

**PROACTIVE APPROACH TO REACTIVE NITROGEN****K.H. Sanders***Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, The Hague,  
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Nitrogen plays a vital role in food production, and helps to feed the world's ever growing population. However, considerable amounts of nitrogen are lost to the environment in the production of food and energy. This leads to an unbalance in the nitrogen cycle, which results in problems with human health and damage to ecosystems. Reactive forms of nitrogen are mobile and can be transformed into one another. As a result, reactive nitrogen can contribute successively to different environmental problems. Nitrogen-related problems can benefit from an integrated approach, which can be more effective, and will therefore lead to a more efficient and cost-effective policy. So far much of the "nitrogen" policy has been aimed at a single nitrogen compound, which can shift the environmental problem to other compartments and in time. There is a need for international cooperation in dealing with nitrogen problems. Reactive nitrogen is transported on different geographic scales, ranging from regional, to continental and global. Countries can benefit from each other's experience in dealing with nitrogen related problems and could coordinate their research. The Netherlands supports such cooperation and has been involved in promoting international discussion and collaboration on this subject by supporting the international nitrogen conferences and the International Nitrogen Initiative, which have a strong focus on science. The Netherlands would like more policy involvement on this subject. UNEP could address the disturbance of the nitrogen cycle in their Global Environmental Outlook, leading to discussion of the nitrogen problem and its solutions at the Governing Council.