

RISE

Regional Integrated Strategies in Europe

Targeted Analysis 2013/2/11

ANNEX 3 Randstad Case Study | 15/7/2012



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ANNEX 3

Randstad Case Study: The making of Integrative
Territorial Strategies in a multi-level and multi-actor policy
environment

List of authors

Marjolein Spaans Delft University of Technology – OTB Research Institute for
the Built Environment (The Netherlands)

Bas Waterhout Delft University of Technology – OTB Research Institute for
the Built Environment (The Netherlands)

Wil Zonneveld Delft University of Technology – OTB Research Institute for
the Built Environment (The Netherlands)

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Glossary

BDU	Brede Doeluitkering (combined national special-purpose grant for traffic and transport in the Netherlands)
BO MIRT	Bestuurlijk Overleg Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur, Ruimte en Transport (Multi-level government meeting about the MIRT)
BPZ	Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel (Administrative Platform South Wing)
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
EU	European Union
Ministerie VROM	Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer (ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment)
Ministerie V&W	Ministerie van Verkeer & Waterstaat (ministry of Transport and Water management)
MIRT	Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur, Ruimte en Transport (The Dutch national long-term programme for infrastructure, territory and transportation)
MIT	Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur en Transport (The (former) Dutch national long-term programme for infrastructure and transportation)
MRA	Metropoolregio Amsterdam (Amsterdam Metropolitan Area)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RRAAM	Rijk-regioprogramma Amsterdam-Almere-Markermeer (Dutch central-regional government programme Amsterdam-Almere-Markermeer)
RISE	Regional Integrated Strategies in Europe
RPB	Ruimtelijk Planbureau (the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research)
RPC	Rijksplanologische Commissie (Dutch National Spatial Planning Committee)
SER	Sociaal-Economische Raad (Dutch Council for Social and Economic Affairs)
UK	United Kingdom
UVVB	Utrecht Verkeer- en Vervoerberaad (the Utrecht traffic and transport meeting)
WERV area	area consisting of the Dutch local authorities of Wageningen, Ede, Rhenen and Veenendaal
WGR	Wet Gemeenschappelijke Regelingen (Dutch Law on municipal cooperation)
WGR-plus region	Enforced cooperation between municipalities with a number of explicitly defined competences which 'normal'

WGR bodies cannot have in the field of spatial planning, housing, traffic and transport, economic affairs and environment. The cooperation is based on the Law on municipal cooperation.

1.0 Setting the scene for RISE in the Randstad

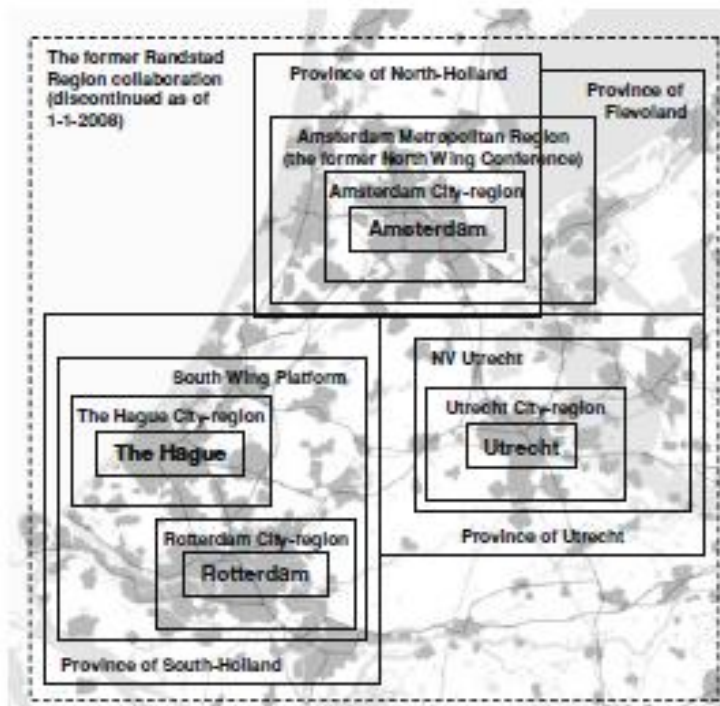
1.1 Introduction

Like the other case regions, in the Randstad there are attempts to develop integrative territorial strategies in a multi-level and multi-actor policy environment. Compared to the other RISE regions the Randstad is probably the most complex one on the basis of regional governance structures and the abundance of territorially relevant strategies. These structures and strategies moreover are in a continuous state of change.

The Randstad is covered by four provinces: South-Holland, North-Holland, Utrecht and Flevoland. Only parts of these provinces are located in the Randstad. The Randstad is rather a soft space: according to the policy document or administrative platform its spatial configuration and perimeters change. Neither at the NUTS 1 level nor at the NUTS 2 level an appropriate delimitation of the Randstad can be given. NUTS 3 regions can be assembled to present the Randstad but some NUTS 3 regions are doubtful case.

Figure 1 gives an overview of the situation a few years ago. It is worth emphasizing that the Randstad Region cooperation body – symbolised by the dotted line – was officially discontinued from January 1 2008. Quite recently a cooperation structure set up by the municipalities of The Hague and Rotterdam emerged: the Rotterdam-The Hague Metropolitan Region. The relationship with the existing South Wing Platform needs to be determined. Events like this are a clear indication of the softness of the Randstad as a level for policy integration.

Figure 1: Partial and schematic overview of administrative supralocal actors in the Randstad area (Source: Lambregts et al. 2008)



In the Randstad case policy integration takes place at several levels. We will seek to address the different – national, provincial, supralocal – levels, but as the stakeholders in the RISE projects are the four Randstad provinces the focus will be on them. This chapter starts with an overview of the history and current state of governance in the Netherlands in general and the Randstad in specific (1.2). It then introduces the formal regional strategic documents available to provinces and other levels and addresses integrative territorial strategies at the regional level (1.3). One of the documents has been selected as showcase for integrative territorial strategies: the MIRT territorial agenda, of which there are three in the Randstad. The Randstad case study focuses on these as a good example of an integrative territorial strategy. Interviews with key actors and documents form the basis of the analysis of the three territorial agendas (1.4). This chapter concludes with an analysis of the territorial agendas in the light of the toolkit.

1.2 Governance in the Randstad

As in most Western European countries the Netherlands has also faced a shift from government to governance. This has become apparent since the 1990s. The private sector and civic societies were increasingly involved in territorial related policies. The dominant role of government and national government in particular shifted towards a multi-level and multi-actor scene. Salet (2006) speaks of institutional building when actors are consulted but not formally involved. This is increasingly used as a means to create societal support for public policy. In this section we will focus on the changes in government structure as our case study on the MIRT territorial agenda predominantly involves government actors.

Government principles

The basic structure of Dutch government was established in the 1848 constitution and named the 'Thorbecke House' after its founding father. The country was divided into municipalities, provinces and the central state each having their specific responsibilities. This system is thus drastically different from the English system for example, in which local government only has competences explicitly granted to it by central government (Zonneveld, 2010).

The government structure is often labelled as a decentralised unitary state: the underlying principle is of self-government of provinces and municipalities. Co-government is the underlying principle: central government involves the provinces, the municipalities, or both in the formulation and execution of its policies. The fundamental philosophy is that unity cannot be imposed on the country from above, but must come from a plurality of forces hashing out their differences within an agreed-upon framework. In other words, the unity in a decentralised unitary state is brought about by consensus building, an activity that is also known as 'poldering' (ibid).

The idea of the Netherlands as a decentralised unitary state run by consensual democracy has left its imprint on many policy domains, spatial planning being one of them. The legal and institutional basis of the Dutch planning system is laid down in the Spatial Planning Act (WRO) of 1962, which came into effect in 1965 and was fundamentally revised in 2008 (more

about which below). Even the legislative process, which had started already before the Second World War, is indicative of the viscous state. It took so long because it was very difficult to reach a consensus about the roles of the different layers of government in relation to each other but also about the instruments of spatial planning in relation to the tasks and jurisdictions of policy sectors (Zonneveld & Evers, forthcoming).

Since the Spatial Planning Act, the idea is that national spatial planning should be seen as a coordinative activity. The instruments to bring about this coordination were of a non-financial nature – funding mainly came from policy sectors like transport, housing or agriculture. Nor was national spatial planning overtly regulative – the statutory powers to issue a directive were rarely used. The instruments of the national planner were primarily communicative: concepts, plans and vision documents were drawn up to capture the imagination of the various relevant actors, both within the sector departments on the national level (the so-called ‘horizontal axis’ of coordination) as well as at other levels of government (the ‘vertical axis’). Sometimes these communicative instruments – especially policy concepts such as Randstad, Green Heart, mainport – reached further than government, spilling over into professional and academic circles, and society at large (ibid).

An important institutional practice to achieve this coordination at the national level was the National Spatial Planning Committee (RPC: *Rijksplanologische Commissie*)¹. The task of this committee was to develop a common policy framework in the field of spatial planning which spans the policy domains of all the departments that influence spatial development. Members of the RPC had high positions in their departments, mostly at the level of director-general, but the secretariat was part of the Directorate-General for Spatial Planning. The main function of the RPC was to prepare political decision-making. Conflicts which could not be solved by the civil servants were put forward to a sub-council of the Cabinet, the Council for Spatial Planning and the Environment, its existence another indicator for the sophisticated policy technologies used for intra-governmental consensus building in the field of national spatial planning policy. The monthly meetings of the RPC have never been open for the public; even members of parliament did not have direct access to the minutes and results of the deliberations (Van der Valk & De Vries, 1996). More important than the lack of openness was the fact that the intricacies of reaching consensus within the government restricts the room for alternatives in the political deliberations to follow (Zonneveld & Evers, forthcoming).

In the Netherlands, there is no clear-cut hierarchy defined by a binding national plan. Instead, when making plans and designing policies, lower levels

¹ The RPC does not exist anymore. In 2007 this high level administrative commission merged with a similar committee working in the (nearby) domain of environmental policy, the RMC. The new commission was baptised as the Committee on Sustainable Built and Natural Environment (CDL). Main objectives of the merger were to thin out negotiation and deliberation structures ideas and to combat compartmentalisation in the administration of government, the latter in fact the *raison d'être* of the RPC and its counterpart. Although both RPC and RMC were working quietly behind the scenes – as was a main criticism – the silence surrounding the CDL is even more impressive. There are no evaluations available of the CDL. In fact such a commission will never be evaluated.

of government (re)interpret the plans and policies of higher levels of government. Consultation and negotiation is key to this process, and strongly recalls the Dutch tradition of 'poldering' (Frissen, 2001). Although there have been many changes to planning in recent years, and evidence that spatial planning has become more politicised (Boonstra & Van den Brink, 2007), this fact has remained relatively constant in an international perspective (Zonneveld & Evers, forthcoming).

Nevertheless, the fact that Dutch planning cuts across so many governmental layers and departments and tries to arrive at a coordinated, comprehensive and integrated solution has earned the epitaph of 'comprehensive integrated approach' in the international literature. In fact, according to the synthesizing report of the EU Compendium project, the Dutch system epitomizes this approach, characterised by "(...) a very systematic and formal hierarchy of plans from national to local level, which coordinate public sector activity across different sectors (...)" (CEC, 1997: 36). While the coordination aspect is certainly true, one can take issue with the statement regarding a plan hierarchy. The relationships between the three governmental levels and between the different types of plans each individual level of government is expected to produce, are rather subtle and in continual flux.

Constant debate on regional governance

The formal government at the level between the state and the municipality is the province. But there is a long-lasting search for a governance structure which fills the 'regional gap'. This 'regional gap' – to be addressed by processes of policy integration – lies somewhere between the municipal and provincial level and for almost half a century there have been discussions to change the territorial organisation of government and to alter the division of tasks between the layers of government. Specifically for the Randstad there has also been a search for governance at the level which surpasses the provincial level.

Intermunicipal or supralocal cooperation

Over the years several governmental proposals have been discussed and rejected. These proposals ranged from the (de facto) introduction of a fourth regional layer of government through municipal cooperation (1969) to an entirely new division at the provincial level: 24 provinces instead of 11, the number in these days (this proposal dates from 1975). There has been a recurring pattern in relation to administrative reform: after proposals to drastically redesign the 1848 structure the legislator returns to an improvement of the possibilities for municipal cooperation. In the 1990s the process seemed to take a new route: only a change in government structure would be needed in those urban regions showing the highest level of spatial integration. In 1994 the Framework Act 'Government in Change' (*Kaderwet Bestuur in Verandering*) announced a special status for seven urban regions which were expected to become city provinces. The proposal to turn these regions into city provinces had to be abandoned due to severe opposition from the (population of the) two main Randstad cities – Amsterdam and Rotterdam (Zonneveld, 2010). The conclusion so far is that municipalities, provinces as well as national government itself have been remarkably resilient

in opposing and ultimately preventing some kind of intermediary level between the municipality and the province (Dijkink et al., 2001: 33).

An indication of the latter is that about four years ago the legislator returned to municipal cooperation. In 2007, after an interim period of more than a decade a new law came into force which created eight regions (see Figure 2) where cooperation was enforced between municipalities in the field of spatial planning, housing, traffic and transport, economic affairs and environment.

Figure 2: The eight WGR-plus areas (Source: Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2010)



WGR is the acronym of this *Wet Gemeenschappelijke Regelingen*, or law on municipal cooperation. 'Plus' stands for a number of explicitly defined competences which 'normal' WGR bodies cannot have. The WGR-plus arrangement is not a governmental level as such because there is not elected council to control the regions. The boards are formed by administrators from municipalities who have to give account of their decision in their municipal council. Next to these WGR-plus regions there is a dense network of 'normal' WGR areas which can be seen – at least partially – as a residue from various efforts over the years to create a genuine regional level of government (ibid. 35). Over the country there are 42 so-called composite cooperation areas, each area covering a limited range of voluntarily selected issues. On top of that there are literally hundreds of single issue WGR cooperation areas. Although in many cases their delimitation could be the same the regulation itself is separate. The exact number of these arrangements is very difficult to determine because there is no central register. Figure 3 gives an impression of the statutory cooperation areas in the Province of Zuid-Holland.

Figure 3: Statutory municipal cooperation areas in South-Holland (Source: Alberts & Luyendijk, 2010)



Wing cooperation

Next to what could be called ‘hard’ statutory cooperation in Randstad – within the perimeters of WGR (plus) regions – there is cooperation on other, higher territorial levels as well (see Figure 1). This cooperation is mostly soft as it is not based on legislation or formal arrangements. It is quite fair to claim that the Randstad concept has been invented by spatial planners. A government advisory committee in a 1958 report emphasised the need of an active planning approach on the level of the west of the country. Due to a growth of population and employment resulting in a rapid extension of the build-up areas of the main cities threatened to turn the deconcentrated urban structure of the western provinces into a ‘sea of houses’. Green belts and a large Green Heart had to be kept open. So the issue of (desired) urban form has led to the introduction of the Randstad as a planning concept on the level of about a third of the country.

This Randstad approach has never been supported by a level of government of about equal size and perimeters. Through national planning policy programmes and agreements and covenants between national government and provinces and main cities the Randstad urban policy has been implemented. A prime example is the execution of the policy to create new towns during the 1970s and 1980s and the successor of this policy – the compact city approach – during the 1990s and 2010s.

There have been calls for the creation of governance structures on the Randstad level though, mainly inspired by issues of economic competitiveness: the pluricentric governance of the Randstad needed to be overcome by a more unified policy level (see also below). In practice this has

In 2008 Regional Cooperation Amsterdam' has been renamed Amsterdam Metropolitan Area (MRA: *Metropoolregio Amsterdam*). 36 municipalities are member as well as the provinces of North-Holland and Flevoland and the Amsterdam WGR-plus region. The area is more than twice as big as NV Utrecht and its membership partly overlaps (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Approximation working area Amsterdam Metropolitan Area (Source: www.metropoolregioamsterdam.nl/achtergrond.html)



The Administrative Platform South Wing (BPZ: Bestuurlijk Platform Zuidvleugel) has been established in 2000 (Figure 6). The BPZ has the following eight partners: the Province of Zuid-Holland; five regional cooperation bodies including Rotterdam Urban Region (Stadsregio Rotterdam: WGR-plus), Haaglanden Urban Region (The Hague and surrounding municipalities; also WGR-plus); Holland Rijnland (the northern part of the province with Leiden as the largest city); the Drecht Cities (Dordrecht and surrounding municipalities) and Midden-Holland (Gouda and its environs); the municipalities of Rotterdam and The Hague. Like the North Wing the BPZ was explicitly not meant to become a new decision-making layer of government. It was meant as a platform to reach agreements about projects and investments without a transfer of competences.

It is not unjustified to claim that the main protagonist of the BPZ is the Province of Zuid-Holland more or less like Amsterdam is the main protagonist of the MRA. Interestingly a new cooperation structure is emerging in the South Wing: the Rotterdam-The Hague Metropolitan Region, an initiative of both cities. In this Metropolitan Region the two main cities (Rotterdam and The Hague) play a major role; the province and the smaller cities and regions

are not represented (as in the BPZ). Like elsewhere in the Randstad it is claimed that this new structure should not be seen as a new layer of government. Both cities though claim the transport budgets when it comes to the abolition of the WGR-plus areas as central government would like to do (see further below).

Figure 6: The perimeters of the Administrative Platform South Wing (coloured areas) (Source: Provincie Zuid-Holland)



Randstad cooperation

The highest level of the entire Randstad is without any doubt the most unsuccessful level of cooperation. When government was preparing the Fifth report on spatial planning in the late 1990s the situation looked quite positive. The concept of Deltametropolis was framed by academics and seemed to guide even politicians and civil servants of the four main cities of Randstad, including Amsterdam. The Randstad as a key level for integrated territorial strategy making seemed to become generally accepted. From this perspective it did not come as a surprise that in September 2002 the four Randstad provinces, the four main urban regions plus their core municipalities established Regio Randstad as a negotiation and cooperation platform. Its formal base was statutory: the law on administrative cooperation (WGR).

Next to the Regio Randstad the Deltametropolis Association – initiated by academics and the civil society at large – was active. Its memberships stretched from main Randstad cities to chambers of commerce. It started to function as think tank and a platform for open, conceptual discussions about Randstad and key areas within Randstad. So about a decade ago two loosely coupled trajectories were created. One trajectory was heavily dominated by

political negotiations, reaching consensus and decision-making. The other trajectory was dominated by research and design related discussions and various sorts of publications, partly web-based and supposed to inspire politicians and administrators working along the other trajectory: a network type of laboratory for research, design and discussion.

The momentum created by the Deltametropolis even lead to (renewed) calls for a Randstad authority. In 2007 central government installed a high level commission consisting of the mayors of the four major cities and the commissioners of the four Randstad provinces – called the ‘Holland 8’ . It came to the conclusion that to improve the competitive position of the Randstad a far reaching administrative reform was necessary to put an end to the ‘administrative crowdedness’ (Lambregts et al., 2008: 51-52). National government set aside this strongly formulated advice. Support for this decision came from two research institutes: the OECD in a 2007 report as well as the RPB, the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research, in a report a year later. The RPB concluded that the administrative structure of the Randstad is not worse compared to other urban regions in Europe and can therefore not count as an explanatory factor for the level of economic competitiveness (De Vries & Evers, 2008). Partly as the result of this the support for a Randstad approach has evaporated. A major event was, as already mentioned in the introduction, the dissolution on the first of January 2008 of Regio Randstad. The main reason was that the four participating cities lost interest in Randstad cooperation, chiefly because it was difficult to reach agreement. They also felt they did not need this governance level of scale to get financial support from national government for a variety of projects.

Randstad cooperation has not ended entirely though. Although there is no political platform to discuss Randstad level policy issues anymore the four Randstad provinces (without the four main cities!) still cooperate to promote their interests at the European level. A small group of provincial representatives works together on this, partly based in Brussels in the ‘House of the Dutch Provinces’ (see: www.regio-randstad.nl; www.nl-prov.eu; accessed 29 May 2010). This structure serves as the framework for the participation of ‘the’ Randstad in the ESPON RISE project.

So the only existing policy cooperation on the Randstad level is externally, even internationally oriented. The Deltametropolis Association is still active although it is suffering from the absence of the parallel political trajectory: a Randstad level policy counterpart is missing. The loose coupling between two Randstad trajectories we have identified above does no longer exist simply because one trajectory has been wiped out altogether. Above we have seen that at present the discussion about the administrative structure of the Randstad is open again. It is highly unlikely though that a single Randstad authority will be created. All the signs are directing towards the Randstad wings (Ministerie VROM, 2008; Ministerie I&M, 2011; Rob, 2011).

Some plans for the future

What plans are there for the future of governance in the Randstad? In spite of the on-going criticism on municipal cooperation as a tool to fill the regional gap (undemocratic; cluttered) there has been some sort of radio silence about the administrative structure of the country. For several years matters have changed though. Because of the financial crisis and heavy investments by the national government in the Dutch banking system, government is cutting down spending. The belief is that a restructuring of the entire administrative system of the country could cut government spending with billions of euros. (Ministerie van Financiën, 2010). The present coalition government – in office since September 2010 – sees the reorganisation and simplification of the administrative structure of the Randstad as a priority. No matters should be dealt with by more than two administrative levels.

One conclusion is that the WGR-plus regions have to go, but there is no news yet about their abolishment. An evaluation by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2010) concluded that the regions score well in the realization of coherent regional policy. Initially another conclusion by the government was that some kind of Randstad authority should have to be created consisting of four provinces. This idea is abandoned. In 2011 a merger of the three northern Randstad provinces (North-Holland, Flevoland, Utrecht) was announced, but there is no consensus about this idea.

Conclusion

What this shows is that regional governance in the Netherlands – at least in the Randstad – is in a state of constant flux. A specific issue requires which regional level is the most appropriate to deal with the issue. While the House of Thorbecke with the three formal government levels is stable, supplementary regional structures will be built up and pulled down in due course. Although there is some sort of consensus about the existence of an administrative gap on the regional level, there is no political and societal agreement how to fill this void. So while the three level structure of the administrative structure of the country as a whole is quite stable since its establishment in 1848 – apart from a creeping amalgamation of municipalities – this does not count for the regional level. Over the years there seems to be a disagreement over the question whether administrative reorganisation and integration is a prerequisite for policy integration, especially in the territorial domain. At present a Randstad approach seems highly unlikely. If there will be a formal reorganisation of the administration at this moment it is very likely that there will be two separate Randstad wings. Whether matters can be resolved on the basis of the laws on the provinces and municipalities remains to be seen. A change of the constitution needs the approval of two consecutive parliaments. As the administrative structure of the country is such a sensitive issue this seems to be beyond comprehension.

2.0 Statutory documents and other integrative territorial strategies at the regional level

2.1 A new Spatial Planning Act

A new Spatial Planning Act came into force as from July 2008 resulting in a less complex planning system than before. This law makes a distinction between policy, regulation and implementation, whereas these were cross linked in former statutory planning documents. The law distinguishes between two main planning documents: a strategic planning document and a legally binding plan. Strategic and indicative policy is set out in structure visions (*structuurvisies*); the legally binding, prescriptive policy is set out in land-use plans (*bestemmingsplannen*). For smaller projects a project plan (*projectbesluit*) can be made. The making of these legally binding land-use regulations as well as strategic planning has become possible at all governmental levels. That provinces as well as national government can formulate land-use plans is a major novelty in the Dutch context and is introduced to speed up the realization of sectoral plans (mainly infrastructure). In addition to these, the possibility of making general legally binding land-use regulations (*verordeningen*) by the provinces and the national government was introduced.

In the structure vision, an integrated outline must be given of the desired spatial developments for a particular area and direction must be given to the relevant spatial policy for the area. The structure vision replaces the national key planning decision at the national level, the regional plan (*streekplan*) at the regional level, and the municipal structure plan at the local level in the previous Spatial Planning Act. The new structure vision is a mandatory policy document without any legally binding elements, in which the administrative body that establishes it binds itself with the vision of the desired spatial development in a particular area. If the provincial interest or the interest of national government is at stake, they will have the power to make their own legally binding land-use plans, called the provincial land-use plan (*inpassingsplan*) in the new system. As far as the legally binding land-use plan is concerned, current legislation also aims at more up-to-date local land-use plans. Therefore in principle every ten years a land-use plan has to be revised. A quicker procedure and an obligation to make digital plans should facilitate this.

2.2 Statutory documents of the province

Due to the changes of the Spatial Planning Act the provincial role has changed. However there is no change in the way the province performs its strategic role, although the statutory planning document is new. Dutch provinces have always been heavily involved in strategic planning; the new legal instrument of the structure vision has the same application as the former regional plan. The only difference is that it no longer forms the basis for mandatory approving local land use plans by the province, a provincial competence that has been abolished altogether. A province is now also able

to make binding land-use regulations itself, using a provincial land-use plan or the independent project procedure at the provincial level. This competence is, however, restricted to projects of provincial importance. The land-use plan is the only planning document which is binding upon citizens.

Provincial structure visions

According to the 2008 Spatial Planning Act each province has to have a structure vision which is the main integrative territorial strategy document at this level (thematic visions as well as visions for a part of the provincial territory are also possible). The province usually involves a wide array of public and civic stakeholders in the formulation of provincial structure visions and other territorial integrative strategies. The current situation of available structure visions looks like this:³

- North-Holland: the current vision dates from mid-2010.
- South-Holland: the first version dates from 2010 but is yearly revised or when political urgency requires it to be.
- Flevoland: the Environmental Management Plan (*Omgevingsplan*) is officially also a structure vision. This document includes all outlines of provincial policy. The province is currently preparing a partial vision for the Oostvaarderswold area (a combined nature and leisure area) and a thematic vision on wind energy.
- Utrecht: the present so-called comprehensive structure vision (*Integrale Structuurvisie*) 2005-2015 (the result of a policy neutral adaption of the regional plan) dates from 2004. Revisions of the current vision are laid down in partial as well as thematic structure visions. A new structure vision (2013-2028) is under construction. The province also has a so-called 2040 Strategy aiming for sustainability (*Utrecht 2040*) (see below).

Other territorial integrative strategies at provincial level

Other than the statutory structure visions provinces also formulate and use other integrative territorial strategies. Examples are visions on urbanisation, landscape, mobility or economy integrating different perspectives. They are often used as input in provincial structure visions. An example is the Utrecht 2040 document, which is developed as a strategy for the future of the province. The scope of this strategy is more general. Also the way it has been prepared is quite different: while a structure vision spells out key interests of the provincial administration and is only binding the administration itself, the 2040 strategy is a strategy of the province and 29 partners ranging from interest groups, NGOs and municipalities to the University of Utrecht and private companies. Building commitment within the province was a major goal which was reached amongst others by jointly discussing and designing the strategy to be followed by the province and its partners.

³ As said above there are legally binding land-use regulations (*verordeningen*) next to the visions. We do not discuss these as they have no importance whatsoever in terms of regional integrative strategy making. The Province of Zuid-Holland uses the general label 'vision' and under this umbrella concept differentiates between the spatial vision, the implementation agenda and the land-use regulation.

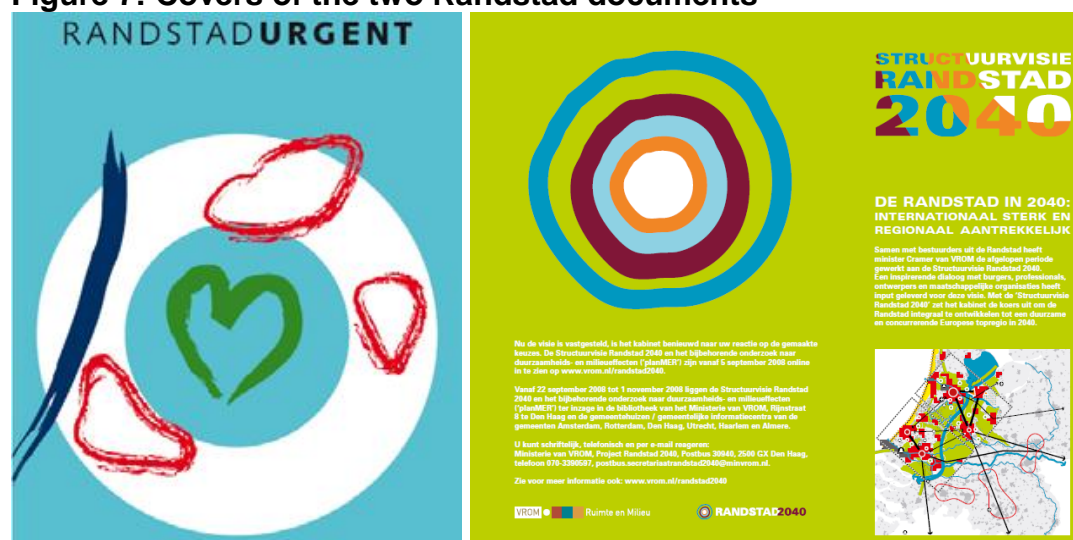
2.3 Integrative territorial strategies at the national level about the Randstad

While the provincial level is the formal government level to address regional integrative strategies, other formal and informal government levels also formulate these. In succession the relevant integrative strategies at national, wing and WGR-plus level will be introduced (from high to low level of scale).

Randstad 2040 and Randstad Urgency Programme

When the Upper Chamber of Dutch Parliament approved the National Spatial Strategy in 2006 it asked for an integrated long-term vision on the Randstad and a strategy for implementation of the vision. This resulted in the Structure Vision Randstad 2040 (*Structuurvisie Randstad 2040*; Ministerie VROM, 2008) and the Randstad Urgency Programme (*Randstad Urgent*) (Figure 7). The vision addresses social, cultural, ecological and economic trends and challenges and their spatial implications and relates them to the spatial structure of the Randstad. The Randstad Urgency Programme, which comprises of some 40 projects (Structure Vision Randstad 2040 being one of them), focuses on the short-term problems in the physical domain.

Figure 7: Covers of the two Randstad documents



2.4 Integrative territorial policy documents at the wing level

Although the wing level is not a formal government level, integrative territorial policy documents are considered as crucial by the participants. With the coming into force of the new Planning Act in 2008 each government tier had to formulate a self-binding structure vision. The vision at wing level forms the umbrella for the structure visions of the individual government tiers. Below we introduce the major documents at wing level.

Amsterdam Metropolitan Area

Ontwikkelingsbeeld 2040

The government tiers in the North Wing body joined forces in developing a joint structure vision. The result was the Development Vision 2040 (*Ontwikkelingsbeeld 2040*). The political core group of the North Wing decided

to reach a supported, long-term development vision in an open process. This vision was then used as point of departure for structure visions of government tiers participating in the North Wing. A structure vision is optional, not mandatory for the North Wing as an informal government structure, however it is for provinces and municipalities. Main ambition is to develop the North Wing into an internationally attractive and competitive European metropolitan area.

NV Utrecht

Ontwikkelingsvisie Noordvleugel Utrecht 2015-2030

De NV Utrecht actors jointly published the Development Vision North Wing Utrecht 2015-2030 (*Ontwikkelingsvisie Noordvleugel Utrecht 2015-2030*) in 2009. As in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area the main goal is to strengthen the position of the Randstad in Europe. It was meant as an elaboration of the national structure vision Randstad 2040. As was the case for the Development for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area the Vision of Utrecht is also the point of departure for province and municipalities for their statutory structure visions. It also forms the basis for agreement in the Long-Term Programme for Infrastructure and Transportation (MIRT) (see section 3).

South Wing

There is not one overall integrative policy document at the level of the South Wing. The South Wing Bureau works along five programmes: (1) the Economic Agenda (*Economische Agenda*), (2) the Accessibility Package (*Bereikbaarheidspakket*), (3) *StedenbaanPlus* (regional rail infrastructure), (4) the Urbanisation Programme (*Verstedelijkingsprogramma Zuidvleugel 2010-2020*) and (5) Metropolitan Landscape (*Metropolitaan Landschap Zuidvleugel*). These programmes all aim at integration of a selective number of policy fields, although that resulted in a sectoral agenda. *StedenbaanPlus* for example relates spatial planning with rail infrastructure and the Metropolitan Landscape South Wing document looks at different levels (international, national, regional and local) and perspectives (spatial, climate, ecological, economic, social, cultural challenges) combining the two dimensions into a scheme with multiple perspectives. Of these five programmes the Urbanisation Programme is perhaps the most integrative programme. It strongly focuses on brownfield housing and quality of the living environment. Transport accessibility and sufficient and accessible public space and recreation areas are conditions for house-construction.

2.5 Integrative territorial strategies at the level of the WGR-plus regions

There are four WGR-plus regions in the Randstad: the urban regions of Amsterdam (*stadsregio Amsterdam*), Rotterdam (*stadsregio Rotterdam*), The Hague (*stadsgewest Haaglanden*) and Utrecht (*Bestuur Regio Utrecht*). Each urban region provides a regional structure plan in which the future development of the area is indicated. It addresses housing, working, mobility, landscape and green spaces. The plan includes concrete policy decisions about projects or amenities of regional importance.

3.0 Integrated strategy making: the MIRT territorial agendas as a showcase

3.1 Introduction

The preceding shows that there is an abundance of integrative territorial strategies in the Randstad at the regional level. The question what we consider as the 'regional' level in the Randstad can also be answered in different ways as there is not one inclusive Randstad covering level. In the Randstad case study one specific integrative territorial strategy was chosen to analyse more into depth: the MIRT territorial agenda. It combines both horizontal and vertical integration and vision and investment programme. Although the origin of the territorial agenda is facilitating decision-making for the purpose of the central government infrastructure investment programme, it has been broadened since.

Since 1999 infrastructure projects financed by central government were included in the MIT project book as an annex to the Infrastructure Fund in the central government budget. MIT stands for Long-Term Programme for Infrastructure and Transportation (*Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur en Transport*). The type of infrastructure determines which level of government is responsible for its financing and construction. Central government is responsible for both financing and construction of highways and railways. Regional infrastructure, such as provincial roads and bridges, but also public transport infrastructure (bus lanes and bus stations) is financed by central government through provinces and urban regions via a combined special-purpose grant (BDU; *Brede Doeluitkering*). Projects above a certain threshold sum are financed via the MIT. The construction is either the responsibility of province or urban region. The procedure which projects are financed through the MIT is based on consultation between regional and central government. In 2007 a new government announced that this programme would be broadened to MIRT in which the R stands for Territory (*Ruimte* in Dutch). Reason was a better tuning of accessibility and territory. The MIRT is an implementation instrument; it links budgets with projects (De Jonge, 2011).

The MIRT contains the central government investments in projects and programmes of two ministries: (1) Infrastructure and Environment and (2) Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. The MIRT project book is an overview of all territorial programmes and projects in which central government jointly participates with lower tier governments. The aim of the MIRT is to bring more coherence in investments in territory, economy, accessibility and quality of life. In doing so the government aims at reinforcing the cooperation between both central departments and between central and lower tier government. Until now Ministers, State Secretaries and lower tier administrators meet twice a year in so-called multi-level government meetings (*Bestuurlijk Overleg MIRT*), in which the MIRT project book is one of the items on the agenda. Programmes and projects which need a decision or about which there is a conflict are then discussed. Although it is the intention to decide about projects in these multi-level government meetings, decisions can also be taken outside the meetings. As from 2012 the frequency of the multi-

level government meetings will be only once a year. Projects which might be included in the MIRT project book to be financed by central government are subject to a MIRT framework of rules of the game (*MIRT-spelregelkader*). A project passes through three phases and there are five moments on which a decision is taken⁴. If a project is in need of a decision it is discussed in the multi-level government meeting. The rules of the game for the projects in the MIRT project form so to say a meta governance structure.

Marshall (2009) concludes that there is an awareness of the problem of departmentalism, silo mentalities, separate communities in the Netherlands. The territorial agenda is one of the attempts to tackle these issues. Marshall indicates that efforts as the MIRT to gain a productive interrelationship with infrastructure planning are critical for the effectiveness of spatial planning.

3.2 Prime function of the instrument of the territorial agenda

In order to provide a strategic framework to assess which programmes and projects should be taken up, the central government asked eight regions⁵ to develop a territorial agenda. These regions cover the entire country. The agendas are drawn up cooperatively by central and lower tier government in each region. They constitute the underpinning with respect to content for potential new programmes and projects. They are meant to stimulate the coherence between the different policy fields and between central and regional policy. The agendas are agreed upon in the multi-level government meeting and form the basis for the agenda of these meetings. New about the territorial agendas is that it provides insight why projects are being pursued and how they contribute to the integrated development of an area. An additional advantage is that central and lower tier government share this vision.

The MIRT territorial agendas serve a confined goal – basis for decisions on investments in particularly infrastructure – and are based on existing policy. The involvement of a wide array of stakeholders is thus not considered necessary; only government actors are concerned with the agenda. The agendas consist of two parts. In the first part the area is characterised and the key developments are described. Partly based on this part the ambitions for the territorial development for the medium range are formulated and the corresponding objectives are laid down. The result is a shared vision. There is a clear distinction between the vision part which has an integrative ambition and the list of projects which has a more limited ambition. In the second part the territorial issues are concretised and elaborated in possible solutions. These form a breeding ground for possible programmes and projects, which may lead to MIRT explorations. If an issue is not sufficiently elaborated in time, scale and aim, a MIRT research may be taken up if importance and urgency are evident in the long term. In view of legitimation a MIRT

⁴ (1) Exploration phase (a. take-off decision and b. preference decision), (2) Plan development phase (c. project decision, d. implementation decision) and (3) Realization phase (e. delivery decision).

⁵ North Netherland, East Netherlands, Northwest Netherlands, South Wing/ South-Holland, Southwest Delta, Utrecht, North-Brabant and Limburg.

exploration needs a broader field of stakeholders than the territorial agenda as it is an elaboration of it.

The vision in the agendas – expressed in ambitions and objectives – has a long term horizon (usually until 2030). Most of the eight territorial agendas have been decided on in the fall of 2009 and have been used in the MIRT project book of 2010. A territorial agenda deals with living, working, economic activity, mobility, nature, landscape and water. It contains at least:

- A characterisation of the area
- An analysis of (autonomous) developments (bottlenecks national housing market analyses, network analyses, demographic developments, economic developments)
- Ambition and vision (area vision)
- Integral objectives (if needed for each geographic subarea)
- Potential programmes and projects resulting from the formulated ambition are prioritised
- Supporting maps (related to vision as well as to concrete programmes/projects)
- Points of difference between central and regional government; these are the topics for the BO MIRT (Multi-level government meeting about the MIRT).

Existing policies are used as much as possible in the formulation of the territorial agendas. All territorial agendas have the same table of content and use the same type of maps.

In 2010 a new central government was inaugurated. Major financial cutbacks, the abolishment of the urban regional level and decentralisation of responsibilities to lower tier government are among the focus points. There were signs that these changes urged a second generation of territorial agendas. Practitioners see the territorial agenda both as promising and worrying. Promising because the agenda gives freedom to relate fundamental issues with regard to territory, infrastructure, urban and rural land uses without given requirements about the form and across administrative boundaries. The agenda is seen as a means to frame decisions on the short term. The worries are about the imbalance between the attention for the integrated vision and the focus on the approval of projects and their financing (De Jonge, 2011, p.125).

3.3 Three agendas for the Randstad

Three of the in total eight territorial agendas are located in the Randstad: (1) South Wing/South-Holland, (2) Northwest Netherlands and (3) Utrecht. Only the first one covers one province, the other two each cover two provinces: Northwest Netherlands covers the provinces of North-Holland and Flevoland and the Utrecht agenda covers a minor part of the province of Noord-Holland and, logically, the province of Utrecht.

The process of the elaboration of the territorial agendas started by an umbrella introduction about the Randstad. The document *Glimpse on the Randstad (Blik op de Randstad)* (Randstad Urgent, 2009) is based on the

Structure Vision Randstad 2040 and describes the coherent objectives in the Randstad. The vision introduces four principles:

- Living in a safe, climate proof and green-blue delta
- Making quality by a stronger interconnection between green, blue and red (nature and agriculture, water and urban land uses)
- Reinforcing what is internationally strong
- Strong and sustainable cities and regional accessibility.

After this introduction under the responsibility of central government each of the regions in the Randstad elaborated its own agenda in a joint collaboration of central and lower tier government. There is an input from regional sectoral policy which has a territorial component and which is relevant in the relation between central and regional government. The territorial agendas are the result of negotiations between central and regional government tiers: they are the result of joint effort. Below we briefly introduce the key objectives in the three territorial agendas (see textbox). In the following sub-sections we will address each of the three agendas in greater detail. Here we will focus on the stakeholders, how they cooperated, the difficulties they had to overcome, the vertical and horizontal integration and the relation with existing policies.

Territorial Agenda South Wing/South-Holland

The territory which is covered by the agenda is physically delimited: it covers the whole province of South-Holland but focuses on the South Wing. The agenda was agreed upon in the multi-level government meeting MIRT of central and lower tier governments in November 2010.

The elaboration of the agenda consists of three phases: vision, list of projects and prioritisation of projects. The agenda presents an overview of projects and programmes for the period 2010-2028. The five ambitions for the territorial development are: (1) to promote economy, (2) to intensify cities, (3) to bring landscape close to home, (4) to improve accessibility and (5) to take on water and energy objectives. For each of these ambitions a vision is formulated based on sectoral policy. This results in a map with projects and programmes and the time range in which they have to be implemented. It concludes with a top ten of projects and programmes, which reflects the importance the region attaches to an integrated approach.

Regional participants in the South Wing Platform had a major input in the text of the agenda. There was input from different sectors, but with a focus on spatial planning. The territory outside the South Wing was also represented in the project team. The themes which overlap with neighbouring territorial agendas such as the Green Heart and the Southwest Delta area, were fine-tuned by the provincial organisations.

Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands

The territory which is covered by the agenda is physically delimited. It covers the provinces of North-Holland and Flevoland, while it focuses on the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. It was written in 2009 and agreed upon in the multi-level government meeting MIRT in November 2009.

The main ambition is to strengthen the international competitiveness of the Randstad. The agenda translates this ambition into a vision for the area and presents an overview of projects and programmes for the period until 2040.

The vision is based on a document which had just been elaborated: Development vision North Wing 2040 (*Ontwikkelingsbeeld 2040*). Projects are elaborated on the basis of five challenges: (1) economy, (2) urbanisation, (3) accessibility, (4) nature and landscape and (5) sustainability and climate proof. The four priority areas are Westflank, Zaan-IJ oevers, Zuidas and Almere.

The official regional authors of the agenda were the urban region of Amsterdam and the two provinces, but the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area was the actual regional platform organising the regional input.

Territorial Agenda Utrecht

As the other two territorial agendas, the one for Utrecht is also physically delimited, but in a hybrid way. The vision part of the agenda includes a larger territory than the agenda part listing concrete projects. Whereas the agenda part exclusively deals with the Utrecht territory, the vision part also includes, due to strong interrelations with Utrecht, the Gooi and Vecht area, and thus territorially overlaps with the MIRT Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands. In the south-western part of the province – of which the WERV area (Wageningen, Ede, Rhenen and Veenendaal) is part – it borders the province of Gelderland.

The agenda was written in 2009 and agreed upon in the MIRT multi-level government meeting in November 2009. It is developed in the context of the aim to strengthen the Randstad area by means of emphasizing diversity. The agenda comes in two parts. Part 1 integrates several national and regional visions and plans into common objectives, an approach and a vision for the Utrecht region. The main ambition is to strengthen the region's sustainable development and economic competitiveness by focusing on 1) housing and urban intensification, 2) improving accessibility and 3) investing in environmental and nature development. The two priority areas are the Utrecht city region and the Amersfoort region. Two other areas which are mentioned concern the Utrecht-West region where Utrecht together with other provinces is focusing on the Green Heart and the WERV area in the eastern part bordering the province of Gelderland, which has taken responsibility for this area. Part 2 provides an overview of the various policy, financial and regulatory issues as well as an complete list of projects and programmes to be addressed in the MIRT multi-level government meeting.

3.4 Territorial Agenda South Wing/South-Holland

3.4.1 Actor network responsible for the MIRT territorial agenda

The territorial agenda has been jointly drawn up by central government and the South Wing partners. The South Wing partners consist of the province of Zuid-Holland, the urban regions (WGR-plus regions) of *Haaglanden* (municipalities of and around The Hague) and Rotterdam (municipalities of and around Rotterdam), the regions (WGR regions) of *Drechtsteden* (municipalities of and around Dordrecht) *Holland Rijnland* and *Midden-Holland* and the municipalities of The Hague and Rotterdam. At the start of the formulation of the territorial agenda a group of authors was formed within the

South Wing organisation. As the Agenda does not cover only the South Wing local authorities outside the South Wing were invited to join the project team. Two supervising groups were formed: one at the political level, one at the organisational level. In both supervising groups there was a representation from different sectors, although there was a strong focus on spatial planning. Chairperson of the political supervising group was the provincial spatial planning delegate. The agenda was not agreed upon by members of the provincial executive and municipal alderman separately, but by the political supervising group of which executives of the South Wing partners and regions and municipalities were members.

Although this Agenda is the only one which covers only one province it is administratively very complex due to the presence of two major cities, two major urban regions and some other regions (see Figure 8). Some argue that the South Wing Platform is potentially a strong platform, but that it lacks the will to cooperate. Research by Dijkink et al. (2001) confirms this. They concluded that the South Wing deprives an evident and powerful government actor in charge of the South Wing platform and that it shows a weak developed joint administrative orientation towards the South Wing. This lack of joint orientation results in a complex process of prioritisation. In this setting the joint formulation of the agenda can be labelled as positive.

The private and the voluntary sectors did not play a role in the realization of the Agenda. However they had a role in the formulation of sectoral policy and the provincial structure vision on which the Agenda is based.

