The Department of Urbanism of the TU Delft and the Chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy will promote the third edition of the Summer School Planning and Design with Sustainability between 12 and 22 July 2016. The Summer School combines spatial planning, urban design and environmental technology to tackle issues of sustainability, climate adaptation and water management in urban environments. It invites students to understand the theories and practices that bring together water management and urban sustainability and to apply the knowledge acquired in the elaboration of a vision and a spatial plan and design for an area in the city of The Hague in The Netherlands. The aim of the Summer School is to explore the Dutch tradition of planning and design with water and the integration of water management and sustainability into urban development.

The Summer School is led by the Delft University of Technology, in collaboration with the IFoU (International Forum of Urbanism) and other international partners. This exercise includes site visits, talks with professionals and academics and a short studio-based exercise, where students and teachers will explore possibilities through the elaboration of spatial scenarios and the design of spatial strategy in the city of the Hague, located in one of the most important urbanized delta regions of the world. Visit our website for more details.

At the end of the summer school, you will be able:
1. To explain the challenges of water issues in regional, metropolitan and urban environments and resilience of urban environments in relation to climate change
2. To make connections between the planning and design of built environments in relation to the challenges above
3. To elaborate spatial plans and design using the complexity of spatial planning and strategy-making in relation to water issues
4. To discuss the possible roles planning and design professionals might have in the practice
5. To connect issues of governance, participation and democracy to spatial plan-making and design
6. To take general steps in spatial plan and strategy-making, using clear methods and tools associated with each step
7. To explain the role of technology in urban development considering climate change and its role as boundary spanner
8. To connect learning and doing through practical interactive exercises

The full programme of the Summer School 2016 is available on our website.

Visit our website for more details.
Among the many challenges faced by our cities today, water management is one of the most pressing. Challenges include the provision of fresh water and sanitation to growing urban populations in the global south, the preservation of natural water environments, pollution and contamination of water sources, flood risk management and tackling the consequences of climate change.[1] UCP, 2013.

The Netherlands has a long and rich tradition of dealing with water issues in urban management and planning. Initially a country built on “thick water”, threatened continuously by the sea, the Netherlands is known today as a reference for outstanding achievement in combining water management, urban design and planning. Building on territorial conditions that even the Romans considered inferior forced the Dutch into vision building, cooperation and carrying out urban plans collectively as early as the sixteenth century.[2] The Dutch are leaders in engineering and in technological solutions for dealing with water issues, particularly flood risk. Much has been achieved in reclaiming and protecting the land, but in the face of continuing environmental threats and climate change this battle to contain flood risks is now seen as futile. This means that rather than fighting the water, the Dutch now seek to work with the water system in order to create more sustainable and prosperous cities and regions.

This paradigm shift has produced new approaches towards safety and urban development. In order to promote safety from flooding from the sea and rivers, a Multi Layer Safety Approach was introduced. Here, there are three levels of safety advocated. The first is protection, the second is adaptation and the third is retraction. This paradigm shift is the “Room for the River” programme which enables rivers to cope with huge amounts of water flow and limits the risk of flooding. This programme is reversing some of the past engineering works to allow rivers to serve as an example of urban planning.

But how can all those things be designed and implemented in a modern planning framework, where participation, accountability, efficiency and economic feasibility are key elements? Through the elaboration of visions and urban plans, the Dutch have successfully implemented strategic spatial planning that effectively integrates the technology of water management and urban development.