

Policy Plan
Stichting Drinkable Rivers
2024-2026



Stichting Drinkable Rivers

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1. Vision

We aim for a world with drinkable rivers. Not so long ago, most of our rivers were drinkable. Now, almost none. When we will have drinkable rivers again, it means that the entire watershed, and all natural life in it, is healthy and in balance. In other words, the health of our rivers is the ultimate indicator for the health of all living beings on this planet. A world with drinkable rivers requires of all human beings to act carefully, every day. Therefore, we believe that drinkable rivers should be the guiding compass for human society, a common global goal to strive for.

Stichting Drinkable Rivers inspires people to care for their rivers. With our watershed approach, we emphasize that all living beings are part of watersheds. Regardless of national borders, language barriers or cultural differences, all of us are dependent on the health of our rivers. Our mantra is “experience, love, care”. We believe that once people experience their river, they will start to learn and understand her values, start to love her and begin to take care of rivers.

2. Mission

Stichting Drinkable Rivers inspires people to contribute to a world with drinkable rivers.

3. Activities

We raise awareness for a world with drinkable rivers and inspire people to take action.

3.1 Raising awareness

We raise awareness by initiating inspiring rivers walks and by co-creating events with partners. In this period (2024-2026) we plan to walk along the Berkel (Germany, Netherlands), the Danube (Romania) and the Scheldt (France, Belgium, Netherlands). We will create a River Walk guide for others to organise their river walk.

Further, we will use our website, newsletter, books, and the film *A Long Walk for Drinkable Rivers*, as tools to spread the word, deepen the understanding of our vision, and inspire people to take action. In this period, we will also explore the creation of a children’s book.

We will select key (networking) events and (international) media to present the vision of drinkable rivers.

3.2 Take action

We simplify taking action towards a world with drinkable rivers. We initiate and welcome action communities for drinkable rivers and give them the tools that they need to be effective. We also explore synergies between these action communities and with our partners. So far, we have initiated the following action communities:

Mayors for a Drinkable Meuse

The Mayors for a Drinkable Meuse network gathers annually for networking and learning how to contribute towards drinkable rivers. The network offers a platform for policy makers to cooperate and act on a river basin level with measures such as restoring river banks, increasing wastewater regulations and stimulating clean water policies among companies.

Our role in the previous phase has been to build the network, set up a webpage, co-organise the annual events (2019-2023) and a film tour (2022). In the period 2024-2026, we will continue to promote and grow the network, maintain the webpage, co-organise the annual events (2024-2026), publish an Action Guide, and encourage the adoption of our citizen science programme. We aim for financial self-sufficiency of the network by the end of this period.

Citizen Science for Drinkable Rivers

Since 2019 over sixty hubs have joined our Citizen Science Programme. These hubs — mostly local environmental organisations — engage people to take water quality measurements. Our aim is to build a people's database of water quality. The data are sourced and owned by us, the people. In the previous phase, we have developed a monitoring kit, measurement manuals, instruction videos and a data platform: data.drinkablerivers.org.

In the period 2024-2026, we will continue to cooperate with Pusaqua for the onboarding of new hubs, delivering support to hubs and encouraging them to keep going. During the onboarding of the new hubs, we invite them to make a measurement plan highlighting what they want to achieve by measuring water quality. The hubs are not only helping us to track progress towards drinkable rivers, we are also empowering them with the tools of our citizen science programme to achieve their mission, including improving the health of the river.

Furthermore, we will explore how we can unleash the potential of the water quality data platform that we have developed with Nucleoo.

Youth for Drinkable Rivers

In the previous phase we have seen a lot of enthusiasm for drinkable rivers among young water professionals. We have gathered them in a loose network and encouraged them to come up with actions that they want to take for drinkable rivers. For example, one member organised a river walk along the Dommel to mobilise people for a drinkable Dommel, and others fundraised for the foundation. Pepijn van Loon and Sannah Peters have come forward as drivers within this community. Apart from initiating this action community, we have involved them actively in the Mayors for Drinkable Rivers gathering in 2023 and we will continue to do so in the upcoming Mayor gatherings.

In the upcoming period, we will explore how this action community can develop internationally with partners. We also aim to involve them actively in the Scheldt walk.

Drinkbare IJssel 2051

Our role in the previous phase has been to promote the vision of drinkable rivers and initiate a walk (2021), set up a website, created IJssel specific content and inspire the growing network of local (political) leaders, decision makers and business leaders. Wim van Vilsteren, Wim Eikelboom and Guido de Vries have come forward as drivers within this community.

In the period 2024-2026, we help the action community — existing of municipalities, provinces and water boards among others — to adopt, integrate and formalise the ambition of a Drinkable IJssel in 2051. We further publish an Action Guide and continue to encourage the adoption of our citizen science programme. We will use the Drinkable IJssel as a source of inspiration for other Rhine tributaries, like the Vecht and the Berkel.

Drinkable Thames

In 2023 we have walked the river Thames. Since then, we have convened three groups. One of these groups, councillors along the Thames, may develop into an action community. We will explore this in 2024 by organising a few events to promote the vision of drinkable Thames and connect councillors. We further publish an Action Guide in English and distribute this among our contacts along the Thames.

4. Financials

Stichting Drinkable Rivers is a non-profit organisation. We will publish a financial report every year.

4.1 Funding

Stichting Drinkable Rivers receives funding from foundations, companies, and the general public. Our action community Mayors for a Drinkable Meuse and our Citizen Science Programme are partly funded by the participating municipalities and organisations.

4.2 Fund management

The funding that will flow into Stichting Drinkable Rivers will be spend on:

- Salary
- Projects
- Administrative support
- Communications
- Events, such as river walks and webinars

5. Organisation

The daily operations of Stichting Drinkable Rivers are run by founder and director Li An Phoa. Li An executes the strategy that was developed together with the board.

5.1 Partners

We work closely together with a number of partner organisations in order to develop and roll out the various initiatives. We mention our most important partners here.

For the Drinkable Rivers Citizen Science Programme, we work actively together with Sandra de Vries, founder of Pulsaqua. Sandra is responsible for project management and the development of citizen science research methods.

Spain-based Nucleoo, formerly BI4 Group, is the pro bono data science partner for the Citizen Science Programme. The company is run by Arnoud Krom, who is a fervent supporter of our work.

5.2 Members of the board

The board consists of three members. The board gathers every quarter. Board members do not receive any salary for their work. On January 1st 2024, the board members are:

Anne Leeflang, president. Anne is project lead at the LIFE project on ecological control of the oak processionary at the Province Noord-Brabant.

Harmen van Doorn, finance. Harmen is the founder of PIF World, a crowdfunding platform for non-profits. He currently runs his own garden design studio.

Klaartje Freeke, secretary. Klaartje works as mediator and artist, formerly as lawyer.

5.3 Contact details

Name: Stichting Drinkable Rivers

Address: Stichting Drinkable Rivers, Da Costastraat 21, 2041 PJ Zandvoort, The Netherlands.

Bank account details: NL18 TRIO 0788943006 in the name of Stg Drinkable Rivers.

BIC: TRIONL2U

Bank Name: Triodos Bank NV

RSIN: 861065256

Chamber of Commerce: 77613651

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