
VINEX: NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY IN THE NETHERLANDS DURING THE NINETIES

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ABSTRACT December 1993 saw the publication of Part 4 of the Spatial Planning Key Decision known as "VINEX" for short. The supplement to the Fourth National Policy Document on Spatial Planning (*Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra*) was the product of at least eight years work, involving many consultations. This article explores the content of the VINEX which consists partly of a continuation of policies set out in previous policy documents on spatial planning and partly of new policies which have been developed and shaped during those eight years. Special attention is paid to the way these policies are being implemented, whereby new approaches are used as well as tried and tested methods. All in all, the VINEX has stirred up quite a commotion. We discuss this in our concluding remarks.

Introduction

The VINEX (Supplement to the Fourth National Policy Document on Spatial Planning) is an unusual policy document. National spatial planning in the Netherlands has traditionally been concerned with the main structure of urban and rural areas. The VINEX adds two new policy themes, directed at two very different scales: the Netherlands in an international context, and the everyday living environment (*Ruimte voor 2015*, 1993). The role of government in the implementation of these policies varies according to the topic. Central government takes the initiative on policies involving the Netherlands in an international context, while working together with the provinces and municipalities on urban and rural planning issues. The responsibility for the everyday living environment lies with the municipalities; the role of central government in this context is restricted to stimulating developments and providing information.

The VINEX is a selective policy document. Policy is directed only at important social changes which will have far-reaching consequences for the design and use of space. The most important changes are: internationalization; emancipation and individualization; the tendency for government to make way for private initiatives;

developments in telecommunications, agriculture and industry; rapidly increasing personal mobility; quantitative and qualitative water management; changing environmental standards; the quest for sustainable development; and the conservation of biodiversity.

The VINEX pursues the following goals:

- 1 In an international, Western European context:
 - to develop a competitive urban climate for new businesses;
 - to stimulate distribution activities (transport of goods and passengers);
 - to offer a good tourist product, particularly for water-based recreation.
- 2 In urban areas:
 - to regulate mobility;
 - to strengthen the carrying capacity for urban amenities;
 - to protect nearby open areas.
- 3 In rural areas:
 - to increase spatial diversity;
 - to maintain and improve environmental quality;
 - to maintain the quality of life.
- 4 In the everyday living environment:
 - to improve the quality of urban design and planning.

The Dutch spatial planning system is a means to achieve these goals. The system is structured as follows (Brussaard, 1987): central government sets out guidelines in national policy documents, the provinces draw up regional plans (*streekplannen*), and the municipalities develop structure plans (*structuurplannen*) and local land use plans (*bestemmingsplannen*). The local land use plans are legally binding upon the citizens and determine the permitted land uses. The planning system consists of a set of rules to guide the work of the various organizations involved. But it says little about the content or level of detail each plan should have. Consensus on these matters has to be obtained during the preparation of policy. Views concerning the rules of the game, the players involved and the content of plans vary with time. This also applies to the role played by national government and the substance of the VINEX, to which we restrict ourselves in this paper. The VINEX sets out a role for national government and the content of policy; elements of both diverge from what has preceded them in previous policy documents. These forerunners have been fleshed out during the decision-making process between 1988 and 1993. They have been developed further after the adoption of the spatial planning key decision (see below) in 1993. Before going into that, however, we briefly review the main procedures for adopting national spatial planning policy.

