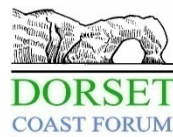




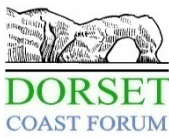
Socio-economical impact assessment of the changing seabed in Knokke-Heist

Sofie Vanhooren
Coordination centre on ICZM
Poole, UK November 19th of 2010



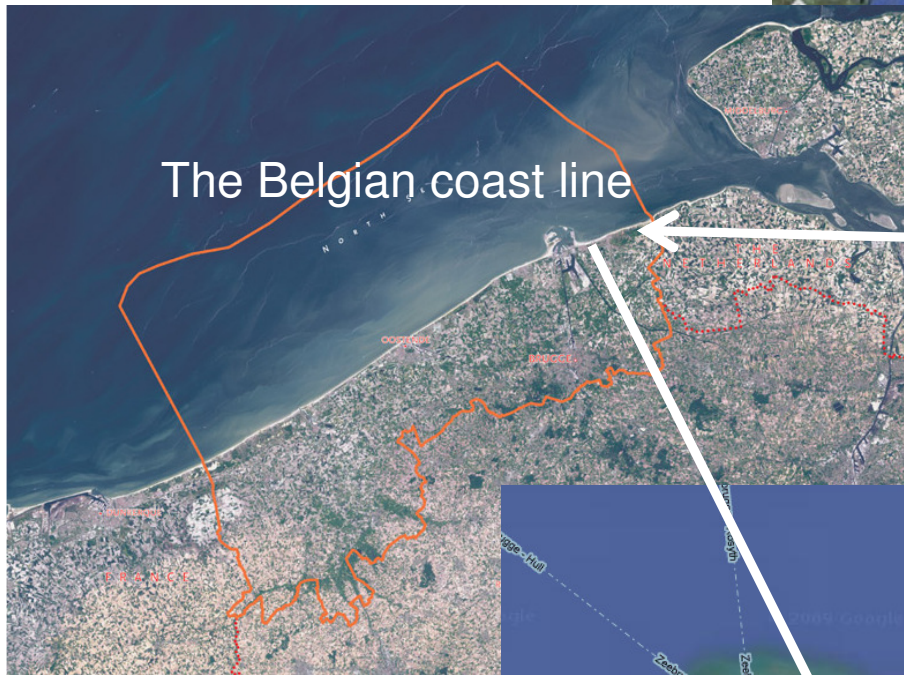
CONTENT

- 🌀 Marine Management Area Heist
- 🌀 Players in Heist
- 🌀 Socio-economical impact assessment
- 🌀 Methodology
- 🌀 Results so far
- 🌀 Conclusions





