

**Plan of Execution for the Covenant Transition Mussel Sector and Nature
Recovery Wadden Sea**

NATURAL PROGRESS

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Foreword and argumentation

On 21 October 2008, the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the product organisation for mussel culture (*PO Mossel*), the Dutch Society for the Protection of Birds, the Waddenvereniging, Stichting WAD and the Netherlands Society for Nature and Environment signed the covenant 'Transition for the Mussel Sector and Recovery of the Wadden Sea' (Appendix 4). In this Covenant the parties agreed to collaborate on a transition process towards sustainable mussel fishery, in conjunction with a programme for nature recovery. The starting point was the Heldoorn report.

The Plan of Execution was developed under the direction of a steering group, with a project group providing the scientific basis. The composition of the steering group, project group and independent process support team are listed in Appendix 5.

This Plan of Execution describes the first steps in a transition process for two related developments. One is intended to make mussel fishery sustainable, the other involves the planning and execution of nature recovery. The target scenario for 2020 has been defined, and the first concrete steps to be taken up to 2011 set out. Provisional agreements have been made for the steps to be taken after 2011. An in-depth interim evaluation will take place in 2014. As almost all the measures provided for in this Plan of Execution are innovative in character, the central motto is 'learning by doing'. Ecological, technical, economic and organisational expectations will be under constant review to ensure that they are in line with experience and this will inform further planning. Lessons learnt in the first stages will then be used to decide further action.

This Plan of Execution is fully endorsed by the covenant partners.

Contents

1. General considerations
2. Nature recovery
3. Transition mussel sector
 - 3.1 Transition mechanism, general
 - 3.2 Springtime dredging and up-scaling of rope culture in 2009
 - 3.3 Ancillary measures for the fisheries sector
 - 3.4 Nature development and the transition of the mussel sector, closed areas.
 - 3.5 Monitoring and research
 - 3.6 Further steps towards 2020
 - 3.7 Recapitulation of actions agreed for 1 October 2009

Appendix 1: Plan of Approach Nature Recovery Programme

Appendix 2: Transition of Mussel sector

Appendix 3: Assessment criteria Nature Recovery Programme

Appendix 4: Covenant text

Appendix 5: Organisation

1 General considerations

The Plan of Execution sets out the first steps for the transition of the mussel sector and preparation for nature recovery to 2020, as agreed in the Covenant 'Transition for mussel sector and nature recovery Wadden Sea' of 21 October 2008.

The following considerations form the basis of this Plan of Execution as well as the points already set down in the covenant.

The covenant partners will work together to achieve a 'Rich Wadden Sea', by:

- developing a comprehensive Nature Recovery Programme and
- transforming the mussel sector into a sustainable mussel fishery and cultivation industry.
- The partners are fully committed to the implementation of the Nature Recovery Programme. It can only be realised with proper planning, organisation and funding.

The target scenario for a Rich Wadden Sea and the Nature Programme is:

- restoration of water clarity
- improvement of food web
- large-scale recovery of bio-builders
- a climate-change resistant Wadden Sea
- international cohesion
- sustainable relationship between the Wadden Sea area and human activity, ecological resilience

The aspect of mussel fishery that is currently perceived to be most at odds with this target scenario is the practice of dredging the seabed to harvest raw materials for mussel cultivation. These raw materials are largely made up of mussel seed, but occasionally also come from half-grown and mature mussels. The agreements made in the covenant, now translated into measures in this Plan of Execution, are therefore aimed at reducing this method of harvesting and making the transition to other techniques. Other aspects of mussel fishery and cultivation which will aid the transition are also addressed in the Plan. These are referred to as ancillary measures. Other aspects not specifically addressed do not fall under the Plan.

The covenant partners also believe that harvesting raw materials for the mussel sector based on techniques that do not disturb the seabed (rope culture and other methods) are better suited to the key planning decision for the Wadden

Sea: priority for nature, limited human co-use within ecological limits. The results need to be assessed by regular monitoring.

The transformation from the mussel sector's seabed disturbing activities in the Wadden Sea to other harvesting techniques, (not necessarily in the Wadden Sea) and the ancillary measures outlined in the Plan of Execution will here be referred to as *transition* of the mussel sector.

