

# Innovation challenge

## Goose population management – From culling to circular value chains

Province of Fryslân



The Province of Fryslân has been dealing with increasing goose-related damage to farmland for many years. In 2024 alone, damages exceeded €17.4 million. In an effort to reduce this impact, geese are culled throughout both winter and summer. Particularly, the resident goose population is growing rapidly, and the province is aiming to reduce its size—making more intensive culling necessary.

Whenever animal populations are managed—especially when this involves killing animals—the guiding principle is to ensure the animals are used meaningfully and respectfully.

This system relies on voluntary, independent hunters. Guided by their own ethical standards, most hunters strive to ensure that any goose they shoot is used—for personal consumption, shared within their community, or via game dealers, food trucks, or restaurants. However, there’s a limit to how many geese a hunter can reasonably distribute within their personal network. There are no official figures on how many culled geese are not used for human consumption, nor on what happens to those animals. This not only represents a lost opportunity to make meaningful use of the animal, but also raises ethical concerns.

If this situation continues, it may lead to growing reluctance among hunters to engage in population control—many do not want to contribute to waste. Yet increasing the annual number of culled geese is precisely what's needed to reduce the damage. The challenge is therefore twofold: **increase population control and make effective, respectful use of the geese that are culled.**

Why isn't this easy to solve? Because the entire chain—from culling to processing to market—faces a complex mix of logistical, legal, practical, and social barriers. These challenges are deeply interconnected and often reinforce one another:

- Consumer demand for goose meat is currently limited;
- Without demand, there is no market;
- Without a market, hunters are less motivated to cull;
- Without hunters, there's no stable supply;
- Without stable supply, large-scale processing is unfeasible.

As a result, no large-scale, commercially viable market for culled geese currently exists.

## The challenge

How can we make meaningful use of the geese culled in Fryslân in a way that creates a viable, circular, and socially supported value chain?

There are several small-scale, local initiatives that manage to create demand through short supply chains and direct-to-consumer models. But a scalable, long-term solution that structurally expands the market for culled geese has yet to emerge.

### Evaluation criteria

A strong solution to this challenge will meet as many of the following criteria as possible:

- **Flexible and scalable design:** The solution must be able to scale up or down in line with the fluctuating supply of culled geese — depending on season, region, and year.
- **Multi-purpose, multi-market approach:** The concept should explore various end-uses simultaneously (e.g., human consumption, animal feed, down, bioproducts) and avoid dependency on a single market or audience.
- **Maximal use of the animal:** Ideally, the entire goose is utilized — meat, fat, down, carcass, feet — minimizing waste. Even parts not fit for consumption should be repurposed within a circular model.
- **Economically viable and realistic:** The business model must be able to function even at relatively low volumes and should not rely structurally on subsidies.
- **Legally compliant:** The solution must align with relevant legislation (e.g., the Dutch Wild Game Meat Regulation, HACCP, EU Birds Directive, Environmental Planning Act).





- **Logistically practical:** The process — from cooling and transport to processing and documentation — must be feasible. Hunters should be supported, not burdened.
- **Demand-driven:** The solution must be guided by clear market interest and real buyer potential. Processing for its own sake is not the goal — value creation is.
- **Socially supported population control:** The solution should maintain or strengthen public understanding and trust in the need for responsible goose population management — even beyond the agriculture and hunting sectors.
- **Collaborative:** The solution allows for co-creation with hunters, farmers, entrepreneurs, authorities, and civil society organizations.

### Call for action

Are you an innovative thinker, maker, start-up or scale-up ready to take on this challenge? Help the Province of Fryslân build a breakthrough solution for goose management—one that balances nature, agriculture, and the economy.

You can apply **until 30 September** via the official procurement platform of the Province of Fryslân.

**Questions?** Contact Joline Teisman at: [joline@challengebase.nl](mailto:joline@challengebase.nl)

After an initial selection round, the most promising applicants will be invited to a site visit in Fryslân. This will be your opportunity to further align your proposal with the province's needs, ambitions, and legal frameworks. The winning proposal will receive a commission to further develop and implement the solution in collaboration with the province.