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STREET LITTER REDUCTION PROGRAMS IN THE NETHERLANDS: REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DUTCH LITTER REDUCTION PROGRAM FOR 2007 – 2009. LESSONS FROM A PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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Abstract

On a daily basis one is confronted with litter. Most forms of litter are, however, of no concern to people. Nonetheless, litter accounts for serious economic costs, and causes negative effects to health, safety and biodiversity. Most countries implement litter reduction policy programs, often in the form of litter collection and penalties for littering. Litter reduction does not necessarily have to be a government initiative as grassroots and business initiatives have shown; for instance, citizens may adopt a road to collect litter, or to prevent others from littering. In this paper we focus on a comprehensive three year €48 Million litter reduction program which was set up in the Netherlands, by a consortium that involved actors from both the public and private sectors. The aim of this paper is to reflect on the design and implementation of this program. The key results are that although the program was not directly effective in meeting predetermined policy goals in terms of observed litter reductions, the program did succeed in laying the foundations on which future programs can prosper. Tensions between public and private actors in the program consortium led to delays and setbacks, but in the end most struggles were overcome, in large part to a mutual learning process. Our case is useful for policymakers and academic scholars seeking to learn from policy practices in waste management, and public-private partnerships for environmental programs.

Key words: governance, litter reduction, program evaluation, policy instrument, public - private partnership, waste management

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