3.4.2 Horizontal and vertical relations between policy sectors

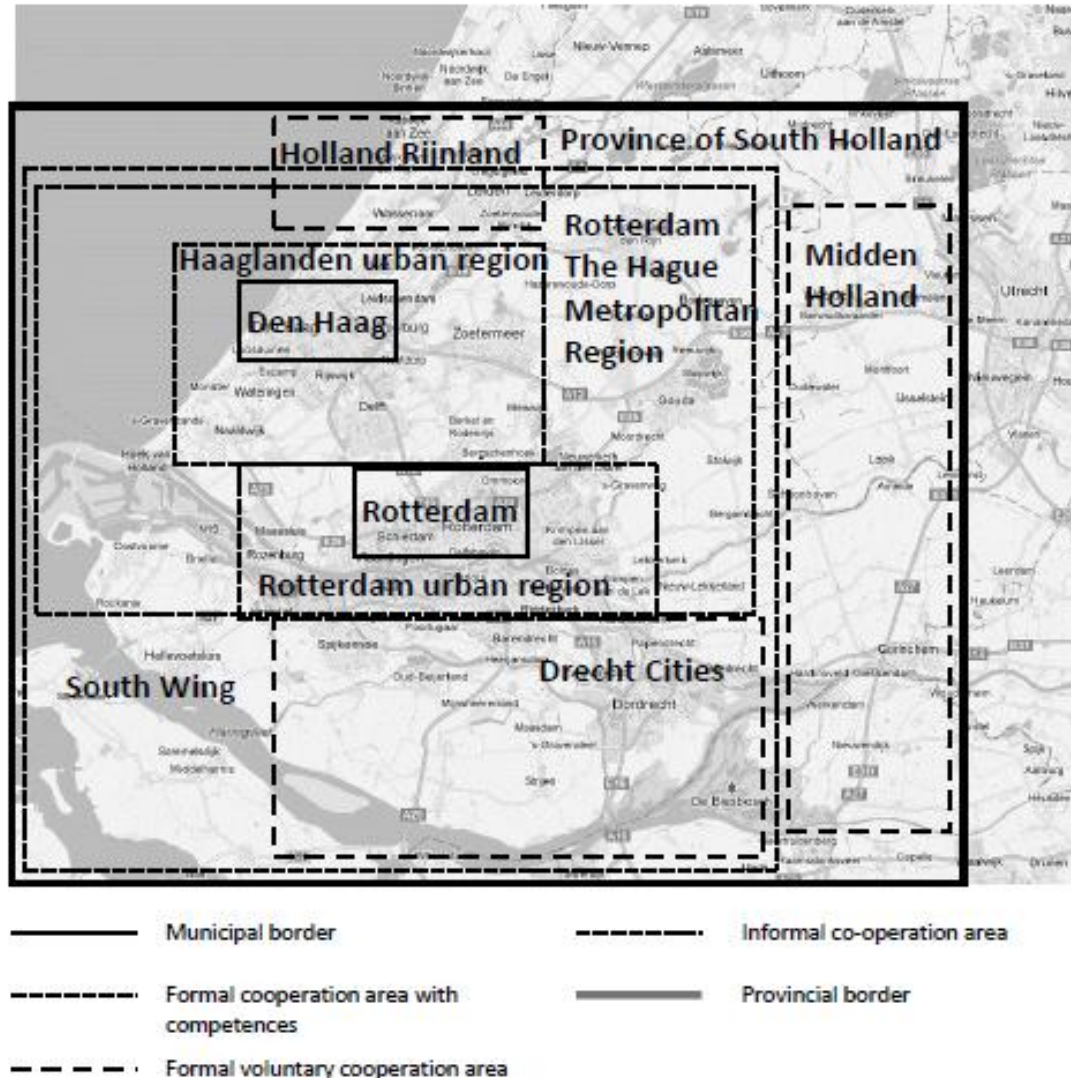
The provincial structural vision was in the phase of being approved (July 2010) and five MIRT explorations (first phase of a programme/project) were spread across the province of which the study areas covered much of the South Wing. The province was therefore not very keen on starting this partly overlapping process. Provincial sectoral policy with spatial relevance was plugged into the territorial agenda process via the provincial project organisation. The remaining policy items were then filtered according to relevance in the relation between central and regional governments. Policy objectives which were only relevant for lower tier governments were thus not included in the agenda.

As an example we looked at the way the Economic Agenda 2010-2020 was taken into account in the territorial agenda. The Economic Agenda brings forward that the broad economic structure of nine strong sectors is the strength of the South Wing. The strength lies particularly in the interrelation of these sectors. The broadness of the economic structure and the creation of chances in the overlap between economic sectors has been the input in the territorial agenda.

The focus in the agenda is on the South Wing as about 80-90% of the MIRT budget related to programmes and projects in the territorial agenda of South Holland is located in the South Wing. However the agenda covers the entire provincial area. Policy for the Green Heart and the Southwest Delta areas

which are located in more than one province, is put forward in the agenda via the provincial project groups.

Figure 8: Actor situation MIRT Territorial Agenda South Wing/ South Holland

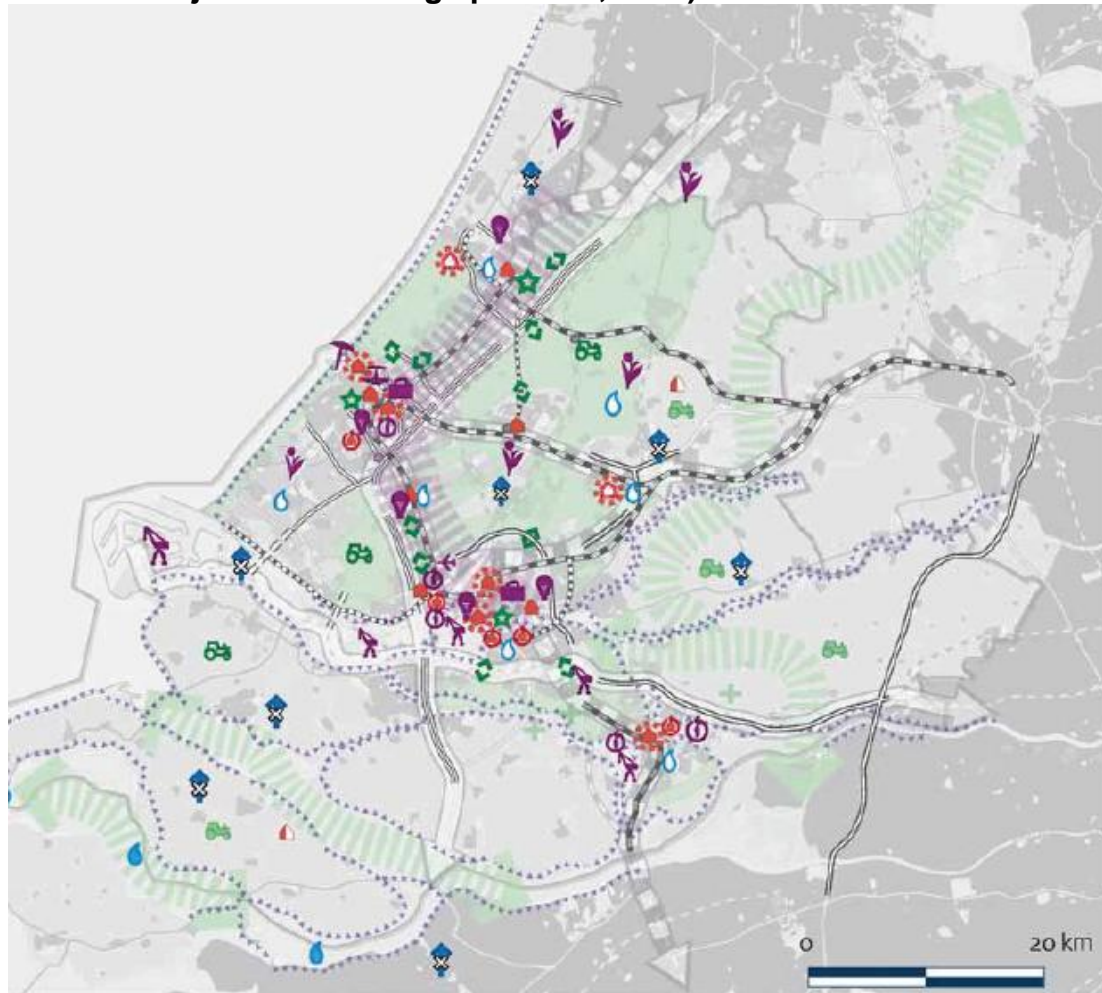


Provincial stakeholders bring forward that they anticipated a more integrated way of prioritising programmes and projects by central government after the change from MIT to MIRT and the introduction of the territorial agenda. The vision is the result of this more integrative approach and the list of projects presents many types of projects and programmes and not only infrastructure projects. But afterwards they felt the focus nevertheless remained on infrastructure. Partly this is due to financial cutbacks and less focus on territorial, nature and landscape objectives and involvement in regional matters (such as regional economy) by the newly installed central government. Infrastructure therefore keeps major attention and resources. Within the field of infrastructure regional actors find that public transport gets too little resources compared to road infrastructure.

The process to get from a joint vision to a prioritised list of projects consisted of three phases. The first phase of putting together a joint vision of central and

regional governments was felt to be the easiest part, the third phase of prioritisation of programmes and projects the most difficult. The second phase was the listing of programmes and projects arising from the vision and which are relevant in the relation between central and regional government (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Overview of projects and programmes in the agenda (Source: Rijk and Zuidvleugelpartners, 2010)



3.4.3 Input from statutory documents and policy plans and strategies in the MIRT territorial agenda

As a result of the new Spatial Planning Act all government levels had to adjust their statutory documents according to it since 2008. One is the structure vision which had just been approved in the Province of Zuid-Holland when the territorial agenda was announced. The province describes its objectives and

provincial interests in the structure vision, sets the rules for territorial developments in the provincial ordinance for the territory and indicates what is needed to realise this in the implementation strategy and agenda. The structure vision was approved in 2009, the ordinance for the territory (*Verordening Ruimte* in Dutch) and the implementation strategy and agenda in 2010. The implementation agenda is an elaboration of what is announced in the Spatial Planning Act as implementation paragraphs. Before the province never focussed so explicitly on implementation. Currently the province is further tuning the two processes: one on its statutory documents and the other on the territorial agenda and the MIRT project book. Both have a vision part and an implementation part. Input from non-government actors is predominantly in the statutory documents, whereas the territorial agenda only involves government actors. Apart from the province the municipalities also had to adjust their planning documents to the new Spatial Planning Act.

3.5 Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands

3.5.1 Actor network responsible for the MIRT territorial agenda

The territory of the agenda covers the provinces of North-Holland and Flevoland, but focuses on the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. As indicated, because of strong functional interrelations, the Gooi and Vecht region is also addressed in the visioning part of the Territorial Agenda Utrecht. Administratively, however, it belongs to the agenda Northwest Netherlands. Both agendas are addressed in one and the same multi-government meeting. This is the only case where more than one agenda is discussed in a multi-government meeting.

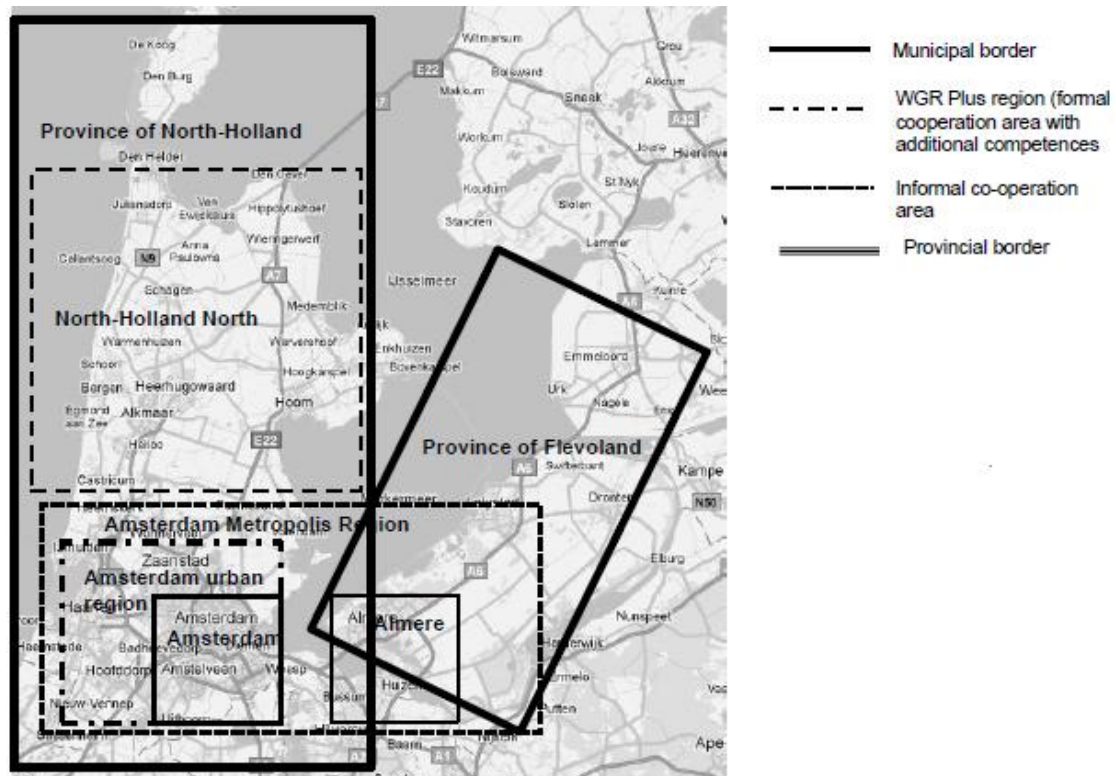
To strengthen the potential of the economic core in this area, the two provinces, the urban region of Amsterdam and 36 local authorities cooperate under the name of Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Lower tier government in North-Holland North – i.e. Province of Noord-Holland, and the regions of Alkmaar, the northern part of North-Holland and West Friesland – loosely cooperated to plug in relevant policy for this area. In the province of Flevoland the local authorities of Almere and Lelystad participate in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. The other local authorities were represented by the province. The province concluded that the projects in this area which were relevant for the MIRT were a provincial responsibility and therefore not necessary to involve the Flevoland municipalities outside the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Civic and private stakeholders were not involved in putting together the vision as it was considered a government exercise for a joint vision (see Figure 10).

The territorial agenda was a joint effort by central and regional government. Central government was represented by the ministries of (1) Traffic and Water management, (2) Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (including the department of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration), (3) Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and (4) Economic Affairs⁶. There was a project team at national level with representatives from each ministry and coordinated by

⁶ This was before a new Cabinet changed the number, names and responsibilities of ministries.

the representative of the ministry of Traffic and Water Management. Regional government was formally represented in the agenda by the provinces of Noord-Holland and Flevoland and the urban region of Amsterdam. Informal coordinator of regional government was the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, in which these three participate amongst others. But as this is a voluntary and informal government structure it was not chosen as official author of the agenda. The Amsterdam Metropolitan Area considers itself as a soft space.

