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The Netherlands' Rural Development plan

Country profile:

- **Agricultural sector:** 56% of the total Dutch area (including water), just from the land surface it amounts to 2/3 of the area.
- **Agricultural employment:** 10% of the total national workforce works in agriculture and its related sectors. Nevertheless more than 30 % of Dutch farmers earn less than the minimum income and the number of farms has fallen by 28 % in the last 10 years.
- **Productivity** of the Dutch agricultural and food sector is 2.5 times higher than the average in Europe. Net value of exports of agricultural and agricultural related products amounts to € 20 billion.
- Dutch **rural areas** are characterised by the wide diversity of nature and landscapes and with the characteristic elements like dykes, ditches, ponds and rivers, which sometimes flood. The area of nature is stable; there is even growth in the area of forest. The Dutch rural areas comply to the description of rural areas with a high peri-urban character.

Chosen strategy corresponding to the profile:

- Transformation of the agricultural sector
- to preserve a viable and active countryside, improve the state of the environment (less nitrates, less pesticides....) and promote sustainable development
- The Dutch government will strive to achieve a good balance between the quality of nature and landscape on the one hand and the use of space for homes, recreation, health and personal well-being on the other hand.

Budget overall and share of EU funding:

Total public expenditure: € 973 million of which € 486 million EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)

* TA stands for technical assistance for the implementation of the programmes.

Axis	Total public (in million €)	% of EAFRD contribution	EAFRD (in million €)	Share %
Axis I	291	50	145	30
Axis II	289	50	145	30
Axis III	290	50	145	30
LEADER	97	50	48	10
TA*	6	50	3	
Total	973		486	100

Overall aim of RD programme in country

The overall challenge will be the integrated approach to the transformation of the agricultural sector. Where possible measures designed to increase innovation and improve the structure of rural areas will be combined with measures to address the equally important challenges of further reducing the environmental impact of the agriculture sector and complying with the obligations arising from the Water Framework Directive. It goes without saying that sustainable development is the only way forward.

Axis 1 budget allocation and main priorities: In total: € 145 440 000 EAFRD (Leader excluded)

- to improve entrepreneurship, and in particular the innovative capacity of the agricultural cluster;
- to enable farmers to better meet social demands in terms of the environment, water management, food quality, animal health and animal welfare ;
- to improve the physical conditions under which farming has to operate;
- to improve the quality of products and production processes, in particular by strengthening the production chain;

Axis 2 budget allocation and main priorities: In total: € 144 710 000 (Leader excluded)

- to encourage farms in particular to engage in sustainable management of Natura 2000 areas and increase biodiversity ;
- to preserve and strengthen valuable man-made landscapes, especially in the so-called National Landscapes ;
- to expand forests on agricultural land and sustainable, multifunctional management of forests ;
- to restore water systems with a view to maintaining economically and ecologically sustainable water levels, preserving the quality of ground water and surface water and preventing desiccation in nature areas and on agricultural land

Axis 3 budget allocation and main priorities: In total € 145 080 000 (Leader excluded)

- to encourage diversification in agriculture;
- to strengthen micro enterprises in rural areas ;
- to improve access to the countryside and promote rural tourism

Leader budget allocation: € 48 360 000