



Ministry of Infrastructure and the
Environment

Summary National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning

Making the Netherlands competitive,
accessible, liveable and safe



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Comprehensive vision

Making the Netherlands competitive, accessible, liveable and safe. This is what central government wants to achieve, taking a robust approach designed to achieve an outstanding international business climate, allow scope for tailored regional solutions, put users first, clearly prioritise investment and link spatial developments and infrastructure. It will work towards this goal alongside other authorities, taking a European and global view, on the basis of a philosophy based on trust, clearly defined responsibilities, simple rules and selective government involvement, to create scope for tailored solutions and freedom of choice for individuals and companies.

This new approach will require an update of spatial planning and mobility policy. The various policy documents on these two areas have become dated as new political priorities have emerged and circumstances have changed, nationally and internationally, in the face of the economic crisis, climate change and growing differences between regions which are due partly to growth, stagnation and contraction all occurring simultaneously.

Changing tack

For a strategy that makes the Netherlands competitive, accessible, liveable and safe, we need to change tack in our policy on spatial planning and mobility. Excessive layers of government, complex regulations and compartmentalisation are all too common, and they have a detrimental effect on the development of the Netherlands. Central government intends to bring spatial planning decision-making closer to the stakeholders (individuals and companies), delegating more to local and provincial authorities (decentralisation as the first option), and focusing more on users. Central government policy will be applied more selectively, focusing on 13 national interests for which central government will take responsibility and ensure it achieves results.

Outside these 13 national interests, local and regional authorities will be able to make their own policy decisions, although they will be expected to contribute to simplifying and integrating spatial planning regulations. This will remove excessive layers of government and create scope for customised regional solutions.

Responsibility for balancing urban and green space development at regional level will be left to the provincial authorities. To this end, central government will abolish national landscape policy and reduce the number of nature management regimes. It will strengthen the cohesion between the various modes of transport and between spatial development and mobility. The introduction of a new accessibility indicator will allow more regionally tailored solutions.

The municipal and interlocal coordination and implementation of urbanisation plans will be left to local authorities working independently or in collaboration within provincial frameworks. Central government will no longer dictate the course of urban planning, for instance by prescribing percentages of built land in inner city areas, or defining National Buffer Zones and objectives for restructuring. Only in the urban regions around major transport hubs and ports (Noordvleugel and Zuidvleugel) will central government agree the programming of urbanisation with local and regional authorities. To promote the careful use of space, central government will include a procedure to guide sustainable urbanisation in the Spatial Planning Decree (Bro). The broad-purpose grant for transport policy will also be transferred to the general funds.

Based on trust; new roles

Trust in other authorities will form the basis for redefining responsibilities, regulations and central government involvement. With their regional knowledge and partnerships, local and provincial authorities are well equipped to meet the challenges comprehensively and effectively, delivering high-quality solutions. Provincial, local and water authorities have enough instruments at their disposal to take up this role. Central government will help them take up their new roles and responsibilities.

Central government will remain responsible for the spatial planning system. It may also have to assume responsibility when:

- an issue entails benefits or drawbacks for the country as a whole, and it is beyond the powers of local and provincial authorities to override the authority of other parties. This might include space for military activities and challenges in urban regions associated with the mainports, brainport, greenports and valleys;
- international obligations or agreements apply, for example on matters of biodiversity, sustainable energy, water system remediation or world heritage;
- an issue transcends provincial or national boundaries and there is either a risk of administrative deadlock or responsibility is in the hands of central government. Examples include the main road, water, rail and energy supply networks, and also the protection of public health.

These three criteria are leading when formulating central government spatial policy.

2040: developments and ambitions

Ambition to be competitive, accessible, liveable and safe

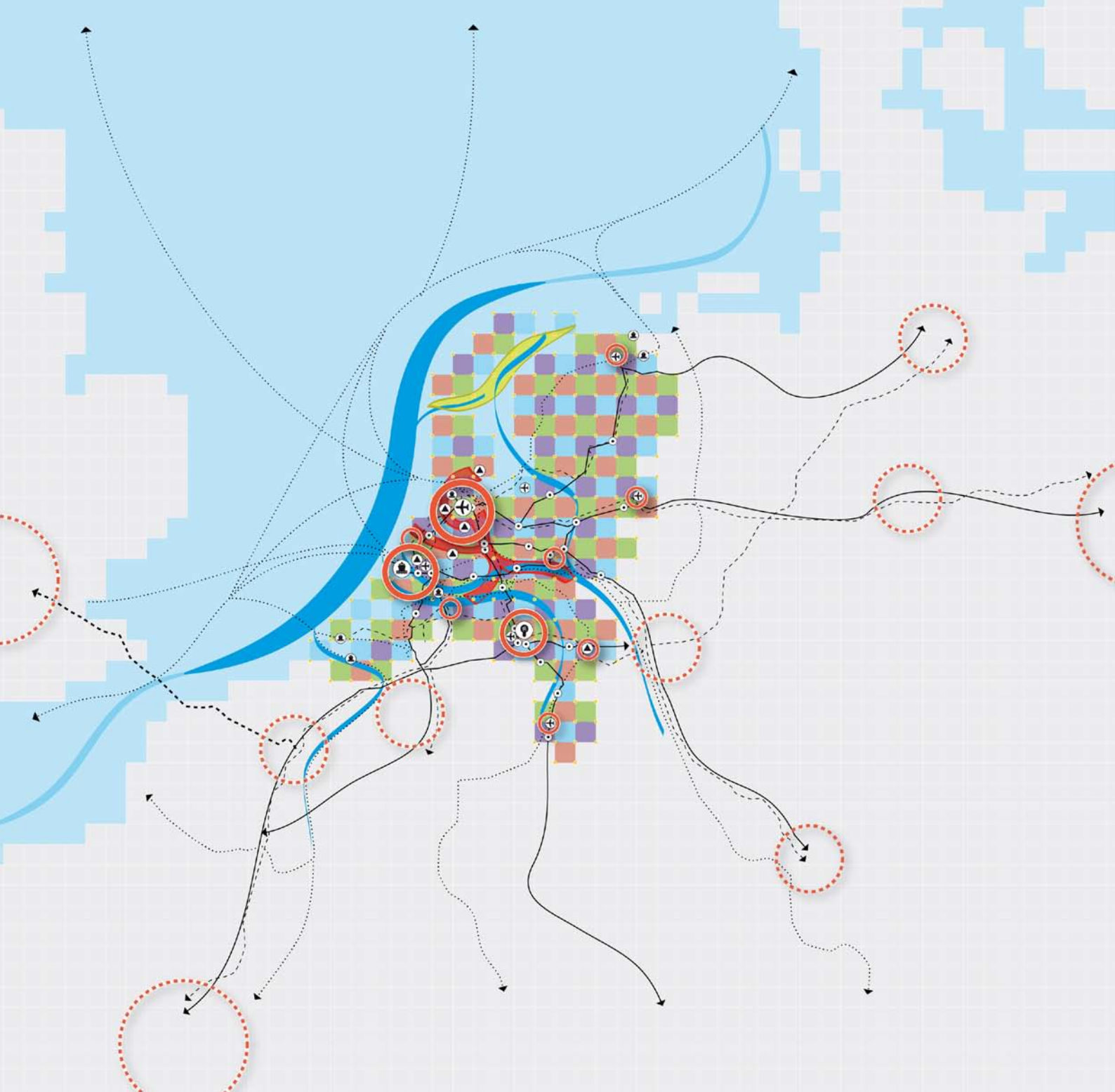
Central government has a vision of the Netherlands in 2040, with clear ambitions, based on national and international developments, above ground and below, that will determine the challenges for spatial planning and mobility in the run-up to that date. The aim of central government is to ensure that our country remains safe, competitive and accessible, and a good place to live.