Figure 10: Actor situation MIRT Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands

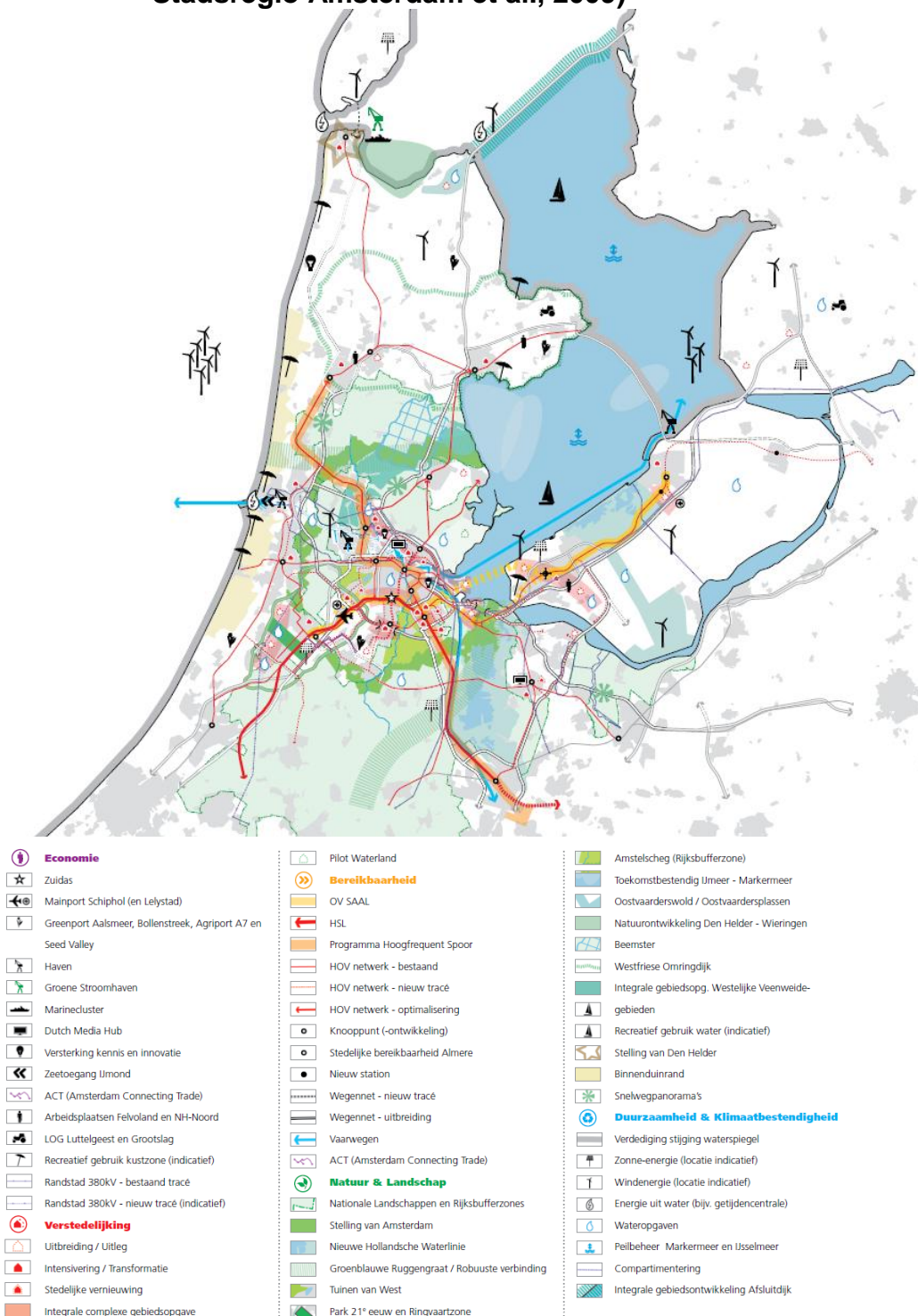


A group of authors was formed to write the territorial agenda, in which all sectors were represented. This group delivered to three platforms which politically handled the agenda in the region. These platforms were the Administrative Platform Accessibility (*Bestuurlijk Platform Bereikbaarheid*), the Administrative Core Group (*Bestuurlijke Kerngroep*) which deals with spatial planning, sustainability etc. and the Platform Regional-Economic Structure (*Platform Regionaal-Economische Structuur*). They each have an integrative character. Decision-making about MIRT subjects and the territorial agenda each pass the regular process: executives at the different levels decide. At the provincial level the agenda also passed the council. After agreement by the public authorities in the region the agenda was decreed upon with central government in a multi-level government meeting.

3.5.2 Horizontal and vertical relations between policy sectors

The Structure Vision Randstad 2040 stated that the central ambition for the Randstad is reinforcing its international competitive position. In this territorial agenda this ambition has been translated for the territory of Northwest Netherlands. The focus is on the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area which is

Figure 11: Overview of projects and programmes in the agenda (Source: Stadsregio Amsterdam et al., 2009)



located partly in the province of Noord-Holland and partly in the province of Flevoland. No new policy was developed for the purpose of the agenda, but existing policy with a territorial relevance and existing agreements were listed and put together. Just before the process for the agenda was started, the policy document *Ontwikkelingsbeeld Noordvleugel 2040* had been written. This document presents the vision on the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area in the year 2040. The vision in this document was supplemented with the vision on Northern part of the province of Noord-Holland and the area of the province of

Flevoland outside of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area by the two provinces on the basis of existing policy documents. In the case of Flevoland the statutory provincial Environmental Management Plan was used. The structure vision for the province of Noord-Holland was approved in June 2010 and thus after the agenda was finalised.

The themes which are addressed in the agenda are spatial economy, urbanisation, accessibility, nature and landscape, and sustainability and climate adaptation. The projects which are considered crucial in the relation between regional and central government are listed in Figure 11. While respondents on the territorial agenda of South-Wing/South-Holland indicated that there was strong focus on spatial planning in the formulation of their territorial agenda, a respondent on the territorial agenda of Northwest Netherlands replied that the focus on spatial planning was less dominant in the formulation of their agenda. The agenda only provides the basis on which in the multi-level government meeting MIRT decisions are taken about programmes and projects. It has a dynamic character: yearly – or as often as needed – issues can be added or removed in consultation between central and regional government.

Discussion during the process of the agenda focussed on the way in which an agenda and list of prioritised projects could be fleshed out. Central government aimed at a shortlist whereas the region saw this list as breeding ground of potential projects in the long term. Contrary to some other agendas not only central government projects have been listed, but also some regional ones for which central government is not the main responsible, but nevertheless plays a role. As the region considered these projects essential for the integrated vision on the region, they have included in the list of projects. Examples are large regional public transport and road projects which exceed the threshold of 225 million euros.

As the MIRT territorial agenda primarily focuses on spatial elements, the province of Flevoland decided to formulate a complementary socio-economic territorial agenda.

3.5.3 Input from statutory documents and policy plans and strategies in the MIRT territorial agenda

Figures 12 and 13 give an overview of national and regional policy documents which were used as basis for the agenda. Within the area of the agenda there is another programme where central and regional government closely cooperate and agree upon: this is the Central-regional government programme Amsterdam-Almere-Markermeer (RRAAM; *Rijk-regioprogramma Amsterdam-Almere-Markermeer*). It is considered as an elaboration of the territorial agenda. Jointly with civic organisations, market parties and involved citizens central and regional government agree how the ambitions in the field housing, transport and ecology may be realized in coherence. A decision by government is expected at the end of 2012.

Figure 12: Overview of policy documents feeding into the MIRT Territorial Agenda

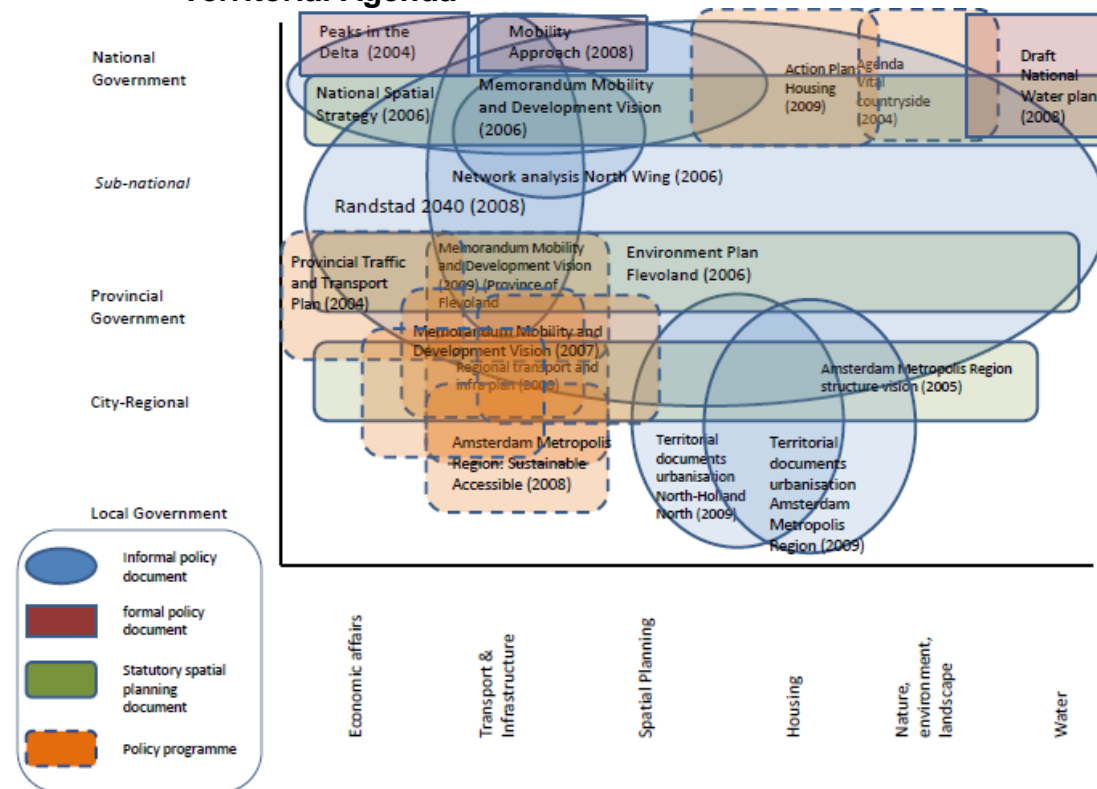


Figure13: List of policy documents feeding into the MIRT Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands (Source: Stadsregio Amsterdam et al., 2009)

Title	Description	Year	Author
National Spatial Strategy	Gives a vision on the spatial developments of the Netherlands and the major related ambitions until 2030	2006	Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Memorandum Mobility and development vision	Elaborates the basic principles in the National Spatial Strategy in the field of mobility and accessibility	2006	Ministry of Transport and Water Management
Peaks in the Delta	Describes the economic agenda for amongst others the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, with the aim to make the Netherlands more competitive and economically dynamic	2004	Ministry of Economic Affairs
Agenda Vital Countryside	Anticipates the change in character, land uses and the esteem of the countryside and the issue of climate change and a dropping soil	2004	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Network Analysis North Wing	Gives a joint and integral vision on the improvement of the regional accessibility, with a translation into measures	2006	Ministry of Transport and Water Management and Amsterdam Metropolitan Area
Mobility Approach	Elaboration on the short term (until 2013) and midterm (2020) of the Mobility Memorandum through additional investments and acceleration of decision-making	2008	Ministry of Transport and Water Management

Draft National Water Plan	Describes measures which have to be taken to keep the Netherlands safe and liveable for future generations and to make most of the opportunities which water offers	2008	Ministry of Transport and Water Management
Regional Traffic and Transport Plan	Traffic and transport plan for the urban region of Amsterdam: a regional elaboration of the Mobility Memorandum	2004	Urban region of Amsterdam
Regional public transport as impulse for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area	Long term vision (2030) for public transport in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area: elaboration of the Regional Traffic and Transport Plan	2008	Urban region of Amsterdam
Provincial Traffic and Transport Plan	Traffic and Transport Plan for the Province of Noord-Holland: provincial elaboration of the Mobility Memorandum	2004	Province of Noord-Holland
Environment Plan Flevoland	This plan addresses strategies from the provincial plan (<i>streekplan</i>), environmental policy plan, water management plan and the traffic and transport plan for the provincial territory	2006	Province of Flevoland
Randstad 2040	In this structure vision central government addresses long term spatial issues	2008	Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Action Plan Housing Production	Action plan focussed on the housing production until 2020	2009	Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Memorandum Mobility and development vision	National memorandum resulted in a joint input by the Metropolitan Area in the Programme Urgent Randstad	2007	Amsterdam Metropolitan Area
Amsterdam Metropolitan Area: Sustainable Accessible	In line with the Mobility Memorandum the Metropolitan Area elaborated the way in which the traffic and transport system as a whole has to develop to meet the Metropolitan ambitions	2008	Amsterdam Metropolitan Area
Territorial documents Urbanisation Amsterdam Metropolitan Area	The Metropolitan input in the Urbanisation covenant between regional and central government	2009	Amsterdam Metropolitan Area
Territorial documents Urbanisation North-Holland North	The territorial input in the Urbanisation covenant between regional and central government	2009	Province of Noord-Holland and region of North-Holland North
Territorial documents Urbanisation Flevoland	Memorandum Mobility and development vision	2009	Province of Flevoland

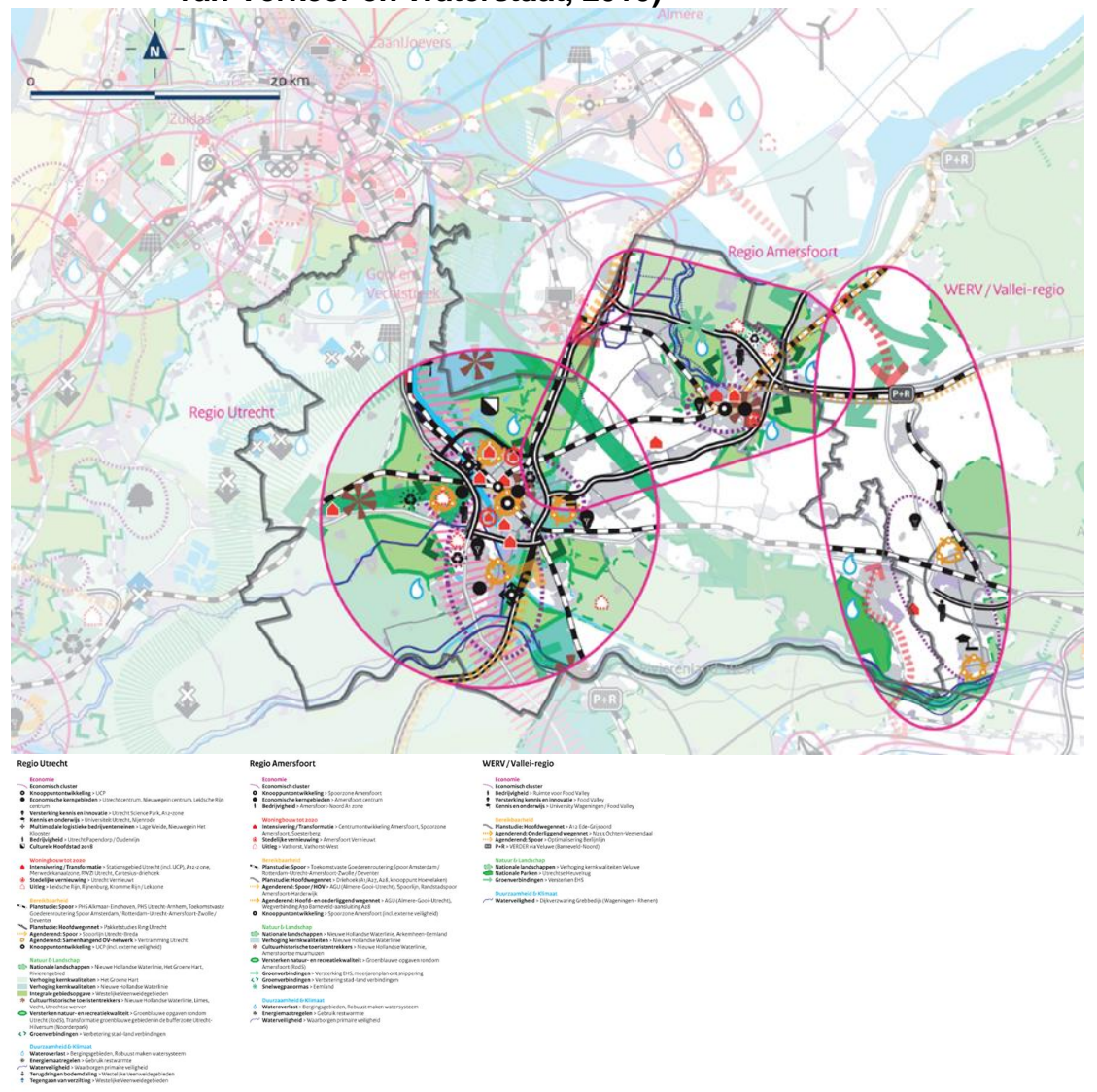
3.6 Territorial Agenda Utrecht

3.6.1 Borders

To explain the territorial borders of the Territorial Agenda Utrecht a distinction has to be made between the vision part of the agenda and the agenda part of the agenda, which concerns a list of concrete projects and programmes. The territory covered by the vision part is physically delimited and mainly follows

