

## References in the reader:

Nathans, H. (1992) 'Doelstellingen ontwikkelen', *Advieseren als tweede beroep: resultaat bereiken als adviseur* [Developing objectives, *Advice as a second career: achieving results as an advisor*], Kluwer Bedrijfswetenschappen, Deventer, p. 115-126.

The research process according to Adriani  
The theory of action model of Heinz Moser  
Formulating the problem.

## Optional references:

Het onderzoeksplan [The research plan] (1998), in: H. 'Hart, et al, Onderzoeksmethoden [Research methods], Boom, Meppel, pages 68 - 96.

## Tasks

Read the case study and associated references in the reader and complete the tasks below.

1. Elise thinks about it and is fed up because she does not have a clear definition of the problem. Using the Adriani and Moser models investigate whether, and if so where, the process went wrong and how it could be resolved. Also outline what went well in the process.
2. If you were Elise, what do you think they should have done at the meeting? Go through this exercise again and try to formulate answers that you have not been given (see Nathans).
3. Carry out a problem analysis.
4. Prepare a research plan on one side of A4 and submit it before the next meeting. The plan should include the objective (the why) of the research, a statement of the problem (the what), and should formulate subsidiary questions and consider which research methods you could use.

## Answers:

1. It appears that something went wrong in phase 2 of the Adriani model. The client placed a number of problems on the table – the rebound effect, the high cost of organic produce, the competition for organic food shops, the position of organic farmers in the North Netherlands, etc. It turns out that the client is not one person but several people with different interests (ministries, provinces and shopkeepers). It is therefore not clear to Elise what the real problem is. In Moser's terms, the "discourse" has not provided Elise with the input she needs and there is a high chance that the client will not get what he is asking for. The solution lies in the cyclical nature. Elise must renew the "discourse". It looks as though Elise has taken on a dual responsibility: institutional responsibility (arranging meetings) and content-related responsibility (formulating the research plan).

2. During the meeting Elise should have tried to get a clear definition of the problem by asking the following correct questions:

a. What does the client see as the problem?

The problem is that a number of parties are involved in the problem and they have different interests. The provinces, LNVN [Ministry of Agriculture, Northern Directorate], owner of De Biotoop. The actual client is the owner of De Biotoop. The problem as he sees it is that prices for organic produce are too high. But he doesn't know whether his solution, the trend break formula, can be extended and, furthermore, whether it would stimulate demand for organic produce.

b. Why is that a problem?

The *ministry* wants to increase the supply of organic produce. Conventional agriculture causes too much environmental pollution. It must be possible to sell the supply. Extending the trend break formula can stimulate sales.

*Consumers* don't want to be punished for good behaviour, just rewarded. The consumer either doesn't have enough money available for more expensive organic produce or his income is not high enough.

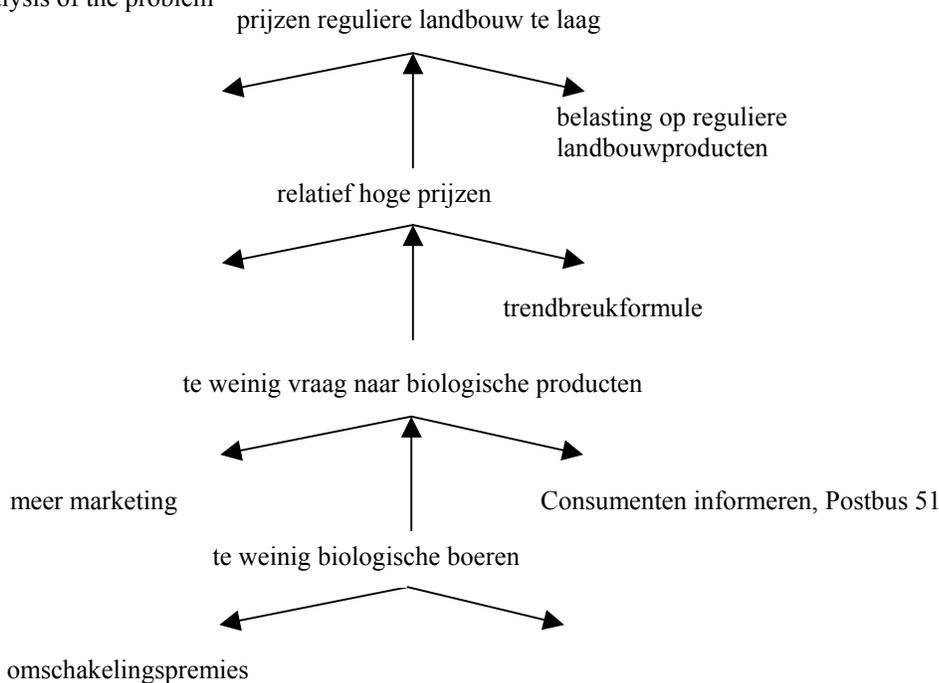
The *owner* of De Biotoop wants to extend the trend break formula to stimulate sales of organic produce because of their positive effects on the environment. But he may also earn money from his idea via copyright.

The *provinces* may be looking at the future prospects for farmers. Growing organic crops may create opportunities for farmers provided that there is a market for them. Extending the Trend Break formula can create this market.

c. For whom is it a problem?  
See point 2

d. How big is the problem?  
Extending the Trend Break formula is in fact an issue. The reason for extending it is to stimulate the consumption of organic produce. This objective can also be achieved in other ways. The desire to achieve a trend break in the consumption of organic produce in North Netherlands may cause the issue to turn into a problem.

### 3. Analysis of the problem



### 4.

#### Objective:

The Ministry of Agriculture, Conservation and Fisheries (LNV) wants to greatly increase the area under organic production. At the same time, there is a fear of organic milk lakes and butter mountains. Sale of organic produce in the Netherlands are lagging behind those in countries such as Scandinavia, Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Dutch consumers perceive the prices of organic produce to be too high compared with the prices of conventional produce. This is one of the reasons why sales of organic produce in the Netherlands by Dutch producers are relatively low. The “polluter pays” principle applied to agricultural produce means that conventional agricultural produce should be more expensive than organic produce. The trend break formula is a means of giving consumers discount on organic produce if they take out a subscription and pay for it.

#### Question

- Is extension of the Trend Break formula achievable? or
- To what extent will extension of the Trend Break formula stimulate demand for organic produce?

This problem can be specified in more detail by expressing the words “trend break” in figures. For example, increasing demand for organic produce from 1.3% to 5%.

The question is testing by nature.

#### Research questions

1. What is the Trend Break formula?
2. What form would the Trend Break formula take on scaling-up (distribution channels, sales points, price, role of internet)
3. What goods would the consumer expect to be included in the subscription as a minimum?

4. How many respondents want to take out a subscription?
5. How many of these respondents will buy more organic produce than previously?