Competitiveness

Economic development in the Netherlands is concentrated increasingly in urban regions. These not only have the largest number of companies and economic sectors and the greatest labour potential, but they are also centres for research and education. Dutch urban regions are characterised by their open structure and, compared to their international counterparts, their relatively small size and low density, and their interaction with and easy access to countryside with high cultural-historical and landscape value.

These urban regions are home to the Netherlands' key innovative economic sectors that lead the field at European and global level: water, agri-food, horticulture and source materials, high-tech systems and materials, life sciences and health, chemicals, energy, logistics and the creative industry. The Netherlands' position is further strengthened by the fact that several international companies have their head offices here. Finally, the mainports of Rotterdam and Schiphol, the port of Amsterdam and the Southeast Netherlands brainport are major hubs in international transport networks.

Our ambition is for the Netherlands to be among the top ten most competitive economies in the world by 2040, with a first-class climate for companies and knowledge workers thanks to its excellent spatial and economic infrastructure. To this end, we must ensure that the Netherlands is an attractive base for international companies and create conditions for economic development aimed at increasing competitiveness. This will call for robust urban regions with a good quality of life and optimum international accessibility.







Ambition for 2040




Competitive

-  Urban region with a concentration of key sectors
-  Mainport Schiphol
-  Mainport Rotterdam
-  Brainport Southeast Netherlands
-  Greenport
-  Other civilian airport of national importance
-  Other seaport of national importance
-  Economic hubs in other countries
-  Robust energy supply network

Accessible

-  Main road
-  Railway
-  Waterway
-  Multimodal hubs and co-modality

Liveable and safe

-  Safe and healthy environment for people and business, a reliable drinking water supply, protection of biodiversity and energy transition
-  Flood protection
-  World heritage

Accessibility

Individual mobility (by car and public transport) and freight transport will continue to grow over the coming decades, particularly in urban regions and on major routes to Germany and Belgium. This will also mean continued growth in mobility even in regions where the population is shrinking. The demand for mobility will grow most markedly in areas which are currently experiencing the greatest mobility problems.

Accessibility (in terms of the effort, expressed in time and costs per kilometre, that users have to make to travel from door to door) is currently inadequate. A robust and comprehensive mobility system will feature multimodal hubs, offer more choice and have sufficient capacity to deal with projected increases in mobility in the medium (2028) and longer term (2040).

User-driven growth in mobility will be facilitated. Here, too, we must adopt a comprehensive approach that will enable us to tackle increasing mobility with spatial development. Our ambition is for users to enjoy optimum co-modality by 2040, with good connections between the various networks via multimodal hubs (for passengers and freight), and close coordination of infrastructure and spatial development.

Liveability and safety

Urbanisation, individualisation, demographic ageing and the loss of green space are causing greater differentiation in spatial development at regional level. Growth, stagnation and decline may occur simultaneously, in different regions. Increasing regional differences impact on urbanisation processes. Supply and demand on the housing and commercial property markets are not always in equilibrium (in either quantitative or qualitative terms). The aim for 2040 is for housing and work premises in towns, cities and villages to cater for demand (in terms of quality) and for as many existing locations as possible to be used for transformation and restructuring projects.

To ensure our country remains attractive we must cherish and enhance those qualities that make us unique and distinguish us from other countries. This means we must safeguard our natural habitats and biodiversity, our unique cultural heritage values and environmental quality. Our ambition for 2040 in terms of liveability and safety is for the Netherlands to offer its inhabitants a safe and healthy living environment with good environmental quality, in both urban and rural areas. By 2040, the Netherlands should also be permanently protected from the effects of extreme weather and the threat of flooding as a result of sea level rise, with an adequate freshwater supply for dry periods. It should also be a key player in the international transition to sustainable mobility, while retaining its current nationally and internationally unique cultural heritage, as well as a network of nature conservation areas to protect its flora and fauna.

Demand for gas and electricity will continue to grow. Geopolitical relations, the exhaustion of fossil fuel resources and our ambition to reduce carbon dioxide emissions mean there will have to be a transition to sustainable, renewable energy, like wind, solar, biomass and geothermal energy, which all take a lot of space. Sufficient space will therefore have to be reserved for the generation and transport of energy (both within and across our borders) and for onshore and offshore electricity production and (international) high-voltage power lines.

The aim for 2040 is for the Netherlands to have a robust international energy supply network, and for our energy transition to be well underway.

Central government has defined these ambitions for 2040. But it is not only up to central government to make them a reality. This will also require the collaboration of local and regional authorities, the private sector and knowledge institutes. Central government has defined three goals on the basis of its ambitions. They have been set for 2028, but a certain degree of flexibility up to 2040 has been built in, since developments and challenges may arise that require some adjustment to both our ambitions and our goals.

Central government goals and national interests

Central government has chosen three goals designed to keep the Netherlands competitive, accessible, liveable and safe in the medium term (2028):

- enhance the Netherlands' competitiveness by strengthening its spatial and economic infrastructure;
- improving and securing space for accessibility;
- guarantee a safe environment in which it is pleasant to live, and in which unique natural and cultural heritage values are preserved.

