

No Economy without Ecology

By 2020 a halt must have been called to the loss of biodiversity while by 2030 consumers' ecological footprints must be halved. This is the unambiguous advice of the Dutch Taskforce Biodiversity and Natural Resources entitled *Green Growth, investing in biodiversity and natural resources*. The Taskforce's recommendations were presented to Minister Maxime Verhagen and State Secretary Joop Atsma in the VNO NCW offices on 13 December 2011.

Green Growth advocates viable and competitive economic development based on the earth's capacities. Care for biodiversity is a precondition rather than a threat.

The Taskforce believes trade and industry play an important role in the transition to *Green Growth*. But they cannot do it alone. Hans Alders, the Taskforce's chairman: 'Without an active government that is willing to invest, support front runners and punish stragglers where necessary, the changeover to green growth will be impossible. A government that is silently cheering on the sidelines is watching a loser's game.'

We have to make the changeover to green growth ecologically, economically as well as socially. Hans Alders: 'Only then can we avoid economic and ecological bankruptcy, guarantee raw materials security for industry, feed the growing world population and offer everyone a chance of a decent existence.' Other countries, too, must make this changeover. With its knowledge and expertise of agriculture, chemistry, water and nature management the Netherlands could make a major contribution.

One of the Taskforce's recommendations has been followed already: the institution of a public/private body that will implement the recommendations. To this end government, trade and industry and social organizations united in the Platform Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Economy will enter into an agreement at the meeting.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Stop the loss of biodiversity by 2020. Not by preserving everything but by preventing further loss (*No Net Loss*).
2. Halve the ecological footprint of the Dutch population by 2030. We use a significantly bigger portion of productive land than is available for the average world citizen. Halving our footprint will bring us closer to a *Fair Earth Share*.
3. Focus international cooperation on the sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources, also with an eye to world food supply and climate policies.
4. Encourage efficient land use for food and nature. By optimising agriculture in the most appropriate locations. And by better protecting nature and giving it a place in coherent ecological networks.
5. Assign an economic rating to biodiversity and the services provided to society by ecosystems and consider this rating in policy, investment decisions and commercial strategies.
6. Work towards a sustainable *Biobased Economy*. One that is no longer heavily reliant on fossil energy and fuels but on sustainable sources of energy and renewable resources.
7. Raise awareness among politicians, citizens, companies and future generations. Create support for the desired transition to a green economy. Means: network campaigns, education and room for local biodiversity plans.

About the Taskforce Biodiversity and Natural Resources

The Taskforce was instituted by the previous Dutch Government on 23 January 2009. Its responsibilities arise from the Policy Programme on Biodiversity (2007). The Taskforce is made up from leading representatives of trade and industry, science, social organizations and the government.

Information for the press only, not intended for publication

For the recommendations, explanatory notes and background information, please go to:

www.taskforcebiodiversiteit.nl

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