

NETHERLANDS

Farm's performance, restructuring & modernisation

Location

Achterhoek

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

Measure

M16 – Cooperation

Funding

Total budget 99 948 (EUR)

EAFRD 39 979 (EUR)

National/Regional 59 409 (EUR)

Private / own 560 (EUR)

Project duration

2021 to 2022

Project promoter

Gemeente Berkelland (local government)

Email

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Website

n/a

Developing a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) in the Netherlands as an alternative to formal certification for small producers operating in short supply chains.

Summary

Certification is often prohibitively expensive for small producers who operate within short supply chains. As an alternative, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) can function as local quality assurance based on mutual trust between consumers and producers. In order to introduce this concept within Dutch short supply chains, a consortium of farms, local government, food networks, a university and local businesses worked together to develop a tailor-made PGS for local supply chains in the Netherlands.



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Project Results

The process of developing and launching the Dutch PGS is now freely available for any interested party.

A list of PGS experts has been compiled and is available online.

No quantified project impacts are yet available.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Cooperation between all the different actors involved was key.
- Securing pre-financing for a CAP funded project is often difficult. In this case, pre-financing and co-financing provided by the local government was important.
- Applying for RDP support is complicated. The technical assistance received from an experienced local government was another key success factor.

Context

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are used in biodynamic farming as a more cost-effective alternative to official certification labels, and in a context where short supply chains allow for direct contact between farmers and consumers. PGSs provide local quality assurance that is based on mutual trust and developed through discussion and exchange.

To develop a tailor made PGS for the Dutch context, a partnership was formed between local government bodies, the Community Supported Agriculture network Netherlands (CSA), a local food cooperative (Buurtmarkt Goed Volk), the Copernicus Institute (University Utrecht), two Biodynamic dairy farms, a biological horticulture farm, a food forest, an artisan bakery, a regenerative farm and a conventional dairy farm.

Nearly all these farms process their own products and/or sell their products at their own farm.

Objectives

The aim of this project is to set up a PGS system in the Netherlands for general use, starting with the short supply chain in the Achterhoek region.

Activities

Preparation of the project plan and PGS development

- i. Analysing PGS examples from different countries and preparing an inventory of the top eight PGSs worldwide. These were then further analysed, looking at consumer involvement, environment, climate and landscape factors.
- ii. Formulating a project plan based on the advice of a national and regional focus group.
- iii. Launching a website to raise awareness about PGSs and to share the story of its development in the Netherlands.
- iv. Project management and administration.

Implementation of the project

- i. Two PhD students set up seven consumer-farmer discussion sessions to develop the PGS in the Dutch context.
- ii. The development of the PGS was supported by a supermarket to ensure that the perspective of retailers was included in the process.
- iii. The final version of the Dutch PGS was then launched and promoted on the website, with the only condition of use being that producers and consumers share their experiences there.
- iv. The PGS is now also promoted to local consumers via the Local Food Work platform.
- v. Project coordination, project administration, project completion and reporting.

Main results

The process of developing and launching the Dutch PGS is now freely available for any interested parties.

A list of PGS experts has been compiled and is available online.

A questionnaire was developed to gather feedback from a broad range of stakeholders. No quantified project impacts are yet available.

Key lessons

The local government acted as the project coordinator, overseeing the complicated application process; the pre-financer and also provided co-financing. This technical and financial assistance was vital and allowed the project initiators to concentrate on delivery.

Cooperation is a very powerful element. Involving a broad range of stakeholders from the supply chain alongside sector organisations and experts created a wealth of knowledge which was key to the project's success.

The format of the application was considered rather restrictive in the case of this project; requiring details that could not be provided prior to the actual implementation of the work.

Additional sources of information

n/a