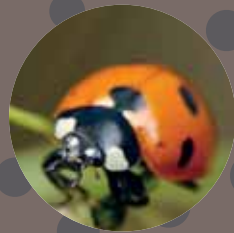


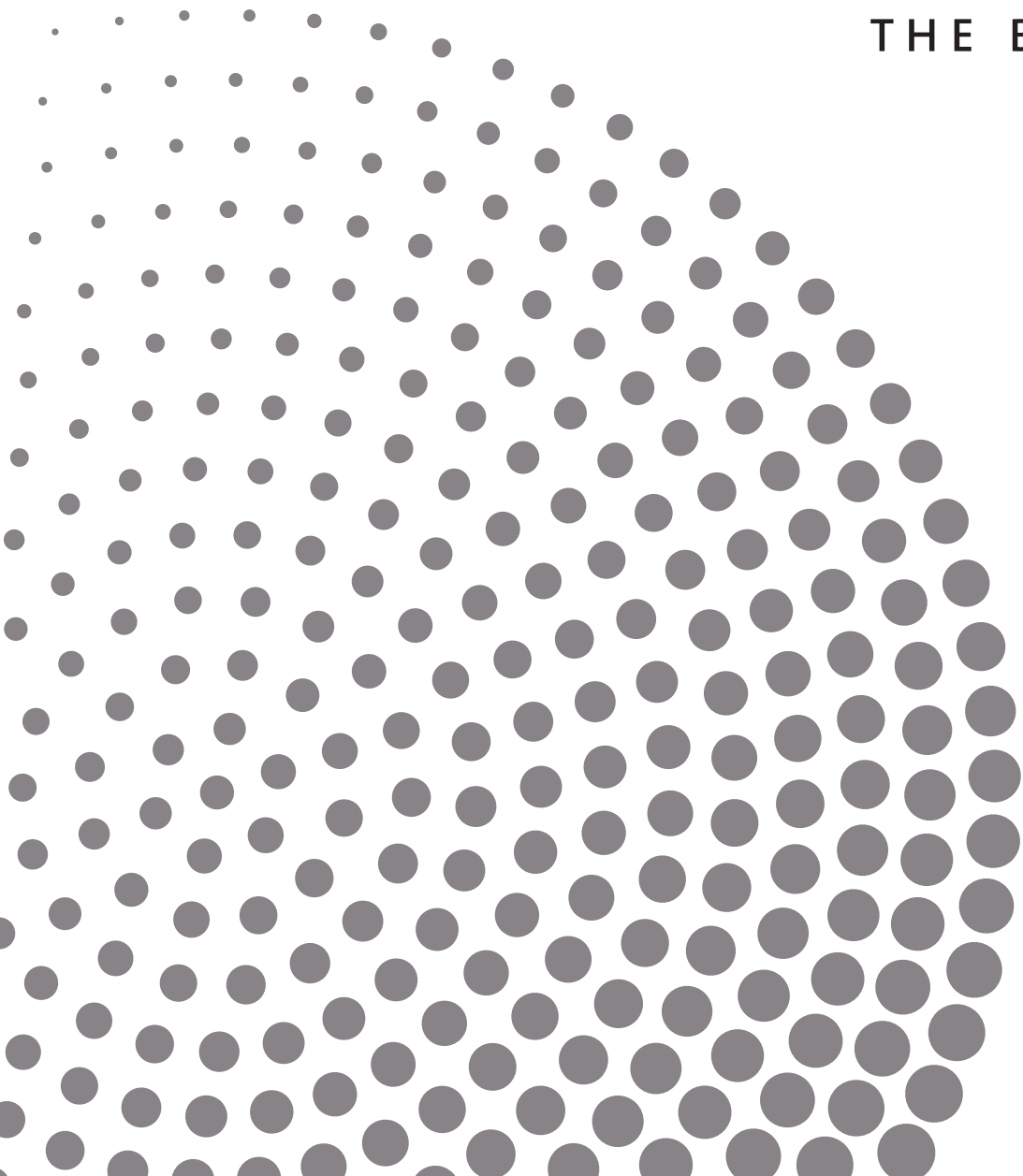
biodiversity **works** for **nature** for **people** for **ever**

THE BIODIVERSITY POLICY PROGRAMME
OF THE NETHERLANDS 2008-2011



biodiversity **works**
for **nature** for **people** for **ever**

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Biodiversity^{is} crucial!

Life on earth is enormously diverse. Every life form, ecosystem and genetic variety, from the smallest bacteria, fungi and plants to the largest animals, the tropical rainforests or the Dutch pastureland, is unique and irreplaceable. This enormous variety is what we call biodiversity.

Many life forms on earth are mutually dependent. Diversity plays an important role in this. Even people cannot survive without other organisms. Biodiversity is not only beautiful, but also useful and necessary. It gives us clean water, fertile soil and a stable climate, but it also gives us food and raw materials for housing, clothing, fuel and medicines. These natural resources safeguard our future and form the basis of our prosperity. Biodiversity contributes to the quality of life and human welfare.

Biodiversity is under serious threat from global climate change, increased consumption, pollution, the introduction of exotic species and the overexploitation of natural areas and natural resources. Many species of plants and animals are disappearing and ecosystems are under threat. Clean air and water, fertile soil and a stable climate are no longer guaranteed. This affects people in poor countries, who often depend directly on the fruits of the forests and the land, but it also affects us. Biodiversity loss and the depletion of natural resources ultimately threaten everyone's survival.

This has to change! The Dutch government has made the sustainable use of biodiversity and an increased knowledge of biodiversity and natural resources a priority. It has taken steps to develop an effective national and international policy. But this is not solely a government responsibility. This crucial problem can only be addressed through close cooperation between the government, citizens, companies and non-governmental organisations.

Foreword

The title of the Dutch government's policy programme, 'Working together, living together', applies beyond a doubt to the policy area of biodiversity as well. Together we are responsible for the preservation and sustainable use of the earth's biodiversity. We cannot 'live together' unless we 'work together'.

This policy programme 'Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever always' sets out the government's priorities for the next four years. These priorities tighten the focus of the Netherlands' contribution to efforts addressing biodiversity loss around the world. We are convinced that by sharpening our focus, our efforts will become more effective.

Unfortunately, greater effectiveness is desperately needed. Despite the many policy proposals and actions at national and international level, biodiversity is still being lost and threatened by human activity, not only in our immediate environment but around the world.

A greater effort is needed in the Netherlands and elsewhere. We have committed ourselves at international level to halting the decline in biodiversity and have been implementing measures honouring that commitment for several decades now.



Cooperation is essential if we are to reverse the negative trend. The preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity calls for cooperation between businesses, non-governmental organisations, the government and citizens. We invite everybody to join us in contemplating the problems and implementing this programme, not only with a view to help ensure the survival of our flora and fauna but so that we can continue to utilise the resources that biodiversity provides for us, in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

Signed by:

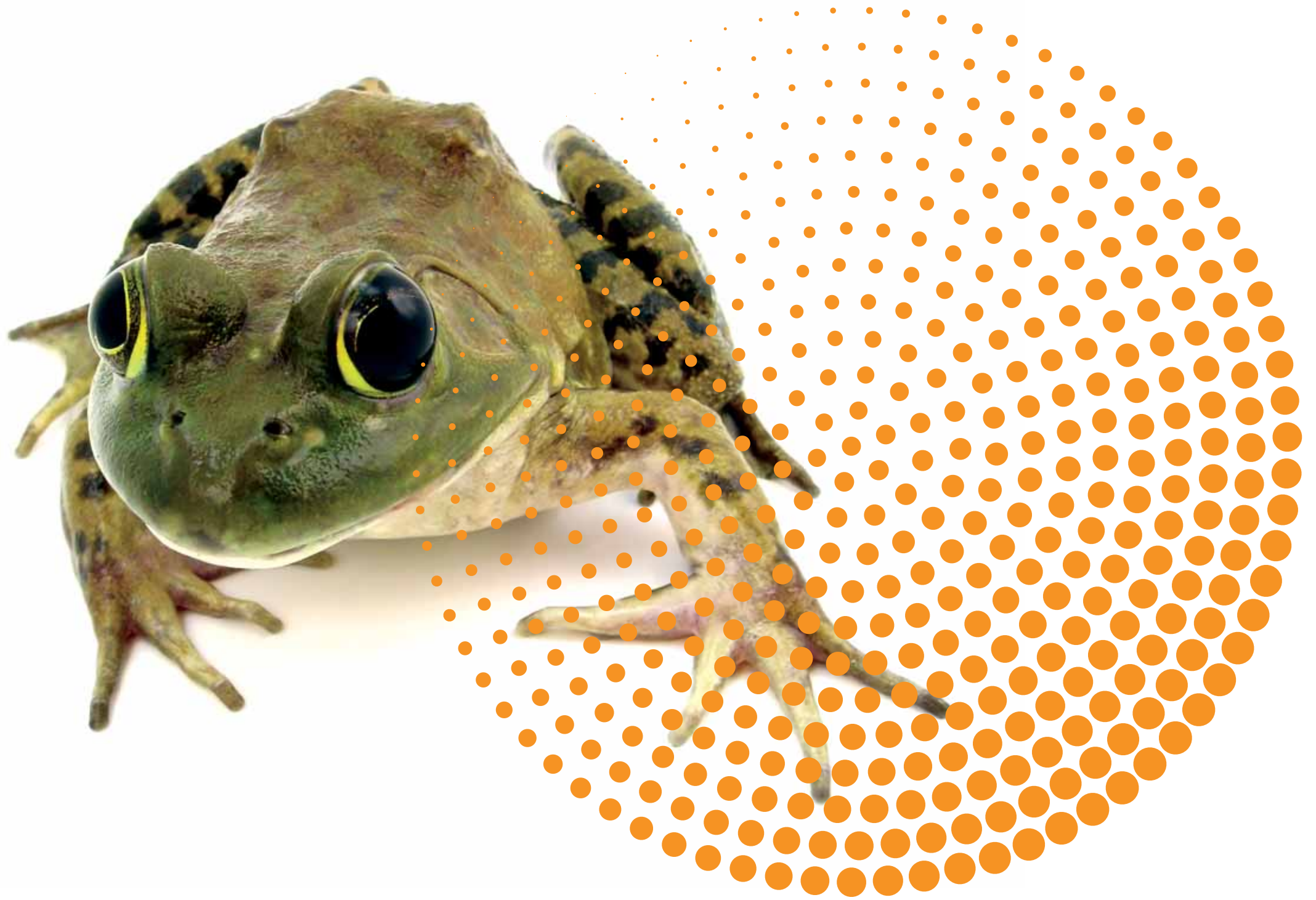
Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Minister of Foreign Affairs for Development Cooperation
Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment

Also on behalf of:

Minister of Economic Affairs
Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences
State Secretary for Transport, Public Works and Water Management
State Secretary for Defence



*Despite the many policy proposals and actions at national and international level, **biodiversity** is still being lost and threatened by human activity, not only in our immediate environment but around the world.*



1 Introduction



This publication describes the policy programme ‘Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever’, which sets out the Dutch government’s priorities in addressing the biodiversity loss and promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources in the coming four years. Cooperation between ministries and with other authorities and actors in civil society is a key feature of this policy. Its intention is to tighten the focus of the current efforts to protect biodiversity. It also sets out the Dutch government’s policy response to various signals from the scientific community and society.

At global level, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA; 2005)¹ has revealed a growing and serious threat to biodiversity and related ecosystem services. As a result, the global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)² may not be met. The MA calls for an ambitious policy with more scope for market-driven instruments. The fourth Assessment Report (2007) by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) states that climate change is already having a visible impact on biodiversity. A further rise in temperatures by 2-3 degrees would put around 20 to 30% of all species of plants and animals at risk of extinction.

Meanwhile, in 2006 the European Commission has published a Communication and Action Plan on the retention and sustainable use of biodiversity (2006).³ In it, member states were invited to transpose the Action Plan into national policy. At national level, the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN-NL) also presented a ten-point plan describing the steps it feels are needed to halt the loss of national and international biodiversity. These documents provided a frame of reference and a source of inspiration for the Dutch government’s policy programme.

This policy programme also explains what the Dutch government will do to halt biodiversity loss within the EU by 2010, an objective defined by the European Union. At the same time, the government has taken careful note of the European Commission’s concern that ‘member states have undertaken steps to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010’, but that ‘it is unlikely that this objective will be achieved’.⁴ Given the current numbers of species on so-called red lists and our patterns of production and consumption, the government shares this concern for the Netherlands. It is obvious that even after 2010 the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity will remain a serious, ever more urgent policy challenge. The criteria for sustainability will have to be constantly reassessed against the latest scientific and other insights. The Dutch government has decided to ask the future Biodiversity and Natural Resources Task Force to publish an advisory opinion on the steps the Netherlands must take in the period after 2010 and to propose verifiable objectives and targets.

The policy programme ‘Biodiversity works: for nature, for people forever’ also marks the government’s efforts to put the third pillar of its coalition agreement into practice: “a sustainable environment to leave the world better than we found it”.⁵ The Dutch government realises that its policy efforts will only have an effect if changes are accepted by the Dutch society and beyond. The government’s policy programme ‘Working together, living together’ took the first step in this direction by announcing the creation of a task force on ‘biodiversity and natural resources’. The government wishes to use this policy programme to reinforce public commitment to the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. One important point is to highlight and increase public awareness of the value and function of biodiversity for humans. This is therefore an important objective for communication and education about biodiversity. The Dutch government



What is Biodiversity?