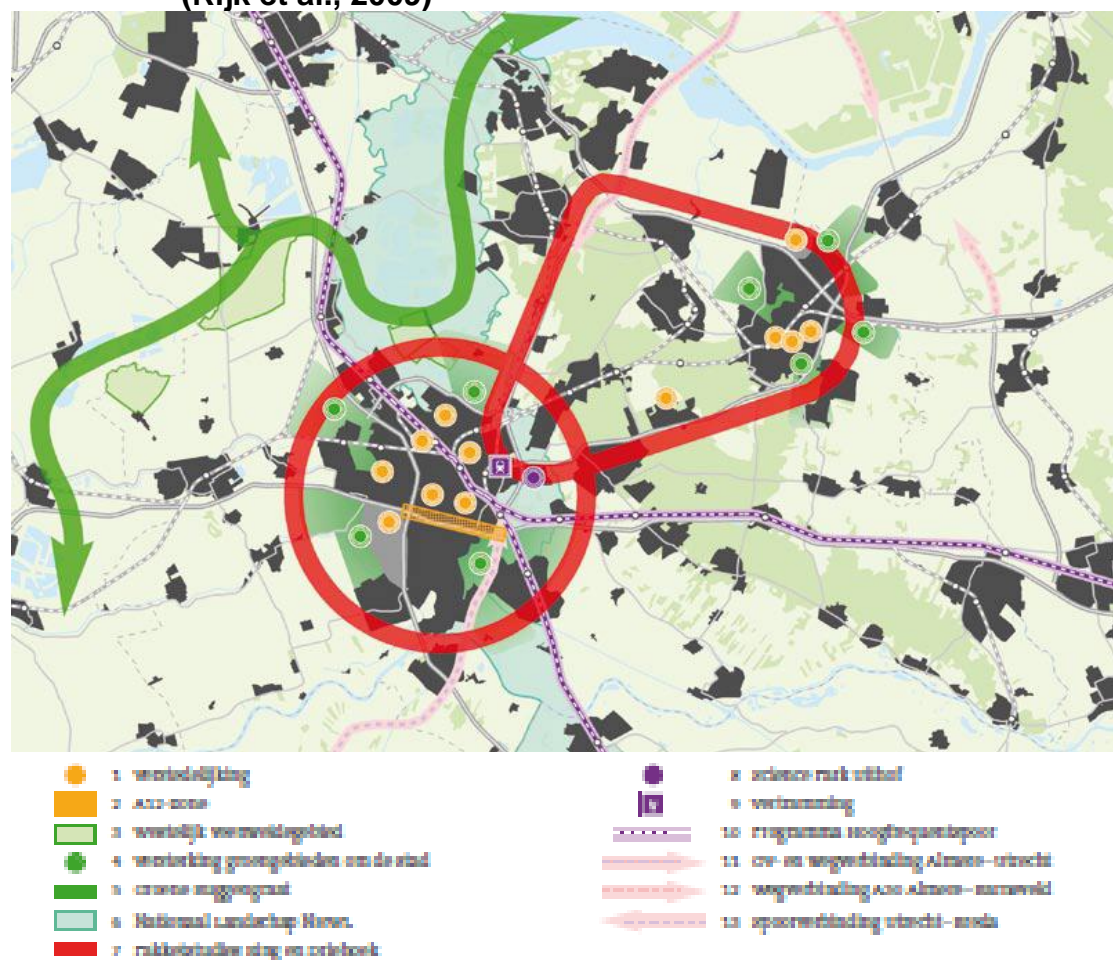
the provincial borders except for an area on the northwest provincial border: the Gooi and Vecht area. Here it overlaps with the Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands and includes a part of the province of Noord-Holland. This overlap only exists in the two visions and is explained from a functional perspective as the Gooi and Vecht region is important for both the Utrecht and the Amsterdam regions. Whereas the area is part of the visions in two territorial agendas, a strict separation has been made with regard to projects and programmes, the agenda part, which fall under the responsibility of the province of Noord-Holland. Nevertheless, as explained above the Northwest Netherlands and Utrecht Territorial Agendas and projects are discussed in one and the same MIRT multi-level government meeting. Towards the east the Utrecht province borders the province of Gelderland. Here in particular the Food Valley region or so-called WERV area (Wageningen, Ede, Rhenen and Veenendaal) is relevant. However, whereas Veenendaal is part of the province of Utrecht, and therefore some coordination has taken place between the two provinces, the initiative fully lies with the province of Gelderland.

Figure 14: Map of 2011 projects in the Utrecht region (source: Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat, 2010)



According to the respondents the borders of the area should be considered soft when speaking about the agenda document, but hard when speaking about the accompanying MIRT project list. The latter follows strict administrative boundaries for the simple reason that agreements have to be made between various tiers of government. In contrast though, the agenda – and the vision part of it – is much more determined by thematic and functional territorial relations. Figure 14, which is taken from the MIRT project book of 2011 (for comparison: Figure 15 shows the official map from the Territorial Agenda Utrecht of 2009), clearly shows the difference between hard borders relating to the provincial border (marked by a thick black line) and projects to be found in the highlighted areas and the soft borders by indicating the ambitions and functional relations on a wider territorial scale. For the centrally located province of Utrecht this easily translates into a wider territorial view, moving across borders. It was, for example, frequently acknowledged by respondents that there are many functional relationships with the Amsterdam area. But also is it recognised that there are connections to the east around the Valley area and in particular to the north to Almere where 60.000 houses are foreseen to relieve urbanisation pressure in both the Amsterdam and Utrecht regions.

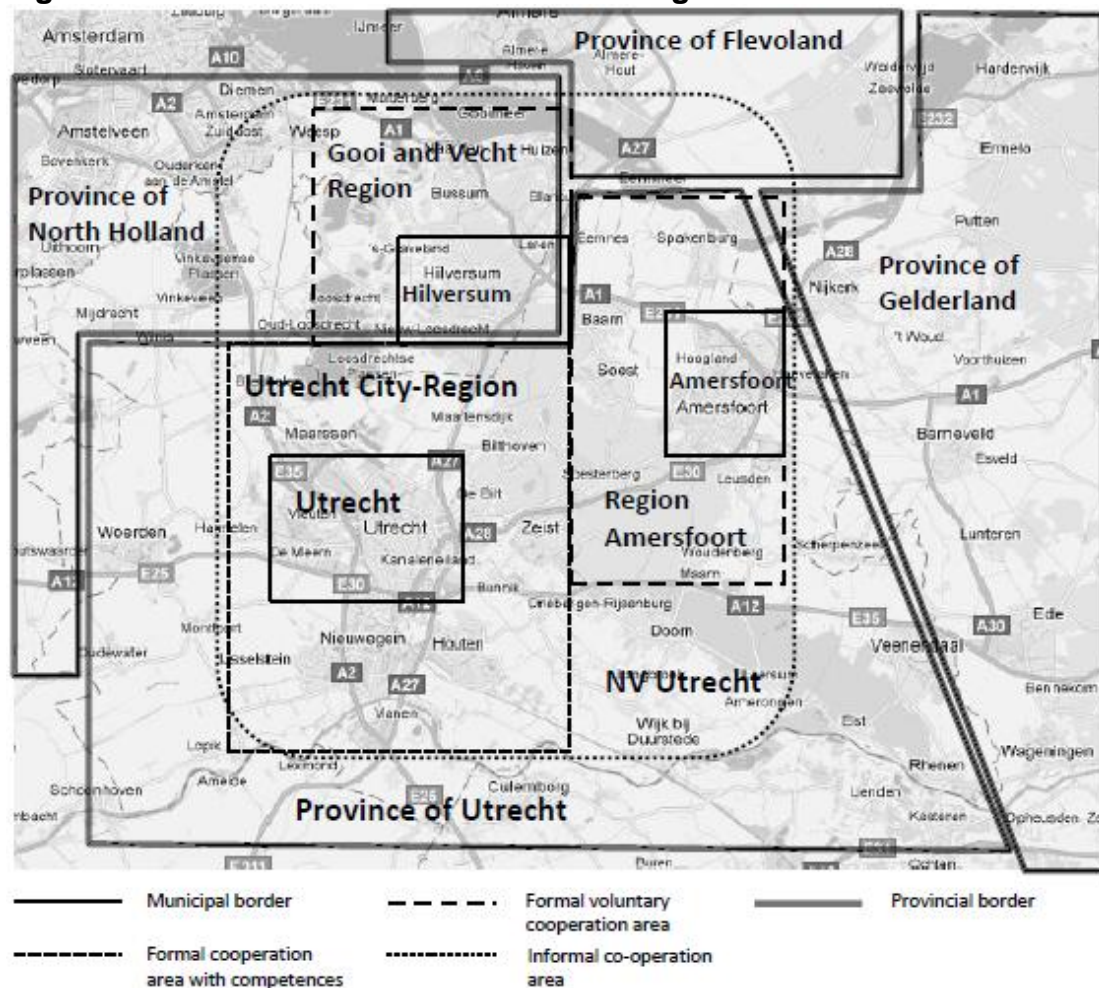
Figure 15: Projects and programmes of the Territorial Agenda Utrecht (Rijk et al., 2009)



3.6.2 Actor network responsible for the MIRT territorial agenda

As indicated the MIRT territorial agendas exclusively are a government affair. No private or civic stakeholders are involved (they may have been involved in earlier policy development processes feeding into the territorial agendas though). The national government is represented by the ministries of Transport and Water management (V&W) and Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM)⁷. From the regional level the province of Utrecht was involved. At supra-municipal level three bodies are involved: City-region Utrecht, Region Amersfoort and the Region Gooi and Vecht. From the local level the authorities of Utrecht, Amersfoort and Hilversum participated. Both Hilversum and Gooi and Vecht region took a role on side-line, because of their formal involvement in the Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands. Figure 16 provides an overview of the actor situation.

Figure 16: Actor situation MIRT Territorial Agenda Utrecht



The Utrecht agenda was written in 2009 and decreed by the MIRT multi-level government meeting on 3 November 2009. It should be emphasised that the MIRT Territorial Agenda Utrecht, just as all MIRT territorial agendas, is separately agreed upon by each of the participating stakeholders: the

⁷ As from 2010 with a government change these two ministries have been merged into the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (the Dutch acronym being: I&M).

province, municipalities and ministers. In the case of Utrecht the document has not been made subject to approval by each of the municipal councils involved. Councils in the city region Utrecht have approved the document, whereas the Amersfoort region has decided not to consult all municipal councils, after all, they reasoned, the territorial agenda is based on existing policies. The provincial council nevertheless has been involved. In this sense the official status of the document remains that of an agreement between the national government and lower tier public administrations, rather than an officially approved formal policy.

Representatives of the governmental stakeholders mentioned actively have developed the territorial agenda and do also participate in the half-yearly MIRT multi-level government meetings. Most stakeholders have been represented by one person. The province of Utrecht is represented by two persons, one from the spatial planning department, one from the transport and infrastructure department. The same is happening at the national level. At lower levels we see only one person representations; usually these persons are from the spatial planning unit. In the context of the territorial agenda and the MIRT multi-level government meetings relevant policy sectors such as economic affairs, environment, agriculture and water are consulted. This is happening at each administrative level.

Following the respondents the writing process of Territorial Agenda Utrecht was a smooth affair (getting from ambition to concrete projects turned out to be more difficult). Few if any issue stirred debate and stakeholders easily could reach consensus over the ambitions of the vision document. This is explained by referring to two policy development processes which took place in the years before and are now combined in the territorial agenda: the Development vision 2015-2030 (*Ontwikkelingsvisie 2015-2030*) and the Utrecht traffic and transport meeting (UVVB; *Utrecht Verkeer- en Vervoerberaad*).

The *Ontwikkelingsvisie 2015-2030* which was agreed upon in 2009 by all relevant local and regional councils concerns a strategy for housing development in the Utrecht province until 2030 and was written to answer the question posed in 2006 by the minister of housing and spatial planning how Utrecht aimed to cope with the future demand of 54.000 houses. This number already excludes the 60.000 houses to be built in Almere, 15.000 of which should cater for the Utrecht the region. The vision is authored by the so-called NV Utrecht⁸, which is composed of the same network of public stakeholders that later on drafted territorial agenda with the limitation that the NV Utrecht only involves spatial planning representatives. It has been in the development of this vision that many stakeholders, public, private and civic, have been consulted. The resulting consensus and vision has been translated into the territorial agenda.

⁸ NV refers to *Noordvleugel*, i.e. North Wing of the Randstad. At the same time it refers to the more common *Naamloze Vennootschap*, which translates as public limited company (plc) in UK-English or Inc (incorporated) in US-English.

In terms of horizontal integration the origin of the NV Utrecht may be of interest in a sense that it only emerged as a reaction on the separation of Utrecht from the North Wing cooperation. Once this had occurred the Utrecht city region, the various municipalities and the province realized that they did not stand a chance of receiving any national funding, unless they jointly addressed the national level. Whereas the Utrecht stakeholders had always been unable to define common objectives while participating in the North Wing Cooperation, suddenly, when they were on their own they realized they had no other choice than to cooperate. In this cooperation the national government was portrayed as the common enemy.

Similarly the *Utrechts Verkeer- en Vervoerberaad* (UVVB) has been meeting as from mid-2000 in the context of the earlier mentioned Randstad Urgent Programme⁹ and discusses issues related to congestion and accessibility in the region. The UVVB network fully overlaps with that of the territorial agenda except for the inclusion of the Eemland area and *Rijkswaterstaat*, the national infrastructure and water works executive and the fact that stakeholders are only represented by their infrastructure representatives. Two main products of the UVVB include firstly an analysis of the infrastructural situation in the Utrecht area and, secondly, a multi-level government agreement which allocates a rough 3 billion euro to infrastructure and transport development in the Utrecht region until 2020. This has been translated in a policy package named VERDER (which translates as 'further') of end 2008 presenting a first number of measures to be taken in order to sustain and improve the region's accessibility by 2020. The VERDER package has been subject to consultation by a so-called stakeholders panel, which includes private and civic organisations, and a citizens panel consisting of some 25 inhabitants of the region. Also the various versions have been discussed with various neighbourhood panels. The VERDER initiative has since then been elaborated and is still on-going.¹⁰

Basically it has been these two networks, the NV Utrecht and the UVVB, and their policies that have been merged into the territorial agenda. The agenda complements the resulting consensus with issues taken from the nature, landscape development and water policy domains. Both the NV Utrecht and the UVVB have been operating within the context of a national policy programme, i.e. Randstad Urgent. It has been via this band that vertical coordination with in particular the ministers of spatial planning and transport and infrastructure has taken place. This experience, too, helped drafting of the territorial agenda.

