

Showcase for nature-based solutions

Wageningen Environmental Research recently published a catalogue of nature-based solutions for societal problems.

The publication doesn't just showcase the options, it also pays attention to the practical aspects of nature-based solutions. Co-editor Daan Verstand sees it as good preparation for the NL2120 Growth Fund programme, due to start soon.

There are all kinds of options for using nature to tackle key challenges facing society. Examples are shellfish banks as extra coastal protection or increasing groundwater levels to reduce CO₂ emissions. But which measure is most appropriate for which contexts? And what about the practical aspects, possible downsides and the financial picture? The catalogue provides answers to all these questions.

Policy

The catalogue ties in with the previous publication of a green vision of the Netherlands in 2120 and the associated presentation of a Dutch city in 2120, with Arnhem as concrete example. Both future scenarios assume a situation in which natural systems are the determining factor, with spatial choices and solutions that are geared to nature. This approach is gaining popularity, and there is increasing interest in nature-based solutions. The idea is that the catalogue will give people something tangible to work with. According to the introduction, the publication is aimed at policymakers. Verstand says it's not quite that simple. 'It's always tricky to decide who exactly you are compiling your publication



The icon for one of the ten categories of nature-based solutions discussed in the catalogue ♦
Photo Menno Diersmann

for. We certainly see municipalities, provincial authorities and water boards busily investigating the possibilities of nature-based solutions. But the catalogue is absolutely also intended for private parties with an interest in this topic, such as civil engineering firms and area developers.'

On a large scale

While the catalogue is based on the Dutch context, an English-language version is also being prepared (though with the same Netherlands-based content) as this approach is attracting a great deal of interest internationally too. Most of the content does not go beyond an overview, explains Verstand. 'With two pages per solution category, you can't really go into much depth. The added value is precisely the breadth, showing and categorizing all the available options.' Parties that need

more in-depth information will soon be able to get that, once the NL2120 Knowledge and Innovation Programme starts. It has been allocated 110 million euros from the National Growth Fund. It

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aims to develop the knowledge and insights necessary to apply nature-based solutions on a large scale. 'For example, we will monitor and quantify in detail the effects of individual nature-based solutions,' says Verstand. The programme is due to start on 1 May. ME