



PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Nature Outlook: Report on the Third Dialogue, 17 and 18 June 2015



1 Introduction

On 17 and 18 June 2015, the third dialogue on the future of nature in Europe took place at the Square Brussels Meeting Centre in Brussels. The dialogue was organised by PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC). The group of participants consisted of more than 30 representatives from European organisations involved in nature conservation, spatial planning, agriculture, hunting, health care and research (see the list of participants on page 12).

PBL and ECNC appreciate the number of high quality ideas generated during the dialogue. This report presents the summary of the results of the dialogue, which will be used as valuable input to the Nature Outlook. This study is being conducted by PBL to provide input for discussions about the future of nature and biodiversity in Europe. The study will be published in the second half of 2016.

This dialogue was the last in a series of three. It focused on deriving key messages related to nature policy and other policies from the perspectives that were developed by PBL, using the results from the former dialogues. The first dialogue took place on 2 and 3 December 2014. During that dialogue, the perspectives were defined, and they were worked out during the second dialogue on 17 and 18 March.

2 Nature Outlook – opening session

Context and aim of the project

At the start of this third dialogue, PBL Department Head Keimpe Wieringa explained the context of the project and answered various questions.

The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs has requested PBL to produce a Nature Outlook. Taking into account the latest indications about progress towards the targets in the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and the likelihood that several will not be met, the Ministry considers it necessary to start thinking and discussing about the long-term future (towards 2050) of Europe's nature and biodiversity. An outlook can support this process. This worked very well with the Dutch Nature Outlook, published in 2012. The Nature Outlook aims to provide inspiration for strategic discussions on EU policies beyond 2020 that are related to nature conservation. The approach is to develop a multi-perspective approach to identify the synergies and new coalitions that are possible and/or required between nature and other sectors.

There was some misunderstanding among several organisations about the aim of the Outlook and concern that it would interfere with the current policy review, but this is not the case. The Nature Outlook looks at the long-term future (towards 2050) and should not be considered an evaluation of the past or the present. In addition, it is not a review of EU nature policies. The Outlook takes the EU Biodiversity Strategy as a starting point, but does not question its goals. Rather, the Outlook is aimed to provide perspectives that may increase understanding about the differences in motives and viewpoints between various stakeholders, and seeks to identify new synergies between nature and other sectors, such as agriculture, energy, water, public health, and rural development. The

Nature Outlook also explores the scope for linking policies in various sectors. By doing so, it may help to build new coalitions and develop integrated policies between nature and other sectors.

To avoid any misunderstanding, the planning of the Outlook process has been adjusted. The final report will be published in the autumn of 2016, after the Dutch presidency of the EU has finished.

Steps taken since the second dialogue

Henk van Zeijts, project leader for the Nature Outlook, explained which steps have been taken since the second dialogue held in March.

The report on the second dialogue has been sent to the participants. The results were analysed and provided input for the further development of the perspectives. An accompanying literature analysis has been conducted, together with modelling and the development of thematic maps. A reference scenario has been developed and described. The participants have received this description in advance of the third dialogue. This reference scenario explores the main challenges for nature and nature policy that can be expected in the future.

During the second dialogue it was suggested to remove the 'Boxed Nature' perspective, as it might be at odds with the EU Biodiversity Strategy. However, PBL decided to retain this perspective, because this viewpoint exists in practice and may also provide valuable insights. However, the character of the perspective was somewhat altered; Natura 2000 areas are respected and, as in all other perspectives, the existing EU nature regulations remain in place.