The planned bid for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games is in line with the goal of enhancing the Netherlands' competitiveness.

Central government has also defined 13 national interests for which it takes responsibility and on which it intends to achieve results. These interests are equal in importance, and impact on each other. This National Policy Strategy represents a first balancing of these interests. Central government will also have to consider these interests in individual projects or regions and, if necessary, specify which national interests take precedence. The relationship between regional and local interests and regional policy challenges will also be addressed in the Multi-year Programme for Infrastructure and Transport (MIRT).

Enhancing the Netherlands' competitiveness

For the Netherlands to be competitive, it is important that international companies remain here and that more companies, entrepreneurs and international knowledge workers are attracted to the country. This means providing the right climate, in terms not only of high quality transport networks, and space to work and live (including a differentiated housing supply, good public transport in urban regions and multi-modal networks for the logistics sector), but also of good educational provision, culture, green space and recreational facilities. All these aspects together create a good quality of life.

The government has chosen to focus on strengthening the spatial and economic infrastructure. This means using to the full and enhancing the strengths of the urban regions with a concentration of key sectors, international connections and mainports. It will also mean providing space for existing and new energy production facilities and for pipelines carrying dangerous substances, and ensuring efficient use of the subsurface.

Creating an outstanding spatial-economic structure through an attractive business climate in and good international accessibility to urban regions where key sectors are concentrated.

Though companies in the key sectors are found throughout the Netherlands, they are concentrated mainly in the urban regions around the mainports, brainport, greenports and valleys, specifically the Port of Rotterdam and Schiphol airport; the Southeast Netherlands Brainport; the Greenports in Venlo, Westland-Oostland, Aalsmeer, northern North Holland, Boskoop and the Bulb Region; the 'Energy Port' in Groningen; 'Food Valley' in Wageningen, 'Health Valley' in Nijmegen and 'Maintenance Valley' in western and central Brabant; Utrecht Science Park and the universities in Twente and Delft for nanotechnology. Central government regards these urban regions as nationally important, and is joining forces with local and regional authorities to strengthen them. Each authority will further this endeavour on the basis of its own responsibilities.

Under a national programme designed to promote better use of the infrastructure to reduce congestion, three levels of government have set to work to develop regional packages for a number of these regions. In accordance with the coalition agreement, central government will prioritise accessibility problems in the mainports, brainport and greenports (including connections to the hinterland) under an extended Infrastructure Fund post-2020. Should there be such strong economic development related to the top sectors in regions other than the currently identified mainports, brainport and greenports that it is crucial for the competitiveness of the Dutch economy as a whole to invest in measures to tackle regional bottlenecks in spatial planning or transport infrastructure, the government may consult the region in the framework of the MIRT as to whether additional investment is feasible or necessary. Central government will continue to foster regional developments of national importance.

An attractive business climate in urban regions with a concentration of key sectors will require a sufficient stock of good-quality housing, commercial sites, offices and other facilities. Given the complexity of the urbanisation challenges in the regions around the mainports (Noordvleugel and Zuidvleugel), the urbanisation programmes will be agreed jointly by central government and local and regional authorities.

Space for the main (sustainable) energy supply network and the energy transition

Energy security is an important economic good. The further integration of the European energy market will mean greater reliance on international connections, and may require that our electricity grid be expanded. Central government will specify routes for power lines (from 220 kilovolts) and sites for power generation (from 500 megawatts), and ensure they are incorporated into the grid.

Central government will initiate a transition to a sustainable, renewable energy supply, and will make the electricity infrastructure suitable for more decentralised power generation in the longer term. Central government and the provincial authorities will plan space for more onshore wind farms, so that at least 6,000 MW is generated by this method in 2020. Potential sites for large-scale wind farms are identified in the SVIR, and these will ultimately be designated by central government and the provincial authorities. Central government will also ensure space is reserved to generate 6,000 MW offshore in the longer term. In 2015, the government will review whether the expansion of new offshore power production will require new spatial planning policy and infrastructure post-2020.

Space for the main pipeline network for the transport of hazardous and other substances

The network of pipelines for transporting hazardous and other substances is economically important to the Netherlands on a European scale. It includes gas transport and links between production sites.

Central government will reserve space so that it will stay possible for these pipelines to be laid on land and offshore (including in the Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone), prevent any disruption and ensure good connections with the international network. Pipelines on land which are of national importance for the transport of dangerous substances will only be allowed in specially designated zones.

Efficient use of the subsurface

Several national interests are at play in the subsurface. It plays an important role in energy supply today (extraction, storage and transport of oil and gas) and in the future (geothermal energy, including underground thermal energy storage) and in the storage of CO₂ and nuclear waste. Other factors to take into account include the extraction of mineral resources (such as salt, coal and sand), archaeology (such as the former Roman border the Limes, which is part of our cultural heritage), national underground infrastructure (tunnels and pipelines), management of fixed soil contamination (or the remnants thereof), and protection of the supply and quality of groundwater.

The various uses of the subsurface impact on each other and on uses above ground. Without regulation, individual functions of the subsurface would soon become inefficient. Given the limited space available in the subsurface, its significance for the economy and the need to coordinate with activities above ground, efficient use of the subsurface is a matter of national importance.

Improving and securing space for accessibility

Central government will put users (both passengers and freight carriers) first in the Netherlands' transport system. Central government aims to work together with regional and local authorities to develop a robust and coherent mobility system that uses all available modalities in order to guarantee good accessibility. As regional and national mobility systems are closely intertwined, good connections between them are important.

Central government plans to achieve such a robust system by reinforcing each mode of transport (roads, public transport, waterways) in response to demand and ensuring better connections between them (aiming for co-modality and multimodal hubs). This will also include better coordination with spatial developments. Door-to-door accessibility will be the key. However, central government does not see more infrastructure as the only means to increase capacity. It will also seek to influence demand for mobility.

To improve accessibility, central government will combine smart investment, innovation and maintenance. Investment in bottlenecks will be strategic – tackling accessibility problems where this would have the most economic value. Innovative solutions will make the mobility system more sustainable and its use more efficient. Good management and maintenance of the main mobility networks are the basis of a robust and coherent system.

If the Netherlands is to remain liveable, cope with diminishing supplies of fossil fuels and achieve its CO₂ reduction commitment, it needs to make progress in the transition to sustainable mobility. The government's letter to the House of Representatives on climate policy in the run-up to 2050 (climate memorandum) describes the transition to a low-carbon economy and the development of cleaner, quieter, safer, low-energy vehicles. It is up to the private sector to initiate this transition. Central government will provide the enabling conditions.

The accessibility indicator will assess and provide insight into the standard of accessibility enjoyed by users across all modalities (covering the entire transport system), in combination with economic and spatial developments. It will be used in conjunction with the accessibility goals for each individual modality as described in current government policy. It will be completed by mid-2012 for use in projects and regional studies.

A robust main road, rail and waterway network around and between the most important urban regions, including connections with the hinterland

Central government will prioritise investments from the Infrastructure Fund (2021-2028) to improve the standard of accessibility in urban regions around the mainports, brainport and greenports and their connections with the hinterland (partly on the basis of the accessibility indicator and the results of the National Market and Capacity Analysis).

Investments must be 'smart': spread across modalities, based not only on traffic engineering principles, but also on the needs of users and the spatial and economic functioning of the regions and of the country as a whole.

On the roads, through traffic and local traffic will be separated as far as possible to improve flow. On the main trunk routes outside the Randstad conurbation where congestion is a structural problem, three-lane carriageways will become the norm. In the Randstad, four-lane carriageways will be the norm. Central government will ensure any infrastructural improvements comply with the statutory requirements (in terms of noise, for example). In the amended Spatial Planning (General Rules) Decree (Barro) and its accompanying ministerial order, land will be reserved for expanding the transport system in the future in accordance with the stated ambitions without incurring unnecessarily high costs.

From 2020 rail passengers will no longer need to use a timetable between major destinations. On the busiest routes, there will be six intercity and six stopping services an hour. The rail infrastructure will be simplified, thus increasing the reliability of services.

Better use of the capacity of the main road and waterway networks

While investment is necessary in many parts of the mobility system, the capacity of the main roads, railways and waterways could also be improved through innovative measures, resulting in more reliable journey times. To this end, central government will launch a programme setting out a whole range of measures such as longer opening times for rush-hour lanes, the introduction of intelligent transport systems, arrangements with employers to reduce commuter traffic and expansion of bicycle parking capacity at railway stations. Central government, local and regional authorities and industry have set out detailed measures in eight regional packages. Users should notice the benefits by 2015. The packages of measures will include mutually agreed targets.

Central government intends to work with local and regional authorities to set up public transport systems based on users' needs, so that different systems (train, bus, tram, underground rail) and transport to and from hubs connect up better. Easily accessible and comprehensive real-time travel information is essential. Central government has a responsibility, in collaboration with local and regional authorities and the private sector, to foster strong multimodal hubs by, for example, helping to create and improve P+R facilities, increasing the number of stations serviced by high-speed trains and contributing to measures to tackle logistical bottlenecks.

The logistics key sector is working on a vision of a core network of national and international connections and multimodal hubs. The international core network will include the main hinterland connections for goods from the mainports, brainport and greenports. Central government is working with the logistics sector and local and regional authorities on the national section of this international network, which should lead to a single logistics system (by rail, water and road) that is well connected to neighbouring countries.

Inland navigation is an important alternative mode of transport that helps reduce traffic on our busy roads. Vessels must be able to travel as efficiently and reliably as possible. We are therefore working to reduce the maximum waiting time at locks on the main national waterway network to 30 minutes.

Maintain the main road, rail and waterway networks to ensure the mobility system functions effectively

The road, public transport and waterway infrastructure in the Netherlands is among the busiest in the world. The country is highly dependent on this infrastructure and it is vital that it functions properly. Good management and maintenance of the existing national infrastructure is an essential prerequisite for a robust mobility system and a flourishing economy. This includes the maintenance, replacement or renovation of infrastructure and the simplification of timetables and the main railway infrastructure to enhance reliability.

Sea ports of national importance for freight transport are Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Terneuzen, Vlissingen, Delfzijl, Eemshaven and Moerdijk. The capacity of the main waterways will be enlarged to cope with increasing national and international movements from and to mainports and greenports without loss in quality.

Airports of national importance for national and international civilian aviation are Schiphol, Rotterdam, Lelystad, Eelde, Maastricht, Eindhoven (military air base with civilian use) and Twente. To ensure sufficient capacity and guarantee air safety, the air traffic infrastructure will need to expand (including a new runway running parallel to the Kaagbaan). For Schiphol, this will mean amending the Airport Zoning Decree and the 20 Ke zone.

Safeguarding the quality of the living environment

A safe, healthy environment for both people and business requires good environmental quality, flood protection and a reliable drinking water supply, protection of our cultural heritage and unique natural values, and sites allocated to national defence.

Improve environmental quality (air, soil, water) and provide protection from noise pollution and external safety risks

Good environmental quality means that the quality of the soil, water and air must at least comply with national and international standards. People's health must be protected from negative influences like noise pollution. In principle, the same level of protection should apply to all parts of the country, but area-specific solutions may sometimes be more appropriate. The government will strive to improve the quality of the living environment by tackling pollution at the source.

Central government and the water authorities are responsible for protecting and improving water quality by means of physical measures, a system of environmental licensing and enforcement. Air quality, noise pollution, flooding, water quality, soil quality and the transport of hazardous substances are all closely connected with other national interests. To prevent future costs and harm to society, the environmental impacts of spatial and infrastructural developments must be taken into account.

Room for flood protection, sustainable drinking water supply and frameworks for climate-ready urban development and redevelopment

Central government is responsible for the integrated management of the main water system and, along with the water authorities, for protecting the Netherlands from flooding. Spatial plans, including plans for urban and brownfield development, should comply with short and long-term water management requirements.

The main water system comprises the North Sea, Wadden Sea, the lakes IJsselmeer, Markermeer and Randmeren, the major rivers, the southwest Delta region and major canals.

Because the national water system is part of four international river basins (Rhine, Maas, Ems and Scheldt), international frameworks and standards must be defined and management measures taken at national and international level to safeguard both the quantity and quality of our water supply. This will prevent

pollution or peak loads in a river catchment from causing problems downstream. The main water system is the main source of the Netherlands' freshwater supply. The government may anticipate or respond to droughts by putting the National List of Priorities into operation.

Water system management is based on the principle of 'going with the natural flow' where possible and putting up defences where necessary. The primary pillar of flood protection policy is prevention, but it is equally important to restrict the impact of a flood through careful spatial planning decisions and disaster management plans, which must be kept up to date (multiple layers of safety).

Central government protects the primary flood defences (dikes, dams, hydraulic structures and dunes) that are under its management, and the coastal foundation. National standards for primary flood defences also apply to those that are managed by the water authorities.

Within the national Delta Plan, the authorities work together under the leadership of the Delta Programme Commissioner to produce a comprehensive package of measures, both water-related and spatial, guaranteeing flood protection and securing drinking water supplies in the short and long term, in conjunction with spatial developments.

Room to preserve and strengthen nationally and internationally unique cultural heritage and natural values

Landscape and cultural heritage values define a region's identity. Culture and cultural heritage also play an increasingly important role in keeping the Netherlands attractive and competitive. Central government is responsible for UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Netherlands (including the Tentative List), as well as for urban and village conservation areas, scheduled national monuments and historic buildings and heritage values in or on the seafloor.

Central government will leave it to the provincial authorities to coordinate landscape and urban development, in order to leave more scope for tailored regional solutions. As such, policy on the terrestrial landscape will no longer be a central government responsibility.

The landscape, natural and cultural heritage values in the North Sea, IJsselmeer and Wadden Sea remain a national interest, since central government is the sole competent authority there. An important criterion for the quality of the seascape on the North Sea is an unrestricted view to the horizon, i.e. to 12 nautical miles from the coast.

Room for a national network of wildlife habitats to aid the survival and development of flora and fauna

From a spatial planning perspective, two factors are essential to the long-term survival and development of flora and fauna: habitat preservation and the opportunity to move from one to another. The Netherlands has undertaken international commitments in agreements on species (flora and fauna) and habitats, in the form of the Biodiversity Convention and the European Birds and Habitats Directives (Natura 2000).

Central government is responsible for and answerable to the EU for compliance with the obligations it has undertaken. The provincial authorities define, protect and maintain a network of nature areas – within a framework established by central government – providing appropriate spatial, hydrological and environmental conditions for characteristic ecosystems of national and international importance. This network, which transcends provincial and national boundaries, is the revised National Ecological Network (EHS). The protection of nature areas in the EHS will be continued under a 'qualified no' regime. New projects, plans and actions that have a significant negative impact on the essential features and values of the EHS will not be permitted within the network unless they are manifestly in the public interest and there are no realistic alternatives. This flexibility already existed in the original EHS and will be continued.

Room for military sites and activities

Sites for military activities (naval bases, barracks, military airfields, training grounds and firing ranges, low-fly zones, helicopter low-fly zones, transmitters/receivers, radar stations and ammunition depots, as well as the restricted access zones around them) are a national responsibility. Activities at these locations sometimes impose restrictions on other spatial functions, and they must therefore be sited with due care.

A new method of assessing radar disturbance will allow more scope for wind turbines and high-rise buildings in the future.

Careful balancing and transparent decision-making in all spatial and infrastructural decisions

Central government is responsible for a good system of spatial planning, including careful, transparent spatial and infrastructural decision-making.

The system should be designed so that comprehensive planning and decision-making can take place at every level, and both current and future interests can be carefully considered. Utility value, future value and amenity value are all part of this. Interests may conflict or reinforce each other. In any event, plans for new development, infrastructure and restructuring should always address the impact on water management, the environment and the cultural heritage. For national infrastructural and area development projects, central government will use the 'Quicker and Better' procedure, which emphasises participation and representation of public and commercial interests in decision-making.

Demand-driven programming and urban development by provincial and local authorities and the private sector are necessary to facilitate growth, keep ahead of stagnation and maintain liveability in regions with diminishing populations. The available space should be used efficiently and excessive programming avoided. To achieve these aims, the Spatial Planning Decree (BRO) introduces a sustainable urbanisation procedure.

The **sustainable urbanisation procedure** has three 'steps':

1. The authorities concerned assess whether the intended development meets a regional, interlocal demand for industrial sites, offices, residential buildings, retail developments or other urban amenities that has not been met elsewhere. Besides a quantitative assessment (number of hectares, or number of homes), there must also be qualitative demand (e.g. an industrial site where a heavier environmental burden is permitted, or a specific type of living environment) at a regional scale. The appropriate regional scale is determined mainly by commuter traffic.
2. If the intended development meets a regional, interlocal need, the authorities concerned will assess whether it can be met in an urban area by restructuring or transforming existing locations.
3. If restructuring or transformation in an existing urban area offers insufficient potential for the regional, interlocal need to be met, the authorities concerned will assess whether it can be achieved in such a way that it can be accessed appropriately by multiple modes of transport.

In addition, a good design and online access to good spatial information also facilitate balanced considerations at the planning stage. In accordance with its responsibility for a good spatial planning system, central government will support regional and local authorities by providing knowledge, conducting experiments and developing alternative forms of financing and income generation.

In keeping with the Elverding Committee's recommendations, the government will put in place a straightforward, coherent body of legislation covering spatial planning, infrastructure, water, housing, the environment, nature, agriculture, archaeology and monuments.