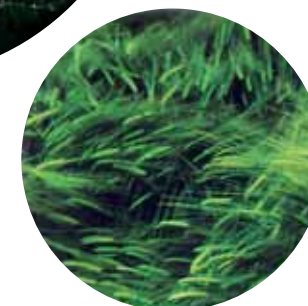
Biodiversity is the diversity of life on earth. Ecosystems, species and genes in their constant interaction ensure that life on earth remains good. Biodiversity is an important 'natural resource' which produces raw materials, goods and services that we need to live, work, produce and consume. Examples include fish, wood, water, fertile soil and climate regulation. In addition, biodiversity also has other values in terms of providing aesthetic experiences, enjoyment of nature, science, symbolism and ethics.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment states that more than 60% of the ecosystem services are used unsustainably. Basic processes that facilitate life on earth – such as the production of clear air and biomass, the preservation of food and water cycles and buffering of the climate system – are consequently no longer guaranteed.

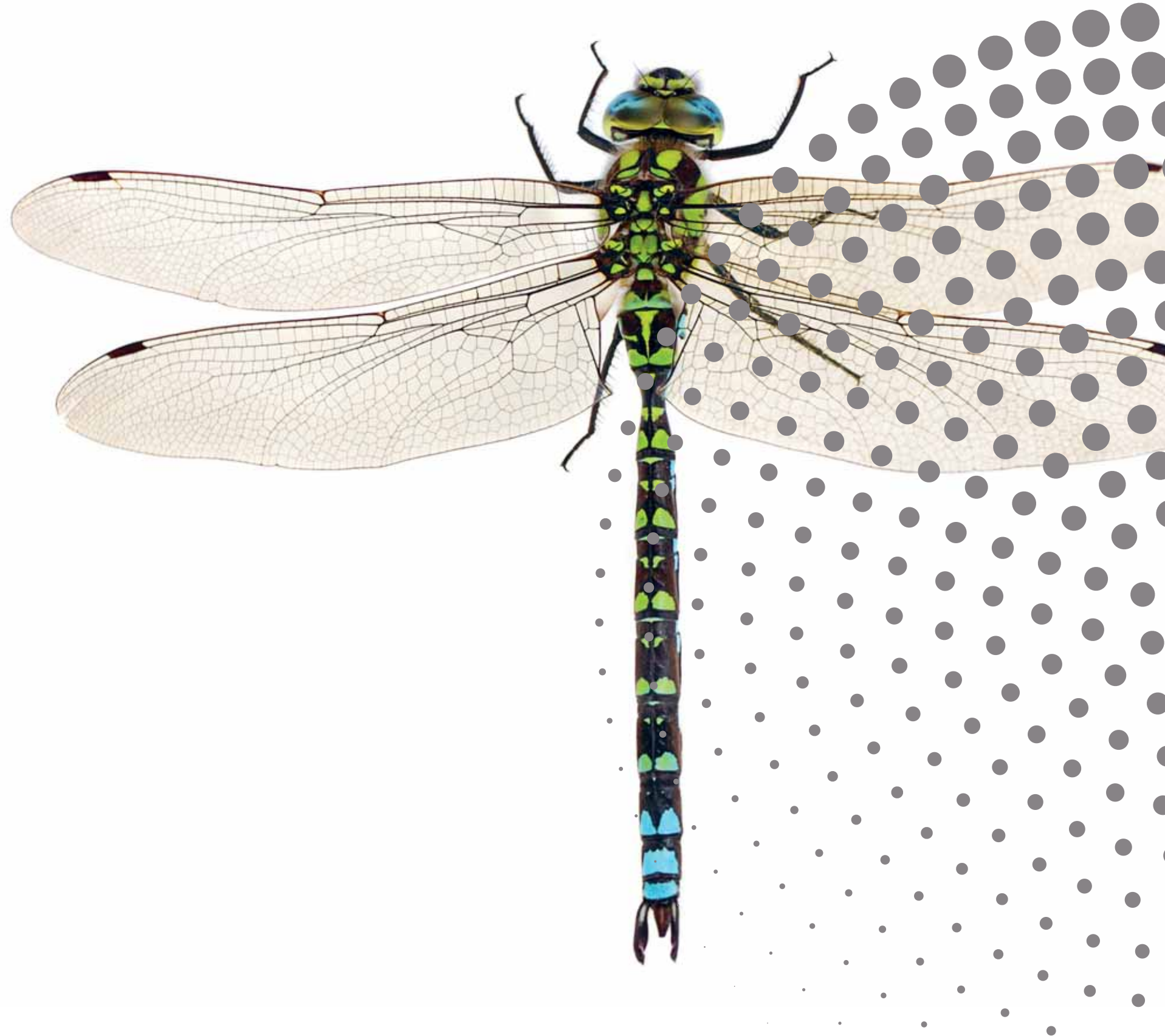
*The Dutch government's priorities in addressing the loss of **biodiversity** loss and promoting the sustainable use of **biodiversity** and natural resources in the coming four years.*

also wants to further align a number of priority themes and improve cooperation between the different ministries on these points; it therefore invites other public authorities, companies and non-governmental organisations to contribute to achieving the goals set in these priority areas.

This policy programme opens with a brief description of the context, starting with our present challenge: how to halt the loss of biodiversity and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. The programme then describes the international and national policy framework. This is followed by the core of the policy: the topics to which the Dutch government intends to devote special attention in the next four years. These priorities are interwoven with regular activities that will be continued within the existing national and international governance frameworks. The appendix includes an overview of the various elements of the biodiversity dossier. For each European policy objective⁶ there is a brief outline of the regular Dutch activities in the coming four years.







2 The context

2.1 The challenge: the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the light of globalisation

The need to preserve and sustain biodiversity for future generations will remain a significant challenge in the coming years. Biodiversity remains under threat throughout the world. Natural resources are being steadily depleted and ecosystems are under threat. In addition to the extinction of species, the degradation of local biodiversity also constitutes a threat to our well-being, economic growth, sustainable development and security in the short term. Dutch policy will therefore focus more than ever on preserving the goods and services that ecosystems provide and promoting their sustainable use.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment states that the degradation of ecosystem services is the result of changes in land use, climate, the introduction of alien species, overexploitation and pollution. These factors are driven by major global trends such as population growth, increased prosperity and globalisation. The second Sustainability Outlook published by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (MNP; 2007) also states that the loss of biodiversity has not been halted (see box). The agency added that the current policy would not achieve this objective.



Trends according to the second Sustainability Outlook (Environmental Assessment Agency, 2007)

- *There has been a lot of progress in development, but it is not evenly distributed.*
- *Development has been at the expense of nature and the environment.*
- *Technology has not compensated for population growth and consumption; pressure on land and energy consumption continue to increase.*
- *More people, more consumption and more competition for raw materials.*
- *The result is further loss of biodiversity and climate change.*
- *Climate, biodiversity and development cannot be realised with the existing policy.*
- *Consumption is leading to increased CO₂ emissions and land use in the Netherlands.*
- *The public and companies look to the government to compel changes in behaviour.*
- *Sustainable development is not yet a guiding principle for the policy.*



*The need to preserve and sustain **biodiversity** for future generations will remain a significant challenge in the coming years.*

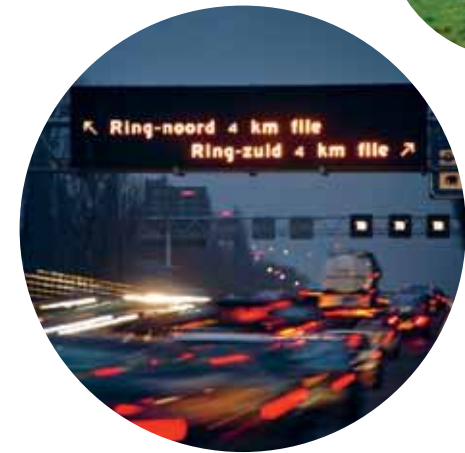


The loss of biodiversity and natural resources may also jeopardise efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, see box). When viewed in the context of poverty alleviation, for example, the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources contributes to achieving MDG7 – the two issues are closely related. In this context, biodiversity can be seen as an integral part of the natural resources on which people depend. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has shown that, right up to today, it has been impossible to reverse the downward spiral of biodiversity loss and growing poverty. The challenge is to turn this situation around. Economic growth and increased prosperity and welfare must be decoupled from the large-scale destruction of habitats and loss of biodiversity. Achieving this not only requires a more coherent policy; it also calls on us to make the sustainable use of biodiversity a key facet of economic activity, development strategies and poverty alleviation. Efforts to combat poverty and halt the loss of biodiversity must be seen in the context of globalisation, changing international relations and new markets.

These issues cannot be addressed without international alliances and cooperation. The Netherlands is conscious of its own international responsibility, which is why it has ratified numerous international treaties relating to biodiversity. As a rich country, the Netherlands must be fully accountable for its impact on ecosystems ‘elsewhere and later’ and not pass on the burden of environmental deterioration to other countries or future generations.⁷ In addition to measures to permanently safeguard valuable geographical areas and specific species, this calls for a change in the pattern of production and consumption in the Netherlands. The question of how production flows can be made more sustainable is particularly relevant for sectors that have a major negative influence on biodiversity, so that our direct ecological footprint is reduced in the most valuable areas of the world. Another question is how can we get consumers to give more consideration to the burden they impose on global biodiversity in their decisions. Finally, the Dutch policy programme ‘Working together, living together’ stated that we must compensate for the remaining burden on biodiversity.

The Millennium Development Goals are:

- 1. eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*
- 2. achieve universal primary education*
- 3. promote gender equality and empower women*
- 4. reduce child mortality*
- 5. improve maternal health*
- 6. combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*
- 7. ensure environmental sustainability*
- 8. develop a global partnership for development*





2.2 *The policy framework: what we are already doing to preserve biodiversity*

International agreements

The Netherlands is working to halt the loss of biodiversity around the world in a wide range of international forums. There have been a number of distinct milestones:

- The signing of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD⁸) in 1992. This convention has three objectives: to conserve biodiversity, to use the natural resources derived from it sustainably, and to share the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources fairly and equitably. These objectives are now part of the aforementioned Millennium Development Goals.;
- The agreement made by world leaders in Johannesburg in 2002 to significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010.⁹
- The decision of the European Union to halt the loss of biodiversity within the EU entirely by 2010. This ambitious target places the European Union at the forefront of global efforts to address the loss of biodiversity. In 2006, the European Commission published a Communication and Action Plan setting out a detailed agenda for achieving this objective (see box).

Separate agreements have been concluded on a number of aspects, including reducing the risks of transboundary movements of genetically modified organisms (The Protocol on Biosafety to the CBD), sustainable fishing and Access and Benefit Sharing.¹¹

Finally, it is worth noting that the Netherlands has invested heavily in biodiversity in the European region in recent years, for example by continuing to develop a Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) and by integrating biodiversity into economic sectors. The subject of biodiversity in countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine, which is so important for Europe, has also been a prime topic in the government's bilateral contacts with those countries. The relations with the countries that have already joined the EU, in the area of biodiversity, are no longer bilateral but take place within the EU context.

National implementation

The Netherlands ratified the Convention on Biodiversity in 1994 and has implemented it through various policy programmes and legislation. Its national policy has been fleshed out in a series of nature policy documents, national environmental policy plans and the development cooperation policy,¹² and described in such documents as 'Sources of our existence' (2002), the 'International Policy Programme on Biodiversity' 2002-2006 (BBI, 2002), the 'Multi-Year Programme on Defragmentation' (2004) and the 'Policy Letter on Agrobiodiversity' (2004).

One of the Netherlands' aims is to protect biodiversity with a view to preserving species, populations and habitats. This involves setting ambitious targets when implementing national and European agreements (for example, the Birds Directive and the Habitat Directive) and taking an energetic approach to improving environmental conditions and water quality, which in many places in the Netherlands fall below the standard required to guarantee the preservation of biodiversity. Another aim is to help affect the transition to the sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation and the integration of biodiversity in economic sectors. Sustainable use of biodiversity in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and other sectors in the Netherlands will not only help conserve biodiversity but also create numerous economic opportunities. Finally, there are area-specific measures and the fair distribution of the costs and benefits of restoring biodiversity, for example through the Netherlands' landscape policy .

In 2002, all the biodiversity-related policy proposals with an international aspect were grouped under the BBI. The BBI was subject to an independent evaluation in 2006 on behalf of the relevant ministries.¹³ The Ecology and Development Working Group initiated a similar evaluation.¹⁴ The two evaluations commended the way in which the BBI analysed the problems and its integrating and binding effect. They added, however, that the BBI also lacked any real coordination, cooperation, cohesion and focus and that the programme was consequently less effective than it might have been. Both evaluations underlined the importance of implementation and political commitment on a number of priority themes.



The Netherlands is working to halt the loss of **biodiversity** around the world in a wide range of international forums.

Parallel to the BBI, the transition programme for the 'Preservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources' (part of the fourth National Environmental Policy Plan, NEPP 4) has concentrated since 2001 on supporting and facilitating the underlying social change processes. The transition programme, supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, consists of a long-term process of identifying, in association with the business community, non-governmental organisations and other ministries, promising developments for effective biodiversity policy. The programme could help set the agenda and provide material for the BBI and its specific projects. An evaluation of the transition programme in 2006 concluded that its approach and focus were good but that it did not have the necessary scale to achieve its ambitions. That is why the implementation of the present policy programme and the work of the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force will include a new working programme for the transition, covering both substance and organisation.

The final relevant document is the 'Future Agenda for the Environment'.¹⁵ This programme sets out a number of specific actions designed to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources. One of its key features is the involvement of the authorities, the business community and non-governmental organisations.

