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AND SUSTAINABLE DECISIONS ★
ABOUT NATURAL CAPITAL

Country Fact Sheet
NETHERLANDS



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Country Fact Sheet: Netherlands (NL)

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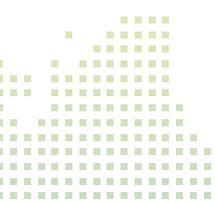
If you feel there are ongoing or upcoming research projects, policy initiatives or legislations, concerning the use of biodiversity, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services knowledge in decisions and policies, missing please contact inge.liekens@vito.be and we update the country fact sheet (until March 2027)

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Update on projects concerning biodiversity, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services assessment and accounting since 2022

In the Netherlands there are five main ES projects funded by the Dutch government dedicated to mapping and/or assessment of ecosystem services. In short, the project 'Atlas Natural Capital' focuses on mapping ES and the project 'Natural Capital Accounts' focuses on both assessment and mapping.

The projects 'Indicator of Nature Services', 'Natural Capital The Netherlands' and the project 'TEEB-NL' focus on ES assessment.

The Atlas Natural Capital (**Atlas Natuurlijk Kapital**) was officially launched on 22 September 2015 by the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment). The Atlas provides information on the status and trends of natural capital and ecosystem services in the Netherlands. It created also the Groenbatenplanner (**Groene Baten Planner**), an assessment tool. supports spatial planners in identifying the added value of applying greenery in the spatial design of an urban environment. In this way, the GBP provides insight into the benefits of adding greenery to city development plans. The RIVM makes the GBP available

via an API. This allows platform developers to use the tool within their application. The tool has been used in the city of Amersfoort, see [here](#).

The Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS) compiles the National Accounts for the Netherlands annually. The CBS is researching the possibility of a Natural Capital Account using the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting. The Natural Capital Account would describe which economic sectors use ecosystem services and where the services are supplied. The Accounts can be described in physical (e.g. CO₂-storage and water use) and monetary terms.

Groen in en om de stad (GIOS) (Green in and around the city) is an integrated approach that aims to create a green and healthy living environment in and around cities while working on biodiversity recovery, climate adaptation and health. The focus areas of the program are: safeguarding a minimum green standard ("groen norm"), developing guidelines to support municipalities, knowledge development and sharing, and financing.



Agenda Natuurinclusief (Nature Inclusive Agenda).

The aim of this agenda is to accelerate the transition to a nature-inclusive society by 2050. Nature-inclusive is defined as the extent to which social and economic activities are intertwined with nature. The agenda is drawn up by public and private parties from 10 different sectors: Energy, Infrastructure, Water, Agriculture, Business Parks, Construction, Health, Leisure Economy, Financial Sector, and Education.

■ [Kamerbrief over Agenda Natuurinclusief 2.0 | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

■ [Kamerbrief met kabinetsreactie op Agenda Natuurinclusief 2.0 | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

The NL2120 knowledge and innovation program focuses on research into nature-based solutions. The aim is climate resilience and restoring biodiversity while maintaining productive capacity and strengthening broad prosperity. The program combines a national knowledge program with gaining experience in ongoing area projects in various landscape types, such as high sandy soils, peat meadow areas and cities. Within these projects, the parties involved learn about the operation of nature-based solutions, innovative revenue models and social transition processes.



Examples of uptake in decision processes, regulations and/or legislation

Inclusion of Nature-Based Solutions in the Dutch Beleidskompas

Since 2023, the Dutch Beleidskompas, a strategic policy guide for national policymakers, incorporates Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) to address environmental and societal challenges. These solutions, such as wetland restoration and urban green spaces, enhance ecosystem resilience and improve human well-being.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, along with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, leads the implementation of NBS. They collaborate with local governments, environmental NGOs, research institutions, and private sector partners. Key stakeholders include local communities and environmental scientists, who provide support and expertise for these initiatives.

