PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Nature Outlook 2010–2040

NATURE AND LANDSCAPE IN 2040: DEVELOPMENT VISIONS

Summary and Findings

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PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency is the national institute for strategic policy analyses in the fields of the environment, nature and spatial planning. We contribute to improving the quality of political and administrative decision-making, by conducting outlook studies, analyses and evaluations in which an integrated approach is considered paramount. Policy relevance is the prime concern in all our studies. We conduct solicited and unsolicited research that is both independent and always scientifically sound.

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Foreword

‘What could still be regarded true nature in this country?’ Not much, according to the Dutch poet J.C. Bloem. Do our nature areas really amount to not much more than ‘a small forest, the size of a newspaper, and a hill with a few villas scattered across it’?
The Netherlands contains internationally unique and large-scale ecosystems, such as the Wadden Sea and the south-west delta. In addition, our nature provides various services, such as drinking water and protection against flooding. Nature, furthermore, is also important for recreation, and indeed also provides the setting for those hillside villas. This illustrates the diversity in values we award to nature. How nature is regarded and valued depends on the point in time and type of society. This Nature Outlook presents new visions on how nature and landscape could be perceived, including the benefits and possibilities for society.

After two decades of relative calm, nature policy now appears adrift. This not only concerns government budget cuts, but also the ongoing decentralisation of spatial and nature policies, and the promotion of the free market system and civic participation. Developments in other policy fields are also of great importance for policies on landscape and nature. This is particularly true for European policy on water quality, agriculture, fisheries and other use of the sea, but also applies to the national Delta Programme.

Dutch nature has a certain paradoxical aspect, as every area has been touched by human hands. However, this in fact provides opportunities for a creative and offensive nature policy. Over the past decades, nature policy has been focused largely on preserving biodiversity – especially in the Dutch implementation of the European Natura 2000 policy. This focus on the decline in especially vulnerable animal and plant species has become very procedural and judicial, and attention for experiencing and using nature has faded into the background.
Dutch society, however, makes quite extensive use of nature. For example, the dunes, which offer protection against flooding, provide clean drinking water and are areas of intensive recreational use. These dunes are also one of the most important areas that rank as nature areas of international importance. This example also shows that, in order to use nature, it must have a solid foundation. Because of the Dutch dune areas are relatively large, there is room for many uses; currently, they protect against flooding and are used for many forms of recreation, and there may be other, yet to be discovered new uses.
Within society, many initiatives have been developed to combine conservation and utilisation. A typical example would be Lake Grevelingen, in the Dutch province of Zeeland – one of the case-study areas for this Nature Outlook. Non-governmental organisations and businesses involved in Lake Grevelingen are jointly developing a plan for the future of this area. One of the elements of this plan is to restore the tides – one of the most important natural processes. This improves the quality of the water, which is beneficial to both recreation and the species of international importance.

In this Nature Outlook, PBL presents ideas for a new vision on nature and nature policy. A vision that returns nature policy to a central position within society, and that will help to create new public support; a vision to which administrators as well as experts and non-governmental organisations may contribute. This vision is presented using four perspectives on nature for 2040, describing the balance between conservation and utilisation, and showing that there are many groups within society that have a variety of reasons for being involved with nature and the landscape.

For the Nature Outlook, PBL relied heavily on contributions by a large number of people from knowledge institutes, the policy realm and societal groups. Especially Wageningen UR (Wageningen University and Research Centre) made an essential contribution. Furthermore, we also found inspiration in stakeholder meetings, workshops and interviews with representatives from a variety of societal groups and all levels of local government. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them for their valuable contributions.

Professor Maarten Hajer
Director PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Summary

In the Nature Outlook, PBL looks thirty years ahead; what could Dutch nature and landscape look like by 2040? The presented sketches of the future may contribute to current policy-making. The policymakers involved in such policies work in various areas of public office, but also at non-governmental organisations and in the business sector. Moreover, this not only applies to nature policy in the strictest sense of the word, but also to policies on landscape, spatial planning, energy and food.

People have always had various motives for their involvement in nature and the landscape. These motives contribute to the likely shape of Dutch nature by 2040. For example, it would matter a great deal whether the societal focus is on conservation and development of biodiversity, on more green areas for recreation, or on nature being utilised for economic activities. For whichever purpose nature would be used, the amount of attention paid to sustainability would also be of great influence.

