

**TOWARDS A STRATEGIC SPATIAL AGENDA  
FOR AN EXPANDING RANDSTAD**  
*A new spatial development framework in The Netherlands?*

Elien Wierenga  
Liese Vonk  
Susanne Vleeshouwers

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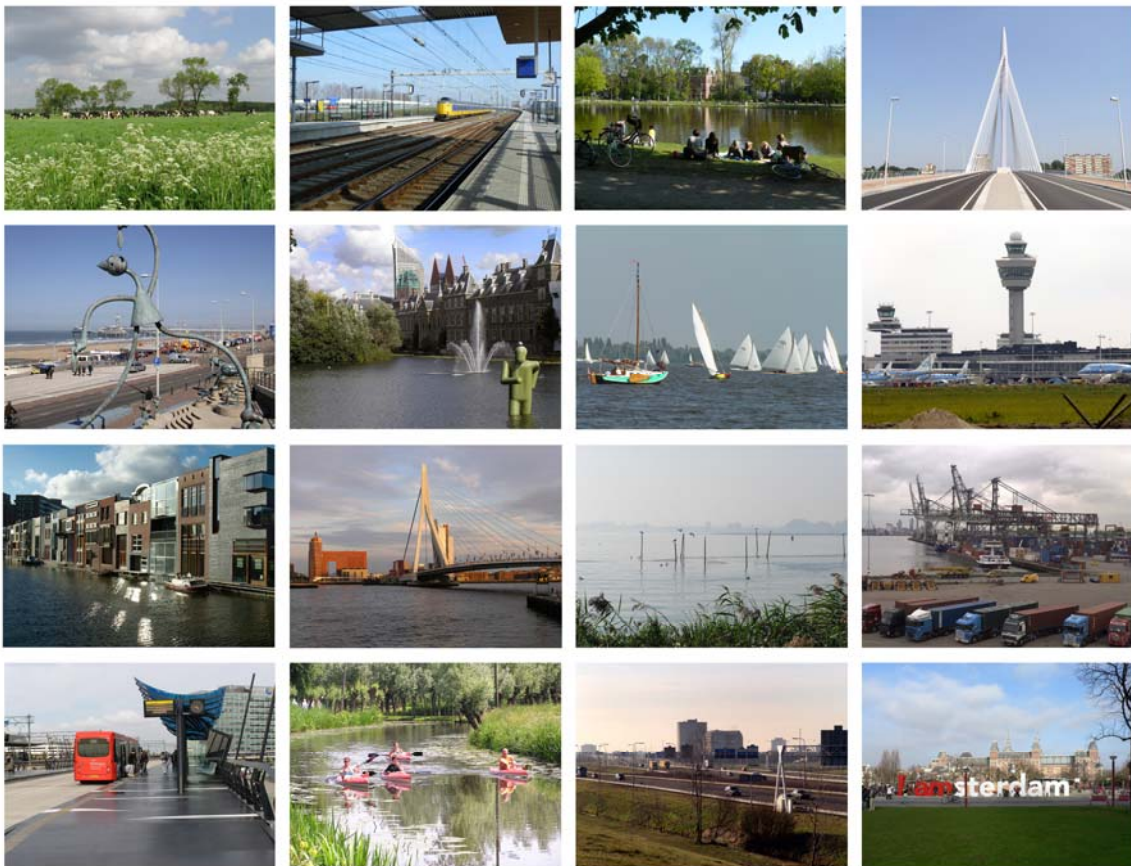
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### RANDSTAD: ECONOMIC HEART OF THE NETHERLANDS

Randstad Holland is the political, administrative, social and cultural heart of the Netherlands and the most important economic motor. The metropolitan region (as an urban network) Randstad Holland is a very high-densed populated area in the western part of the country. More than 6.6 million people live there (41% of Dutch inhabitants) and almost half of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the Netherlands is earned in this area. The Randstad is an international player in trade, logistics and transport, financial & business services, and horticulture. It is one of the most attractive regions in the OECD foreign direct investment (FDI).



This area is highly significant for the long-term vitality and appeal of The Netherlands and Europe. The Randstad faces formidable international competition. A variety of international researches, for instance the Randstad Territorial Review of the OECD shows that the Randstad loses international position compared to other West European regions, which strengthened their position. Cities and urban regions like Barcelona, Helsinki, Dublin, Berlin and Munich increase their lead in attractiveness for people and business. It worries many people, and among them different political and other well-

known public figures that the Randstad loses its attractiveness. The new government is ambitious to turn the tide. They want to take action! Their ambition is to make the Randstad a sustainable and competitive European top region.

#### LONG TERM VISION RANDSTAD 2040 AND RANDSTAD URGENCY PROGRAMME

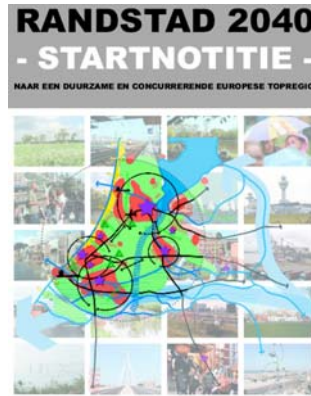
The Randstad is facing some serious challenges on which a sustainable answer must be found. Challenges like global economic dynamics, adequate protection against flooding, water storage, new combinations and ways of living and recreation, tackling traffic congestion, maintaining and developing high qualitative green spaces including the Green Heart in the Randstad and green networks, as well as tackling the social problems in the cities (housing, safety, labour market) and making space for new economic developments. Even more when you take into account that the Randstad is a region with highly complex spatial and administrative needs. There is an urgency to find an answer to these challenges in a long-term vision for the Randstad.

Next to the urgency to find an answer to these challenges, the First Chamber has especially asked for an integral long-term vision for the Randstad when the National Spatial Strategy was accorded in 2006<sup>1</sup>. Coupled to this vision, they also asked for a strategy to implement this vision. From this long-term vision and strategy we have to conclude in what way, with the existing policy and implementation of the policy, we can anticipate on the expected long-term developments.

The central government works on an integral vision for the Randstad for the time till 2040, of which the starting memo (Randstad 2040 – Startnotitie) is now published. This notation is the beginning of the discussion and addresses the main objectives and the spatial choices, which will have to be made for the Randstad on the way to 2040. In this vision different social, cultural, ecological and economical trends and challenges and their spatial implications will be addressed and are related to the spatial structure of the Randstad and shows its relations over the borders of the Randstad and the Netherlands.

