are more involved in a project because of the decree. 36.4 % agree with this statement, 9.1 % remains undecided, 27.3 % disagree, 9.1 % strongly disagree and for 18.2 % doesn't this statement apply. Those 18.2 % are two experts who aren't involved in one specific project. The two respondents who disagree with this statement are a legal advisor and a member of a project team. They both state that they would also be involved without the decree. The other respondents didn't write any comments about this statement. The involvement of the stakeholder will also be investigated in depth in the several interviews further in this dissertation.



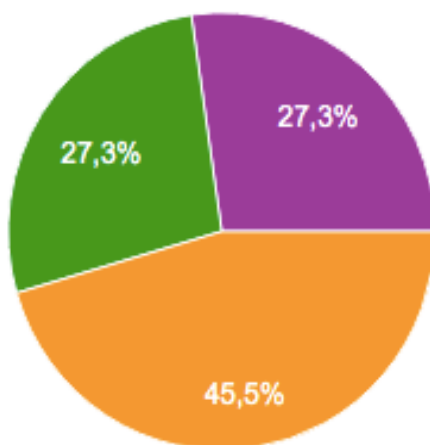
*Figure 9: Involvement as a stakeholder in a project because of the decree*

Another claim of the complex projects decree is the usefulness for all different stakeholders. 63.6 % of the respondents agree with this statement, 18.2 % strongly agree, one respondent remains undecided and for one person doesn't this statement apply. All comments have the same trend; the object of the complex projects decree is to provide more transparency and the projects are easy and clear to consult.



*Figure 10: Usefulness for the different stakeholders*

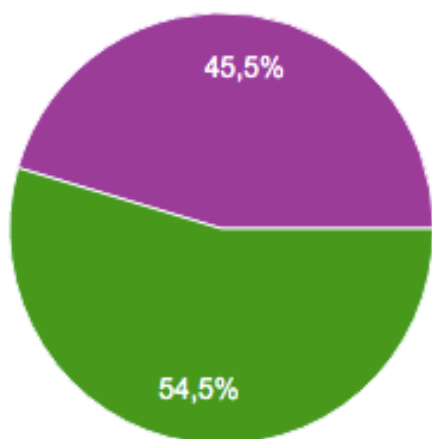
One of the characteristics of the complex projects decree is the efficient approach (only three decision moments, parallel investigations on different levels, ...) to speed up the project. Only 27.3 % of the respondents agree with this statement. 27.3 % remains undecided and 45.5 % of the respondents disagree. The comments on this statement are remarkably negative. The procedure leads to better substantiated decisions, but this is very time consuming. It takes one year to reach the preference decision. Other persons have their doubt about this statement and state that we have to see whether it allows to speed up the projects. The proof of the pudding is the eating. Another comment states that this isn't a negative evolution. The substantiated procedure could reduce the chance that legal proceedings will follow. So, in that sense it does speed up projects. Furthermore, not only the speed of the process is of importance, but also the quality of the decisions, certainly in relation to juridical procedures.



*Figure 11: Efficient approach of the decree to speed up the project*

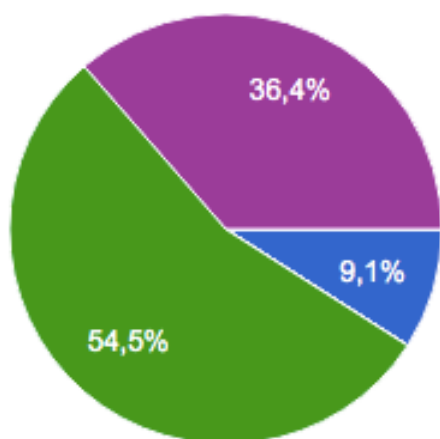
45.5 % agree that the route planner with the different phases is an accurate tool to successfully complete a project, 54.5 % remains undecided. There was an additional question to indicate whether there are specifically good or bad phases. The respondent representing real estate heritage indicates that the route planner regularly needs to be actualized. The

respondent representing De Lijn is very positive about the research phase. These were the only additional comments.



*Figure 12: Route planner an accurate tool to successfully complete a project*

36.4 % of the respondents agree that there is a difference in legal certainty with the implementation of the complex projects decree. 54.5 % remains undecided, and the statement doesn't apply for one person. A legal advisor indicates that the involvement of the different stakeholders from the very beginning should lead to less litigation if their involvement lead to more acceptance in the project. But it remains to be seen whether that will be reality. An expert argues that there should be a difference, but it will only be possible to make clear conclusions if the 'Raad van State' takes their first decisions. At least until now, there is confidence about the legal certainty. The respondent representing De Lijn states that there is an improvement because the problems are earlier tackled and the decisions are clearly written.



*Figure 13: Difference in legal certainty with the decree*

The last statement questions the drop in the risks that have to be taken in a project with the complex projects decree. The respondents answered very diverse on this statement; 36.4 % agree with this statement, 36.4 % remain undecided, 18.2 % disagree and for one person does

this statement not apply. The most interesting comment is from an independent expert. The person states that because of the multidisciplinary approach of the project teams the number of risks is not lower, but it's now possible to better find measures to tackle the risks.

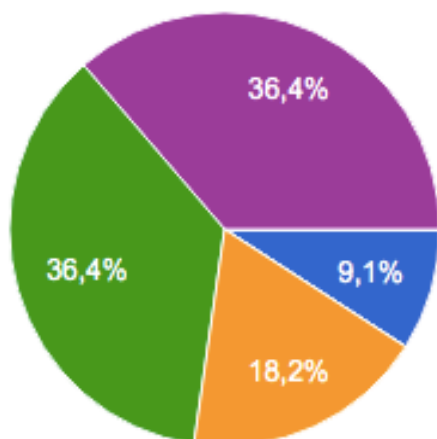


Figure 14: Drop in the risk that has to be taken

At last the respondents were able to leave additional remarks about the complex projects decree. The legal advisor states that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The pudding is now being prepared, it is too soon therefore to say if the pudding is fine. The independent expert says that a good legal structure is very important in a time where almost every great project has pro's and contra's and every citizen, every firm or stakeholder can make a claim.

## 5.2 Interview

The guideline in the conversation with Mr. Aerts was a document with recommendations about possible improvements for the complex projects decree, addressed to the cabinet of Zuhail Demir, minister of Environment of the Flemish government <sup>12</sup>. This document is ideal to discuss the decree in general, certainly with the expertise of Mr. Aerts.

Because of the complex projects decree, there is a more solid basis for big projects. For example, in Antwerp it has led to cooperation between all actors. The current preference decision is not optimal for all actors, but it is acceptable for everyone. According to Mr. Aerts, this wouldn't have happened without the complex projects decree. The decree was founded in 2014 to speed up complicated projects. Mr. Aerts don't agree with that statement.

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.vlaanderen.be/organisaties/vlaamse-regering/zuhail-demir-vlaams-minister-van-justitie-en-handhaving-omgeving-energie-en-toerisme/kabinet-van-de-vlaamse-minister-van-justitie-en-handhaving-omgeving-energie-en-toerisme>, consulted on April 9, 2020.



There is a more solid basis, but it still stays a slow and limp process. The existing structures take a lot of time to complete. It takes one year to get from the design of the preference decision to the effective preference decision.

The decree itself doesn't lead to that more solid basis, but the obligatory interaction between all actors does, because of the decree. For example, the compulsory process note of 50 pages doesn't contribute to more communication.

Mr. Aerts states that there are aspects that will need to be adjusted throughout the process, because it's a new decree. Those adjustments can be challenged by the 'Raad van State', so the decree doesn't deliver more certainties.

A big advantage is the possibility to adapt certain documents during a phase of the route planner. The documents can be adapted in function of specific remarks and recommendations. This wasn't possible before the decree, and leads to an end product with more quality. But, this method is also more time consuming because of the possible involvement of all actors. Mr. Aerts his hypothesis is that this method will pay off in the future, because there is less chance that certain actors will go to the 'Raad van State' after the preference decision has been taken. Up to now, this hypothesis remains unclear and future will prove.

When a complex project starts, a certain department of the Flemish government takes the lead in the project. The other departments have their own interests, which can lead to difficult cooperations within the Flemish government. It is necessary to get the government more on the same line, according to Mr. Aerts.

The templates to prepare conclusions are not sufficiently adapted to the legislative advice. Looking to the new expropriation decree, it is obligatory to determine exactly which grounds are needed and why. It is impossible to determine this exactly in the preference decision. Hence, the project team isn't able to start the expropriation before the project elaboration phase. This a huge bottleneck for the speed of a project, pursuant to Mr. Aerts.

Furthermore, certain aspects of the decree are very tedious. There is a procedure to publish documents; it needs to be announced in the papers and advertising posters need to be placed in the involved municipalities. This is a time consuming and money demanding process with little added value and needs to be questioned.

Looking more in depth to the different phases, in the preparation of the preference decision, all conducted research is on strategic level. All compensatory and mitigating measures need to be approved together with the preference decision. But these measures are also on strategic level, and can only be elaborated in depth in the project elaboration phase. Mr. Aerts propose

to research these measures only in the project elaboration phase to save time instead of constantly adapting those measures through the process.

Another possible time saving topic is about the duration of the advising round and the amount of decisions taken by the Flemish government according to Mr. Aerts. Now, a public investigation takes 60 days and there are five decisions needed by the Flemish government from the starting decision to the effective preference decision. To finalize the project decision, another four agreements of the government are required. Mr Aerts recommends to restrict those agreement moments to two or three and to reduce the public investigation time to 30 days, which would save one year in total.

The complex projects decree offers a fixed process with different phases and decision moments. Every project is unique and does have its own specifications and belongings, which is illustrated in this dissertation. Mr. Aerts agree to create a categorization within the decree to conduct the adaptations according to priority. For example, in Little Russia, the belongings of the residents are of more importance than the economic interests. But the biggest problem according to Mr. Aerts is the lack of decision making. Up to now, all important decisions are pushed forward and the government tries to reconcile everything.

The conclusion of Mr. Aerts is that the decree certainly serves an added value, but the government needs to simplify the regulations in order to gain time and to increase the efficiency. Now with the decree, there is a lot more communication and interaction which is a positive thing. But at one point, decisions have to be taken. Mr. Aerts propose to take those decisions faster in the process, because despite all interactions, it won't happen that all actors will completely agree with the proposed decision. According to Mr. Aerts, a solution is to be clearer about the destination of certain grounds. It is essential to find a balance between investment and expansion of the industry, grounds for nature conservation and the housing of the residents. At last, speed up projects is a good idea, but there has to be financial capacity and it should not be at the expense of the quality of the process of the decree.

## 6 EXPANSION OF THE CONTAINER HANDLING CAPACITY IN THE PORT OF ANTWERP

### 6.1 Overview<sup>13</sup>

The Flemish government took the starting decision on July 15, 2016 about the project ‘Expansion of the container handling capacity in the port of Antwerp’, also called ECA. This is a crucial project for the development and evolution of the port of Antwerp with the new processed approach of the complex projects decree with a triple consultation structure.

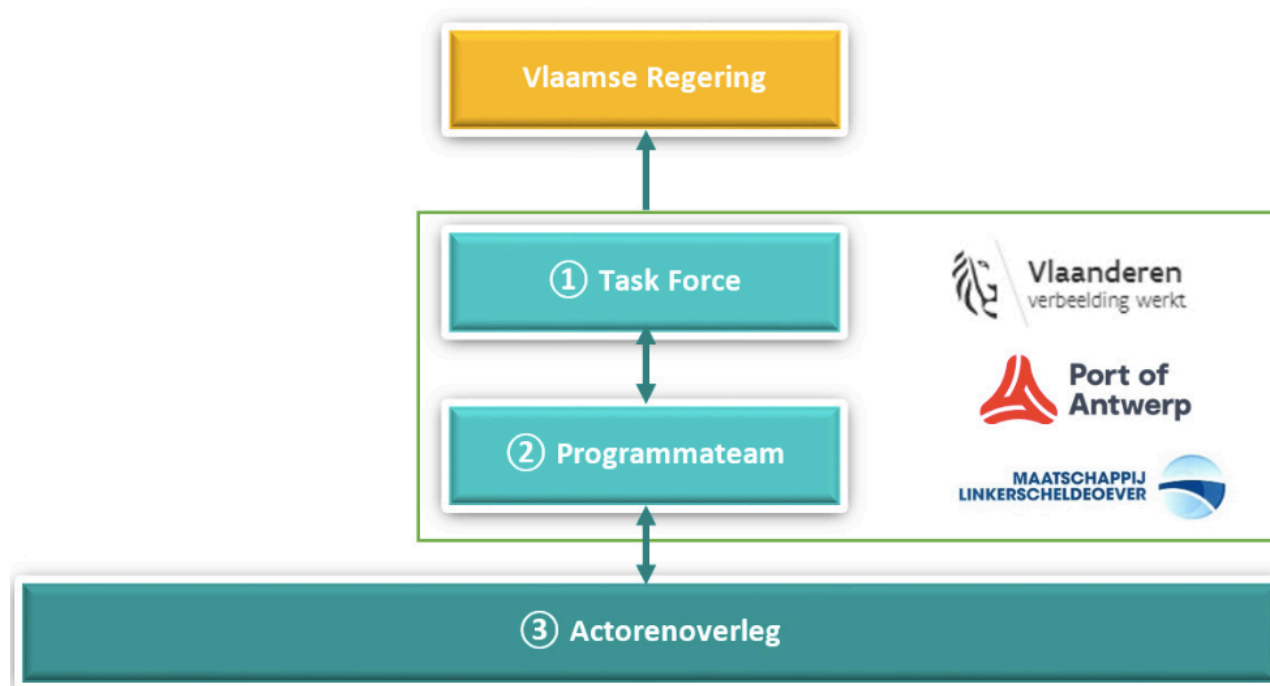


Figure 15: Overview structure project in Antwerp

The task force directs the project. It is responsible for the preparation and support of the decision making by the Flemish government with Freddy Aerts as the chairman. The Department of Mobility, Public Works and Environment of the Flemish government, the Antwerp port authority and the Company ‘Linkerscheldeover’ reside in the task force. The Regional Port Commissioner acts as an observer.

A program team forms the engine of the project. The team ensures that all elements of the investigation are coordinated. Furthermore, it prepares the necessary documents and steps in the process. This team consists of experts from the Flemish government (Department

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/extracontainercapaciteitantwerpen/>, consulted on February 20, 2020.

Environment and Public Works), the Antwerp port authority and the Company 'Linkerscheldeoever'.

The stakeholder consultation acts as the sound board for the task force and the program team. The members get participation and so contribute to the ECA project. The stakeholder consultation consists of action groups, citizen movements, government bodies and sector organizations like agriculture, nature and entrepreneurs. The members of this consultation receive all first-hand information and can cooperate in the project at crucial moments.

The port of Antwerp is an essential key stone in the realization of the Vision 2050 of the Flemish government; becoming a logistical hub and gateway to Europe for international good flows. Furthermore, the additional container handling capacity will create more welfare and employment

This project has three objectives to realize the expected growth until 2030:

- The realization of additional container handling capacity in the port area of Antwerp.
- The related development of logistics-industrial land.
- Multimodal access to the main network.

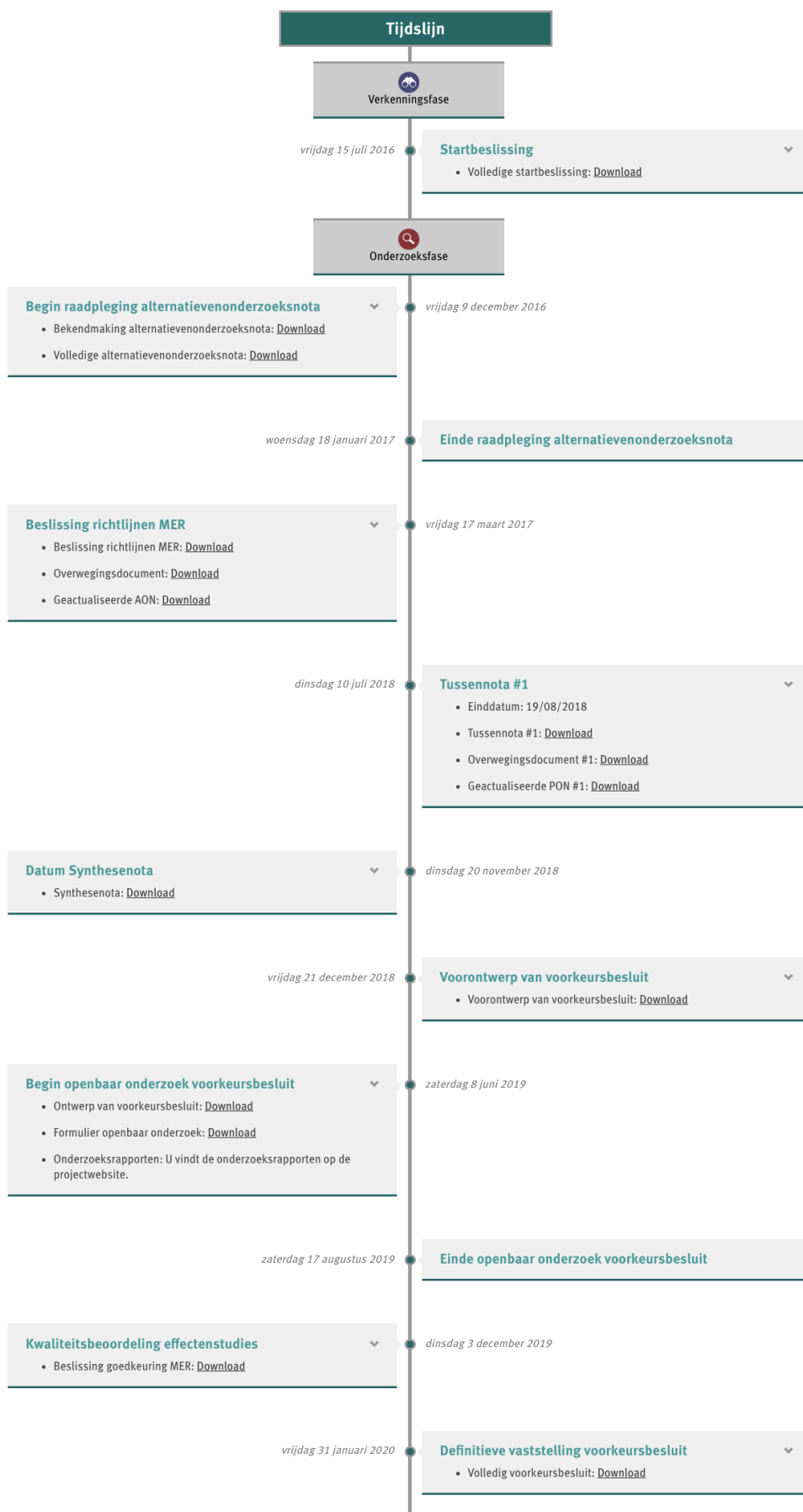


Figure 16: Timeline complex project ECA

## 6.2 The alternatives<sup>14</sup>

Nine alternatives were researched and weighed it up. The nine alternatives are:

- Saeftinghe dock phase one
- Saeftinghe dock phase one bis with the maintenance of Doel
- Saetinghe dock whereby only the southern side is developed
- Expansion of the North Sea terminal, the Europe terminal and Deurganck dock east
- Expansion of the North Sea terminal and a container quay situated north west of the Deurganck dock
- Expansion of the Deurganck dock along the Waasland Canal and Doel dock, a plug-in dock north of the Zandvliet lock
- Container terminal at the northern side of the Delwaide dock in combination with a new sea lock, a limited expansion of the North Sea terminal and half a quay north west of the Deurganck dock
- Container terminal on an artificial island in the river Scheldt near the ‘Schaar van Ouden Doel’ together with container handling at the Verrebroek dock
- Expansion of the Deurganck dock along the Waasland Canal and ‘Doel’ dock, a plug-in dock north of the Zandvliet lock on the southwestern side of a new tidal dock across the Deurganck dock

The Flemish government decided to select alternative nine out of the nine alternatives as preference decision at the end of 2019. This alternative is illustrated on the figure below.

To realize the necessary extra container capacity, the plan of the Saeftinghe dock was researched together with all possible alternatives. All actors were allowed to participate in the process. From July till October 2016, the project team collected propositions during the several consultation moments. Those propositions were compiled in the alternative research note and presented during the public consultation round from December 9, 2016 till January 18, 2017. Everyone was allowed to submit propositions themselves. After a thorough analysis, three variants of the Saeftinghe dock together with alternative solutions for extra container capacity were composed. The alternatives consist out of several building blocks, illustrated in the figure below. For each alternative, the used building blocks are marked.

---

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/extracontainercapaciteitantwerpen/>, consulted on February 20, 2020.

	Bouwsteen nr.	Bouwsteen omschrijving	Alternatief							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Containerbehandelingscapaciteit	1a-zuid	Saeftinghedok zuid	X							
	1a-noord	Saeftinghedok noord	X							
	1b-zuid	Saeftinghedok met behoud van Doel - zuid		X						
	1b-noord	Saeftinghedok met behoud van Doel - noord		X						
	2	Saeftinghedok - enkel zuidkant			X					
	4a	Containerkaai Noordwest					X			
	4b	Containerkaai Noordwest - halve uitvoering							X	
	5a	Uitbouw langs Waaslandkanaal ten westen van Kieldrechtsluis						X		
	5b	Uitbouw langs Waaslandkanaal ten oosten van Kieldrechtsluis						X		
	6	Inname van Ashland				X				
	10	Uitbreiding Europaterminal				X				
	11	Insteekdok ten noorden van Zandvlietluis						X		
	12	Stroomafwaartse uitbreiding Noordzeeterminal (beperkt)							X	
	13	Stroomafwaartse uitbreiding Noordzeeterminal (uitgebreid)				X	X			
	14	Delwaidedok in combinatie met nieuwe zeeluis							X	
	15	Schaar van Ouden Doel								X
	16	Westzijde Verrebroekdok								X
Logistiek	A	Gedempt deel Doeldok	X		X		X	X	X	X
	B	Kop Verrebroekdok	X							X
	C	Vlakte van Zwijndrecht	X							X
	D	Logistiek Park Schijns		X		X	X		X	
	E	Churchillzone		X		X		X		
	F	Omgeving Putten Weiden			X					

Figure 17: Building blocks ECA<sup>15</sup>

A fast growth was taken into account whereby the capacity of composed alternatives is situated in the range of 6.4 – 7.1 million TEU's. In this way, the effects aren't underestimated.

In the integrated research till the end of December 2017, experts examined the eight alternatives in depth. After many discussions and meetings, it turned out that none of the

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cpeca.be/bouwstenen>, consulted on April 27, 2020.

alternatives were completely sufficient. A new combination of the existing building blocks was researched to better achieve the proposed objectives. In an interim note, a ninth alternative was presented to the people during a second public consultation round from July 10 till August 19, 2018. Everyone did have the chance to propose additional combinations of the known building blocks, but this wasn't successful either. So afterwards, the ninth alternative was researched thoroughly, in line with the established method in the alternative research note. Based on all research results, The Flemish government decided to select alternative nine in the design of the preference decision on May 17, 2019.

Figure 18: Illustration of alternative nine

The second column shows the specifications of building block 5a, the expansion along the Waasland Canal located west from the Kieldrechts lock. It's assumed that the berth at the



Deurganck dock which will be removed by the tidal dock transverse to the Deurganck dock, will be compensated in the new tidal dock. The last column illustrates the additional net quay wall length, capacity and the surface whereby it's assumed that the capacity and quay wall length that's dismantled, will be compensated in the new tidal dock.

Looking to the terminals, the first building block is located behind the Kieldrechts lock, and exist of two parts:

- 5a The section located west from the Kieldrecht lock provides quay walls at the Waasland Canal and the Doel dock, and can be considered as an extension of the terminal on the western side of the Deurganck dock.
- 5b The section located east from the Kieldrecht lock can be considered as an expansion of the terminal at the eastern side of the Deurganck dock.

The second building block, number 11, consist of a new insertion dock located north from the Zandvlietdock. This dock can be considered as an extension of the existing North Sea terminal.

The third building block contains a new tidal dock transverse to the Deurganck dock and can be considered as a self-functioning unity or as an extension of the terminal on the western side of the Deurganck dock.



	Noordzeeterminal (11)	DGD West (5a)(*)	DGD Oost (5b)	Zuidwestelijke zijde van getijdendok dwars op Deurganckdok (**)
Aanmeerlengte zeevaart 	+500m (d -18m LAT)	+660m (d-14,5m TAW)	+500m (d-14,5m TAW)	+1400m
Aanmeerlengte binnenvaart (dedicated) 	+0m	+450m (Doeldok + kop DGD)	+150m	+300m
Terreinoppervlakte	+12,7ha	+30,5ha	+62,3ha	56,0ha
Capaciteit (M+B)	+0,9 mio TEU (import/export terminal)	+1,7 mio TEU (transshipment-hub)	+0,9 mio TEU (import/export terminal)	+3,7 mio TEU (transshipment-hub)

Figure 19: Illustration of the extra container handling capacity

## 6.3 Planning<sup>17</sup>

As already mentioned, the Flemish government took the starting decision on July 15, 2016 for the research phase of this project. The first eight alternatives were rejected after a thorough analysis during the research phase because none of the alternatives could meet the premised objectives. Parts of other alternatives were used to create a ninth alternative in July 2018. The Flemish government undertook a comprehensive research and came up with a design preference decision on May 17, 2019. After a public research with adjustments based on the response, the Flemish government took the preference decision in the end of 2019, which also meant the end of the research phase and the start of the elaboration phase.

## 6.4 Interview

During the interview, all prepared questions were discussed. Mr. Vandamme represents the port company in the project team who was the first requesting party for the ECA project. The task of Mr. Vandamme was to design and develop the alternative research and to represent the assets of the port company and he gave some insights in the process of the complex projects decree in the ECA project so far.

The assessment of the complex projects decree can only be done when the project is effectively realized, according to Mr. Vandamme. Up to now, there is only a preference decision which isn't a guarantee for the further phases in the project.

Mr. Vandamme also mentioned the context of the use of the decree. There was a spatial implementation plan for a second tidal dock in the port of Antwerp, but it was rejected by the 'Raad van State'. The project was stuck, and the complex projects decree was used to find a solution by trying to create a more solid base between all actors. So far, it looks like the decree succeeded to create a more solid base for the chosen solution, but the preference decision can still be challenged by the 'Raad van State'. If none of the involved parties go to the 'Raad van State', then there is a more solid base because of the decree. So, it is too soon to decide if the decree has led to an added value.

The complex projects decree is a limp process with a lot of decision moments, a statement Mr. Vandamme agrees with. But, some phases are impossible to skip to prevent legal vulnerability, according to Mr. Vandamme. It takes a year to reach the preference decision

---

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/extracontainercapaciteitantwerpen/>, consulted on February 21, 2020.

and the Department of Environment is planning to reduce this to half a year by synchronizing decisions and phases.

Now the preference decision has been taken. The most important steps up to now were during the beginning of the project. In the start decision, the necessity of the ECA project was expressed; extra container capacity is necessary to deal with the growth till 2030 in the port of Antwerp. A debate with all actors was conducted to discuss the necessity. Not all stakeholders were convinced about the necessity. Afterwards, the Flemish government decided that the ECA project is essential, and from that moment the focus shifted to try to find a solution instead of debating about the necessity. This was a very important step.

The next step was the formulation of the alternative research notes which contains the content of the eight alternatives and the way how they would be examined. This happened in a very open and transparent way. None of the eight alternatives were sufficient; they all had important disadvantages for the market or the environment and a ninth alternative was created based on the research results and threatened in the same way as the other eight alternatives. A lot of actors didn't agree with this way of working but according to Mr. Vandamme, it was communicated that a ninth alternative could be created based on the research results. All remarks and objections about this alternative are treated and added in the decision making after the public investigation by the Flemish government. There are two options now; there is effectively a solid base or there will follow a juridical decision.

The ninth alternative is the balanced decision who do meet all preconditions. There are still some challenges anyway with this alternative. First, the tidal dock has to be dredged which will lead to ground surpluses. Furthermore, in comparison to the created capacity, it is an expensive project because the expansion of the container capacity will be at just one side of the dock.

Mr. Aerts stated there is a need for a more apparent delineation of the various grounds. According to Mr. Vandamme the spatial implementation plan destroyed by the 'Raad van State' contained an apparent delineation between the farmers, the persons from the port and the representatives of the environment. After the destroyment, a compromise need to be found again. But the problem is that both the preference decision and the project decision can be challenged in the future. So, there is no guarantee on the long term till the dock is built.

The participation for the various action groups and residents is a big topic in the complex projects decree. The opinion of Mr. Vandamme is that there have been sufficient opportunities for consultation up to now. This is necessary in the research phase, but not in

the elaboration phase. The alternative is chosen and elaborated, so now it's time to work towards the end result instead of debating again with all actors. There is still a need for participation, but it's essential to frame this clearly because it takes a lot of time and the process is not the main goal but the end result.

Looking to the future, the project decision will be taken in 2022, and the effective building will take five more years, so the project will normally end in 2027-2028. There are still several challenges for the port company itself because the ratio investment and return is not ideal for the port company. The port company don't aim for extreme benefits, but needs to remain financially stable, and this is still an objection in the ECA project. Mr. Vandamme don't expect real problems because of the decree and hopes that the steps towards the project decision will be taken faster than during the process to the preference decision.

## **7 NAUTICAL ACCESSIBILITY PORT OF ZEEBRUGGE**

### **7.1 Overview<sup>18</sup>**

The Flemish government took the starting decision on July 15, 2016 about the project ‘Improved nautical accessibility to the port of Zeebrugge’. This is a crucial project for the growth and development of the port of Zeebrugge with the new processed approach of the complex projects decree. The purpose of this project is to create a second and new access to the inner port of Zeebrugge. Several alternatives were studied before a definitive choice was made, followed by the technical elaboration and execution of the chosen alternative.

### **7.2 Why a new lock?<sup>19</sup>**

The inner port of Zeebrugge is a growing zone in the port. A second access is essential to secure the further growth of the port and the employment opportunities in the region. At the moment, the shipping traffic runs completely along the Pierre Vandamme lock. The second lock who gives access to the inner port, the Visarts lock, is outdated and can no longer meet the requirements of the shipping industry nowadays.

Proceedings at the Pierre Vandamme lock are necessary for the long-term operation of the lock. To realize this, the lock will be inoperative for a longer time. So, due to the state of the Pierre Vandamme lock and the further development of the inner port, a second lock is a necessity in Zeebrugge. The aim is to create a new lock with a length of 427 meters, a width of 55 meters and a maximum water depth of 18.5 meters.

### **7.3 Future of Zeebrugge and the Nx**

The Nx is a road who has to create a connection between the N31(Expressweg) and the N350 (Alfred Ronsestraat) both for normal traffic as for port traffic. The construction of the new road will make the local roads as the N34 (Kustlaan) and the residential areas more safe and livable. The specifications of the development of the road is mentioned in every researched alternative below.

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/nieuwesluiszeebrugge/>, consulted on February 26, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/nieuwesluiszeebrugge/>, consulted on February 26, 2020.

## 7.4 Processed Approach complex projects decree<sup>20</sup>

So, the starting decision was taken on July 15, 2016. During the exploration phase, six alternatives were formulated. Every alternative has been investigated on environmental effects, nautical consequences and cost-benefit ratio. Based on the results of the investigation, the Flemish government chose one alternative with the preference decision. When this is approved, the elaboration phase with the technical amplification of the preference decision will be conducted, which results in the project decision. This is made public, followed by the implementation of the chosen alternative. The two figures below show the timeline of the complex project in Zeebrugge. The timeline shows that the research phase is finished and the preference decision has been taken.



Figure 20: Timeline project Zeebrugge

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/nieuwesluiszeebrugge/>, consulted on February 27, 2020.



Figure 21: Timeline complex project Zeebrugge in detail

## 7.5 The alternatives<sup>21</sup>

Six alternatives with ten variants of the exact location of the new lock were researched and weighed it up. The six alternatives are:

- Carcoke
- Visart
- Visart east
- Vandamme east
- Vandamme west
- Connection dock

In addition to the research on environmental effects, nautical consequences and cost-benefit ratio, the alternatives were compared to a situation without the construction of a second lock; the zero alternative. The main purpose is to focus on the elements with clear differences between the six alternatives.

The research on environmental effects targets the effect on humans, bottom, water, noise, vibrations, air and climate in general.

The cost-benefit ratio measures the costs and benefits of every alternative. The costs who are taken into account are: purchase and expropriation, remediation, construction of infrastructure and maintenance. The benefits who are taken into account are: shorter waiting times, higher income due to port taxes and an alternative access in the event of an existing lock failing.

The nautical screening tests the different alternatives with a sailing simulation. During this simulation, the focus is on the difficulty level, execution time, need for the use of a tugboat and rudder and bow thruster. Alternatives who score bad on this simulation can increase the risk of collisions between ships or with the bank.

Two alternatives of importance will be elaborated in depth; the Visart alternative and the alternative of the Connection dock. The Visart alternative is the chosen alternative by the preference decision, and the Connection dock alternative is the best alternative, according to the expert of the complex project, and explained in the section below.

---

<sup>21</sup>

[https://nieuwesluiszeebrugge.login.kanooh.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/BROCHURE%20NSZ\\_WEB.PDF](https://nieuwesluiszeebrugge.login.kanooh.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/BROCHURE%20NSZ_WEB.PDF), consulted on April 24, 2020.



In the Visart alternative, the Visart lock will be dismantled and replaced by a new lock. The connection between the Visart lock and the Connection dock will be deepened over the complete length. Looking to the traffic, the local and slow traffic, the tram and rail traffic will all pass the lock by bridges.

Considering the Nx, there are two possible variants. In the first variant, the Nx goes along a tunnel under the lock and a bridge will be built at both lock heads for local and slow traffic and for the tram. In the second variant, the Nx will be built over the lock. Seven bridges will be built; three over the northern lock head (one for local and slow traffic and the tram and two for the Nx) and four over the southern lock head (one for local and slow traffic and the tram, two for the Nx and one for the railway).

The research about this alternative states that the variant of the Nx with a tunnel has a positive effect on the local traffic. There would also be less noise and air pollution in the proximity of the houses. The research showed also negative results. About 35 (variant with the Nx in a tunnel) or 70 (variant with the Nx over the lock) houses in the Station district and along the 'Kustlaan' and 'Evendijk-Oost' will be expropriated for the construction of the new lock and associated infrastructure for roads and the tram. The entrance of the marina needs to be moved, and for local traffic, pedestrians and cyclists the trajectory will be longer with the new lock. Furthermore, the new lock and the roads will come closer to the residential areas. Also, the variant without a tunnel for the Nx is the worst alternative looking to the noise pollution by car and vessel traffic and the air pollution would also increase. Furthermore, a deviation of bus line 47 is needed if the Nx will be built over the lock and also longer waiting times at the swing bridge across the passage canal will take place. Nautically seen, this alternative scores the worst, together with the Visart Est and Carcoke. At last, the Visart lock is valuable heritage and will disappear. The two variants of the Nx in the alternative are illustrated in the figures below.



Figure 22: Visart alternative with Nx via tunnel variant

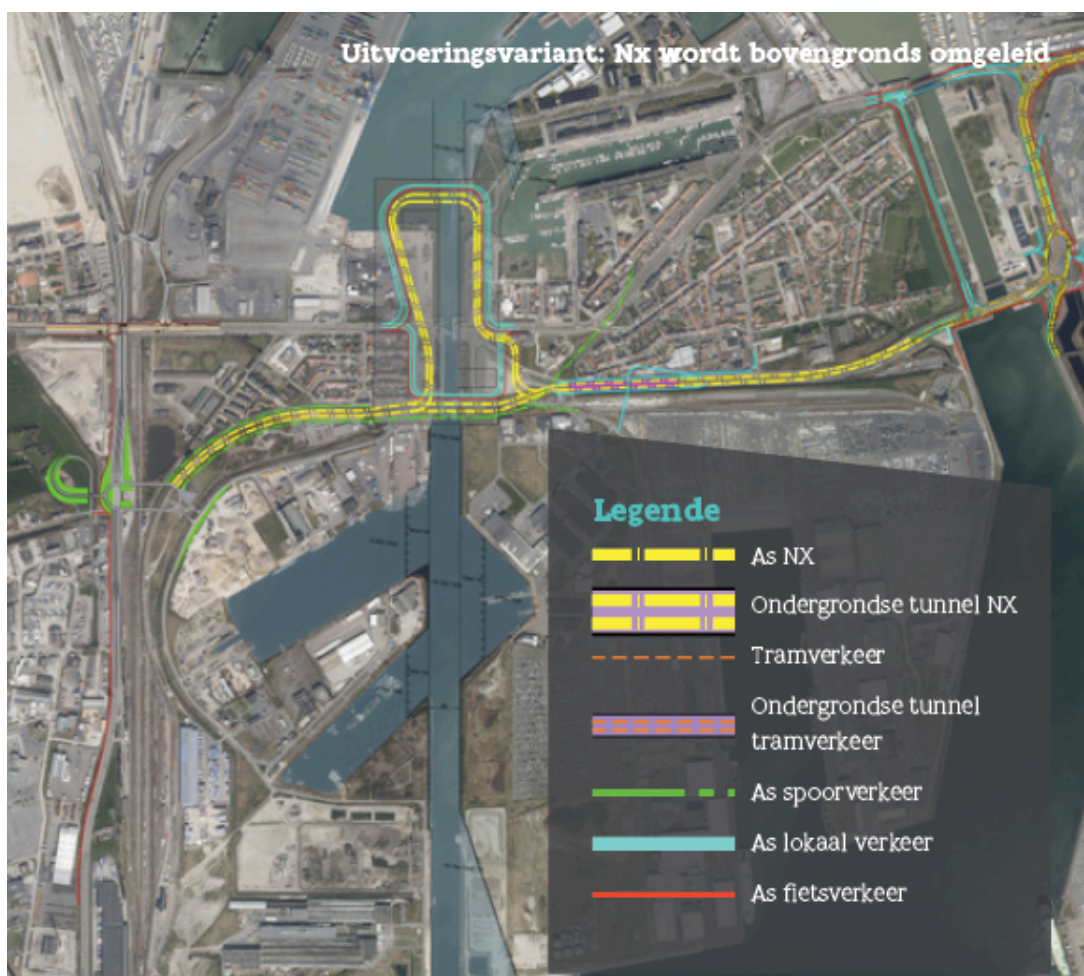


Figure 23: Visart alternative with Nx above the ground alternative

In alternative number six, two new locks would be built in the Connection dock, south of the Vandamme lock. The Vandamme lock would be dismantled to create place for an access channel. The Visart lock would be taken out of service and the local, slow and tram traffic would go over the northern lock head. The railway traffic and the Nx would pass via the southern lock head. Between the Visart lock and the Vandamme lock, an exit complex for the connection of the local and port traffic to the Nx would be constructed. This alternative also has two implementation variants for the Nx. In the first variant, the Nx goes through a tunnel under the access channel. Four bridges would be built in this variant; one bridge over each lock head. In the second alternative, the Nx would be built over the locks. 12 bridges would be constructed in total, three bridges per lock head.