The MA and the MNP's Sustainability Outlook underline the urgency of proactive and ambitious biodiversity policy. The evaluations of the approach taken up to now, the lessons learned from the BBI, the fundamental approach of the transition programme and the realisation that concerted action is needed at national and international level form the basis for this policy programme 'Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever'.

10 European objectives

Biodiversity and the EU

- To protect the EU's most important habitats and species.
- To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU rural areas.
- To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU marine environment.
- To reinforce compatibility of regional and territorial development with biodiversity in the EU.
- To substantially reduce the impact of invasive alien species and alien genotypes on EU biodiversity.

The EU and global biodiversity

- To substantially strengthen the effectiveness of international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- To substantially strengthen support for biodiversity and ecosystem services in EU external assistance.
- To substantially reduce the impact of international trade on global biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Biodiversity and climate change

- To support biodiversity adaptation to climate change.
- To substantially strengthen the knowledge base for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the EU and globally.

Source: European Commission, 2006. Communication of the Commission 'Halting the loss of Biodiversity in 2010 – and beyond. Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being'.







3 Priorities for 2008-2011

3.1 Objectives

The Dutch government wants the Netherlands to play an active role in Europe and on the wider international stage. The current international objectives of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the European Union's policy continue to dictate the course to be pursued. This means that the Netherlands will continue its efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond – and to contribute to achieving the MDGs.

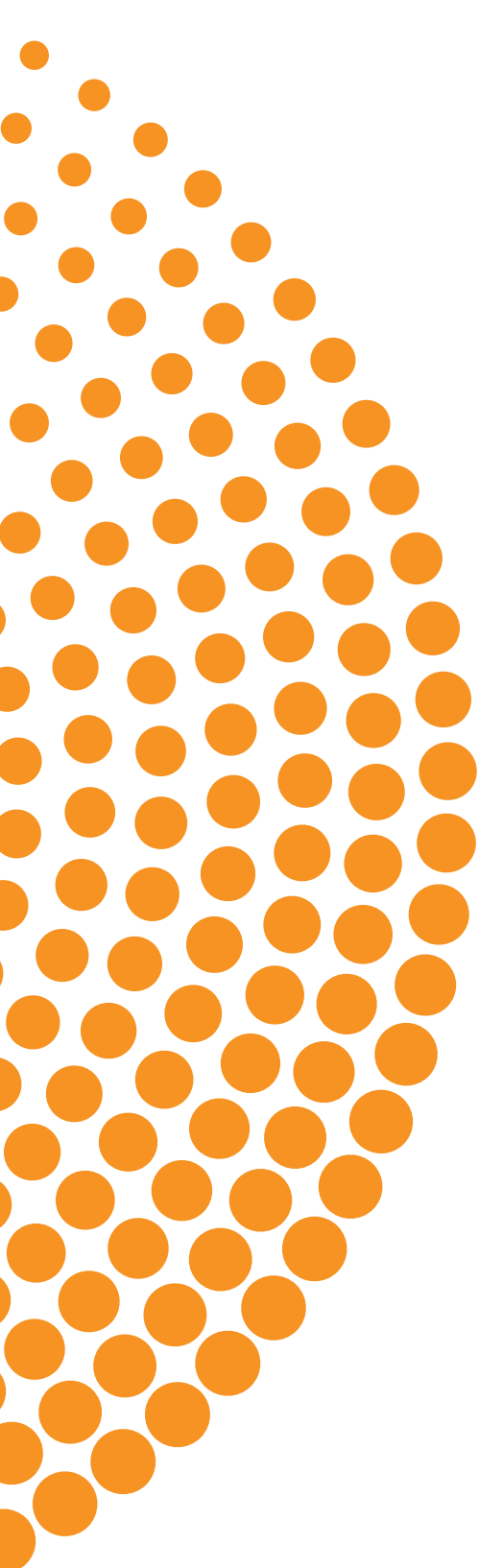
It will dedicate itself to:

- actively helping to slow the pace of biodiversity loss outside the European Union, in accordance with international agreements.;
- contributing to achieving MDG1, MDG7 and MDG8: linking poverty alleviation to the sustainable use of natural resources, creating a better environment and sustainable economic growth (trade chains).;

- integrating aspects of biodiversity into economic sectors.;
- halting the loss of biodiversity in the Netherlands by 2010 – and beyond – and ensuring that by 2020, sustainable conditions are in place for the survival of all species and populations native to the Netherlands in the recent past (1982).;
- supporting the realisation of these goals by promoting biodiversity-related participation and knowledge as well as communication and education focusing specifically on the functions, values and visibility of biodiversity .

The policy measures required to achieve these objectives will be implemented by various ministries. In addition to the current policy, the policy programme 'Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever' focuses on priority areas within these objectives which are so urgent and complex that they call for closer collaboration between ministries and with actors in civil society. The aim of the policy programme is to improve policy coherence in priority areas.





3.2 *The identified priorities identified in the policy programme*

The progressive loss of biodiversity worldwide represents a direct threat to the prosperity and well-being of humans in the Netherlands and elsewhere. The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency reiterated this in the second Sustainability Outlook (see also chapter 2). The growing demand for natural resources such as wood, fish, water and agricultural land due to economic and population growth, the overexploitation of existing resources, new trade flows with emerging powers, the additional demand for crops arising from energy policy and climate change – these are all factors that pose a direct threat to biodiversity and to the functionality and productivity of the ecosystems. The problems are so complex that simply continuing on our present course is not enough. They call for a different pattern of consumption and production, a different and greater commitment in international negotiations, greater coherence and closer cooperation.

For the Netherlands, this means supplementing the regular policy with a number of additional incentives, both within our national borders and in our international cooperation. It is also increasingly important to change our patterns of consumption and production, which means promoting sustainable behaviour that is beneficial to biodiversity (including encouraging and rewarding front-runners) while at the same time discouraging and, where necessary, preventing unsustainable behaviour that is bad for biodiversity. The government therefore intends to give priority to increasing the sustainability of economic chains and to have the price of products and services reflect the burden on (or the good management of) biodiversity. The government also wants to see more effective use being made of the benefits of biodiversity in production processes, particularly in agriculture.



At the same time, the Dutch government realises that such an approach will only be effective in the longer term and that we cannot conserve biodiversity and natural resources ‘elsewhere’ through sustainable trade alone. This is why prompt and urgent action is required in the Netherlands and globally to conserve biodiversity and the natural resources that are most at risk. In the next four years, the Dutch government will therefore focus on creating and improving the ecological networks and on promoting the development – together with international partners and civil society organisations – of new financial instruments. A particular area of attention will be marine biodiversity, both with respect to our own seas (Wadden Sea and North Sea) and the oceans. The threat to marine biodiversity and the risk of natural resources (fish) becoming exhausted are perhaps even more urgent and more complex than on land. Additional measures are needed in the years ahead to promote the sustainable management and protection of these resources.

The government of the Netherlands is providing the necessary extra encouragement in this policy programme by focusing on five priority areas. They relate to the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services, the protection of vulnerable and valuable biodiversity and improvements in the management of marine ecosystems. The government has also chosen to prioritise three key supporting areas relating to the creation of new coalitions, and knowledge and communication concerning biodiversity. The government is also using these specific priority themes and key supporting measures to highlight the Dutch policy accents in its implementation of the EU’s Communication and Action Plan on biodiversity and in international and bilateral treaties and partnerships.

They relate to the sustainable use of **biodiversity** and ecosystem services, the protection of vulnerable and valuable **biodiversity** and improvements in the management of marine ecosystems.



Substantive priorities

Brief explanation

Orientation

Trade chains and biodiversity

Sustainability of trade in wood, soya, palm oil, biomass and peat.

International

Payment for biodiversity and ecosystem services

Creating markets and payment mechanisms for biodiversity ('the user pays').

National and international

Biodiversity works

Formulating the policy for ecosystem services in national land use and promoting the use of biodiversity in (agricultural) production processes.

National and international

Ecological networks

Creating ecological networks in the context of broader eco-regional development.

National and international

Marine biodiversity and sustainable fishery

Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in seas and oceans.

National and international

Support priorities

New coalitions for biodiversity

Cooperating with business, non-governmental organisations and governments.

National and international

Knowledge of biodiversity

Ensuring adequate knowledge and research in relation to the priorities in this policy programme.

National and international

Communication on biodiversity

Increasing public appreciation of biodiversity through adequate communication and education, e.g. about the importance of biodiversity.

National and international





These priorities demand greater coherence, inter-ministerial collaboration and cooperation with civil society. There is also a need for a longer-term perspective on biodiversity management in the Netherlands and elsewhere and the changes that are required. As with the energy transition, this calls for an intensive public-private partnership. As previously mentioned already announced, the government will establish a social 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force to this end, which will be required to present specific short-term proposals that also reflect medium- and long-term needs. Specifically, the Dutch government is asking the task force to advise it on how agreements can be reached with economic sectors and other social groups about the changes required in our patterns of production and consumption. This also indicates the added value of this policy programme: biodiversity is not an isolated element in the international context but an integral part of social and economic development. The government's biodiversity policy does not merely complement socio-economic and development policy; it is part of it.

To boost international cooperation and improve the coherence of the policy, the government of the Netherlands will coordinate its multilateral and bilateral efforts more closely. In multilateral relations, we will focus primarily on the UN Biodiversity Convention and five other conventions relating to biodiversity,¹⁶ the UN environmental organisation (UNEP), the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the UN Forest Forum (UNFF), and the International Tropical Wood Organisation (ITTO), pan-European cooperation and the European Union. With respect to its regular and priority activities, in the next four years the government will focus its bilateral efforts on its immediate neighbours in the European Union¹⁷ and, in keeping with the policy priorities of the Minister for Development Cooperation, on developing countries. In addition, it will consider consulting with the four rapidly growing economies¹⁸ for achieving the policy targets.

The following sections explain the various priorities identified and the steps the government intends to take in the coming four years.

We leave a large 'ecological footprint' in other countries. Mining, energy production, tourism, the financial sector, wood, agricultural raw materials (soya, palm oil, fish meal and biomass) and peat production are particularly important in this respect.

3.3 The priorities in detail

3.3.1 Trade chains and biodiversity

The government of the Netherlands wishes sustainability to be a factor in Dutch trade with other countries. This means that social, economic and ecological aspects will also be considered in the policy decisions of government bodies, companies and non-governmental organisations. What happens in the Netherlands has an impact far beyond our country's national borders. We leave a large 'ecological footprint' in other countries. Mining, energy production, tourism, the financial sector, wood, agricultural raw materials (soya, palm oil, fish meal and biomass) and peat production are particularly important in this respect.

The Dutch government's aim is to cease shifting our burden on biodiversity to other countries in a manner that is unsustainable. In the long term, all raw materials from natural resources or from nature that we use in the Netherlands – whether we obtain them in the Netherlands or abroad – must be produced sustainably. The ecological factor is one of the elements of sustainability. By treating biodiversity and ecosystems as important factors in the process of making trade chains sustainable, the policy programme 'Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever' adds value to this sustainable development. The impact on biodiversity of other activities, such as tourism, investment and mining, must also be made more sustainable. Voluntary agreements, the formulation of criteria, and payment for ecosystem services will play a major role in these sectors. These aspects are discussed under 'Payment for Biodiversity'. This section concentrates on wood, agricultural chains and peat, since these chains have a direct impact on biodiversity and because they make use of biodiversity .



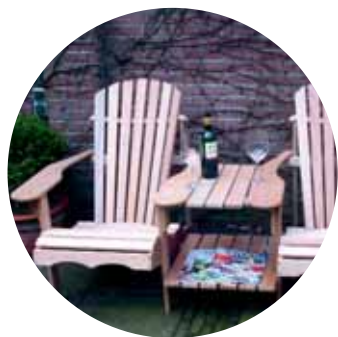


To ensure that progress towards achieving the long-term objective of sustainable market and product chains over the next four years, the government of the Netherlands will work towards the following results with respect to wood, soya, palm oil, biomass and peat during the following period:

- No later than 2011, the government will conclude agreements with the business community on the transition required to manage biodiversity sustainably in the wood, palm oil, soya and peat production economic chains. These agreements will be based on recommendations to be made by the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force.
- From 2010 on, the central government will purchase only wood that has been produced sustainably. The Dutch government will also strive to ensure that at least 50% of the wood on the Dutch market is produced sustainably by 2011. This target is based on the current share of sustainable wood on the Dutch market and the potential to promote the use of sustainable wood with the business community's own instruments and initiatives.¹⁹

- The production of biomass and biofuels will be more sustainable, both in the Netherlands and abroad. The government of the Netherlands has already entered into a commitment stating that biofuels will account for at least 10% of Dutch energy consumption by 2020 (in line with the European target). We intend to be on course to meet that target in 2011. The use of biomass and biofuels can help reduce CO₂ emissions, but it is also important that their production has no negative social, economic and ecological consequences. The Dutch government will specifically explore opportunities for developing countries in the rapidly growing international markets for sustainably-produced biomass and biofuels. Furthermore, the latest scientific insights will be reflected in the biomass policy, with a critical review of sustainability criteria²⁰ in light of the related European debate.

- The import of palm oil and soya as food, animal feed and biomass crops will be sustainable.
- Small producers outside the European Union will be integrated into sustainable chains, including the soya, palm oil, wood and biomass chains.
- Sustainability criteria will be developed and embedded in an international context, particularly in the WTO and the EU (Common Agricultural Policy). Proposals will be made to introduce certification of sustainably produced palm oil and soya as food, animal feed and biomass crops with the aim of promoting sustainable production.



