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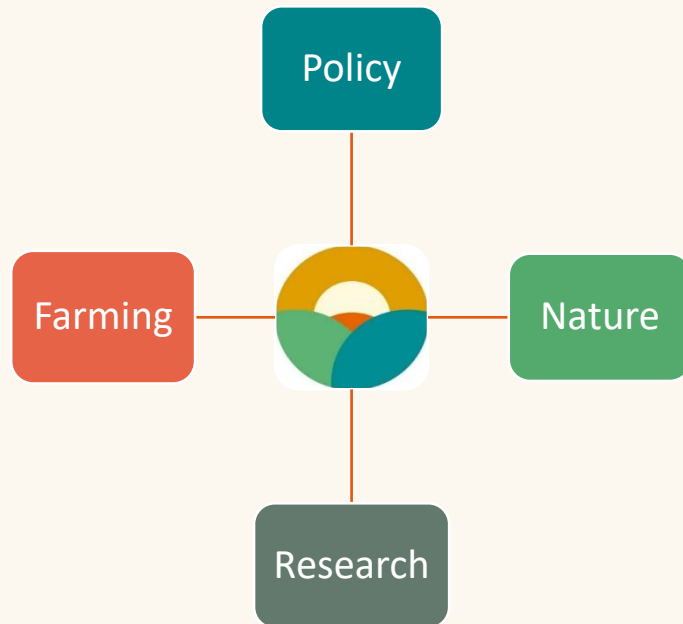
Collective action for biodiversity by farmer groups in Flanders

Boerennatuur Vlaanderen

Sven Defrijn

Boerennatuur Vlaanderen

Towards an agriculture in Flanders that has a **positive impact on nature, environment and climate while being **economically profitable**.**



15 jaar boerennatuurlijk!





***Once upon a time
in 2008***

Context : high pressure on land



- High population density & land fragmentation
- Intensive agriculture



Farming and nature: a complicated relation

Declining farmland biodiversity and landscape structures

- 50 %

“Berenbuiten of boeren buiten?”

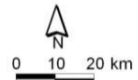
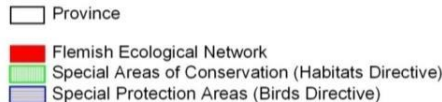
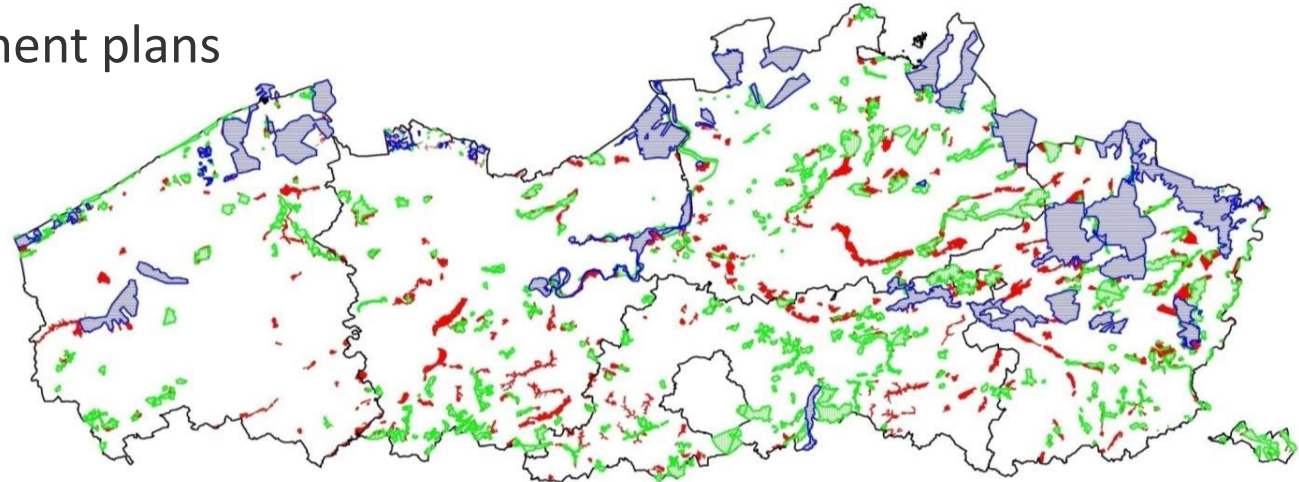
Water quality

Soil erosion



Farming and nature: a complicated relation

- Largescale nature development projects
 - NATURA 2000 areas (68.000 ha agricultural land use)
 - SIGMA-project: flood areas along the river Schelde (3000 ha)
 - River catchment plans
 -



From crisis to opportunity?

Is a more pro-active role possible?

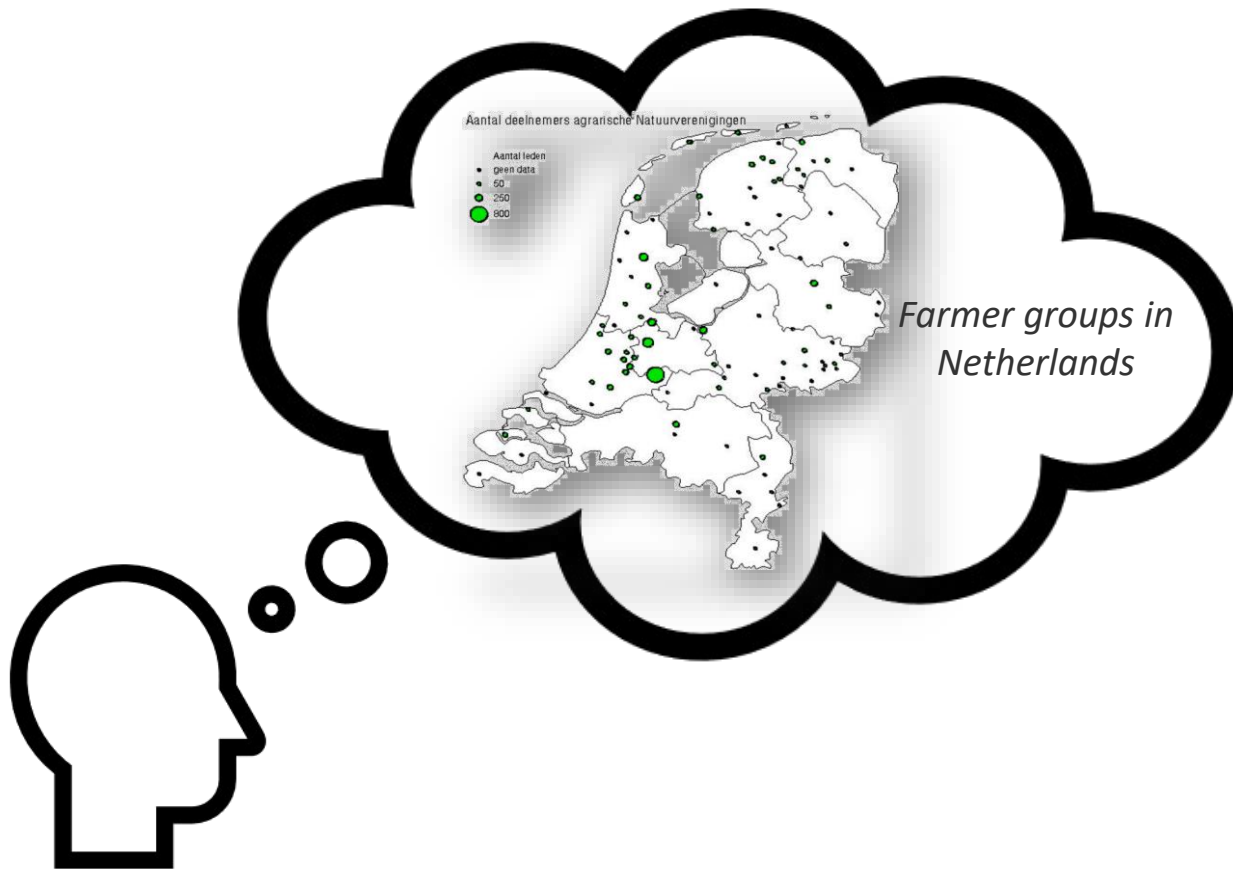
Demand for nature conservation

→ economic opportunity for farmers?

*Improve support + effectiveness of
agri-environmental schemes*



From crisis to opportunity?



From crisis to opportunity?

Collective approach possible in Flanders?



Experiment:

2008- 2012: Project ECO²

Creating synergies between ECONomy x ECOlogy



Difficult start of ECO² project

- Barely examples of collaboration between farmers on environmental management
- *“Farmers in this region are not keen for cooperation”*
- *“Is it wise to be involved in this?”*
- Lack of trust of nature ngo's because initiative of farming sector



Farmer environmental groups in Flanders



Farmer groups 2009

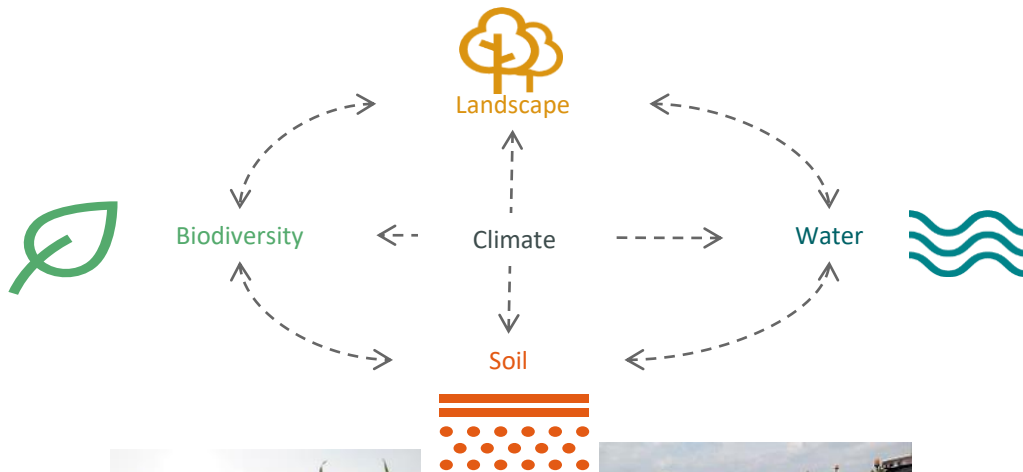


Approach

- Communicate to farmers via existing (trusted) networks of farmer organisations
- Codevelop site-specific solutions create synergies between farming and environment that are practically, legally and financially feasible
- Voluntary basis
- Demonstrate good examples to farmers in other regions (farmer to farmer extension)