Together with this long-term vision, the cabinet introduced in the new coalition agreement the Randstad Urgency Programme (Urgentieprogramma Randstad (UPR)), which focuses on the short-term problems in the physical domain. Both documents are sent to the parliament. The Advisory Commission for strengthening the Randstad (lead by former prime minister mr. W. Kok) defined the long process of decision making as a lack of governmental ownership. This as a result of the increasing complexity of decision making in our network society. Taken this advice into account, the overall focus of this Randstad Urgency Programme is to speed up the decision making process and come to realisation of projects. For that, a new way of governance is presented. The government will become a trustworthy partner that takes its decisions and gets to realisation in time.

Both products are related: they set out for the same ambition and the content is built along three main issues (climate persistence safety, accessibility and economical dynamics and quality of life with an attractive living and working climate). We think that this intertwining of the goals on the long term and the short term can be a real opportunity for both the content and sustainability of the decisions about the content and the decision making process itself. Maybe it can function as *a new spatial development framework*.



#### MAIN QUESTION

In this paper we will address the following main question:

**What is the value of the interrelationship between the Randstad Urgency Programme (UPR) and the national strategic vision process 'Randstad 2040' (R2040) as a new spatial development framework in the national spatial strategy also in relation to the international (economic) position of the Randstad?**

To answer this question we will discuss some of what we consider to be the most important trends and ingredients:

1. The qualities of the Randstad that should be strengthened by R2040 and UPR.
2. Things that need to be done to bring the Randstad towards committing and performing in strengthening the qualities of the Randstad.

## **2. TOWARDS A DYNAMIC AND COMPETITIVE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY**

International competition matters in a globalizing world. But how to be international competitive in general? And what scale is the right one? These questions will be addressed in this paragraph.

### **INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION**

In Europe, Randstad Holland takes a prominent position in between other big and economic strong cities and regions like Madrid, Barcelona, Dublin, Stockholm, Frankfurt or for instance Milan. The same like every other mondial region, the European Union has to react to a paradigm shift in the sources of economic development, which is guided by globalisation and the new knowledge-based economy.

### **LISSABON EN GOTHEBORGSTRATEGY**

With in their minds structural lack of growth and investments, raising unemployment, ageing, dramatic low labour market participation and growing competitiveness of the USA, Japan, China and upcoming countries in Asia and South-America, the European Council decided in 2000 to follow a strategy to speed up growth for Europe in total and to become an attractive partner for investors competing with other strong and upcoming countries and regions. Heads of State and Government of the European Union signed up to an ambitious programme of change in Lisbon, 2000<sup>2</sup>. In 2001 the strategy of Lisbon was completed with an environmental dimension (sustainability) (European Council of Göteborg). From that moment the strategy is called 'Lisbon and Göteborgstrategy'. The affiliated countries committed themselves to making the European Union the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment. This is the goal for 2010. The Netherlands has the ambition to be in the top 10 of the European countries to realise this goals. To realise this ambition in reality a better position of the Randstad Holland is needed and therefore we have to find a way to make a sustainable growth possible and to compete with other countries and regions in attracting (economical) activities.

### **WHAT CLIMATE AS A BASIS FOR AN INNOVATIVE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY?**

Richard Florida<sup>3</sup> stated that the presence of creativity stimulates innovations. Especially the sectors of the economy in which is worked in a creative and knowledge-intensive way, are economically prosperous. The 'creative class' are the workers of the future and generate much income for cities and urban regions. But the employees are selective. They first choose where they want to live and then they search for a job. In the past, it normally was the other way around and the people followed the companies. Nowadays, 'creative people' are very important for a city, because they bring a pleasant atmosphere

and start new initiatives. Places like restaurants, cafes, bars, festivals or parks, are important for this 'creative class' to meet other people. In this situation all kind of new activities are born. New start-up firms, cultural festivals, new products are possible, because there are cross-overs between knowledge, private initiatives and this all can bring new innovations. The cities profit from those developments and can facilitate it.

In a creative region, the creative class could be the link between the footloose economy (space of flows) and the physical environment (space of places)<sup>4</sup>. In a creative region we can see a ABC<sup>5</sup> of professional atmospheres (Academic), Business activities and Cultural projects and activities which have interrelations, but also have their own autonomy. The area should have a clear and pleasant identity and literally and figurative offer enough free space to all kind of activities, initiatives and developments. The ABC is the capital of a large part of the knowledge-based economy. The combination of a high dynamic and a relaxed environment could work as a magnet on the creative class and forms the base of the ABC.

#### WHAT SCALE AS A BASIS FOR A COMPETITIVE REGION?

Randstad Holland is a polycentric urban region. The four largest Dutch cities (G4) in the western part of The Netherlands are included in this area (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) with a Green Heart between them. These G4 and the smaller cities around them are the urban and high-dynamic part of Randstad Holland.

There still is discussion about the Randstad as one entity, as the level of scale on which the policy on economic competitiveness in the Netherlands is largely based. In 2006, the Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research (RPB) has done research on the existence of the Randstad. The study is called *'Many towns do not make a Randstad'*. The main conclusions in this publication of the RPB are that the Dutch Randstad does not function as a single cohesive entity (functional area), and hence neither does it function as a 'network city'.

In an article in the *Blauwe Kamer*<sup>6</sup>, a magazine for landscape development and urbanism, Rob van der Bijl opposes the main conclusion of the RPB in their study. He states that the Randstad exists. He admits that the Randstad is not a normal city, a configuration of a metropolis, and also not a network city. But still, there is a vision and policy necessary for the Randstad as a whole. The interconnection within the Randstad and the amplification of this is necessary to be able to compete internationally with comparable urban ensembles like the regions of Frankfurt, Seattle, Lyon, Milan, or with incomparable metropolis like Paris, London, New York and Tokyo.

The level of scale of the Randstad as a whole is important for the Netherlands to play a role in the international competition. But within the Randstad, the urban regions play an

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*Towards a strategic spatial agenda for an expanding Randstad*, 43<sup>rd</sup> ISOCARP Congress 2007

important role; they are the motors for the economy, and each have their own qualities, which together form the strength of the Randstad. These motors should be strengthened and connected in such a way that the Randstad as a whole will become stronger.

