

# CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MAIN FOCUS AREAS IDENTIFIED IN ADVISORY REPORTS PUBLISHED IN THE PAST  
FOUR YEARS BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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**About the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure**

The Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Raad voor de Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur, Rli) advises the Dutch government and Parliament on strategic issues concerning the sustainable development of the living and working environment. The Council is independent, and offers solicited and unsolicited advice on long-term issues of strategic importance to the Netherlands. Through its integrated approach and strategic advice, the Council strives to provide greater depth and breadth to the political and social debate, and to improve the quality of decision-making processes.

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THIS PUBLICATION  
IN A NUTSHELL

### **What is this publication about?**

Over the past few years, the Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (hereafter also referred to as the ‘Council’) has identified five major transformations that must be implemented urgently to support sustainable development in the Netherlands. Our competitive strength must be improved, whilst simultaneously achieving climate targets and enhancing the quality of life as well as that of the living environment. The Council has also identified a number of principles that will help in realising policy objectives.

### **Which transformations are necessary in the physical living environment?**

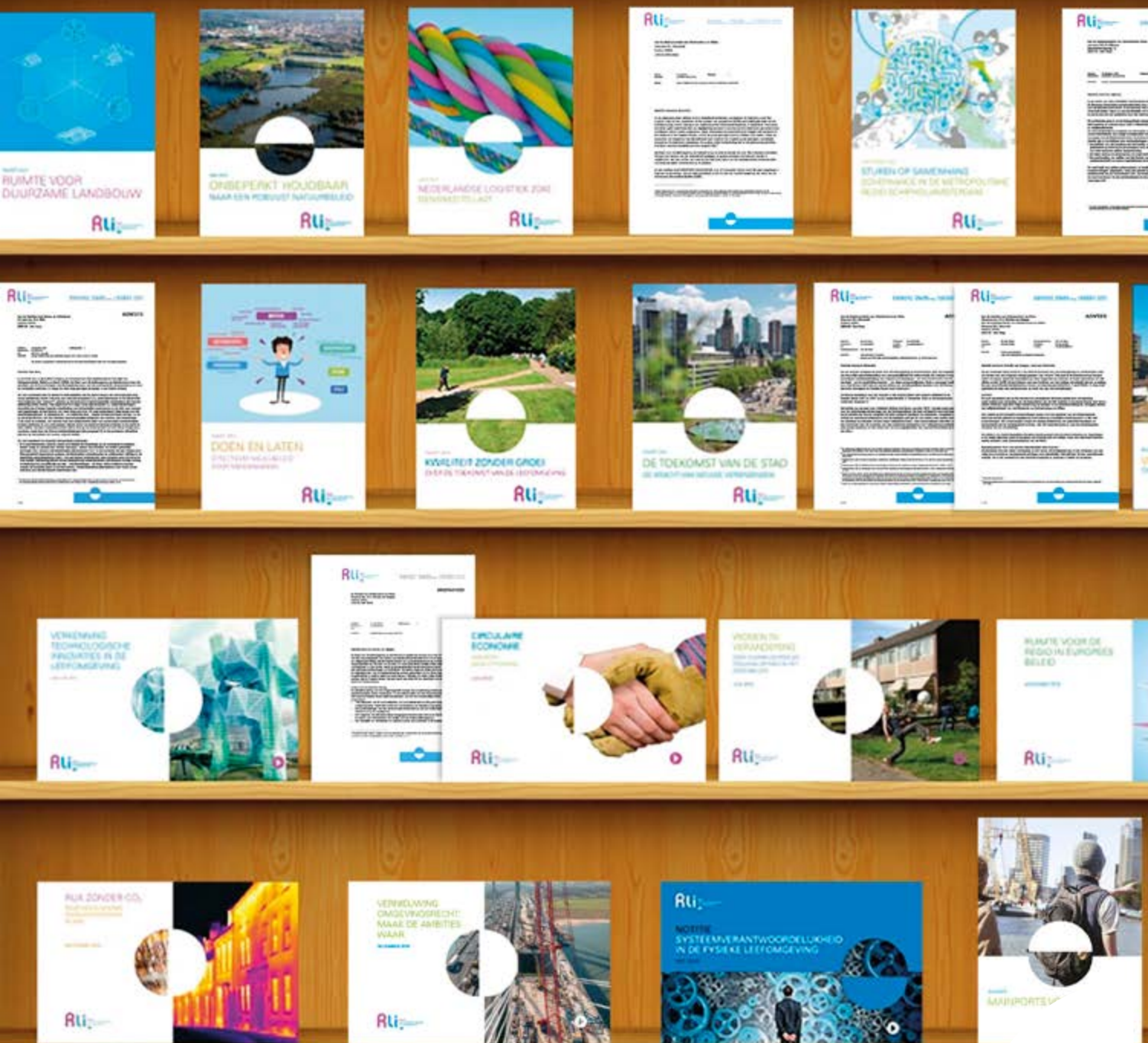
- Transition to a circular economy
- Energy transition
- Promoting the sustainable development of rural areas by making agriculture and horticulture more sustainable and creating more room for nature
- Developing the agglomeration power of urban regions
- Transforming urban real estate

### **Principles for government coordination**

Partly due to administrative decentralisation, the national government is not always the party with ultimate decision-making authority. The position of government authorities is changing, in relation to each other as well as in relation to society. This requires them to reconsider their role and handle their responsibilities differently. Adopting the following principles can contribute to this process:

- The playing field and the stakeholders must be primarily determined by the actual task or challenge at hand.
- Early dialogue and engagement with society are more important than (the illusion of) legal certainty.
- Careful transition management is essential.





# INTRODUCTION

Society and public administration are in a state of flux and are confronted with far-reaching changes that have a major impact on the policy domains which are the focus of the Council's work. Examples include climate change, migration flows, ongoing urbanisation combined with simultaneous population shrinkage, and changes in the energy supply system. At the same time, policy processes are being decentralised, and an increasing number of stakeholders are involved in political and social decision-making. In addition, continuous changes within society and ongoing technological innovations are rendering the future less and less predictable.

The government, societal stakeholders, and local and provincial authorities must take a stand in these uncertain times and address the major challenges that we face. In this context, the Council would like to draw attention in this publication to the necessary transformations that must take place in the physical living environment. This publication is not a new, separate advisory report; it reviews and combines a number of recommendations from previous reports.

### **Five necessary transformations in the physical living environment**

1. The transition to a circular economy requires a Cabinet-wide agenda, with clear objectives and tasks for the various government agencies. This development is so important that the Council has concluded that it should be regarded as a 'policy pillar' for the next few periods of office.
2. In addition, it is essential to complete the transition to a fully sustainable energy supply system. This requires a drastic increase in the pace of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction in the Netherlands. Sustainable development goals have been defined for each of the various energy functionalities. Clear and fixed CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction targets will help to realise these goals.
3. The rural areas of the Netherlands present major challenges. Each type of agricultural or horticultural activity – from small- to large-scale and from intensive to extensive – has its own specific sustainable development tasks. In addition, biodiversity must be restored and increased in rural areas. This requires sufficient room for nature. Where possible, links must be created between agricultural activities and caring for nature.

4. If cities commit to complementarity and collaboration instead of competing for economic activity and residents, they can develop sufficient strength to be players in the global economy. This requires the central government and local and provincial authorities to implement a joint strategy aimed at increasing the competitive strength of the urban regions of the Netherlands.
5. Urban vitality demands a transformation of real estate in cities. The Council concludes that buildings must be used much more flexibly than at present in order to respond effectively to developments in society.

The Council expects that policies focused on the living environment, either by setting these transitions in motion or by supporting their ongoing implementation, can make a major contribution to the further improvement of welfare and well-being in the Netherlands.