The names of perspectives were changed and matching icons were designed:

PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

New names of perspectives

- Vital Nature
 - Allowing nature to find its way
- Cultural Nature
 - Strengthening cultural identity
- Functional Nature
 - Cooperating with nature
- Boxed Nature
 - Going with the economic flow

11 17 June 2015 | Kaimpe Wieringa, Henk van Zeijts

Questions and remarks

During the discussion that followed, a number of questions were posed. One participant asked whether, because of the postponed publication of the Nature Outlook, there would still be enough time and opportunity for the Outlook to feed the reaction of the

Commission into the Fitness Check and the Midterm Review? In reply to this question, it was explained that the Nature Outlook is focused on exploring long term policies and that one of its aims is to facilitate the integration of nature policy into other policies. It will require time to think this through and, therefore will go beyond the period of responding to the Fitness Check. Following publication of the Fitness Check and the Midterm Review, discussions will start on what should be done next and what the targets will be for the period after 2020. With appropriate communication, the Nature Outlook can provide relevant insights for these discussions. There will be enough room for discussion about strategies for the longer term. Another participant asked on what term and to whom the messages that would be derived from the perspectives were addressed. The answer to this question was that messages are focused on measures and actions that could be taken in the short term, also taking into account the perspectives, which are focused on the long term. They are primarily addressed to the EU Member States' Nature Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament, but businesses, environmental organisations and other stakeholders can also benefit from the messages.

3 Selected issues

The messages were developed in two steps during a plenary session. First, the participants were asked to identify a great number of relevant issues related to nature and other adjacent sectors in Europe. Subsequently, participants were asked to prioritise the issues. They selected the following top 15 of issues that were considered the most important:

1. How to secure money for nature in the future?
2. How to make ecosystem services available to everyone?
3. How to better integrate love for nature into education?
4. How to relate nature to people's lives?
5. How to increase the political will to do something for nature?
6. How to reduce the pressure on nature related to population growth?
7. How to realise local solutions for local problems?
8. How to better balance multifunctional land use with nature conservation?
9. How to achieve a better understanding between nature and human well-being
10. The use of water and water management and agriculture.
11. The impact of climate change on nature.
12. How to reduce environmental pollution caused by agriculture?
13. How to better integrate sectoral issues into spatial planning?
14. How to make nature a foundation of sustainability?
15. How to better re-engage people with nature?



These issues were also raised:

- Societal acceptance of dynamics in nature and how we manage it.
- Acceptance of reducing resource use.
- How to manage our soil in a more sustainable way?
- How to limit the impact of intensifying agricultural production and consumption?
- How to address land abandonment in Europe?
- How to expand Europe's nature areas?
- How to stimulate the transformation from grey to green infrastructure?
- How to improve the balance between quality of life in urban and rural areas?
- How to better map the impact of agriculture on nature?
- How is nature perceived in relation to leisure?
- How to change ways of thinking in methodologies?
- How to deal with the development of animal rights?
- How to use social media for nature conservation?
- More resources for family planning.
- How to build capacity within the nature conservation sector?
- How to adapt to and deal with the lack of public support for the EU?
- How to better restore natural systems?

After selecting the top 15 of most relevant issues, groups of participants were invited to define messages for better dealing with these issues. Every group consisted of the person who raised the issue, up to five other participants and a moderator. A number of thematic posters and maps were available to specify the messages. The first eight issues were worked out during the first dialogue day, and the remaining seven on the second day. At the end of the second day, each group presented their results.

4 Formulated messages

This section provides brief summaries of the messages that were elaborated by the groups. The summaries are mainly based on the plenary presentations that were given at the end of the dialogue. A longer and more complete description of the group results is being used by PBL to further elaborate the messages. For those who are interested, the longer versions can be obtained by sending an email to ed.dammers@pbl.nl.

Issue 1 How to secure funding for nature?

At present, it is difficult to secure enough money for nature, and this will not be very different in the future. A number of measures that could be taken to help find or realise funding were suggested, such as selling nature-based solutions to sectors, promotion of nature capital reporting, and implementation of green taxes.