The process of creating more sustainable chains requires the government to collaborate with actors in civil society: the business community, non-governmental organisations and the knowledge community.

In implementing the policy programme, the transition approach will play a key role in making economic chains more sustainable. This approach focuses on the longer-term aspects and process-driven support of those chains. Chains are multidimensional; they connect local and international levels and cannot be seen separately from each other. The synergy required to bring about change can only be achieved by addressing the problem of how to increase sustainability systematically and from various perspectives. The process of creating more sustainable chains requires the government to collaborate with actors in civil society: the business community, non-governmental organisations and the knowledge community. The international character of the selected chains poses the additional challenge of integrating the local perspective and local responsibility of the producing partners elsewhere into the programmes. One example of such cooperation is the Initiative for Sustainable Trade (IDH; an inter-ministerial initiative under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Development Cooperation). The IDH is expected to be operational in 2008. It is a multi-stakeholder venture in which the participants (companies, non-governmental organisations, trade unions and the Dutch government) will work together to make international trade chains more sustainable, with people, plant and profit in developing countries being a key concern. The focus will be on programmes to improve conditions at the start of the chain in the developing countries.





The policy programme ‘Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever’ will follow up on existing initiatives and platforms in order to help them achieve a balanced approach. The point of departure is the ecological and biodiversity component in relation to social and economic aspects. Examples include the round tables and partnerships for soya, wood, palm oil and fish meal, and the platform on green raw materials for the energy transition. Many of these are private initiatives (RSPO, the round table on palm oil, RTRS, the round table on sustainable soya, the FSC label for wood, CC-GAP for peat substrate), and the policy programme will provide information and facilitate projects relating to biodiversity in consultation with the other actors. Besides the input in specific chains, the policy programme will establish links between them; after all, there are interactions on both the user and the production sides in the various chains. The multiple uses of the same product (for food, animal feed or energy) not only increase demand and the number of actors involved, but also give rise to new policy choices, raise different aspects of sustainability criteria and labels and affect different social interests. Producers face a growing demand and hence pressure on land and other resources. This means choosing between agricultural production for food or energy, export or national consumption, preservation of ecosystem functions and nature conservation. The challenge is to find an integrated approach that helps making choices which ensure that ecosystem functions are preserved and nature and biodiversity are spared as much as possible. The relationship with the priorities ‘ecological networks’ and ‘payment for biodiversity’ is obvious.

Although the emphasis in the priority area ‘trade chains and biodiversity’ will be on international cooperation, certain steps must also be taken in the Netherlands itself, principally in relation to the government’s purchasing policy and the promotion of corporate social responsibility.



What are the Dutch government's priorities in the Netherlands?

Agreements on the necessary transition

- Agreeing with the business community on changes in Biodiversity management, at least in the wood, palm oil, soya and peat production economic chains.

Sustainable procurement by the government

- Developing a public tendering policy for wood.

Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility

- Supporting and joining in initiatives by the business community related to corporate social responsibility, and promoting agreements (covenants) with businesses on the preservation and sustainable Management of biodiversity.



What are the Dutch government's priorities in international cooperation?

Sustainability of specific chains

- Supporting implementation of the EU Action Plan Forest Law Enforcement Governance & Trade (FLEGT), e.g. in Malaysia/South-East Asia and Ghana, in cooperation with other international initiatives.
- Improving mutual relations, cohesion and cooperation between trade chains and encouraging mutual learning.
- Boosting efforts to include Biodiversity as an element in improving the sustainability of the palm oil, soya and biomass chains (embedding in national and international sustainability criteria, coordination of strategy and approach between the trade chains, exploring possibilities in procurement policy and incentive policy, cooperation with producing countries).

Improving cohesion and cooperation between chains

- Promoting the formulation of a coherent set of instruments (criteria, labels).
- Aspects relating to synergy and competition between and within chains for production and inclusion of use in decisions throughout the Chains.

Instruments for promoting sustainability

- Exploring legal and socially acceptable possibilities / instruments such as certification to promote sustainable production.
- Embedding sustainability criteria at international level (EU, WTO).

On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek cooperation with partners in civil society?

Sustainability in a broad sense


- Contributing to the Sustainable Trade Initiative; submit proposals for selection of sectors to which the initiative can initially apply.

Sustainability in specific chains

- Together with relevant actors (business, large customers of wood and NGOs), drawing up an action plan to meet the 50% target for wood
- Developing a system for verifying the sustainable production of soya, palm oil.
- Applying the criteria for sustainable palm oil and soya (fleshed out in round tables).
- Evaluating the public-private partnership for sustainable palm oil with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands
- Implementing pilot projects (partnerships) for sustainable biomass production.
- Searching for alternatives for peat substrate in collaboration with producers, users and Researchers.

Sharing knowledge and capacity building

- Contributing to capacity building and knowledge sharing on sustainable forestry, aimed at sustainable wood production, strengthening good governance and management, and contributing to poverty targets (MDGs).
- Sharing of experiences and , broadening of horizon beyond the sector itself.



Making biodiversity a more explicit consideration in economic and monetary decisions is a way of combating poverty directly.



There are various approaches that can help eliminate the economic mechanisms leading to biodiversity loss:

- Better regulation of the fair distribution of biodiversity benefits and of access to natural resources while safeguarding property and user rights.
- Clear pricing of products and services provided by ecosystems. Markets for biodiversity and related goods and services will create opportunities for more sustainable management. The opportunities are considerable, for example in relation to international agreements on measures to mitigate the effects of climate change by preventing deforestation and degradation of moorlands.
- The prescription of requirements for (any remaining) unsustainable use of biodiversity, for example through compensation.

3.3.2 Payment for biodiversity

One of the underlying reasons for the loss of biodiversity is that biodiversity is a public good. It is frequently accessible to everyone and it is free. As a result, there is a widespread failure to recognise the significance and value of ecosystem services and a lack of adequate financing mechanisms for them.

The social costs are not passed on in the price of goods produced at the expense of biodiversity.

This frequently leads to excessive use of resources and a failure to invest in sustaining the capacity of ecosystems to continue providing goods and services ('Tragedy of the Commons'). An additional factor in developing countries is that the very poorest tend to be most dependent on natural resources but lack the capacity to invest in sustainable management of those resources. Making biodiversity a more explicit consideration in economic and monetary decisions is a way of combating poverty directly.

The government of the Netherlands will develop activities along these lines. However, it cannot do this alone and depends on international collaboration and cooperation with non-governmental organisations. Together with its partners, the Dutch government will investigate what organisational and governance structure, as well as formal and informal agreements are needed at national and international level to successfully implement forms of payment for biodiversity and how they can be put in place. The government will make greater use of market-driven instruments for the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The coalition agreement states that the government wishes to achieve its ambitious targets in pillar three, a sustainable living environment, largely through financial incentives and disincentives to encourage environmentally friendly behaviour. The policy programme 'Working together, living together' also states that unsustainable use of biodiversity must be compensated. For this reason, specific attention will be devoted to developing and implementing instruments to compensate for the loss of biodiversity.

The Dutch government's targets for 2011 are:

- No later than 2011, to agree with the business community on specific measures involving payment and/or compensation for the use of biodiversity (in the Netherlands and elsewhere) on the basis of an advisory report by the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force.
- To help anchor the value of biodiversity in an international context, particularly by highlighting non-trade related aspects ('non-trade concerns') in the WTO and in the further development and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU.
- To quickly reach international agreements on economic instruments addressing deforestation and degradation of moorlands, as a part of the climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. The Netherlands' contribution to this effort will include participating in a pilot programme organised by the World Bank to reduce CO₂ emissions by avoiding deforestation (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, REDD).
- To help formulate international agreements on access to genetic resources and a fair distribution of the benefits derived from them (*Access and Benefit Sharing, ABS*).
- To continue the shift towards environmental taxes and, where necessary, to design or redesign and constantly update incentives, such as the Green Investment scheme and the VAMIL and MIA subsidy schemes for investments by companies in environmental improvements.
- To support initiatives aimed at developing markets for both goods derived from biodiversity and for ecosystem services. Where the government operates in the market, it will encourage the market by employing sustainable procurement practices.
- Together with international partners and civil society organisations, to explore and promote international mechanisms and instruments involving payment for biodiversity products and services and compensation for unsustainable use of biodiversity.
- To research possibilities for linking sustainability criteria to subsidies.

The Netherlands supports the aims set out by the European Commission in the EU Green Paper on market-based instruments for environment and energy. In the Green Paper, the Commission observes that, with a proper regulatory framework, such instruments (levies, subsidies and tradable emission rights) can contribute to efforts to conserve important ecosystems and ecosystem services, and compensate for inevitable loss of biodiversity.

Measures that will integrate biodiversity into production processes and the price of products include supporting the development of sustainability criteria, assessing these criteria in practice, developing market incentives and pressing international bodies for a level playing field and scope for sustainable practices. In this policy programme, these efforts are clustered in the priority area 'trade chains and biodiversity'.



What are the Dutch government's priorities in the Netherlands?

Agreements on the transition that is required

- Agree with the business community on specific measures to pay for and/or compensate for the use of biodiversity (in the Netherlands and elsewhere).

Greening measures

- Make the tax regime 'greener' and where necessary develop, re-develop and continuously update incentive policies, such as the Green Investment scheme and the VAMIL and MIA subsidy schemes.

Climate

- Promote the use of organic substances in agricultural areas as water and CO₂ buffer through pilot projects and policy.
- Actively encourage and support sequestration of CO₂ in forests and moorlands.



What are the Dutch government's priorities in international cooperation?

Anchoring in international frameworks

- Make international agreements on a fair ABS regime (no later than 2010).
- Strengthening the ties between institutions engaged in international processes aimed at financing sustainable conservation of ecosystems (UNFCCC, CBD, UNFF).
- Explore and promote a system of payment for biodiversity in international forums such as the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the WTO.
- Achieve the balanced anchoring of the three pillars of agro-biodiversity (genetic sources, ecosystem services and nature) in the CBD working programme relating to 'Payments for Ecosystem Services'.

Compensating for unsustainable burden on biodiversity elsewhere

- Continue developing and implementing the Ecobalance (part of the Future Environment Agenda).

Best practices and pilot projects

- Collect best practices and recommendations for establishing markets for ecosystem services, where possible in collaboration with UNEP, OECD, UNFF, CBD and other international organisations.
- Carry out a pilot programme in collaboration with the World Bank for projects to prevent deforestation and loss of moorland with the aim of including these activities (aimed at preventing CO₂ emission as a result of changes in land use) in the market-based instruments in international climate agreements after 2012.
- Reach agreement in the UN Forest Forum on wider and more effective use of financial instruments resources for preserving forests worldwide.
- For ecosystem service carbon sequestration, investigate whether and how a pilot project can be set up in a developing country to test identify what which what international rules are needed for payment of emission reduction by reducing deforestation.

On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek to cooperate with partners in civil society?

- Set up scalable pilot projects with Dutch companies.
- Develop and implement sustainability indicators and benchmarks for corporate performance on biodiversity.
- Carry out pilot projects in 'payment for sustainable tourism'.
- Develop and implement additional financial instruments for specific areas and ecosystem services.
- Capacity building, to be specified in programmes.
- With the pension funds PGGM and ABP and the Association of Investors in Sustainable Development (VBDO), set up a working group to flesh out proposals for private financing of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Set up pilot projects for reducing emissions due to deforestation in the developing countries.



This policy programme provides powerful boost to efforts to address one of the central challenges in the EU Communication on Biodiversity: the preservation and active, sustainable use of ecosystem services.

3.3.3 Biodiversity works

What are ecosystem services?

Ecosystem services are the benefits (material and immaterial) that people derive from the functioning of ecosystems. Biodiversity plays an important role in how ecosystems function and in the many services they can provide. Ecosystem services include the water and food cycle, the creation and preservation of soil fertility, protection against invasive species, pollination of plants, climate regulation and management of pests and pollution. Important factors are the availability and the number of species.

This policy programme provides powerful boost to efforts to address one of the central challenges in the EU Communication on Biodiversity: the preservation and active, sustainable use of ecosystem services. Biodiversity and the related ecosystem services are essential natural resources for many economic sectors, including agriculture and fisheries. The sustainable use of these resources and hence their preservation depends on integrating biodiversity into the business operations of companies in these sectors. Preserving these natural resources and using them optimally are vital for sustainable economic development. Although ecosystems have a certain resilience, persistent damage can lead to a sudden dramatic decline in their capacity to provide various services. It is then uncertain whether they will recover, and recovery will be expensive. The sensible course of action,

therefore, is to attempt to preserve ecosystems by not burdening them unnecessarily. In the Netherlands, the potential of ecosystems is often not exploited to the full. Recent social cost-benefit analyses²⁷ have shown that it pays to invest in the landscape in such a way that sustainable use is made of ecosystem services. Their sustainable use is hence a cornerstone of Dutch policy on biodiversity and sustainability.

The Dutch government's aim is to preserve resilient and healthy ecosystems outside the protected areas to the extent required to guarantee their capacity to provide services. In the first place, this will require improving the knowledge and awareness of the functions of ecosystems in our economy, and organising projects to demonstrate the added value of caring for and using ecosystem services. Doing so will prompt innovation in the sustainable use of ecosystem services and contribute to sustainable economic development .

Like the aims it has set for 'Payment for Biodiversity' and 'Trade chains and Biodiversity', the government of the Netherlands wishes – no later than 2011 – to reach agreements with the business community on how to integrate ecosystem services into national land use, based on the advice provided by the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force. The government will look for striking examples in the years ahead, in consultation with actors in civil society, and take action on a number of fronts.