### **3. (SPATIAL) QUALITIES OF THE RANDSTAD TOWARDS A DYNAMIC AND COMPETITIVE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY**

In this paragraph we want to show more in detail what the unique (spatial) qualities of the Randstad are and which qualities have to be strengthened so the Randstad can play an important role and distinguish itself in the international competition. The OECD gives in the recent Territorial Review Randstad some key recommendations for action for the Dutch government and shows the most important factors to focus on and to solve the problems. In the Randstad Urgency Programme and Randstad 2040 - Starting memo the national government is trying to focus and to select the most important (spatial) aspects for making those unique qualities of the Randstad stronger.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS OECD**

In this paper we will shortly introduce the recommendations of the OECD, which have a spatial character or support the qualities of the Randstad. But also other aspects – non-spatial -, like flexibility of the labour market and knowledge, are topics for further studying and to take in mind for strengthening the spatial economic goals for the Randstad. The Randstad does not seem to exploit well the proximity of its four large cities. Using the unique characteristics of the area is one way to improve the economic performance. Key recommendation is: improve internal accessibility within the area

#### *Mobility: solving congestion problems and coherence in regional and local public transport within the Randstad area*

The Randstad is the centre of congestion in the Netherlands. More than 80% of the traffic jams are concentrated in this area. Other polycentric regions like the Flemish Diamond in Belgium and the Rhine Ruhr Area in Germany do not have the same problem as the Randstad. Congestion has a strong impact on productivity growth. In the Randstad, the system of highways is heavily used. The network of regional roads is limited and less than half the highways in the Randstad has a parallel regional road. The railway capacity in the Randstad is low but also used very intensively. The coherence between the different regional transport networks is not optimal for travellers and for many people the distance to public transport from their living area is too far away.

#### *Lack of high quality housing is a risk for the international attractiveness of the Randstad.*

The OECD recommends also improving the quality of housing. Today there is a mismatch between qualitative and quantitative demand and supply on the housing market. The inflexibility on the Dutch housing market is a big problem, especially in the Randstad.



There is considerably more demand than supply of residential housing, especially in green areas. Using the Green Heart for recreational areas, water storage and green housing is an option the OECD brings forward.

#### *Make better use of knowledge*

In the transition process to a knowledge-based economy, the Randstad has tried to make better use of the potentials of the highly skilled (foreign) workers and the knowledge infrastructure. It is crucial to attract more highly skilled workers and students, and innovative foreign firms. To attract more (foreign) highly skilled workers and innovative firms, an excellent place of business and living is required. Projects like supporting the South Axis (Zuidas) with an excellent accessibility (motorway and public transport), living and working areas with unique urban qualities and a climate for meeting and going out in restaurants and bars will create a sustainable and attractive climate for business and knowledge workers in the Randstad.

#### RANDSTAD QUALITIES

Loosing attractiveness of the Randstad needs action. The economic strategy on generating high volumes (transport of goods and people) is limited and effort has been made to develop more value-added activities. To become an international attractive area, there are more investments necessary to hold the strong (potential) position in the strong economic clusters and create more added value for the future. But in the knowledge-based economy facilitating and stimulating the creative economy more and more important. Spatially this means putting effort on good working and living environments.

#### *Randstad economy in international perspective*

Randstad Holland is the most important economical region in The Netherlands. The strong economic competitiveness in the Randstad is especially important because we are a trade nation and have an open economy. The logistic sector is strong developed (logistic hub for Europe) but there are also some other strong sectors in the diversified and service-based economy of the Randstad. Financial and business services, trade and logistics, horticulture and the creative industry are more or less well developed in the last decennia. The Randstad has a relatively high regional income per capita, unemployment is one of the lowest in OECD metropolitan regions and labour productivity per hour is high. The Randstad is one of the most attractive OECD metropolitan regions for foreign direct investments (FDI)<sup>7</sup>.

A big challenge is the low productivity growth over recent years. Over the last decade, the growth rate in The Netherlands was one of the lowest in the OECD, and much lower than cities such as Munich or Stockholm for instance.

### *Green open area*

In the G4 and other towns, the academic and business activities are settled and where we can find urban living environments, while in the Green Heart, the inhabitants and visitors can find rest, openness, cultural and natural values and space for recreational activities in the vicinity of the urbanised area. This is a unique quality of the Randstad, in comparison to other metropolitan regions. But the open green areas in the Green Heart are getting smaller and the openness in the Green Heart is decreasing. It is necessary to stop the disorderly developments, which can disturb the character of the typical Dutch landscape in this economically important area.

### *Specific environment of the delta area*

Since the 14<sup>th</sup> century this agglomeration of cities is situated mainly below sea level and has been known as Holland, the Lowlands or Les Pays-Bas. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the area experienced the Golden Age, a period of remarkable prosperity stimulated mainly by its convenient coastal location, an abundance of great rivers (the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt) but also by the vibrant spirit of tolerance and commerce of that time. The harbours are still at the moment very important for the economic position and related activities for the Randstad (Rotterdam at the first place, but also the harbour of Amsterdam is growing). Next to the economical attraction of the Delta area, this also brings attractive recreational areas and high quality living areas. The delta-character makes the landscape of the Randstad with elements like polders, windmills, canals, coastline, harbours, dunes and riverbanks a specific and interesting area. Strengthening these qualities and marketing them can attract a new stream of inhabitants, tourists, services and business to the Randstad.

### *Strong urban regions with their specific character*

In the Randstad a number of distinct and administratively and politically independent urban areas close to each other grew over the years to become a polycentric metropolitan area or maybe an 'urban network'. The Hague is the seat of the national government and international organisations (peace, justice, safety) and embassies are located here. Utrecht has the central point of the national railway network and many trade and industrial activities have become increasingly connected to the harbour of Rotterdam. But the capital city Amsterdam is the most important city in the urbanised ring of cities in the Randstad and for The Netherlands in general. Amsterdam is, not only for tourists, but also for business internationally the most attractive place. Airport Schiphol (fourth biggest airport in Europe) is a strong asset for this area and many people find employment in the region Great Amsterdam. The South Axis is the potential international top location of The Netherlands and with the High Speed Train Amsterdam is a part of the international HST-network in Europe. In the global network of world cities, Amsterdam and to a lesser extent Rotterdam and The Hague, all have a prominent place. Randstad Holland is a gateway to Europe and continuous flows of goods,

information, people and business give an enormous dynamic to the economic processes in Randstad Holland. Polycentric city requires greater inter-city region collaboration in spatial planning, division of labour and various related urban issues such as housing and congestion.

## RANDSTAD 2040 (STARTING MEMO) AND RANDSTAD URGENCY PROGRAMME: STRENGTHENING THE QUALITIES OF THE RANDSTAD

### RANDSTAD 2040 – STARTING MEMO

With 'Randstad 2040 – starting memo' the Dutch national government puts the important long term subjects on the agenda for a spatial development of the Randstad towards a sustainable and competitive European top region in the coming years: a region in which prosperity and economic growth go together with social, cultural and ecological desired options for this and the future generations. In the future, the Randstad is an attractive area from different perspectives as a destination and in which people with different life styles can make true their dreams. Because of this ambition on the long term, we now have to make sustainable choices in many (future) problems, take chances to redevelop and to profit from challenges. We need unique qualities to compete with other European regions and to facilitate sustainable growth. The qualities are not only on spatial aspects, but are also more general qualities like a good school system, good labour relationships, reliable rules, and integration, emancipation and participation of different groups in the society.