The following messages were derived:

- Restoration of nature can reduce costs. For example, development of nature in the upstream areas along a river could prevent houses downstream from being flooded. It is necessary to quantify the benefits of 'nature-based' solutions and to have 'evidence-based' examples.
- Nature-based solutions are best understood on regional or local scales, where people can see how it works in practice. Demonstration projects make the abstract concept of nature-based solutions visible and demonstrate who benefits.
- Evidence of nature-based solutions should be communicated in various ways to different target groups (narratives versus figures), using the language of the target audience.
- Most nature in the EU is man-made. Include nature into the business models of cultural venues or institutes, such as castles and museums. Organise the financing of nature in the same way as cultural heritage is financed.
- There is money available, but it must be organised or tapped in modern ways; for example, bottom up, by crowdfunding.
- Make people more connected to nature, as they may then be more willing to pay for it.

Issue 2: How to make ecosystem services available to everyone?

This issue is related to social justice. Social justice contributes to strong local communities and stability of society and economy, which is essential for preserving nature and the goods it delivers. The following measures and messages were mentioned:

- Strengthen local communities and cultural identity
- Encourage people to be engaged in politics and decision-making
- Connect local communities to ecosystem services
- Define and address problems on a local scale, involve landowners
- Make ecosystem services available to everyone
- Involve urban areas; for instance, improve access to nature

Different stakeholders were mentioned with regard to these measures; for example, local communities, urban population, farmers, politicians and NGOs.

Issue 3: How to better integrate love for nature into education?

The issue is relevant because children are the decision-makers of the future. -A large number of measures were mentioned by this group, for instance:

- Integrate nature into the official school curricula. Create 'forest schools' (school buildings in nature areas or classes held outdoors) and forest kindergartens. Facilitate access to nature.
- Educate the educators. For good nature education, you need properly trained educators. Rather than working solely from school books, teachers should also take

other educational approaches to nature that involve our senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.

- Use creative ways to connect to nature. Involve for instance the gaming industry. Consider how the gaming or ICT industry could spark curiosity about nature. What types of games could awaken curiosity in children about nature? Which digital learning methods could be used? Also use school television.

Other actors, in addition to teachers and the gaming and television industries, could also play a role, such as the toy industry, parents, policymakers, farmers, hunters and landowners. The following messages were formulated:

- Children need to experience nature. Most children today do not experience nature first-hand. Not only nature knowledge but also nature experience should be integrated in official school curricula. The educators should be trained in this subject.
- The world of children and young people today differs from that of their parents' childhood. Today's children live in a digital world. It is important to adapt teaching methods to the mindset of children.
- Make nature fashionable; nature is cool! We cannot bring back the past, a new movement is needed. Idols could be used.



Issue 4: How to relate nature to people's lives?

This issue was redefined to: 'How to better communicate nature?' People are losing their connection with nature – this is bad for us and bad for nature. Communication can create more awareness, drive personal values, and create support for policy. The following measures and messages were formulated:

- Governments must learn how to communicate better. Point out the benefits; nature can support many sectors. NGOs pay much attention to the benefits of nature in their communications. The EU, government authorities, wealthy people and enterprises could fund the communication activities of NGOs.
- Communicate by experience. Artists, films, youth organisations and landscape architects could be used to convey the message. Slogans, such as 'Create the nature you desire' and 'Create the nature you deserve (and be happy)' could be used. The

key would be to stimulate emotional relationships with nature; paying attention to people's passions and interests and to their roots.

- Make nature accessible for everyone. Restrictions provide negative messages; instead, better explanation could be given to create possibilities. Site managers, landowners and farmers must provide access for people to experience nature.

Issue 5: The political will to do something for nature

This issue is relevant because nature conservation has gone down the list of priorities, due to the economic recession. Environment ministries are of 'low standing' at the moment. And there is a lack of integration with other ministries. However, taking into account the latest indications, the 2020 targets for biodiversity are not likely to be achieved. Therefore, 'business as usual' is not an option.

