

Meeting Report

SUBJECT: First-time acquaintance & discussion on floating development in French Polynesia

DATE: Saturday, 11 February 2017

TIME: 11:00-15:45

PLACE: Rotterdam, the Netherlands

CONVENER: Blue21, on behalf of The Seasteading Institute

RECORDER: Vicky Lin, Blue21

ATTENDEES: **French Polynesian Delegation:**

Oscar Temaru, ex-President French Polynesia, Mayor of Faa'a, Founder & leader of Tavini Huiraatira

Teua Temaru, former Minister of Environment & Sustainable Development

Moetai Brotherson, MSc Computer Science at FIT, member of the Tavini Huiraatira

Blue21:

Bart Roeffen, Co-founder, architect

Karina Czapiewska, Co-founder, real-estate expert

Barbara Dal Bo Zanon, Architect & researcher

Vicky Lin, Water innovation & circularity specialist

OBJECTIVES: The purpose of the visit was for parties to meet for the first time, to exchange knowledge/concerns/opportunities with regard to floating development and the relevance for French Polynesia, and to understand discuss various challenges and needs of French Polynesia (e.g. socio-economical, environmental and climate change).

CONCLUSIONS: The main conclusion was that there are certainly opportunities for the project – energy, clean-tech, food and floating technologies could bring new (diversified) economic developments and help solve both local and regional challenges - but there is still a world to win in terms of how the project is presented and perceived. Floating developments ('Seasteading') in French Polynesia should look very different from the ones currently represented on websites and the media, from the point of view of scale, character and functions. Another conclusion was that for the future of the project, it will be vital to have more than just the backing of the current government: in the end, the most important stakeholders are the people of French Polynesia.

ACTIONS: Develop a concept (design) that better suits the local environment of French Polynesia
Mr. Temaru suggested attending the 2017 PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM, to introduce the project to other small island developing states that are more threatened by the effects of climate change. (Note: Samoa will host the 2017 Forum, Nauru 2018).
Mrs. Temaru informed about wave interaction data, also in relation to other projects.

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ITINERARY:	11:00	Pick up at Rotterdam Central Station
	11:00 – 11:50	Trip to Hotel New York (Tram + walk in the snow)
	11:50 – 13:20	Lunch in Hotel New York
	13:20 – 14:05	Trip to the Floating Pavilion (Water taxi)
	14:05 – 14:20	Tour of the Pavilion
	14:20 – 15:15	Presentation, discussion and Q&A
	15:15 – 15:45	Trip to Rotterdam Central Station (Metro)

IMPRESSION:



MINUTES:

Key Points from the French Polynesian delegation:

Mr. Brotherson mentioned that floating developers should “be careful in selecting the location” and obviate the potential resistance of people: “the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) mentality”.

- For locations: it is important to investigate different types of locations. For instance, lagoons or atolls where there are still waves in the inner part, it is important to study/simulate whether the floating structure can withstand waves (wave in inner atoll can still reach to 1.5 m).
- He mentioned that Raiatea/Tahaa Lagoon serves as a “water highway” where transporting activities take place regularly and a floating development would present an obstacle.
- Mr. Brotherson suggested Tūpai as an interesting location in terms of acceptance. It is remote, flat and belongs to the government.
- It was further suggested to involve universities/research institutes in future studies, as they are regarded as independent and qualified (e.g. UC Berkley’s Gump Station in Moorea), potentially assisted by local universities and companies.

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The necessity to develop a better representation of what floating developments in French Polynesia could like.

- The existing images of floating cities or floating islands are quite large and “avant-garde”, a bit like a billion dollar luxury resort, probably too much for the locals.
- Images should be more down to earth and inviting, rather than imposing. For instance, the images shown in Blue21’s presentation slides (of children playing next to a floating playground/garden) can people associate and think from their perspectives that maybe they can bring their children as well.
- Mrs. Temaru noted that in Tahiti, many hotels were built but then closed and left un-used there. The locals are tired of such developments and are weary of government’s announcements on “BIG, FANCY, LABOR-INTENSIVE projects” that are short-lived. She specifies that we should have long-term vision of 30-40 years. We should study what lessons could be learned.
- Mr. Brotherson suggested that The Seasteading Institute (TSI) can think about combine different functions together. Mr. Roeffen then suggested that French Polynesia can also look into different floating systems to e.g. solve temporary flood problems.
- Mr. Temaru mentioned that the challenges of black pearl farming are also sophisticated and should be looked into and see how floating development can help the farming culture to be better managed or developed.
- French Polynesia is highly dependent on imports. It is important to look into the possibility of building with local materials and cooperate with local construction companies.
- French Polynesia still needs to improve its waste management. It is interesting to look into “circular economy” and turn wastes into resources instead of e.g. shipping waste to New Zealand for processing like the current way.
- Topics such as sewage treatment, productive functions, renewable energy (particularly solar energy), and bio-economy are all interesting for French Polynesia to investigate into.
- Mrs. Temaru anticipates that the cooperation of French Polynesia with floating development experts can generate knowledge that can be exported to neighboring island countries and help to solve climate challenges together.