Inclusion of Ecosystem Services in the Nationaal Programma Landelijk Gebied (NPLG)

The Nationaal Programma Landelijk Gebied (NPLG) incorporates ecosystem services to enhance rural development and environmental sustainability in the Netherlands. By making use of the National Natural Capital accounts, valuing natural processes such as pollination, water purification, and soil fertility, the NPLG aims to support agricultural productivity, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality oversees the integration of ecosystem services in the NPLG, working closely with provincial governments, farmers, environmental organizations, and research institutions. These stakeholders collaborate to implement practices that sustain and enhance ecosystem services, ensuring long-term benefits for both the environment and rural communities.

Milieu Effect Rekeningen and Ecosystem Services Mapping

Milieu Effect Rekeningen (MER) are environmental impact assessments required for major projects and policies in the Netherlands. These assessments now increasingly include ecosystem services (ES) mapping to evaluate the benefits provided by natural processes, such as clean air, water, and biodiversity. The integration of ES mapping in MER helps to identify and balance ecological, economic, and social trade-offs, aiming for more sustainable outcomes.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management leads the MER process, collaborating with local governments, environmental NGOs, scientific experts, and industry stakeholders. Key leverage points that facilitated the uptake of ES mapping in MER include the alignment with EU Biodiversity Strategy targets and the Nature Restoration Law, as well as enthusiastic support from certain political parties and European



funding opportunities. These factors created a policy window, encouraging the adoption of comprehensive ES assessments.

Despite the progress, challenges remain in fully integrating ES assessments into MER. Not all ecosystem services are considered, leading to incomplete evaluations and unrecognized trade-offs, which can hinder truly nature-positive decisions. The building and construction sectors, where MER is commonly practiced, often face difficulties due to these gaps. Nevertheless, the inclusion of ES mapping in MER represents a positive step towards incorporating ecological considerations into policy and project planning, promoting better environmental and societal outcomes.

Use of the Groene Baten Planner in Urban Development Projects

The Groene Baten Planner (Green Benefits Planner) has been utilized in large-scale urban development projects, such as in Dordrecht, to incorporate ecosystem services (ES) assessments into city planning. This tool helps quantify the value of natural capital, integrating ecological, economic, and social benefits into the decision-making process. In Dordrecht, the Groene Baten Planner was used to highlight the value of green spaces, water management, and biodiversity, demonstrating their contribution to urban resilience and public health.

The urban development projects in Dordrecht involved a collaboration between the municipal government,

