

Local authorities get a gri

Nowadays, local authorities have a duty of care with respect to urban groundwater. A Higher Water Board is responsible for establishing a Desired Groundwater and Surface Water Regime. The Utrecht local authorities of De Bilt, Woerden, Zeist, Houten and the Higher Water Board 'De Stichtse Rijnlanden' therefore sought a company that could install and manage a groundwater monitoring network. A European invitation to tender followed and was eventually won by Eijkelkamp Agrisearch Equipment. Now more than 200 survey points have been installed that Eijkelkamp will manage.

Mehmet Seyman, Project Leader Civil Works at the local authority of De Bilt, explains the Water Innovation Network project, in short WINNET: 'For the De Bilt local authority, the duty of care was the reason to start the WINNET project because by 2013, all of the local authorities in the Netherlands must have a groundwater and rainwater vision.'

Importance of reliable data

'However, there were other reasons. Prior to this project, monitoring wells had only been occasionally installed in De Bilt even though we received many questions about the groundwater levels. For instance for planting trees or disconnecting rainwater discharge from the drainage system. Furthermore, the municipality is located in the middle of a drinking water extraction area. At the end of the 1960's, the water company started to extract water from a depth of 100 metres. In the following period, numerous beech trees died. A link between these two events has never been physically shown. We can now address these discussions by using reliable data from the monitoring network.

'In the near future,
we want to have a
user-friendly website
containing clear information.'



'The De Bilt municipality is enclosed by peat polders and the range of hills called the Utrechtse Heuvelrug.'



Project leader Mehmet Seyman: 'Eijkelkamp gives you what they promise to give you.'

The De Bilt municipality lies in an unusual area. It



borders the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, a range of hills, on the one side and a peat polder on the other. The groundwater collects here in a sort of funnel. If you examine the groundwater levels from the last decades using the information provided by the DINOLoket portal, you will see that sometimes there is more than a metre difference between the summer and winter levels. For us as the local authority it is extremely important to know when the rainwater can be disconnected from the drainage system and what system should be used to do so. This is normally a perforated pipe, or put another way, a drainage pipe. However, when the groundwater level is high, this type of pipe works exactly the other way round. You will then start to drain off groundwater, something you don't want to do.'

European invitation to tender

The WINNET project concerned not only the installation and equipping of the monitoring networks, but also the establishment of the monitoring and maintenance of the system and the implementation of the complete monitoring system at the various clients. Because the value of the project exceeded € 200,000, it had to be put out to tender in accordance with the European regulations.

p on groundwater

'Six companies submitted a tender and the outcome was based on a list of criteria. The criterion 'price' received a certain number of points, as did 'data management quality' and 'sustainability'. Eijkelkamp, as one of the tender companies, scored the highest points in practically all areas. The project is now running and everything that was promised is happening. I am extremely satisfied with Eijkelkamp. The project is running smoothly and project leader Norbert Peters is always available if you need him. The work is done in an extremely disciplined way and exactly according to plan.'

Multifunctional online environment

'We are currently busy with the online environment. We want to have a citizen-friendly website that clearly explains what is being monitored and how. No complex graphs that no one understands. Just clear information. We are going to great lengths to inform citizens about this. Of course, the website must also be user-friendly for us and other departments within the local authority, such as Spatial Planning.

Every local authority has its own ideas about what is relevant. It would be nice if in the near future there could be a website that is used by everyone and to which local authorities in the management area of the



Eijkelkamp employees monitor the groundwater before installing the Diver

water board could easily link up. This could make the WINNET project an even greater success. At the moment there are four other local authorities that are interested.'