It is important for nature conservation and development to start a local level and work in an iterative way with politicians on a national level. Local communities should benefit, but macro-economic impacts also should be calculated. The following messages were formulated:

- Economy, enterprise and social arguments create powerful sound bites for politicians; this fact should appeal to urban politicians and urban voters. Environmental awareness can be used as political capital, which translates into votes.
- The nature conservation sector needs to build capacity on this (including on calculations) and modernise its lobbying (skills, funds).
- Social benefits should be addressed. Link the social deprivation agenda to nature.
- Never waste a good crisis. Use the current attention and concerns raised by the Fitness Check of EU Nature Directives as a window of opportunity to promote new ways of thinking.
- Prioritise targets that are achievable in the short term. This is important for politicians, because they are focused on tangible results on the short term.

Issue 6: How to reduce the pressure on nature that is related to population growth?

This issue is important because most people live in cities and this puts pressure on nature, environment and natural resources. Urban sprawl will lead to increasing fragmentation and loss of space for nature. This calls for ecosystem-based spatial planning. Basically, there are two options: spread the population development or concentrate it in several places – the latter being a more practical option if properly planned. The following measures and messages that were defined are focused on the local scale:

- Strategic planning and thinking should be improved. Strategic development plans of local authorities may include green areas, rural-urban linkages, and green-blue corridors and walkways from and towards city centres.
- Practical solutions to manage land are important, because budgets are declining. Various groups of volunteers could be involved. Involvement of the private sector is important to get things done and make them profitable.
- Combine the creation of green corridors with the needs of various groups; this can create stress relief and facilitate 'healthy' walks.

Issue 7: How to realise local solutions for local problems?

This issue was rephrased to: How to realise local solutions for local problems and needs? This issue is important because many changes in nature are driven by agriculture. One of the major issues is the conflict between agricultural and environmental policies and between the objectives of both sectors (e.g. agro-environmental schemes, cohesion funds, regional funds). Agriculture provides suboptimal contributions to biodiversity and habitats. The budget of the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy is relatively small and is being spent on a broad range of issues. Moreover, auditing by the EU is based on output instead of real outcomes.

Messages:

- The local scale is very important. As problems often occur on a local scale, their solutions must also be looked at on this scale.
- Recognise the importance of local knowledge and create the possibility for regulations to be adapted to local situations. Current regulations are not flexible. Initiatives from programming authorities and EU auditors are needed.
- Farmers do not always feel proud enough about the ecosystem services they provide. They feel more proud about producing agricultural products. Therefore, communication is needed to improve this.
- The 'Leader programme' could be used more for biodiversity projects, which means that criteria may need to be changed. A very basic problem is that policymakers in Brussels are unfamiliar with the practical problems on the ground. The current system leads to 'ticking boxes' and not to effective protection of high nature value farmland.



Issue 8: How to better balance multifunctional land use?

This issue was redefined to: How to better balance multifunctional land use without losing biodiversity? The use of mono-functional ecosystem services can have a negative effect on biodiversity. Multifunctional land use, however, can have positive effects, if properly integrated. The following measures were mentioned in this group:

- Integrate functions to create more nature and apply a holistic landscape approach
- Focus education and training more on sharing the information on good and bad practices
- Organise local platforms

The organisations and groups to be involved are the Chambers of Commerce, legislators, local communities, the people who can be considered catalysts or ambassadors, and landowners (from local to national levels).

The following messages were identified:

- Find out what land-use functions are needed now and in the future
- Explore which functions are compatible to create sustainable and resilient land use
- Explore win-win situations and their benefits for nature
- Live in those areas, ensure that the link between people and nature is re-established

Issue 9: Better understanding between nature and human well-being

This issue is relevant for there are important relationships between nature and human well-being. Nature can have a positive influence on human health, and healthy people are productive. Quantification of what nature does for people, can provide economic reasons for investing in nature. There is a large amount of evidence on nature's positive health effects on people, including clinical studies.