### **Staying the course in times of change**

The government must reconsider its role in order to successfully tackle the major challenges associated with improving the physical living environment. After all, realising the transformations outlined above is

a shared responsibility of government and society. The Council recommends focusing on the tasks to be achieved and structuring regional and other forms of collaboration accordingly. Moreover, well-considered and careful transition management is necessary in order to implement these major changes. This requires commitment to the proposed changes on the part of policy-makers, administrators and society as a whole, as well as the formulation of clear long-term objectives. It also means that vested interests and their possible resistance, as well as the ‘losers’ in the new economic environment, must be recognized and acknowledged. In its coordinating role, the central government must make arrangements to prevent transitions from being bogged down due to resistance. Stakeholders in society will be given the freedom to achieve societal goals within a framework of clearly defined preconditions and process requirements. Independent monitoring will be performed to assess if agreements are complied with and objectives achieved.

### **Structure of this publication**

In this publication, the Council presents a summary of its recommendations to successfully address the main societal challenges in the physical living environment.

Consequently, this publication should not be regarded as a new advisory report but rather as a review of reports previously issued by the Council during its most recent term of office (2012-2016). Chapter 2 elaborates the main societal challenges in the domain of the physical living environment. In Chapter 3, the Council discusses the governance principles that can help to realise the required transformations. Appendix 1 to this publication contains an overview of the advisory reports published by the Council in the period under review.



# 2

## TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT





## 2.1 Transition to a circular economy

### Value retention and creation through sustainable and efficient (re)use of resources

Coping with resource scarcity is one of the key global challenges of the 21st century. Making sustainable and efficient use of resources contributes to environmental quality and is also of essential importance for economic, political and strategic reasons. If we recycle products instead of discarding them after using them just once, we can increase the economic value of raw materials whilst reducing the environmental burden. In a circular economy, products and services are designed to be reused. In its advisory report 'Circular Economy: From Wish to Practice' (Rli 2015-2), the Council notes that the Dutch economy is currently highly dependent on the import of raw materials, whilst prices are fluctuating and the security of supply is under pressure due to global events. In addition, the growing demand for resources is putting increasing pressure on the environment worldwide. Making the transition to a circular economy is therefore an urgent task for the Netherlands as well as other countries.

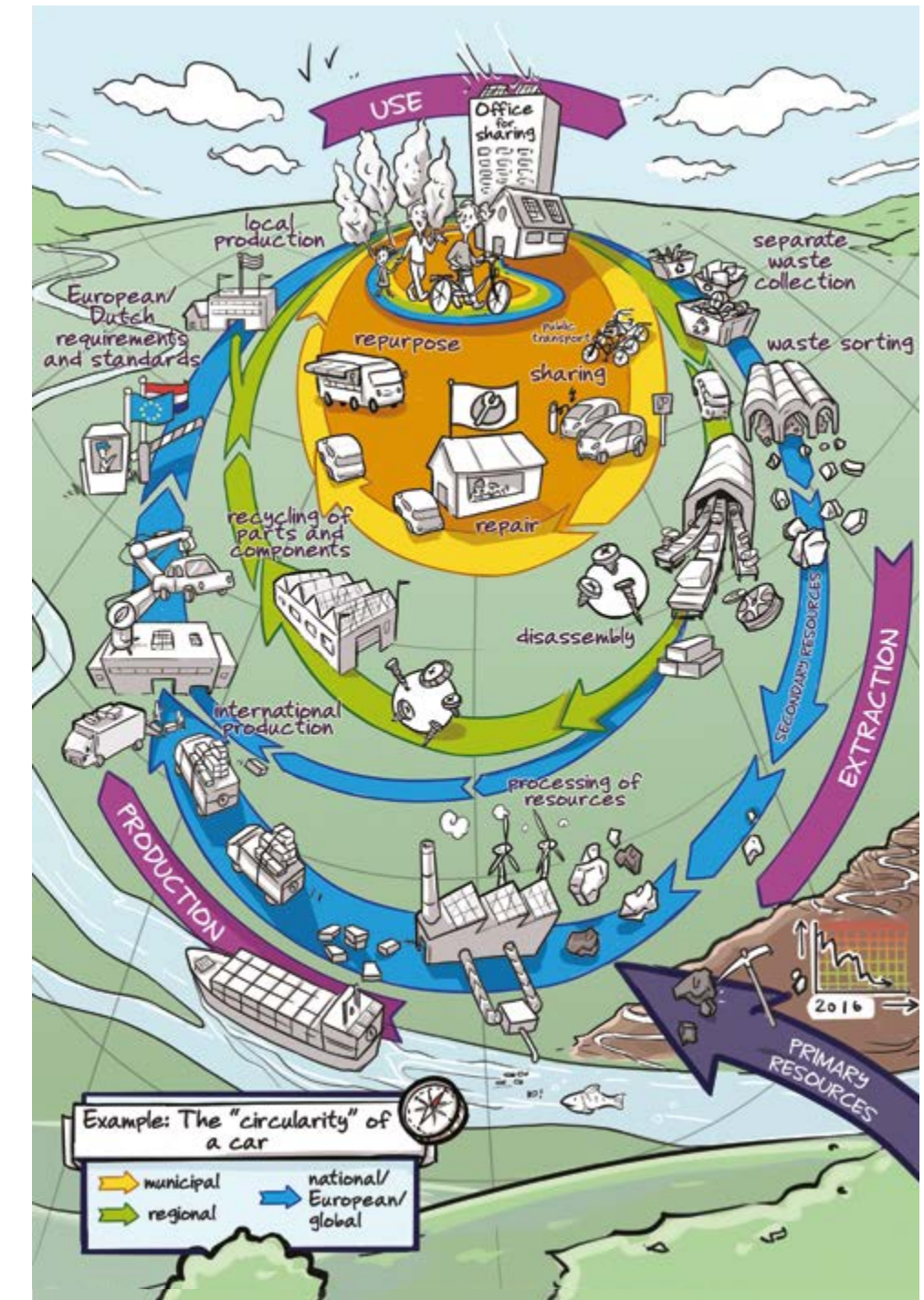
### Circular economy offers opportunities for the logistics sector

In its advisory report 'Dutch Logistics 2040: Designed to Last' (Rli 2013-3), the Council concludes that the circular economy will create opportunities for the Dutch logistics sector as a result of changes in the flows of goods. For instance, production facilities may be relocated back to Europe to ensure greater control of raw materials. This will change the transit function of the Netherlands, and will offer opportunities for the development of the Port of Rotterdam as a circular economy hub. In addition, there will be a demand for a range of innovative solutions for urban, service and return logistics.

### Transition to circular economy has impact on all levels of scale

The transition to a circular economy affects all levels of scale: global, national, regional, and local. Decisions taken at one level have consequences for other levels, and consequently for the transition as a whole. This requires close coordination between the parties involved, both within one level of scale and between the levels.

Figure 1: The main principles of the circular economy



### From a cohesive vision to concrete actions at various levels

The transition to a circular economy requires a vision of the future that is shared by the parties involved: how do we define the concept of a ‘circular economy’, and in which areas do we want the Netherlands to excel? The Council advises the central government to adopt the circular economy as one of the key pillars of cabinet policy (Rli 2015-2), and to prepare a corresponding joint agenda in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders. This agenda should identify overarching objectives that are then translated into concrete actions to be taken by each Ministry. In its advisory report ‘Circular Economy: From Wish to Practice’, the Council has elaborated specific objectives for each Ministry (Rli 2015-2). Provincial and local authorities must implement steps similar to those taken by the central government. In doing so, it is essential for these authorities to operate based on deep insight into their inherent strengths and weaknesses (what are the distinct characteristics of citizens and companies in their region?), to ensure they do not all pursue the same goals.

### Main recommendations for the transition to a circular economy:

- Operate on the basis of inherent strengths and collaboration: make the transition a key pillar of cabinet policy, and to that end develop a joint cabinet-wide circular economy agenda that defines shared objectives and tasks based on inherent strengths.
- Local and provincial authorities should also make the transition to a circular economy by adopting the same principles, and by letting the inherent qualities of the relevant region guide their circular economy strategy. To this end, develop insight into the qualities, circumstances and characteristics of the region and chart the raw material flows. Elaborate a combination on the basis of four main circular economy strategies: ‘the zero waste region’, ‘the sharing region’, ‘the economically self-sufficient region’, and ‘the industrial symbiosis region’. Determine which elements need to be organised locally, supra-locally, or supra-regionally.
- Investigate the societal impact of the disappearance of companies that ‘lose out’ in

a circular economy, and include corresponding actions in the transition agenda if possible.