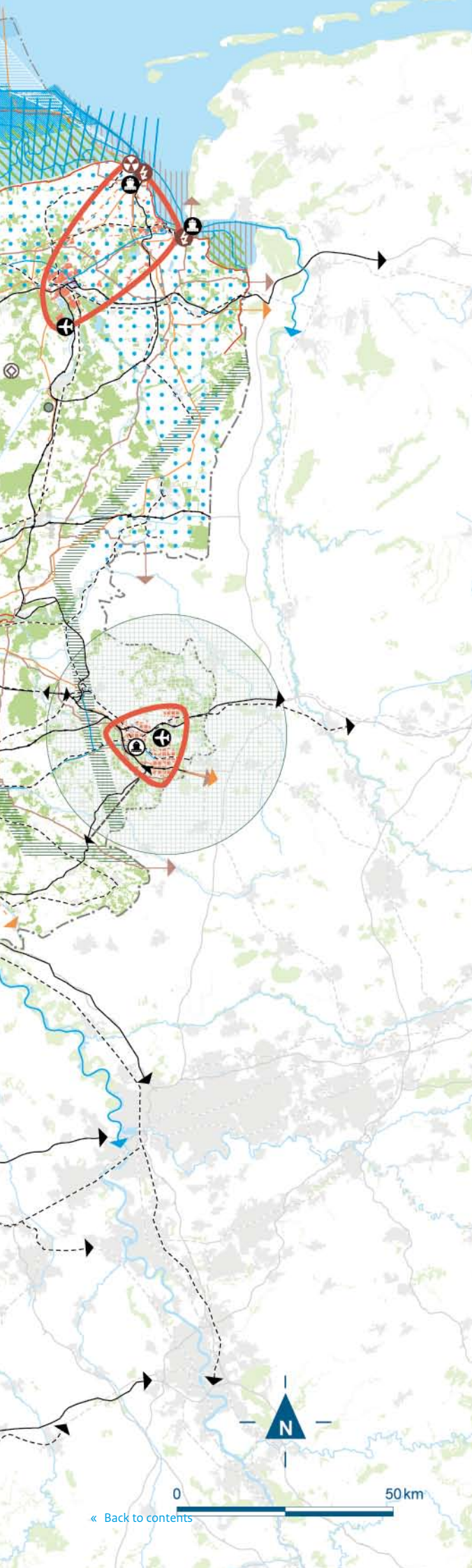
National Spatial Structure

The National Spatial Structure (see maps on following pages) illustrates in geographical terms the matters of national interest for which central government is responsible. The map sets out roughly which areas and structures are of national importance in view of central government's goals concerning competitiveness, accessibility, liveability and safety, thus giving a visual impression of a coherent spatial structure. To reveal how the various national challenges are connected, the National Policy Strategy sets them out for each individual MIRT region.

The North Sea is of major economic importance to the Netherlands in terms of shipping, fisheries, extraction of natural resources and generation of wind power. It is also important for naval exercises, as well as being an important wildlife habitat and a defining feature of our landscape. The map highlights spatial challenges in the North Sea region.

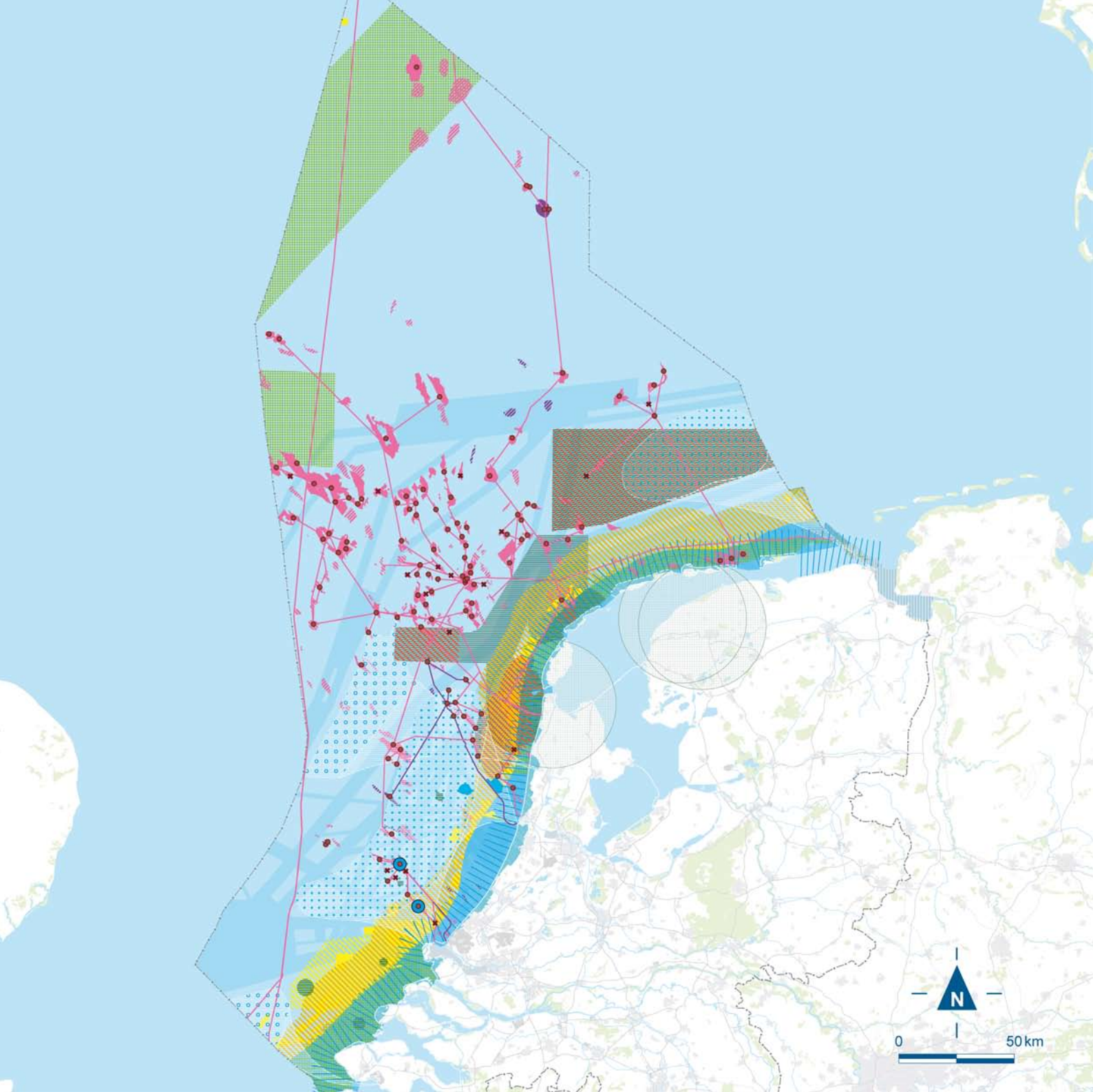
Central government is the competent authority in the Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone, and thus responsible for the integrated policy on and management of the zone. The Caribbean is of major international economic importance for shipping, fisheries, extraction of mineral resources and generation of wind power. It is also important for naval exercises, as well as being an important wildlife habitat and defining feature of the landscape (Bonaire National Marine Park and Saba Bank). A List of National Spatial Interests is being drafted for the Caribbean parts of the Netherlands (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) separately from the National Policy Strategy for use as a tool in preparing and advising on spatial plans in that region.





