

Implementation of the Water Framework Directive in the Netherlands

Maartje Oonk

Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, The Netherlands

Water is very important in The Netherlands, with hundreds of thousands km of waterways in a intensively managed, and densely populated country. This leads to a great attention for safety related to surface water, and for water quality.

In the process of implementation the Water Framework Directive (WFD), 3 Ministries, 12 provinces, and 27 Water Boards are involved, and also stakeholders and scientists. An important task lies decentralized with the Water Boards who start their work at a local and regional scale. These plans will build up to Basin Area Management plans.

Legal implementation of the WFD develops via General Governmental Regulations (AmvB), that are aimed to be flexible, and in which monitoring is an important aspect. There is a concern about the elaboration of the WFD, especially about the large number of artificially designed watercourses and the high concentrations of nutrients in surface water. Although these concentrations are decreasing, and we can say that we are heading in the right direction, the goals are not reached. Via frequent "ex ante" evaluations future developments are investigated for the use of nutrients, and their loss to surface water.

In the near future, research programs will start for innovative research on diminishing nutrient losses. Research will be done on the relation between sources of nutrient and the effects in surface water, and measures will be further developed and implemented.