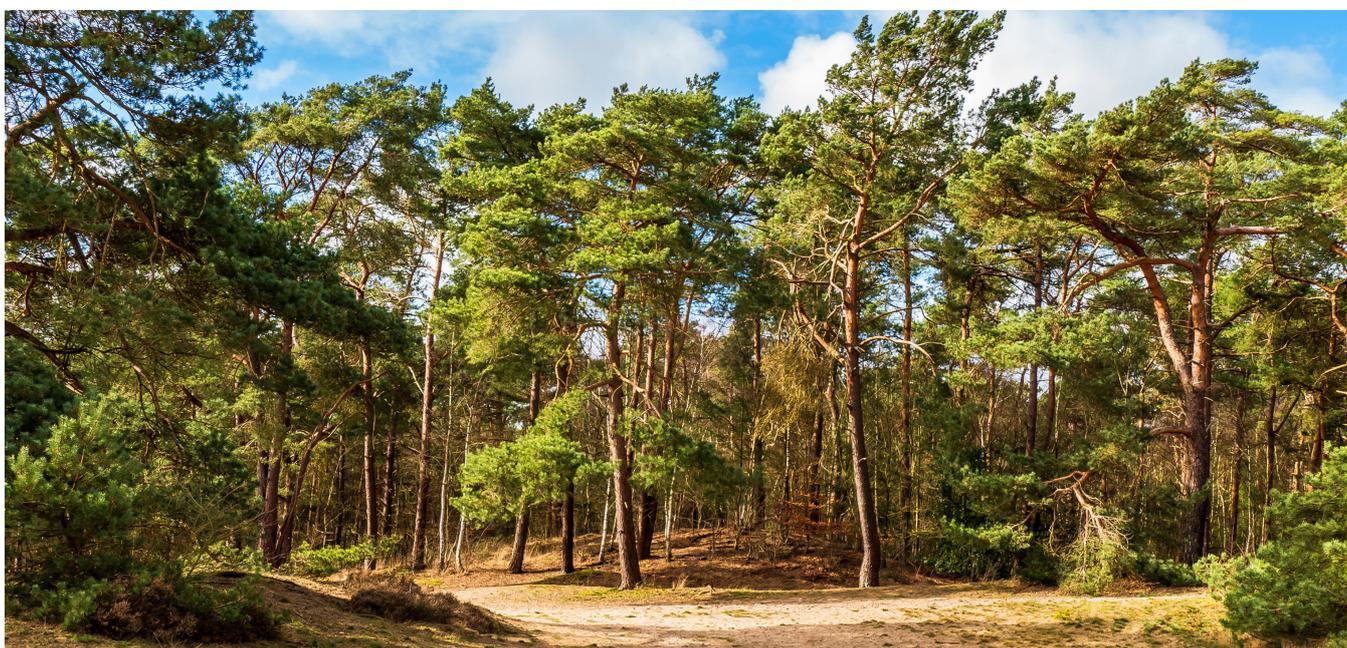
urban planners, environmental NGOs, health experts, and local communities. Key leverage points that facilitated the uptake of the Groene Baten Planner included European funding availability, policy alignment with the EU Biodiversity Strategy targets, and strong support from local political parties advocating for sustainable development. These factors created a conducive environment for integrating ES assessments into the planning process.

While the Groene Baten Planner offers clear insights into the value of natural capital and addresses health benefits derived from ecosystem services, it remains incomplete in its assessments. Not all ecosystem services are considered, which can obscure trade-offs and leads to underappreciation of the full value of natural capital. Despite these challenges, the tool has positively influenced policymaking in the building and construction sectors, promoting a more holistic approach to urban development that recognizes the importance of ecosystem services for sustainable and healthy cities.

MKBA-Werkwijzer Natuur (MKBA guideline nature);

A social cost-benefit analysis (SCBA) is a tool to make integrated considerations about spatial decisions. In the Netherlands, we have developed a guideline on how to integrate nature in such analyses: **for example**.

Adaptation building decision: Buildings need to foreseen nesting possibilities for birds and bats. **Kamerbrief reactie op artikel natuurvoorzieningen in bouwbesluiten | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl**



3

Perceived barriers and needs to enhance uptake

3.1 Barriers

- **Political Landscape:** The political climate can be a significant barrier, as changes in government or political priorities can disrupt long-term environmental initiatives. Inconsistent support for green policies can hinder the steady progress needed for comprehensive ecosystem services (ES) uptake.
- **Legislative Gaps:** While there are policies that support the integration of ES, the lack of a robust legislative framework specifically mandating their consideration makes implementation inconsistent and non-uniform across different regions and sectors. This inconsistency is exacerbated by existing processes and procedures that do not mandate the integration of natural capital, often making it voluntary and perceived as extra work. Additionally, harmful subsidies financing intensive agricultural practices illustrate the gaps in current legislation.
- **Funding Limitations:** Sufficient and consistent funding is crucial for the implementation and maintenance of ES projects. Budget constraints and competing priorities can limit the financial resources available for environmental initiatives.
- **Awareness and Understanding:** A lack of awareness and understanding of the benefits of ES among policymakers, stakeholders, and the public hinders their integration into planning and decision-making processes. Many are unaware of the National Natural Capital accounts and their potential applications. Misconceptions about the costs and benefits of ES further complicate their adoption.
- **Technical Challenges:** The complexity of accurately mapping, assessing, and valuing ES requires advanced technical expertise and data, which is not always readily available. This leads to incomplete or inaccurate assessments, reducing their effectiveness. Moreover, the lack of data on the monetary value of nature and ecosystem services, such as the health benefits of green spaces, and issues with the scale and applicability of available data, particularly in spatial decision-making, further impede effective integration.