Europe



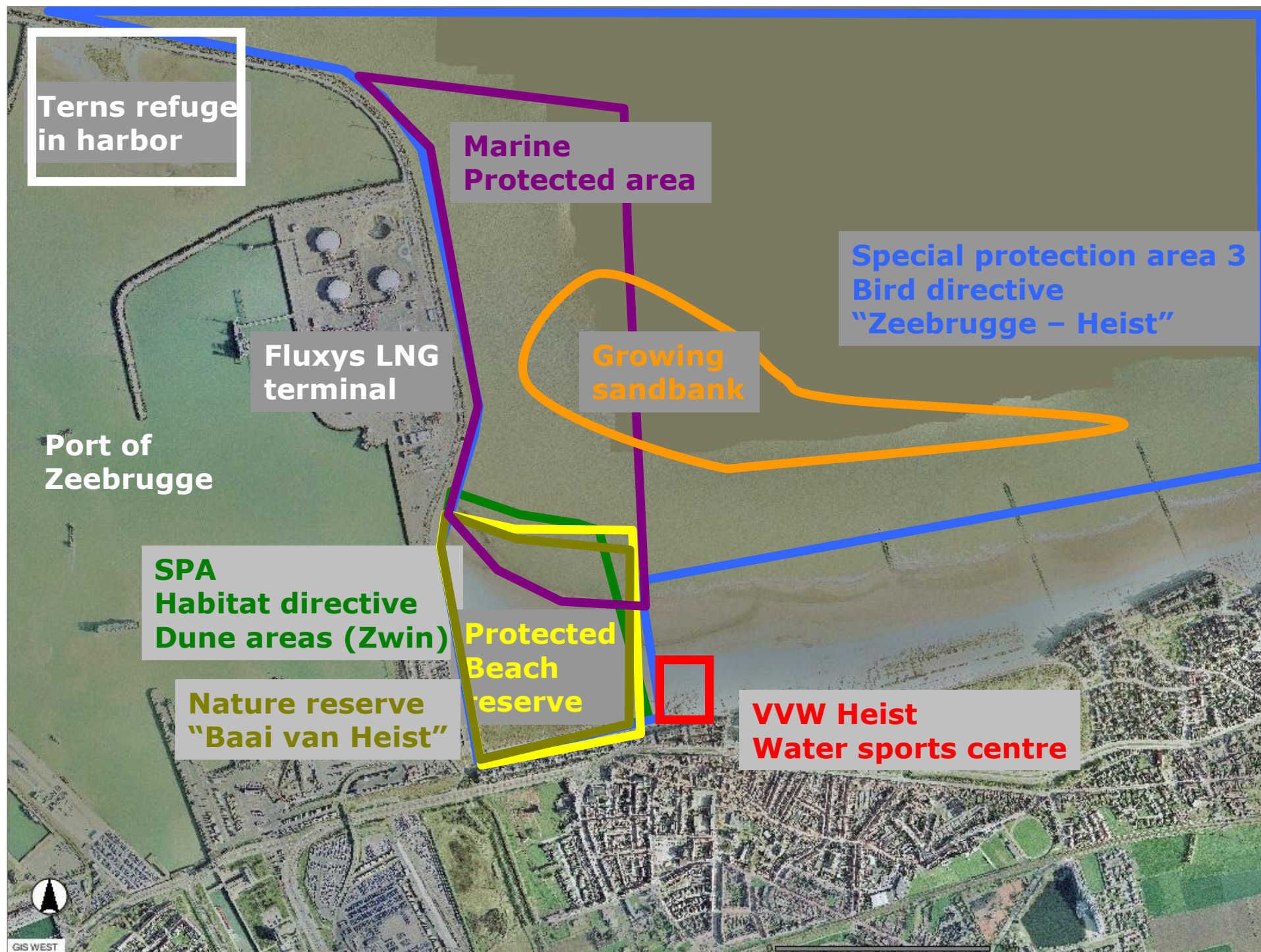
The Belgian coast line



Heist

Port of Zeebruges







March 2010



Socio-economical analysis

- Basis analysis vs socio-economical analysis
 - ➔ Basic analysis study: too green?
 - ➔ Need for socio-economical data about the area
- What is the impact of the growing sandbank, the beach nature reserve and the harbour on the recreational and touristical use of the beach?
- What are the threats and opportunities for the recreational sector?
- Which future scenarios can be developed for a new use of the beach in the future to ensure the recreational return in Heist ?



Methodology

- 🌀 Interviews & surveys amongst tourists and recreational users of the beaches of Heist and Duinbergen, inhabitants, owners of second residences, local merchants
- 🌀 Data collection
- 🌀 Analysing social and economical data -> SWOT
- 🌀 Description of similar 'foreign' cases



Results so far: economical data

How important is the touristical sector in Heist?

🌀 2009: Knokke: 7880 companies → 18%
touristical sector

Heist: 2611 companies → 15% touristical
sector

🌀 Activities:

🌀 Eating & drinking facilities: Knokke: 47,4%, Heist: 60,2%

🌀 Real estate: Knokke: 21,1%, Heist: 13,4%



Results so far: economical data

How important is the touristical sector in Heist?

- More companies make profit than loss
- 30% of the total employment: touristical sector for Knokke and Heist
- CONCLUSIONS: Touristical sector important
- Further data collection necessary to see if touristical sector in Heist is decreasing or not.