During the last years, the focus of nature policy has been on realising ecological objectives and on the procedures for achieving them, which has led to a situation of few people still understanding this policy. In order to achieve a closer connection with society, a strategic vision needs to be developed that connects with all the different nature-related motivations that exist within society. Developing such a vision is not only a task of government, but also of non-governmental organisations. Taking the various motivations into account also helps to anticipate societal developments, such as sustainable entrepreneurship, increasing demand for recreation and for sustainable energy. This opens the way for new coalitions, such as in the building and energy sectors, as well as for renewing existing coalitions, such as with the sectors of recreation and agriculture.

Central government can stimulate the formation of these coalitions. Provinces, water boards and (collaborations of) municipalities have an important role, as well. Central government's role in the process relates to tasks that exceed the regional scale and require spatial planning or water policies. Examples of such tasks are water safety and the deliberate raising of the water table in peatlands for CO_2 fixation. Central government also has a role in coordinating nature policy and other policy fields on a national level. Example of such coordination is the economic policy focused on the expansion of top sectors, linking this with green growth and the combination of water safety and nature.Various coalitions between top sectors and the nature sector could be envisaged. However, this would also require attunement between the government's various sectoral policies, such as those on water safety and nature. For example, by focusing more on the delta character of the Netherlands, central government could conserve nature areas that are of international importance and create areas of highly valued nature, while optimising their various uses. Furthermore, the knowledge thus obtained could also be applied to nature areas abroad.

Central government retains its role in securing and developing collective values, such as those of biodiversity, landscapes and sustainable utilisation of natural resources on a national scale. Many of the coalitions envisaged in this Nature Outlook could ultimately produce remarkable nature, although none of its species or landscapes would be of international importance. Those important species and landscapes, therefore, require particular attention from central government. Realising a robust ecological network would be a suitable strategy for biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, such a robust network would create additional opportunities for the utilisation of nature without adverse effects on biodiversity. For the North Sea policy, the creation of a robust base for nature should particularly focus on limiting disturbance. This could be achieved by excluding certain areas from use, but also by applying new techniques, such as in fisheries or in the sustainable extraction of sand and other minerals.

This Nature Outlook focuses on the long term – with a time horizon of up to 2040. This long-term focus should also be taken into account in policy that is developed today. Therefore, a close eye should be kept on policy programmes such as the Common Agricultural Policy and Fisheries Policy, the Delta Programme, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Water Framework Directive, the Structural Vision on Infrastructure and Space, and finally on the EU Nature 2000 policy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Awareness of the multiple motivations relating to nature policy is increasing, also on a European scale.

Findings

Introduction: Nature policy in motion

Every four years, PBL publishes a Nature Outlook under statutory obligation. This year, the Nature Outlook is published at a time of important amendments made to nature and landscape policies and in related policy fields. This includes efficiency increases, less government involvement, and further decentralisation of policies on nature, landscape and spatial planning.
In the implementation of the current policy on nature and landscape, the focus has been directed to the National Ecological Network (EHS) in a way that has resulted in complex procedures. This applies especially to the Dutch implementation of the EU Natura 2000 policy. The current approach has led to few people still understanding the policy on nature or feeling any connection to it. With this Nature Outlook, PBL is presenting options for a new nature and landscape policy that is positioned securely within society. A policy to which administrators, experts as well as non-governmental organisations may contribute.

These options were worked out by taking into account the various motives that people may have for engaging in nature and the landscape. Some of these motives are ethical; for example, from the viewpoint that people are obligated to treat the earth's biodiversity with careful consideration. Other motives involve certain aspects of nature; for example, people seeking rest and relaxation. The motives have been portrayed using literature studies, stakeholder meetings, workshops and interviews. Subsequently, they were used as starting points to develop four nature perspectives for 2040: *Vital Nature, Experiential Nature, Functional Nature* and *Tailored Nature*. These perspectives cover a range between nature conservation and utilisation, and show the various ways in which nature and the landscape are used and valued in society.
The Nature Outlook connects nature perspectives to the following policy tasks for the coming decades: to preserve biodiversity; to improve public access to nature; to better utilise services provided by nature; and to strengthen the economic benefits of nature, while reducing the burden of statutory rules and regulations (see Figure 1).

