

# Formulating a policy on public support for the Goois Natuurreservaat, the Netherlands

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The Goois Natuurreservaat, a nature reserve in 'Gooi' area in The Netherlands, is owned and managed by the Foundation 'Goois Natuurreservaat. In this Foundation the six municipalities based in the area, the municipality of Amsterdam and the province of Noord Holland work together to preserve the area. For the Netherlands, this situation with such direct involvement of municipalities in nature conservation is rather unique. The size of the nature reserve is approximately 27 square kilometers (mostly forest and heath). The reserve is situated in a densely populated area and is easy accessible by the inhabitants.

The foundation was established in 1932 with two main aims:

- The preservation of nature in the Gooi area;
- Assuring the accessibility of the nature to the public.

Furthermore, the foundation aims at rising the interest of people in nature conservation. Nowadays most of the nature area is owned by the Goois Natuurreservaat. Many people visit the areas of the nature reserve to walk, cycle or undertake other recreational activities. In general, visitors and inhabitants of the area appreciate the reserve and the work of the foundation. Some inhabitants support the Goois Natuurreservaat financially or by doing voluntary work for the organisation. A detailed survey amongst visitors or inhabitants has so far not been conducted; In general, however, the Goois Natuurreservaat does not face much resistance against its nature management policies. The foundation manages various facilities, like a sheep-fold and a watchtower. The foundation realised that it lacked a clear policy on what these facilities should be used for and how they should be managed. The organisation concluded that the facilities should be utilised to gain and keep public support for the Goois Natuurreservaat.

The Goois Natuurreservaat asked Kenniscentrum Recreatie to support them in formulating a policy on public support. We did so by making an inventory of experiences of other nature conservation organisations in the Netherlands. Employees of Goois Natuurreservaat voiced their vision on public support in various sessions, which led to important choices concerning the overall policy.

For the Goois Natuurreservaat creating public support means:

- Preserving and enlarging the knowledge of the target groups about the Goois Natuurreservaat (the organisation and the nature reserve).
- Preserving and creating a positive attitude towards (the management of) nature and of the Goois Natuurreservaat.
- Stimulating positive behaviour towards the Goois Natuurreservaat, for instance by financial support or by doing voluntary work.

The organisation formulated various target groups. First of all, **prime target groups**, which include inhabitants of the region, specifically: children, families, and elderly people. Besides, prime target groups consists of those people who visit the area with the motives 'amusement', 'having a break' and 'interest' (Goossen & De Boer 2008). **Secondary target groups** include organisations and actors closely involved with the Goois Natuurreservaat, for instance: the board of the foundation, municipality councils, environmental groups, sponsors. Finally, **tertiary target groups**: visitors from other areas and primary schools.

For all these target groups the organisation formulated goals on knowledge, attitude and behavior.

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Based on the formulated goals and target groups, we developed a framework which can be used to make a judgment of the facilities and activities regarding their contribution to public support. The framework has been used to score each facility on its contribution to public support. The maximum theoretical score is 100%, the minimum score 0%. Figure 1 and 2 show, as an example, the score of the sheepfold, which can be regarded as an important facility with regard to public support.

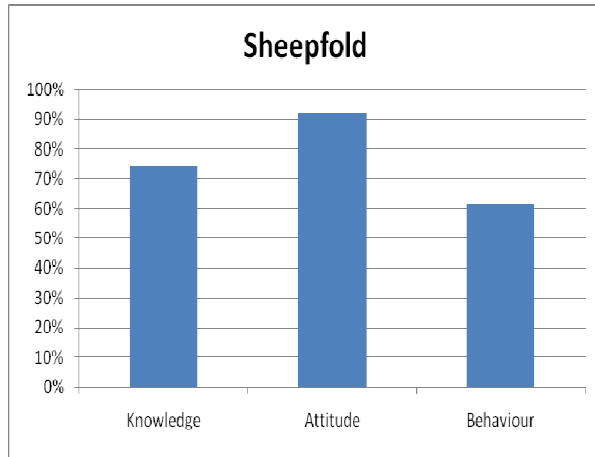


Figure 1 Scores sheepfold on knowledge, attitude and behaviour

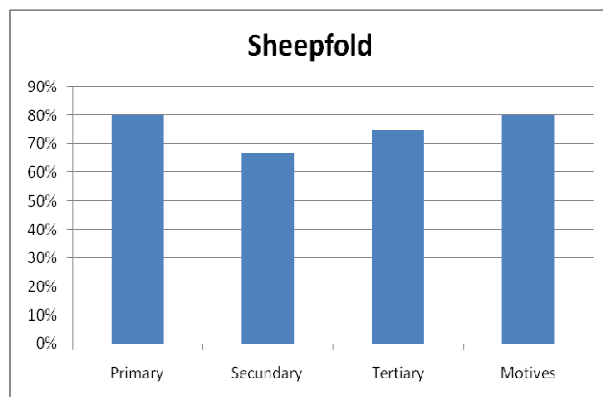


Figure 2 Scores sheepfold on target groups

It is important to notice that the scores are the results of the opinion of the employees of the Goois Natuurreservaat and not the result of research amongst the public. The results therefore are not used as research-based evidence, but as input for discussion within the organisation about the role and function of each facility and how improve this function in relation to public support.

At the time of writing this abstract, the project has not been completed yet. In the organised session we will present the definite outcomes of the project and present the policy on public support of the Goois Natuurreservaat.

## References

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