3.2 Needs

- **Strong Legislative Framework:** Establishing clear laws and regulations that mandate the consideration of all ES in all relevant policy areas would provide a solid foundation for consistent and effective uptake.
- **Stable Funding Sources:** Ensuring dedicated and stable funding for ES projects would help overcome financial barriers. This could involve public investment, private sector partnerships, and access to European funding programs. Where identified harmful subsidies can be redirected to subsidies that support nature positive activities
- **Capacity Building and Education:** Investing in education and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the understanding and skills of policymakers, planners, and stakeholders regarding ES. This would include training programs, workshops, and the development of educational resources.
- **Technical Support and Data Accessibility:** Providing technical support and ensuring the availability of high-quality data and tools for ES assessment would enable more accurate and comprehensive evaluations. This could involve collaboration with research institutions and the development of standardized assessment methodologies.
- **Political Commitment and Leadership:** Strong political commitment and leadership are essential to drive the integration of ES. Championing these initiatives at the highest levels of government can help overcome resistance and ensure sustained focus on environmental priorities. The development of a Gross Ecosystem product and the integration of this in National statistics accounts could be a helpful first step..





4

On the way to transformative change

The overall conclusion of the IPBES global assessment (IPBES 2019) was that Goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond, may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors.

Transformative or transformational change refers to “a fundamental, system-wide reorganization

across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values” (IPBES, 2019). Simply said, doing things differently, rather than doing less or optimising the system.

A means to enhance uptake is bringing people of the quadruple helix together and exchange information and learn from each other. Another is to establish projects that can show that it works and lead to possible pathways of transformative change.

4.1 Community of practice

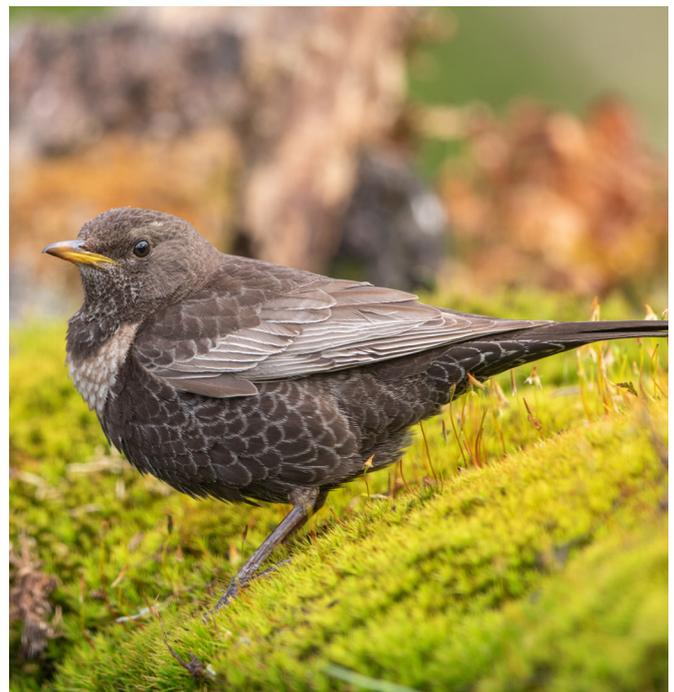
The Community of Practice (CoP) Natuurlijk Kapitaal was established to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration among stakeholders interested in the integration of natural capital and ecosystem services into decision-making processes. Participants include representatives from local governments, environmental organizations, research institutions, and private sector entities.