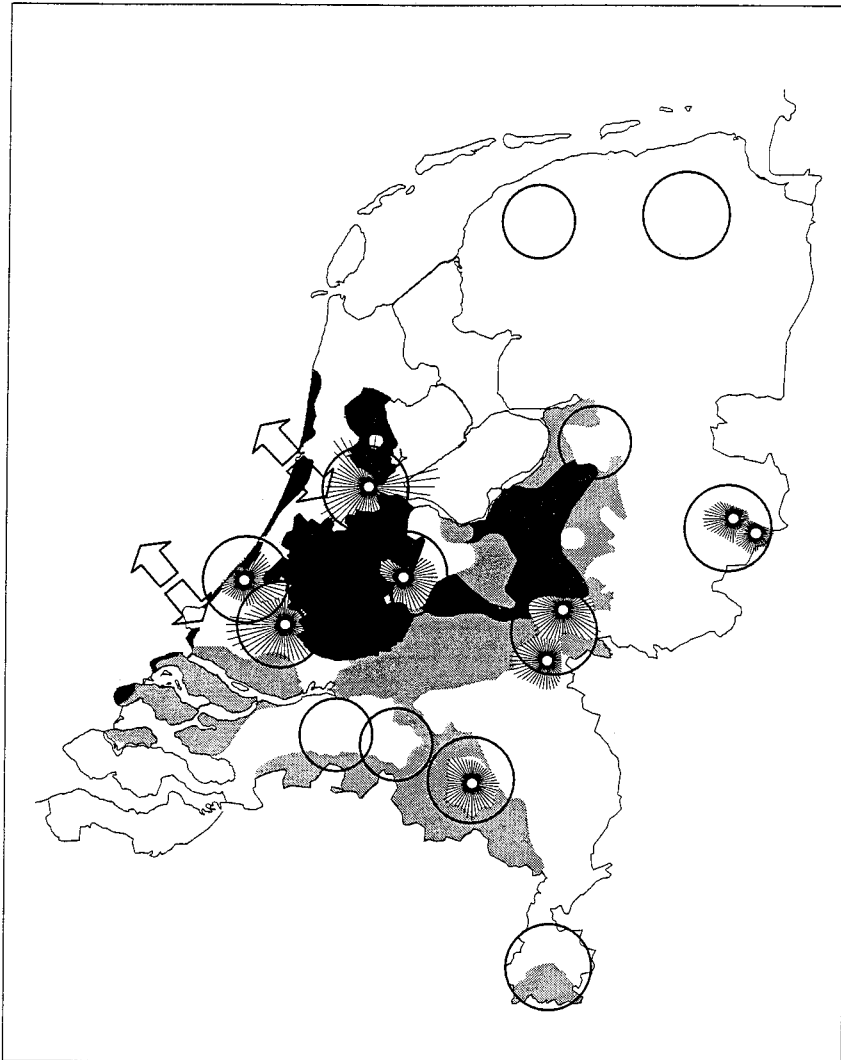
Spatial planning key decisions (*planologische kernbeslissingen*, or PKBs) are drawn up at the national level for spatial planning policies as well as for a number of sectoral policies. The VINEX concerns spatial planning policy. Examples of sectoral PKBs include national structure plans for traffic and transport, rural areas and electricity supply. The spatial planning key decisions are intended to draw the various strands of sectoral policy together, while sectoral decisions are supposed to







elaborate upon spatial planning policy. There are four stages in the procedure for making and adopting a PKB, and these constitute the four parts of its documentation (National Spatial Planning Agency, 1996). Part 1 outlines the intended content of the PKB, formulating its policy proposals. The results of the subsequent round of consultations and public participation are published in Part 2. The government's position is then published in Part 3. Part 4 is the decision by parliament. The Fourth National Policy Document on Spatial Planning was preceded by a study on 'spatial perspectives' (Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and the Environment, 1986). The policy proposals were published in March 1988; the government's standpoint appeared in December of the same year (Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening, 1988). However, the government of the day fell before parliament could reach a decision. The new cabinet decided to add an additional layer of policy, which also had to go through the procedure; hence the name "Supplement to the Fourth National Policy Document on Spatial Planning" (Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra VINEX). Part 1, the draft PKB, was entitled "On the road to 2015". It appeared at the end of 1990. And in December 1993, the policies that were finally adopted were published as Part 4, the National Spatial Planning Key Decision. In this article we refer to the whole body of policy adopted (i.e., in both policy-making rounds) as the VINEX. Some aspects of the VINEX policy are currently being revised and expanded to cover the period 2005–2010. This partial revision will also go through the PKB procedure; Part 1 of the revised version was published at the end of 1996.

The VINEX devotes more attention to the implementation of policy than previous policy documents have done. This is immediately clear from the structure of the PKB text. It draws a distinction between future planning scenarios and statements of policy concerning actions central government will undertake, and what is expected of other levels of government. In the traditional manner of implementing PKB policies, central government takes the PKB as its point of departure when executing policy. At the same time, the state requires other government authorities to take account of the PKB when drawing up and pursuing their own policies. In addition to this, the VINEX contains a number of new implementation strategies which involve central government much more than has been usual in the past. These take the following forms:

- For eight areas designated in the PKB, central, regional and local government jointly prepare regional elaborations of policy (*nadere uitwerkingen*). These are geared to providing a framework for the execution of initiatives to tackle the specific spatial planning problems in those areas (see Figure 1).
- In 11 designated areas, central and other government authorities draw up integrated spatial and environmental policy action plans. These provide a framework for implementing specific projects (see Figure 1, ROM areas).
- In the seven major urban regions (see Figure 2), central government signs voluntary agreements with the municipalities covering the location of new housing areas and the procedural and financial conditions for their development. Similar agreements are drawn up between central and regional government for the other urban regions.

