

FACT SHEET

Lessons Learnt with Structural Funds in the Netherlands

Lessons learnt

The Netherlands has a vast experience in financing EE and/or RES projects and programmes, but only few are funded with EU money. The information below mostly reflects Dutch experiences with structural funds not directly related to EE or RES. The information is gathered from interviews with Dutch Managing Authorities. The categories of topics are based on the information needs identified through interviews with managing authorities from the target countries of PromoSCene.

The Netherlands uses a hybrid approach to handling EU Structural Funds. The Managing Authorities (MA) of the Sectoral and Regional Operational Programmes consist of delegated Provinces, Cooperations, Foundations and Municipalities. On the national level, the relevant ministries coordinate the actions of these Managing Authorities.

Promotion of Structural Funds

- The most effective way of promotion is networking between MAs and (potential) beneficiaries.
- Procedures should be clear and transparent, and MAs should have at least some capacity available to provide assistance such as clarification of forms, explanations about necessary documents and to be able to answer basic questions.
- Often, the informal exchange of information works best.
- Other channels of communication can be Chamber of Commerce magazines, local magazines and local tv-programmes.

Administrative Burden

- The necessary paperwork for Structural Funds is complex. Because MAs are well informed, their assistance in (especially smaller) projects is of vital importance.
- Once you know your way, SCF are not complicated anymore – just rather timeconsuming.
- Often, the rate of success of a project is highly dependent on the project manager's and/or MA's perseverance
- Some degree of flexibility will be necessary in the course of the project given changes that might occur.

Financial Issues

The Netherlands Court of Audit conducts yearly surveys on the financial management of EU funds. For the period 2000-2006, the Court of Audit identified several issues that deserved attention (see *Links*: EU Trend Report 2008):

- The financial management required improvements in the accountability. The legitimacy and effectiveness of money spent was sometimes unclear.
- Unnecessary financial risks were taken concerning VAT which was possibly claimed twice and had to be paid back, and because of irregularities in some public tendering procedures.
- On a smaller scale, evaluation and monitoring systems did not reach the required standards and statement of expenses were not in order.
- Another issue was the underdepletion of funds allocated.

The Court of Audit advised the government to improve the inspection of Managing Authorities by the relevant ministries. Another advise was to create an "ERDF Agency" and an "Interpretation EU-counter". The latter in order to create more transparency in the interpretations and definitions used by the EC (see www.structuurfondsen.ez.nl).

Evaluation

The general advise is to choose evaluators from all fields of society, in order to benefit from a wide range of expertise.

In the EU Trend Report 2008, the Netherlands Court of Audit concluded that in some cases, the evaluation and monitoring systems did not reach the required standards, especially concerning the statement of expenses.

Contact details

Most relevant Managing Authorities related to energy issues:

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Web Links

EU Trend Report 2008. Netherlands Court of Audit.
 Web: http://www.rekenkamer.nl/9282000/d/p431_eutrend_report_2008_engels.pdf

Overview of 2000-2006 period in the Netherlands by the European Commission:
 Web: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/overmap/nl/nld_en.htm

PromoSCene website:
www.promoscene.eu