The primary aim of the CoP is to foster collective learning and development by bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise. Over the past year, the CoP has made significant strides in identifying needs and opportunities through initial meetings that highlighted demand and supply dynamics. The group has worked on case studies in rural areas, such as the Noardlike Fryske Wâlden, and urban settings, like the municipality of The Hague. A focused session was conducted on non-market values, culminating in an evaluation meeting that incorporated insights from the international Selina Project identifying ‘Seeds of Change’.

Recently, the CoP has been relatively quiet due to a leadership transition within the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and an evaluation of the CoP’s effectiveness. This pause provided an opportunity to reflect on the CoP’s progress and plan for its future. Despite productive knowledge exchanges, it became clear that the CoP had not fully achieved its goal of collective learning and development. This shortfall is partly due to the current composition of the group, the diversity of themes covered, and the limited capacity of participants to engage deeply with the topics.

Moving forward, the CoP will focus more on practical case studies where the integration of natural capital and ecosystem services can have a significant impact. The group’s composition will be adjusted to better align with these practical needs.

Currently the CoP is inviting stakeholders to join the CoP if they are involved in a project where incorporating natural capital and ecosystem services into decision-making could provide valuable insights or strengthen the business case. Additionally, for municipal stakeholders, we aim to improve the transfer of existing knowledge on this subject.



4.2 Seeds of transformative change

Several projects were nominated. Only of the following information was received.

The “Werklandschappen van de Toekomst” (Work Landscapes of the Future) project envisions the creation of sustainable and innovative work environments that harmonize economic activities with ecological and social goals. This project aims to redesign industrial and commercial landscapes to be more resilient, inclusive, and adaptable to future challenges.

The project incorporates seeds of transformative change by integrating principles of sustainability and circular economy into the design and development of work landscapes. It emphasizes the use of green infrastructure, renewable energy sources, and sustainable materials to reduce environmental impact. The project also specifically promotes social inclusion and community engagement, ensuring that the benefits of sustainable development are widely shared.

Key stakeholders include local governments, businesses, environmental organizations, and research institutions. Together, they collaborate on pilot projects and case studies that serve as models for future developments. By fostering innovation and collaboration, the “Werklandschappen van de Toekomst” project aims to transform work landscapes into thriving, sustainable ecosystems that support both economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Embassy of the North Sea gives a voice to the North Sea through ambassadors in discussions.

Emissary of GAIA: In 2023, Meyberg launched the ‘Emissary of GAIA’, a groundbreaking project that provides ecosystems the ability to speak through AI and communicate with humanity.

Groene schoolpleinen

■ Groene schoolpleinen – IVN



Project duration: 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2027

Keywords: biodiversity, ecosystems, ecosystem services, natural capital accounting, evidence-based decision-making, transformative change

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PROJECT PARTNERS

-  Leibniz University Hannover
-  Stichting Capitals Coalition
-  Ecostack Innovations Limited
-  University of Trento
-  Pensoft Publishers
-  Centre for Ecological Research
-  Mykolas Romeris University
-  Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
-  University of Patras
-  space4environment
-  National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography
-  Rey Juan Carlos University
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-  University of Bucharest
-  Flemish Institute for Technological Research
-  Foundation for Sustainable Development
-  Baltic Environmental Forum
-  Adam Mickiewicz University
-  National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment
-  Copenhagen University
-  Norwegian Institute for Natural Research
-  Estonian University of Life Sciences
-  The Cyprus Institute
-  Wageningen University
-  The Finnish Environment Institute
-  Global Change Research Institute SarVision
-  Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic
-  Gaspar Frutuoso Foundation
-  Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest
-  Municipality of Trento
-  Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
-  Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia
-  Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources
-  University of Haifa
-  COHAB Initiative Secretariat
-  KTH Royal Institute of Technology
-  Croatian Forest Research Institute
-  SEAcoop
-  Macroplan
-  University of Reunion Island
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-  South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute

