

## CASE STUDY NL-3

### LOCAL ACTORS INVOLVED IN LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHWEST DRENTHÉ

#### BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

The pilot project ‘Landscape is managed together’ is being conducted in the southwestern part of the Dutch province Drenthé (2014-2016). In this project local actors manage the landscape in and around their villages. This type of management is organised as a bottom-up process. The village inhabitants decide which activities are conducted. They are supported with both practical knowledge on landscape management as well as tools which are provided by a facilitator, the Landscape Management Drenthé foundation. The project is financed by 5 municipalities and the province Drenthé. The aim of the case study was to assess how the direct involvement of inhabitants and local actors in landscape management increased their sense of responsibility for the landscape, enhanced social cohesion and led to better understanding between farmers and local actors.



Photo: info@broeklander.nl

#### KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

The main political driver behind the project was the budget cut on landscape management by the region Drenthé. In this area, there is a tradition to recruit volunteers for taking care of the local commons (so-called ‘Boermarkte’). It was therefore a rather obvious step to ask local actors to conduct landscape management activities in order to fill the financial gap. At the same time, this led to a shift in governance. Environmentally, this new governance system contributes to enhance the attractiveness of the landscape and the viability of species which are endangered by invasive species notably. From a social point of view, the project aims to enhance social cohesion between different local actors and to enable a better understanding of nature and agriculture. The Landscape Management Drenthé foundation has been an important pivot in the process. Relations between local groups and municipal policy makers vary in strength. Indirectly there can be tensions around landscape management by national land management organisations.

#### EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

We found that landscape management by local actors successfully contributed to:

- increase social cohesion among local people;
- enhance the sense of responsibility by local actors for the local landscape;
- increase the understanding of local actors of the system in which farmers operate and the forces which drive them.

However, a few drawbacks are to be noted:

- the quality of the landscape management is not guaranteed nor the continuation of local groups managing the landscape, in the longer run;
- not all landscape elements can be managed by local groups; very often additional action from regional governments is needed.