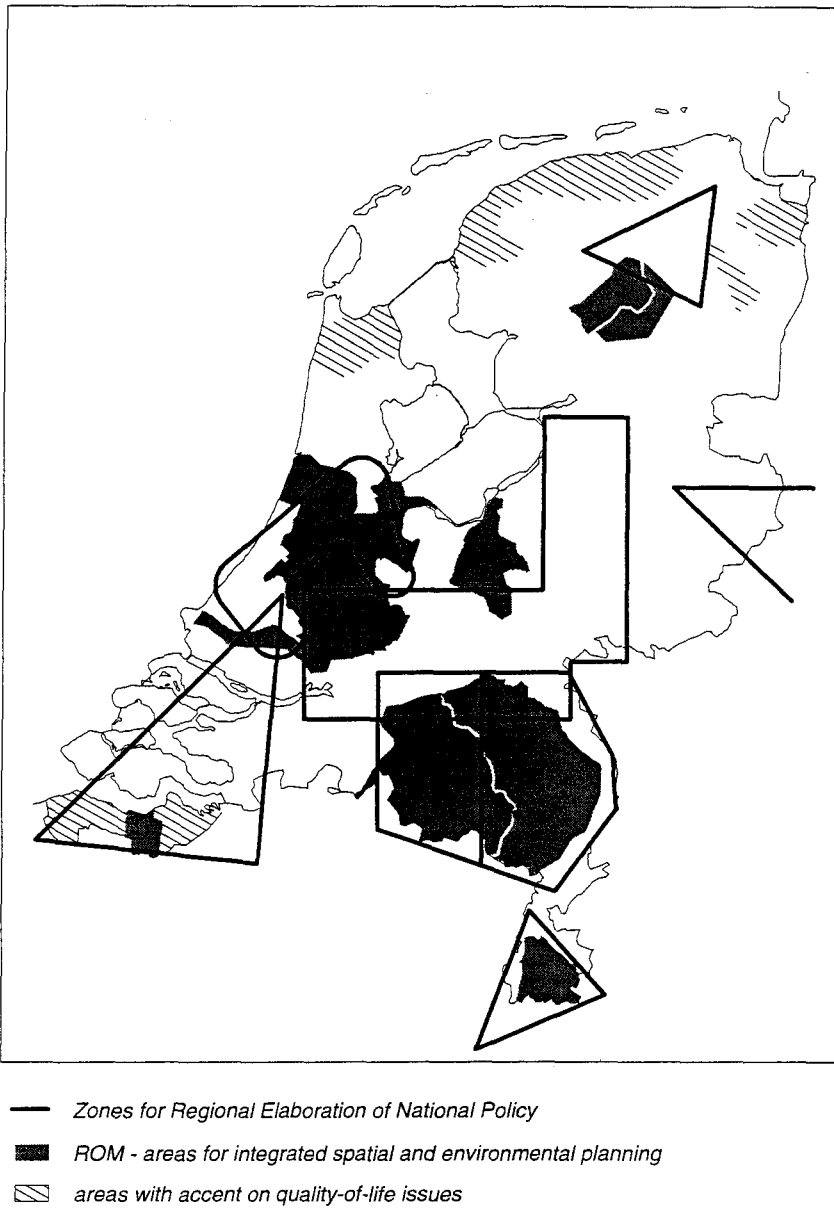
Figure 1 Areas designated in VINEX, deserving special attention



-  the seven major urban regions
-  Green Heart
-  national restrictive planning policies
-  provincial restrictive planning policies
-  mainports
-  nodes

Source: Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra

Figure 2 A number of key issues in national planning policy



Source: Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra

- Central government draws up a policy giving municipalities firm guidelines to coordinate the siting of industrial estates and business premises with regional transport policy. The objective is to make more of these sites accessible by public transport while reducing car traffic.
- Complex major developments, so-called key projects (*sleutelprojecten*), are designated. In doing so, central government commits itself to speeding up and coordinating decision-making as an inducement to commercial investment. Agreements are signed between investors and government. These cover financing from central government funds and describe the quality of the completed development which is expected in return.
- Demonstration plans (*voorbeeldplannen*) are set up as an incentive for local projects. The objective is to improve spatial quality through nationwide publicity and offering financial rewards for the best ideas.

Each of these new methods of pursuing policy are described in detail below.

All these implementation strategies have a common element. Namely, government civil servants are directly involved with the translation of policy at levels below that of the PKB. The new implementation strategies were all designed to provide lower levels of government with a framework for specific projects. This translation of national policy deals with tangible measures, the allocation and use of resources, agreements between parties on performance, etc. The ambitions of central government in this are not always the same. The degree of collaboration required from other government authorities in implementing national policy varies according to the policy measure concerned. In some cases, it is enough for other authorities to take note of national policy and take account of it when pursuing their own policies. In other cases, central government requires other authorities to adopt the PKB policies and adapt their own policies accordingly (De Ridder, 1995).

The National Spatial Planning Agency (Rijksplanologische Dienst, or RPD) is the government department responsible for the preparation and execution of national spatial planning policy. The agency made an enthusiastic start with implementing the policies. The approach adopted was more or less intuitive, lacking a thorough methodological basis or structure. In 1992, however, it commissioned an external evaluation of the experiences gained during the implementation of the VINEX. This might appear to be too soon to begin an evaluation, but it should not be forgotten that the adoption of the VINEX policy was preceded by eight years of policy development in an open planning process. Other government authorities had plenty of time to prepare for the introduction of the new policy, which was based in part on their own ideas and policy ambitions. The evaluation programme was concluded in 1996 with a research report (De Ridder, 1995). This lays the foundation for a more thorough and systematic implementation of policy, an approach which is now being developed by the RPD. It involves better coordination between policy development and implementation. Besides dealing with the content of policy, attention is paid at the outset to issues such as the different government ambitions mentioned above, the way policy is carried through (concepts, policy instruments), implementation strategies, and a desirable role for central government in subsequent policy-making

and projects. In 1994, the planning minister informed the Lower House of Parliament of the current situation regarding the implementation of the VINEX. This lengthy briefing was published as the Position Statement 1994 (*Ruimtelijke Verkenningen 1994*). Implementation of the VINEX will continue through to 2010.