Research results have shown that there would be less noise pollution because the lock and the Nx would be situated further away from the buildings. In the variant with the tunnel for the Nx, also the air pollution in the vicinity of the buildings would decrease. The shutdown of the current Visart lock offers possibilities for the expansion of the marina. Furthermore, the alternative has the second-best cost-benefit ratio. Looking to the construction cost, the variant with the Nx over the locks is better than the variant with the Nx in a tunnel. Negative points of this alternative are the 51 (variant with the Nx in a tunnel) or 52 (variant with the Nx over the lock) houses that has to be expropriated along the 'Kustlaan' for the construction of the tram tunnel. The impact on the companies is, together with the Vandamme East alternative, the biggest. There is a large take-up of terminal area from Wallenius, ICO and C.RO and also the mainline for natural gas from Fluxys needs to be replaced. Looking to the local traffic, the trajectory will be longer with the new lock and bus line 45 will get a longer deviation. Nautically seen is this alternative less good, but better than the Carcoke, Visart and Visart East alternative. In all alternatives, the inner port and the Boudewijn Canal can further salinize due to the increase in shipping traffic, but in this alternative, the part of the inner port under tide will completely salt as well. At last, a part of the nature area 'Kleiputten van Heist' will be taken because the new locks would be located more inland. As a consequence, a part of the Connection dock will be under tide and the average surface water level will decrease. The Schipdonk Canal will flow more south into the outport which will lower the ground water pressure. This may lead to a light dehydration and less salty 'kwel' at the 'Kleiputten van Heist'. The two variants of the Nx in the alternative are illustrated in the figures below. The legend can be found in the figure above.





Figure 24: Connection dock alternative with Nx via tunnel variant



Figure 25: Visart alternative with Nx above the ground alternative

## **7.6 Preference decision**

Based on the results of the research and screening, the preliminary draft of the preference decision is the 'Visart' alternative; the new lock will be at the current location of the Visart lock and the Nx will be placed in a tunnel. The most important elements of the chosen alternative are:

- The Visart lock will be dismantled and replaced by a new lock.
- The connection of the Visart lock with the Connection dock and the yacht club will be adjusted.
- Local traffic and the tram will pass over the lock.
- The tunnel of the Nx will be constructed under the lock.
- Necessary actions will be taken to guarantee the quality of life for residents and users of the yacht club.

This preference decision will be further actualized into a feasible project in the elaboration phase.

## **7.7 Planning and next steps**

In March and April 2018, there was a meeting about the preliminary draft of the preference decision. The results and advices from that meeting were processed which led to a draft of the preference decision by the Flemish government. This design was made public and open for recommendations and comments. Afterwards, the Flemish government have set up the definitive preference decision on June 28, 2019. This preference decision will be further substantiated into a feasible project during the elaboration phase.

## **7.8 Interview**

As mentioned in the method section, the interviewed person wanted to stay anonymous and will be called 'the expert'. The expert is very clear about the first question about the added value of the complex projects decree. The decree hasn't served an added value till now in Zeebrugge. There has been a lot of protest against the location of the new lock because of the lack of transparency, especially towards the citizens. There have been evenings where the citizens could ask questions and express their displeasure according to the route planner. But nothing has been done with these remarks so it was useless, according to the expert. Everyone agrees that there is a need for a new lock, but the process up to now has been

dramatic for the citizens of Zeebrugge Village. Some years ago, a revitalization study has been conducted about the possibilities for the future of Zeebrugge Village and the integration with the beach district of Zeebrugge because Zeebrugge Village is isolated between the Pierre Vandamme lock in the north and the Visart lock in the south west. But with the current decision about the location of the new lock the village will become even more isolated.

The expert isn't satisfied with the current chosen alternative. The traffic situation will be a catastrophe. The Nx will pass under the lock, but the tram will still cross above the lock, a bridge will be needed for local traffic and the pedestrians, and also a bridge for the freight track. So, in total, three bridges will have to cross the bridge. In terms of environment, the chosen alternative isn't the most appropriate one, according to the expert. If the wind blows from the west (70 % of the time), the smoke of the vessels will blow over the village. Nautically seen, the alternative will lead to a lot of problems as well. The expert states that no ships will be able to enter the port with more than five beaufort.

It can be questioned why the current alternative is chosen. The alternative with the connection dock would have been the best option; no one had to be expropriated, the traffic wouldn't be affected, the construction could start immediately but it was a more expensive project than the chosen alternative and the vessels who had to go to the rear port would be hindered during the construction of the connection dock. The expert states that for the current alternative, which will cost 1.1 billion euros, the accompanying measures are not included yet in the cost. So, the price of both the alternatives will be more or less the same with the accompanying measures included and the hinder would be temporary. Moreover, the building of the connection dock is technically too complex. The lock is economically seen very important, but the location has a lot of consequences on social level. The location doesn't really matter for the economy whether it is via the Visart lock or via the connection dock. The expert states that a consensus should have to be found for all involved actors. Because with the chosen alternative, hardly any stakeholders were included. Furthermore, certain companies situated in areas that will be expropriated aren't still contacted and the marina is threatened because yachts won't be able to reach the marina easily. So, there is a lot of confusion for several actors.

The expert agrees with the statement that the decree has a limp and complex process. The expert proposes to simplify the whole system and process. Experience should clarify this, but in Zeebrugge there's nothing concrete after five years of administrative and research work. It's difficult to work with a general decree because every project is unique and has its own

sensitives and location. The complex projects decree shouldn't be abolished, but it has to be simplified a lot, according to the expert.

To avoid those situations in the future, the expert says that there has to be listened to all stakeholders and actors. But more important, it has to be taken into account as well and not ignored like in Zeebrugge.

The decision has been taken, but the question is when the project decision will be taken and when the effective construction will start. Nothing is known yet, and the Flemish government didn't provide any budgets until now. Everything is more complex, but the process doesn't go faster.

The preference decision has been taken, so the future of the districts needs to be questioned. Except some buildings, the station district will disappear completely with the chosen alternative. But the village district with 5000 inhabitants is threatened by the new lock. The price of their houses is dropping and are barely taken into account.

The last part of the interview was about the Nx, which will be built to relieve the traffic. This is a claim the expert doesn't believe. Three bridges will have to be built to cross all traffic. So, there will always be a bridge that's open somewhere. A research has been considered to let the tram pass under the lock. But that would be too expensive and taking up too much space. Also, the option to stop the tram in Blankenberge, and connect Knokke with buses would be a lot better to relieve the traffic, but this won't happen either. A better delineation of the different types of areas would be a good solution, but according to the expert, this is probably too late already. Because all grounds already do have a specific destination and there aren't any industry grounds left.

The expert concludes that it might be better to work more project specific. A general decree like the complex projects decree can certainly offer an added value, but everything needs to be more efficient and clear, and more important, there must be an opportunity to better involve the different stakeholders and local residents.



## 8 IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN LITTLE RUSSIA

### 8.1 Overview



Figure 26: Map of Little Russia

The garden district Little Russia is a district of the municipality Zelzate along the Canal between Ghent and Terneuzen and located south of the highway A11/E34.<sup>22</sup> It was founded in 1920 as a consequence of the establishment of large chemical companies near Zelzate. During the 50's, problems arose due to the used inferior material of the buildings.<sup>23</sup> The decrepit houses, the district that's enclosed between roads and industry and the plans of a new tunnel under the channel between Ghent and Terneuzen led to the decision of the Flemish government to make the neighborhood disappear. It is essential to create a clear plan to ensure the best future possible for the inhabitants of the neighborhood. This is the main purpose of this project, via the complex projects decree.<sup>24</sup>

The governor of East Flanders, Jan Briers, wanted to research what's the best future for the district Little Russia together with the residents, the Flemish government, the municipality and the social housing company CVBA. On February 26, 2016, the Flemish government took the starting decision about the project 'Little Russia', which is illustrated on the timeline below.

---

<sup>22</sup> [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuinwijk\\_Klein\\_Rusland](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuinwijk_Klein_Rusland), consulted on April 27, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20180629\\_03590942](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20180629_03590942), consulted on April 27, 2020.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2019/01/25/markante-plekken-klein-rusland-in-zelzate/>, consulted on April 27, 2020.