In the first step of making the vision there are three main topics nominated:

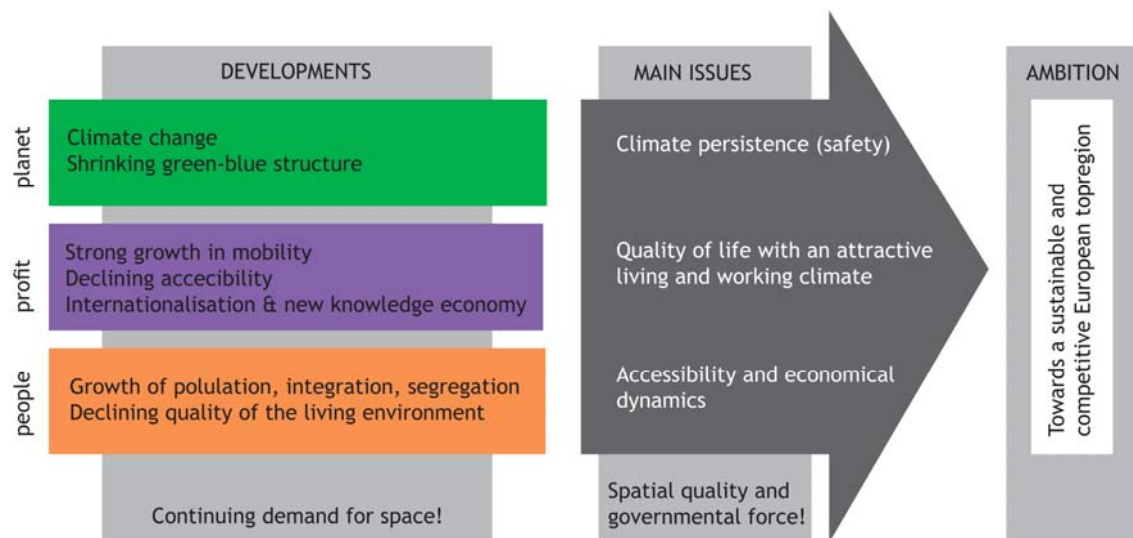
- the consequences of climate change;
- the economic dynamic processes (like globalisation, effects of ICT, the growth of services economy) and the expected growth of the mobility (of people and goods);
- the (negative) effects of the explosive growth of people (immigration), integration and segregation, and a high demand for space with possible negative consequences for the spatial quality is also very important to take in regard.

Sustainability is a key value in the selections and choices the cabinet want to follow and take into mind. Because we think about more than 30 years in the future, the importance of sustainable choices is very high and desired. In the starting memo, the Randstad is analysed with the three dimensions of sustainability: people, planet, profit and the layer approach (underground, networks and occupation). This is also translated to five different parts of the Randstad, which have comparable issues and developments. These parts also cross the borders of the Randstad and the Netherlands: they show their relations with surrounding areas.



Source: Randstad 2040 – Starting Memo (2007)

From the developments and issues for the Randstad, and the five parts of the Randstad, three main issues for the Randstad are selected, and seven topics on which the dilemma's are described, and on which choices will have to be made for the sustainable development of the Randstad towards 2040.



Three main issues:

1. Climate persistence (safety)
2. Accessibility and economical dynamics
3. Quality of life with an attractive living and working climate

Seven topics with their dilemma's:

**1. Climate persistence of the low lying delta**

Sea level is rising, the soil is sinking, there is more and more water in the rivers. Staying in the Randstad, which is under sea level means large investments and making fundamental choices for the long term. Where can we let the water (temporarily) run, where can we work and live? Also plans on the short term will have to be tested on their climate-persistenceness.

**2. Spatial investment strategy**

Are we aiming for investing in the existing strong elements of the Randstad to make them even stronger and do we use this to be stronger in the international competition, or will we aim on eliminating regional differences. Spatial investments which will be most profitable on the long term are attractive, but do we accept 'investing in the power' if that means that the national government will put more spatial-economical investments in one region, and less in another region?

**3. Green-blue structure as a framework for urbanisation**

The amount of green areas in the Randstad has already been decreasing for decennia, and the feeling of 'fullness' is increasing. It is the question in what way we accept further ride of urban use of space. To protect the Green Heart and other valuable landscapes on the long term, powerful action is needed for working on a green/blue structure in the Randstad. Will we develop parts of this structure towards metropolitan parks for the Randstad? Will we invest more and reserve more space for green areas, even if this will give restrictions to working and living areas?

**4. Strategy for urbanisation**

A good and sustainable balance between living and working, next to space for green areas, is a big challenge for the long term. This corresponds with the clustering of urbanisation on the 'Randstad ring'. This is efficient and spares valuable landscapes, but how can it be designed in such a way that it fits the demands of companies and people who live in the Randstad? Good choice of location and innovative solutions are crucial. It will still be the question how urban, or rustic the clustered urbanisation will have to be designed. Next to that, there are the questions how much more clustering within the existing cities is possible, and in what degree we have to think about high-rise.

**5. Accessibility in relation to spatial development**

Mobility is a necessity for economical growth and social development, and has a large meaning for spatial dynamics. Where can we best build new houses and

businesses so car and public transport are used in the best way? Where and for whom can public transport become a real alternative for the car? How can improvement of the transport system best contribute to the development of the Randstad towards an attractive, sustainable and competitive top region? Should we above all focus on improvement within the urban regions, the Randstad as a whole or the (inter)national level?

**6. Spatial-economical characterization and structure**

The Netherlands is an important country in distribution, and transport of goods shall stay to grow in the coming decennia. The two large harbours (mainport Rotterdam and the harbour of Amsterdam) and Schiphol airport are important bases for economical growth. The (environmental and) spatial demand of storage and transshipment is enormous. How can we deal with this on the long term in such a way that the Randstad stays an attractive place with high spatial qualities and attracts international knowledge-labourers and tourists? More knowledge-intensive and innovative activities correspond with this goal. This will ask for attractive top locations, more choice in working and living environments and a 'beautiful Holland'.

**7. The future of mainport Schiphol.**

With the economical growth, the demand for aviation will stay to grow. Moving Schiphol to an island in the sea seems unlikely. Will we stay to make use of the potentials of Schiphol on the current location, with the additional limitations for living and working in the surroundings of Schiphol? Or will we choose to spread the environmental hassles towards regional airports?

This resulted in a discussion-map, which will be used for the dialogue in the following process.



Discussion map Randstad 2040 – starting memo (2007)

In the process, which follows on the Randstad 2040 – starting notation process, local governments, private actors, social organisations and citizens will be involved. The dialogue with other actors has to lead to focussing on the most important topics, problems, opportunities and challenges, decision-making on these topics and the selection of a selected amount of projects.