3.6.3 Horizontal and vertical relations between policy sectors

The agenda is developed in the context of the aim to strengthen the Randstad area by means of emphasizing diversity. The agenda comes in two parts. Part 1 integrates several national and regional visions and plans into common objectives, an approach and a vision for the Utrecht region. The main

⁹ The project was indicated under the name '*Draaischijf Utrecht*', which merely refers to the roundabout function of the Utrecht region for the Netherlands.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.ikgaverder.nl/home/>

ambition is to strengthen the region's sustainable development and economic competitiveness by focusing on 1) housing and urban intensification, 2) improving accessibility and 3) investing in environmental and nature development. The two priority areas are: the Utrecht city region and the Amersfoort region (Figure 15). Two other areas of importance concern the Utrecht-West region and the WERV area (Figure 14), but these regions are not part of the MIRT multi-level government meetings since they concern either purely provincial matters (Utrecht West) or are taken care of by another province (Gelderland in this case). Whereas these areas are mentioned in the ambition part of the territorial agenda, they do not play a role in the multi-level government meetings. Part 2 provides an overview of the various policy, financial and regulatory issues as well as a complete list of projects and programmes to be addressed in the MIRT multi-level government meeting. In terms of horizontal and vertical coordination it can be noted that Part 1 of the agenda could be drafted fairly easily and quickly without much need for negotiation between stakeholders. According to our respondents this can be explained from the fact that the vision is both non-binding and exclusively based on existing policies. In other words, the territorial agenda does not aim to develop any new policies.

With regard to developing Part 2 of the territorial agenda, the list of projects, it has been noted by respondents that this was and still is more difficult. In contrast to the vision part the list of projects has direct policy consequences in terms of priority, status and allocation of, in particular, national budgets. The list is subject to further development and negotiation during each multi-level government meeting every half year. Here both on the vertical and on the horizontal level negotiations take place. Although reference is made during these negotiations to the vision part of the agenda, and although there is quite broad consensus among the stakeholders, the project list remains politically sensitive. Yet, once agreement has been reached the list starts to function as a point of reference, with the agenda fading to the background. The list creates transparency as regards when which project will be addressed and how. It enables stakeholders to mutually remember each other about scheduled tasks and commitment. In so doing, and this is regarded the major added value of the MIRT territorial agenda and project lists, it creates trust and rest between the stakeholders, vertically as well as horizontally.

So far it is not possible to distinguish between projects that have been more politically sensitive than others. Nor is it possible to indicate which topics have been more difficult to agree upon in the context of the vision part of the agenda. What is clear though is that in particular around border areas, in this case the provincial border with North-Holland where the Gooi and Vecht region is located, it requires some additional effort to come to agreements. With regard to the Gooi and Vecht region Utrecht stakeholders asked for better public transport services, in particular to better connect Utrecht with Almere. This being the competence of the province of Noord-Holland required additional effort and negotiation from the Utrecht stakeholders to convince the province of Noord-Holland.

In terms of added value by means of mainly horizontal integration it can be noted that by merging the various sectoral territorial claims, objectives and projects, in particular those developed by the UVVB and NV Utrecht, led to a more complete picture of both the ambitions for the area and the measures taken to realise them. Before the territorial agenda such a picture did not exist. For some of the stakeholders concerned the exercise made clear that some ambitions would be difficult to reach with the current set of projects. They sensed a gap. At the same time the agenda also made clear how particular projects contributed to achieving multiple ambitions and objectives. This in turn raised support for these projects.

As regards vertical integration it has been noted by some respondents that the territorial agendas and half yearly multi-level government meetings facilitate the trickling down of national discourse and helps new concepts and principles to be introduced in the regional debate. Examples of this concern the so-called 7-junction of Verdaas¹¹ and the SER ladder (SER refers to: Council for Social and Economic Affairs), both referring to methods to decide step-wise if and when to develop new infrastructure or allocate open land to housing respectively.

3.6.4 Input from statutory documents and policy plans and strategies in the MIRT territorial agenda

As indicated in the MIRT Territorial Agenda Utrecht itself it has been informed by a wide range of policy documents (BO MIRT 2009, pp. 54-55). This includes formal and informal policies, visions, strategies and programmes at all administrative levels and from a variety of policy sectors. In total 25 policies have been mentioned. Some documents have been made specifically for the MIRT process, others were there already. As indicated above the Development Vision 2015-2030 has been most important together with the several transport related documents. It is difficult, based on the analysis and stakeholder interviews, to allocate weights to specific policy schemes or documents and determine which have been more influential than others. Perhaps interesting to note is the relative absence of statutory spatial planning policy documents.

Figure 17 attempts to provide full picture of the various policy documents, their sectoral scope and administrative involvement (a list of all the documents can be found in Figure 18). The sheer overlap between documents and policies indicates at least two things: the governance thickness in the area and, if anything, the need for some kind of coordination between the various policies which all have some kind of territorial component. Also Figure 18 indicates the substantive scope and governance reach of the MIRT Territorial Agenda Utrecht.

¹¹ In Dutch: *De zevensprong van Verdaas*

Development perspective motorway A12	Ambition for sustainable urbanisation in A12 motorway zone	2009	City-region Utrecht, Utrecht Province, municipalities Utrecht, Nieuwegein and Houten, Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Action plan Housing production	Action plan focussed on the housing production until 2020	2009	Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Green Heart Precursor		2009	Provinces North-Holland, South-Holland and Utrecht
Programme Western Veenweiden	Business case restructuring and transition Western Veenweiden	2009	5 directors meeting National Spatial Strategy, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Programme agencies Low Holland and Green Heart
Agenda Landscape		2009	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Mobility Approach	Elaboration on the short term (until 2013) and midterm (2020) of the Mobility Memorandum through additional investments and acceleration of decision-making	2008	Ministry of Transport and Water Management
Draft National Water Plan	Describes measures which have to be taken to keep the Netherlands safe and liveable for future generations and to make most of the opportunities which water offers	2008	Ministry of Transport and Water Management
Randstad 2040	In this structure vision central government addresses long term spatial issues	2008	Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Regional Transport and Infrastructure plan	Regional elaboration of national Mobility Approach	2008	City-region Utrecht
Strategic Transport and Infrastructure plan Province Utrecht 2004-2020	Provincial elaboration of National Mobility Approach	2008	Province Utrecht
Integrative territorial elaboration Eemland	Exploration in the context of the Development Vision 2015-2030 for the Eemland region	2008	Multi-government meeting North Wing Utrecht
Structure Vision Amersfoort		2008	Municipality Amersfoort
National Spatial Strategy	Gives a vision on the spatial developments of the Netherlands and the major related ambitions until 2030	2006	Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment
Memorandum Mobility and development vision	Elaborates the basic principles in the National Spatial Strategy in the field of mobility and accessibility	2006	Ministry of Transport and Water Management

ILG government agreement 2007-2013 between national government and province Utrecht	Agreement on national objectives nature, Ecological Main structure, Natura 2000, National parks and landscapes, leisure etc.	2006	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Safety, Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment, Ministry of Transport and Water Management and Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
MIT exploration network analysis region Utrecht	Analysis provides joint and integrative vision for improving the regional accessibility, with translation into measures	2006	Ministry of Transport and Water Management and UVVB
Regional Structure Vision Utrecht	Vision and ambitions for territorial development	2005	City-Region Utrecht
Peaks in the Delta	Describes the economic agenda for amongst others the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, with the aim to make the Netherlands more competitive and economically dynamic	2004	Ministry of Economic Affairs
Agenda Vital Countryside	Anticipates the change in character, land uses and the esteem of the countryside and the issue of climate change and a dropping soil	2004	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Regional Spatial Plan Utrecht 2005-2015		2004	Province Utrecht

3.7 Findings and comparison between the three MIRT territorial agendas

We looked into more depth at the three MIRT territorial agendas in the Randstad. Although there are many similarities between them and the three agendas serve the same purpose, there are also differences in process architecture, form etc. In this section we will briefly analyse the strategy and focus on the characteristics of this strategy in pursuing horizontal and vertical integration of territorial related policy and implementation. What is the added value, what are positive and negative aspects and which conditions apply when using this strategy?

The added value of policy neutrality

As an instrument for stimulating integrative regional development the MIRT territorial agendas fulfil a specific role amidst a wide array of other formal and informal policy documents and programmes. Rather than developing new policies, MIRT territorial agendas only combine existing policies. According to respondents it is exactly this condition ('no new policies') that makes it possible to develop the agendas and to give them added value over existing policies. From a governance perspective this condition makes it possible to involve only a limited amount of key stakeholders. From a substantive perspective it becomes easier to reach consensus with regard to the overall vision, objectives and ambition of the document.

Interestingly, it is exactly the combining of relevant aspects of existing policies for a given MIRT region that according to the respondents creates added value. The emerging overall impression of scheduled territorial development projects within a given region makes it clear to stakeholders how projects are mutually related and potentially impact upon one another. Also it becomes clear whether the ambition level for the region is realistic given the set of territorial development projects. Reassessing planned projects from a regional perspective enables a stronger focus on the desired regional development.

Emphasis on vertical integration

A second aspect which makes the MIRT territorial agenda different from other integrative policy documents is its gestation process in a multi-level government context. Whereas the focus is on the regional level, the process includes stakeholders from all formal and informal government levels: from the municipal level (in the case of larger cities), the supralocal level (i.e. informal and formal cooperation bodies between neighbouring municipalities), to the formal provinces and the national government. The EU level, for example by means of the Operational Programmes, is completely absent in the territorial agendas. Be that as it may, in particular the representation of the national state (which budgets are significantly larger than those of other administrative levels) is considered important by the respondents, since this allows for developing a joint vision on the future of the region that is shared at regional/local as well as the national level.

This vertical multi-level process materializes in the so-called project list that accompanies the MIRT territorial agendas. This project list contains all the relevant territorial development projects for the region in which the national government will be involved financially (projects for which no national involvement is required hardly ever appear on the list¹²). The list differentiates between projects to be carried out on the short term and on the mid and long term. In case of the latter the project list is still useful as it indicates when, at what moment in time, the negotiations, research and talks around a specific project will start. The result is transparency for all government levels as regards the timing of projects and their role in them. In so doing, according to many of the respondents, the MIRT territorial agenda and the accompanying list of projects create relative rest between the levels of government. This makes the MIRT territorial agendas unique in the Dutch context, as there are only very few integrative territorial strategies which combine the complete stretch from vision to actual projects on the short term.

It has to be emphasised though that the rest between governmental levels is only relative and depends on the extent to which real negotiations between government levels have taken place. In case of first general agreements on the ambition of a region the 'rest' concerns the common understanding of the structuring of the development of a particular area. In such cases, as a respondent of the national level indicated, the national government is no

¹² There are slight differences between agendas in this respect. In the one of Northwest Netherlands also regional projects without central government leadership are listed, whereas this is not the case in the other two.

longer caught by surprise due to provincial requests. It requires thorough and often tough negotiations, however, to reach detailed agreements about which project, when and how will be implemented. It is only then that rest between governmental levels may occur. Visioning alone is not sufficient for that.

Limited horizontal integration

In contrast to more standard spatial vision documents the focus of the MIRT territorial agendas is, as indicated above, not primarily on horizontal integration of various (sectoral) policy objectives. Despite of this, horizontal integration does play a role. Driven by the contextual process architecture laid down in the so-called MIRT programme, the MIRT territorial agendas necessarily combine transport and infrastructure development objectives with spatial planning objectives. As indicated this is in contrast to the former MIT programme in which *Ruimte* (i.e. territory) did not play a role and the focus was exclusively on transport and infrastructure projects. As a result of the new programme a minimal degree of horizontal integration is achieved in any case. Often, however, the integrative character of the MIRT territorial agendas is raised above this minimum level.

Integration between transport and infrastructure objectives on the one hand and territorial development/spatial planning objectives on the other leads to a (more) integrated, or at least co-ordinated, perspective on the desired territorial development. In so doing each of the analysed territorial agendas addresses a variety of issues which goes beyond the infrastructure and territory proper. For example, each of the agendas puts sustainable development at its core. This is subsequently translated in measures in the fields of housing and urban intensification, in improving accessibility and in strengthening the green and blue natural networks. The result would be a sustainable as well as economically viable region. MIRT thus translates also into attention for water related objectives (which is not coincidental as in the Netherlands the execution of infrastructure and water projects are combined in the *Rijkswaterstaat* organisation, the executive arm of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment) as well as green and economic development objectives. Issues related to social and employment policy have not become part of the agendas. Yet, when the process goes along and enters the project negotiation phase in which detailed decisions need to be made, in practice it turns out that the focus often narrows to the (expensive) infrastructure projects as these are prioritized by the national funding mechanism, and that other interests, such as nature, quickly get lost in the process.

During the agenda making process the substantive integration of policy objectives, which can be merely understood as co-ordination, also translates into organisational arrangements at each of the involved government levels. The content of the territorial agendas (as well as subsequent MIRT multi-level governmental meetings) is discussed and co-ordinated at each governmental level among representatives from the policy sectors economic affairs, environment and nature development, water and soil, transport and infrastructure and spatial planning (the actual label of departments varies from authority to authority). They meet in sounding boards chaired by

representatives of the spatial planning and infrastructure departments. In cases, when less important decisions are on the agenda of the MIRT multi-level government meetings, co-ordination takes place on a lower level of intensity by simply disseminating (mostly by e-mail) the input for the meeting. Sector department representatives then may react but are not obliged to do so.

Navigating territorial borders

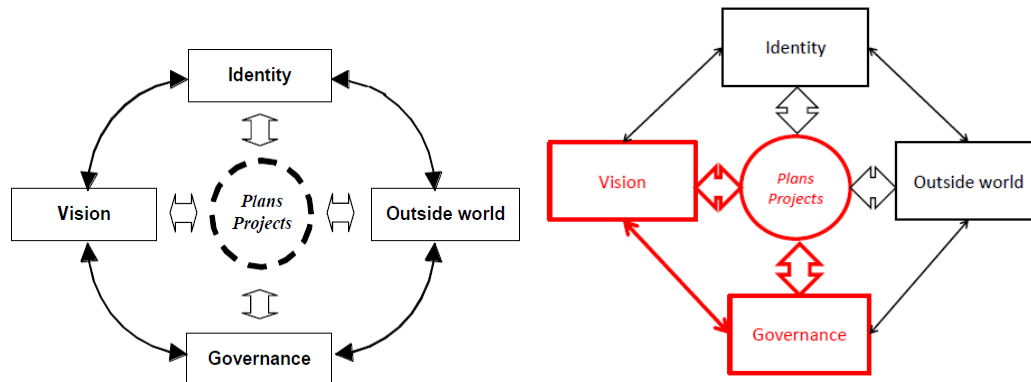
Two of the three analysed MIRT territorial agendas stretch across provincial borders. In the case of Utrecht a small part of the province of North Holland is included, whereas the Northwest Netherlands agenda fully covers two provinces. Cooperation over territorial borders usually adds complexity to the process. In the context of MIRT this has consequences in two directions.

One consequence is that a strict separation is made in terms of responsibilities between the contents of the vision and the agenda part of the territorial agenda, the latter of which finds its way into the MIRT project lists. For example, whereas the Gooi and Vecht region participates in the vision part of the Utrecht territorial agenda in which ambitions are laid down, it exclusively turns towards the provincial executive of Noord-Holland when projects are concerned. Nevertheless, along borders it remains more difficult to arrive at consensus and concrete projects because in particular the responsibility for investments always rests with one stakeholder along the border, depending on whose side of the border a project is located, whereas the benefits are shared between two or more stakeholders including those on the other side of the border.

A second, more positive consequence, or rather effect, of provincial borders in MIRT areas concerns the horizontal integration not only of policies, but also of provincial stakeholders' ambitions and agendas. This is in particular true in the case of Northwest Netherlands where the territorial agenda has created a joint frame of reference between the two provinces of Noord-Holland and Flevoland. In practice, and similar to the vertical integration between stakeholders addressed above, the agenda can be used to keep one another alert and in this sense creates trust and rest between the two provinces.