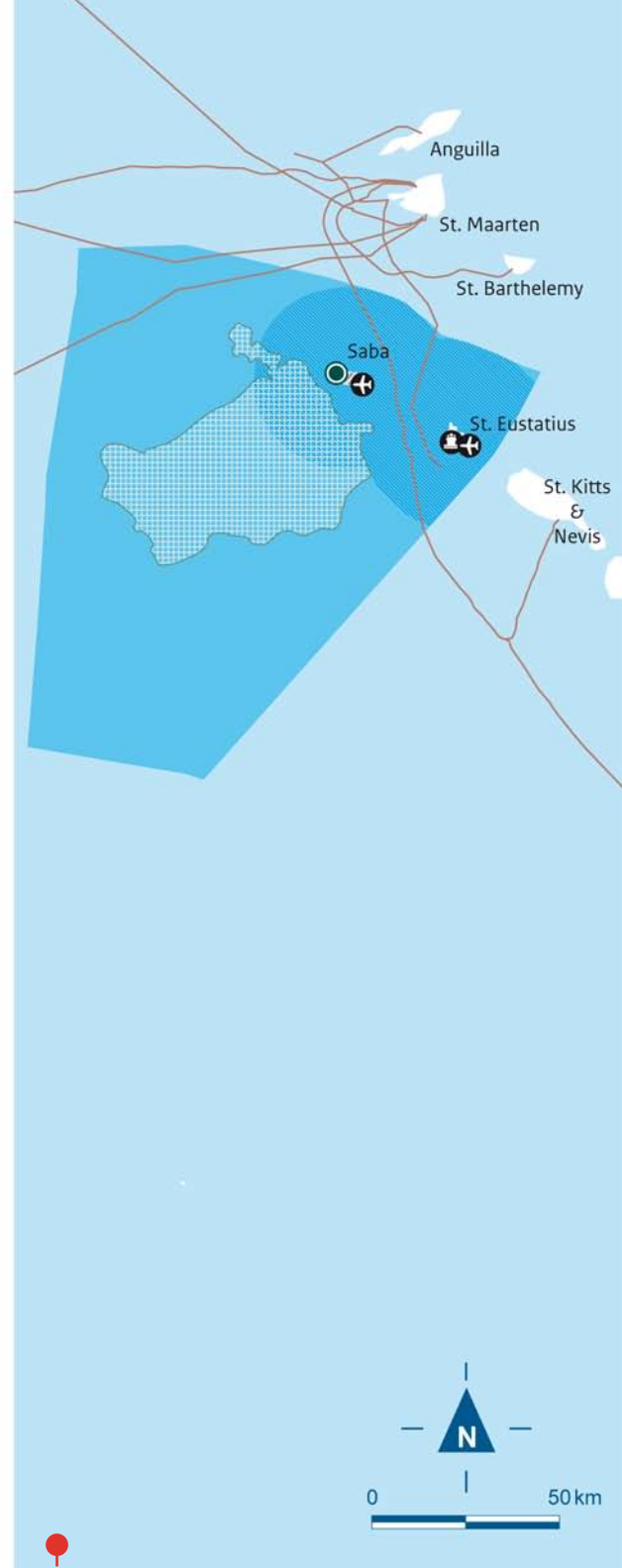
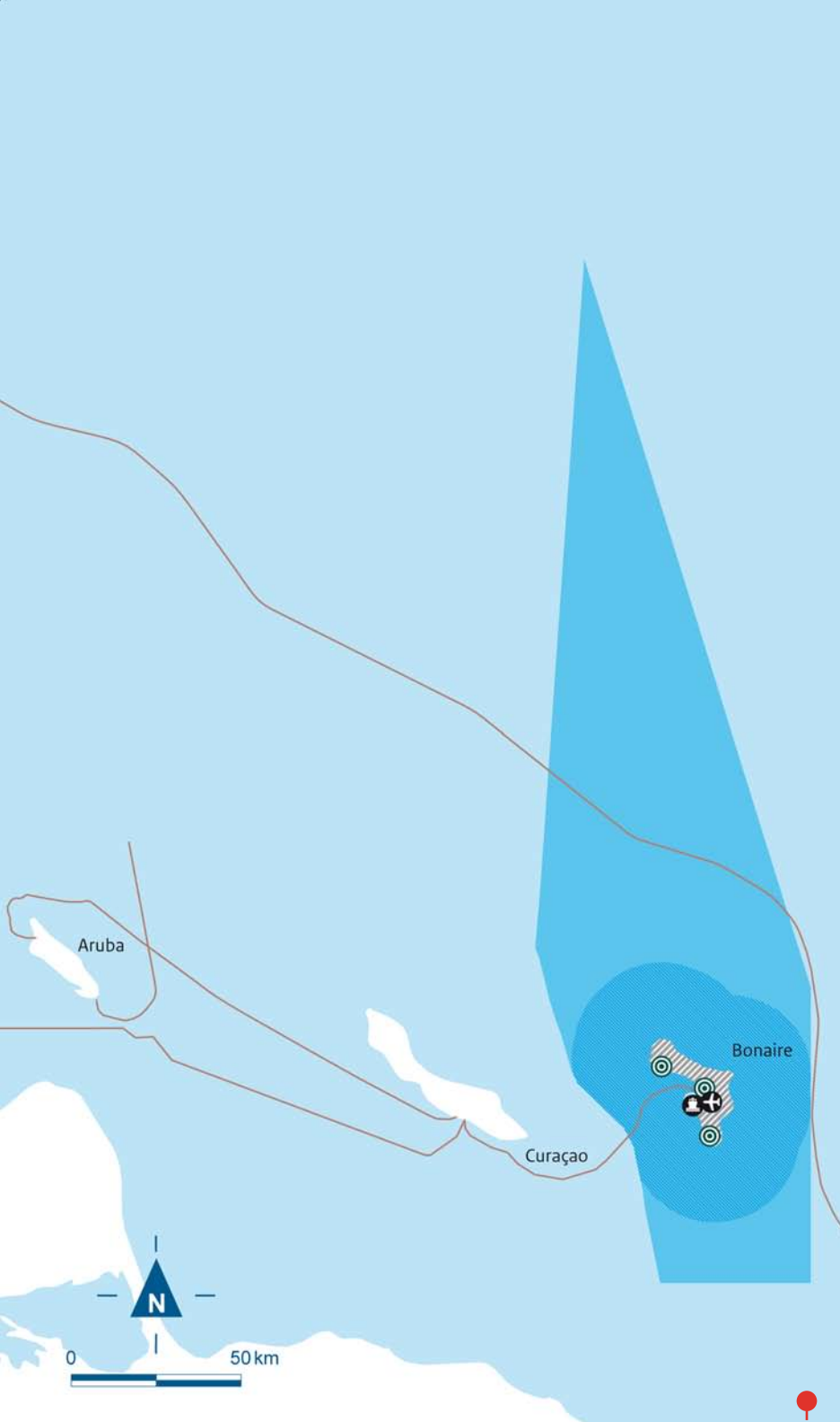
Map: National Spatial Structure