Covenant partners realise that the economic and ecological effects of measures are uncertain and that knowledge of the Wadden Sea ecology is limited. The strategy of both the Nature Recovery Programme and the transition process is therefore to take steps, monitor and study the effects on the ecology and economy, learn from this and then prepare the following steps.

Action to 2020 will be based on the line set out in the Heldoorn report, proportionate increase of yields from techniques that do not result in seabed disturbance in the Wadden Sea and the simultaneous reduction of seabed disturbing harvesting methods. The target scenario aims to end the practice of dredging by 2020 and replace it with rope culture or other innovative harvesting methods.

The covenant partners can only be obliged to do what they can, within their own individual powers and possibilities. Result commitments will be undertaken for these elements only.

For elements in the transition where other parties, including non-covenant partners, are of considerable influence, best effort commitments only will be undertaken.

For each activity, one covenant partner will be designated to bear prime responsibility, supported by the other partners.

If the best efforts do not achieve the desired result, the party with prime responsibility must draw attention to this in time so that the covenant partners can decide what action to take. The covenant partners will then make every effort to achieve the covenant objectives.

To maximise support for the implementation, covenant partners commit themselves, as their role and responsibility requires, to involve non-covenant partners in the implementation of the agreements.

There is a real difference between springtime fishery when there is a reasonable chance that there are biogenic structures such as mussel banks in the relatively stable areas and autumn fishery in which the chance of them occurring is negligible.

This does not mean that the springtime fishery is unacceptable, or that autumn fishery can always take place without restriction. The partners will try to find a practical and acceptable way forward for both seasons.

The quantity of mussel seed that can be harvested from the Dutch Wadden Sea varies from year to year and this dictates the quantity that can be taken by dredging or other methods. It is undesirable to base the calculations on fluctuating figures if they are to be used to change from one harvesting system to another. We have therefore based the calculations on a fixed standard yield of 40 million kilos of mussel seed per year (400,000 mussel tonnes). This quantity is in line with the average annual raw material yield from combined spring and autumn dredging techniques in the Wadden Sea in the period 1991-2005. Dredging activities in the Dutch Wadden Sea therefore will stop as soon as these 40 million kilos per year are harvested by alternative techniques.

The 40 million kg is not the production ceiling of the Dutch Wadden Sea. The maximum raw material harvesting and the maximum production of consumption mussels in the Wadden Sea is determined by other factors, such as effects on nature, the spatial capacity for the various alternative seed harvesting methods, market development, and so on.

The effects of the steps set out in this Plan of Execution will be closely monitored, in the first place for nature development and for any negative effects on the nature of the Dutch Wadden Sea from the non-seabed disturbing techniques. In addition the achievability of the non-seabed disturbing techniques of raw material harvesting will be monitored. An annual assessment will be made of whether the actual effects agree with projections. If necessary efforts will be intensified. Special evaluations will take place as follows:

At the end of 2010 the first interim review of the technical effects of production on rope culture will be made, to include the results of seed harvesting and growth potential of the seed.

In 2013 the effects on the ecological capacity of the Oosterschelde and Wadden Sea landscape will be analysed in depth.

In 2014 agreements will be made on the manner and timescale of further transition in mussel fisheries on the basis of all the information collected, the situation regarding the whole Nature Recovery Programme and the development of rope culture and other non-seabed disturbing techniques. Agreements will also be made on the methodology to be used and the rate of transition for the autumn fishery. The anticipated developments after 2020 will be addressed, on the basis of the knowledge available at that time.

In the short term (2 years) the following are crucial:

- the implementation of an ambitious Nature Recovery Programme on the basis of the target scenario Rich Wadden Sea.

- maximum rate of rope culture introduction
- staged reduction of springtime fishery
- monitoring of scaled-up rope culture and its effects on nature development.
- agreements on transport of rope culture seed from the Oosterschelde to the Dutch Wadden Sea.
- Decision on autumn fishery permits earlier in the season (ancillary measure).

The *covenant partner with prime responsibility* will always be italicised. For the sake of simplicity the nature organisations will be referred to as a group, unless one of these organisations takes on a specific role.

2 Nature recovery

- (1) The Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality will draft a Nature Recovery Programme jointly with nature organisations, the Wadden Sea Council, the Ministry of Public Works and Water Management, Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment. The preparatory Plan of Approach (see Appendix 1) was agreed by the covenant partners and accepted by the Nature Recovery Programme steering group. The final Nature Recovery Programme will be completed by 1 October 2009.
- (2) The Plan of Approach and Nature Recovery Programme meet the criteria set by the steering group (Appendix 3). The Plan of Approach has generated the following agreements and actions:
- (3) *The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the nature organisations*, together with other Ministries involved will finance the drafting of the Nature Recover Programme. *The Ministry of Agriculture Nature and Food Quality* will organise the involvement of the other Ministries. *The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the nature organisations* will set out the route (including expertise, planning and budget) for the translation of the Plan of Approach into the Nature Recovery Programme in close consultation with stakeholders and other Ministries.
- (4) The Minister of Agriculture will work to obtain administrative commitment from the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Vice Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management.

(5)The *covenant partners* will work towards an implementation plan for the Wadden Sea Fund and for a programme-based methodology in line with the vision of the Plan of Approach/Nature Recovery Programme.

(6)The *Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality* undertakes to make funding available from the Ministry's own and other Ministries' budgets for the required structural activities not falling under the Wadden Sea Fund and so contribute to the co-financing of the Wadden Sea Fund projects.

(7)The other *covenant partners* will secure funding for other supporting activities where necessary.

3 Transition mussel sector

The main points of the transition plan for the mussel sector are outlined below. Appendix 2 describes the backgrounds to this transition. Before 1 October 2009 the covenant partners will decide on the allocation of the plan's commitments that still need to be dealt with.

3.1 Transition mechanism, general

The transition mechanism that has been agreed so far is as follows:

In a step-by-step approach up to 2020, the current method of obtaining mussel seed, the raw material for mussel cultivation, will be replaced. At present, the seed is dredged from the naturally occurring seed banks in the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea in spring and autumn. In future, the seed will be obtained through methods that do not disturb the seabed, like longline or rope culture or other alternative methods (sourcing seed from abroad, from hatcheries, nurseries, and natural settlement areas in the North Sea. The target scenario for 2020 is for the mussel sector to be a sustainable sector that no longer needs to rely on seabed disturbing methods for its raw material.

With each step taken, the sector will reduce its springtime harvesting from the Wadden Sea banks by 20%, starting in the spring of 2009. This first step is a results commitment.

The spring of 2009 will be special. In the spring of 2008 dredging vessels did not work the banks in the Wadden Sea at all. In 2009 there will be unworked banks of half-grown mussels in place. The commitment for 2009 is not to work 20% of the seed and mussel banks in place at that time.

The next step will not be taken until the seed quantities obtained by alternative methods have come level with those once obtained by dredging. This next step involves an additional 20% reduction in springtime harvesting. The quantity thus lost will be won back by alternative methods.

The aim is to take this second step during the 2011 spring season, according to the mechanism outlined above, which means that springtime harvesting will take place on 40% of the banks in place. This, too, is a results commitment by the sector.

Dredging in autumn will come to a close as soon as most of the springtime harvesting (80%) has ended and been compensated for. This step will have to be worked out in more detail in due course. In principle the reductions involved will be equivalent to the 20% springtime reductions.

An area where mussel fisheries has ended remains closed over the further transition period, and to other seabed disturbing activities. In the selection of areas that will be closed to mussel harvesting an effort will be made to leave the best possible opportunities for mussel banks and the associated biotic communities to emerge in various stages of development and cause the least possible hindrance to other seabed disturbing activities. Matters will be agreed with other users in the areas.

The mussel sector will invest in rope culture in the Oosterschelde estuary and the Wadden Sea and in alternative methods that do not disturb the seabed in the Wadden Sea trusting that the mussel seed quantities lost by reduced dredging will be won back by alternative methods.

Quantities obtained by alternative methods (rope culture, imports etc) applied after the covenant is signed are counted as compensating quantities. Alternative methods in use before the covenant was signed (experiments with rope culture on the Wadden Sea, Oosterschelde estuary and Voordelta) will be part of the scaling-up policy before 1 October 2009 in a manner yet to be decided. The effects of these experiments will be included in the monitoring and evaluation exercise into the carrying capacity of the Wadden Sea and Oosterschelde estuary.

In 2009 a study will be launched to assess whether and under what ecologically safe conditions mussel seeds harvested in the Oosterschelde estuary can be relayed from the intertidal areas into the deep water 'lays' in the Wadden Sea where mussels will grow to market size. If this proves to be a viable option, the conditions will be agreed and these quantities of mussel seed will count as compensation for the quantities lost as a result of the discontinuation of dredging in the Wadden Sea. The same applies to mussel seed quantities obtained by other methods (imports from Norway, mussel seed harvesting in Delta waters, etc.)

To convert lost mussel seed quantities harvested from the Wadden Sea to mussel seed quantities eligible for compensation the following method is used:

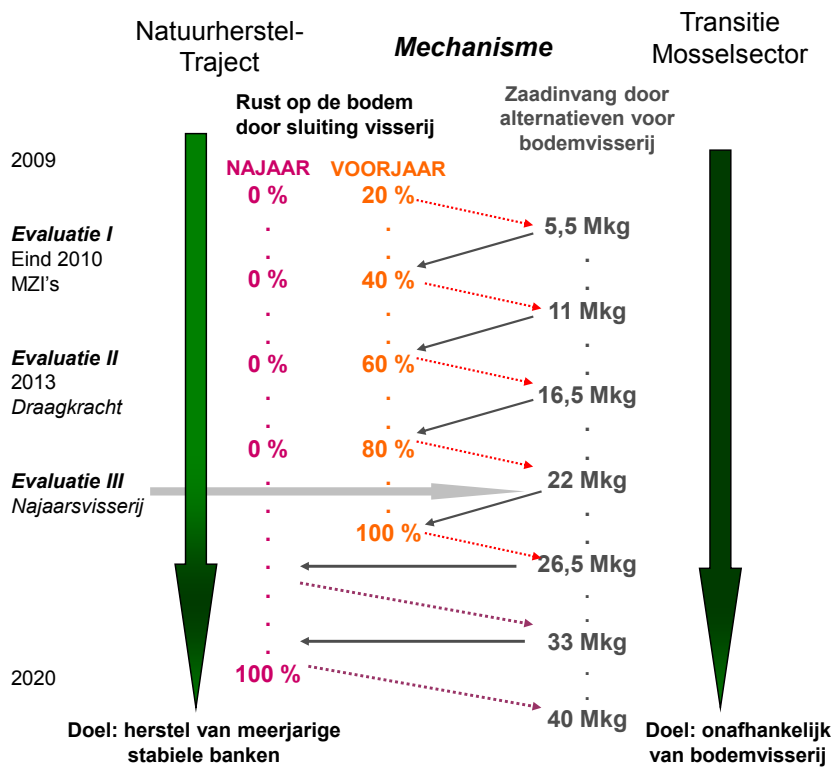
- The basic unit of calculation is an annual harvest of 40 million kg. This is the average quantity harvested from the Dutch part of the Wadden Sea from spring and autumn fisheries in the 1991-2005 the period. The 40

million kg is not a ceiling, the ceiling is determined by other factors, like carrying capacity.

- Springtime fisheries makes up 2/3 of total fisheries.
- a 20% reduction would amount to roughly 5.5 million kg a year.

If an extra annual 5.5 million kg of mussel seed can be obtained by alternative methods and this quantity can be grown to market size in the Wadden Sea, it will be time for the next step in the transition process. However, only on the condition that this quantity has the same growth potential as the mussel seed harvested in the conventional way. If not, the loss will be compensated.

The transition mechanism is illustrated in the figure below:



[Nature recovery plan mechanism transition of mussel sector

Seabed recovery dredging phased out use of alternative methods

2009 spring autumn

2010 Evaluation of rope culture

2013 Evaluation of carrying capacity

Evaluation of autumn fisheries

2010 Aim: recovery multi-annual stable banks Aim: harvesting no longer relies on dredging]

In the autumn of 2009 the mussel product organisation will set up additional experimental areas for rope culture in the Wadden Sea (101 ha) and in the Oosterschelde estuary (120 ha) in line with the interim policy for 2009 (as outlined in the letter of 1 October 2008 from the Minister of Agriculture to the House of Representatives).

In 2009 the further up-scaling of rope culture will be decided in consultation with all the Wadden Sea users and administrators involved. Use will be made of the lessons learnt from the interim policy.

An intensive independent monitoring programme will be set up (see section 3.5).

The covenant partners will each as their role and responsibility requires, work towards the realisation of the steps in the transition process. This includes making arrangements with non-covenant partners, whose cooperation is crucial to the success of the transition and Nature Recovery Programme.

The covenant partners will be in charge of communication with the relevant non-covenant parties who may be affected by the agreements made under the covenant.

The following activities and agreements for the mussel sector's transition process have been laid down in the Plan of Action.

3.2 Springtime dredging and up-scaling of rope culture in 2009

- (1) In the spring of 2009 the sector will reduce its springtime harvesting from the Wadden Sea banks of mussel seed and half-grown mussels by 20%. Preferably from one bank where all other seabed disturbing activities will also come to a halt.
- (2) The mussel sector will make an effort to compensate the loss (in kg mussel seed) by alternative methods that do not disturb the seabed in the Wadden Sea.
- (3) The mussel sector will make the maximum investment in rope culture in the Oosterschelde estuary (120 ha within the maximum 150 ha) and in the western part of the Wadden Sea (101 ha within the maximum 160 ha). The areas earmarked for this purpose will be realised in 2009 in addition to the existing mussel banks in place, in accordance with the interim policy. By this time the sector will also have applied for the permits required.

- (4) The Minister of Agriculture, in consultation with the other covenant partners, will decide as soon as possible on the issue of the relevant permits for the Wadden Sea and Oosterschelde estuary under the 1998 Nature Conservation Act, preferably no later than 1 April 2009.
- (5) The mussel sector as tenants and the Ministry as managing body of the rope culture areas involved will each as their role and responsibility requires, approach the other stakeholders (from shrimp fisheries sector, sailing trip organisations, shipping) to discuss possible consequences of rope culture in the areas where they are active.
- (6) In the rope culture areas in the Wadden Sea and Oosterschelde estuary the Minister of Agriculture will organise a zero-measurement to assess the effects on nature. For this purpose a Programme of Requirements will be agreed with the other covenant partners. The zero measurements, the costs of which will be shared equally between the sector and the Ministry, will take place shortly after the long lines have entered the water. They may be repeated if in 2010 it turns out that the long lines need to be moved, in which case the costs will be shared again.
- (7) In 2009 the further up-scaling of rope culture will be decided in consultation with covenant partners and other stakeholders.
- (8) The mussel sector will make a timely application for the springtime harvesting permit in 2009. The Minister of Agriculture will take a decision, in line with the process laid down in appendix 2.1, no later than 29 April 2009.
- (9) The covenant partners will work together to speed up procedures and decisions that may be influenced by non-covenant partners under the supervision of the party primarily responsible for the matter in hand.

3.3 Ancillary measures for the fisheries sector

- (1) The Minister of Agriculture, in collaboration with the sector and nature organisations, will propose a procedure to allow mussel seed harvesting in the autumn of 2009, to bring forward harvesting. A regime for stability 3 classes will also be agreed.
- (2) This permit issuing procedure will be the basis for procedures in subsequent years. Procedures may be improved provided they are jointly agreed by covenant partners and approved by the Minister of Agriculture.
- (3) To speed up the decision making process the Minister of Agriculture, in consultation with the other covenant partners, will set up a multi-year framework for the annual issue of permits for springtime and autumn harvesting under the 1998 Nature Conservation Act. This framework will

cover such structural aspects as cultivation, collection and transport to the culture plots in the Wadden Sea as well as the relevant assessment criteria involved. The multi-year framework can also be applied in years where mussel stocks are needed for shellfish eating birds like scaup or eider duck.

- (4) Before 1 June 2009, the covenant partners will draft workable criteria for the transport of mussel seed from rope culture in the Oosterschelde estuary to the culture plots in the Wadden Sea. The criteria must be based on the 1998 Nature Conservation Act. Before 1 October 2009 these criteria are considered by the Minister for approval.
- (5) Before 1 October 2009, the Minister of Agriculture, in collaboration with the sector, nature organisations, and other users of the area will propose a plan for the optimum use of the culture plots in the Wadden Sea taking into account the nature values of the areas concerned.

3.4 Nature development and the transition of the mussel sector, closed areas.

- (1) Areas in the Wadden Sea where mussel fisheries has ended remains closed over the further transition period, also to other seabed disturbing activities.
- (2) Before 1 April 2009 covenant partners will decide the areas where spring dredging will be reduced by 20% on the basis of the following criteria (in order of priority):
 - The area must have natural seed banks and banks of half-grown mussels;
 - The area must stand a good chance of developing mussel banks over the years, in line with the stability chart;
 - The expected nature values should be in place;
 - The areas must be contiguous;
 - The areas must not be disturbed by other activities such as other forms of dredging;
 - The area should fit in and be compatible with ongoing research.
- (3) To provide guidance to the end of mussel seed harvesting in the Wadden Sea the covenant partners have drawn up a chart indicating the opportunities for the development of nature values on the basis of the Nature Recovery Programme. This chart will be up-dated at regular intervals taking account of the Natura 2000 conservation objectives and the profile document for habitat type 1110a.
- (4) Before 1 October 2009 the way mussel seed harvesting will come to an end will be elaborated on the basis of the criteria mentioned above, the chart (still to be drawn up), the permanent nature of the closure, spat fall characteristics and the involvement of other stakeholders.

- (5) The covenant partners will draw up a multi-year management and monitoring programme for the areas where mussel seed harvesting has ended as of June 2009. The monitoring will provide an insight into the development mussel banks and the associated biotic communities in the relevant areas for the term of the covenant .
- (6) The Minister of Agriculture, after consultations with the Wadden Sea Council and stakeholders, will decide on the measures to be taken for the areas where mussel seed harvesting has ended to ensure that other seabed disturbing activities are prevented.

3.5 Monitoring and research

- (1) Before 1 October 2009 the covenant partners will jointly draw up a detailed monitoring and research programme aimed at the preservation or enhancement of nature values in the Wadden Sea. Under this programme:
 - the development of nature values in the areas closed to mussel seed harvesting will be followed closely. The lessons learned will be used in the next steps of the transition process for the selection of areas to be closed, management measures, and will provide an insight in the area's carrying capacity.
 - it will be investigated whether the quantities of mussel seed harvested by rope culture in the Wadden Sea or brought in from outside affect the Wadden Sea's carrying capacity and if there should be a maximum to the quantities of mussel seed that can be cultivated. Account will be taken of annual fluctuations in carrying capacity. Where necessary, zero measurements will be carried out.
 - the seed transports to the Wadden Sea from rope culture in the Oosterschelde estuary or from other sources will be checked at regular intervals to see whether they meet the criteria outlined above. This is done to prevent the introduction of non-native species that may damage nature in the Wadden Sea.
 - the chart indicating the opportunities for the development of nature values on the basis of the Nature Recovery Programme will be up-dated at regular intervals taking account of the Natura 2000 conservation objectives and the profile document for habitat type 1110a.
- (2) For the sake of efficiency, an inventory and analysis will be made of the monitoring and research programmes already in place to see how they can best be integrated into the new monitoring and research programme.
- (3) the monitoring results will be reported annually and analysed for their effects on the nature values of the Wadden Sea.
- (4) Evaluations will take place:
 - in 2010 of mussel seed harvested from rope culture and other methods

and their economic potential;

- in 2013 of the Wadden Sea's ecological carrying capacity (including the Sea and Coastal Research results);

- in 2013 of the PRODUS study and its consequences for springtime and autumn harvesting;

- in 2014 the situation in light of the Nature Recovery Programme and the innovative techniques other than rope culture, the pace of the transition process, the agreements to be made for autumn harvesting and perspectives beyond 2020.