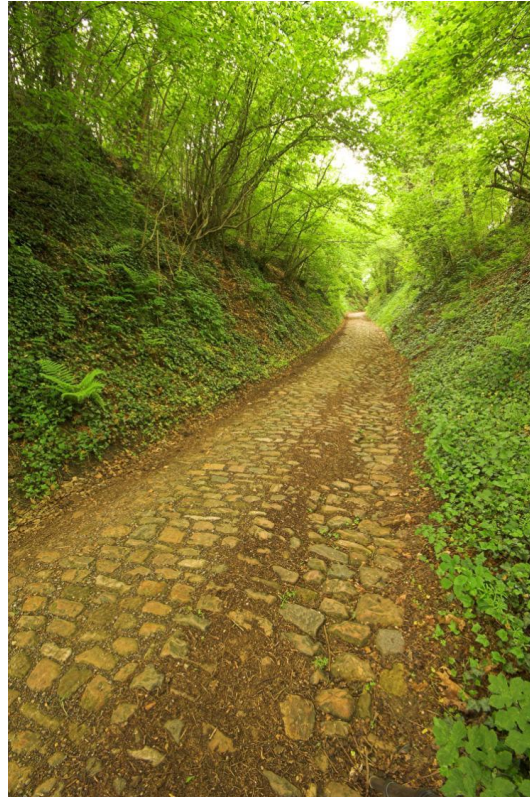


Diversity of topics

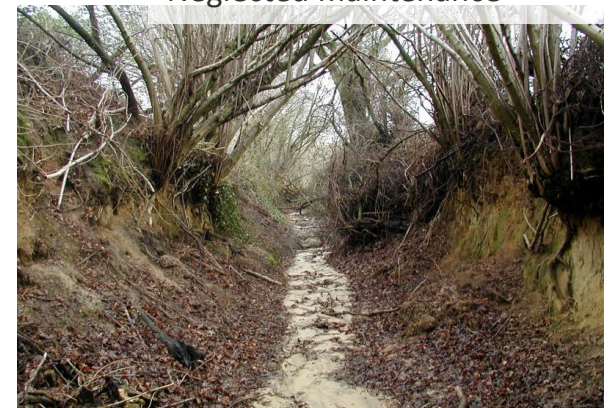


Example: collective landscape management

Biodiversity (habitat + corridor) – erosion control - heritage - recreation



Neglected maintenance



Collective landscape management



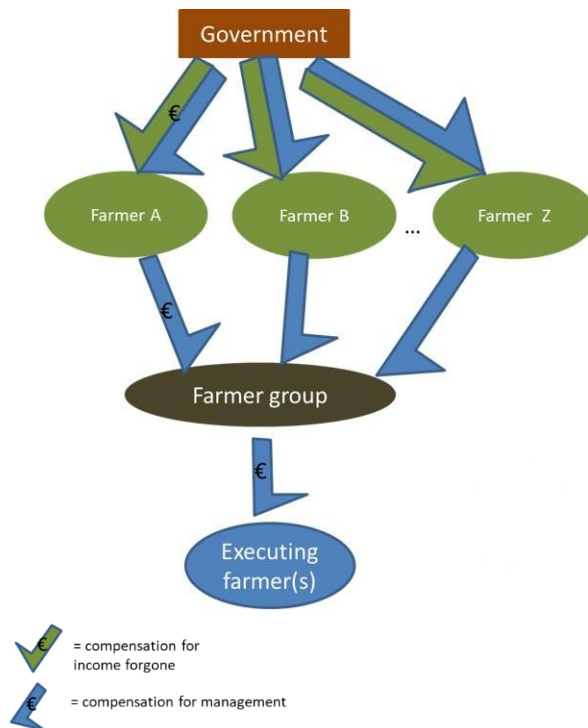
- Practical:
 - Who is interested and capable to do this?
- Financial:
 - Where to get funding to pay the management work?
- Legal:
 - Are farmers allowed to do work for others?
 - How do we arrange the payments?
 - What about landscape elements owned by others actors?



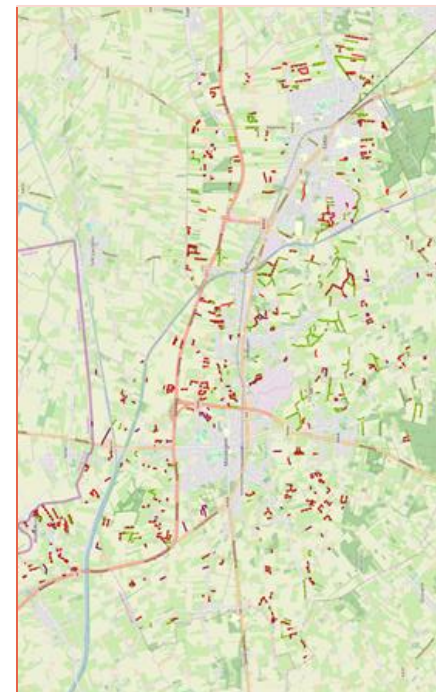
Collective landscape management



Payments



Collective landscape management plan



Collective landscape management



Efficient machinery – collective use



Collective landscape management

Creating added value



Green heat

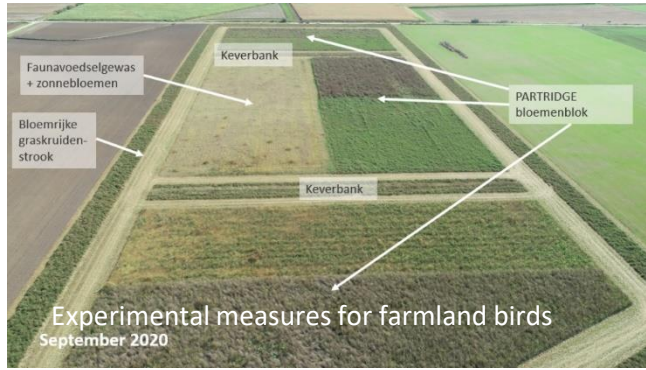


Collective water management

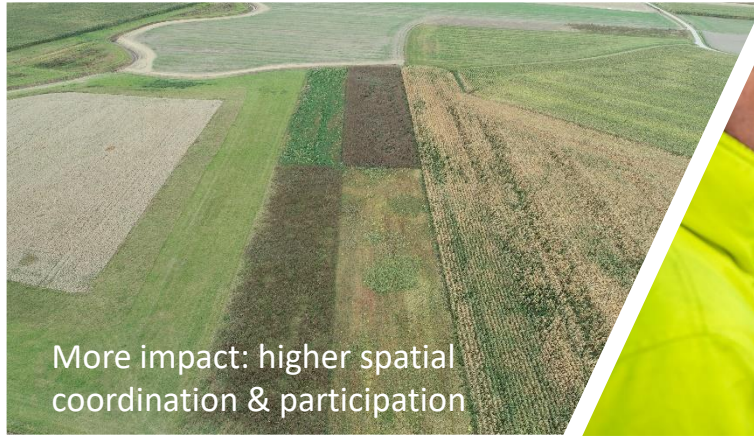


- Combating drought stress and flooding
- Making agriculture more climate-proof

Collective management for biodiversity



Added value of collective approach



More impact: higher spatial coordination & participation



More social learning
- peer to peer & group advisory



More social capital - recognition – empowering – collaboration with others



Higher efficiency





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