

Policy measures and governance for sustainable tourism and recreation in the Netherlands – an evaluation

Valentina Dinica

SUMMARY

The paper discusses the policy approach for facilitating sustainable development of the tourism and recreation sector inside the Netherlands. Taking a national perspective, it reflects on the sustainability challenges facing the sector, and how the currently used governance and policy styles address them. It observes that a mismatch exists between the preferred governance policy-making style of the central government, and what numerous entrepreneurs and sub-national actors argue would be desirable. The central government prefers national-level, direct regulations and policies based on themes such as spatial planning, integrated water management, nature conservation, and environmental protection, for which the tourism recreation sector is just one of many target groups. Tourism businesses and many sub-national public actors and private stakeholders, on the other hand, consider new national level regulations targeted specifically at the tourism-recreation sector most desirable. The central government believes that policy measures of the 'new-modes-of-coordination' type are most appropriate to specifically target sustainable tourism. To underpin the possible contributions of such measures for sustainability, an analytical framework is proposed to evaluate the sustainability depth of instruments and initiatives. Two 'new-modes-of-coordination' instruments are then evaluated. The conclusion drawn is that these instruments had rather modest ambitions in design, insufficiently facilitating a shift towards sustainable patterns of tourism-recreation development. The paper argues that, under the general expectation of significant increase in demand for recreation and tourism in the Netherlands, there is a need to reconsider the administrative boundaries of the sector in terms of governance structure, policy-making styles, and policy instrument types that would adequately support sustainable development in the sector.

Key words:

sustainability development; evaluation; governance; policy; tourism and recreation; the Netherlands

INTRODUCTION

Academic interest in sustainable tourism has increased in the last decade. However, the attention given to policy and governance issues has, so far, been lower compared to the research efforts in tourism sustainability from marketing, economic, organizational, planning, and customer perspectives. Often, such studies take tourism companies, destinations, and tourists as analytical units. Taking a country as unit of analysis for tourism sustainability research has less often been the focus of tourism researchers.

The importance of the dominant approaches is not contested: tourism activities take place at destinations to large extent, and the tourism supply sector consists largely of tourism companies. In promoting tourism sustainability, it is crucial to take into account issues of marketing, economics, planning, and consumer behavior. Nevertheless, directly or indirectly, tourism is affected by governance characteristics and policy instruments – or the lack thereof – applied not only at destinations, but also at meso/regional or macro levels for the entire country.

*Valentina Dinica, PhD, Center for Clean Technology and Environmental Policy, University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands.
E-mail: V.Dinica@utwente.nl*

Tourism affects various fields of governmental interest such as environmental protection, nature conservation, mobility, national cultural, and heritage preservation. The governance of these fields and many others - such as spatial planning, transport and mobility, fiscal policy, labor policy, education and culture, urban policies, health, and food safety - affects the development of tourism and its impacts. Tourism is an important economic sector not only for destinations, but also for countries and national governments, as it provides jobs, tax revenue, and supports a wide diversity of other economic and industrial sectors. As well, tourism and recreation are important tools for social cohesion, helping governments reach wider societal goals. Hence tourism activities are embedded in national policies and governance systems, which make policy science approaches a necessary complement for research efforts. This paper brings both theoretical and empirical contributions to the discussion of sustainable development in the tourism sector. Empirically it looks at the domestic tourism and recreation sector at a national level. In the Netherlands, a distinction is made in the governance system and policy frameworks between recreation and tourism. The former regards leisure activities as day trips originating from visitors' permanent residences, while the latter regards leisure as travel including at least one overnight stay in facilities, such as hotels, bungalows, camping sites.

The paper addresses two questions:

- What are the sustainability challenges for domestic tourism and recreation in the Netherlands and to what extent do governance structures, national-level policy frameworks, and specific initiatives exist to respond to these challenges?
- What is the sustainability depth of the initiatives already taken that aim to bring sustainable development to the sector?

The first question is addressed in Section "Challenges and responses to sustainable development in the tourism and recreation sector in the Netherlands". To answer the second question, the analysis needs a theoretical framework that sets clear criteria to evaluate the 'sustainability depth' of initiatives.

Understanding policy design and its consequences is crucial because, even when implementation is full, adequate and timely, policy outcomes will reflect policy design.

When stimuli and mechanisms for changes have not been (sufficiently) embedded in policy design, implementation is highly unlikely to bring about positive outcomes that the instrument design did not envisage. Section "An analytical framework for the evaluation of sustainability depth of voluntary policy measures in tourism-recreation" proposes hence a framework for the assessment of the 'sustainability depth' of initiatives. Section "The evaluation of two policy measures for sustainable tourism and recreation in the Netherlands" applies this framework for the evaluation of the initiatives identified in the Netherlands and selected in Section "Challenges and responses to sustainable development in the tourism and recreation sector in the Netherlands". Finally section "Conclusion" concludes the paper by reflecting on the kinds of governance changes and initiatives that would be appropriate to initiate a genuine transition to sustainable tourism and recreation at national level.

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOURISM AND RECREATION SECTOR IN THE NETHERLANDS

The domestic tourism-recreation sector accounts for almost 5% of employment nationally, and 3% of total national annual income. In 2002, incoming tourists spent Euro 8.1 billion while Dutch people spent Euro 14.4 billion on domestic tourism and recreation (CBS 2005).