These nature perspectives are intended to broaden people's thinking on nature and the landscape. They are not meant as a blueprint for Dutch nature or nature policy, but rather portray four ideal-typical images of the future. These portrayals, therefore, are one-sided and none will independently become a reality. In actual practice, combinations of these future images will often occur. For example, nature areas are important for both biodiversity and recreation.
Every nature perspective has been fitted with a policy strategy that indicates how such an image of the future could be achieved, anticipating possible future developments within society. In addition, the effects of each perspective are shown with respect to biodiversity, human experience and valuing of nature, sustainable use, as well as the financial costs and benefits.

The Nature Outlook does not cover all of the territory of the Netherlands. From 10 October 2010, this territory was expanded by the special municipalities of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba (BES). However, it was not possible to incorporate the BES islands into our study in a meaningful way, as one of the essential elements of the approach for this Nature Outlook is the close involvement of stakeholders, which requires careful preparation and thus a considerable amount of time.

The following sections describe the four nature perspectives. The last section unites the four perspectives to present the building blocks for an overarching vision, which forms a solid basis for extensive use of nature and the landscape. The focus is on strategic policy options that could be developed by the Dutch Cabinet and that would have an impact for at least the coming 15 years.

The 'Full Results' section of the Dutch report presents the nature perspectives in full detail and elaborates on related policy consequences. The background report to the Nature Outlook, which is due later in 2012, contains detailed descriptions of research approach and scenario methodology.

Objectives and motives of the four Nature Perspectives

Vital Nature 	Objective: • To preserve, restore and develop biodiversity of international importance. Motives: • Humankind is responsible for preserving and, where necessary, restoring biodiversity. • Biodiversity will be best protected in large connected areas which provide room for natural processes. • Existing international agreements to halt the decline in biodiversity, which the Netherlands has entered into.
Experiential Nature 	Objective: • To make nature and green features in towns and surrounding areas as well as the marine environment, available, accessible and something to be experienced by a broad public. Motives: • Being able to live in a 'green' or 'blue' environment is healthy and provides a source of relaxation. • A varied landscape, natural surroundings and the presence of attractive species form the basis of the nature experience. • 'Green' and ´blue´ surroundings are important to gain public support for nature and nature policy, reduce healthcare costs and are an establishment factor.
Functional Nature 	Objective: • To recognise the benefits which nature provides and use them in a sustainable way. Motives: • Humankind is responsible for the sustainable use of natural resources so that they continue to be available also to future generations. • Plants, animals and natural processes can be sustainably used by humanity. • Depletion of natural resources will be very costly in the long term.
Tailored Nature 	Objective: • To strengthen the economic benefits of nature while limiting the burden of nature legislation. Motives: • Nature is beautiful and important but subordinate to other functions. • Nature is robust, dynamic and adaptable. • Obstacles to economic development arising from legislation should be removed.

Source: PBL www.pbl.nl

Figure 1. The four nature perspectives presented in the Nature Outlook each fit a certain policy task and societal need.

The four nature perspectives for 2040

1. Vital Nature: Ecological network of natural processes

By 2040, there will be plenty of room for nature, according to the nature perspective of 'Vital Nature'. There will be unbroken expanses of nature, with natural processes having free reign, such as meandering brooks and frequent floodings. Outside these nature areas, agriculture and other use functions, such as housing and employment, have plenty of room to develop. This nature perspective is in keeping with the societal and policy tasks of preserving, restoring and developing biodiversity of international importance. In the Netherlands, this particularly relates to nature areas on the border of land and water, such as mudflats and dunes, the delta areas, peatlands and riparian areas. Other areas of international importance are the moraines covered with heather and sand drifts.

A strategy for preserving and developing such biodiversity of international importance is to restore the natural and dynamic processes that fit the delta character of the Netherlands. Examples of such processes are floods, sand drifts, tides and the process of erosion and deposits along the coast, rivers and brooks. This natural process requires the creation of a network of interconnected nature areas of a sufficiently large size – something that originally also was the starting point for the Dutch National Ecological Network (EHS), and has since been adopted in European policy. The realisation of the EHS, so far, has not led to such a robust ecological network. Large nature networks are also important in relation to climate change; for example, because they would enable species that are vulnerable to certain changes in climate to easily migrate to areas with a climate more suitable to them.