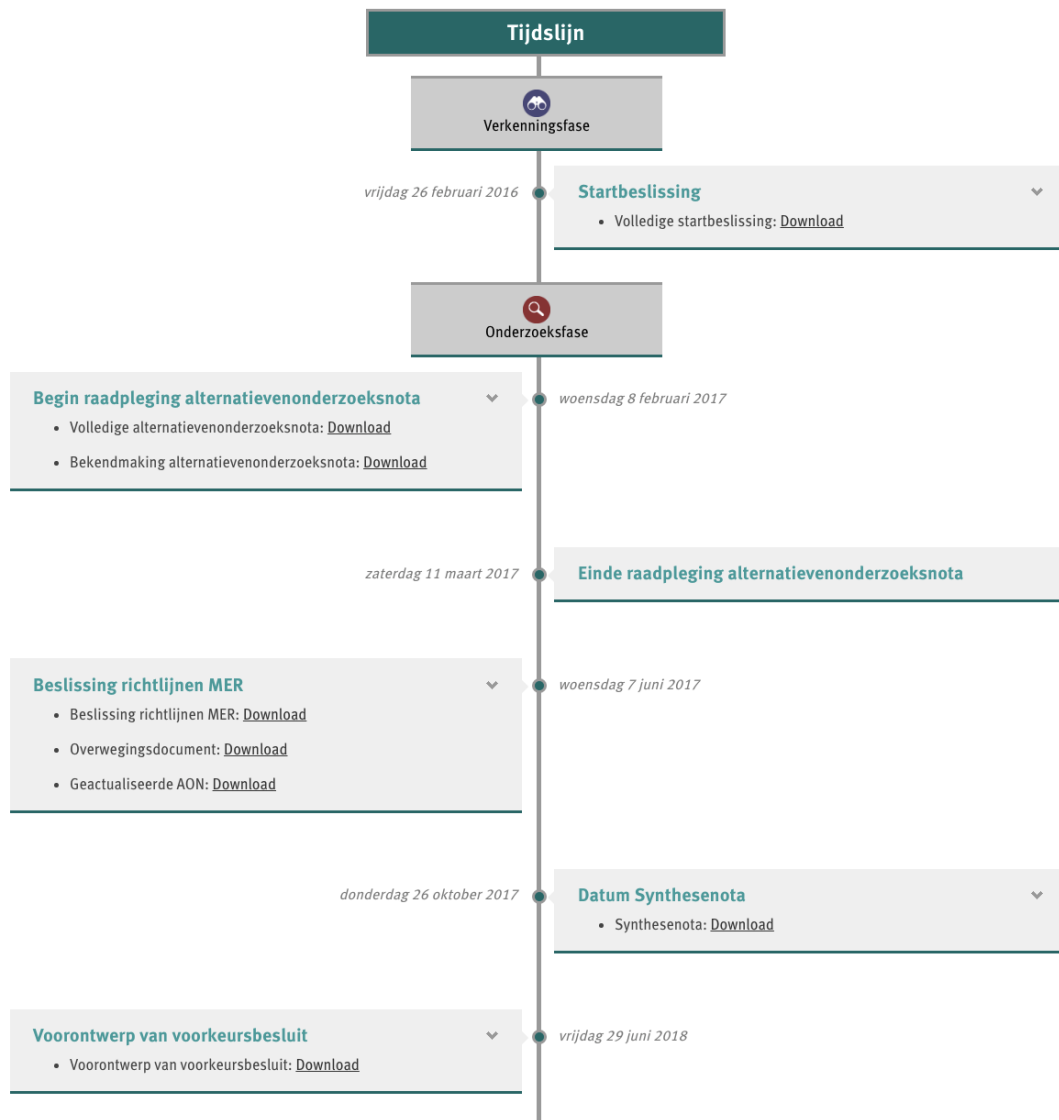


Figure 27: Timeline complex project Little Russia

## 8.2 Alternatives and alternative research Little Russia<sup>25</sup>

There are five alternatives mentioned in the alternatives research note for the current residents of Little Russia. The first four alternatives are focused on a transformation of the current district on the same location, and it's assumed that the reservation area is completely taken in by port infrastructure. In alternative five, possible locations are researched in Zelzate to answer the housing requirement and livability of Little Russia. On the figures below,

<sup>25</sup> <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/20170502-aangepaste-AON-KR-def.pdf>, consulted on April 28, 2020.

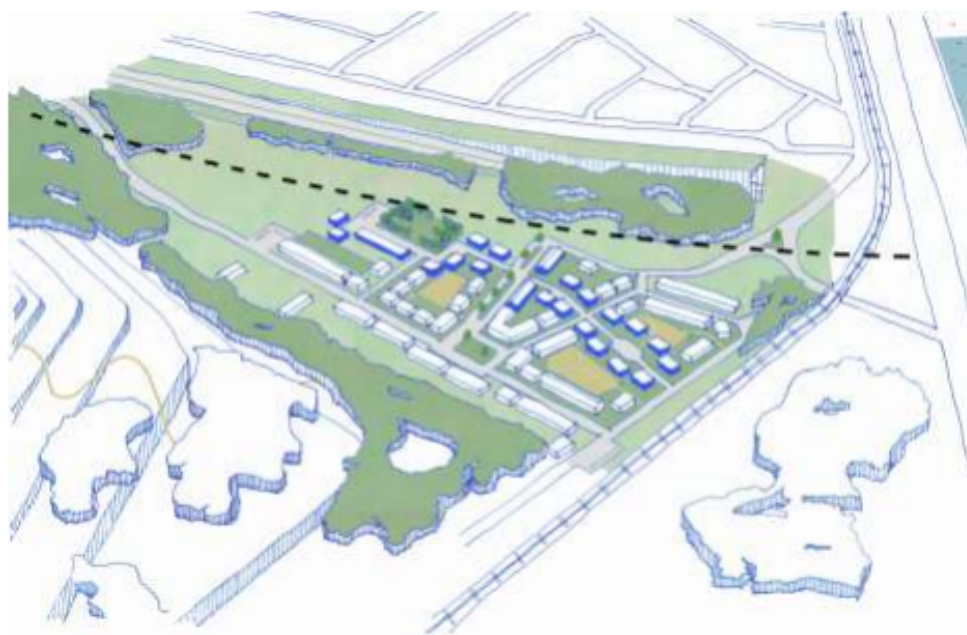
buildings with a blue edge have heritage value, buildings with a white edge can be considered as new housing estate. The dotted line shows the reservation area for infrastructure.

The first alternative focuses on maximal heritage of Little Russia. It includes the restoration and reconstruction with maximal conservation of the heritage, so the preservation of all houses built in the period 1920 till 1930.



*Figure 28: Illustration of alternative one*

The second alternative contains limited heritage of the garden district. It comprises the restoration and reconstruction with limited conservation of the heritage; all buildings located near the Kardinaal Mercier square and the adjacent Albert Mechelinck street.



*Figure 29: Illustration of alternative two*

The third alternative is called ‘Garden district 2.0. Little Russia’. This alternative comprises new buildings with maximum maintenance of the current street pattern; the preservation of

the garden district concept with the corresponding housing typology and the maintenance of the street pattern with new building typologies.



*Figure 30: Illustration of alternative three*

The fourth and last alternative focuses on a transformation of the current district on the same location and is called ‘park district Little Russia’. This alternative contains a new construction without retaining the current street pattern but with innovative housing typologies.



*Figure 31: Illustration of alternative four*

The fifth and last alternative is about new housing estate in Zelzate if the area of Little Russia no longer serves for social housing. In this fifth alternative, a differentiation is made between new buildings in the current living zone of Zelzate, A-variants on the figure below, and new buildings in residential expansion areas, B-variants outside the R4 on the figure below.



Figure 32: Illustration of alternative five

### 8.3 Integrated research complex projects quality of life Little Russia<sup>26</sup>

Between June 2017 and November 2017, the integrated research was conducted. This investigation comprises the draft of a strategic environmental impact report and the draft of a cost estimation of each alternative. The summary of this investigation was compiled in a synthesis note<sup>27</sup>. In December 2017, the elaboration of a realization strategy note<sup>28</sup> was started. The purpose of this note was to develop the different alternatives more in depth. This report was completed in April 2018 and was the result of workshops with experts and the consultation of the residents.

### 8.4 Preference alternative Little Russia<sup>29</sup>

On June 29, 2018, the Flemish government presented a design preference alternative. The government proposed to offer the residents of Little Russia a new, high-quality social rental home closer to the center of Zelzate East and West and to leave the garden district over a

<sup>26</sup> <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/klein-rusland/#toggle-id-3>, consulted on April 28, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> [http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-1\\_KR\\_synthesenota.pdf](http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-1_KR_synthesenota.pdf), consulted on April 28, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> [http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-4\\_KR\\_procesnota-versie-4.pdf](http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-4_KR_procesnota-versie-4.pdf), consulted on April 28, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/klein-rusland/#toggle-id-2>, consulted on April 28, 2020.



period of ten years. According to all partners, this proposal should offer the best guarantee for a fine and sustainable future for the current residents and future tenants. 160 new rental houses supplemented with private buildings or social houses were planned. The project should cost 53 million euros, but this can change as a consequence of further developments of the alternative.

Based on the different researches, it seems that Little Russia will become even more isolated due to the future infrastructure. Leo Van Brock, Flemish ‘Bouwmeester’, stated that the services for quality living are no longer present in Little Russia due to the nearby industrial sites. The removal of the houses to the center of Zelzate was linked to the draft of a masterplan for Zelzate. In that plan, a clear vision about spatial developments, housing policy and mobility was elaborated. Also, the destination of Little Russia would be discussed in that masterplan.

In the preference alternative, several locations in Zelzate were proposed where new residential developments can be realized for the residents of Little Russia. These locations aren’t definitive, and will be further researched on their feasibility. The locations are:

- Kastanje square: the current site with homes for the elderly will be transformed into a mixed housing project
- Charles Andries street: a mixed housing project with social rental houses and private and social owner-occupied houses
- Slachthuis street / Rene Vermandel street: social rental houses with a view on the water
- Denderdreve: a bigger and mixed social and private project
- The finish of the residential area Denderdreve: a small residential development near the KMO which is about to close
- Endeke: a larger mixed social and private project
- Krekelmuyter: about 20 social rental houses
- Small residential units within the living area of Zelzate on smaller areas with dilapidated buildings

The research was conducted in consultation with the residents of Little Russia and the citizens of the new locations. They were closely involved in the development of the new plans.

## 8.5 The draft preference decision<sup>30</sup>

On June 29, 2018, the draft preference decision was published. Based on the several studies and the results of the consultations, alternative five was chosen; a new residential development in Zelzate. 160 new social rental houses would be realized on several locations in the center of Zelzate and the residential function of Little Russia would be canceled out in different phases.

The integrated research has identified the alternatives, also, the environmental, spatial and social aspects have been investigated in the strategic environment effect report <sup>31</sup> and a cost estimation has been calculated. The cost estimation can be consulted in the alternative research note. During the research phase, the four important groups of stakeholders were involved:

- The members of the project group
- Residents from the residents group
- The citizens from Zelzate
- Experts via workshops and reflection meetings

In the draft preference decision, there was written that there's a strong demand for a quick solution, both among the partners of the project group and the residents from Little Russia. Furthermore, there is a clear demand from various stakeholders to use a solution to improve the quality of life for the residents from Little Russia as a leverage for strengthening Zelzate itself. The focus lies completely on the reinforcement of the core of Zelzate. Almost all proposed locations from alternative five are located in the core of Zelzate, close to services, public transport and embedded in the qualitative residential and living environment.

The isolated location of the current district and the conservation of the reservation area for future line infrastructure which will even more increase the isolation, were important alternatives to withdraw the other four alternatives. The evolution of all events who took place after the publication of the draft preference decision are well explained in the interview below with Mr. Dejonghe.

---

<sup>30</sup> <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/090135578024217d.pdf>, consulted on April 28, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/smerKR.pdf>, consulted on April 28, 2020.

## 8.6 Interview

According to Mr. Dejonghe, one of the problems of the complex project decree in Little Russia is the change of the political landscape due to the last elections. Not the change itself, but the consequences have led to some difficulties.