Table 1
GUESTS IN DUTCH ACCOMMODATION PER PROVINCE (Dutch and foreigners) AND DAY RECREATION DESTINATIONS (Dutch recreationists only)

Province	% tourists 2004 in accommodation units	% day recreation 2001/2
Groningen	2	3.2
Friesland	5	3.4
Drenthe	5	2.6
Overijssel	6	5.8
Flevoland	1	1.5
Gelderland	10	11.5
Utrecht	3	7.1
Noord-Holland	28	17.6
Zuid-Holland	12	21.9
Zeeland	6	2.2
Noord-Brabant	10	14.5
Limburg	11	6.6

Source: CSB (2004).

But these economic benefits are unequally spread across the twelve Dutch provinces, although the less visited provinces also have rich natural and cultural resources and have ambitions to develop the tourism-recreation sector. The distribution of guests in accommodation facilities across the 12 provinces in 2004 is shown in Table 1.

Challenges for sustainability

As with many industries, the economic benefits of tourism-recreation come with a series of *environmental costs*. A study was commissioned by the central government in 1995 to investigate such impacts. Its results, presented in 1996 to the Dutch Parliament, were that the main pressures come from transport to holiday destinations and day-attractions, recreational navigation, and beach tourism (Imming et. al. 1995). In terms of transportation used by the Dutch for domestic holidays: 90% go by car; 5% by train; 2% by bicycle; 1% by boat, 1% by touring bus, and 2% by other means (CBS 2004). Holiday transportation, therefore, plays a large role in the air pollution problem in the Netherlands. Recreational navigation has traditionally been an important leisure activity. But significant pollution developed in the form of inland water and soil quality, and marine nature degradation.

In a later study for the central government, challenges for sustainability were also indicated in nature-based leisure, which was held (co-)responsible for beach-dunes erosion, loss/fragmentation of habitat, disturbance of bird breeding and wildlife, land erosion, and vegetation change (RMNO 2003). In addition, there is increasing concern about the environmental pressures cause by facilities in terms of water and energy consumption, and the treatment (and to the extent possible, prevention) of solid wastes and wastewater.

Although tourism-recreation companies need an environmental permit to operate, the stringency of requirements differs across provinces because the implementation of the national environmental and nature protection regulations is under the competence of provincial and local authorities, including the design of company permits. The accumulated effect of many facilities also differs across provinces, as density of facilities varies. So far, no studies have been done at the destination or provincial level regarding the Carrying Capacity or Limits of Acceptable Change, which would look at the pressure tourism-recreation exerts on environ-

mental and natural resources. Environmental impacts from tourism and recreation are the highest in South-Holland and North-Holland provinces, which are also the provinces with the highest population density.

On the *social-local dimension* of sustainability the biggest challenge is the increasing number of conflicts between local communities or municipalities and tourism businesses for access to land (Valk 2002).

This originates in the poor coordination and coherence of the local/provincial implementation of national policy frameworks relevant for access to land for various types of economic development, including tourism facilities and activities. Conflict also exists between these economic imperatives and nature conservation policies. In some cases local communities prefer other types of economic development than tourism. In more frequent cases, conflicts between municipalities and tourism businesses relate to the compatibility of nature conservation and tourism development. By 2004, around 65% of all camping and bungalow facilities were located inside or within 500 meters of sites protected by the EU Habitat and Wildlife Directives as 'National-Ecological-Networks' (RLG 2004; SR 2002).

On the *economic dimension of sustainability*, there are two serious challenges. Firstly, there are inefficiencies in how some provinces harness tourism-recreation's economic potential. Tourism-recreation businesses believe that some features of national policy frameworks play an important role in the poor competitiveness of tourism businesses in some destinations and in the insufficient use of the local/regional tourism-recreation resources. Based on current national policy frameworks, the responsibility for setting tax levels on tourism belongs to municipalities, and there are large differences within and across provinces. There is no national level coordination or harmonization of the local policies setting the principles of tax setting and tax levels. Many areas have become so expensive that the threat of losing market share not only as a business, but also as a destination, is real (Verstand 2005).

In some destinations, all locally required taxes count for as much as 20% of accommodation price. Next to this, national tourism development is chiefly demand-driven and strongly decentralized. The central government finds it unacceptable to plan tourism supply and operates with quantitative growth indicators at a national and/or provincial level. In the absence of a supply-driven policy of tourism development, with

special attention to the support of emerging destinations and provinces with lower tourism volumes, this inefficiency is likely to persist.

Secondly, there is the threat of economic losses at national level, through an outflow of both Dutch and foreign tourists to other European, especially neighboring, countries. This outflow is most likely for certain products easy to find over border, within relatively small distances, such as nature tourism, camping, and active tourism (biking, walking, water sports). The outflow may be, to a large extent, due to the increasing cost of tourism-recreation because of higher local taxes and the subsequent failure of entrepreneurs to develop tourism-recreation products, which are currently under short supply (RECRON 2005). The inefficiencies on the economic dimension also negatively effect the expansion of tourism-recreation facilities; activities will be too intensive in some provinces, which will likely be environmentally and locally unsustainable in the longer term. This implies an uneven distribution of the environmental and social impacts from tourism-recreation at national level. As a consequence, worsening natural and environmental impacts will likely occur through significant, further deterioration of the most impacted destinations and sites.

Governance and policy approaches

The previous section mentioned some key sustainability problems and linked them to features of governance and the policy context that have, to some extent, contributed to their emergence and persistence. But in the Netherlands, the key central governmental actors contest these connections. Basically, two broad lines of thinking can be identified among the tourism-recreation stakeholders in the Netherlands: the first is represented by central governmental authorities, numerous politicians in the national parliament and some tourism businesses; the second ideology is held by an important part of the commercial sector, especially small and medium size enterprises, joined by a series of public authorities at the sub-national governance level, social-environmental stakeholders, and numerous sector analysts.

The central government authorities with competences relevant for the sector consider tourism and recreation to be, primarily, issues of local responsibility, and that the source or remedy for any problems ought to be addressed chiefly by local actors and businesses. They

believe the current governance system, policy-making styles, and the current policy measures should be preserved, and that they are the most adequate strategies for the sector. More specifically, the central government defends the following strategies (Schap 2006; Dekker 2006; Veerman 2004):

- General-theme policy frameworks at the national level, such as for spatial planning, environmental protection, nature conservation, taxation, water management, rural development, and coastal-zone policy. Under this strategy, recreation-tourism businesses are just one target group among many. Provincial and local public authorities play an important role in their implementation and operationalization.
- Mechanisms exploiting market forces, and the use of 'new modes of coordination' types of policy measures are viewed as the most adequate instruments to address concerns on the sphere of sustainable tourism. 'New modes of coordination' are instruments such as voluntary agreements, ecolabels, industry codes of conduct and benchmarking, public information campaigns, and in some cases public-private partnerships to help the industry achieve certain improvements faster.
- Coordination among actors and fine-tuning within and across governance levels – ministerial, provincial and local – on issues pertaining to tourism-recreation development; a central national coordinating actor for (sustainable) tourism-recreation is viewed as superfluous.

However, numerous stakeholders contest these choices for governance and policy approaches. They argue that, while local action is very important, adequate national level policies need to be in place to enable effective local initiatives for sustainable tourism-recreation. They basically argue that, ideally, a new body of policies and regulations should be designed at national level targeted at promoting sustainable tourism-recreation, which should replace the current approach of 'general-theme direct regulations'. In these new 'specific-theme' national policy frameworks, tourism businesses and stakeholders should form the only target group. At minimum, national policies should be adopted to coordinate and harmonize local and provincial level implementation of current general-theme regulations that enables a better adoption of sustainable tourism measures. Added value can be offered with 'tourism-specific new modes of coordination'. This coalition believes that the priority for the new national policy frameworks and/

or direct regulations should be on the harmonization of:

- evaluation criteria for the environmental and local impacts of tourism and recreation based on which company permits issued locally, and strategies are designed at provincial level;
- basic principles, criteria and approaches for the integration of nature-biodiversity conservation and water management goals on the one hand, and recreation-tourism activities on the other (RLG 2004);
- spatial development and planning criteria for tourism activities and facilities, looking at the various types of tourism-recreation products that could be promoted. These criteria should also create harmonized conditions for access to land for tourism-recreation investments. A national body would help competent local and provincial authorities identify and facilitate projects and initiatives that support sustainable tourism and avoid the pitfalls of economically attractive, but environmentally and socially unsustainable developments (RMNO 2003);
- tourism-recreation taxes, in terms of their ranges and uses (Verstand 2005).

Further, this group argues that the current governance framework cannot address sustainability challenges adequately given the high fragmentation of the governance structure in tourism-recreation as well as the poor coordination of actors at the national level and across governance levels. A national-level public authority dedicated to the regulation, planning, and coordination of the recreation-tourism relevant activities is viewed as a crucial governance innovation for sustainability.

Currently, three levels of government have jurisdiction in the tourism and recreation sector: national, regional, and local. At the central governmental level, jurisdictions are split: the Ministry of Economic Affairs is concerned with the policy for incoming tourists; the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality is interested in the relationship between leisure (either by recreation or tourism), nature/green areas and biodiversity; the Ministry for Environmental Protection is concerned with environmental quality – water, air, land, and underground; the Ministry of Transport controls mobility and coastal zone management. Regional and local governments are also stakeholders in tourism

policy by means of their control over taxes of tourism services and facilities, spatial development, infrastructural investments, and the decentralized aspects of environmental policy and nature conservation. The latter competences are typically exercised by means of detailed plans for land allocation and restrictions on land use, as well as by company environmental permits. Regional and local governments also play an important role in the promotion of certain (innovative) tourism products, such as agri-tourism and nature tourism. The new actor should therefore coordinate the actions of the multitude of public authorities and stakeholders across governance scales and levels. This could be either a state-secretary or a minister for sustainable tourism (RMNO 2003; RLG 2004; Recron 2005).

So far, the calls of the opposing coalition for governance and policy reforms have remained unanswered. These preferences for governance and policy styles by central governmental actors are part of the larger and longer ongoing process of decentralization and deregulation in the Netherlands. The Minister of Agriculture and Nature declared in parliament in 2004 that the 1991 policy of his ministry "Choosing for Recreation" was "the last comprehensive policy on recreation with provisions pertaining to almost all recreation forms and with perspectives addressing each province in the country". Since then, "the role of the government changed, and is now focused on the formulation of national goals and steering in broad lines, as well as the fulfilling of facilitating roles by means of offering knowledge and instruments with the help of which others can implement their policies (from 'taking care of' to 'taking care that')" (Veerman 2004).

There is also an increasing ideological preference for the use of new modes of coordination. This was reiterated in the latest policy document for sustainable tourism and recreation (LNV and EZ 2006). This was signed by the Minister of Agriculture and Nature, and the State Secretary responsible for Tourism from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, which was then sent as a letter to the Dutch parliament in July 2006. The included policy measures refer to governmental financial support for the "one-time" implementation of five initiatives for sustainable tourism:

- improve access to rural areas from cities;
- set up the Dutch Travel Foundation, promoting two main goals: the realization of voluntary projects supporting sustainable tourism that may serve as examples

for other stakeholders/businesses, and awareness raising among holiday makers on sustainable tourism issues;

- stimulate voluntary participation in the certification program 'Blue flag';
- update the voluntary instrument 'internal environmental management for water sports businesses and activities';
- stimulate voluntary participation in the certification program 'Environmental Barometer'.

The last four are all examples of 'new modes of coordination'. If deregulation and decentralization are the key themes of governance and policy-making, it is difficult to argue for national-level direct regulations and planning for sustainable tourism unless more systematic and objective empirical evidence is generated regarding their added value, compared to the government's preference for new modes of coordination. To find this evidence, an evaluation is necessary to find out to what extent the 'new modes of coordination' are able to initiate and sustain, on their own, new patterns of tourism-recreation development that are compatible to the principles of sustainable development. So far, several policy measures have been adopted for sustainable-tourism recreation in the Netherlands, but their design has not yet been evaluated from the perspective of sustainability depth. There are some important questions regarding the change potential that new modes of coordination could induce: How far reaching are such initiatives? Are they able to bring about significant changes in current tourism patterns and impacts, hence sustaining environmentally-friendly and locally-beneficial tourism? Are they sufficiently ambitious to address the already identified negative impacts for which recovery action is needed? Does instrument design adequately address the magnitude of the impacts? Are country-wide problems also addressed?

Initiatives aimed at sustainability in the Dutch tourism-recreation sector

Several policy measures have been adopted in the Netherlands that can be described as new modes of coordination, developed at various governance and sector levels. However, so far, only a few programs can be seen as national-level initiatives. Due to size limitations this paper will discuss two of them.

Firstly, there is the program called Policy Agenda Environment, Tourism and Recreation. In 1993, a Nature and Environment Plan was adopted by the government, where a section was dedicated, for the first time, to the environmental consequences of tourism activities. To implement the objectives set out in the plan, a national platform was set up - the Coordination Group for Environment Tourism and Recreation (CMTR in Dutch abbreviation). The platform was initiated by the Dutch Ministry for Environment (VROM) and the Dutch Association for Road Transport (ANWB) which also represents tourism interests. Their main aims were to design follow-up implementation plans and exchange information. A diversity of stakeholders participated: the five ministries mentioned in the introduction, the Inter-provincial Dialog Group - representing all 12 Dutch provinces - and 12 organizations from the recreation and tourism sector. The largest association representing companies in tourism and recreation sector is RECRON, with around 1200 members - campsites, holiday villages, groups - involved in accommodation facilities and mixed businesses (including attraction parks). The CMTR public-private partnership elaborated the Policy Agenda Environment, Tourism and Recreation. This has been implemented since 1996 by means of a series of projects. Table 2 presents the projects started by CMTR and their aims. Some of these projects were initiated and implemented by private actors while others were designed and carried out as public-private partnerships (PPP).

A second national-level initiative of importance has been the Environmental Barometer (EB), an ecolabel for companies in the recreation and tourism sector. EB is a voluntary internal environmental management system for tourism facilities. If companies achieve higher performances than required in the legal framework, and they receive recognition. These awards are divided into three levels: bronze, silver and gold.

Since central government actors believe that new modes of coordination are adequate policy instruments, even at national level, it is important to understand the sustainability impacts of CMTR and EB. For this, the paper proposes the theoretical concept of 'sustainability depth', differentiating between deep and shallow sustainability.

The analytical framework for the evaluation of 'sustainability depth' of initiatives is presented in Section "An analytical framework for the evaluation of

sustainability depth of voluntary policy measures in tourism-recreation". It consists of two criteria that are used to assess in Section "The evaluation of two policy measures for sustainable tourism and recreation in the Netherlands" the two macro-level initiatives taken for domestic tourism-recreation in the Netherlands. the two macro-level initiatives taken for domestic tourism-recreation in the Netherlands.

AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EVALUATION OF SUSTAINABILITY DEPTH OF VOLUNTARY POLICY MEASURES IN TOURISM-RECREATION

The paper proposes two criteria to assess how far reaching the successful implementation of such projects may be: one inspired from public policy literature and one developed based on sustainable tourism principles. The full conceptualization of 'shallow sustainability' and 'deep sustainability' will be explained after the presentation of the two criteria.

The first criterion is inspired by the Contextual Interaction Theory (CIT) developed in the Netherlands by Hans Bressers (2004). Although this theory is designed to study policy implementation, this is a very useful point of departure to conceptualize the sustainability depth of initiatives because of the significance of the key variables it involves: information, motivation of stakeholders, and resources. It is important that *instrument design stimulates stakeholders on these aspects*, 'empowering' them to take action by increasing their positive motivation, filling in eventual informational gaps, and eventually also helping them mobilize the resources needed to successfully implement measures. But the aspect of 'resources' has actually two crucial dimensions in the transition to sustainable tourism:

- resources can be seen as means for enabling change, if we look in terms of actor characteristics (hence resources cause change); but also
- resources as the object/effect of change in terms of the infrastructure (tangible or not) in which tourism activities take place – accommodation facilities, landscapes, and nature areas with all their elements such as biodiversity, land, water and air quality, transportation infrastructure and vehicles, quietness, etc.

Considering the three variables that Bressers views as crucial for implementation, it is interesting to look at

the extent to which they are involved in instrument design and impacts/requirements. Are initiatives:

- mainly focused on motivating actors to change their behavior and enable more sustainable businesses/practices?
- generating new information, for example in support of future actions/decisions, or used to enable various other actors to act (such as to enable consumers to choose more sustainably-managed facilities/activities or enable companies to implement environmental management systems)?
- directly changing/enriching the resource-base that supports tourism activities so that environmental impacts are minimized and local benefits maximized?

In order to look at how 'deep' the sustainability impact of projects (policies/measures) is, I propose to consider as *the first analytical criterion: the impacts in terms of stakeholder motivation, information and resource-base changes induced towards sustainability*.

A second criterion I propose is *the types of sustainability aspects addressed from the perspective of the timing and magnitude of negative impacts*. Initiatives may address one or more aspects of sustainable tourism: environmental, tourist satisfaction (economic), and social-local. For the detailed analysis of this, the paper proposes to use the principles of the 1995 International Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Charter was adopted at the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, on 27-28 April 1995. Although many definitions, charters, and declarations were adopted in various international and regional contexts, this one was also referred to by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He recommended it be adopted by the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system. Its inclusion is also grounded in the observation that the aspects addressed, as to what sustainable tourism should achieve, are very comprehensive and are supported and discussed very frequently in the theoretical and empirical research literature. The in-depth investigation of its principles led to the selection of the following aspects for analysis. Under the 'social-local aspects' heading the following aspects were differentiated:

- participation of local communities and local stakeholders in tourism policy;

- integration of tourism in all relevant local policies and planning;
- local social and economic benefits from tourism: maximizing positive opportunities and minimizing negative effects.

Under the 'economic / tourist satisfaction' heading it is useful to distinguish between:

- service quality: treatment of the customer, comfort of accommodation, and (quality) entertainment (low levels of noise, crowdedness);
- generating new environmentally-friendly tourism products or demand for them.

Under the 'environment' heading, five aspects can be discerned:

- tourist awareness of the importance of sustainability in tourism and how to contribute to this: codes of behavior, information on sustainable holiday opportunities;
- nature and landscape management and conservation (Projects 1; 2; 11; 14)
- biodiversity conservation;
- qualitative and quantitative management of environmental resources: water, energy, waste processing;
- combating environmental impacts from transportation.

The two criteria proposed are actually related in how they are evaluated, as measures are normally designed to bring improvements in one or more sustainability aspects. When evaluating initiatives from the perspective of sustainability, it is important to *consider the match between the level of priority associated with the respective aspect(s) in terms of timeline and magnitude of the problem, on the one hand, and the consequences of initiatives in terms of motivational, informational and resource-base changes, on the other.*

The evaluation needs therefore to be based on some knowledge of the threats to tourism sustainability, whether they have already occurred or are expected to take place. This may be available from research studies already performed, or from consumers' organizations, NGOs, local communities, etc.

Consequently, the following conceptualization is proposed. Initiatives and policy measures could be labeled as '*shallow sustainability*' when their design implies only motivational and/or informational consequences for the target group and/or stakeholders, while addressing sustainability aspects for which negative impacts are either already significant or impending (highly likely to occur, in short, medium, or long term) and would need immediate action through resource-base changes.

By contrast, initiatives and policy measures could be labeled as having '*deep sustainability*' when they bring about direct and meaningful changes in the resource-base supporting tourism activities in areas where sustainability is already problematic or expected to raise problems. Similarly, measures can also be described as '*deep sustainability*' initiatives when they are designed to credibly prevent *possible future* negative impacts by having at least motivational and/or informational consequences for stakeholders/target groups who, in turn, will be further committed to take actions and proceed with the necessary resource-base changes. The evaluation framework can be used both ex-ante and ex-post in policy research analyses.

THE EVALUATION OF TWO POLICY MEASURES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND RECREATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

In this section, the evaluation framework will be used ex-post, addressing the question: what is the sustainability depth of the two new modes of coordination used country-wide in the Netherlands in the 1990s?

The policy agenda environment tourism and recreation

Table 2 presents the strategies and projects started by The Coordination Group for Environment Tourism and Recreation (CMTR) in 1995 and their aims. Some of these projects were initiated by private actors alone, while others were designed under public-private partnerships (PPP). In total there were 23 projects designed, of which three had an administrative nature – projects 19, 20, 21. These will not be discussed from the standpoint of sustainability depth, leaving a total of 20 projects under CMTR.

Table 2
THE STRATEGIES AND PROJECT AIMS OF THE CMTR PROGRAM

Project	Aim	Impacts on sustainability aspects	Sustainability depth assessment
1. The sustainable farmer	Promoting agri-tourism as new product and extra income opportunity locally. Country level.	Motivation, Information Resource-base. Aspects [c]; [e]	Deep-sustainability
2. Brochure "Recreation and Green Spaces: examples close to home". Since 1998.	Diffuse information and encourage municipalities to create recreational spaces close to cities/villages to reduce environmental/nature pressure and car use. Country level.	Motivation, Information. [j]; [e]	Shallow-sustainability
3. Development of Heempark in village Heeg, 1999-2002.	Recreation and education on nature and environment for villagers; reduction of car use. Local level.	Information. Resource-base. [f]; [j];	Deep-sustainability
4. Development of nature-transfer Borger area. Started 2000.	Increase public transport use of the intensively visited forested area Gieten/ Borger (1million visits/year). Instruments used: information supply, develop new transport options; management of the routing system and visitor streams. This is a first project in a series located in province Noord Holland. Regional.	Information. Resource-base. [j]; [f]	Deep-sustainability
5. A Day out: tomorrow also nice?	Research on the obstacles and solutions for accessibility and environmental quality in recreational sites. Country level.	Information. [g]; [j]	Shallow-sustainability
6. Transformation of tourism-recreational transport	Increase public transport use and sustainable transport in National Park Veluwezoom; inform tourists of the new opportunities and the importance of environmentally-friendly transport. Regional level.	Information. Resource-base. [f]; [j]	Deep-sustainability
7. Environmental management systems (EMS) for stay-over and day-recreation facilities. 1999-2002.	Sector-wide actions to introduce EMS in 240 camping sites, bungalow parks, and similar accommodation. Phase information diffusion 1999-2002 followed up by stimulation implementation at the company level. Collective quantified targets for reduction drink-water use by 30%; 25% reduction in electricity; gas use reduction of 10%; more cost-effective waste collection systems; separate waste collection: glass (min. 70%), paper min 85%), organic wastes (min. 50%). Company results reflected in three levels of 'environmental barometer', which are checked annually.	Motivation, Information. [i]	Deep-sustainability
8. Environmental handbook hotels	Providing information to members of the Association of Hotel and Catering on environmentally-friendly practices. Country level.	Information. [i]	Shallow-sustainability
9. Development "Ecomat"	Providing information for environmental management for companies in recreation sector on CDROM.	Information. [i]	Shallow-sustainability
10. Keep the environment clean	Providing information on environmental management for navigation and harbors. Country level.	Information. [i]; [j]	Shallow-sustainability
11. Environmental management systems for sport associations	Quick scans at 40 sport accommodations to identify saving options; pilot project to serve for diffusion of EMS at country level.	Motivation, Information. [i]	Shallow-sustainability

Table 2 CONTINUED

Project	Aim	Impacts on sustainability aspects	Sustainability depth assessment
12. Noise Barometer	Measure noise levels generated by motor-vehicles and locate devices displaying noise levels at places where motor traffic is high for awareness raising among drivers and motivate them for 'quiet driving'. Information on 'quiet driving' made available. Country level.	Motivation, Information. [j]	Shallow-sustainability
13. Noise pollution in quiet areas: simulation program	Gain information on noise sources and contribution to noise pollution. Country level.	Information. [j]	Shallow-sustainability
14. Noise prevention in green areas	Study in the noise level around recreation areas in Drenthe. Local level.	Information. [j]	Shallow-sustainability
15. Infrastructure for waste water collection in recreational navigation	Country level.	Resource-base [j]	Deep-sustainability
16. Demonstration project in Friesland, Noord-Holland and Zeeland.	Reduction of nutrient pollution of waters by changing type of ship paint used. Regional level.	Resource-base [j]	Deep-sustainability
17. Environmental information for tourists	The development of a land-level system for environment-relevant travel information; information diffusion to stimulate environmentally-friendly behavior by tourists in nature areas and motivate consumers to generate a demand-driven development of a green tourism market. Monitoring consumer behavior. Research on possibilities for regional-integrated nature management. Country level.	Motivation, Information. [f]; [g]	Between shallow-deep-sustainability
18. Questionnaires camping companies	Survey of 2100 camping companies on the accessibility of nature information and its diffusion among tourists. Aims to increase interest and care of tourists for nature. Country level.	Motivation, Information. [f]	Between shallow-deep-sustainability
19. Investigation on fund raising for Environment and Tourism	Administrative nature – collecting information	-	-
20. Financial database Environment and Tourism	Administrative nature – collecting information	-	-
21. Expansion existing programs on Environment and Tourism	Impact on environmental sustainability dimension – collecting information	-	-
22. Sector communication as stimulus for environmental innovation	Development of a green network of national, regional, and local actors in need of environmental information for innovation in tourism and recreation sector. Participation will not only inform but also increase stakeholder motivation for green innovations and adoption. Country level.	Motivation, Information. [e]; [i]	Shallow-sustainability
23. Hospitality for People and Nature	Brochure for tourism companies with information diffusion on cases of success. Effect of informing and increasing their motivation to adopt environmentally-friendly practices. Country level.	Motivation, Information. [i]	Shallow-sustainability

Looking from the first analytical perspective at the aims of the projects listed in Table 2, it emerges that the overwhelming majority of projects had an informational component - eighteen of the twenty analyzed projects.

This suggests the program focuses strongly on knowledge generation and diffusion. But the analysis of sustainability depth requires a combined look at the nature of induced changes and the magnitude of the problem, in terms of sustainability aspects addressed.