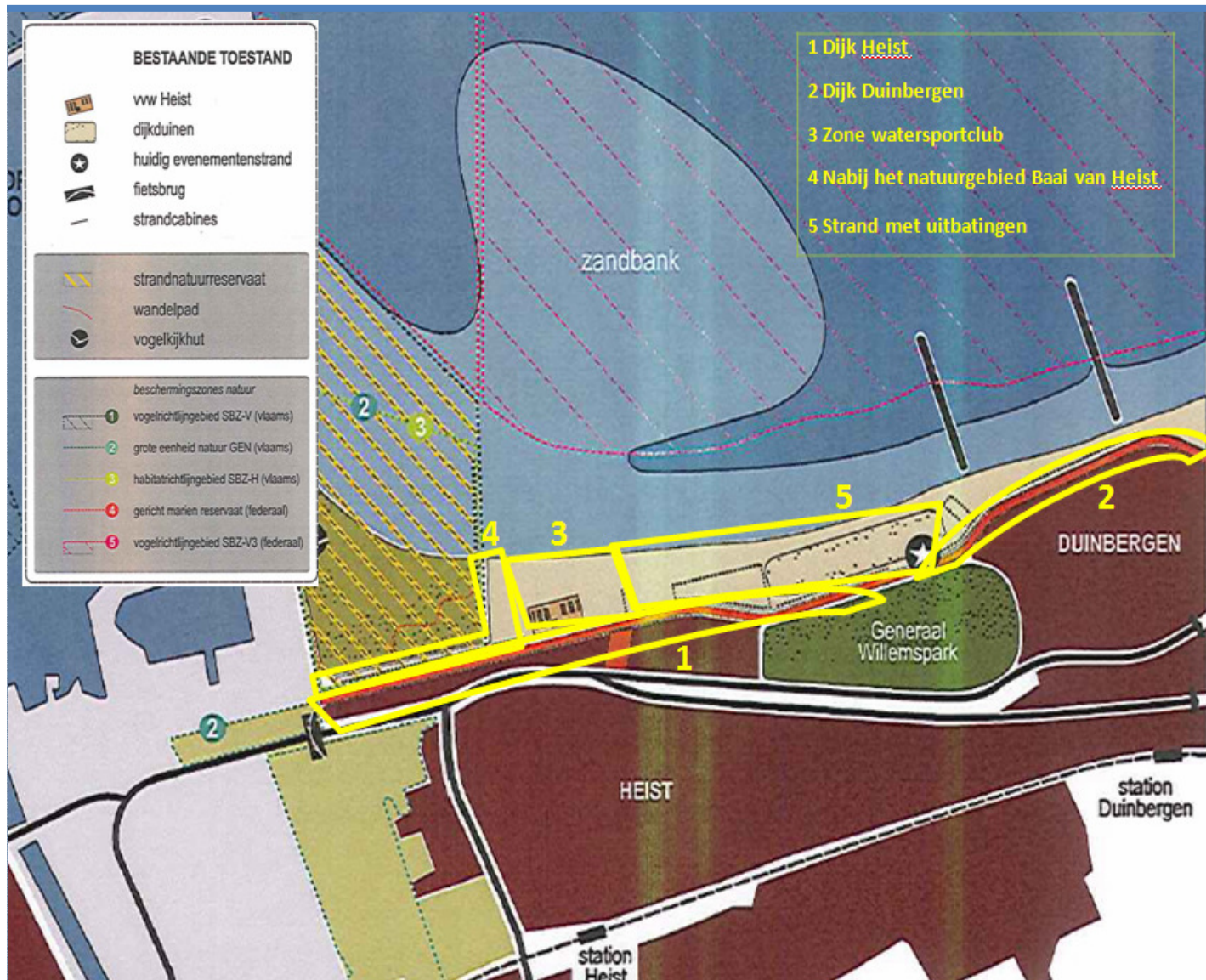


Results so far: interviews & surveys

- 🌀 Tourists and recreational users of the beach
- 🌀 Merchants
- 🌀 Inhabitants and owners second houses