The previous governance of Zelzate agreed with the complex project in Little Russia, but they had a hesitating attitude and were skeptical about the progress of the preference alternative and the alternative research. So, the previous governance had patiently joined the complex project, which was mainly drawn by the project leaders. But, after the elections in May 2019, the new governance decided not to follow the decision of the previous governance, which was also very strong supported by the Flemish government. In the alternative research, alternative five was chosen. This alternative contains the relocation of Little Russia.

This was in contradiction with the strategic plan ‘Welvarende Kanaalzone’ of 2007 <sup>32</sup> in function of the project ‘Gentse Kanaalzone’, which was drawn up after an interactive process with all involved stakeholders. In that plan, it was very clear where living would be maintained and where living would be given up. This had led to the expropriation of 300 houses in the Gentse Kanaalzone in a very good way in consultation with the residents, the companies and all governments together, according to Mr. Dejonghe. Furthermore, in that strategic plan, Little Russia was seen as a living zone and could be preserved. But this is changed because of the complex projects decree.

The previous governor of East Flanders wanted to research what’s the best future for the district Little Russia and its inhabitants using the complex projects decree because of the miserable conditions of the residents of Little Russia and the impotence of the previous governance. He decided to play the role ‘go between’ between the Flemish, provincial and local government. Also, the social housing company CVBA has hesitated for years with a passive attitude.

Mr. Dejonghe states that the situation of Zelzate is important to mention as well. Zelzate has been the ‘misfit’ of the Gentse Kanaalzone and the municipality underwent all developments submissive. Zelzate has been split by the canal in three ways, is surrounded by the R4, a new bridge with dangerous transport and the tunnel of the future port line. So, Zelzate suffers

---

<sup>32</sup> <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/strategischplan.pdf>, consulted on April 5, 2020.

from the nuisance without being able to reap the benefits. This illustrates the attitude of the previous governance of Zelzate, and that's the reason why the previous Governor took the role to start up the complex projects decree to research the best solution for the future.

Five scenarios have been investigated. The previous Flemish government came up with the statement that scenario five of relocalization would be the best solution because of the isolated position of the district far from all facilities and the poor living conditions, the inadequate mobility, the negative effects of the port and the industry and the possible construction of the port railway. Scenario five contains a new residential area on a place with good facilities and better public transport.

And then, the new governance of Zelzate changed everything. They believe completely in the livability of Little Russia and they decided not to follow the procedure of the decree anymore. Because, according to the governance, the arguments cited against Little Russia apply equally to Zelzate West, so it's wrong to let disappear Little Russia.

Mr. Dejonghe states that he and his team are also 'go between' and want to find a plan with maximal consensus between all actors. The masterplan of the project desk contains all investigations about new destinations for the municipality, the mobility and the new redevelopment of Little Russia. The masterplan acts as an intermediate step to the preference decision. The governance of Zelzate asked to reorient the masterplan and to investigate Little Russia as living area in the plan. Looking to the actual masterplan, there are sufficient living places to relocalize the inhabitants of Little Russia in a proper and diverse way with various support facilities. But, the new governance of Zelzate wants to achieve more than that; they want to benefit their strategic position in the heart of the Kanaalzone Ghent Terneuzen instead of suffering from the negative aspects.

For the moment, three concrete living places are elaborated in the masterplan in consultation with the municipality and the CVBA. Three new garden districts should be constructed. The current inhabitants should have the option to choose between a new district at the eastern side of the Warande park with 250 houses, a more urban variant in Zelzate West at the Kastanje square with 100 houses and the third option, the re-establishment of Little Russia with the reservation zone for the new railway line taken into account.

The next step is to start up the project phase if the municipality and the CVBA have made good agreements about the elaboration of the project. Because, for the moment there is still distrust between those two parties.

Furthermore, the question raises if it's still useful to continue with the complex projects decree in the current form in Zelzate. Exactly one year ago, Mr. Dejonghe had written the



preference decision for alternative five for the previous Flemish government. To take that decision, the municipality had to pass on the authority to the Flemish government to elaborate the project, but they have refused to do that. So, the previous Flemish government wasn't able to take the decision, and the current Flemish government wasn't interested to change the course because the process has been completed and the several alternatives have been researched. So, it's important to question if it's still useful to continue as a Flemish project, because the municipality don't give the permission. According to Mr. Dejonghe it may be useful to continue as a local project and to make a number of agreements with the Flemish government. But this is already investigated, and it appeared to be impossible considering that PVDA is part of the governance. Furthermore, there are some risks when a project continues as a local project.

So, it can be questioned if it's even useful to continue with the decree. Because, there is no need for a new destination to conduct the content of the masterplan. If the governance and the CVBA come to an agreement, then they only need the Flemish government for the exchange of the ground of the Warande park. Those grounds could be traded in exchange for the reservation area for the new railway or just be bought.

Mr. Dejonghe thinks that the complex projects decree is dead and states that the decree is a tool and it certainly served its purpose. The decree has been started up because the governance and the CVBA didn't take their responsibility, and maybe because of the decree, they have found each other. According to Mr. Dejonghe, the perfect situation would be when the CVBA cooperates with a professional company to realize the project, guided by the local governance. If that will be successful, then it's just a local housing assignment and will the complex projects decree make little sense. The project about the new port railway is important to mention as well according to Mr. Dejonghe. The governance of Zelzate states that they don't want to give up Little Russia for a project far in the future which could be approached in a different way. This attitude illustrates the new vision of the governance; instead of undergoing everything, they do discuss if this is a good plan. That critical vision of the governance had revealed gaps in the reasoning of the Flemish government to reach scenario five. This has led to new insights, and that's really the merit of the complex project decree. So, the governance has a vision and a positive recruiting story to perform. And maybe the decree will stop now, it certainly has provided an added value.

The preference decision wasn't taken with the previous governance of Zelzate. If the decision was taken, would there be another situation in Zelzate? Mr. Dejonghe states that the previous governance didn't want to make a decision and the residents are the victims of that policy. If

the previous governance had taken that decision, then there would have been clarification but it would also be very difficult to define the exact future of Little Russia. Furthermore, the CVBA didn't agree with scenario five. So according to Mr. Dejonghe, the governance didn't want to choose and the CVBA was against the scenario so there was no solution anymore using the complex projects decree. The decree is a good tool to create decisions, but choices need to be made, even if this means the end of the complex projects decree in Zelzate. It certainly has provided an added value in Zelzate declares Mr. Dejonghe, even if the decree stops now. Because of the decree time is taken to discuss the situation and to properly research all options. It took maybe too much time, but that's more the fault of the governance and the CVBA than the decree itself states Mr. Dejonghe. Such a decree only makes sense if all major actors are involved in the story. The problem is that Zelzate has undergone too much without being able to act. And according to Mr. Dejonghe, that's essential for a complex project. Important actors who aren't properly involved in the project will drop out at one point.

Mr. Dejonghe believes in the potential of Zelzate in the Gentse Kanaalzone. There are a lot of opportunities, and it will be important not to let them pass this time again. For example, a lot of inhabitants of the middle class had moved to Wachtebeke. To insure the potential, it will be important to provide high quality residential areas with a well-supported public space. There is an enormous potential of qualitative space for parks and forests in Zelzate but up to now, most of the free grounds are used as parking spaces. Also, the proximity to the industrial activities and zones is an enormous advantage. There is a project going on to use the residual heat of Arcelor Mittal for the houses at the Warande park. If such a project become successful, then the proximity to the industrial zones is a huge asset and a unique selling point for Zelzate. Also, the new railway line between Ghent and Terneuzen can be seen as an opportunity to finally construct an own station. So, Mr. Dejonghe concludes that there are chances and opportunities, but the governance need to finally take their responsibility.

## 9 CONCLUSION

Three different complex projects and the decree in general were investigated during this dissertation. The answers from the different stakeholders on the questionnaire in combination with the four interviews in depth offered thorough answers on the proposed questions.

Looking to the answers on the questionnaire, most of the questions were answered positively or undecided. The many 'undecided answers' can be explained by the fact that the decree hasn't been completed totally in a project up to now. The conclusion of the legal advisor illustrates this perfectly by using the statement 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The pudding is now being prepared, it's too soon therefore to say if the pudding is fine'. But it's possible to make interim conclusions about certain aspects of the decree.

To get an overview of the questions of the questionnaire, all statements are categorized in three groups. For the following statements, the majority of the respondents agreed:

- Usefulness for the different stakeholders (81.8 % agree or strongly agree)
- More transparent and solution oriented approach because of the decree (72.7 % agree or strongly agree)
- The decree as an improvement for the project in general (63.6 % agree or strongly agree)
- Involvement as a stakeholder in a project because of the decree (54.6% agree or strongly agree)
- Drop in the risk that has to be taken (45.5 % agree or strongly agree)

The following statements remains undecided:

- Major problems occurred because of the decree (72.7 % remains undecided)
- Route planner an accurate tool to successfully complete a project (54.5 % remains undecided)
- Difference in legal certainty with the decree (54.5 % remains undecided)

The last group contains the statements where the majority of the respondents disagreed:

- Efficient approach of the decree to speed up the project (45.5% disagree)

45.5 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the decree lead to an effective time gain in a project. All interviewees had the same opinion as well. For example, Mr. Aerts stated that there are too much time-consuming decisions that need to be taken by the Flemish government. Also, the duration of the advising rounds and public investigations need to be

questioned, according to Mr. Aerts. None of the interviewees or respondents advised to cancel complete phases or structures out of the decree. So, the framework of the decree is correct, but some parts of the content need to be shortened. An important statement from one of the respondents was that not only the speed of the process is of importance, but also the quality of the decisions, certainly in relation to juridical procedures. So, it's only useful to speed up a project when the quality of the decisions is unaffected, which will always be the main purpose. Although considering the big disagreement, time management of the decree is an aspect that deserves more interest in function of improving the decree.