Developing an ecological network requires direction and vision, involving spatial policy as well as water policy, on both a national and international scale. The large areas and interconnected structures can only be created through spatial policy, which is also needed to regulate the influences of external functions. This concerns, for example, realising a certain groundwater level near nature areas, as this also influences the nature areas themselves. Water policy is important because many natural processes are related to water and take place on a national scale (restoration of tides in the riverdelta and protection of groundwaterbodies and seepage). Government management of development plans is necessary, although many parties (e.g. water boards and private parties) may play a role in the actual execution. The realisation of such an ecological network involves large investments, especially in the early stages. Here, government expenditure may be reduced by making ecosystems robust enough to also carry other uses. Examples of such uses are recreational functions and biofuel production, which may also co-finance the ecological network.
The Dutch 'Room for the River' policy programme is an example of combining biodiversity and user functions – in this case, recreational uses and protection against flooding (see photo). The Delta Programme may grow to become a comparable example in the future.

The Dutch Government also must comply with European regulations when creating these ecological networks. Current European policy is aimed at enclosing areas and preserving local habitats and species. This policy restricts the possibilities for the development of ecological potential and natural dynamics. If the Netherlands were to develop a long-term vision for nature that focuses on more natural processes and sustainable use, it could form a basis for trying to steer European policy in this direction. For the medium term, there are a number of nature areas where natural processes could be given more room to develop. Examples of such areas are stream valleys, rivers and the south-western delta.

The Dutch 'Room for the River' policy programme is a good example of a successful combination of new nature development and sustainable use; in this case, water safety and the mining of raw materials. Financing by several government departments is combined with the proceeds of, for instance, clay extraction.
Photo: De Jong Luchtfotografie.

2. Experiential Nature: Offering room for recreation and nature enjoyment

From the perspective of 'Experiential Nature', by 2040, nature areas will be freely accessible for recreational purposes. Landscapes are all small scale, with scattered around them some recreational forests and resting areas along brooks. There will be more green areas for recreation, especially in and around cities, and the countryside has been made attractive and easily accessible through cycle paths and footpaths. This image of nature in the future is in line with the societal and policy tasks of making nature accessible and enjoyable for the general public. Nature and the landscape are important for relaxation, health and recreation. Nature enjoyment and its recreational use create a broad support base for nature policy. Existing nature areas already have an important recreational function; for example, the coastal areas and dunes, the Oosterschelde delta, the Veluwe, the Dutch national park Drents-Friese Wold and other national parks.

The nature areas must be large enough to accommodate a wide variety of recreational functions, and all must be easily accessible. Larger areas also ensure that future changes in recreational needs may be met. To ensure that the public's wishes become reality, future users could be involved early in the design phase of such recreational areas, and, at a later stage, play a role in area management. This would enhance people's engagement in certain nature areas, creating a feeling of ownership.
There are high costs involved in nature development near cities. Land prices are high in such areas and the necessary and intensive management and maintenance of recreational facilities are costly. The relatively high costs of maintenance and management may be reduced if users of these areas help to maintain them. In addition, it goes without saying that coalitions between the nature and recreational sectors would be beneficial, as well. Collaborations between the nature sector and, for example, insurance companies are also conceivable, because of the positive effect of green environments on human health. An example of how the interests of private developers may meet those of the public is the plan for a tunnel under the A2 motorway at Maastricht in combination with the plans for a new city park (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *A tunnel has been designed under the part of the A2 motorway that runs through Maastricht, with a green belt along it, on surface level, to be used for recreation (figure on the left). This green belt operates as an ecological connection between a number of large nature areas (figure on the right). Private parties are also involved, partly because of the expected increase in value of the real estate in the vicinity of this green belt.*
Source: Project A2 MAASTRICHT Groene Loper © West 8 Urban Design & Landscape Architecture

By making nature areas more attractive and accessible, not only the green areas around the city, but also the countryside could be enjoyed more effectively. Options to achieve this can be found in current developments in the agricultural sector, whereby farmers broaden their activities and, for example, create paths or restore windbreaks. Other opportunities relate to the application of funds from the EU Common Agricultural Policy.