We now take a closer look at a dozen specific policies. These have been divided into the four main policy themes introduced at the beginning of this introduction: the Netherlands in an international context; urban development policy; rural areas; and policy options for the everyday living environment. Each policy theme is briefly introduced, followed by a discussion of the historical context (if there is one) (see Kragt 1996 for a brief historical view), the content of the policy, the implementation strategy and developments so far. In our concluding remarks, we give an impression of current national spatial planning policy in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands in an international context

Towards the end of the eighties, there was considerable concern in the Netherlands about the country's economic position within Europe. The Netherlands had undergone a period of high unemployment and the economy was just beginning to pick up again. Against this background, spatial planning policy was to be geared towards strengthening the country's economy. This implied a turnaround in thinking. Spatial planning would not determine where economic activities should take place, which had proved ineffectual in the past. Rather, it would support the further development of the economically attractive areas of the country.

The European dimension was crystallizing rapidly. Economic borders between the member states of the European Union were to disappear in 1992. This would allow the free movement of goods, services, people and capital and offer new opportunities in the form of larger single markets (320 million consumers). The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which opened up the whole of Eastern Europe, gave a further impetus to this process. But these opportunities had to be seized: urban regions within Europe started to compete more heavily with each other and the Dutch regions could not afford to lag behind in the battle to attract international companies and head offices. This notion that spatial planning could make a contribution to the economic position of the country within Europe is a key characteristic of the VINEX. What form does this approach take?

A spatial planning strategy with two components was developed. The first aim was to acquire a number of "trump cards" to improve the economic position of the Netherlands within Europe. This includes the development of an internationally competitive climate for inward investment in a limited number of cities. It also entails upgrading the distribution sector (airports and seaports) and transport connections to the hinterland. This economic thrust was to go hand-in-hand with improvements in environmental quality and natural habitats of international significance, primarily water-related, to form the basis of a high-quality tourist industry. The second aim was that all the regions would make full use of their own

particular assets. They were to focus more on promoting their strong points and establishing good links with relevant core economic zones elsewhere in Europe.

Within this double-headed strategy (trump cards and focusing on regional assets) the following policies were developed:

- Netherlands: selective investment in
 - urban nodes
 - key projects.
- Distribution Netherlands: investing in
 - main ports of Schiphol airport and the port of Rotterdam
 - main transport corridors and connections to the hinterland.
- Waterland Netherlands: investing in boating routes, recreational amenities for pleasure cruising, water quality and wet habitats.
- Regional assets.

Urban nodes

The urban nodes concept was first introduced by the VINEX (Figure 2). Thirteen cities in all were designated as areas for concentrating investment in the urban fabric. Central government would itself set a good example by siting important amenities in these cities in the hope that the market would follow. In order to attract market investment, nodal cities were encouraged to present a clear identity of their own and to build on this with specific projects. The chosen cities already had an advantage in terms of population numbers and provision of amenities which could be exploited further. They would become the vanguard of the Dutch economy. Did it work out this way?

Right from the start, there were deviations from the original strategy of selective investment. At the end of the political debate, many more urban nodes had been designated than were justified by the objectives of economic competition alone. An additional objective was subsequently added to the urban node policy: an equal distribution of amenities across the country. This is a relic from a previous hierarchy of urban centres for the allocation of amenities, dating from the Second National Policy Document on Spatial Planning (1966) (Tweede Nota, 1966).

Taking into account the policy initiatives and the results achieved so far, we can see that the RPD has invested much energy in guiding government investment. In the end, though, only a few government investments appear to have had a catalytic effect. The Government Buildings Agency has been particularly active in urban node cities. Extra money for infrastructure (from natural gas revenues) has also been almost exclusively dedicated to the urban nodes. It should not be forgotten that a large proportion of central government funds are channelled to the urban node cities anyway, irrespective of any special policy to promote this, simply because they are the largest cities. It has also proved to be particularly difficult to give urban node cities priority when distributing money for soil remediation (Bosch et al., 1993).

The municipalities themselves have drawn up the required identity profiles and developed a number of initiatives to encourage investment in the urban fabric. In retrospect, it can be questioned whether these projects were such a good

interpretation of these profiles. Many such projects were basically office developments. They have led to the cities becoming more alike as opposed to more distinct, raising the degree of competition between them in the office market. However, the profiles have resulted in a more coherent set of plans. They have stimulated the regional and municipal authorities and the business community to sit down and think about opportunities for future development (Voortgangsrapport Stedelijke Knooppuntenbeleid, 1996; Buck Consultants International, 1995).