A national Business and Biodiversity initiative is to be launched to assist companies wishing to actively pursue the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. Examples of possible measures are better information provision, supportive research and development of analytical instruments. The Dutch government will also review whether public-private partnerships can be developed with specific companies and sectors.

Special attention will be given to soil, an ecosystem that can provide a number of socially valuable services. Soil has a significant influence on the type of nature that can grow above ground, and plays an important role in farming methods. In the recent years the government of the Netherlands has started to formulate policy relating to the biological quality of soil, for example by setting up a monitoring network to measure that quality. The results of this network will be used to establish a sustainable use benchmark for a number of land use and soil type combinations. The monitoring network and the reference scenarios will support the transition to more sustainable farming practices and nature development in rural areas. The government will continue to pursue this policy by emphasising new packages of voluntary measures and innovative technologies in collaboration with users, such as the agricultural sector. It will also stress the importance of soil biodiversity and soil ecosystem functions in international discussions.

The agricultural sector is making the transition to sustainable farming. By making greater use of ecosystem services, this sector can reduce its reliance on external inputs and make production more sustainable. The government will support these very promising innovative routes, for example by setting up experiments under the Investment Budget for Rural Areas (ILG) and where necessary by removing obstacles to the widespread implementation of successful measures. It has agreed with 'LTO Nederland'¹ and NAIK²² on establishing an Incentive Programme for Agro-Biodiversity and Sustainable Soil Management (SPADE). With the European Commission's support, the Netherlands will also promote this approach at European level and share lessons learned with other member states (EU learning network on functional



agro-biodiversity). The government will also promote exchanges with countries outside the EU.

There is also a direct relationship between the functional use of ecosystems and other priorities in the policy programme. The sustainable use of ecosystem services cannot be seen in isolation from the optimal functioning of ecological networks. Many species in natural areas depend directly or indirectly on man-made landscapes and how they are managed. Green-blue veining, such as banks of ditches, hedges and other landscape elements, can also be developed and managed in a way that satisfies the wishes of the agriculture sector, for example natural prevention of diseases. For the same reason, landscape restoration, as proposed in 'Deltaplan Nederland weer mooi' [Delta Plan to Restore the Netherlands Beauty] drawn up by the Vereniging Nederlands Cultuurlandschap [Dutch Cultural Landscape Association], also deserves a boost. The social cost-benefit analyses mentioned earlier also show that it is usually not the investors that enjoy the benefits but frequently other parties in the area. This imbalance needs to be addressed.



What are the Dutch government's priorities in the Netherlands?

Agreement on the necessary transition

- To agree with the business community on specific measures to improve the utilisation of ecosystem services in national land use. Where necessary, agree on payment and/or compensation of the use of these services.

Land-bound agriculture

- To gain experience with sustainable production methods in land-bound agriculture, the government has given provincial authorities funding through the Investment Budget for Rural Areas (ILG) to set up pilot projects.
- To set up an incentive programme together with LTO-Nederland and NAJK, set up an incentive programme to publicise experiences with sustainable production methods in the various land-bound agricultural sectors (SPADE).

What are the Dutch government's priorities in international cooperation?

Cooperation in the EU

- To help launch a 'Learning network on functional Agro-biodiversity' in the EU; the kick-off workshop will be organised in the Netherlands at the beginning of 2008.
- To exploit opportunities created by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (see also section 3.3.2).

On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek to cooperate with partners in civil society?

- Project Functional Agro-Biodiversity- 2 (LTO).
- Pilot projects in sustainable production under the ILG (provinces).
- Implementing Agro-Biodiversity and Sustainable Soil Use Incentive Programme (SPADE); first phase (2008- 2009): (LTO-Nederland and NAJK).
- Draft and update a 'References Biological Soil Quality' manual: Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment and the National Institute for Health and Environment (RIVM).
- Participating in the EU learning network on functional agro-biodiversity; advise on the start-up phase.
- International project office on agro-biodiversity, DIVERSITAS.

Ecological networks in the Netherlands and elsewhere are designed to ensure that the current and future generations can continue to enjoy nature areas and that we can continue to benefit from the goods and services that biodiversity provides.



3.3.4 Ecological networks

Among the most serious threats to biodiversity are the loss and fragmentation of habitats of species. We want to counter this threat by creating worldwide ecological networks.²³ Global agreements have been reached on this topic, for example in the working programme of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It has also been agreed that a network known as Natura 2000 will be created in Europe. The principal network in the Netherlands is the National Ecological Network (Ecologische Hoofdstructuur/EHS). The EHS comprises not only most of the Natura 2000 areas in the Netherlands, but also the majority of the country's land-based biodiversity (species). Ecological networks in the Netherlands and elsewhere are designed to ensure that the current and future generations can continue to enjoy nature areas and that we can continue to benefit from the goods and services that biodiversity provides.

Ecological networks must not be enclosed enclaves within a larger area. That will neither help achieving the objectives for biodiversity nor other social goals. That is particularly true in the developing countries, where sustainable protected networks help alleviate poverty; after all in such countries, a region's natural resources form the basis of local and regional economies. Sustainable eco-regional development is a spatial concept designed to integrate economic development and the preservation of biodiversity in areas that are part of the same ecosystem while also guaranteeing the sustainable supply of ecosystem services to other areas. The key challenge is to combine the protection of important and vulnerable global biodiversity with sustainable economic development. Climate change reinforces the need for this, since robust ecological networks ensure the lives of many plants and animals and guarantee the permanent availability of natural resources. The corridors within and between protected areas in ecological networks must be capable of accommodating future shifts.



Significant steps have been taken to protect the Netherlands' ecological network. The Dutch policy primarily involves specific management measures aimed at achieving the formulated objectives (Natura 2000 management plans) and improving the quality of the environment. This is supplemented by the policy to protect species. Outside the Netherlands, particularly in poor countries, the policy still focuses mainly on the first step: selecting ecological networks and regulating their protection.

The government of the Netherlands will ensure that the Netherlands continues to play an active role in creating ecological networks. The main priority at national level is to manage the EHS and the Natura 2000 areas sustainably. Good environmental conditions and water quality are essential for this. Under the terms of the Water Framework Directive, water managers implement measures that can make an important contribution. The habitats approach for species will also be implemented. At international level, the government will continue to support efforts to promote sustainable regional development that combine economic development, sustainable management of natural resources and protection. The synergy between economic, social and ecological development should lead to a sustainable protected ecological network encompassing at least 10% of every ecological

region in the world,²⁴ with safe migration routes, biologically diverse regions and large interconnected ecosystems. International cooperation will concentrate more heavily on creating national or regional ecological networks, for example by sharing experiences, implementing training programmes and providing tools such as communication techniques. Since it is vital for as many countries as possible to commit to and cooperate in creating ecological networks, the Netherlands will continue to urge countries that have not yet signed international treaties and agreements aimed at creating ecological networks to do so.

The Dutch government will pay particular attention in the years ahead to the relationship between preserving biodiversity by creating and protecting ecological networks and climate change. One important aspect will be the capacity of ecological networks to adapt to possible climate change.

The added value of including ecological networks as a priority area in this biodiversity policy programme lies in the opportunities presented by inter-ministerial cooperation. After all, the Netherlands's nature policy will have to be integrated with policies in other areas – such as the environment, water and the economy – in order to meet the quality targets that have been set for the EHS and Natura 2000. At international level, integration with development cooperation policy is crucial.

What are the Dutch government's priorities in the Netherlands?

Management and cohesion of EHS and Natura 2000

- All management plans for Natura 2000 and the conservation targets will be completed and adopted as soon as possible but not later than 3 years after the formal designation of the Natura 2000 areas, with the exception of the areas in the North Sea, which are still to be designated.
- In 2008/2009, implementation of the 'EHS rules' will be evaluated with a review of whether tighter supervision by the Environment inspectorate is required; if necessary legal measures will be taken in the Spatial Planning Act.
- On the basis of the situation at the time of mid-term review of the ILG in 2010, it will be decided whether a shift from management to acquisition is needed.
- Redrawing of the boundaries of the EHS in response to relevant developments will be considered in connection with the effect on Natura 2000 areas.

Environmental conditions EHS and Natura 2000

- In 2010 the agreements that have been made with provinces until 2013 on the ambitions for nature quality of the EHS in 2018 will be adjusted to the new management system.
- In the water plans (to be adopted at end of 2009) the measures relating to water quality will be adopted.
- In the mid-term review (2010) of the ILG contracts, the progress of efforts to combat desiccation will be evaluated in the TOP-list areas.

Habitats approach

- The habitats approach pursues a pro-active species policy, supplementing the EHS and Natura 2000. The Dutch government will make further agreements on it in 2008 with the provinces.

Climate change and adaptation in the Netherlands

- Security in combination with nature: linking of green and blue.
- Review of feasibility of targets set for certain species and habitats.
- Conservation and recovery of wetlands: strengthen resilience of delta and 'IJsselmeer' lake.
- Identification of priority ecosystems, areas and adaptation strategies for biodiversity, both from the perspective of vulnerability (conservation) and functionality (sustainable use in the event of adaptation).

What are the Dutch government's priorities in international cooperation?

Creating ecological networks worldwide

- Further elaboration and embedding in international context of the concept of ecological networks, for example by making an active contribution to the CBD Working Group on Protected Areas, implementation of the Letter of Intent with the CBD Secretariat and contributing to the World Conservation Congress 2008.
- In Europe, the Netherlands will actively contribute to the creation of a Pan-European ecological network.
- A specific Dutch contribution to concrete projects for the ecological networks management, embedded in the socio-economic development of a region. The Dutch government will give particular priority to the flyways and wetlands because of the special expertise and position of the Netherlands concerning them.
- Strengthening ecological networks in relation to climate change.

Increasing cohesion

- Fleshing out of international agreements to guarantee the 'connectivity' of existing networks and their integration in the broader socio-economic development of a region, partly in relation to adaptation to climate change strengthening international cooperation.
- Promoting international cooperation with respect to transnational protection of ecological networks, for example through CMS and subsidiary conventions.



On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek to cooperate with partners in civil society?

In the Netherlands

- Coordination of the efforts and activities of civil society organisations relating to the creation of ecological networks in the Netherlands and elsewhere.
- Preparation of proposals for adaptation to climate change by land management organisations and nature conservation organisations.
- Preparation of proposals by water boards and the agricultural sector to flesh out adaptation in moorland areas and stream valleys.
- Specific elaboration of the concept of 'natural climate buffers'
- Organisation of five concrete pilot projects with provinces for redrawing EHS boundaries for robust ecosystems.

Outside the Netherlands

- Contribution to sustainable ecoregional development through economic activities (tourism, trade chains).



Seas and oceans are inhabited by a rich variety of life-forms: marine biodiversity.

3.3.5 Marine biodiversity and fisheries chains

The threat to marine biodiversity is increasingly regarded as an urgent problem. Seas and oceans are inhabited by a rich variety of life-forms. A very large part of the world's marine biodiversity is to be found in the sea, but unlike land-based biodiversity, the regime to protect it is very limited. Marine biodiversity encompasses fish, shellfish and crustaceans, a vital global source of protein for humans and a source of income for fisheries. Many other marine organisms are also important to humans, for example because of their aesthetic or pharmaceutical value. In fact, new forms of marine life are constantly being discovered. However, the pressure on marine biodiversity is steadily increasing due to overfishing, discards and disturbance of the seabed by fishing vessels, but also owing to pollution, disturbances and climate change caused by many other human activities.

One of the visible effects is a decline in fish catches. On the high seas, in the Exclusive Economic Zones and in coastal areas, fishermen in both developed and developing countries face declining catches as a result of unsustainable management. In coastal areas in particular, there is a very strong correlation between the exploitation of marine resources, the protection of vulnerable areas and local economic and social development. This means that the protection of such areas as mangroves and coral reefs, deltas and estuaries is important for the preservation of biodiversity, fish stocks and local economic activity.

The policy framework for the protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity has not yet been given a statutory basis in the Netherlands through the extension of the effect of the Nature Protection Act beyond the Dutch territorial waters. Compared with the land, the number of marine areas designated as protected and managed are few. There is international recognition that this needs to change, and the Dutch government wants the Netherlands to make an active contribution in this regard.



The added value of this policy programme with respect to marine biodiversity lies in the greater coherence that can be achieved through closer cooperation between ministries and actors in society in policy areas where there are often conflicting interests (fishery policy, fishery conventions, exploitation of marine resources, protection of the marine ecosystem, market access for fishery products, poverty alleviation, coastal development). The measures to be taken are based on the principle that international efforts should be consistent and coherent with relevant regional and European policy (and vice versa) and with the Dutch government's efforts within the Kingdom.





Priorities in the Netherlands

The Dutch government's target is to arrive at the sustainable conservation and use of marine resources in Dutch waters and by Dutch vessels in international waters, in accordance with international standards. The key priorities in this respect are a sustainable fishery sector and the designation of protected areas. Since the North Sea is a single indivisible ecosystem and the common fishery policy (CFP) is a community domain, national policy is of necessity strongly European in nature. Consequently, it is at that level in particular that the Netherlands must exert influence during negotiations in order to reach its objectives.