Competitive		Liveable and safe	
	Urban region with a concentration of key sectors		Main water system
	Mainport Schiphol		Management of coastal foundation
	20 Ke noise contour		Primary flood defence
	Rotterdam Mainport		Maintain unrestricted view to horizon
	Brainport Southeast Netherlands		Cultural heritage site on (tentative) World Heritage list
	Greenport		Natural heritage site on World Heritage list
	Zuidas development		Other property or site on (tentative) World Heritage list
	International city of peace and justice		Revised national ecological network on land
	(Potential) site for power plant, from 500MW		Military restricted zone
	(Potential) site for nuclear power plant		Radar activity
	High-voltage power line, from 220 kV		Military air base
	New high-voltage power line (approximate route)		Military air base with civilian use
	Pipeline zone		Naval base
	Pipeline		Major military training area and/or artillery range
	Existing offshore wind farm		
	Designated area for offshore wind farm		
	Potential area for offshore-onshore grid link		
	Area with high potential for wind power		
Accessible			
	Railway station for high-speed/international trains		
	Civilian airport of national importance		
	Seaport of national importance		
	Inland port of national importance		
	Potential route for new road on main road network (not yet established)		
	Potential route for new line on main railway network (not yet established)		
	National or international main road network		
	National or international main railway network		
	National or international main waterway network		












Map: the North Sea





Map: the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

-  Airport
-  Seaport
-  Radar station
-  Transmitters/receivers outside military areas
-  Pipeline
-  Property or site on (tentative) World Heritage list
-  Saba Bank
-  Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone
-  Territorial waters



Achieving the aims of the SVIR and safeguarding national interests

The National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning (SVIR) provides a comprehensive view of central government's current spatial planning and mobility policy. The Policy Strategy also includes a section on achieving the aims it sets out, presenting an approach for each national interest based on current and future projects. Central government has four types of instruments at its disposal:

- Frameworks (area-based or thematic elaborations of the SVIR, relevant legislation);
- Performance agreements at administrative level (e.g. with provincial and municipal authorities, international agreements with authorities in neighbouring countries);
- Financial instruments (e.g. Infrastructure Fund, Delta Fund);
- Knowledge (e.g. consult Board of Government Advisers on spatial development issues, share best practices).

The national interests identified in the SVIR are legally safeguarded by two pieces of legislation based on the Spatial Planning Act (Wro), one covering policy and the other procedures. They are:

- the Spatial Planning (General Rules) Decree (Barro), which establishes the legal frameworks for safeguarding spatial planning policy; and
- the Spatial Planning Decree (Bro). In accordance with central government's responsibility for putting in place a sound system for spatial planning, the Bro establishes legal frameworks for procedures relating to consideration of spatial planning interests and decision-making by the different tiers of government.

The Bro will be amended in 2012 to include the sustainable urbanisation procedure.

The Barro currently addresses:

- the Mainport Rotterdam Development project;
- military sites and objects;
- the Wadden Sea;
- the coast (including primary flood defences);
- the major rivers;
- the World Heritage sites.

The amended Barro, which comes into force in 2012, will also include:

- reserved land for expanding the road and railway networks;
- safety on the waterways;
- the electricity grid;
- land reclamation areas outside the dikes in IJsselmeer;
- protection of other primary flood defences;
- reserved land for the river Maas project;
- the national ecological network.

The Bro safeguards the sustainable urbanisation procedure, the procedural requirements for plans and the water management criteria, environmental concerns and our cultural heritage.

Additional information

The National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning was compiled by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment.

Relationship between the National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning and other central government spatial planning policy strategies

This National Policy Strategy gives a comprehensive overview of central government policy on spatial planning and mobility and will act as a reference frame for all new and existing government policy with spatial planning implications. It replaces the National Spatial Strategy (Nota Ruimte), the Randstad 2040 Structural Vision, the Policy Document on Mobility,¹ the Mobility Strategy and the structure scheme for the motorway environment. It also supersedes the spatial objectives and conclusions in the following documents: Key Planning Decision on the Structure Scheme for Military Sites, the landscape agenda, the Living Countryside agenda and 'Peaks in the Delta'.

Scope

The National Policy Strategy applies to the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands, both its terrestrial areas and waters (territorial zone²) and Exclusive Economic Zone. This includes the Caribbean parts of the Netherlands and the Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone. It does not include the islands of Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten (and their territorial zones). The Eems-Dollard Treaty (1960) provides the framework for the Eems-Dollard region.

The Strategic Environmental Report (SER), which examines the environmental aspects of the deliberations underlying this National Policy Strategy, was used in the decision-making. Central government used the draft National Policy Strategy as a basis for consultation with the public, civil society organisations and other authorities both in the Netherlands and abroad.

The National Policy Strategy Strategy on Infrastructure and Spatial Planning can be downloaded in its entirety at www.ruimtelijkeplannen.nl.

Monitoring

The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency will be asked to work with the Mobility Expertise Centre to carry out the Infrastructure and Spatial Planning monitor, which will replace the Spatial Policy Document monitor and will primarily investigate the extent to which national interests have been safeguarded in relation to the ambitions defined.


Regulation

Devolving decision-making to regional or local authorities is rooted in a philosophy based on trust. Central government assumes that, where legislation gives other public authorities responsibility with regard to the national interests, they will take this responsibility seriously. Accordingly, central government expects municipalities to implement the Barro provisions on zoning plans. This means it will not assess zoning plans during the development and finalisation stages to establish whether spatial matters of national importance are properly incorporated. Municipalities may ask central government to explain and, if necessary, advise on the national interests at the preparatory stage. Central government will also conduct systematic or thematic studies in retrospect to establish whether zoning plans and provincial regulations comply with national legislation, in order to determine whether the system functions as intended.

In accordance with the current system, central government will continue to represent its direct interests in zoning plans in its capacity as property manager or landowner (e.g. in its role as road and waterway management authority, or landowner of military sites).

¹ Appendix 6 of the National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning lists all the essential policy decisions from the Policy Document on Mobility (amended) that will remain in force. Under the Transport Plan Act these issues must be addressed in local and regional plans. With the inclusion of these essential policy decisions in appendix 6, this National Policy Strategy supersedes the entire Policy Document on Mobility.

² Waters from the baseline to 12 nautical miles where the Netherlands is free to make its own laws, and over which it has jurisdiction.



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