Looking at the economic developments now taking place in the cities, the anticipated knock-on effects of this policy have been rather disappointing. The comparative level of amenities is no higher than it was to start with. Nevertheless, the western part of the Netherlands has a relatively large number of European head offices and distribution centres. The level of employment — which is what matters at the end of the day — varies within and between the urban nodes. Growth in employment in the central areas of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague lags behind, while that in the surrounding municipalities is higher than the national average. Growth is also lower than average in Maastricht/Heerlen and Eindhoven. The urban nodes in the Randstad have an extra handicap: heavy traffic on the main routes leads to serious congestion, making accessibility a serious problem in these cities. There are few indications that this situation will improve in the near future. The extra investments which have been made available by the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management in a recently launched plan called "Working Together for Accessibility" are heavily oriented towards public transport. Moreover, they are too small to bring about significant improvements.

Key projects

Comparing the Netherlands with London, Brussels or Paris, all prime sites for international company headquarters, reveals that the Netherlands does not possess a truly prime site. The original idea was that such a prime site would have to be established. There is really only room for just one such site in the country. That idea proved not to be politically feasible as no choice could be made between the three candidates Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Prime sites are now no longer mentioned. The key projects, though, have been successful. An initial ten key projects for urban renewal have been designated, although with no pretensions of international stardom. These are large and complex investments involving a partnership between public authorities and private investors. Usually, the projects are a combination of infrastructure, residential development and business premises on a strategic site in the heart of the city.

How has this worked so far? Designation as a key project meant that central government considered itself to be responsible for coordinating and promptly executing the various decision-making procedures involved. For each project, there was one central contact person, the national coordinator. These have played a considerable role in broadening support within central government and gaining agreement among the various government departments. This public-private collaboration is set down in the form of voluntary agreements between central

government and private investors. Financial resources for the key projects are distributed through the established channels and assessment procedures. Setting up one executive agency for a key project has not yet overcome the problem of each government authority operating from its own narrow viewpoint, resulting in different sets of priorities. Despite this, the key projects can be considered a success. All parties were involved in the preparation of plans from an early stage. The agreements have ensured a balanced result. And the area-based approach has taken an important step forward (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, 1996).

Main ports and transport corridors

The second Dutch trump card is the fact that the Netherlands is a distribution country. The VINEX therefore proposes special investments in main ports, the connections to the hinterland, and the main transport corridors.

The main ports -- Amsterdam Airport (Schiphol) and the Port of Rotterdam (the Rijnmond area) -- are the two main motors of the Dutch economy (Figure 2). "Main port" is originally a transport concept. The VINEX takes up this concept and broadens it into a spatial/economic concept. Schiphol and Rijnmond have both been given a dual role: strengthening the main port function, while at the same time bringing about improvements in the quality of the environment. The PKB states that central government, along with the provinces, municipalities and those involved from the business community, will draw up action plans for the two main ports. This has already been done. In the VINEX, central government has indicated in broad terms what should be achieved and how. The subsequent negotiations have carried this through, but in very different ways for Schiphol and Rijnmond. The Schiphol Action Plan has been through the PKB procedure and was adopted at the end of 1995. The Rijnmond plan has never been given a legal status but did lead to a management agreement between the various government authorities involved. At the moment, there are 47 projects running under this agreement, the most important being the research into a possible extension of the port onto a second area of reclaimed land, the "Second Maasvlakte". Current policy for Rotterdam has its roots in the Seaports PKB of 1984, which was later included in the Second National Traffic and Transport Structure Plan, 1992.

Passengers and goods arriving at the main ports must be able to move on quickly to further destinations inland. The plans for the Betuwe Railway Line, designed for freight traffic to the Ruhr, have been approved by parliament. Objections have been fully heard and the planning procedures completed. The discussions in the lower house on the alignment of the High Speed train from Schiphol to Brussels, Paris and London were brought to a close at the end of 1996 with a decision. A second line, to Berlin, is also on the cards. The decision-making for large-scale infrastructure projects was brought under a separate act of parliament in 1993, the Routing of Infrastructure Act (Tracéwet). The intention was to create a single framework for decision-making, instead of separate spatial planning and transport procedures as before, which then had to be combined at the end. Experience is currently being obtained with the execution of the act.

"Main transport corridors" is a wider concept. It covers more than just the main connections to the European hinterland. These corridors serve not only the international distribution sector but also connect the urban nodes to each other and to important centres in neighbouring countries. Investments to be made in the road network are set out in the Multi-Annual Programme for Infrastructure and Transport. The Dutch road network may have been expanded, but it is still inadequate to meet demand during the rush-hour. At the current levels of investment, which are comparable with neighbouring countries, traffic jams will hardly become a thing of the past. Spatial planners are therefore arguing for the maintenance and expansion of public transport. Although a relatively large amount is being invested in public transport, this is only having a minor impact on the volume of traffic. This issue continues to cause concern.