The following measures or actions could be taken:

- Use existing tools, such as ISO norms, where possible
- Recruit business 'champions' to communicate about their experiences and benefits
- Demonstrate the benefits
- Make nature more accessible
- Kick-start initiatives
- Unite relevant stakeholders in the fields involved
- Start conversations and build coalitions
- Create co-benefits
- Share nature

The actors to be involved are businesses, supermarkets, municipalities, health organisations, research communities, and private citizens.

Issue 10: Use of water and water management in agriculture

This issue is relevant with regard to climate change and its expected impacts on nature and agriculture. Examples of important water-related issues that put pressure on biodiversity are intermittent rainfall (and how to deal with this), diffuse pollution from agriculture, artificial irrigation, and changes in hydro-morphology (e.g. damming). Actions could be taken in two areas, where perspectives provide rather different messages:

- In the perspective Cooperating with nature, adapt the agricultural system, for instance, by:
 - developing water reservoirs
 - adapting agricultural intensity to water availability
 - using drought-resilient crops and cattle
 - applying proper soil management (increase organic matter) and precision farming
 - creating riparian buffer zones to avoid diffuse pollution
- In the perspective Going with the economic flow, apply new technologies (increasing efficiency) for:
 - desalination
 - using deep groundwater

- long distance transportation of water, using pipelines
- greenhouse cultivation
- effective use of various water qualities, using a price mechanism
- applying genetically modified organisms to create drought-resilient crops

The actors to be involved are policymakers (EU and Member States), farmers (frontrunners, ambassadors), water companies or water boards, research institutes, and spatial planning authorities.

Issue 11: Impact of climate change on nature

The evidence that climate change will have a net negative impact on biodiversity is still limited. For instance, modelling predicts that species will migrate north. At the moment, some species are indeed migrating, but others are not. Although extreme weather events disturb forests, such as by knocking down trees, this also reintroduces biodiversity and dynamic processes (re-establishing natural processes). It is not very likely that people will take specific measures to protect biodiversity against climate change, at their own initiative. The following measures and messages were mentioned:

- Too little attention has been given to nature measures that would also benefit other sectors. Try to connect themes and provide integrated responses.
- Search for innovative solutions from science (bio-based economy) that not only include benefits for nature, but that also include nature as part of the solution.
- The municipal level is a good level for applying solutions. In this way, EU responses, and political and industrial leadership will all lead to implementations on a local level.
- Space needs to be created within urban areas in order to apply solutions to the impacts of climate change. This will require national guidance.

Issue 12: How to reduce environmental pollution caused by agriculture?

This issue is important because environmental pollution that is caused by agriculture can lead to biodiversity loss. The renewed Common Agricultural Policy will be focused more on integrating nature into agricultural practices, but there is still a lack of practical knowledge on this issue. The following examples of measures were given:

- raise awareness and understanding of the agricultural landscape in an ecological context
- apply regional marketing strategies
- produce in a more nature-friendly way
- more sharing of scientific and practical knowledge and information

The actors to be involved are groups of farmers or cooperatives, regional authorities, local NGOs and local leaders. The following messages were formulated:

- extensification of agriculture, applying regional approaches
- address the knowledge gaps and make information more accessible
- promote cooperation between key actors
- make traditional agriculture more profitable, for instance, by applying technology and marketing.
- help farmers and other producers on a regional level to share and strengthen regional identity



Issue 13: How to better integrate sectoral issues in spatial planning?

This issue was reformulated to: How to better integrate nature and biodiversity in spatial planning?

In order to achieve this, broad stakeholder involvement is needed from the start of the planning process. All concerns must be heard and interests must be understood, and decisions on the local level must be made together. Local actors could be educated on this subject. It is also important to take nature-based solutions into consideration in spatial planning. Mapping ecosystem services could be helpful.

Although the implementation level is local, actors from all levels – EU, national government, local communication, citizens, and intermediate actors – can play a role.