The government of the Netherlands aim is to have achieved the following results within the national waters no later than 2011:

- To have implemented the policy programme for sustainable fisheries by, among other things, employing measures to modernise and make the fishing fleet more sustainable, to promote innovation, and to reduce the fleet capacity under the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). The Operational Programme, which contains the measures for which the Netherlands will seek funding from the EFF, was submitted to the European Commission in September 2007 and approved at the end of that year. The programme's objective is to promote the sustainable development of the Dutch fishery sector, for example through innovation. The entire Dutch fishing sector will be required to make a significant effort to reduce its ecological impact in the coming years. Major changes in the way the sector operates will be inevitable. Here too, the government expects to make agreements with the sector on these change by 2011 at the latest.
- To have reduced discards of commercially uninteresting fish significantly. The indicator is a reduction of 50% in 2013 compared with known quantities in 2007. The negative impact of fishing on the seabed ecosystem must also be significantly reduced; here the Dutch indicator is that 40% of the current traditional trawl fishermen will be using a different method of fishing in 2013.
- To have declared the Nature Protection Act applicable in the Netherlands' Exclusive Economic Zone, one of the purposes being to create a network of marine protected areas in the Dutch section of the North Sea.

All operations at sea must be carried out in such a way that marine life is not threatened and is preserved for future generations. The Netherlands will therefore play its part in formulating an integrated and generic policy to protect marine biodiversity

- No later than 2009, partly on the basis of its obligations under European law and other international commitments,²⁵ to have designated and be protecting areas of special importance for biodiversity in the Dutch sector of the North Sea.²⁶ The four areas concerned were already designated in the Integrated North Sea Management Plan 2015 (IBN 2015): the 'Friese Front', the 'Klaverbank', the 'Doggerbank' and parts of the 'Kustzee'.
- To have contributed to OSPAR's efforts to improve the quality of the marine environment, for example by operationalising the ecological quality objectives (ECOQOs), and to measures for the OSPAR list of threatened and declining species and habitats. Efforts made in this context will be more closely aligned with the EU directives (Birds Directive, Habitat Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive).

To achieve these goals, the Netherlands will contribute actively to the European implementation and continuing development of marine biodiversity policy, including the greening of the EU's fishery policy. The Netherlands will press for a sustainable CFP, in which the ecosystem approach is actually implemented. The Netherlands supports the steps taken in Europe to promote this approach, for example by providing funds to make the fishery sector more environmentally friendly, implementing a Maximum Sustainable Yield as the point of departure for long-term management and recovery plans for fish stocks, reducing discards, reducing the effects of fishing on non-target species (fish, birds, mammals) and on marine habitats, and developing alternatives to the current system based on the *Total Allowable Catch* (TAC management).

Besides the European fishery policy, the Birds and Habitat Directives and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive are also relevant. The Dutch government will promote coordination on these issues within the EU and with OSPAR. The government will also encourage innovation in the fishery



sector and has accordingly set up the Fisheries Innovation Platform (VIP) with representatives of the industry, the scientific community and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Priorities in international cooperation

The Dutch government will also promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources through international cooperation. Special attention will be devoted to making fishing more sustainable, with a focus on improving policy, management and control, particularly with respect to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, since these human activities are among the most harmful for marine biodiversity. All operations at sea must be carried out in such a way that marine life is not threatened and is preserved for future generations. The Netherlands will therefore play its part in formulating an integrated and generic policy to protect marine biodiversity, for example by pressing for the creation of a worldwide network of marine protected areas. Efforts to protect marine biodiversity will be guided by the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach, the aim being to ensure the sustainable use of the marine environment, subject to the basic conditions of protection and conservation.





The government's aim is to have achieved the following results in international cooperation by 2011:

- An international, legally binding instrument that can be used by port states to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) and a global database of vessels involved in IUU fishing.
- Better tracking and tracing of the trade in caught fish, e.g. through coordination and cooperation between regional fishery management organisations (RFMOs)²⁷ between these organisations and the FAO, and CITES and purchasing organisations.
- Capacity building in developing countries to assist them in developing sustainable fishery management and combating IUU fishing.
- Worldwide coverage by regional fishery management organisations of areas of the open sea.
- An independent review of the performance of RFMOs, adjustment of their mandates, and the exchange of *best practices* between RFMOs.
- The preservation of marine biodiversity and sustainable fishing as equal points of departure in RFMOs, and the adoption of the '*maximum sustainable yield*' principle as the goal of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (2015).
- The creation of an international regime (besides that of fishery management) for the protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in marine areas outside national jurisdiction.
- The design of a consolidated system of designation (criteria, classification systems) and management (UNCLOS Implementation Agreement Biodiversity) of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in areas outside national jurisdiction.
- The creation of a network of marine protected areas in the North Atlantic (particularly OSPAR/NEAFC) and the West African region.
- A contribution to sustainable ecoregional development in the field of marine ecosystems in at least one priority region, starting with West Africa. This initiative will make a direct contribution to transforming the regional fisheries consultation platform Cefac into a full RMFO.
- Implementation of the recommendations made by the fish meal and fish oil chain round table for sustainable aquaculture and assistance in developing instruments and capacity in this chain.



What are the Dutch government's priorities in the Netherlands?

Sustainable fishery

- Reducing discards and seabed disruption, by introducing pulse fishing and continuing development and use of more sustainable and selective fishing vessels.
- Translating the possibilities provided by the European Fishery Fund in national schemes.
- Reaching agreement with the sector on implementing the prospects for sustainable fishing.
- Reaching agreement with business on the transition needed to manage biodiversity in the fish meal chain.

Protected area at sea

- Declaration of the applicability of the Nature Protection Act 1998 to the Netherlands EEZ.
- Designating four areas in the North Sea as Natura 2000 areas, before 2010.
- Ensuring that by 2012 these areas be managed in such a way as to guarantee their natural values.

Quality Objectives

- Defining a set of Ecological Quality Targets (EcoQO's) and making them operational, also for biodiversity

What are the Dutch government's priorities in international cooperation?

Sustainable fishery

- Combating illegal, unreported and unregistered fishing (IUU fishing), in order to reduce the uncontrolled burden on the marine ecosystem and tackle unfair competition, and loss of income and increase the chance of regulated sustainable fishing succeeding.
- Reforming Regional Fishery Organisations (RFMOs).²⁸ The organisations should then apply the ecosystem approach in fishery management. The conservation of marine biodiversity and sustainable fishing are equally important points of departure.

Protected area at sea

- Contributing in bilateral policy and multilateral forums to a worldwide network of marine protected areas. Protection of marine areas makes the targeted protection of marine species, habitats and fish stocks possible.

Coordination in international frameworks

- Closer cohesion between different regimes with respect to biodiversity at European/Atlantic level (EU-OSPAR). This includes aligning the lists of threatened species and habitats in the OSPAR Convention and the Birds and Habitat Directives.

On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek cooperation with partners in civil society?

- Greening and increased sustainability of the North Sea Fishery by the Fishery Innovation Platform (VIP): business community, scientists and NGOs.
- Awareness-raising and conceptual development with respect to the problems of marine biodiversity and fishery chains and IUU fishing.
- Helping to implement projects, involvement in the tourism sector.
- Issuing measures to protect vulnerable species and habitats.
- Formulating and implementing a public-private partnership for sustainable fishing in West Africa.
- Implementing recommendations for a round table on fish meal (criteria and standards for sustainable fish meal industry) and translating them into a public-private partnership.





3.4 *The supporting priorities in detail*

3.4.1 **New coalitions for biodiversity**

The government of the Netherlands is only one of a large number of actors in a field as broad and complex as biodiversity (conservation, sustainable use and fair distribution). Cooperation between the government, the business community, non-governmental organisations, research institutions and members of the public is therefore absolutely essential if the objectives are to be achieved. There are already many actors involved in efforts to conserve biodiversity. The government of the Netherlands is delighted with this and will stimulate and facilitate initiatives wherever necessary. By creating new partnerships, it wishes to spur on creative new ideas and so increase the effectiveness of measures focusing on the preservation, sustainable use and fair distribution of biodiversity. This is one of the key challenges of this policy programme.

In specific terms, the Dutch government will help to facilitate such partnerships by supporting the public dialogue and by clustering authorities and civil society actors around specific themes. The 'Biodiversiteit door en voor burgers'

[Biodiversity for and by citizens] project in the 'Hoeksche Waard' is a good example of such a dialogue. The government's aim is to bring together the parties and create a useful public sector, one which brings together and inspires parties that want to try to promote the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Dutch government feels that its primary task is to facilitate the necessary social transition – a transition that will only be sustainable if the producers and consumers of natural resources agree on the prudent use of our biodiversity and reduce the Netherlands' ecological footprint abroad.

A 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force will be set up, on the joint initiative of business leaders,³⁹ to shape the public debate. The task force will be charged with guiding the transition to the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and with providing the government with concrete and feasible suggestions and measures. These suggestions and measures will guarantee the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the longer term. The business community must play an active role in this, particularly those economic sectors in the Netherlands that derive considerable benefits from global biodiversity while, at the same time, imposing a burden on it. Representatives of non-governmental organisations will also be invited to join the task force.



By creating new partnerships, it wishes to spur on creative new ideas and so increase the effectiveness of measures focusing on the preservation, sustainable use and fair distribution of biodiversity.

In consultation with the task force, the various Dutch ministries will establish platforms in which relevant actors in civil society will set joint priorities and further chart the innovative path to be followed. If possible, platforms will be established with participants from the relevant regions. The experiences with the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' transition and the 'Energy' task force will be used in setting up and facilitating these platforms, which represent a continuation of existing activities and form the link between implementation and cooperation.

Within the EU, the Netherlands committed itself to the objective of halting the loss of biodiversity in the European Union by 2010 – a deadline that is rapidly approaching. The efforts of other parties will be required if that objective is to be achieved. The government of the Netherlands will therefore encourage local government and non-governmental organisations to endorse this Countdown 2010 target and to draw up local or regional biodiversity action plans with specific measures. To help them, a 'Biodiversity Works Manual!' filled with inspiring examples will be published.

A number of international *Business-and-Biodiversity* initiatives have been or are in the process of being launched. For example, there is the dialogue '*Business and the 2010 Biodiversity Challenge*', launched on the basis of the Biodiversity Convention, the European *Biodiversity and Business Initiative* and proposals to establish a European platform for *Business and Biodiversity*. The Netherlands will use this European platform in relation to its own initiatives, which include 'BioBizz', a programme of measures designed to help companies in the Netherlands (multinationals as well as the SMEs) integrate

biodiversity into their business operations. In this programme, the government of the Netherlands will work with bodies such as the employers' organisation VNO-NCW, pioneers in the business community and CSR Netherlands, a centre of expertise in corporate social responsibility. It will also investigate with which companies or sectors voluntary, but measurable, agreements can be made on the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources. The government feels it is important to produce instruments that enjoy international support. It therefore intends to ensure that its instruments are adequately bedded down in an international context. One such instrument is a *benchmark* of the biodiversity policy of companies that have an indirect (chain) impact on biodiversity .

The government will carry out projects and activities in public-private partnerships (PPPs) wherever possible. The partnerships will be based on the partners' common interest in achieving the objectives. Public-private partnerships are not straitjacketed by regulations and financial mechanisms, but can enable the partners to pursue their common interests through joint action where appropriate. These partnerships, which are often international in nature, call for a new approach from the government. Lessons learned in the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' transition will be put into practice at this time.





What are the Dutch government's priorities?

- *To formulate the policy in a social dialogue with the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force.*
- *To use platforms as an instrument for securing widespread involvement of parties in the Netherlands and abroad and initiating practical innovations.*
- *To cooperate with business community to achieve biodiversity objectives in a national Business-and-Biodiversity Programme ('BioBizz'). In fleshing out the implementation programmes, cooperation will be sought with sectors that have ambitions in this area, such as the tourism sector, the ornamental flower industry and the wood sector.*
- *To investigate possibilities for a 'biodiversity-proof dredging' project as part of the innovation programme 'Building with Nature'.*
- *To explore the possibilities for measurable commitments by businesses to reduce the burden on biodiversity, for example by concluding covenants or agreements of intent.*
- *To design instruments, sector modules, national modules, benchmarks and biodiversity in sustainability reports; helpdesk function (international) and adequate communication to facilitate the business community's biodiversity policy.*

On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek specific cooperation with partners in civil society?

- *Participation in the task force and contributions to the platforms on the basis of the public interest.*
- *Specific cooperation in drawing up and implementing agreements and covenants.*
- *Working out codes of conduct to embed biodiversity in day-to-day decision making on criteria and the application of rules in business.*
- *Joint development and implementation of proposals and activities, with partners contributing to integration of biodiversity in their policy plans.*
- *Implementation of pilot projects for sharing best practices in the area of biodiversity, with the tourism sector, the plant improvement sector, the wood sector, and the biomass sector, etc.*



3.4.2 Knowledge for Biodiversity

Developing and generating specific support for national and international biodiversity policy requires us to use existing knowledge and generate new knowledge about biodiversity. Knowledge in this context refers to a fundamental knowledge of biodiversity as a complex biological phenomenon and its social significance, as well as to the applied knowledge needed to improve policy on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Most of the research into biodiversity in the Netherlands is carried out by universities, the institutes set up by Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR, including Alterra and IMARES), the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, institutes of taxonomy (e.g. Naturalis National Museum of Natural History and the National Herbarium), and institutes set up by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) (e.g. Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO) and the Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ)).

The Dutch government's policy with respect to biodiversity research will concentrate on three priority areas:

- 1 An adequate knowledge infrastructure;
- 2 Improvement in the dissemination and use of accumulated knowledge;
- 3 Research to support this policy and applied research.

The knowledge infrastructure in the field of biodiversity must match the needs of practitioners and help the Netherlands to secure a prominent international role in the field of biodiversity policy, biodiversity research and poverty alleviation.