Waterland Netherlands

According to the VINEX, the Netherlands can also present another face to the international community. The Netherlands possesses beautiful water-rich areas and opportunities for recreational boating. These are to be further developed, so adding to the country's qualities as a site for international companies. The objectives of Waterland Netherlands lie in developing better coordination between the provision of water-based amenities, nature, tourism, recreation and transport, and in habitat restoration and the creation of a network of recreational waterways, making it possible to sail from north to south and from east to west. Waterland Netherlands was presented in a very open-ended way in the VINEX — more of an idea than a policy concept. It consisted only of a vague scenario; there were no policy instruments to bring it about. In 1993, the RPD proposed a set of ideas in a discussion document, but since then nothing concrete has emerged from the original idea. The theme, however, has been further expanded in two regional elaborations of national policy, for the Green Heart (of the Randstad) and the River Zone (Figure 1). The subject has proved to be an inspiring one, though. It keeps popping up in policy documents from other ministries and in regional and local plans. The water sports elements of Waterland Netherlands can be found in the Ministry of Economic Affairs' Tourist Policy Document, and it appears in the National Structure Plan for the Rural Areas (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries), albeit under another name. A plan to remove all the obstacles in the recreational waterway network during the period up to 2010 has been drawn up by an independent non-profit organization, which also coordinates the implementation and financing. Money from both government and private sources is being pooled in order to raise the quality of the network.

Regional assets

There are large differences between the economic structures, employment levels and gross regional products of the Dutch regions. The core economic area of the country is expanding eastward out of the Randstad to incorporate an area which, together with the Randstad, has been dubbed the "city ring" in the VINEX. This does not mean, however, that there have been any large shifts of activity. Despite the strong

growth in employment in the Province of North Brabant in the south-east and the Province of Gelderland and the Twente region in the east, the bulk of employment is still based in the Randstad. Growth in the peripheral regions lags behind. Central government wanted to get the message clearly across that it does not consider the development of the regions to be its responsibility as long as the quality of life is not under threat. The regions have to do the best job they can themselves, seize the opportunities for economic development, and use the planning system to accommodate these opportunities. Examples of this are the regional elaborations of national policy for the area between Groningen, Assen and Drachten in the north, and the Maastricht/Heerlen-Aachen-Liège triangle in the south, the freight distribution centre in Venlo/Tegelen and the container terminal at Nijmegen.

Urban development policy

The Netherlands is becoming more crowded. Suitable land for residential and industrial development is increasingly hard to find, while the massive increase in car traffic threatens to choke the cities and access roads. This, coupled with the migration of both residents and businesses to the periphery, threatens to undermine the social and financial resource base for urban amenities. Despite many years of restrictive urbanization policy, development is still encroaching upon the remaining open areas. The VINEX sets a target of 880,000 new houses between 1995 and 2010, of which about half a million will have to be built in the Randstad. Given this situation, the key question facing urban planners was how to find land for homes, businesses, amenities, green areas and infrastructure, and how to generate the right mix and overall design. The VINEX policy-makers envisioned a compact urban structure which would meet three quality objectives:

- channelling personal mobility;
- generating a broader social and economic resource base for urban amenities;
- protecting the remaining open areas.

These quality objectives reflect current concerns about spatial quality.

The VINEX strategy for achieving this spatial quality consists of three main elements:

- Each region must provide for its own housing and industrial development needs. In other words, a conscious decision has been made to keep the distribution of the population over the country unchanged: no overflows from the Randstad into Brabant and Gelderland.
- New urban development must be concentrated within urban regions, with a restrictive policy on development to protect open areas outside these regions.
- A set of ground rules has been made for urban-regional planning and design, specifying location criteria for new residential, business and large-scale recreational developments.

Attempts have been made in the past to channel growth from the Randstad to other

regions of the country. Assuming that the bulk of employment opportunities will remain in the Randstad, the government has decided to accommodate the (growth in the) population of the Randstad within the region. The proportions of new housing development allocated to the various regions has remained more or less constant since 1980; this distribution pattern is therefore being continued. The VINEX defines the Randstad more sharply by clearly delineating the Green Heart on the map (Figure 1). The VINEX concentrates development within the surrounding urban ring (no seepage inwards or outwards) by designating buffer zones. For Brabant, though, where the urban regions are also starting to coalesce into larger urban structures, the VINEX does not indicate a particular development strategy at the level above the urban region, nor does it do so for the rest of the country. Urban development policy finally took shape in the form of designated VINEX housing areas, the restrictive planning policy, and the ABC location policy for businesses and services (see later in this paper).

Much more recently, towards the end of 1996, the government sent a position statement to parliament which sets out its vision for the further development of the Randstad and Green Heart ("Randstad en Groene Hart: de Groene Wereldstad") (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, 1996). This was prompted by a variety of new ideas for planning the Randstad and Green Heart. It also reflected the concern that the Randstad will be unable to deliver sufficient room for economic activities and therefore fall behind in the international marketplace. There was a perceived need for a clear political standpoint in which priority is given to a coherent national policy for the Randstad and Green Heart, and which could provide guidelines for the coming investment decisions to be taken in the spring of 1997. This document is a further confirmation of VINEX policies.