- Investigate, together with stakeholders, the impact that a circular economy would have on the types and volumes of goods imported into Europe and exported from Europe via the Port of Rotterdam. Together with all stakeholders, design a programme to investigate and elaborate the potential of Rotterdam as a circular economy hub in Europe.
- Develop innovative solutions for urban, service and return logistics.

## 2.2 New perspectives on climate policy and the energy transition

### A sustainable energy supply is necessary

The Netherlands is a party to a number of international agreements aimed at substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions (see box). However, the demand for energy in the Netherlands remains high. Creating a sustainable energy supply in the Netherlands is one of the greatest and most fundamental challenges in the coming decades. True sustainability will only be achieved when we have



realised a safe and affordable low-carbon energy supply with a high level of security of supply. Before even more ambitious reduction targets were agreed at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris<sup>1</sup>, the Council published its advisory report 'A Prosperous Nation without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a Sustainable Energy Supply by 2050' (Rli 2015-6). In this publication, the Council describes the massive challenge of aligning reduction targets with major structural changes in the energy supply system. In the coming period, far-reaching social and technological changes will occur that will have a significant impact on this transition.

### Targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

The advisory report 'A Prosperous Nation Without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a Sustainable Energy Supply by 2050' states that by 2050, greenhouse gas emissions must be 80 to 95 percent lower than they were in 1990. This overall national target is derived from the European Union's emission reduction target and the internationally agreed aim of limiting the rise in the average global temperature to 2°C (UNFCCC, 2015).

<sup>1</sup> 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21), Paris, 30 November - 12 December 2015

Where the Netherlands' energy supply is concerned, by 2050 the associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must be cut to between 82 and 102 percent of the levels in 1990. Hence, the maximum scope for energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is 30 megatons (Mt).

The Paris Agreement defines a more ambitious goal, namely limiting the rise in the average global temperature to 1.5°C. The Council expects that this will result in a CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction target of more than 90% for the Netherlands, instead of the aforementioned margin of 80 to 95 percent.

### Targets are feasible, but a different approach is needed

The Council firmly believes that the agreed reduction targets are feasible, although they do require enormous efforts in addition to the measures that have already been taken. Various studies and calculations confirm this view. Achieving these goals requires massive investment and will result in major changes to the landscape, but it is possible.

The national debate on energy and the energy supply is currently dominated by discussions about specific energy sources, technologies and sectors.

The main emphasis is on how the use of specific energy sources can be promoted or discouraged. This narrow, fragmented focus has led to sharply opposing positions in the debate which ultimately do not contribute to the development of a sustainable energy supply. After more than 25 years of targeted climate policies, the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions produced by the Dutch energy supply system have still not been reduced. The Council therefore recommends adopting a specific approach to the various societal energy needs as part of the energy transition. In this context, the Council distinguishes between four energy functionalities: low-temperature heat for the heating of buildings and the supply of hot water, high-temperature heat for industrial production, energy for transport and mobility, and energy for lighting and electrical appliances.

### Clear goals and an adaptive approach will help realise a sustainable energy supply

Energy policy must be based on a new perspective in order to truly develop a sustainable energy supply. The Council recommends adopting clear, fixed objectives for the energy transition, namely the agreed targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (see box). In its advisory report 'A Prosperous Nation



without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a Sustainable Energy Supply by 2050', the Council has recommended incorporating these objectives in legislation. In this way, the current government can issue a strong signal to subsequent governments and to society as a whole to indicate that climate change and developing a sustainable energy supply are urgent challenges.

The Council also advises providing a degree of latitude with respect to the ways in which the statutory targets are to be achieved. This allows government, the private sector and society to respond to any innovative developments that arise, and adopt different speeds to address the different energy needs in society. According to the Council, the central government must provide guidance by setting clear and binding intermediate objectives for each energy functionality in consultation with societal stakeholders.

The Council believes that the central government should play an active role in creating and monitoring the right conditions for the energy transition. This means that the government must establish clarity about the playing field and the applicable rules, and then stick to them. A wide range of stakeholders – government authorities, private citizens, market

parties, and civil-society organisations – must be provided with the scope needed to make the transition to a sustainable energy supply. This active role also means that the government supports necessary innovations by setting up long-term investment programmes. This concerns innovations throughout the energy chain: from production, transport, storage and conversion to trade, consumption, and earning models. The Council believes that this massive challenge can only be successfully tackled if the relevant developments are monitored and spurred on by an independent government official ('energy commissioner').

#### **Main recommendations concerning climate policy and the energy transition:**

- Legislate to formalise the internationally agreed 2050 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction target of 80 to 95 percent (relative to 1990). Based on the Paris Agreement, the Council expects that the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction target for the Netherlands will need to be pinpointed at over 90%.
- Pursue the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction target on an active and adaptive basis by setting clear and binding intermediate objectives for each

energy functionality in consultation with societal stakeholders.

- Be decisive and increase the pace of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction in the Netherlands. Impose an increasingly strict incentive and legislative regime if required.
- Set up an independent organisation (an 'energy commissioner') that can encourage the parties involved, hold them accountable, provide guidance, and even impose penalties if necessary. This organisation must also serve as a point of contact where people can submit questions, ideas, suggestions, and complaints.
- Enter into regional coalitions in Europe if EU-wide agreements cannot be secured quickly enough.
- Establish large-scale, task-focused, long-horizon innovation programmes.
- Ensure appropriate pricing and tax rules. In practical terms, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must carry a price. The social costs associated with, for example, security of supply and maintaining the flexibility and stability of the system must also be reflected in energy prices.
- Allocate sufficient financial resources to the energy transition.

## 2.3 Sustainable development of nature and the agricultural sector

### **Agriculture, horticulture and nature are under pressure**

In its advisory report 'Reform of Environmental Law: Realise Your Ambitions' (Rli 2015-7), the Council names the transformation of rural areas as one of the cross-cutting topics on which the National Environmental Strategy should focus. Landscapes, nature areas, waterways and agricultural production areas all have their own qualities and also contribute to the business climate of the urban economy. However, the quality of the countryside is under pressure. The various claims on rural areas are not considered integrally to a sufficient extent, and this has a negative impact on the countryside's healthy and green qualities.

Agriculture and horticulture are the main economic 'drivers' of the Dutch countryside, and make an essential contribution to the national economy. The Netherlands is an international leader in agriculture and horticulture. However, the sector is also under pressure due to fierce international competition and fluctuating prices. At the same time, society is placing

ever higher demands on the sector with respect to emissions reduction, food safety, animal welfare, environmental quality, and other aspects. As a result, the agriculture and horticulture sector is facing more complex challenges than ever before. In its advisory report 'Room for Sustainable Agriculture' (Rli 2013-1), the Council concludes that focusing on sustainable development will enable the sector to retain both its licence to operate and its competitive position.