The group formulated the following messages:

- engage all stakeholders from the beginning
- set clear objectives for various levels
- develop a clear strategy for implementing policy 'on the ground'
- share your ideas, give your ideas ownership
- develop a socio-economic agenda to stimulate the development of green infrastructures

Issue 14: How to make nature a foundation of sustainability?

This issue is important because people do not sufficiently realise that we cannot do without nature. Sustainability was metaphorically presented as a temple with a roof and three pillars (profit, planet and people). In this metaphor, the 'planet' pillar is very fragile and unstable. If we do not act in the correct way, the building can easily collapse. The following measures were mentioned:

- introduce price tags on nature in order to stimulate more sustainable use (sustainable business cases will emerge) and to make unsustainable use more expensive
- further develop knowledge about the value of nature
- change people's mindset towards long-term thinking

Messages that were formulated in the group are:

- continue to protect and connect nature areas for the benefit of people
- build attractive storylines
- apply leadership and create a movement
- accept other perspectives, reconnect people in various ways
- provide people with knowledge and empower them so they can change

Issue 15: How to better re-engage people with nature?

An important question in this respect is that of how we could get people to physically go into nature. This especially applies to people living in urban areas. Involvement of children is crucial for this. When you engage children you may also engage their parents. This can be done by including nature in the regular education system. But also by increasing the amount of green areas in and around the cities and to facilitate people to visit nature areas; for instance, by providing free bus services. The following measures and messages were formulated:

- embed nature in the education system
- enable people to enjoy nature, instead of hindering them to do so
- change regulations in some places; for example, to allow people to build a fire, build a cabin or pick mushrooms (lift restrictions)
- offer nature activities together with other sectors, such as the cultural sector
- link people's needs to what nature may provide, for instance, use nature to help solve health problems
- make nature more cool, sexy and fun, and using different media to communicate this message
- inspirational people, communities, and families can play important roles

List of participants

Agnes Zolyomi, European Habitats Forum
Alexandra Tisma, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Alwin Gerritsen, Alterra - Wageningen UR
Amanda Gregory, Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Anik Schneiders, Research Institute for Nature and Forest
Anita Prosser, Europarc Atlantic Isles
Anne Teller, European Commission, DG Environment
Anne Gerdien Prins, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Axel Buschmann, Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
Aysegul Cil, European Center for Nature Conservation
Carlos Pina, Lisbon Regional Coordination and Development Commission
Caroline Costongs, EuroHealthNet
Charlotte Simon, Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU
Ece Aksoy, European Topic Centre, University of Málaga
Ed Dammers, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Florian Wolf-Ott, Environment Agency Austria
Hans Farjon, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Henk van Zeijts, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Irene Bouwma, Alterra - Wageningen UR
Ivone Pereira Martins, European Environmental Agency
Janneke Vader, LEI - Wageningen UR
João Teixeira, Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Development Commission
Johannes Drielsma, Euromines
Juan Urbano, Ministerio de Agricultura
Kadri Tillemann, Keila Municipality
Kathrin Ludwig, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Keimpe Wieringa, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Kristijan Civic, European Center for Nature Conservation
Lawrence Jones-Walters, Alterra Wageningen UR
Marijke Vonk, PBL - Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Mark Snethlage, European Center for Nature Conservation
Matthias Jurek, United Nations Environment Programme, Vienna
Mélanie Yammine, International Union for Conservation of Nature
Miklós Kertész, Research Centre for Ecology of MTA
Monique Brok, European Center for Nature Conservation
Natalie Pauwels, European Commission, DG Environment
Neil McIntosh, European Center for Nature Conservation
Peter van Tilburg, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Petra Péntek, Ministry of Agriculture
Sharon Parr, Burren Farming for Conservation Programme
Soscha de la Fuente, Dutch National Youth Council
Tamas Marghescu, International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
Tania Runge, Copa - Cogeca
Ties Mouwen, Dutch National Youth Council
Toby Aykroyd, Wild Europe
Valerie Carter, ECOVAST