The housebuilding targets of 654,500 homes by 2005 and a further 226,000 homes between 2005 and 2010 appear mighty indeed. But in fact even more houses (1,747,100) were built in the period between 1980 and 1995. Neither was the strategy new. The urban development policy of the VINEX builds upon a long tradition of concentrating urban development in urban regions, controlling suburbanization, and prohibiting urban development in certain areas, of which the Green Heart is the most well known. The Second National Policy Document on Spatial Planning (1966) (Tweede Nota, 1966) already viewed the core city and the surrounding urban centres as a single coherent urban structure. That structure was seen as one which needed to be strengthened to ensure that the residential, business and social service functions could be organized at the scale of the city region. Initially, the accent lay primarily on the prevention of uncontrolled suburbanization by building new overflow settlements some distance from the central city. Later, in the urban development part of the Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning (1976) (Derde Nota, deel 2), the idea of the small urban region was adopted, in which the distance between the periphery and the centre could be travelled by bicycle. In 1983 (revision of the National Structure Plan for the Urban Areas), there were fears of a mass exodus from the cities. The emphasis was shifted to maintaining and improving the social and financial resource base for the central

area by confining new development to existing urban areas as far as possible: the compact city (Galle, 1990).

Designation of VINEX housing areas

In the VINEX, this policy can again be found in the criteria for identifying large areas for new residential development. Building within existing urban areas is preferred, followed by sites at the edge of the urban area. In the last resort, sites further afield may be considered, but again these must tie into existing urban centres. That appeared to make the choice more difficult than it needed to be because more distant sites proved to be the quickest and cheapest to develop. However, the conviction that this was the only way to achieve the desired spatial quality won the day. Other location criteria in the VINEX are: accessibility by regional public transport and by bicycle; coherent planning of homes, workplaces, amenities, recreational areas and infrastructure; no encroachment into open areas; and ease of implementation. Where links to existing public transport facilities are not possible, public transport arrangements are to be made in time so that residents are not forced to use their cars. Initial car use has the accompanying danger that drivers might not change their travel behaviour when public transport is in place. More than in the past, the VINEX places emphasis on the construction of new infrastructure at the scale of the urban region.

The urban region remains at the core of urban development policy in the VINEX. Urban regions must be able to function as coherent entities; all aspects of daily life should be catered for within the region. This means that the city region will have to offer its residents a sufficiently varied range of housing, employment opportunities and amenities. Besides the provision of high-quality public transport, this is expressed through a compulsory ratio of 30% subsidized housing and 70% non-subsidized housing. For a thorough description of the performance of this policy we refer the reader to the article by Needham and Zwanikken elsewhere in this issue. We restrict ourselves here to a short description of the policy efforts and their results.

For the first time in the history of Dutch planning, urban development policies are being executed through the use of voluntary agreements between central, regional and local government. These contracts contain agreements on development sites which meet central government criteria, the number of houses to be built, the granting of government funds for the purchase of land and preparation of the site, the provision of infrastructure, and soil remediation. The seven major urban regions negotiated directly with central government for money and sites (Figure 2). Although the urban regions were not themselves administrative units, they had to operate as a unit for the first time. Such a coordinated performance by central government departments had not been seen before either. The reason behind this new approach was that central government was no longer prepared to bear the financial risks associated with large developments. The state wanted to pass this on to lower-level authorities and market players. In its place, the government offered a guaranteed lump sum finance for a period of ten years. Backed by this form of security from central government, it was thought that the municipalities and market

players would be able to come to an agreement.

The negotiations struggled on for four years, but were eventually brought to a successful conclusion. The development sites meet central government criteria. Two-thirds of the homes will be built in or on the edge of the city, and performance against the other criteria has been satisfactory (Needham et al., 1994). The remaining 19 urban regions do not negotiate directly with central government. Financial arrangements for these are conducted between central and provincial government, the latter approving the sites in accordance with central government criteria. Central government has also agreed reductions in housebuilding in the "restrictive" areas; we return to this again later on. In the Green Heart, additional agreements have been made on future expansion of industrial estates and greenhouse horticulture.

The agreements cover urban development policy up to 2005. Even before the agreements were concluded, doubts arose as to whether all the necessary land could be found. New forecasts of housing need were higher than before and there was more demand for industrial sites. The government eventually decided to look into possible new housing sites. But these were only to be released after 2005 in the fear that these sites might otherwise be developed before the hard-won sites adopted in the agreements. The results of this process were formalized in a partial revision of the VINEX, which will have to go through the PKB procedure (Actualisering, 1996). The main elements of the revision are the determination of the national housebuilding programme of 226,000 homes to be built between 2005 and 2010, and stipulation of a set of central government guidelines within which the regions can identify sites themselves. These criteria rule out a number of potential developments desired by the regions, including the Grote Polder development near Leiden, to which the region still clings. Part 1 of the PKB, the policy proposals, was presented to the Lower House in December 1996. It is expected that after the participation and consultation procedures, the cabinet's decision (Part 3) will be presented to parliament towards the end of 1997.

