



# IDELE

Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in  
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

## NETHERLANDS DUTCH RURAL POLICY

### General details

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### Details of activity

Description of Dutch rural policy	<p>Compared to many other European member states, the Dutch countryside proves to be atypical in the sense that, the Netherlands being a densely populated country, most of the countryside is under urban influence. Also a number of areas contain concentrations of intensive farming or greenhouse businesses.</p> <p>The Dutch countryside fulfils several essential functions for all Dutch citizens; it provides employment opportunities, living space, as well as landscapes to enjoy and recreate in. In addition it is the storehouse of nature, wildlife biodiversity and water. Combining these sometimes conflicting interests proves to be an interesting challenge. Creative solutions can be found in combining functions like recreation with agriculture or nature developments with water management.</p> <p>Changes in European rural policy will have great impact on the countryside. Many farmers will be faced with critical choices, and will either choose to expand, cease operation, or broaden their scope combining agriculture with other activities such as care, recreation, or energy production.</p> <p>There is a tendency for diversification of the rural economy; other economic activities are gaining importance.</p> <p>To encourage growth and vitality in the rural community all parties concerned need to be given room to manoeuvre. When</p>
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publishing their “Agenda for a vital countryside” in 2004 the Dutch government chose to devolve as much as possible and centralise only when necessary. While this Agenda describes the main national policy targets and budgets for the countryside, it is up to the regional and local authorities to translate these policies into action and integrate these into local and regional measures. Cooperation National funding of measures (by means of a broad Investment Budget for the countryside) will be based on multi-year target agreements with the regional authorities, which leave more scope for integrated and sustainable plans based on a combination of national and regional priorities.

Thus, the roles of the various actors are changing. The national government will be less involved in implementation and concentrate on facilitating policies by setting clear targets and providing knowledge and funding to regional and local authorities as well as reducing and simplifying rules and regulations and reducing the administrative burden wherever possible. Furthermore it will focus on the translating of global and European regulations into national policy. Local and regional authorities will have more responsibilities and scope for implementation. Local partnership, citizen responsibility, innovative entrepreneurship should be key words in rural development.

Based on the recently published Programma for a Vital Countryside 2007-2013 (thus complying with the time scope of the European rural development programme), agreements are now being set up by the national and regional authorities.