#### RANDSTAD URGENCY PROGRAMME

Taken the advice of the OECD and the advisory commission for strengthening the Randstad into account the Randstad Urgency Programme has the ambition to grow towards a sustainable and competitive European top region and for that it sets a double goal. The main goal is to speed up the decision making process of some of the projects in the spatial domain which are of importance for the Randstad and its functioning and attractiveness. As will be addressed further a different kind of governance is of vital importance to get projects realised. We also will get in to more detail about the working methods of the Randstad Urgency Programme.

The spatial goals are related to the Randstad 2040 – starting notation: climate persistence (safety), accessibility and economical dynamics, quality of life with an attractive living and working climate. Next to this, there is a goal for the long term, making a robust approach for the future with the long-term vision for the Randstad, which will result from the Randstad 2040 – starting memo.

Resulting from these spatial goals, there are different themes, in which projects are chosen which have priority on the level of the Randstad, and in which attention of the National Government is needed to help the process of decision making. In line with the OECD advice the central issue of the programme is accessibility. Especially the national routes are facing some severe congestion. The UPR focuses on the following main themes:

**Accessibility and economical dynamics**

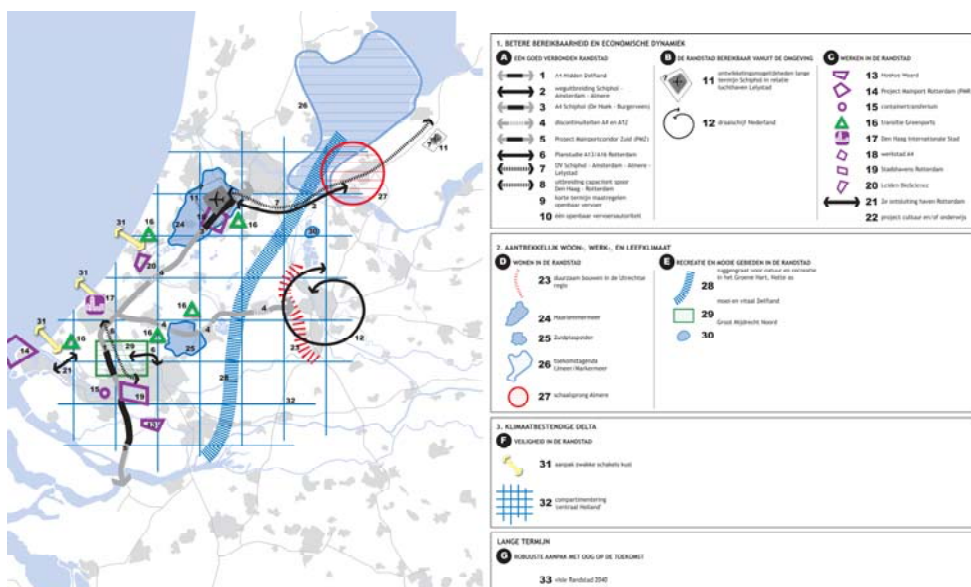
- One well-connected Randstad: connecting the most important cities and the mainports;
- The Randstad accessible from the surroundings: the Randstad should nationally and internationally be well accessible from the surroundings;
- Working in the Randstad: strengthening the Randstad by providing more space for working locations, partly by restructuring areas like Stadshavens in the harbour in Rotterdam.

**Quality of life with an attractive living and working climate**

- Living in the Randstad: sufficient houses in all segments of the right quality;
- Recreation and beautiful areas in the Randstad: more space for recreation near the cities, quality of the landscape, and accessibility of the landscape. Investments in recreational areas, landscape and nature go together with developing a robust water system.

**Climate persistence in the Delta,**

- safety in the Randstad: anticipating on the long term effects of climate change.



Projects in the Randstad Urgency Programme (2007)



#### **4. HOW CAN RANDSTAD 2040 AND RANDSTAD URGENCY PROGRAMME BRING THE RANDSTAD TOWARDS COMMITTING AND PERFORMING IN STRENGTHENING THE QUALITIES OF THE RANDSTAD?**

In the former paragraph we gave an overview of the unique qualities of the Randstad and the qualities we have to strengthen according to for instance the OECD to strengthen our position in the international level playing field. These recommendations are translated into recent policy. But besides the content, instruments are also of vital importance to facilitate and stimulate the actions that are needed. In this paragraph we will give insight in the recent instruments in general and in specific the principles for Randstad 2040 and the Randstad Urgency Programme.

The OECD has also some remarks about the governance of the Randstad to solve problems. The city-region level (as a daily urban system) is appropriate for solving many problems and this level should be strengthened institutionally. Better coordination of economic activities and specialisations among the four cities is desired. To see other actors as partners instead of competitors will be profitable for the Randstad as whole. As a first step a Randstad-agenda is needed to solve problems at the Randstad scale. Issues where coordination might be needed are harbour activities, airport Schiphol and the regional airports, Green Heart are all activities, the coherence of local and regional public transport, tourism, the location of top-end offices and housing.

With the Randstad Urgency Programme, the first step is taken to do this on different topics and the Randstad 2040 – starting memo will follow this line for the longer term. The cabinet has not chosen to make structure adjustment in the government organisation, but on longer term it is not decided yet and all options are open.

#### **THE DUTCH GOVERNMENTAL PRACTICE – IN SHORT**

The commission for the strengthening of the Randstad, which was lead by our former Prime Minister Mr W. Kok concluded that there is no governmental ownership. There is no party who can or will take concluding decisions, can or will allocate budget or can mobilise realisation force from the necessary parties. There are too many parties and the spatial dynamics are enormous. Often politicians still think too much in their own interest: their area and personal status and power. This leads to dozens of meetings and ineffective cooperation. And above just few decisions are made, the ones who are taken are delayed and just a few projects are build. An other aspect which has a negative effect on decision making is the governmental culture. We are not used to act with force to some decisions, although we have the instruments.

The theory about this phenomenon has its origin in networking. Because of globalisation and upscaling, complex global networks of different kinds have developed. More and

more these networks expand and therefore they cannot be defined within territorial borders. This territorial spread networking which crosses borders also effect the management approaches of companies. They organise themselves in networks. This complex process of networking also effects the government. A lot of policy processes play on different levels. And with spatial processes it is clear that territorial boundaries are not the only boundaries. This makes the traditional hierarchy an ineffective steering mechanism. In a network all parties want to reach their own goal. They will do that by influencing the strategies of other actors in the network. The effect is that no decisions are taken or the decision-making process is delayed.

#### THE THEORY OF POLICY NETWORKS

Instead of hierarchy horizontal links become more important. This leads to a double development: decisions are made on more places. This leads to more fragmentation. And at the same time decisions get more influenced by interdependencies between parties and therefore lead to more horizontal links: networks<sup>8</sup>. The society contains of more of these networks and these overlap each other as well.

Policy networks are dynamic and constant under influence of changing relations between interdependent actors. These actors organise themselves around policy problems<sup>9</sup>. More and more policy networks can be characterized by interdependency, pluriformity, dynamic and capriciousness. This interdependency means that actors are not capable and don't have enough power of solving a problem on their own. Their goals can only be reached by mixing the capital (knowledge, property, authority, money etc.) of the different actors. So cooperating, working together and coalition making are key qualifications for success. But because of the different interests of the actors cooperation to solve problems can be difficult. Coalition formation, searching for common goals and a common vision, joint investments and share risks, are ways to work together and for successful results in everyone's advantage. Public-private partnerships are ways to get more added values for realising projects because all parties get some benefits for a good price and the whole society can profit.

An important characteristic of networks is the dynamic; dynamics in the composition of actors, the roles the actors play and the content of the policy problem. Also depending on the stage of the political or policy process the roles and the composition of the actors can change over time. And also the content of the policy problem and initiated solutions can shift. Policy processes in networks have in general no clear starting and ending point and are often unstructured and capriciousness.

Traditional hierarchical solutions for steering are not effective in policy networks. A different approach is needed; an approach that deals with the characteristics of policy networks. Network management focuses on common problem solving or policy

development. So the network management incorporates the interdependencies of actors. Network management is seen as: “promoting the mutual adjustment of the behaviour of actors with diverse objectives and ambitions with regard to tackling problems within a given framework of inter-organisational relationships”<sup>10</sup>.

Network management is characterized by three elements:

- Intervention in existing patterns of relations;
- Stimulating the conditions of working together (joint image/ consensus building)
- Joint problem solving.

To be successful the attempts to influence the interaction processes must take institutional aspects like interdependencies, relations and rules into account. Second there are two intervention moments: the interaction processes itself (direct influence) and the institutional context (indirect influence via structure and culture) (policy).

The role of governments is different than that of public firms. Governments have special responsibilities: a government is part of a network, at the same time the government is the authority to set the rules for the interaction between different actors and they have the responsibility to realise certain societal tasks which are not produced by other parties.

In this responsibility the government is not used to work together with more than one or two other parties. Starting point in governmental thinking is the one-on-one relation between task and organisation; the government doesn't think in solving complex problems they only solve part of the problem for which they are responsible. Also their set of solutions is based on this principle: the government is traditionally hierarchical. The system works with command-and-control procedures, content specific restrictions and intern headed organisation cultures. So the government is not capable to cross the internal organisation boundaries. But in a network society with complex problems other thinking of also the government is needed. And also the government is changing and tries to adjust to the new situation both by intervening directly via interaction processes and by renewing the institutional context. In the next paragraphs we will explain this in more detail.

#### DECENTRALISING RESPONSIBILITIES AND FOCUSED NATIONAL INTEREST

The economy now plays a greater role and the national government wants to create more space for development. This gives greater responsibility for action to other actors: the provincial and municipal councils, the institutions of civil society, and not least to individual citizens and private actors. The most noticeable adaptation in the newest spatial policy document of the national government 'the National Spatial Strategy'<sup>11</sup> is its governance model, or 'steering philosophy'. This document sets the policy until 2020 (middle long term). The national policy will be further elaborated at the regional and local

levels through the participation of a range of actors: the public sector, private firms and the community of voluntary and non-governmental organisations. Central government does not want to be involved in all planning matters and is decentralising responsibilities to other tiers of government; it intends to give strategic guidance on spatial development. Of course, central government will determine the direction to be taken on matters involving the national interest, but where regional interests are paramount, regional parties will be given greater freedom to determine their own course of action. The provincial and municipal councils - and let us not forget civil society organisations and interested citizens - know what is needed. That is why central government will allow different regional and local approaches and policy interpretations. The central government is responsible for 'system quality' instead of 'result responsibility'.

The steering philosophy can be placed in the adage of policy networking. To realise some of the governmental force in policy networks what first is necessary is focussing on the desirable spatial development. This gives the opportunity to define effective relations between the parties and make the relations as situation specific as possible.

#### DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

As scheduled out before, the government has to try a new way to steer the most important spatial activities in a sustainable way. Development planning<sup>12</sup> will contribute to better utilisation of spatial opportunities and improved regional qualities, thus also allowing the Dutch design traditions of landscape, urbanisation and architecture to continue. For this the national government will only set limitations on spatial developments if national interests are at stake. This also gives the national government a ground to focus on the most important spatial developments.

At least once every two years (preferably in the context of the Implementation Agenda of the National Spatial Strategy to be updated every two years) the government will assess whether the policy scope is sufficient in practice.

To ensure proper implementation of the National Spatial Strategy and to give space to development planning a full range of legal tools is needed to ensure the proper. The Spatial Planning Act (*Wet op de ruimtelijke ordening*) will therefore be amended.

One of the most noticeable things of current planning is the fact that the governments cannot operate in their own. The government has to interact with other parties who are key players in the spatial domain. In development planning the government every time can change their role and effort. New parties are concerned in those developments and spatial projects, so the government is not always the leading actor. Firms or private actors can invest in new initiatives and it is not automatically the role of the public government to spend money.

The government every time can change their role and effort but the different actors involved in a specific project have to make arrangements with clear and transparent appointments (about investments, values, quality etc.) but with the flexibility to adaptation to the longer term. Also choices in way of a sustainable strategy are important.

One of the instruments introduced in the National Spatial Strategy – which also fits the development planning - is *programme management*. The former cabinet introduced working with programmes: coordination between the decision making process of projects (infrastructure, landscape, business estates, attractive leaving areas) which are related. The most important element was coordinate the decision making process between the four different ‘physical’ ministries (Ministries of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV), Transport, Public Works and Water Management (V&W) and Economic Affairs (EZ)). It was often the case that the decision making process was frustrated because two ministries thought different about a project result. Another effect of more coordination is the increasing reliability of the central government and also the ministers defined their role better: they became coordinators.

The programmes were geographically defined. In the Randstad there were three programmes: North Wing, South Wing and Green Heart. Each programme had a selected assignments/projects as part of a nationwide and concerted effort. For example in the South Wing, the following projects were selected for the programme approach: the Maasvlakte 2 compensatory nature reserve and the Zuidplaspolder as large new house building location. For the North Wing, projects include urban planning on the southern edge of Amsterdam (the South Axis), the development of Almere and the possible construction of a bridge over or tunnel under the IJmeer (IJmeerverbinding). Projects selected for the Green Heart include the Eastern Rijn Gouwe Line (Rijn Gouwelijn Oost), the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie heritage landscape and a peat grassland area (Veenweiden).

The programmes all had one government official who was made responsible for the implementation of the programme and its projects. But the Ministers kept their responsibility. So there were no shifts in responsibilities or budgets. The Minister for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) co-ordinated spatial policy and is responsible for the programme approach method.

Other type of instruments like investments can stimulate or facilitate those projects or programmes. Therefore various investment schemes contribute to the realisation of the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy. One new investment scheme is introduced: the *National Spatial Strategy Budget*. This budget will be allocated for spatial development on the middle long term (till 2014) to integrative spatial development

projects, which are of national interests. Also the Ministries of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV), Transport, Public Works and Water Management (V&W) and Economic Affairs (EZ) are involved in the allocation of the budget.

#### RANDSTAD URGENCY PROGRAMMA: SPEEDING UP THE PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING

The Randstad Urgency Programme replaced the programmes for the three different parts of the Randstad, but the new programme is based on the same “programme management”. With the Randstad Urgency Programme there is only one programme for the whole Randstad. More than before perseverance and quick wittedness are explicitly included in the goals of the programme, because this cabinet wants to come closer to a swift-paced implementation of the selected assignments/ projects. In this new programme approach only one Minister is responsible for the progress of the programme. This is the Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management (V&W). Of course the other Ministers of the ‘physical’ ministries play an important role, because they keep their ministerial responsibilities. Also the Ministers for Internal Affairs and Finance are closely involved in the process. The minister of the ‘physical’ departments adopts one or more projects and is therefore responsible for the project progress. In the next coming months an assignment will be formulated so that it is clear at the beginning what has to be the result of this cabinet term. To enforce the perseverance the assignment will also contain transparencies on money, and agreements upon the use of legal instruments. One of the budgets for the projects within UPR is the National Spatial Strategy Budget. The Minister of Transport can and will interfere if the progress of a project is in danger. The assignment per project will be defined in the next coming months.

But the assignments are not only signed by the Minister it also involves a regional politician. The two politicians (a project duo) are in their function as government’s official responsible for the project result. They will define the project result and to make it more official they will sign a contract. They also define what mandate they need. So compared to the first programme approach governance is still light but the things needed to reach the result is project specific defined and empowered. This also fits into the adage of policy networking because it so more custom made and flexible. The contracts make it transparent and focused.

An other difference with the first programme approach is the more explicit role for private and other non-governmental parties. They will function as ambassadors for a cluster of projects. The project duos will be extended to trio’s.

In this trio the regional governor has to deal with the most (regional) parties for commitment and reaching the defined result. The person of the non-governmental organisation can add experience in complex decision-making and he or she has a

network, which can help getting commitment. The ministers keep the responsibility for their policy content and budget. The Minister of V&W is responsible for the progress of the programme as a whole. The instrument therefore is light, flexible, it can be made project specific and is because of the contracts transparent. And the moments of dealing with different governmental parties and the number of politicians are less because with the approach we deal with the projects in a sand-glass model. All this is expected to have a positive effect on the speed of the decision making process. But an important factor in the success of the programme and the individual projects is the chemistry between the people.

For the content of the programme the coordination of the central government is strengthened; the steering principle of more decentralisation and focussed central steering is defined more specific. The cabinet determined the content of the Randstad Urgency Programme but in close cooperation with other parties. In particular the advise of the four provinces and four large cities was taken into account. The content of the programme will be evaluated each year. Changes can then be made. The result(s)/decision(s) per project must be taken within this cabinet term. The new cabinet focuses the energy to a selection of projects. This is also positive towards private investors, which are indispensable in the realisation of projects. But the question is: how can we stay reliable as government when every four years new politicians arrive?

#### PRINCIPLES FOR A LONG TERM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (IN R2040)

In R2040 five strategic principles are defined for the long-term strategy and implementation:

1. *The role of the national government in integral approach of the international competitive position.*

Strengthening the direct concern of the national government for the Randstad on the way to 2040. The cabinet wants to specify the role and responsibility of the national government for the Randstad, as an important part of the National Spatial Structure within the frame of the steering philosophy in the National Spatial Strategy (2006).

2. *Coordinated national investments*

It is important not to invest the national investments in sectoral projects but to bring them together and invest in certain areas. A start of this is bringing together the investments in infrastructure and transport (MIT) together with the spatial developments in the MIRT (Meerjarenprogramma Infrastructuur, Ruimte en Transport). The long-term vision of the Randstad, which will be developed, can give input to the MIRT.

3. *The Randstad as an investment paradise*

The Randstad will also need private investments to grow towards an European top region, so the attractiveness for private investors will need to increase. Different actions of the national government at this moment should lead to reaching this goal.

4. *Governmental cooperation will follow the issues*

Cooperation on the level of scale on which the issues are presenting themselves and can best be solved. Acting 'up in arms' also asks for decreasing the governmental activities.

5. *Early input of environmental aspects in decision-making*

To be able to tune space and the environment better towards each other, it is important that the environmental consequences of interventions on a larger level of scale are taken into consideration early in the process.



## 5. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have tried to come to an answer on the following question:

**What is the value of the interrelationship between the Randstad Urgency Programme (UPR) and the national strategic vision process 'Randstad 2040' (R2040) as a new spatial development framework in the national spatial strategy also in relation to the international (economic) position of the Randstad?**

To answer this question we focussed on two specific elements:

1. The qualities of the Randstad that should be strengthened by R2040 and UPR.
2. Things that need to be done to bring the Randstad towards committing and performing in strengthening the qualities of the Randstad.

The Randstad is of strategic importance for the Netherlands. It becomes clear that binding forces on the level of the Randstad is important when it comes to international competition. Therefore strategic interventions must secure the long-term vitality and appeal. To strengthen the position of the Randstad in a sustainable way we argue that it is important to link the improvement of the qualities in the Randstad with the enforcement of implementation (governance). And that within content (qualities) and the governance both, the link between the long term and short term is important.

The different qualities needed, and the answers of R2040 – starting notation and UPR on this have been explained in chapter 3. The different elements of governance and the elements mentioned in R2040 and UPR have been explained in chapter 4. In this conclusion, we will argue that it is important to make the links between the different elements.

The National Spatial Strategy (2006) - the spatial policy for the middle term – focuses on the time frame until 2020. This has been the first step towards new spatial policy, which focuses more on positioning areas spatially economically. The Randstad – as a national urban network - gets special attention in this policy document, because of its strong economical importance for the Netherlands.