In addition to agriculture and horticulture, nature is also a key factor determining the quality of the countryside. The main goal of nature policy – preserving biodiversity – is still not being achieved. Although the deterioration of nature quality in the Netherlands has slowed down, no recovery has yet occurred. This is mainly caused by a lack of room for nature areas and fragmentation of the areas that do exist. In its advisory report 'Nature's Imperative: Towards a Robust Nature Policy' (Rli 2013-2), the Council notes that the implementation of the Netherlands Nature Network (formerly known as the National Ecological Network) has not proceeded quickly enough to achieve substantial improvements in nature quality. Furthermore, there seems to be a growing mismatch between the societal need to

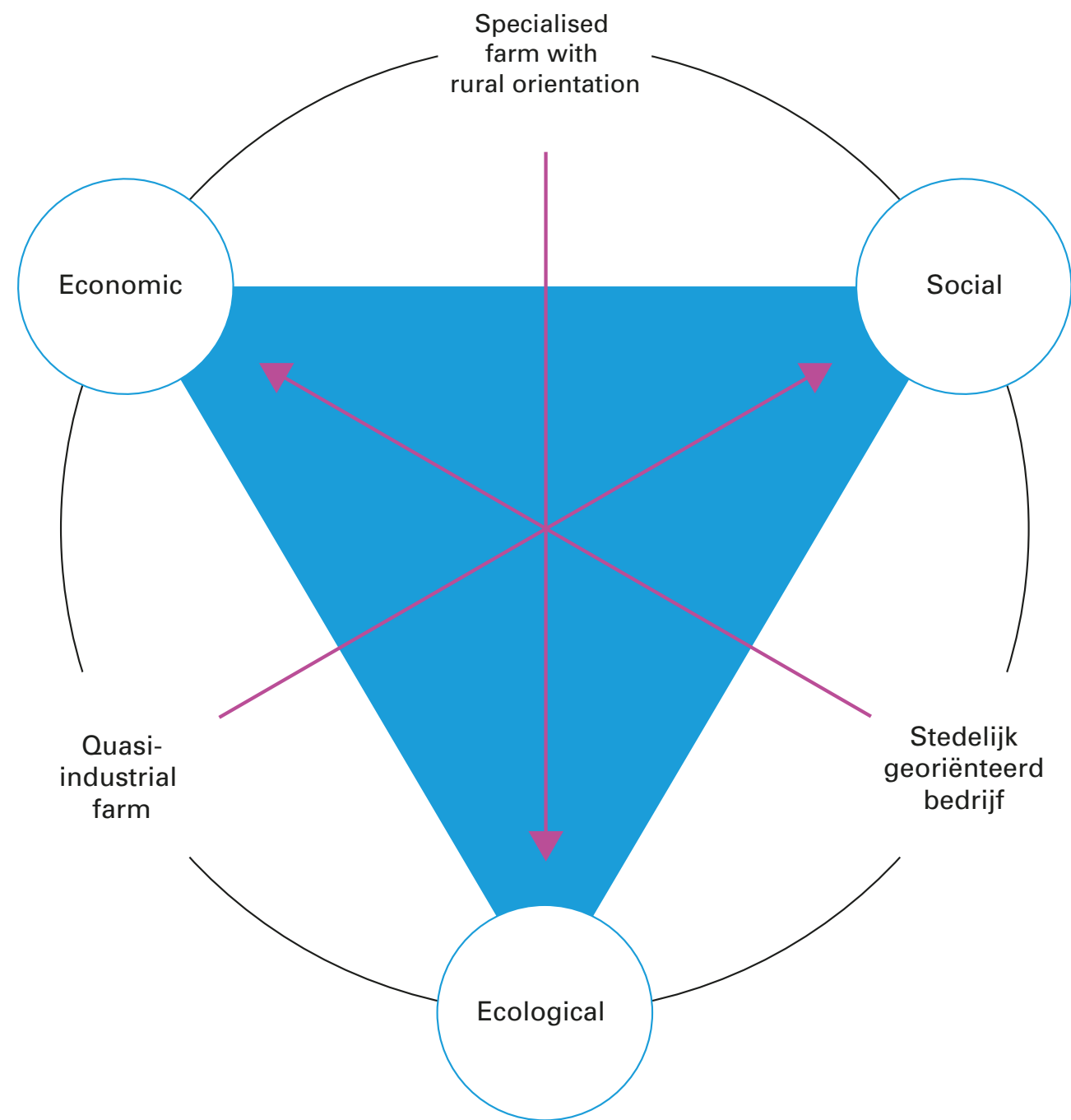
experience nature and nature conservation policy. In the past few years, nature policy has been affected by decreasing budgets and uncertainty about financing. In summary, the Council concludes that the manner in which nature policy is being implemented shows a lack of ambition. In practical, organisational and financial terms, the current approach is inadequate to achieve the stated objectives (Rli 2013 2).

### **Each type of agricultural or horticultural activity has its own sustainable development tasks**

The public debate on agriculture in the Netherlands is fierce and is characterised by strongly opposing positions and mutual misunderstanding. As in the energy debate outlined above, the debate on agriculture pays too much attention to the pros and cons of specific types of companies or activities. The debate is chiefly focused on the dichotomy between intensive and small-scale agriculture. Ethical considerations and public perceptions of food quality and health risks also play a role.

The Council believes that these are not black-and-white, all-or-nothing choices. All types of agricultural and horticultural businesses must pursue sustainable development. Each type of business has its own

**Figure 2: Sustainability challenges of three types of farms**



This figure shows the relationship between three types of agricultural and horticultural businesses and the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, ecological, and social. The lines that make up the circle represent strengths, while the purple arrows represent challenges. Specialised farms with a rural orientation possess strengths in the economic and social dimensions and face challenges in the ecological dimension; quasi-industrial farms possess strengths in the economic and ecological dimensions and face challenges in the social dimension; and farms with an urban orientation possess strengths in the social and ecological dimensions and face challenges in the economic dimension.

specific sustainability task. Large-scale land-based farms must reduce their ecological footprint, while large-scale building-based farms should focus on retaining their social licence to operate. Extensive farms with an urban orientation are generally mainly focused on the profitability of their operations (see Figure 2). The intensification of agriculture is continuing apace all over the world. If the Netherlands should take the lead in sustainable development, we can make a major contribution to a stronger export position while promoting the sustainable development of agriculture globally.

If government and the private sector collaborate closely on the sustainable development of all types of agricultural and horticultural businesses, the sector can remain a key driver of the countryside. In its advisory report ‘Sustainable Choices in the Implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy in the Netherlands’ (Rli 2013-6), the Council recommends making full use of the discretion allowed at national level under EU agricultural and rural policy in order to further promote the sustainable development of the Dutch agricultural and horticultural sector.

### Nature needs space

The Council has also noted strong polarisation in the debate on nature, partly as a result of competition for land and clean air between agriculture and nature. In addition, the implementation of nature policy is characterised by highly specific conservation objectives and a strong focus on legislative provisions. This approach is not sufficiently tailored to the growing societal need to experience nature. However, steps are being taken to change this situation as part of the decentralisation of nature policy to the provincial authorities and in the context of the National Nature Vision.

Nature needs space in order to safeguard its quality in the future and to increase its value for society. Creating space for nature inevitably means that less space will be available for other forms of land use in rural areas, particularly for agriculture. However, these other forms of land use will be provided with more (environmental) scope for development. In other words: the amount of space available for intensive agriculture will be reduced, but the remaining surface area will offer greater production potential. Creating a stricter separation between nature and intensive agriculture will clear the path for further productivity increases. In addition, many nature areas in the

Netherlands will benefit from closer links to more extensive forms of agriculture. The Council also concludes that nature must be restored to its central position in society, and that links must be established with other societal domains such as healthcare, the food supply, and economic functions.

The Council recommends ensuring favourable conditions in rural areas to allow ecosystems and landscapes to develop in the desired direction. This will require enlarging nature areas, creating links between them, and improving their quality. Long-term aims should be central here, without prescribing detailed targets. Nature policy should prioritise projects that also address other societal challenges. The Council believes that continuous, long-term, stable financing must be provided for the implementation of nature policy, even in times of scarce resources.

Sustainable development in rural areas can only be achieved by considering the interconnections and dependencies between nature, agriculture, and horticulture. As indicated above, nature needs space. Agricultural nature management offers additional possibilities to create that space. In its advisory report 'Nature's Imperative: Towards a Robust

Nature Policy', the Council recommends initially concentrating agricultural nature management within large, contiguous areas. In this way, agricultural nature management will make an effective contribution to connecting nature areas. The provincial authorities and the Ministry of Economic Affairs have adopted a policy of placing trust in agricultural nature management collectives, which represents a step in the right direction. Agricultural nature management and use can also yield benefits for nature and contribute to farm income, provided that farmers are closely involved in nature policy and that the costs associated with nature management can be incorporated into the cost price of the end products.