Based on the evaluation framework proposed in Section "An analytical framework for the evaluation of sustainability depth of voluntary policy measures in tourism-recreation", *eleven projects should be described as 'shallow sustainability' initiatives*. In four cases, there is a mismatch between the type of impacts and the magnitude of the problem because the project only encouraged informational/motivational changes having limited, indirect, and uncertain consequences for sustainability aspects that are considered serious problems in the Netherlands: combating environmental impacts from transportation (projects 12, 13, 14), as well as nature and landscape management with conservation (project 5). For these impacts, recovery action is needed to produce resource-base changes. These projects are focused on information collection/management, and research on what the problems are and what could be done about them. Information collection is a necessary step, but not sufficient for addressing pressing problems. No follow-up action or project was envisaged within or outside of CTMR. The consequences of new information collection and diffusion are uncertain.

In addition to these, seven other projects can also be considered 'shallow sustainability' initiatives, but for different reasons (projects 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23). All these projects address either the sustainability aspect regarding the management of environmental resources or the reduction of environmental impacts from transportation. Both were considered a high priority in the 1995 report to parliament. But, while target groups are identifiable, it is not clear if - and to what extent - the members of the various target groups will commit the necessary financial, human, and technical resources to produce the necessary improvements. No mechanisms are envisaged to facilitate or organize implementation at a target group level or to check if anything is done with this information, such as if there are ultimately positive changes in the resource-base of tourism for the two sustainability aspects under serious

pressure. The inclusion of monitoring mechanisms with assigned responsibilities for monitoring could indicate likely commitment after information diffusion took place, though this is no guarantee of implementation and resource-base change. But no such mechanisms were envisaged in relation to these initiatives.

In contrast to the design of the above-mentioned initiatives, another project did include a follow-up mechanism by envisaging a lobbying phase for target group members to implement the scheme and subscribe to the collective targets for environmental quality improvement (project 7). The project aimed to provide target groups with both information and an action framework for achieving quantified collective targets for improvements in environmental quality. Beside information diffusion, the initiative also had a follow-up phase where the focus was to increase the motivation of members to implement the scheme at company level. This also implies monitoring of companies efforts and follow-up contacts among actors to check progress towards targets. Moreover implementation is also rewarded by a recognized ecolabel, which is an important motivating factor, as company efforts are linked to the national-level Environmental Barometer scheme (see section "Voluntary environmental management system for tourism facilities"). This instrument's design suggests more credibility regarding the commitment of target group members to implement company measures leading to positive resource-base changes, which confers *project 7 features of a 'deep sustainability initiative'*. But this is not the only initiative that deserves the attribute of deep sustainability. *Six other projects can also be evaluated as such*. Five of these projects (3, 4, 6, 15, 16) address sustainability problems that confront many recreational destinations in the Netherlands: all five projects aimed to alleviate some impacts from holiday and recreation mobility, traffic noise, congestion, and water nutrient pollution; three of these projects (3, 4, 6) aimed, in addition, to improve tourists' awareness of the importance of sustainability and how to contribute to nature protection. Next to these five, project 1 also envisaged a resource-base change by aiming to expand agri-tourism facilities. This is the only project that had in its design all 3 elements of information, motivation, and resource change. The initiative aimed to provide farmers with knowledge on how to use their resources to set up a new tourism product - agri-tourism. But the initiative also found it important to motivate farmers because this is a new line of business, with unknown practices and challenges. Once new agri-tourism destinations are established, this can

change the resource-base supporting tourism, as it is expected that this will release some of the pressure from future demand and/or from the already intensively visited facilities in nature areas and other recreational areas (RLG 2004).

This way the project can directly affect two sustainability aspects: local economic benefits from tourism and the generation of new environmentally-friendly tourism products. The project is also expected to reduce pressure on nature areas and biodiversity.

For the remaining two projects of the program analyzed, the most appropriate evaluation would be as *midway between shallow and deep sustainability* (projects 17 and 18). They both address the sustainability aspect of 'tourist awareness' and how tourists can contribute to sustainable development in the sector. Project 17 also contributes to the adequate quantitative and qualitative management of environmental resources. The differentiation between deep and shallow initiatives proposed in Section "An analytical framework for the evaluation of sustainability depth of voluntary policy measures in tourism-recreation" implies some indication that target group members are committed to take actions and reduce or eliminate the behavioral patterns that lead to un-sustainability (last part of the definition). This is something feasible when target group members are identifiable and can be individually addressed (or reached through their representative association). This is not so with consumers. But still these initiatives should not be labeled as 'deep sustainability' by default. It can be argued, on the one hand, that information diffusion to consumers is necessary but not sufficient to credibly help the recovery of damaged nature/environmental resources at the sites where this already happened. But, on the other hand, awareness raising may prevent or reduce nature damage at the sites where nature quality is still good, under the scenario of significant growth in tourism volumes. This is why such initiatives can be rather viewed as midway between shallow and deep sustainability.

