

# ACTIVE COOPERATION A GREAT WAY TO ACHIEVE LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT GOALS



## *Summary*

*Climate change causes flooding and water quality problems in many European areas. The Aquarius pilot in the Delft area focused on identifying opportunities for active cooperation between different stakeholders, including farmers, to hinder flooding and to reduce the deterioration of water quality by nutrient releases.*

*The water authority in Delfland has a long history of interaction and dialogue in the Delfland region. But active cooperation in water management requires a completely different mindset – a new way of interacting in a new setting.*

## *Main Benefits*

### **General aspects**

Active cooperation with farmers in local water management may lead to:

- » A faster realization of local water management goals.
- » More than what is legally required in local water management.
- » Understanding and support for the local implementation of water management measures.

### **Economic/job creation**

Active cooperation with farmers in local water management may lead to:

- » Cost savings in local water management.
- » Retention of income for local farmers.
- » Low investments and business risks for local farmers.
- » Preservation of the agricultural area.

### **Innovative aspects**

- » Water authorities and farmers together are exploring opportunities for cooperation to preserve the agricultural area and improve the local water environment (win-win).

## Boosters for Implementation

- » A local intermediary, such as an agricultural nature organization, helps to work more efficiently.
- » The Dutch catalogue of green-blue services, which is produced by the national government in cooperation with the regional governments, contains a long list of feasible measures and (maximum) amounts of money approved by the EC. On a local level, measures from the catalogue can be chosen and implemented.
- » Visualizations are used to stimulate everyone to learn about the similarities and differences between their perceptions. Working together we can reach a collective perception of the problems and solutions at hand. The outcome of the discussions can then contribute to redeveloping and maintaining plans.

## Barriers for Further Implementation

- » Inadequate financial compensation discourages farmers to participate.
- » The lack of a solid business case greatly reduces the chance of turning initiatives into a practical success.
- » Participation of farmers requires reliability and trust.

## How to Get Over Barriers

- » Pay farmers a fair price for water management services.
- » Make sure any financial agreement with farmers is in full legal compliance.
- » Take time to reach clear agreements about mutual tasks and responsibilities at the beginning.

## Policy Recommendations

- » Policy should acknowledge and support 'Farmers as water managers' more. Besides food production, farmers deliver water management services at fair prices to preserve the water environment.
- » When drafting new policies, remember that participatory partnerships play a crucial role in water management.
- » Support and facilitate cooperation between stakeholders at local level.
- » Make room for bottom-up solutions as a way to develop and complement innovations

### More Information

- » **Policy Advisor Karin Tromp**  
ktromp@hhdelfland.nl  
Waterboard Delfland
- » **Senior Policy Advisor Helen Hangelbroek**  
hhangelbroek@hhdelfland.nl  
Waterboard Delfland
- » [www.aquarius-nsr.eu](http://www.aquarius-nsr.eu)