#### Main recommendations for the sustainable development of rural areas:

- Develop a practical strategy – based on the involvement of a wide range of societal stakeholders – that sets out the preconditions for making Dutch agriculture and horticulture more sustainable in three dimensions ('people, planet, profit'). Formulate specific sustainability objectives for agricultural and horticultural businesses, for the periods up to 2025 and 2040.



- Provide scope for the different types of farm businesses and their associated sustainability tasks.
- Provide sufficient financial, legal and fiscal scope for the sustainable development of agriculture and horticulture, including by eliminating from laws and regulations obstacles that hinder sustainable development, opting for mandatory targets rather than mandatory measures, and by using the national scope provided by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to promote sustainable development.
- Create extensive nature networks with a view to protecting and conserving nature while also exploiting its societal value. For this purpose, adopt a horizon strategy with long-term objectives based on an overall development vision.
- Achieve the required qualities for the nature network and make nature conservation less rigid by deploying a system of 'compass management' rather than pursuing overly detailed objectives.
- Create synergies based on the societal significance of nature. Allow greater opportunity for societal initiatives.

- Concentrate agricultural nature management within large, contiguous areas.
- Ensure continuity in nature financing.

## 2.4 Developing the strength of urban regions

### The agglomeration power of Dutch cities is lagging behind

All over the world, cities are becoming increasingly important as hubs in the global economy. The clustering of people, companies and amenities in cities creates countless economic opportunities. Research has shown that the size and density of urban areas positively correlates with the productivity and growth of firms. However, the agglomeration forces in Dutch urban regions remain relatively weak. This is due to the Netherlands' polycentric urban structure with predominantly mid-sized cities, meaning that individual cities are too small when compared with their international counterparts. In its advisory report '[The Future of the City: The Power of New Connections](#)' (Rli 2014 4), the Council states that the lack of agglomeration power of Dutch cities must be compensated if these cities want to become true players in the global economy.

### From inter-city competition to collaboration

The Council notes that a situation has emerged in the Netherlands in which local authorities compete with each other to attract businesses and residents through local policies. In the past, municipalities were strongly focused on expansion, due in part to high land prices and market forces. Each municipality developed its own business parks, office locations, homes, and facilities (Rli 2014-04), and for a long time based its policies on the most favourable regional needs assessments (Rli 2014 03). This competitive environment has led to oversupply and vacancy of property, as well as more of the same bland building stock, which in turn presents more formidable urban redevelopment challenges. However, the parties involved are now taking measures to prevent the oversupply of, for instance, business parks, including through regional coordination. The provincial authorities play a key role in this process.

### Borrowing from the neighbours will enhance joint strength

The Netherlands must urgently adopt a fundamentally different approach to urban development. In its advisory report '[The Future of the City: The Power of New Connections](#)', the Council concludes that a

shift needs to take place from competition to close collaboration and utilising each other's strengths. By enhancing the complementarity of Dutch cities, they can make a sustainable contribution to economic development (Rli 2014-4).

Societal results at a higher level of scale than individual cities must be paramount (Rli 2015-4). The Council recommends a strategy whereby local authorities collaborate and focus more on the regional (instead of the local) housing, business and retail markets. The focus must be on results that benefit society, with aspects like employment, recreation, spatial quality, nature and the environment being considered at the regional level. The basis for such a strategy is formed by good connections between complementary cities (Rli 2014 4). Optimal infrastructure links must be in place for various modalities, including ICT. The Council recommends increasing the density around multimodal hubs (Rli 2014-4) (also see Section 2.5).

The Public Administration Study Group (*Studiegroep Openbaar Bestuur, SOB*) also recently recommended a

task-oriented approach in regional collaboration<sup>2</sup>. The Council has offered similar advice on implementing strong regional policies, for instance in the advisory report 'Pulling Together: Governance in the Schiphol/ Amsterdam Metropolitan Region' (Rli 2013-5) (also see Chapter 3). The Council recommends utilising the scope provided by the Environmental Planning Act (*Omgevingswet*) to work out the administrative agreements in a regional area agenda and a regional environmental vision. The possibility of voluntary regional equalisation may be included. The conclusion of regional administrative agreements that transcend local interests requires decisiveness on the part of administrators. Provincial authorities have an important supervisory and coordinating role to play here. The central government can provide further support for the 'borrowed size' strategy by expanding the existing 'top sectors' policy to include spatial-economic policy on the basis of complementarity and borrowing from neighbouring municipalities. Strategies and forms of administrative collaboration aimed at complementarity will lead to differences in amenities within and between regions. This

<sup>2</sup> SOB (2016). 'Maak verschil – Krachtig inspelen op regionaal-economische opgaven'

is inevitable, as house prices and the demand for housing, business accommodation and other functions differ significantly between regions and cities. Furthermore, the rules that currently apply for all of the Netherlands (for instance, concerning housing benefits) should be tailored to each region. The Council believes that such differences should be accepted, both at the regional and at the national level (Rli 2014-4, Rli 2015-5).

#### Main recommendations for developing the strength of urban regions:

- In order to achieve the metropolitan mass and density necessary for international competitiveness, the national government should embark on an explicit strategy of borrowed size and complementarity between urban regions.
- Not only the national government, but municipalities too should base their policies on complementarity, both between municipalities within a region and between urban regions. To do this, municipalities should gain insight into their own economic strengths and weaknesses within the urban region, and foster diversity

between and within cities. A further increase in urban development planning should be avoided.

- Ensure good infrastructural connections within and between urban regions with a view to the complementarity and strategy aims.
- Create partnerships around issues and opportunities as and when they arise. Focus on achieving societal results, so that objectives in other policy domains such as sustainability, employment and risk sharing can also be addressed.
- Work out a financial arrangement that will promote regional complementarity and cooperation between governmental tiers and between sectors. One way to do this would be to set up regional funds supported by annual contributions from the national government, provinces, and municipalities.

## 2.5 Transforming urban real estate

### Urban development requires transformation of buildings

In a number of advisory reports published during its most recent period of office (Rli 2014-3, Rli 2014-4,

Rli 2014 7, Rli 2015-4), the Council devoted attention to the oversupply of real estate that is emerging in Dutch cities, due in part to disused retail properties, office buildings and healthcare facilities that need to be repurposed. Government-owned real estate that is no longer used for its original purpose is also increasingly becoming available. Vacant buildings can have a negative impact on the environmental quality in urban areas. Because cities are also becoming increasingly popular as places to live and spend time, it is important to invest in quality. This requires a sustainable transformation of urban real estate to meet people's continuously changing needs and (housing) preferences. In its advisory report '[Changing Trends in Housing: Flexibility and Regionalisation within Housing Policy](#)' (Rli 2015-4), the Council points out that living, running a business, working, providing care etc. are no longer self-evidently separate spheres of life. For instance, many people work from home or in public spaces, share office space, or receive care at home. This means that urban development will no longer be based solely on new construction, but also on transforming and converting existing buildings for new uses. In its advisory report '[The Future of the City: The Power of New Connections](#)' (Rli 2014-4), the Council describes how this shift creates opportunities

for improving environmental quality in cities while linking various urban developments and challenges.

### Vacant real estate can be used for urban redevelopment

A new perspective on urban real estate is needed to ensure that the city of the future is an attractive environment that fosters economic and social development. In its advisory report '[The Future of the City: The Power of New Connections](#)', the Council concludes that the repurposing of buildings can serve to quickly and efficiently utilize surpluses in one market segment (e.g. office buildings) in order to resolve shortages in another segment (e.g. residential construction). The focus must be on societal returns or results. This means that the needs of society and the market must determine how buildings are used, not their existing or former function. In its advisory reports '[Quality Without Growth: On the Future of the Built Environment](#)' (Rli 2014-3) and '[Managing Surplus Government Real Estate: Balancing Public Interest and Financial Gain](#)' (Rli 2014-7), the Council concludes – based on a consideration of two different issues – that although it remains vital to find new commercial uses for existing buildings, this alone will not solve the long-term problem. Vacant factories, stores,

offices and public buildings can be used to improve environmental quality in urban areas. By regarding these buildings as (indoor) public spaces, we can create new opportunities for community initiatives that contribute to the quality and vitality of the built environment (Rli 2014-3, Rli 2014-4).