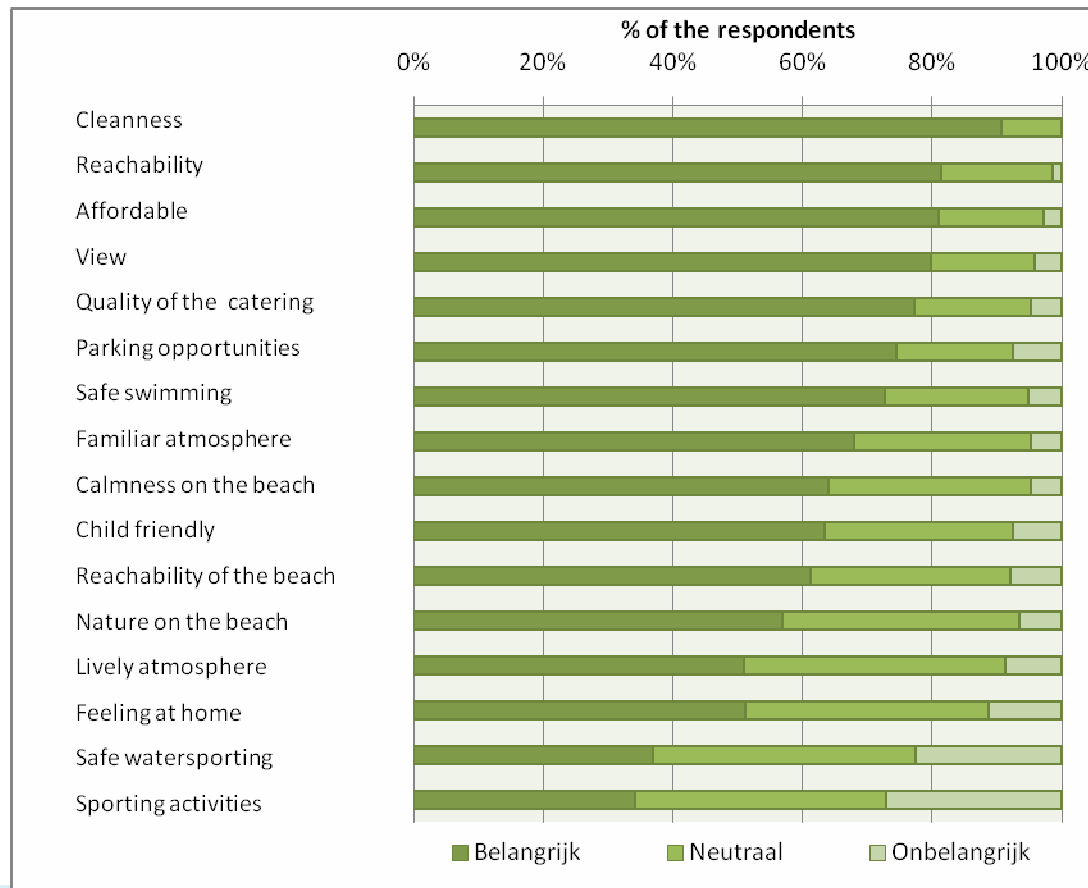


Results interviews tourist and recreational users of the beach



Results interviews tourist and recreational users of the beach

What is important during a visit to the beach and the dike of Heist?



Results interviews tourist and recreational users of the beach

Nature versus sport activities: 2 important players in the Heist MMA

- Both locations, aquatic sports club VVW Heist and the beach nature reserve: little known:
 - 45,1% doesn't know the beach nature reserve at all, 10,7% only know the name
 - 53,7% doesn't know VVW Heist at all, 20,4% only know the name
- Low scores for importance of nature and sport activities: not so important for respondents?



Results interviews tourist and recreational users of the beach

Perception of the environment

- 88%: pleasant staying on the beach of Heist
- 78%: satisfied with facilities on dike
- 70%: Heist is still a lively place
- harbour: positive element
- 26%: chairs and cabins take too much space of the beach



Results interviews tourist and recreational users of the beach

Future – what would make Heist more attractive – top 5?

- 65%: Cleanness & calmness!
- 54%: Maintaining the beach nature reserve
- 51%: Parking possibilities
- 48%: More facilities (showers, toilets,...)
- 30%: More possibilities for events and animation on the beach (theatre, music)



Important aspect: tourists chose Heist because of its calmness

- Not so popular: yachting marina (5%) and more exploitations on the beach (6%)



Results interviews merchants

- Only 24 merchants participated → not representative?
- Evolution of sales
 - For only 25% their sales decreased
 - More than half of the merchants see an increase of their sales
 - 80% of the merchants did not change their offer during the past years
 - Type of merchant: beach material, real estate, restaurants, cafés, shops
- Evolution of customers
 - Touristic low season: mostly elder people
 - Touristic high season: families with children
 - Loyal customers, especially long stayers and inhabitants



Results interviews merchants

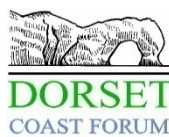
- Perception of the entrepreneurs' climate
 - 35%: no difference between different coastal communities
 - 35%: climate is worse in Heist MMA than in the rest of the coastal communities
- Influences on the entrepreneurs' climate (open questions)
 - Local: Parking system too expensive, lack of activities in Heist (removal of VVW Heist), vacancy and disappearing of hotels, sandbank
 - Economical crisis, aging of the population, bad weather pronouncements
 - No consensus on the beach becoming wider: bad influence or not?
 - Most merchants don't consider the beach nature reserve to be of influence



Results interviews merchants

Possible improvements in future – Open questions

- 🌀 Lack of sufficient activities ↔ tourists prefer calmness
- 🌀 New parking plan
- 🌀 Laying hands on vacancy, making infrastructure more attractive
- 🌀 Communicate more on Heist!



Results interviews merchants

- What would make the beach and dike in Heist more attractive?

