



## Workshop Natural Capital: *inspiration for the Water Framework Directive*

Can we implement the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in a way that also contributes to ambitions of local governments, entrepreneurs and citizens? That was the focus of the TRAP-workshop 'Natural Capital: inspiration for the Water Framework Directive' as held on 21 May 2014 in Groningen, The Netherlands.

The workshop marked the start of a local dialogue about measures which are needed to reach the objectives of the WFD, while contributing to regional economic development and quality of landscape. We used the concepts of ecosystem services and natural capital as a framework for the discussion about mutual gains. Regional Water Authority Noorderzijlvest organised the workshop to disseminate the results of the European project Territories of Rivers Action Plans (TRAP). The aim of the TRAP-project is to integrate qualitative and quantitative water management, landscape values and economic activity. In TRAP the concept of ecosystem services has been imported as a good practice from project partners to Noorderzijlvest.

Stakeholders working in the fields of agriculture, recreation, nature conservation and water management immediately agreed: the framework of natural capital and ecosystem services facilitates the identification of shared goals for regional development in an innovative way. Implementation of the WFD goals increasingly becomes an activity in which all stakeholders participate and benefit from it. Better mutual understanding of interests is the first step in building this cooperation.

During the workshop attendees suggested new opportunities for cooperation. Regional Water Authority Noorderzijlvest wants to explore the feasibility of two ideas with regional partners:

1. Cooperation in maintenance of natural capital as a starting point for the development of a bio based / circular economy. The use of grass- and wood clippings for energy production.
2. Maintenance of bridges and sluices by the water recreation sector. At the moment maintenance is an activity of the water authority.

Noorderzijlvest is working on a new Water Management Program for the years 2016-2021. As a result of the transfer of good practices in the TRAP project, the concept of ecosystem services and the use of natural capital has already been adopted in the draft version. In the coming months this draft program will be discussed on by the executive water board and some of their partners. Before the end of 2015 the program has to be finalised and officially decided on by the general water board.