### **Responding flexibly to societal challenges**

If buildings can be repurposed relatively simply, it becomes easier to respond in a flexible manner to new developments at the local level. At present, this is often difficult due to various rules, including housing market regulations, land-use plans, and local and provincial ordinances. The Council recommends government authorities to eliminate these obstacles at all levels, not necessarily through deregulation but by creating scope for flexibility within the existing rules. The buildings themselves also present certain problems when it comes to responding flexibly to societal challenges. In future, buildings should be designed more with possible repurposing in mind (Rli 2015-4).

However, the Council does believe that the desired flexibility has certain limits. As indicated, the Council recommends focusing on societal returns when

transforming and repurposing vacant real estate. Provincial and local authorities can define the applicable limits by imposing quality requirements on the real estate itself and on the management of the surrounding area. The Council also recommends local and provincial authorities to examine together with (potential) users how the societal value of projects can be further increased and aligned with other objectives and interests.

The need for flexible repurposing of buildings also means that the central government – followed by provincial and local authorities – must make regional and urban societal objectives and interests a prime consideration when disposing of real estate. The balance between public interests and financial gain may differ from situation to situation, and, in the Council's view, should always be considered within the local context (Rli 2014-7).

### **Main recommendations for transforming urban real estate:**

- Relevant uses need to be found for vacant (or imminently vacant) public buildings. Make societal returns paramount when finding new

uses for vacant public buildings and try to accommodate community-based initiatives looking for space.

- Create room for community-based initiatives in the city. Cherish attractive meeting places in neighbourhoods since they are important in fostering community-based initiatives.
- Cut back urban development plans and write down privately owned property values.
- Make clear policy decision at the municipal level about the functions and types of real estate that are allowed and prohibited in cities.
- Align decision-making on the national government real estate portfolio with regional issues and the societal goals of provincial and local government. Balance public interests and financial gain within the local context.
- Create more possibilities for the repurposing of real estate, for instance by allowing greater flexibility in regulations and zoning plans and by using fiscal incentives.



# 3

## GOVERNANCE IN A COMPLEX PLAYING FIELD

The transformations required to support sustainable development as described in Chapter 2 are taking place in a society undergoing massive change. Each of these transformations occurs in a complex playing field characterised by multiple issues and a wide range of players – the national government, provincial and local authorities, collaborative organisations, global players, the private sector, and civil society. Furthermore, the boundaries between the different playing fields are often diffuse. The Council has encountered this complexity time and again in its advisory reports and discussions. In many cases, this concerned the consequences of what Hajer (2011)<sup>3</sup> calls the ‘energetic society’. The importance of autonomy in modern society and the changing relationship between government and citizens is increasingly playing a role in sustainable development. Although the government has been a dominant player in the physical living environment for decades, that position is now changing. During its most recent term of office, the Council has frequently noted that the government is trying to find its new role, while societal players are demanding their place

on the playing field. However, it is not just the changes in society that are leading to increased complexity. The EU, the Dutch central government, water boards and provincial and local authorities are continually reconsidering their position *vis-à-vis* each other. Virtually all the challenges related to the physical living environment transcend the administrative boundaries of the Netherlands’ existing constitutional state structure. Furthermore, EU policies are affecting all administrative levels, and their impact is becoming increasingly noticeable in society (Rli 2015-5). International river basins pose various water-related challenges, air pollution crosses borders, and the accessibility of centres of economic activity requires close coordination between international, national, provincial and municipal traffic and transportation systems. This interplay between different administrative levels is further complicated by the fact that spatial, economic and social care policy has been largely decentralised.

The Council notes that administrators frequently have the tendency to seek to simplify the complex playing field in which the challenges emerge. The workload on public administrations must be reduced, and procedures and regulations must be introduced

to ensure clarity and provide an overview. However, the Council does not expect that it will be possible to create an all-encompassing administrative system by allocating tasks, nor that this approach will offer a solution. The technological and social changes and innovations in this day and age are occurring too quickly for that. In addition, a number of decentralisation processes in the Netherlands have not yet been completed and will continue to result in changes in the playing field. A one-sided attitude of compartmentalisation is not effective. In fact, the Council believes that complexity offers room and opportunities for resilient arrangements that enable a flexible response to challenges as they emerge. Societal stakeholders and government authorities must be given room to contribute to sustainable developments, collaborating in changing alliances where appropriate. However, merely providing stakeholders with room is not sufficient to support the sustainable development of infrastructure and the living environment in the Netherlands. The necessary transformation also requires inspiring visions of the future, a framework of clearly defined preconditions, and a degree of persistence.

<sup>3</sup> Hajer, M. (2011). ‘The Energetic Society: In Search of a Governance Philosophy for a Clean Economy’. The Hague: Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

In short, the Council believes that government authorities should embrace administrative complexity and adjust their policies to developments in society. This requires them to reconsider their role and handle their responsibilities differently.

Adopting the following principles can contribute to this process:

- The playing field, the stakeholders and the partnerships must be determined by the actual task or challenge at hand.
- Early dialogue and engagement with society are more important than (the illusion of) legal certainty.
- Careful transition management is essential.

**The playing field, the stakeholders and the partnerships must be determined by the actual task or challenge at hand**

*The focus should be on the tasks to be achieved*

Each sustainable development task described in Chapter 2 has its own administrative and geographical scope and requires the involvement of different (potential) partners. The Council recommends letting the tasks at hand determine the type of regional partnerships to be set up (also see Section 2.4).

Task-oriented collaboration between stakeholders will maximise the likelihood that the defined objectives will be realised (Rli 2013-5). As explained in the discussion of the sustainable development transformations in Chapter 2, each task requires a balanced consideration of the various societal interests at stake. In this respect, the Council’s recommendation to focus on the tasks to be achieved differs slightly from the previously mentioned advisory report published by the SOB (2016)<sup>4</sup>, which deals primarily with regional economic challenges.

*Governance as a true balancing act*

According to the Council, the different levels of government must adopt a collaboration-oriented strategy for the various tasks at hand, with due attention to their own strengths and qualities (Rli 2015-4, Rli 2014-4, Rli 2014-3). Regional interests must also be considered, and the central government does not always need to be the party with ultimate decision-making authority. The complexity of the tasks at hand also poses complex governance challenges. The Council believes that current constitutional state

<sup>4</sup> SOB (2016). ‘Maak verschil – Krachtig inspelen op regionaal-economische opgaven’

structure of the Netherlands provides a solid basis to address these challenges. In the Council’s opinion, a discussion about powers as referred to in the SOB advisory report is not necessary. The existing administrative boundaries and distribution of powers provide enough possibilities to devise solutions, which is not to say that those solutions will be simple. In its advisory report ‘Pulling Together: Governance in the Schiphol/Amsterdam Metropolitan Region’, the Council characterises governance as a true balancing act of robustness and resilience. Governance must devote attention to both these aspects, which often impose conflicting requirements. A robust system ensures a degree of simplicity and stability, and therefore transparency and substantive guidelines about what is allowed and prohibited. Sufficient transparency and a clear framework are necessary to provide certainty to all stakeholders. At the same time, adaptability is needed to devise solutions for the major transformations ahead, and to respond in a creative and flexible manner to new challenges. The table below lists four requirements that regional governance arrangements must fulfil according to the Council (Rli 2013 5).

	<b>Robustness</b> = The ability to put things in order	<b>Resilience</b> = The ability to respond intelligently to unexpected threats and opportunities
<b>Organisation</b>	<i>Stabilising ability:</i> The ability to implement governance arrangements that are as transparent as possible within clear organisational structures	<i>Organisational ability:</i> The ability to devise solutions within networks for issues that are interconnected and sometimes changing rapidly, through the effective use of informal working methods
<b>Policy</b>	<i>Guiding ability:</i> The ability to provide certainty and continuity by defining clear preconditions for policies and developing a strategic vision that is supported by the parties involved	<i>Adaptive ability:</i> The ability to disrupt established routines and quickly develop new approaches in order to create alternative intervention options

The adaptive ability of governance arrangements can be increased by organising partnerships between different government authorities and between government and societal stakeholders on a temporary rather than a permanent basis. The parties involved can conduct regular evaluations to review whether the adopted arrangements still provide sufficient added value (Rli 2013-5).

