

Interactive comment on “Costs of sea dikes – regressions and uncertainty estimates” by Stephan Lenk et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

Received and published: 14 September 2016

In their manuscript, Lenk et al. use data on the cost of sea-dike construction from the Netherlands and Canada with the aim of producing typical unit costs for use in further studies. Such an effort is very much required, and therefore I believe this paper to be of potentially great value to the field. There has been a great deal of attention in recent years for the needs to assess adaptation costs, yet this aspect remains very much undercovered in the scientific literature compare to studies on the damages caused by natural hazards. The information in this paper can help researchers to start to make the important step towards also including the costs of the adaptation in their analyses. I believe that the paper is well-written, timely, succinct and therefore I would recommend publication subject to the author's addressing several points below.

“ The lack of good quality costs estimates has hampered progress in the advance of large scale flood risk modelling. Whilst many advances have been made in assessing

C1

large scale flood risk (e.g. Hinkel et al., 2014; Ward et al., 2013; Arnell and Gosling, 2014), these studies either do not address the costs of adaptation, or do so in a simplified way (e.g. Hinkel et al., 2014). The need for data on the location and costs of dikes is called for also in a recent commentary by Ward et al. (2016). It would be useful to mention how the current manuscript can support such efforts (in the introduction or the discussion), which would make further explicit the wide implications of this paper.

“ The abstract states that the paper provides recommendations on how to improve the reporting and estimating of the costs (of sea-dikes) in order to support future adaptation studies worldwide. However, I did not really find anything in the manuscript to warrant such a statement; I was expecting some vision of how a database should be further developed. Whilst I don't think this is required in this paper, I believe that this statement in the abstract should be dropped.

“ I think that the paper would be improved by a more explicit discussion of how operation and maintenance costs are included in the datasets. The paper is intended to provide some kind of information and guidance for assessing adaptation costs. In terms of sea-dikes, O&M costs can be extremely high over the lifetime of a dike, perhaps as high as the investment costs. How should decision-makers deal with this? Are there rules of thumbs that can be prescribed, like taking a percentage of investment costs per year to represent O&M costs?

“ Similar discussions to those sketched here are taking place in the field of river flood modeling. It would be worth mentioning to what extent this research is / is not useful for such studies.

Small comments “ Page 2, line 6. Insert “the” between “While” and “climate” (i.e. “While the climate. . .”) “ Page 2, line 16: Replace “Using historic construction costs are. . .” with “Using historic construction costs is. . .” “ Page 3, line 27. “Replace “. . .affecting the exact shape to the dikes” with “. . .affecting the exact shape of the dikes”. “ Page 12, line 3: “Nevertheless, we do find neither statistical signatures of

C2

fixed costs nor of non-linearities for the costs of dikes we have analyses.” This sentence does not flow well, I am not sure what point the authors are trying to make.

References Arnell, N.W., Gosling, S.N., 2014. The impacts of climate change on river flood risk at the global scale. *Climatic Change*, 134, 387-401.

Hinkel et al., 2014. Coastal flood damage and adaptation costs under 21st century sea-level rise. *PNAS*, 111, 3292-3297.

Ward, P.J. et al., 2013. Assessing flood risk at the global scale: Model setup, results, and sensitivity. *Environmental Research Letters*, 8, 044019.

Ward, P.J., Jongman, B., Salamon, P., Simpson, A., Bates, P., De Groeve, T., Muis, S., Coughlan de Perez, E., Rudari, R., Trigg, M.A., Winsemius, H.C., 2015. Usefulness and limitations of global flood risk models. *Nature Climate Change*, 5, 712-715, doi:10.1038/nclimate2742.

Interactive comment on *Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss.*, doi:10.5194/nhess-2016-270, 2016.