63.6 % of the respondents agreed with the statement that the processed approach of the route planner is more transparent and solution oriented because of the early and obligatory participation. According to Mr. Aerts, the current preference decision wouldn't be taken without the decree in the project in Antwerp. Mr. Vandamme is convinced as well that the decree has succeeded to create a more solid base for the chosen solution up to now. If none of the involved parties go to the 'Raad van State', then there is a more solid basis because of the decree. But according to Mr. Vandamme, it is too soon to decide if the decree has effectively provided an added value in Antwerp. Also in the complex project Little Russia, the decree has offered a more solid basis. Mr. Dejonghe states that maybe because of the decree, the governance and the CVBA have found each other. The decree may be stopped timely, the governance does now have a vision and a positive recruiting story to perform. So, in general, the decree has definitely provided more transparency up to now. It will be interesting to see if this approach will be preserved in the other steps of the decree in the future.

The third question handled the application of the decree for each specific project and its consequences. Every project will have problems with the application of a certain decree, that will happen with and without the complex projects decree. It's impossible to create an alternative that's perfect for all stakeholders, but a plan with maximal consensus between all actors should always be the main objective, and the complex projects decree can contribute to that goal. Mr. Vandamme states that consultation is important, but once an alternative is chosen and elaborated, it's time to work towards the end result instead of debating again with all actors. In Zelzate, the decree has led to a provisional agreement between two important actors (the governance and the CVBA), in Antwerp, the ninth alternative is a good consensus for most of the actors, but the expert in Zeebrugge is much less positive. The citizens of Zeebrugge could ask questions and express their displeasure about the content of the complex project, but nothing has been done with these remarks. So, the participation of the action groups and the involved citizens remains an important topic. The conclusion of the expert of

Zeebrugge is very important. The expert states that the objections have to be taken into account to be useful and not only be conducted and ignored. The decree provides more interaction and collaboration, but there's still room for improvement.

At last, the decree is a new instrument. Which topics and decisions need to be maintained in the route planner? Are there certain phases who needs to be changed? The document with recommendations about possible improvements for the complex projects decree addressed to the cabinet of Zuhair Demir, which has been discussed with Mr. Aerts, is ideal to discuss and modify certain shortcomings of the complex projects decree.

To conclude, the complex projects decree certainly does serve an added value, but it should be discussed to simplify the regulations in order to gain time and to increase the efficiency. Now with the decree, there is a lot more communication and interaction which is a positive thing. But at one point, decisions have to be taken. Despite all interactions, it won't happen that all actors will completely agree with the proposed decision, so taking those decisions faster in the process may contribute to a more qualitative end result instead of endless debating with all actors. Speeding up projects can be a good idea, but it shouldn't be at the expense of the quality of the process of the decree.

## **10 ATTACHMENT**

### **10.1 Questionnaire**

#### **Question 1**

In which project have you been involved in?

Answer possibilities:

- projects in Antwerp
- projects in Zeebrugge
- projects in Zelzate
- General involvement in the complex projects decree

#### **Question 2**

If so, what was your function in this project?

Answer possibilities:

- Open answer

#### **Question 3**

In general, do you see the complex projects decree as an improvement for the project?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale
- Comment to indicate the answer

#### **Question 4**

Do you, or have you received major problems in the project that wouldn't have happened without the decree?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale
- Comment to indicate the answer

#### **Question 5**

One of the claims of the complex projects decree was that the processed approach would be more transparent and solution oriented. What's your opinion about this statement?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale

- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 6**

As a stakeholder, are you more involved in the project because of the decree?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale
- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 7**

Another claim of the complex projects decree is the usefulness for the different stakeholders:

- projects manager and project employee ('Tackle complex projects more efficiently and qualitatively')
- Advisors ('Shows advisors how they are involved during the different phases of the complex project')
- Political decision makers ('The route planner shows during which phases of the complex project and in which way political decision makers are involved')
- Citizens ('The route planner informs citizens about the new processed approach and focuses on cooperation between the initiator and the citizen')

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale for each function
- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 8**

One of the characteristics of the complex projects decree is the efficient approach (only three decision moments, parallel investigations on different levels,..) to speed up the project. Do you agree with that?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale
- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 9**

Is the route planner in general with the different phases, an accurate tool to successfully complete a project?

- Phase 1: Exploration phase

- Phase 2: Research phase
- Phase 3: Elaboration phase
- Phase 4: Performance phase

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale
- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 10**

If the previous question does apply, are there phases who are specifically good or bad?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale for each phase
- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 11**

Is there a difference in legal certainty with the implementation of the complex projects decree?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale
- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 12**

Is there a drop in the risks that have to be taken in a project with the complex projects decree?

Answer possibilities:

- Likert Scale
- Comment to indicate the answer

### **Question 13**

Do you have special remarks or messages about the complex projects decree?

Answer possibilities:

- Comment to indicate the answer



## 11 REFERENCES

1. “Historiek | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Historiek>. [Accessed: 30-Nov-2019].
2. “Hoe projecten versnellen | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Hoe-projecten-versnellen>. [Accessed: 30-Nov-2019].
3. “Principes | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Principes>. [Accessed: 30-Nov-2019].
4. “Voor wie is dit nuttig | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Voor-wie-is-dit-nuttig>. [Accessed: 1-Dec-2019].
5. “Verkenningfase en startbeslissing | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Verkenningfase-startbeslissing>. [Accessed: 13-Dec-2019].
6. “Onderzoeksfase en voorkeursbesluit | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Onderzoeksfase-voorkeursbesluit>. [Accessed: 14-Dec-2019].
7. “Uitwerkingsfase en projectbesluit | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Uitwerkingsfase-projectbesluit>. [Accessed: 14-Dec-2019].
8. “Regelgeving | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Een-nieuwe-procesaanpak/Regelgeving>. [Accessed: 14-Dec-2019].
9. “Uitvoeringsfase | Complexe Projecten.” [Online]. Available: <http://www.complexeprojecten.be/Routeplanner/Uitvoeringsfase>. [Accessed: 16-Dec-2019].
10. “Likert scale definition | SimplyPsychology”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/likert-scale.html>. [Accessed: 5-Apr-2020].
11. “Deurganckdok | Wikipedia”. [Online]. Available: <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deurganckdok>. [Accessed: 8-Apr-2020].

12. “Kabinet van de Vlaamse minister van Justitie en Handhaving, Omgeving, Energie en Toerisme | Vlaanderen”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.vlaanderen.be/organisaties/vlaamse-regering/zuhel-demir-vlaams-minister-van-justitie-en-handhaving-omgeving-energie-en-toerisme/kabinet-van-de-vlaamse-minister-van-justitie-en-handhaving-omgeving-energie-en-toerisme>. [Accessed: 9-Apr-2020].
13. “Overzicht | Extra containercapaciteit Antwerpen ”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/extracontainercapaciteitantwerpen/>. [Accessed: 20-Feb-2020].
14. “De alternatieven | Extra containercapaciteit Antwerpen”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/extracontainercapaciteitantwerpen/>. [Accessed: 20-Feb-2020].
15. “Een overzicht van de bouwstenen | CPECA”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.cpeca.be/bouwstenen>. [Accessed: 27-Apr-2020].
16. “Alternatief 9 | CPECA”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.cpeca.be/alternatief-9-uitbouw-van-het-deurganckdok-langs-het-waaslandkanaal-en-doeldok-een-insteekdok-ten>. [Accessed: 27-Apr-2020].
17. “Planning | Extra containercapaciteit Antwerpen”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/extracontainercapaciteitantwerpen/>. [Accessed: 21-Feb-2020].
18. “Project | Nieuwe sluis Zeebrugge”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/nieuwesluiszeebrugge/>. [Accessed: 26-Feb-2020].
19. “Waarom een nieuwe zeesluis? | Nieuwe sluis Zeebrugge”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/nieuwesluiszeebrugge/>. [Accessed: 26-Feb-2020].
20. “Aanpak | Nieuwe sluis Zeebrugge”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mow.vlaanderen.be/nieuwesluiszeebrugge/>. [Accessed: 27-Feb-2020].
21. “Brochure NSZ | Nieuwe sluis Zeebrugge”. [Online]. Available: [https://nieuwesluiszeebrugge.login.kanooh.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/BROCHURE%20NSZ\\_WEB.PDF](https://nieuwesluiszeebrugge.login.kanooh.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/BROCHURE%20NSZ_WEB.PDF). [Accessed: 24-Apr-2020].
22. “Tuinwijk Klein Rusland | Wikipedia”. [Online]. Available: [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuinwijk\\_Klein\\_Rusland](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuinwijk_Klein_Rusland). [Accessed: 27-Apr-2020].
23. “Groot leed in Klein Rusland | De Standaard”. [Online]. Available: [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20180629\\_03590942](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20180629_03590942). [Accessed: 27-Apr-2020].

24. “Markante plekken | vrt.be”. [Online]. Available: <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2019/01/25/markante-plekken-klein-rusland-in-zelzate/>. [Accessed: 27-Apr-2020].
25. “Alternatievenonderzoeksnota | Klein Rusland”. [Online]. Available: <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/20170502-aangepaste-AON-KR-def.pdf>. [Accessed: 28-Apr-2020].
26. “Klein Rusland | Project Gentse Kanaalzone”. [Online]. Available: <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/klein-rusland/#toggle-id-3>. [Accessed: 28-Apr-2020].
27. “Synthesenota | Klein Rusland”. [Online]. Available: [http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-1\\_KR\\_synthesenota.pdf](http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-1_KR_synthesenota.pdf). [Accessed: 28-Apr-2020].
28. “Procesnota | Klein Rusland”. [Online]. Available: [http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-4\\_KR\\_procesnota-versie-4.pdf](http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bijlage-4_KR_procesnota-versie-4.pdf). [Accessed: 28-Apr-2020].
29. “Voorkeursalternatief | Klein Rusland”. [Online]. Available: <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/klein-rusland/#toggle-id-2>. [Accessed: 28-Apr-2020].
30. “Voorontwerp voorkeursbesluit | Klein Rusland”. [Online]. Available: <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/090135578024217d.pdf>. [Accessed: 28-Apr-2020].
31. “Strategisch – MER | Klein Rusland”. [Online]. Available: <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/smerKR.pdf>. [Accessed: 28-Apr-2020].
32. “Strategisch plan | Welvarende Kanaalzone”. [Online]. Available: <http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/strategischplan.pdf>. [Accessed: 5-Apr-2020].