The future Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity Research (NCB) will be given a greater role in helping to achieve the goals of the policy programme. The public function and expertise function of the NCB are important for promoting awareness and improving communication about biodiversity. The Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) will also be expanded into a knowledge base for specific target groups, including business.

The Environmental Assessment Agency (MNP), which merged with the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research on 1 January 2008, will have greater responsibility for reporting annually on the progress being made in the policy programme. Its progress reports can be geared to regional ecosystem assessments, such as the one being introduced for Europe in association with the European Environmental Agency (EEA). The Biodiversity Platform's advisory role in advising the government will be enhanced. Its main task will be to coordinate the three policy strands: research, the dissemination and use of knowledge, and the knowledge infrastructure.

In particular, the government of the Netherlands will facilitate *capacity building* in relation to biodiversity and water management in developing countries, for example through organizations such as Tropenbos International, Wetlands International, IUCN, Birdlife International and the WUR. Funds will be provided for PROTA from the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality for the period 2008-2012.





The Dutch government will promote the creation of knowledge networks to stimulate the dissemination and use of knowledge. Examples of such knowledge networks are the 'Nature and Poverty' network and the 'Ontwikkeling en Beheer van Natuurkwaliteit' [Development and Management of Nature Quality] (OBN) network. In light of the demand for fundamental and applied knowledge about biodiversity, the government will invest, on both a short-term and long-term basis, in establishing and maintaining a world-class research infrastructure. Current initiatives to collect, assemble, digitise, store and disseminate biodiversity data will be continued or improved. The government will urge coordination and cooperation between various information initiatives, such as DIVERSITAS, Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), its Dutch arm NI-BIF, Encyclopedia of Life (EoL), the Netherlands Species Register (NSR), the National Database of Flora and Fauna, Ecogrid and individual suppliers of biodiversity data (e.g. Private Data Managing Organisations (PGOs)). The government also supports the creation of Life Watch, the European monitoring and research facility that monitors, processes and disseminates information about biodiversity in Europe. Given the strength of the Netherlands' current position in terms of knowledge and information about biodiversity, these initiatives offer us clear opportunities to play a greater international role.

The outcomes of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Global Biodiversity Outlook II, the IPCC reports, future regional ecosystem assessments, various climate research programmes and existing priority research themes will provide an excellent basis for the immediate implementation of policy measures and for identifying specific knowledge requirements in support of policy and application-oriented knowledge. In defining the demand for new knowledge, consideration will be given to the knowledge that has already been or is being developed by Dutch research institutions. The challenge is to find a balance, both in implementation and in the debate with civil society, between the need for more knowledge and the urgency of direct action. The Dutch government's aim is that, where possible, policy will explicitly consider how to deal with uncertainties. In order to promote research in support of specific policy and applied research, the government will work towards establishing a new incentive programme in collaboration with the NWO and its foundation WOTRO Science for Global Development. The research will follow the main themes of the policy programme. Here too, existing knowledge and current research will be taken into account. Cooperation and exchanges between the research departments of ministries will also be intensified. The research programme will also be tailored to the wishes of the business community and the research being conducted by companies. There will also be scope for fundamental research.

The government of the Netherlands works on an ongoing basis with partners in civil society to identify the demand for knowledge. Research questions arising from the priority areas will lead to an additional research agenda for the medium term. If necessary and possible, this agenda will be incorporated in future programmes run by the WUR, the Adaptation Spatial Planning to Climate Change (ARK) programme, the incentive programme mentioned above and any follow-up programmes coordinated by NWO/WOTRO.

What are the Dutch government's priorities in the Netherlands?

- *Ministries will concentrate available knowledge resources and instruments, and coordinate their use in the priority fields identified in the policy programme.*
- *A knowledge agenda will be developed for each substantive priority; this will form the basis for the ministries' research programmes.*
- *The government will investigate how to improve cooperation in managing and disseminating existing prominent Dutch biodiversity collections.*
- *The globally accepted 'DIVERSITAS Science Plan' will be implemented nationally by the ministries of OCW, NWO, LNV and VROM.*
- *There will be a new NWO programme 'Biodiversity Works'.*

What are the Dutch government's priorities in international cooperation?

- *Supporting international knowledge networks (and their development) and capacity building.*
- *Joining with and investing in prominent or promising global research infrastructure and initiatives, such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and its Dutch branch, NLBIF and DIVERSITAS, Encyclopaedia of Life (EoL), and European knowledge networks in the area of marine biodiversity such as the Network of Excellence MarBEF (Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning) and terrestrial biodiversity such as NoE ALTERNET (a long-term biodiversity, ecosystem and awareness research network).*
- *Ensuring that the Netherlands' efforts in the EU and elsewhere match Dutch strengths in the field of research and policy formulation as closely as possible.*
- *Enhancing international cooperation, for example through CMS³⁰ and ESA,³¹ with respect to research on worldwide bird migration.*

On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek to cooperate with partners in civil society?

- *Review and update of Dutch Clearing House Mechanism.*
- *Permanent cooperation with civil society to identify knowledge needs.*
- *Development of special indicators for the evaluation of biodiversity policy.*
- *Promotion of cooperation and coordination between the CBD-CHM, NIBIF, WOT-Nature, the Data Authority Nature, the Netherlands Species Register, Ecogrid and Private Data Management Organisations.*
- *Advice to the government by the Dutch Biodiversity Platform.*
- *Cooperation with internationally active knowledge partners, including Tropenbos International, ECNC, Wetlands International, Birdlife International and IUCN, and civil society organisations and research institutes in the partner regions, with the aim of promoting effective knowledge development and transfer to stakeholders and other knowledge users effectively.*
- *strengthening the role of private research institutions in the field of biodiversity.*
- *Reinforcing the cooperation and exchange between ministries' research institutes .*
- *Supporting the research plan 'Sea and Coastal Research'.*
- *Actively supporting and guaranteeing the knowledge requirements of the Coordinating Body on Invasive Exotics.*



3.4.3 Communication on Biodiversity

Biodiversity is more than our biological heritage. Biodiversity performs vital functions and is valuable to our society in important ways. This applies equally to biodiversity that is less immediately visible, for example in soil, in water or in other countries. Loss of biodiversity reduces our quality of life, economic conditions and future options. Little is known about the functions and values of biodiversity, and much of it is hidden from view. As a result there is a lack of adequate support for the biodiversity policy and for a change of behaviour among governments, companies and consumers.

The government therefore wants to increase public awareness of biodiversity and make its functions and values more evident. To achieve this, it will launch a powerful communication, education and consciousness-raising campaign. A uniform, government-wide key message on biodiversity³³ has been developed and a project started to develop a more effective government-wide communication policy on biodiversity (Combio). This project will also produce analyses of other non-governmental organisations that communicate about biodiversity and make recommendations for improving joint communication by the various ministries. The changes will involve improving the communication infrastructure, for example coordinating any messages being communicated, integrating website information about biodiversity, and tailoring communication to different target groups.

In addition, besides the CEPA³³ principles in the Biodiversity Convention, new and existing programmes of education and consciousness-raising will take the functions, values and visibility of biodiversity as an important point of departure. Measures will include support for communication with the public through projects by intermediaries, such as visitor centres, natural history museums and National Parks, and a policy document on nature and environmental education (NME).

Individuals, companies, non-governmental organisations and local authorities will also be offered ideas for specific actions they can take to promote the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair distribution of its benefits, including outside the Netherlands. They will be encouraged to join the 'Countdown 2010' campaign and the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment's manual 'Biodiversity Works!' will provide inspiring examples for everyone.

There is also growing international awareness that biodiversity is important for our livelihood and, more particularly, that the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are essential for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation in many poor countries. The Netherlands will therefore continue the international exchange of expertise and experience in this field and actively support the CEPA working programme under the Biodiversity Convention.

Little is known about the functions and values of biodiversity, and much of it is hidden from view. As a result there is a lack of adequate support for the biodiversity policy and for a change of behaviour among governments, companies and consumers.



What are the Dutch government's priorities?

- *To increase the awareness and visibility of the vital functions and important values of biodiversity for people. This will be the basic principle when formulating, implementing and supporting communication and educational activities, requiring the government to communicate the priorities of this policy programme as well as to promote education through a policy paper on Nature and Environmental Education (NME), develop a follow-up programme Learning for Sustainability and implement the Regeling Draagvlak Natuur [Support for Nature Regulation] (RDN), as well as communication deriving from the long-term goals of biodiversity policy.*
- *To provide inspiring examples of specific actions, through The VROM manual 'Biodiversity Works!', that everyone can take to foster the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and fair distribution of its benefits.*
- *To actively support the CEPA working programme under the UN Biodiversity Convention.*

On what themes and activities will the Dutch government seek to cooperate with partners in civil society?

- *Improving communication about the functions and important values of biodiversity for people and making them more visible, using the channels of non-governmental organisations, economic sectors, etc.*
- *Supporting participation by other tiers of government and companies in biodiversity communication campaign 'Countdown 2010'.*





4 Management mechanisms and financial framework

4.1 Programme-based management

The government of the Netherlands proposes to implement the policy programme 'Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever' via programme-based management. In response to recent experiences, the government has opted to focus on a limited number of priorities. The urgency and complexity of the selected priorities exceed the capacity of a single ministry. The policy programme will produce coherency in the ministries' activities and cooperation between them, and facilitate implementation of the programme. The funds for the policy programme will be allocated to the priority fields.

The programme-based management style calls for an inter-ministerial structure in which the policy priorities are incorporated into the biodiversity-related themes of the various ministries. This structure must also act as a clear point of contact for the 'Biodiversity and Natural Resources' task force and other allied platforms. The relevant ministries will establish an Inter-ministerial Biodiversity Programme Team (IPB). The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality will head the IPB as the coordinating ministry for biodiversity. All the relevant ministries will provide personnel and appoint a contact person.

The IPB is responsible for inter-ministerial consultation and coordination on the biodiversity policy. The team will focus on cooperation, coordination and strategic policy making with respect to the priorities formulated in the policy programme 'Biodiversity works: for nature, for people, forever' and its implementation. The actual measures to be taken to implement the policy programme will be laid down each year in a work plan document. This will not affect the division of responsibilities between the ministries. Regular activities will be coordinated in broad terms but not at project level. In addition to the work plan for the priorities set out in this policy programme, the IPB will be responsible for translating recommendations and other findings of the task force into long-term implementation programmes for the transition.



4.2 *Financial framework*

The policy programme will be financed by the existing biodiversity-related funding. The estimated budget for the activities of the inter-ministerial programme team, the secretariat of the 'Biodiversity and natural resources' task force and its platforms is 2.3 million Euro a year. This budget will be managed by the inter-ministerial programme team and projects will be carried out by an implementing organisation. The ministries most closely involved will share the costs equally.

Initiatives arising from inter-ministerial cooperation, the task force and platforms (both multilateral and bilateral) will be financed from the regular ministerial budgets. For each proposal, a decision will be taken on the most appropriate policy framework for financing. An annual sum of approximately 230 million euro³⁴ has been included in the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality's budget for measures partly aimed at the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. These concern measures such as environmental conditions in nature areas, the habitat approach, management, international biodiversity, sustainable enterprise and knowledge and research. Initiatives related to Dutch biodiversity in particular will have to be financed from this budget. Of the funds set aside for environmental policy, approximately 1.5 million euro is available each year for the transition needed to promote sustainable biodiversity. Under the budget available for development cooperation, expenditure relating directly to biodiversity totalled approximately 90 million euro in 2007. The level of spending is expected to remain static in the coming four years. The budget has enough leeway to cover any new initiatives that may arise from the policy programme, provided they meet the criteria for development cooperation. Besides the budget for development cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget for the Matra programme is also relevant, since nature protection is one of the programme themes eligible for financing in this programme's pan-European regions.







5 Evaluation and monitoring

5.1 Evaluation

The government of the Netherlands will report to the Lower House of Parliament every year on the progress of this policy programme. The report will include a financial section summarising how the available resources have been spent. It will also indicate how much has been spent on regular biodiversity activities. This financial section will not replace the relevant chapters in the ministerial budgets concerned, but will summarise them and show how they relate to one another. The Dutch government wishes to provide an overall financial report on biodiversity policy in this way. The progress reports will also explain what specific activities the government expects to see carried out in the year ahead.

The Environmental Assessment Agency (MNP) will also report on the policy's performance in its balances, partly in relation to the actual quality of biodiversity in the Netherlands. In its forecasts, including its sustainability forecasts, the MNP will also report on performance in an international context, placing the policy programme in a wider context.

5.2 Monitoring

The MNP reports will maintain the framework for biodiversity indicators developed as part of the Biodiversity Convention (CBD). With a view to the European objective for 2010, the programme will also adhere to the pan-European indicator system, SEBI 2010 (currently in development). What is crucial when using these indicators is the cohesion between conservation, sustainable use (integration into economic sectors), public support and pressure factors (such as inadequate environmental quality).

In addition, starting in 2007 the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality will report annually on the state of Dutch biodiversity, based on an indicator developed within the context of the Vital Rural Area Agenda (AVP). The indicator is based on the long-term biodiversity target laid down in the 'Nature for people, people for nature' policy document: *'The conditions for the preservation of all naturally occurring species and populations in the Netherlands in 1982 will be permanently present in 2020.'* The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment will also facilitate the development and application of a soil biological indicator, undertaken by RIVM. The government will continue to support the essential role that Private Data Managing Organisations (PGOs) play in monitoring and providing data for biodiversity indicators.