In order to be able to seize these opportunities it is important that those involved are willing to consider the various options and search for creative solutions. For example, the plans for the tunnel at Maastricht meant that the original nature objectives and plans for the ecological network had to be slightly altered.

3. Functional Nature: Recognising and stimulating sustainable use

By 2040, according to the perspective of 'Functional Nature', nature's provisional services will be used in a sustainable manner. Reed beds, for example, purify the water, and in peatland areas peat is being formed again, thereby sequestering CO_2. To achieve this image of the future, ecosystem services must be recognised and used in such a way that they can be sustainably maintained. Utilisation of nature is not a new thing; nature and the landscape already provide many services. Coastal protection and drinking water systems are services that have been supplied by the Dutch dunes for a long time. The dunes have caused the Dutch coast to positively distinguish itself from the coasts in many other places in Europe; recreational use and nature enjoyment followed much later.

In the future, ecosystem services could be utilised in a more efficient and especially more sustainable manner. This involves choosing more natural solutions, sometimes combined with technical ones. Examples are the use of wind and biomass in nature areas to produce energy, using nature areas for water storage, and using marshlands for water purification. The degree to which nature could be successfully used in a sustainable manner would depend largely on the pace at which economic sectors produce in a sustainable way, as well as on consumers focusing on sustainable products. The greatest challenge in stimulating sustainable use is that of creating markets that combine supply and demand of these services. An example of such a situation is the trade in CO_2 emission rights. The government has a role in creating such markets.

Another government role is that of developing knowledge and connecting private and public interests on a local level (also see photo). Guaranteeing the sustainable use of ecosystem services

is also partly a government responsibility. After all, certain ecosystem services serve the collective interest, such as dunes that protect against flooding and forests that sequester CO_2. Furthermore, the government could stimulate so-called top sectors in the Netherlands to use ecosystem services more sustainably. These top sectors have been identified as such by the cabinet because they offer opportunities for the Dutch economy. Examples are the agri-food, horticulture and water sectors.

Establishing field margins is generally financed by farmers, sometimes with the help of government subsidies. Farmers profit, as these strips of land contain animal species that contribute to pest control and combat plagues in adjacent fields. Tourists, holiday-makers and local residents also enjoy the flowering field margins. To date, they can do so free of charge. However, if they were to contribute financially, this could further stimulate farmers to establish even more attractive field margins, or save on government subsidies.
Photo: Buiten-Beeld/Nico van Kappel.

4. Tailored Nature: Increasing benefits, reducing burdens

According to the 'Tailored Nature' perspective, by 2040, nature will make money. Project developers, sand dredgers, gravel and clay companies, fishermen, farmers and recreational businesses will exploit nature in their day-to-day operations to a larger degree than they do today. Housing, companies, roads and windmills will have been built in the most economically beneficial locations, regardless of existing nature values. Agriculture and fisheries also will have more room to grow. Water is used for depositing dredged sediments. This nature perspective shows that nature can be profitable, instead of costing money. In locations where this is done in a smart way, the development of 'red' can also create additional 'green' (see photo). The size of the financial benefits strongly depends on economic development. In order to work towards and achieve this image of the future, the economic benefits of nature must be enhanced and the burdens of statutory rules and regulations related to nature must be limited. This from a point of view that although nature is important and nice to look at, it is subservient to other functions.

The economic possibilities of nature could be exploited to a larger degree if statutory regulations would be limited. Existing regulation could be modified in several ways. For example, the government could reduce the administrative burden by streamlining procedures around permits. Or it could make more use of the options under European policy. The European biodiversity strategy, for instance, permits Member States to allow multiple uses of nature areas, on the condition that these also contribute to the preservation and/or recovery of biodiversity.

In this nature perspective, when management of nature is left fully to the economic market, special attention should be paid to possible conflict between the various uses. Building development on the edge of or within nature areas, for example, could erode the quality of nature enjoyment, leading to a conflict of interest with the recreational sector. Without regulation – which would be in keeping with this nature perspective – those that provide the financing will determine what happens in such cases. Under a certain amount of regulation, there would be room for more activities. For example, the government could establish a 'fish field' at sea for the fisheries sector, when fishing is being pushed out by increased exploitation of the sea by cash-rich investments in sand excavations and wind energy.