CONTRIBUTING

- yachting marina
- jetty, with walking and fishing facilities
- maintaining possibilities of water sport in sea

NON CONTRIBUTING

- keeping the beach nature reserve
- more calmness on the beach and the dike
- more exploitations on the beach



Results interviews inhabitants and owners of second residences

Perception environment

- 89,3% is satisfied or very satisfied
- 38% neighbourhood improved, 40% neighbourhood stayed the same, 22%: neighbourhood got worse
- There is no significant difference between inhabitants and owners of second residences
- Positive elements:
 - 70,3%: presence of beach and sea
 - 44,3%: poor delinquency
 - 40%: cleanness



Results interviews inhabitants and owners of second residences

How do they see the beach?

Important elements:

- 95%: Cleanness of the beach
- 82%: Reachability of beach and dike
- 75%: Safe swimming



Not so important:

- 38%: Nature on the beach
- 45%: Lively atmosphere



Results interviews inhabitants and owners of second residences: perception of the beach in Heist

- 🌀 Why do they appreciate Heist? Open questions:
 - 🌀 Calmness, space and view (NOT present on other beaches in the entire community of Knokke-Heist)!
 - 🌀 Possibility for watersport
 - 🌀 Familiar and welcoming atmosphere
 - 🌀 Walking and cycling possibilities



Results interviews inhabitants and owners of second residences: perception of the beach in Heist

🌀 Why don't they appreciate Heist? Open questions:

- 🌀 Presence of the harbour
- 🌀 Lack of activities
- 🌀 Wide, wet beach and the siltation
- 🌀 Beach nature reserve
- 🌀 Sporting activities
- 🌀 Vacancy, older houses and shady dike
- 🌀 Bad, obsolete infrastructure



Results interviews inhabitants and owners of second residences

🌀 Nature vs watersport

- 🌀 Most correspondents know the beach nature reserve and the aquatic sports club
- 🌀 40,3% sported via VVW Heist
- 🌀 53,6% walked in the beach nature reserve and 10% observed nature



Results interviews inhabitants and owners of second residences

Statements

- 68%: 'The presence of the sandbank has a negative impact on tourism'
- 58,5%: 'The beach and the dike became less attractive for watersporters'
- 58%: 'The wet beach in Heist is too wide at low water tide'
- 55%: 'The beach nature reserve is not a positive element for the calmness and view of Heist'
- 47%: 'Cabins and chairs take too much space of the beach'



Results interviews inhabitants and owners of second residences

Future perspectives

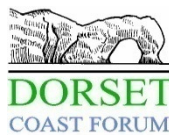
- 71%: 'keeping possibility for aquatic sports in the sea'
- 36%: 'maintain the beach nature reserve'
- 63%: 'a clean and calm beach'
- 43%: 'more facilities on the beach' (showers, toilets)

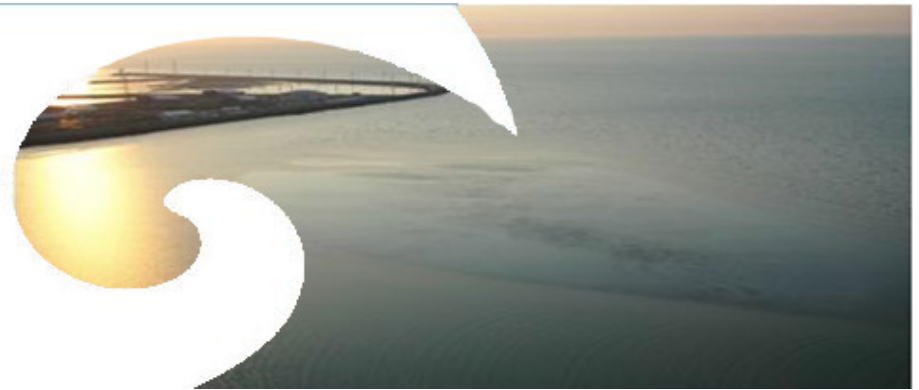
Less popular:

- 18%: 'more exploitations on the beach'
- 22%: 'a permanent playground on the beach'

Open suggestions:

'Dredge the sandbank'





CONCLUSIONS

- The opinions of the different groups are very polarised on some issues
- Opinion of the tourists/recreational users/inhabitants/owners of second houses and the merchants differ on some issues
- Influence of media, community of Knokke-Heist on the merchants?





CONCLUSIONS

- Discrepancies on:
 - Beach nature reserve
 - VVW Heist
 - Calm beach vs more activities on the beach
- How to deal with this discrepancy in the long term vision on the Heist MMA?
- The sandbank has for most of the interviewed a negative impact on the socio-economical environment -> subjective opinion





With special thanks to our funding partners
and all our coastal stakeholders