(5) Research, monitoring and evaluation will be carried out by jointly agreed research institutes. In consultation with these institutes an estimation of the costs will be drawn up.

(6) Research, monitoring and evaluation results will be published in scientific journals at regular intervals.

(7) Covenant partners and other stakeholders will agree on how the research, monitoring and evaluation will be funded. The financial plan will be agreed before 1 October 2009.

3.6 Further steps towards 2020

(1) The sector has committed itself to take the second step in the transition process by 2011 according to plan.

(2) The mechanism of the first steps in reducing springtime dredging will be continued. As soon as the mussel seed quantities obtained by alternative methods have come level with the 5.5 million kg once obtained by dredging an additional 20% reduction in springtime harvesting will take place.

(3) As soon as most of the springtime dredging has ended (i.e. after the fourth step in the transition process when an 80% reduction has been achieved), dredging in autumn will be reduced according to the same principles.

(4) In 2009-2020 the mussel sector will make every effort to obtain seed quantities by other methods (imports hatcheries, nurseries mussel seed harvesting on the North Sea and in Delta waters). To this end the sector and Government will jointly prepare an innovation programme to be approved as of 1 October 2009.

(5) The agreed mechanism shall apply to all rope culture and alternative methods applied once the covenant is signed. The quantities obtained by alternative methods in use before the covenant was signed will not count as compensating quantities. They will however be included in the assessment of the carrying capacity of the Wadden Sea. They will become

part of the transition mechanism once the rope culture methods have moved beyond their experimental stage and after possible reallocation of areas and associated property rights. The relevant decisions will be made before 01-10-2009.

(6) The covenant parties will make a concerted effort to have the Wadden Sea Fund contribute to innovation programmes that make Wadden Sea fisheries (the mussel and other fisheries) more sustainable.

(7) The target scenario for 2020 is for the mussel sector to be a sustainable sector that no longer needs to rely on seabed disturbing methods for its raw material and Wadden Sea conditions in line with the Nature Recovery Programme.

3.7 Recapitulation of actions agreed for 1 October 2009

The above section refers to actions that were agreed but still need to be elaborated and ratified by the covenant parties before 1 October 2009. They are listed below:

- Definitively designating areas in the Wadden Sea from which no harvesting is to take place in the spring of 2009, after a spring survey has taken place.
- Implementing zero-measurements to assess the ecological effects of rope culture in the Wadden Sea and Oosterschelde estuary.
- Giving a permanent status to the alternative methods in use before the covenant was signed (experiments with rope culture on the Wadden Sea, Oosterschelde estuary and Voordelta). Deciding how and when they will become part of the compensation regime.
- Further up-scaling rope culture in consultation with all the Wadden Sea users and administrators involved. Use will be made of the lessons learnt from the interim policy.
- Drawing up a chart indicating the opportunities for the development of nature values in the Wadden Sea and up-dating it at regular intervals taking account of the Natura 2000 conservation objectives and the profile document for habitat type 1110a.
- Further elaborating the method of closing seed banks after 2009.
- Deciding on criteria for the transport of mussel seed from rope culture in the Oosterschelde estuary and elsewhere to the culture plots in the Wadden Sea.

- Drafting the permit for the autumn of 2009 taking into account earlier harvesting and a regime for dealing with stability 3 classes.
- Drafting a multi-year framework for the annual issue of springtime and autumn permits taking into account cultivation, collection and transport to the culture plots in the Wadden Sea including a regime to be applied in years where mussel stocks are scarce.
- Further elaborating an R&D innovation programme for alternative methods of seed harvesting and cultivation.
- Drafting a multi-year plan monitoring yield and effects of rope culture, growth potential of seed from other sources and ecological developments in areas closed to harvesting.
- Drafting and implementing a plan for the optimisation of the culture beds in the Wadden Sea taking into account the nature values and other users' interests.
- Drafting and agreeing a financial plan to fund the above actions.