Endnotes



ENDNOTES CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION (PAGE 9–10)

- 1** The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment started in 2001 at the initiative of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The aim was to identify the consequences of changes to ecosystems for the welfare of people, and to provide a scientific basis for the necessary action. More than 1360 experts from around the world have contributed to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.
- 2** Adopted during the Millennium Summit on Sustainable Development in New York, September 2005 (Millennium Development Project).
- 3** Communication of the Commission on 22 May 2006: ‘Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being’; Action Plan: Annex 1 to the Communication.
- 4** Communication of 20 November 2007 from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Preparing for the ‘Health Check’ of the CAP reform. (COM(2007) 722).
- 5** Coalition agreement between the parliamentary parties of CDA, PvdA and ChristenUnie, 7 February 2007, page 12.
- 6** European Commission, 2006. Communication of the Commission. Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond. Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being.

CHAPTER 2 THE CONTEXT (PAGE 13–17)

- 7** In the words of the coalition agreement: “The globalised economy risks ushering in a race to the bottom. The danger is that every country will produce at the lowest possible cost and pass on the burden of environmental deterioration and diminishing natural resources to the rest of the world and future generations”..’ (Coalition agreement between the parliamentary parties of the CDA, PvdA and ChristenUnie, 7 February 2007, page 8).
- 8** CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity.
- 9** World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg)
- 10** Conclusions of the Presidency, European Council, Gothenburg, 15 and 16 June 2001.
- 11** Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). Access to and the fair and equitable distribution of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.
- 12** For example: Nature for people, people for nature (2000), the National Environmental Policy Plan 4 (2001), Aan elkaar verplicht [Bound to each other] (2002) and Een zaak van iedereen [A matter for everyone] (2007).
- 13** NovioConsult Van Spaendonck, 13 June 2006. Evaluation of International Policy Programme on Biodiversity. Commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.
- 14** The Ecology & Development Working Group (WEO) is an independent network of experts in the international field of nature protection which was founded in 1975 with the aim of influencing Dutch development cooperation policy.
- 15** Lower House of Parliament, session year 2006-2007, 30 535, no. 5.

CHAPTER 3 PRIORITIES FOR 2008–2011 (PAGE 19–49)

- 16** These are: CITES, CMS and its protocols, the World Heritage Convention, Ramsar and IWC.
- 17** Funds are available in this context from the Matra programme, provided the relevant criteria have been met. With respect to biodiversity, the objective of this programme is to halt the loss of biodiversity in the Pan-European region by building up and enhancing civil society’s input into the theme of nature.
- 18** Brazil, Russia, India and China.
- 19** Based on ‘The Roots of Timber’, the Policy Plan 2006-2009 of the Netherlands Timber Trade Association (VVNH).
- 20** Assessment framework for sustainable biomass. Final report of the ‘Sustainable production of biomass’ project group (2007).
- 21** ‘Investeren in het Landschap, opbrengst geluk en euro’s’ [Investing in the Landscape, the yield in happiness and euros] (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; 2007) and the Social Cost-Benefit Analysis ‘Kwaliteitsimpuls Groenblauwe dooradering Hoeksche Waard’ [Improving the quality of the green-blue arteries in the ‘Hoeksche Ward’] (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment; 2007).
- 22** Nederlands Agrarisch Jongeren Kontakt [Dutch Young Farmers Contact Group].
- 23** Ecological networks consist of key areas with valuable biodiversity which are linked to one another by corridors and buffer zones whose ecological functioning is stable both for the network itself and for the neighbouring areas.
- 24** CBD, 2002. Strategic Plan. Objective 1.1.

CHAPTER 3 PRIORITIES FOR 2008–2011 (PAGE 19–49)

- 25 Including the Biodiversity Convention, the OSPAR convention, the Birds Directive, the Habitat Directive.
- 26 As on land, areas in the North Sea will be designated as protected areas on the grounds of the Nature Protection Act 1998. The Act's protection regime will apply for practically all uses in these areas. This means that a licence is required for projects and other activities that could significantly damage the quality of natural habitats and the habitats of species or could have a disrupting effect on the species for which the area is designated.
- 27 Regional Fishery Management Organisations (RFMOs).
- 28 Regional Fishery Management Organisations (RFMO).
- 29 In an open letter to the Dutch parliament and the government formateur (person charged with forming a new government), a large group of business leaders called for this policy to pay more attention to sustainability. One of their suggestions was to appoint a non-governmental task force.
- 30 Convention on Migratory Species, also including the subsidiary convention on the migration of birds in the African-Eurasian migration route (AEWA).
- 31 European Space Agency.
- 32 For the government's key message see the inside cover of this policy programme.
- 33 Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness.

CHAPTER 4 MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK (PAGE 51–52)

- 34 Of this amount, a very large share (approx. 200 million euro) is provided via the ILG.
- 35 PA= protected areas
- 36 EUROBATS = Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats
- 37 CITES = Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora



Appendix:

Overview of current activities in the Dutch biodiversity policy

Current activities (based on the action points in the European Commission's (EC) Action Plan)

EC Action Plan Current topics in the Dutch biodiversity policy

A THE TEN PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

POLICY AREA 1: BIODIVERSITY AND THE EU

A1

Protection of the most important habitats and species in the EU

- Creation of National Ecological Network (EHS), Natura 2000, Emerald Green Network (Bern convention) and creation of a Pan-European ecological network, including robust corridors, and the implementation of the long-term defragmentation programme.
- Protection, restoration and 'wise use' of wetlands worldwide via Ramsar and ecological networks.
- Support of Ramsar and Wetlands International.
- Designation and management of national parks.
- Contribution to protection of biological hotspots (protected areas).
- Integration of the concept of ecoregional development in development cooperation policy.
- Embedding of network concept in the working programme of the CMS (Bonn Convention).
- Adjustment of the existing protection regime in the Antilles.
- The Flora and Fauna Act.
- The creation of management areas (inside and outside the National Ecological Network) and the drafting of a national nature objectives map.
- Updating the red lists.
- Drafting of fauna management plans.
- Convention on the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW).
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention), in association with the the CMS there are agreements, among other things, on the conservation of migratory species such as waterbirds (AEWA), small cetaceans (ASCOBANS) and bats (EUROBATS) as well as several Memorandums of Understanding within the CMS. Cooperation with and development of an instrument for migratory birds of prey within the CMS and for the Central Asian flyway.

A2

Conservation and restoration of biodiversity and the ecosystem services throughout the rural areas in the EU

- Contributing to the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE).
- Further strengthening of the conservation of biodiversity in the further development of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and in the the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), with specific attention for 'high nature value farmland'.
- Pressing for consideration of the effects of the CAP and of European agriculture on nature in the review of the CAP.
- Attention for the effect of the cultivation of biofuels on biodiversity.
- Anchoring of three classes of agrobiodiversity in the working programme of the CBD in 2008, as basis for the inclusion of nature.
- Assisting developing countries in integrating biodiversity in agricultural areas, particularly where they are part of ecoregional development.
- Continuing the CBD working programme in revised management of agricultural areas, the more precise definition of the term 'good agricultural practice'.
- Attention for biodiversity in 'non trade concerns' of the WTO.
- Promoting good agricultural practice in developing countries, tailored to the local situation and to sustainable rural development.
- Maintaining attention for biodiversity in the FAO.
- Conservation regime for a selection of Belvédère areas.
- Demarcating and managing national landscapes by provinces.
- Allocating agro-environmental payments and payments for natural handicaps.
- Implementing the programme 'Sources of our existence'.
- Promoting an integrated landscape design.
- Supporting green and blue services.
- Steering the implementation of the management of the programme by the central government.
- Increasing the sustainability of agriculture.
- Reconstructng the sandy areas.
- Addressing dehydration (Desired Ground and Surface Water Regime - GGOR) and setting targets for environmental quality.

A3

Conservation and restoration of the biodiversity and the ecosystem services in the marine environment of the EU

- Regulating the legal status of genetic sources in the open sea through 'UNCLOS implementation agreement on marine biodiversity'.
- Implementing the 'Water Framework Directive' (KRW) and the 'Marine Strategy Framework Directive'(KRM).
- Implementing Management Vision North Sea 2010.
- Establishing 'Public Private Partnership' (PPP) for sustainable fishery and aquaculture in Asia.
- Implementing CBD working programme on 'marine and coastal biodiversity'.
- Designating protected areas on sea (MPAs, Natura 2000, etc.).
- Implementing and further developing the OSPAR Convention.
- Fishery policy

A4

Strengthening the unity of regional and spatial development with biodiversity in the EU

A5

Significant reduction of the impact of invasive exotic species and genotypes on biodiversity in the EU

- Performing risk analyses.
- Identifying and monitoring of exotics by the monitoring network of Private Data Management Organisations (PGOs) and other 'eyes and ears' in the field.
- Preventing and combating.
- Communication (creating awareness of the risks of exotic species for indigenous biodiversity).

POLICY AREA 2: THE EU AND GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY

A6

Significant improvement in the effectiveness of international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services

- Strengthening global *governance* with respect to biodiversity issues, in association with the UN process with respect to the institutional setting for environmental activities of the UN.
- Contributing to sustainable use and conservation of ecological networks outside Europe, including the protection of biological hotspots (PAs³⁵).
- Embedding the network concept in the working programme of the CMS (Bonn Convention).
- Adapting the existing conservation regimes in the Antilles with a view to impending changes in governance.
- Further developing the Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands (Ramsar), Convention on the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention; section on species), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS, Bonn Convention), including the subsidiary agreements on the conservation of species such as waterbirds (AEWA), small cetaceans (ASCOBANS) and bats (EUROBATS³⁶) as well as a number of Memorandms of Understanding in the CMS.
- Supporting the role of Wetlands International , partly as a supporting organisation for Ramsar.
- Supporting capacity building for managers in developing countries (e.g. via DLO support as part of WETCAP and Ramsar Advisory Board).
- Capacity building in the field of integrated water management.

EC Action Plan *Current topics in the Dutch biodiversity policy*

A7

Significant strengthening of the aspect of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU's policy for external assistance

- Integration of poverty alleviation in the ABS regime.
- Integration of development aspects in the work of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
- Contribution to negotiations and EU input for the FAO International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
- Integration of the concept of eco-regional development in policy on development cooperation.
- Further implementation of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in the Netherlands in close collaboration with the Centrum for Genetic Resources Nederland (CGN).
- Incorporation of the Dutch collections of crops listed in the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in the multilateral system where possible.
- Conservation, restoration and *wise use* of wetlands worldwide via Ramsar and ecological networks.
- Promotion of the combination of conservation of wetlands and 'sustainable livelihoods', including integrated management of land and water in accordance to the 'Guidelines on Agriculture, Wetlands and Water Resource Interactions' (GAWI), taking into account ecosystem services of wetlands, and the development of Ramsar-FAO guidelines.
- Integration of water management in development cooperation policy.
- Elaboration of bilateral water policy in the form of WSSD partnerships and water panels.
- Support for socially just legislation with regard to land ownership and use.
- Active promotion of sustainable forestry.
- Prevention of land degradation via TerrAfrica and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the sustainable use of deserts, savannahs and steppes.

A8

Significant reduction of the impact of international trade on global biodiversity and ecosystem services

- Implementation and further development of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES³⁷).

POLICY AREA 3: BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A9

Support for the adaptation of biodiversity to climate change

- Integration of climate risks in development cooperation policy.
- Decision on details of emission trading in the context of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), in relation to COP 13 or COP/MOP 3 of the Convention on Climate change
- Green Seat tree for travel.
- Adaptation of farming methods, (e.g. cultivation of biofuels) taking into account the impact on biodiversity.
- Implementation of programme 'Clean and efficient'.
- Adaptation measures through the construction of the National Ecological Network, 'a Green-blue veining', and Natura 2000 areas.
- Limiting the damage and adopting measures in ecosystems that are highly vulnerable to climate change, including Arctic systems, wetlands and coastal areas.

POLICY AREA 4: KNOWLEDGE

A10

Significant strengthening of the knowledge base for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in the EU and globally

- Financing WUR/DLO research, dedicated in part to the priorities in this policy programme.
- Starting pilot projects with 'sustainable management plans for ecosystems'.
- Keeping LNV databases of species and habitats up to date.
- Arranging for and responding to the annual nature and environment balances of the Environmental Assessment Agency (MNP).
- Performing activities by the Data Authority

EC Action Plan Current topics in the Dutch biodiversity policy

B THE FOUR SUPPORTING MEASURES FOR BIODIVERSITY

B1

Ensuring there is adequate financing

- Provide help in drafting plans for sustainable management and biodiversity.

B2

EU-level

- Strengthening policy making at EU-level.

B3

Creating partnerships

- Facilitate Corporate Social Responsibility, with the aim of promoting transparency about the impact of companies on biodiversity.
- Support for initiatives by the Dutch tourism sector and in developing countries, for example aimed at internationalisation of 'Product Environmental Care' and fleshing out 'Community-Based Tourism'.

B4

Raising awareness and increasing public participation

- 'Socially Significant Nature' scheme.
- Carrying out the 'Learning for sustainability 2008-2011' programme.
- Encouraging certification of sustainable wood.

C MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

C1

Annual reports

- The MNP will produce the annual 'Nature and Environment Balance'.
- Every four years the MNP will produce a 'Nature Outlook'.
- Annual reports on the progress with the policy implementation programme 'Nature for people, people for nature'.

C2

Indicators

C3

Monitoring

- National measurement network strategie

C4

Evaluation and assessment

- Once every eight years there will be an evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy instruments set out in 'Nature for people, people for nature'.



Colophon

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