

Netherlands Wants to Help Indonesia's New Capital on Water Management

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Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi shakes hands with her Dutch counterpart Hanke Bruins Slot in The Hague on January 31, 2024. (Photo Courtesy of Foreign Affairs Ministry)

Jakarta. The Netherlands has pledged to help Indonesia's future capital Nusantara better manage its water resources, according to Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi.

Retno recently had some bilateral talks with her Dutch counterpart Hanke Bruins Slot in The Hague ahead of the EU-ASEAN ministerial meeting in Brussels. Both ministers discussed Indonesia's new capital, which the government sees as a solution to replace the sinking Jakarta.

"On bilateral cooperation, the Dutch minister reaffirmed her country's commitment to work together in the new capital project, particularly in the fields of water [management] and sustainable city," Retno said on Wednesday.

Although Retno did not talk much about the new capital relocation in her press statement, the Nusantara authority body has been in touch with the Netherlands on water management cooperation. Last September, the Nusantara body launched a kick-off meeting for a scoping study for nature-based solutions for water management. Dutch water research firm Deltares is one of the institutions that is conducting the study. Also, the study receives support from the Dutch government via the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

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A month later, the Nusantara authority body visited Deltares's office in the Netherlands. Indonesia wants Nusantara, which lies in East Kalimantan, to adopt the "sponge city" concept -- an urban planning model that aims to prevent flooding. Deltares said at the time it would help make Nusantara a sponge city.

Earlier this week, the Nusantara body announced that they had received around 350 letters of intent from domestic and foreign investors. The first phase of Nusantara's construction has reached 71.47 percent.

Government data shows the Netherlands is Indonesia's eighth largest foreign investor in 2023, with the investment reaching about \$1.3 billion. The Netherlands is also Indonesia's largest source of foreign direct investment in Europe.

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