

LEGAL UPDATE

Letter from Parliament on progress in relation to nitrogen problem

Date: 20 February 2020

Over the past months the government has taken steps to solve the nitrogen problem. For example, a package of measures was presented for housing construction and MIRT projects and 172 million euros will be made available to farmers for innovation and making livestock accommodation more sustainable. The government also announced that 250 million euros has been earmarked for nature restoration and improvement. In her [letter of 19 February 2020](#), Minister Schouten informed the Lower House of Parliament how the 250 million euros will be used and what steps are still being taken.

Nature bank

Half of the earmarked total of 250 million euros will be made available as part of a nature bank. This money can be used to re-establish nature in a bid to compensate for environmental damage: nitrogen-sensitive habitats are being created and expanded where they already occur. Projects by the national government and water boards that represent a major public interest and which rely on the ADC test for their permits can use nature from the nature bank as a compensation measure for the adverse effects they cause to nature. This prevents nature from deteriorating on balance as a result of the project.

In the near future, the government will work out the further details of the nature bank, including the legal anchoring of the bank, together with the provinces and site management organisations.

Restoring and improving nature

The second 125 million euros will be made available for nature restoration and improvement in order to achieve the conservation objectives. A scheme is being put in place which will enable site management organisations, working in consultation with provinces, to apply for specific funds for measures that contribute to reducing the nitrogen sensitivity of nature and which can be implemented in the short term. This could include speeding up and, where necessary, intensifying nature restoration measures, taking hydrological measures in and around nature areas, speeding up the development of nature sites already acquired, acquiring certain sites to prevent the fragmentation of nature and to realise robust ecological links, and achieving goals in the context of the Water Framework Directive.

Next steps

The government continues to work on a solution to the nitrogen problem. Later this spring, the government will in any event decide on long-term funding for the nature programme with provinces, a target value for the reduction of nitrogen deposition and (source) measures in the relevant sectors.

This is a Legal Update from Mathilde van Velzen-de Boer.

For more information:

Mathilde van Velzen-de Boer
+31 30 25 95 521
mathildevanvelzen@vbk.nl