



Government Service for Land and  
Water Management  
Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and  
Innovation

get rid of this peat fire trouble radically and forever. The Ministry of Natural Resources' Peat Fire Elimination Program's key point is the re-hydration of non-exploited drained peat lands, converting them back into their natural state. The re-watering methods include removal of old drainage systems and the development of land management measures to capture and conserve water. To prevent decay of forest stands grown on peat lands, the drainage systems of these areas must be re-engineered so as to provide the equilibrium of rain/runoff after having reached 93% moisture content of the peat layer. Maintenance of these restored areas is also a mayor challenge.

#### **Integrating solutions, combined benefits**

Mobilizing the economic potential of these areas, integrating solutions for local and regional pressing needs will result in a combined benefits. On one hand, benefits to the local, regional and national economy and on the other hand, benefit to sustainable forest management and ecological and environmental quality. In our view two new developments could be seen as potential flywheels for strengthening the importance and quality of forests which are not in use for forestry: green gas, and strategic urban development. The first will strengthen Russia's position as world's largest exporter of natural gas. The other will provide a framework for resilient urban planning and quality of life in and around Russia's cities. But most importantly, these nature areas are given a new, additional function, thus providing more value and guarantees for sustainable management. And by good management, risks will be reduced significantly. Last but not least, the new functions can provide budget to compensate for land devaluation due to a higher groundwater level.

This publication is issued by  
Dienst Landelijk Gebied | July 2012  
[www.dienstlandelijkgebied.nl/international](http://www.dienstlandelijkgebied.nl/international)

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## Fire it up!

### From challenges to chances

- Reducing maintenance costs
- Reducing disaster relief costs
- Reducing social and economic effects
  
- Introducing new economic functions
- Integrating social functions
  
- > Improving awareness
- > More value, less costs

#### **Area development and wildfires**

Of all European countries, the Netherlands is the most urbanised. However, 60% of the country's surface area is still in use by agricultural entrepreneurs. Eighty percent of the Netherlands is formally rural area and is home to nearly forty percent of the Dutch population. The land use pressure is enormous. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to strategically combine goals, and their corresponding land use. Clever land use combinations add value to each square meter.

Most large-scale nature areas are part of the National Ecological Structure, but also new nature areas are developed within this framework. To improve nature quality, measures are taken to raise ground water levels. The negative effects on surrounding agricultural areas are compensated. The risk of wild fires is always present, but there is an emerging risk on hazardous situations. To reduce the risks on hazardous development of wild fires and to reduce the social and economic impact of wild fires a National Work Program on Wildfires has been designed.

Area development plays an important role in the Dutch National work program on Wildfires, primarily in enhancing prevention, and in preparations to deal with wildfires when they occur. Tool kits will be developed on different strategies and measures, using the methodology of area development. Think of other vegetation types, adapted nature management, evacuation routes and alignment between risk areas and economic areas and developments. This is a complex process, involving many stakeholders, but it can lead to multiple benefits: lower costs, more value and less risks.



### Towards multiple benefits

Mobilizing new economic potential of nature areas, for instance as a source for renewable energy, matched with integrated solutions for local and regional priorities, will result in a combined benefits. On one hand, benefits for the local, regional and national economy and, on the other hand, benefit to sustainable forest management; ecological and environmental quality and resilient nature areas.

### The Dutch Government Service for Land and Water management (DLG) works on the landscapes of tomorrow.

As a public organisation with a broad knowledge of rural and peri-urban development in all its facets, we translate policy to practical implementation. Towards resilient landscapes, facilitating an optimum economic potential, upgrading the quality of life and cherishing the environmental and cultural values. DLG is committed to find the best solutions for an area by bringing people together to find efficient and effective ways to combine different area objectives.

We are an independent executive agency of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. We have over 75 years of experience in strategy development and policy implementation towards tangible projects in the Dutch rural area and peri urban areas. DLG focuses on a strong linkage between planning and implementation. Developing coherent strategies throughout different policy levels and integrating different disciplines, DLG has proven experience and expertise in a unique combination of fields. DLG works on behalf of several government authorities at different levels, local, regional and national.

### Sharing experiences and knowledge

In an international context, DLG is regularly requested to share its expertise and experience. DLG carries out a wide variety of advisory and cooperative projects in a range of countries at the request of local and national authorities. DLG welcomes sharing experiences and knowledge and close cooperation, and has built up broad European networks on area development and land and water management, nature conservation and land consolidation. DLG enjoys tackling challenges together, discovering the most suitable approaches and gaining new experiences. DLG is involved with Russia in different projects and on different themes.



valuable medicinal herbs and raw materials for various sectors of industry. On the forest lands of Russia 24 national parks have been set aside up to now totalling 2,500,000 ha. Large areas of forest represent an economic value. These forests are managed under sustainable forestry management to secure the export demands. Besides these well maintained forests there are forests with limited or non-exploitation values. These forests represent more 'soft' values, like historical, ecological and socio-cultural.

Forests, and also the large peat areas which characterize some regions, which are important for protection of watersheds and other ecologically important functions, and forests in densely populated areas, are dealing with challenges in sustainability and quality of management. Of course, these forests and peat areas are highly valued for their public goods and services, such as water and biological diversity, but this is generally not translated into economic value. Therefore providing budgets for the management of these areas is often difficult.

Each year between 12,000 and 34,000 wildfires are recorded in Russian forests and peat areas. These wildfires are partly beneficial, for example for regeneration, but more often they cause economic, ecological and social damage. After the hazardous peat fires of 2010 Russia decided to



In 2011 the cooperation between DLG, the city of Moscow and two landscape architecture consultancies from Russia and Holland won the Russian National Award on Landscape Architecture in the category 'Best public conceptual plan' with the project Green River Brateevo on resilient and sustainable cityscapes.

### Stronger together, smart solutions

DLG stands for an integrated approach. For each assignment, we combine different goals and procedures to attain the best combination of benefits, using the power of the area itself. Local knowledge and pressing needs form the basis for a powerful and a feasible plan. Local energy is mobilised, real pressing needs are articulated and synergy between parties and disciplines are found, leading to an optimal solution for all concerned. The resulting plan is then not seen as a burden that should be supported, but as a vehicle to achieve different private and public objectives. We see smart combinations of functions and disciplines and strategic, possibly new and challenging alliances of great importance for area development.

### Reflection on the Russian challenges

#### Description of the Russian situation

Russia has more forests than any other country on the planet. In total Russia's forests cover over one thousand million hectares, or 22% of the world's forest cover, an area larger than continental USA. The total area of the Russian Forest Fund covers ca. 1,181 million ha. The Russian forests are a unique source of wild fruits and berries, nuts and mushrooms,

