



# OUR PURPOSE

## Why Certified Nature Inclusive Solar Parks (NISP)?

**Nowadays there is quite a media flurry over solar park development.**

Landscape integration, land use, displacement of farming and the concerns of local communities — these are all frequently discussed issues which lead to rejection of solar park plans and a negative result for the energy transition.

We see an opportunity to improve the process and purpose of solar park development, and as a result, their acceptability. In this Purpose Statement, we briefly discuss the signals we see happening around us, which gave us impetus to create NISP, and also, we mention some taboos which surround and impede solar park development.

## Signals in land use

Did you know 55% of the Netherlands land area is agricultural land? And actually, solar energy production uses a miniscule amount of this land. There is around 4GW of solar energy capacity installed in the Netherlands to date. If this number would quadruple to 16 GW by 2050, only 0.5% of the agricultural surface in the Netherlands would be covered.

Furthermore, circumstances in the agriculture sector mean that sale or rental of farm land for solar parks is a viable option. There has been a loss of 90% of family dairy farms in 50 years, and only 1/3 of farmers over 50 years old have successor in line to take over the farm business. On top of this, there can be price pressure and policy changes which create income insecurity for farmers. Thus, selling, leasing or co-owning land for solar park development can provide a solution for farmers.

But did you know — there is new solution called agrivoltaics, which combines raised solar panels, spaced apart, with crops growing underneath. This helps land owners to have 2 sources of income – from food and energy yields. Research has found particular food crops still grow well under partial shading, and it can actually protect crops from intense heat and frost.

## Signals in solar parks impact

We have seen how solar parks which cover land end-to-end with solar panels are detrimental for soil quality and vegetation. This is because light and water penetration to the ground is important for sustaining a healthy soil ecosystem. Scientific research has found that the spaces between panels have less issues for soil than areas of complete coverage. That is why our NISP tool asks for spacing between panels, and preferably no east-west panel arrangement.

We present NISP as an opportunity for the land to heal itself. The Netherlands has been the 2nd biggest exporter of food in the world after the US, for one of the smallest densest countries. Intensive farming practices have compressed the soil, polluted the land and water and weakened ecosystems. We see that the land needs its health regenerated so we can sustain agriculture into the future.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE!

All in all, we see opportunity for change. Guidance is needed to help create a quality process for the rollout of solar parks — and we provide this through the NISP management tool and certification, and also through Leafteasers expert advisory services on ecosystem, environmental quality, stakeholder engagement and landscape regeneration matters.