The R2040 - starting memo is based on the National Spatial Strategy but takes also long term economical, social, cultural and environmental trends into account. Some of the themes and issues in R2040 are qualities, which need to be strengthened and some are shortcomings that we need to overcome. The starting notation is the basis for the long-term vision, which will be published in spring 2008. In the following process, spatial choices will be defined and the long-term vision will be presented to the cabinet. The vision has a strategic character so that on the one hand it is a framework for policy,

realisation and the expenditure of (extra) budget is done sustainable and on the other hand it will define the role of the national government. This long-term vision for the Randstad in 2040 will not become a blue print for the future, but will be flexible with clear goals for the long term. The cabinet eventually will adopt the long-term vision as basis for the integral spatial-economical development of the Randstad.

The UPR builds also on the policy of the National Spatial Strategy, the Agenda for a Living Countryside (*Agenda Vitaal Platteland*), the Mobility Policy (*Nota Mobiliteit*) and the Peaks in the Delta (Pieken in de Delta). The content is on the one hand defined by urgent problems (also mentioned in the above policy documents) and on the other hand on the long-term trends in R2040 – starting memo. The UPR can be seen as a short-term integral spatial programme with projects of national interest and urgency. Because of the double goal and the maximum term of results (one cabinet term of four years) it can be defined as an implementation agenda for especially the national government. Each year the content will be evaluated and may change due to that, this makes the UPR a flexible agenda.

Both R2040 and UPR focus on the role of the national government. This in addition to the National Spatial Strategy, which also includes spatial development for the Randstad initiated by other governments (regional and local). And because of the strategic importance of the Randstad for the Netherlands it is argued that binding forces on the level of the Randstad is important when it comes to international competition.

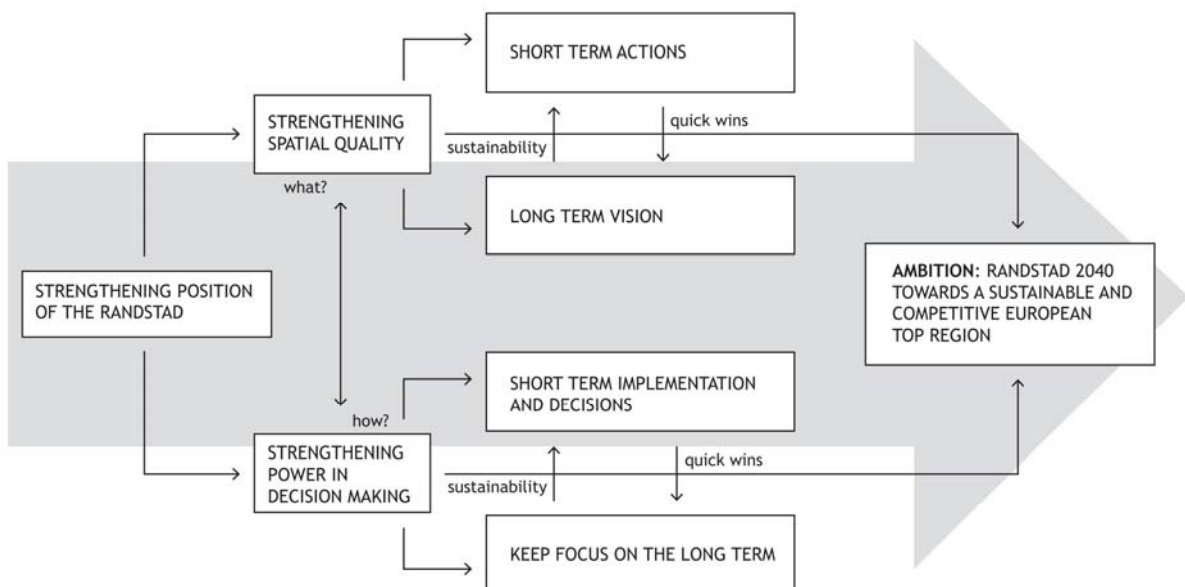
By intertwining R2040 and UPR the content is consolidated for the short and long term, and in this way, the short-term (spatial) decisions on the Randstad can be done in a sustainable way, based on a long-term vision. But the difference in time frame can also be a threat to the sustainable development of the Randstad because the different government layers change every four years and therefore policy accents or even worse the vision on spatial strategy can change. For sustainable development is, next to the content, also enforcement of implementation – especially on short-term projects – and reliability of decision-making - also on the long term - is needed.

Enforcement in decision-making is the main goal of the UPR. The working method also secures commitment of other governments by signing contracts on the different projects. This is also positive on the reliability on short-term decisions of the government. But long term governmental choices and the abstracted decisions still are not guaranteed because of the political term of four years. One of the solutions is to make the future urgent by keeping (future) trends and their consequences on the agenda and base directional decisions on these trends. This is done for the long term by the R2040. In this agenda trends and the consequences are made visible.

In the following process towards the long-term vision, choices have to be made on the seven mentioned themes in R2040. But the choices must be made spatially specific and therefore we advise to translate the themes into spatial 'interventions'. The interventions are the spatial translations of the goals on which the national government will focus. These interventions can be concretized by connecting projects in different terms (in steps from short term to long term) to the interventions, with which the goal of the spatial intervention can be reached. One example of an intervention with its projects could be the development of a metropolitan park system in the Randstad. This is a new spatial concept, which gives direction to the choice on 'Green-blue structure as a framework for urbanisation'. In this framework the UPR project 'Beautiful and Vital Delfland' can be marked as a quick win project towards a metropolitan park system mentioned in R2040.

In this way, the interrelationship between the Randstad Urgency Programme (UPR) and the national strategic vision process 'Randstad 2040' (R2040) in both content and governance can be of great value in positioning the Randstad internationally, and developing the Randstad towards a sustainable and competitive European top region. It can give focus, flexibility, transparency, and will make the role of the national government in this development clear.

In this concluding scheme we try to explain the interrelationships between the content and governance and the short term and long term for strengthening the qualities of the Randstad and for a better economic international position. We consider this scheme as the basis for a new spatial development framework in The Netherlands.



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9. Teisman (1998) en Kickert (1997)
10. Kickert (1997) p. 44
11. The National Spatial Strategy will only be successful if all spatially-relevant policies form a coherent whole. Spatially-relevant policies in the Agenda for a Living Countryside (*Agenda Vitaa! Platteland*), the Mobility Policy (*Nota Mobiliteit*) and the Peaks in the Delta Regional Economic Perspectives (*Pieken in de Delta. Gebiedsgerichte Economische Perspectieven*) support the National Spatial Strategy and are based on the same governance model.
12. Development Planning is a method that makes the *implementation* of spatial plans, visions and projects the central consideration. Features of development planning are:
  - adopting an area-dedicated approach that improves spatial quality in the entire area. The area could be a restructured residential district, a major conurbation or rural community, for example;
  - co-operating and agreeing firm arrangements with stakeholders;
  - carrying out various projects cohesively, by such means as an implementation programme or 'projects envelope'

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