

# New agri-environmental delivery systems in The Netherlands

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## Long tradition of agri-environmental measures

The Netherlands has a relatively long tradition of agri-environmental measures, as illustrated by the fact that Axis 2 measures are predominantly incorporated in existing national policy instruments for agri-environmental services. These existing instruments are the subject of national debate with respect to multiple issues such as efficacy and efficiency, the basis for remuneration, and needs for extra funding from public and private sources. Particularly in the last decade, an intensive search for new instruments and approaches has been seen in an effort to overcome these different limitations to prevailing agri-environmental policy instruments. To facilitate ongoing experiments at different administrative levels (provincial, local), the EU



approved in 2008 a national Catalogue of Green and Blue Services, a toolbox with new instruments and state-aid control checks for public financial support. Currently, this toolbox offers new opportunities for nature and landscape management for individual farmers and/or new collectives, e.g. agri-environmental cooperatives. The integration of blue services, providing temporary water storage capacity at agricultural or water retention services, is still under construction due to their complex relationships with prevailing legal frameworks.

## RDP and CAP still not very stimulating

RDP regulations offer little opportunity to co-finance innovative agri-environmental measures. The over-short length of contract periods, the 'income foregone' principle as the remuneration basis and highly limited opportunities to establish contract relationships with collectives as agri-environmental cooperatives, which are nowadays present almost everywhere in Dutch rural areas, have been identified as some of the fundamental shortcomings of RDP Axis 2 requirements. More generally, CAP Pillar 1 lacks sufficient targeting to respond adequately to the growing willingness but simultaneously differentiated farmers' capacity to respond actively to new societal demands with respect to sustainable management of natural resources and the preservation of rural amenities.

## Institutional learning challenges

- Better targeting of agri-environmental measures (AEM).
- More market-oriented remuneration systems for AEM.
- Reduction of transaction costs of AEM.
- Continuity in agri-environmental management.
- More adequate monitoring and evaluation of AEM.

## Contact information

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