Concluding, territorial agendas do not include new policy, but integrate and combine existing policy objectives which are laid down in regional and national planning and sectoral policy documents, into one regional territorial agenda. It thus gives a clearer perspective on (1) regional policy objectives and challenges and (2) the contribution of individual projects to multiple policy objectives. If we typify the MIRT territorial agenda according to the strategic cycle of strategies, focus is on the relations between vision, governance and plans and projects (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: The MIRT territorial agenda in the strategic circle (left: strategic circle in general; right: typology of MIRT territorial agenda)



3.8 Reflection

While in the preceding section the MIRT territorial agenda itself was food for thought, this section takes the environment of the strategy into consideration.

Conditions that make the MIRT territorial agendas possible

There is a number of conditions which enable the territorial agenda to function as it is now. The first one is the abundance of integrative policies which exists at various horizontal levels. A second one is that, because of the previous condition, MIRT territorial agendas are not supposed to formulate new policies. Another condition is the fact that external stakeholders (i.e. private and civic actors and umbrella organisations) have often been involved in policy documents, feeding into and preceding the MIRT territorial agenda. As a result the territorial agendas do not include political sensitivities which implies that they do not have to be discuss in the individual councils. The legitimation has taken place through the process of the underlying policy documents. These conditions combined thus make that from the perspective of legitimacy there is no need to involve non-government actors in the joint vision of the territorial agenda.

Results / effectiveness

The process architecture of a strategy determines the result at the end. In the case of the MIRT territorial agenda the balance between horizontal and vertical integration and the integration between vision and projects determines its effectiveness. The basic idea is that there is consensus about a joint vision and about priorities within and between government tiers. When addressing integration different levels of integration can be distinguished. Integration may relate to sectors, actors or territories. An example of an attempt of horizontal integration is the agenda of Northwest Netherlands. It presents an overview of key projects for each sector and indicates the main relations with other themes.

There are however limits to the results and effectiveness. Examples show that even within one tier of government one of the ministries can withdraw from a

joint decision and jeopardize a project. An example concerns the case of an integrated development near Schiphol in Haarlemmermeer West where the minister of Economy, Agriculture and Innovation independently decided for an open air 380 kV high voltage connection and not for an underground connection as was agreed upon. This would have had heavy consequences for the project, as 6.000 houses less could have been realized due to distance regulations. Although the issue has been solved, it shows the boundaries to MIRT territorial agendas. The agendas do not lead to (binding) agreements between national or regional stakeholders. A ministry can still decide independently contrary to what has been included in the agenda. This is also true for lower tier administrations, but the impact would be smaller since their budgets are not crucial for carrying out MIRT projects. At the same time it has to be concluded that there are several other policy trajectories that work alongside but are not integrated in the MIRT programme.

In this sense the relation between separate policy processes and arenas may require further attention. Whereas it seems possible to arrive, between a given set of stakeholders, at a consensus or shared vision, their policy efforts may become futile when decisions made in other policy arenas negatively influence them. The example above is a case in point. A solution could be to merge the various policy arenas, however, as has been learned from the past such integration efforts sooner or later collapse under their own weight. Future research therefore may focus on the question how links can be created or forged between separate yet mutually influencing policy arenas.

The relation between vision and projects

When speaking about spatial visions or other visionary policy documents their implementation usually remains a moot point. This is at least in general the case in the Netherlands. Under the previous Spatial Planning Act this was in particular true for most spatial visions. With the current Act of 2008 this may change, however, as the Act requires spatial visions to include a chapter on its implementation. Whether this will be sufficient to make spatial visions more applicable and effective in terms of reaching their aims remains to be seen.

Yet, based on our analysis, the MIRT territorial agendas seem to break with this tradition. Coming from the context of the MIT programme, which exclusively focused on the implementation of projects, this is perhaps no surprise. Within this setting the focus is firmly on achieving pragmatic results rather than on creating attractive sweeping storylines about a desired but far away future, such as is often the case when developing visionary documents. In effect, the MIRT territorial agendas never had to answer to wild expectations of a wide and difficult to please range of stakeholders. In all modesty they just were expected to pragmatically develop an overall picture of on-going and future projects and combine existing policy consensus across separate domains into one integrative consensus and ambition for a given territory. The starting point of the MIRT territorial agendas therewith is fundamentally different when compared with most informal or statutory spatial visioning documents. In the case of the three agendas that have been reviewed here the approach to start from projects and existing policies and aim to overlay these with a more integrative vision seems to be effective to

the extent that projects become better related to each other and to the overall ambition for the region. Yet, it should be noted that in the multi-level government meetings the territorial agendas play a role in the background and merely perform as a frame of reference. There has not been found evidence that the territorial agendas fundamentally changed the routine and priorities in the MIRT programme. For the moment they should be regarded a modest first step in a process of integrating infrastructural and traffic related projects to other relevant territorial issues.

Formal versus informal

The issue of formal versus informal addresses both the governance model applied and the type of policy document. If looking at responsibility the question is at stake which platform should represent regional government? In some cases an informal platform was chosen (South Wing organisation and NV Utrecht) whereas in the case of Northwest Netherlands the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area was not one of the official authors of the agenda, but the two provinces and the WGR-plus region of Amsterdam were. Each region should figure out which platform is most effective to deal with an integrative territorial strategy, regardless whether it is a formal or informal platform. In this sense it should be noted that the territorial agendas are not considered as highly political. Alderman or provincial executives do not sleep with the document under their pillows, whereas they might with statutory or non-statutory structure visions such as Utrecht 2040. As indicated, the MIRT programme is primarily regarded an implementation instrument.

When considering the type of policy document the MIRT territorial agenda shows that an informal document can become robust by linking it to the policy in statutory documents as structure visions. These structure visions exist at the three formal government tiers, but also at informal regional level. Although the MIRT territorial agenda is not a statutory document, the agreements which are made in the multi-level government meetings on the basis of the agenda have a formal status and are binding upon the government tiers in this meeting.

Meta governance: MIRT process architecture limits and enables integration

The vision in the MIRT territorial agenda has proved to result in an integrative joint vision. At the same time, however, the process architecture imposed by the national level limits a full integrative central government investment programme. The way in which infrastructure is budgeted makes it possible to include specific projects in the long-term in the MIRT project book. The framework with rules of the games for the projects in the MIRT project book form a strong body of meta governance. The steering effect is expressed in the prioritisation of projects, whereby provinces choose projects which are likely to receive national funding.

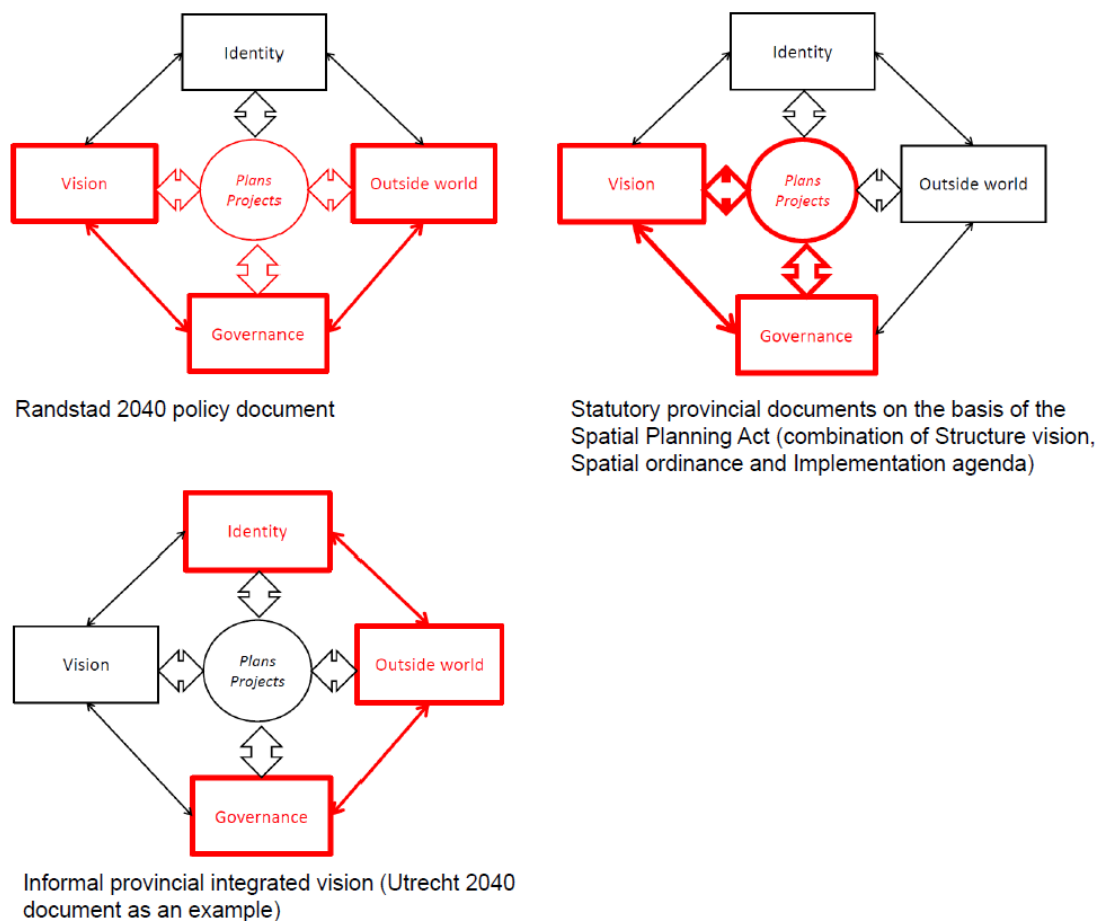
When looking at other budget lines at national level in other sectors these do hardly allow inclusion at project level in this MIRT project book. This applies for example for the way in which nature conservation is budgeted. A number of grant schemes have been merged into lump sums for provinces. The province is now the hinge between central government and region and

responsible for planning, finance and implementation. Time horizons between budget lines differ as well as the way in which investments can be assigned to specific projects. As a result, even if involved stakeholders would like to integrate certain projects, for example related to nature development, the current process architecture makes this impossible.

Inclusiveness with respect to involved stakeholders

When comparing MIRT territorial agendas with other types of integrative policy documents one can differentiate between them by using the ‘strategic circle’ as developed within the ESPON RISE project. The territorial agenda links a multi-level government vision to a government investment programme. As Figure 19 above has shown, vision and governance dominate when looking at the elements of strategic analysis. Identity and the outside world only have a marginal role in the strategy of the territorial agenda. Yet, as Figure 20 demonstrates, integrative strategies which precede the territorial agenda focus more on these concepts. Nevertheless, with regard to the updating of the current territorial agendas it has already been indicated that these processes will be different from the first generation agendas and aim to involve a wider set of stakeholders, including civic and private ones.

Figure 20: Typification of some integrative territorial strategies in the Randstad according to the strategy cycle



Potential improvements

The current territorial agendas focus on a national investment programmes, whereas it could also include related regional investment programmes. The commitment for the prioritised projects would then be more reciprocal. Central budgets for rural areas (such as for nature conservation and landscape improvement) have a different way of being budgeted and therefore hardly appear in the project lists. They are decentralised to the province as a lump sum. Presenting a more inclusive project list with both all central government financed and regional government financed projects would provide more transparency, yet might also further complicate the governance process.

Territory as integration frame

A last point of reflection concerns the fundamental rationale underlying the integrative policy process in the context of MIRT in which a deliberate choice has been made to use territory as such as a frame of integration. Other choices could have been made as well when revising the former MIT programme. For example, the MIT programme, which initially only dealt with infrastructure provision, could also have been made more integrative along the line of economic development. The result would have been a MIET programme: Long Term infrastructure and Economic Development Programme. Not illogical given the close relationship between accessibility and economic development. Yet, for reasons we do not know, it has not been economic development but territory that has been chosen as integration frame. Or at least, this is how it currently works out. By including territory in the programme and by making the development of a territorial agenda mandatory the former MIT programme now has taken quite a different and new direction.

4.0 Conclusion

If anything, it has become clear that there is no such thing as a regional integrative strategy at the level of the Randstad. Rather there are several strategies, some being more integrative than others, at several levels below and above that of the Randstad. Amongst the wide array of integrative territorial strategies the MIRT territorial agendas is just one particular kind of integrative policy. As we brought forward it has been studied in this case study as it is relatively new and combines both horizontal and vertical integration and vision and investment programme. But there are many other, maybe more exiting, policy documents under the umbrella of integrative territorial strategy within the Randstad. In about a period of half a century there has only be one policy document that could be regarded a regional integrative strategy for the Randstad: the Structure Vision Randstad 2040 (Ministerie VROM, 2008). Ironically though, the key message of this vision, which already has become obsolete, is that because of limited functional relationships there is no rationale to speak of one Randstad, but rather that policy strategies should be aimed at the two wings. This is also the view of the 2010 government, but it needs to be seen how it will be fleshed out.

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Interviews

Territorial Agenda South Wing/South-Holland

- Leo van 't Hof, coordinator at central government level for the territorial agenda South Wing/ South-Holland, ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment
- Annelies van der Does, project leader territorial agenda, Province of Zuid-Holland
- Twan Verhoeven, responsible for the traffic and transport projects in the MIRT

- Nicolas van Geelen, responsible for the Economic Agenda and economic input in territorial agenda, Province of Zuid-Holland
- Olga Arandjelovic, team leader territorial strategy and programme leader of the on-going development of visions and coherence between the different products within the province.

Territorial Agenda Northwest Netherlands

- Kees Hansma, coordinator at central government level for the territorial agenda Northwest Netherlands, ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment
- Wim Brussaard, MIRT coordinator at the Province of Noord-Holland
- Peter Jellema, MIRT and territorial agenda coordinator at the province of Flevoland
- Hillebrand Koning, responsible at the province of Flevoland for the input in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area and the central-regional government programme Amsterdam-Almere-Markermeer (RRAAM)
- Menko Noordegraaf, coordinator at regional level for the territorial agenda, Urban region of Amsterdam/ Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.

Territorial Agenda Utrecht

- Harm van den Heiligenberg, strategic advisor and coordinator Utrecht 2040, province of Utrecht
- Jacqueline Sellink, spatial planning department and MIRT coordinator province of Utrecht
- Bart Althuis, infrastructure department and MIRT coordinator, province of Utrecht
- Caroline Drupsteen, spatial planning department and MIRT coordinator, municipality of Amersfoort
- Frank Giele, spatial planning department and MIRT coordinator, municipality of Hilversum.

Participants in Randstad meetings

Meeting Randstad stakeholders July 2011

- Joanne Swets (Randstad Regio Brussel)
- Wim Stoker (Randstad Regio Brussel and province of Noord-Holland on behalf of Hilde van Velzen-Donker)
- Liza Groeneveld (province of Utrecht on behalf of Harm van den Heiligenberg)
- Jolanka van der Perk (province of Flevoland)
- Lenneke Joosen (province of Zuid-Holland)
- Helmut Thoele (province of Zuid-Holland)
- Annelies van der Does (province of Zuid-Holland)

Focus group meeting December 2011

- Joanne Swets (Randstad Regio Brussel)
- Leo van 't Hof (ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment)
- Jolanka van der Perk (province of Flevoland)
- Wim Brussaard (province of Noord-Holland)
- Harm van den Heiligenberg (province of Utrecht)
- Jacqueline Sellink (province of Utrecht)

- Helmut Thoele/Jeroen van Schaik (province of Zuid-Holland): announced but not able to come
- Helen Land (ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment): announced but not able to come
- Menko Noordergraaf (Amsterdam Metropolitan Area): announced but not able to come.

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