**Recommendations for regional collaboration:**

- Let the tasks at hand determine the regional collaboration arrangements to be adopted.
- Set up robust and resilient regional partnerships that correspond to existing administrative boundaries and the existing distribution of powers. Avoid any discussion about powers.
- Collaboration arrangements do not necessarily need to be permanent. Regularly evaluate if the adopted arrangements still provide sufficient added value.

**Early dialogue and engagement with society are more important than (the illusion of) legal certainty**

*Involvement of society*

The Council believes that major challenges like the transition to a sustainable energy supply or the development of a future-proof agricultural and horticultural sector are the shared responsibility of government and society. Government authorities at all levels must facilitate the societal debate about these challenges, and invite citizens, the private sector and civil-society organisations to participate. In its advisory report 'Risks Assessed: Towards a



Transparent and Adaptive Risk Policy' (Rli 2014-6), the Council recommended ensuring close involvement of citizens in all phases of the decision-making process in order to arrive at better risk assessments. Early dialogue with society will result in more balanced and better-informed decisions, and will also increase the social acceptance of the choices made and their consequences (Rli 2013-1, Rli 2014-6, Rli, 2015-6). In addition, this approach makes it possible to give societal stakeholders greater shared responsibility for decisions. Consider, for instance, the energy transition as discussed by the Council in its advisory report 'A Prosperous Nation without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a Sustainable Energy Supply by 2050' (also see Section 2.2). This transition can only succeed if it enjoys broad support in society. Such support will only increase if enthusiastic and engaged citizens and entrepreneurs can participate, and are provided with opportunities to develop their own ideas for energy generation or conservation. This approach will also help to create a 'vanguard' that will help kickstart a broader movement.

#### *Joint consideration of values at stake*

In its advisory report 'Reform of Environmental Law: Realise Your Ambitions', the Council states

that in many cases, legal certainty is an illusion. Strict, non-adjustable norms and standards carry the risk that values under threat are not protected, and that the debate on (un)desirable developments is not conducted based on substance, but rather in a formalized and 'juridified' manner. This is one of the main causes of tension in nature policy (Rli 2013-2; also see Section 2.3), for instance. With respect to risk policy, the Council has also noted that the benefits of high-risk activities are not taken into consideration when developing risk standards (Rli 2014-6). Dealing with complex societal challenges requires a customised approach which often conflicts with generic, non-adjustable standards (Rli 2015-7, Rli 2014-6). The Council believes that government and citizens should be able to jointly consider the values at stake and the solutions that are acceptable. In this way, citizens' concerns about uncertainties in policies and plans or the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of high-risk business activities, for instance, can be transparently incorporated into decision-making processes. The necessary information for such assessments must be derived from a dialogue with society about the values at stake (Rli 2014-6).

#### *Accessible to all*

It is up to the government to strengthen the position of citizens and to provide all stakeholders with access to the public debate and the relevant decision-making processes. Guarantees must be put in place to ensure the active involvement of citizens in the preliminary phase of relevant developments. At the same time, certainties must be provided about the processes governing interactions between active, engaged citizens and government authorities (Rli 2015-7). In addition, policy-makers should consider the extent to which any differences in participation by citizens are acceptable. According to the Council, this issue has not been sufficiently debated.

#### *Room for societal initiatives*

In order to work together to achieve the defined long-term objectives, the Council believes that societal initiatives and government policies should be coordinated and interconnected in order to enhance each other's strengths. This places high demands on the competencies of policy-makers and the effectiveness of administrative and political processes. The Council advises government authorities in their relationship to society to release control, to accept, to appreciate, to facilitate, and to

stimulate. This demands a cultural shift on the part of administrators and government officials (Rli 2014-2, Rli 2014-7, Rli 2014-3). They must devise in advance clear frameworks that give government authorities, citizens and societal initiatives the freedom to develop, reconsider and revise possible solutions. This requires trust. More than in the past, administrators and government officials will have to adopt the role of process facilitators in order to support initiators in their attempts to shape their living environment.

#### Recommendations for engaging in dialogue with society:

- The Council believes that government authorities and citizens should be able to jointly assess the values at stake and the solutions that are acceptable. Dealing with complex societal challenges often conflicts with generic, non-adjustable standards. The necessary information for such assessments must be derived from a dialogue with society about the values at stake.
- Ensure that the public debate and the decision-making processes are accessible to all citizens. Put guarantees in place to ensure the active

involvement of citizens in the preliminary phase of relevant developments.

- Policy-makers should consider to what extent any differences in participation by citizens are acceptable.
- Provide citizens and other stakeholders with the room they need to make their own contribution to achieving the agreed aims.

#### Careful transition management is essential

##### *Political and administrative support*

The transformations described in Chapter 2 will not occur by themselves, as they will have a major impact on society and there are still many uncertainties around the relevant developments. In order to increase the chances of success, the central government in its coordinating role will need to devote explicit attention to the transition process. In the preceding discussion, we have already mentioned the importance of creating support and trust within society. This also requires a solid political and administrative base of support in order to ensure the implementation of consistent long-term policies and to secure the required investments. Broad political support will prevent the transition

process from being ‘bogged down’ due to opposing interests and resistance to change (Rli 2015-3). A clear perspective on the ultimate aims of the transition process and a government that stays the course will help to create trust and to reduce uncertainty for the parties involved (Rli 2015 2).

##### *Governance based on clear goals*

The various transformations towards sustainable development will have different consequences in different regions, and will be interconnected in different ways. In addition, there may also be differences in timing and in citizens’ needs, requirements and capabilities between regions and between groups. Providing scope for societal initiatives means that the decisions made may deviate from the original plans of the responsible government authorities. The Council therefore considers it important for government authorities to formulate clear strategic objectives, preconditions and process requirements, and to clearly indicate which steps they are taking themselves (Rli 2015-7). Do not specify how these objectives are to be achieved, so that other parties have the freedom to determine their own course in order to contribute to achievement of the objectives. When implementing EU directives in

national legislation, the central government should preferably opt for mandatory targets that leave room for interpretation, rather than mandatory measures (Rli 2015-5). In its advisory report 'A Prosperous Nation without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a Sustainable Energy Supply by 2050' (Rli 2015-6), the Council recommends the government to legislate in order to formalise clear emissions reduction targets (also see Section 2.2). In its advisory report 'Pulling Together: Governance in the Schiphol/Amsterdam Metropolitan Region' (Rli 2013-5), the Council mentions the example of Schiphol Airport, where the focus should be on the airport's connectivity rather than the number of flights.

#### *Intermediate objectives and binding agreements*

Clear and defined societal objectives will establish goals to work towards, and provide direction to government action and help promote creativity in society. The timeline for realisation of these objectives may extend over 25 to 30 years, for instance, in order to ensure policy continuity (Rli 2015-7, Rli 2015-6). However, the Council does believe it is important to define clear intermediate objectives, and to assess short-term government programmes in light of long-term aims. This will allow short-term activities to be aligned with long-term objectives, and will allow

interim adjustments to be made. The intermediate objectives will provide a basis for binding agreements with the parties involved. These may be accompanied by an increasingly strict inventive and legislative regime that will enter into effect when the agreed objectives (intermediate or otherwise) are not realised without an acceptable reason.