Voluntary environmental management system for tourism facilities

The Environmental Barometer (EB) is a voluntary program that requires companies to adopt an environmental policy and to declare the measures adopted to address a series of sustainability aspects. Most aspects included are recognized as serious negative impacts by the

tourism-recreation sector in the Netherlands. Many provisions address the implementation of measures that would bring improvements in the so-called aspect [i] of sustainable tourism (see section "An analytical framework for the evaluation depth of voluntary policy measures in tourism-recreation"), requiring adequate qualitative and quantitative management of environmental resources – water, energy (energy efficient devices and renewable energy), waste processing (separated collection) and reduction; use of recyclable/ biodegradable/environmentally-friendly products; reduction/replacement of chemicals; sustainable construction.

But there are also requirements regarding aspects that work preventively towards sustainable tourism such as: tourism satisfaction and health aspects (e.g. prevention of Legionella); tourists' awareness of environmental issues, nature and landscape management, and conservation through 'green area management measures' for hotels and 'nature development' for camping sites. For camping sites and bungalows, various measures are also required to combat the environmental impact of transportation. Keeping in mind that EB has direct consequences on the resource-base supporting tourism activities, improving many sustainability aspects that are currently challenges of high magnitude in the Netherlands, this program can be qualified as a deep sustainability initiative.

CONCLUSION

This paper reflected on the challenges facing the sustainable development of tourism-recreation sector in the Netherlands in terms of environmental, local-social, and economic aspects, and how the features of the governance structure and policy frameworks applicable to the sector could address the challenges in the eyes of various stakeholders. Given the preferred strategy of central governmental actors to rely on new modes of coordination to facilitate sustainable tourism, the paper asked the question – what can be expected from this type of policy measure in terms of contribution to sustainability?

The empirical analysis concluded that, from the standpoint of the two criteria proposed in Section "An analytical framework for the evaluation of sustainability depth of voluntary policy measures in tourism-recreation" for the evaluation of initiatives, basically eleven projects may be seen as 'shallow sustainability' initiatives, two projects may be placed midway

between 'shallow' and 'deep' sustainability approach, while seven of the twenty CMTR projects, together with the Environmental Barometer initiative, have features that may qualify them as 'deep sustainability' initiatives. The two national level programs analyzed display rather modest design ambitions in terms of tackling known negative impacts. These findings suggest that, on the one hand, new modes of coordination instruments should not be dismissed as a sort of greenwashing. Next to shallow initiatives, deep sustainability programs and projects may also be expected. But new coordination modes should rather be seen as part of a more elaborated policy package. In order to initiate a genuine transition towards sustainable development patterns in the sector, new modes of coordination will need to be combined with adequate direct regulations and financial instruments. They should compensate for the absence of initiatives on sustainability aspects that businesses, social stakeholders, and even public-private partnerships are unlikely to approach voluntarily. And they should also compensate for the aspects that are only addressed through shallow-sustainability initiatives on a voluntary basis.

Theoretically is not unthinkable that new modes of coordination, such as voluntary agreements, are used to develop sector-specific nationally-harmonized frameworks for environmental and social-impact development criteria, spatial planning principles, and criteria or principles for the integration of nature-biodiversity and water management with recreation-tourism development. But reality so far indicates that they are unlikely to emerge. A contributing factor is the lack of coordinating actors and national platforms, and, for the time being, the absence of studies and insight from various stakeholders on the impacts and negative consequences of further growth.

Assuming that new modes coordination emerge on these aspects the question is - what is the likelihood that these will be deep-sustainability programs? Given the magnitude of the problems posed on all three dimensions of sustainable development, instruments are needed that are more likely to lead to positive changes at the resource-base level to sustain recreation and tourism activities. Direct regulations and financial instruments are more likely to produce deep-sustainability impacts on aspects for which recovery action is needed and can guide development through prevention principles matched with initiatives offering positive informational and motivational impacts for target groups. For example, tax exemptions may be applied

for businesses that voluntarily implement environmental management systems, and which trade green-holiday products that include environmentally-friendly mobility towards and inside destinations. Direct regulations specifically designed for the sector may be used to ensure a more effective conservation of nature and biodiversity that at the same time conflicts less with tourism-recreation activities.

The danger of working with the general-theme regulations, as preferred by central government, is that implementation processes and outcomes may not serve sustainable tourism goals; or the changes induced will not be timely enough; or they will be incompletely responding to challenges because they were not meant to respond directly to the challenges of sustainable tourism in the first place. This can be either because given the wide competences at provincial and local levels, many implementation programs and plans need to be designed as steps in a long process. The process can be difficult and additionally time-consuming because of limited expertise on how to deal with the particular problems of the tourism-recreation sector, and absence of guidelines or guiding criteria. In the background are frequently conflicting interests and priorities at local and provincial levels. There are many points in the process where implementation may be inadequate and even fail, with negative consequences for sustainability.

The expectation is that national-level direct regulations and financial instruments specifically focused on the recreation-tourism sector are more likely to result, within the short time horizon required by pressing problems, in adequate resource-base changes towards sustainable development patterns in the sector. This policy-making style is more appropriate because it implies the elaboration and harmonization of implementation guidelines for the sub-national governance levels, shortening the implementation process, reducing its complexity, and increasing the prospects of adequate and sufficiently extensive positive resource-base changes. In conclusion, under the general expectation of significant increase in demand for recreation and tourism in the Netherlands, there is a need to reconsider the administrative boundaries applicable to the sector in terms of governance structure features, policy-making styles, and policy instrument types in order to adequately support the sustainable development of the sector.

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Submitted: 05/17/2006

Accepted: 05/10/2006