In the north-western part of the Dutch city of Den Bosch, the Haverleij estate has been developed. The full plan covers around 225 hectares, 20 of which contain castle-like buildings and 65 hectares are used for a golf course. The surrounding greenery is financed mostly from the proceeds of the new housing.
Photo: Hollandse Hoogte/Siebe Swart.

Solid foundation is required for a great variety in nature and landscape uses

The four nature perspectives discussed above show possible images of future nature and landscapes in the Netherlands. These perspectives are ideal-typical images that never could be fully achieved in actual practice. Working towards one particular image of the future would be at the expense of another. However, combinations or regional distributions of these images of the future are conceivable.

This would mean making various policy choices. The first is that of which societal and policy tasks to work towards and which not to take on, or only to a limited degree. These tasks vary and relate to the different motivations and needs that exist within society. Another important policy choice is which roles to assign to government and which to other parties, such as non-governmental organisations and the business sector.
A number of the tasks relate to collective interests. In these areas, government involvement seems logical. Examples are the achievement of international biodiversity goals, protection against flooding, CO_2 sequestration, and the preservation of landscapes of international importance. Safeguarding these interests could be fundamentally organised in nature policy. It would subsequently be up to the government to make the choices. For the peatland regions, choices could be between using those lands for water storage or CO_2 sequestration, or to preserve them

because they are areas of international importance, or to choose for food production in combination with recreation.

If nature areas are sufficiently robust, a broadening towards recreational and sustainable uses could be considered. A metaphor in this respect could be a tree with a solid trunk base (the robust foundation) which is therefore able to carry a sizeable canopy (representing the various nature uses).
A broadening of nature uses would also improve the way in which nature meets the desires and developments within society. Furthermore, increased attention for enjoyment, recreation and sustainable use also offers the possibility for new parties to be considered in nature policy, and for revising the relationship with traditional parties, such as the agricultural sector.

A stronger trunk base enables the tree to carry a heavier canopy. This also applies to nature policy; if the basis is robust (if nature areas are large enough, interconnected through 'green' or 'blue' structures – in other words: if they are of an integrated design), there will be room for other uses. Examples are energy production, food production, drinking water supply, water basins, construction and recreation.
Photo: Luuk Huiskes

Within society, both corporate and civilian, several initiatives already are attuned to such a nature policy. This applies, for example, to sustainable food production, urban agriculture, red-for-green constructions, wind parks, and natural coastal defences, as well as financial relationships between nature and landscape organisations, citizens and the business sector. Past experience, however, has taught us that our expectations about societal initiatives should not be too high. Red-for-green constructions, for example, require a fair amount of empathy and mutual trust among the parties involved. In several existing red-for-green projects, some of the green ambitions have been abandoned. Although many coalitions between nature and other sectors do yield some interesting nature, to date, this has not resulted in biodiversity of international importance – something the Netherlands has committed to in international agreements.

Organisation and development of a vision by the national government are essential. On the one hand, because the government has access to instruments that other parties do not, such as statutory rules and regulations that are necessary to include 'laggards'. And, on the other hand, to ensure that collective interests remain in government hands.

The Dutch Government may draw on the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 when forming a vision on nature and in developing nature policy. The EU strategy offers opportunities for multiple uses of nature areas, on condition that biodiversity will not be negatively affected. The Natura 2000 policy,

for example, could be applied in a more flexible manner, thus creating not only additional space for the use of nature areas, but also for natural processes and for anticipating climate change.

The presented ideas and recommendations are directed to the formulation of a renewed policy on nature, for the middle to long term. However, this is still a long way off, with nature policy currently being in an interim phase; among other things because of ongoing decentralisation and cut backs. The national government as well as provinces and various non-governmental organisations are in search of a new positioning, the outcome of which cannot be predicted. In the meantime, it is important not to enter into any activities that would close the door on the sustainable use of nature in the longer term. This applies especially to activities with irreversible effects, such as the construction of permanent buildings, which should not be started without very careful deliberation. It is also important that activities are attuned to current policy processes, such as the implementation of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Delta Programme, and the ongoing decentralisation of policy on spatial planning.