#### *Customised approach for different target groups*

Not all parties involved in tackling a particular sustainable development challenge need to take the same steps at the same pace. We have already emphasised in this report the importance of providing stakeholders with freedom as regards the way in which they achieve objectives. This also means that specific target groups, sectors, subsectors and niches must be provided with sufficient room to follow their own transition path at their preferred pace. In its advisory report 'A Prosperous Nation Without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a Sustainable Energy Supply by 2050' (Rli 2015-06), for instance, the Council advocates a differentiated approach for four energy functionalities, and in its advisory report 'Room for Sustainable Agriculture' (Rli 2013-01), the Council recommends a differentiated approach for three different types of farms. This also means that policy-makers must gain

insight into the target groups or organisations affected by or involved in the relevant policies, in order to formulate feasible targets, conclude agreements, and implement measures. Different types of policies are effective for different target groups. Many individuals and organisations are willing to contribute to the necessary transformations, but they differ with respect to the action they are able and willing to take. By gearing policies in each domain to the needs, values and opportunities of the various target groups and the specific characteristics of their behaviour, policy instruments can be deployed in a targeted and effective manner, thus reinforcing the support base for policy. For this purpose, the Council has developed a tool that can be used by policy officers for policy preparations (Rli 2014-2).

#### *Dare to experiment*

The Council believes that government authorities and societal stakeholders must be provided with more freedom to respond to changes, opportunities and threats if there is room to experiment. Small-scale experiments make it possible to investigate – in contravention to existing rules if necessary – whether a particular approach contributes to the realisation of societal objectives in practice (Rli 2014-2).

Room for experimentation creates possibilities to jointly develop solutions to concrete issues, and/or to redistribute burdens and benefits (Rli 2014-6). The Council has described in a number of its advisory reports the conditions that such experiments should meet. For instance, there must be sufficient time to properly assess the intended effects and results of experiments. In addition, experiments can only be conducted successfully if there is room to make mistakes and learn from them.

In the past, the Dutch government has explicitly created a number of opportunities to experiment with new methods and approaches for achieving spatial quality. Examples include the Crisis and Recovery Act (Crisis- en Herstelwet), the Business Investment Zones Experiments Act (Experimentenwet Bedrijven Investeringszones), the City and Environment Experiments Act (Experimentenwet Stad en Milieu), as well as 'Proefprogramma stedelijke herverkaveling', a trial programme of space reallocation ('reparcelling') in urban areas (Rli 2014-3). In its advisory report 'Room for the Regions in European Policy' (Rli 2015-5), the Council noted that the EU's governance philosophy offers little room for experimentation. Because EU policies, laws and regulations have a major impact on

the living environment and therefore on sustainable development tasks, the Council advises the Dutch government to lobby for the inclusion of provisions on experimentation in EU legislation.

#### *Vested interests and parties that stand to lose as a result of the transformations*

The sustainable development transformations will not benefit everyone, as society's long-term interests do not necessarily coincide with short-term private interests. Sweeping changes mean that there will also be 'losers', and that vested interests will attempt to block or delay the transition. The responsible government authorities must therefore remain alert to opposing forces and spurious arguments being raised (Rli 2015-2). At the same time, in an early stage of policy development careful consideration must be given to the (possible) societal impact of the transformations in different regions and for different stakeholders. In the case of parties who stand to lose in the transition process, ways to include them must be sought, for instance by redefining the core business of companies or by retraining employees. Other options include transitional arrangements for parties that have incurred damages or are in danger of doing so (Rli 2015-4).

#### *Monitoring and supervision*

Independent monitoring and supervision of the transition process and the realisation of the agreed (intermediate) objectives is essential. If the various target groups follow different approaches and adopt a different pace in the transition process, the Council believes it is necessary to monitor the progress of the transition for each of these target groups, to investigate the causes of any delays, and to determine which steps may be taken to accelerate the process if necessary (Rli 2015-6).

#### **Recommendations for transition management:**

- Ensure a solid political and administrative base of support for the intended long-term changes and the transition process.
- Government authorities should base their governance on strategic goals which have been defined for the long term.
- Formulate clear preconditions and process requirements for the realisation of the required transformations, and explicitly define the role of government.



- Align long-term objectives with short-term activities by concluding binding agreements with the parties involved.
- Such agreements may be accompanied by an increasingly strict incentive and legislative regime that will enter into effect when the agreed objectives (intermediate or otherwise) are not achieved without an acceptable reason.
- Apply a differentiated approach to the realisation of objectives, based on deep insight into the various target groups.
- Create room to experiment and learn from the results.
- Devote attention to the 'losers' in the transition process, and make arrangements to include them in the process anyway.
- Organise independent monitoring and supervision of the realisation of objectives.

# APPENDIX

## A SELECTION OF ADVISORY REPORTS PUBLISHED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Beyond Mainports ['Mainports voorbij'], July 2016 (Rli 2016-02)

Reform of Environmental Law: Realise Your Ambitions ['Vernieuwing  
omgevingsrecht: maak de ambities waar'], December 2015 (Rli 2015-07)

A Prosperous Nation without CO<sub>2</sub>: Towards a Sustainable Energy Supply  
by 2050 ['Rijk zonder CO<sub>2</sub>, naar een duurzame energievoorziening in 2050'],  
September 2015 (Rli 2015-06)

Room for the Regions in European Policy ['Ruimte voor de regio in Europees  
beleid'], September 2015 (Rli 2015-05)

Changing Trends in Housing: Flexibility and Regionalisation within Housing  
Policy ['Wonen in verandering, over flexibilisering en regionalisering in het  
woonbeleid'], June 2015 (Rli 2015-04)

Fundamental Revision of Environmental and Planning Legislation ['Stelsel-  
herziening omgevingsrecht' - only available in Dutch]. May 2015 (Rli 2015/02)

Circular Economy: From Wish to Practice [‘Circulaire economie: van wens naar uitvoering’], June 2015 (Rli 2015-02)

Survey of Technological Innovations in the Living Environment [‘Verkenning technologische innovaties in de leefomgeving’], January 2015 (Rli 2015-01)

Managing Surplus Government Real Estate: Balancing Public Interest and Financial Gain [‘Vrijkomend rijksvastgoed, over maatschappelijke doelen en geld’], December 2014 (Rli 2014-07)

Risks Assessed: Towards a Transparent and Adaptive Risk Policy [‘Risico’s gewaardeerd, naar een transparant en adaptief risicobeleid’], June 2014 (Rli 2014-06)

Recovering the Costs of Environmental Damage: Financial Indemnity to be Provided by High-Risk Companies [‘Milieuschade verhalen, advies financiële zekerheidstelling milieuschade Brzo- en IPPC4-bedrijven’], June 2014 (Rli 2014-05)

The Future of the City: The Power of New Connections [‘De toekomst van de stad, de kracht van nieuwe verbindingen’], April 2014 (Rli 2014-04)

Quality without Growth: On the Future of the Built Environment [‘Kwaliteit zonder groei, over de toekomst van de leefomgeving’], April 2014 (Rli 2104-03)

Influencing Behaviour: More Effective Environmental Policy through Insight into Human Behaviour [‘Doen en laten, effectiever beleid door mensenkennis’], March 2014 (Rli 2014-02)

Living Independently for Longer: a Shared Responsibility of the Housing, Health and Welfare Policy Domains [‘Langer zelfstandig, een gedeelde opgave van wonen, zorg en welzijn’], January 2014 (Rli 2014-01)

Sustainable Choices in the Implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy in the Netherlands [‘Duurzame keuzes bij de toepassing van het Europees landbouwbeleid in Nederland’], October 2013 (Rli 2013-06)

Pulling Together: Governance in the Schiphol/Amsterdam Metropolitan Region [‘Sturen op samenhang, governance in de metropolitane regio Schiphol/Amsterdam’], September 2013 (Rli 2013-05)

Safety at Companies Subject to the Major Accidents Risks Decree: Responsibility and Effective Action [‘Veiligheid bij Brzo-bedrijven, verantwoordelijkheid en daadkracht’], June 2013 (Rli 2013-04)

Dutch Logistics 2040: Designed to Last [‘Nederlandse logistiek 2040, designed to last’], June 2013 (Rli 2013-03)

Nature’s Imperative: Towards a Robust Nature Policy [‘Onbeperkt houdbaar, naar een robuust natuurbeleid’], May 2013 (Rli 2013-02)

Room for Sustainable Agriculture [‘Ruimte voor duurzame landbouw’], March 2013 (Rli 2013-01)



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