

SUMMARY

PARTICIPATION PLAN ARAMIS INITIATIVE

Fourth revised version, October 2023: Environmental Impact Assessment – Preferred Option Phase

ABOUT ARAMIS

Aramis is an initiative of TotalEnergies, Shell, Energie Beheer Nederland (EBN) and Gasunie. The Aramis project aims to develop infrastructure for transporting CO₂ captured from large industrial plants to depleted gas fields deep beneath the North Sea. This process, called carbon capture and storage (CCS), is necessary because there is insufficient renewable energy available to eliminate the use of fossil fuels overnight.

CCS will reduce greenhouse gas emissions during the transition period required for industry to phase out fossil fuels. Aramis will thereby contribute to achieving the Paris Agreement climate goals.

SCOPE OF ARAMIS

The Aramis project aims to deliver CO₂ captured from industrial sources by land pipeline and maritime transit to a collection hub with a storage terminal and a compressor station at Maasvlakte in Rotterdam. Captured CO₂ will be temporarily stored and compressed at the collection hub before being transported via a central offshore pipeline to distribution platforms in the North Sea.

The construction of this offshore pipeline, as well as the compressor station at the collection hub, is part of the Aramis project. The terminal falls under CO₂next, a project led by Vopak and Gasunie. This open-access terminal for receiving and delivering liquid CO₂ will be built at Maasvlakte. The processes involved in capturing CO₂ at industrial plants and storing it in depleted gas fields beneath the North Sea also lie outside the scope of Aramis. The Aramis infrastructure will be open access, giving interested parties the opportunity to participate in the capture or storage of CO₂.

DECISION MAKING REGARDING ARAMIS

Aramis cannot be realised until a spatial planning decision is made and the appropriate permits are obtained. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (EZK) is responsible for coordinating the entire project procedure. In addition to the legally required public participation, Aramis is involving any and all interested parties in the project. This means that the Aramis participation plan is already acting in the spirit of the upcoming Environment and Planning Act (*Omgevingswet*), which takes effect on 1 January 2024.



Figure 1. Overview of the steps and timeline of the project procedure.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SO FAR

The Aramis project procedure officially began on 6 January 2022 with the release of a notification of intent and proposal for participation in the project and the publication of the first version of the participation plan in the Government Gazette (*Staatscourant*). The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy received six responses to the notification.

On 19 and 24 January 2022, Aramis organised sessions for Maasvlakte and North Sea stakeholders. These were followed by a number of individual and joint meetings with key stakeholders. Input from these meetings was incorporated in an updated second version of the participation plan and taken into consideration when drafting the Memorandum on Scope and Level of Detail (*NRD*) and the technical design.

During a stakeholder session on 21 June 2022, the draft memorandum was discussed, and eight views were submitted. The participation procedure led to two adjustments to the draft.

1. In response to the view submitted by Neptune Energy, the storage facilities and infrastructure of Neptune Energy will be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as equivalent to the storage facilities of TotalEnergies and Shell.
2. The route of the offshore pipeline was optimised, resulting in three options and one variant, all of which will be assessed in the EIA.

November 2022 saw the publication of the third version of the participation plan, which focused on the Memorandum on Scope and Level of Detail as adopted in December 2022.

PARTICIPATION IN THE COMING PERIOD

The next step of the project procedure involves preparing for the EIA – an assessment of the project’s environmental impact drawn from desk research, impact studies and surveys. Aramis will prepare an Integrated Impact Analysis (*IEA*) in October 2023 based on the initial results of the environmental studies. This impact analysis of the different route options and variants will also include a detailed examination of issues such as spatial incorporation.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and Aramis will consult the wider stakeholder community on the following aspects of the impact analysis: environment, costs, surroundings, technical feasibility and future viability. Participation will be sought through channels such as:

- The website www.rvo.nl/onderwerpen/bureau-energieprojecten
- Aramis and CO₂next websites
- Executive meetings (held by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy)
- One-to-one meetings or cluster meetings
- Aramis newsletter

The Integrated Impact Analysis will guide the Minister for Climate and Energy Policy in selecting the preferred option (VKA) in November 2023, in consultation with other authorities. The preferred option will form the basis for the spatial planning decision (project decision) and the permits. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and Aramis will confer with local authorities and other departments on the preferred option. Regional authorities will be asked to provide regional advice. Participation will be sought through channels such as:

- One-to-one meetings or cluster meetings with stakeholders
- Executive meetings (held by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy)
- Aramis and CO₂next websites
- Aramis newsletter

CHANGES TO THE PARTICIPATION PLAN

The current participation plan differs from the previous one mostly in terms of planning and public participation.

- The EIA was previously scheduled to run from autumn 2022 to autumn 2023. Views on the EIA could be submitted when the draft decisions were available for public inspection.
- The preferred option was previously scheduled to be chosen in mid-2023, and the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) would be consulted. In the current version of the participation plan, the preferred option will now be selected in November 2023 and stakeholders will be consulted. Participation will now be sought through one-to-one meetings and executive meetings held by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy. Information will be provided through the websites of the initiators, and the NCEA will not be consulted.
- The draft project decision and draft permits were previously scheduled for publication in spring 2024; anyone could submit their views, and public information meetings would be held. Publication has now been scheduled for late 2024, and the NCEA will be consulted.
- Publication of the final project decision and final permits was previously anticipated for autumn 2024. In the current version of the participation plan, publication is now expected to take place in late 2024. Anyone can appeal the project decision and permits.