On the basis of all this, it would appear that a sufficient number of acceptable sites can be found within the regions, including the Randstad, to meet their own housing needs. Only the difference of opinion between central government and the Leiden region remains. The feared migration away from the Randstad need not therefore take place. So far, there has also been less movement of business activity away from the Randstad than expected. Although industrial activity is growing faster in Brabant and Gelderland than in the Randstad, this is not due to the relocation of existing companies from the Randstad. On average, two-thirds of the housing stock is concentrated in the city regions: 75–80 per cent in the Randstad provinces, 50–60 per cent in the east and south, and 15–20 per cent in the north. This is a fairly constant pattern which will hardly be altered by the new stock to be built. We have no clear picture of the diversity in housing stock, employment and amenities that would be required within each urban region in order to provide for the citizens in day-to-day life. Government involvement with housebuilding has been drastically reduced while housing policy has been decentralized. The only central government regulation concerning the new developments is that there must be a ratio of 30 per

cent subsidized housing to 70 per cent non-subsidized housing. In the heavily urbanized areas of the Randstad and Brabant, proximity appears to have been replaced by accessibility as a structural factor. This shift would be accompanied by an alternative network of connections, covering more than one urban region, required for day-to-day life. As yet, no information is available on this. What we do know is that in the urban regions in the Randstad, 80 per cent of travel-to-work journeys take place within the region.

ABC location policy for businesses and services

New in the VINEX is a location policy for businesses and services. The so-called "ABC policy" was launched under the motto "the right business in the right place" (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment *et al.*, 1991). Businesses and services with a higher-than-average concentration of employees and visitors belong on sites with good access to public transport routes, such as in city centres near the central railway station (A location) or otherwise near a peripheral public transport node (B location). Sites which are easily accessible by road (C locations) should be reserved for companies and services which rely strongly on road transport, and should not be squandered on other businesses. The ABC policy is therefore an additional design principle for urban regions.

The ABC policy has now become an established part of Dutch spatial planning, despite the considerable resistance it has engendered, particularly in areas where traffic congestion is not yet perceived to be such a problem (Spit and Lensink, 1994; Van der Sluis, 1996). Accessibility profiles for industrial estates and business properties have been completed for most of the country. Implementation of the policy should have been relegated to newly set up transport regions, but these were not viable organizations and have since been abolished. The ABC policy has now been adopted in provincial regional plans, and the provinces, backed by the national planning inspectorate, are responsible for its implementation (Rijksplanologische Dienst, 1994). However, there may be good reasons to depart from this policy in favour of other interests. The most contested aspect of the policy concerns the stringent parking conditions for A and B locations. Companies locating there were to be allocated very little parking space in an attempt to further discourage car use. This parking policy has now been relaxed somewhat in most regions.

Restrictive planning policy for open areas

The reverse side of the city regions are the open areas, which are under severe development pressure. The goal of the so-called restrictive policy is to protect these areas from encroachment by new development. The VINEX distinguishes between national and provincial restrictive areas (Figure 2). In the national areas absolute limits to development have to be established around existing centres. No new development is allowed beyond these contours. The best-known restrictive area is the Green Heart; other examples are the coastal dunes and the Veluwe (an area of heathland, forest and agricultural pockets) in the middle of the country. The Green Heart is subject to the most severe planning restrictions. The area itself has been defined in detail. Limitations have also been placed upon the expansion of

greenhouse horticulture. In provincial restrictive areas, the expansion of urban functions is only permitted within regional overflow centres. Even here, the province has to define ultimate building contours for all rural settlements. The buffer zone policy can also be considered as a special form of restrictive policy. The goal of this policy is to maintain the open zones in between the urban regions through active central government investment in their development (supporting ecological and recreational uses) and in some cases even by purchasing land.

The restrictive policy is not popular. For rural communities, freezing new development is tantamount to decline, and they are not willing to agree to that. Moreover, central government has not kept to its own methods of restricting new development, but has accepted other methods proposed by the provinces (numbers of houses and growth classes). In the Green Heart, agreements have been reached with the provinces on the numbers of additional homes which may be built and how this is to be calculated and registered by the provinces. The tightening up of the restrictive policy announced in the VINEX has so far not amounted to much (Mastop et al., 1995). The partially revised version of the VINEX again takes up the contour approach to define the limits of new development in the restrictive areas. The provinces, which are in principle free to define their own form of restrictive policy, have to come up with a policy for the provincial restrictive areas which is as clear to implement and enforce as the contours. (See also the paper by Needham and Zwanikken elsewhere in this issue.)

Spatial quality

All in all, we can conclude that the strategy set out in the VINEX to meet the central policy goals (find space for urban functions and ensure a coherent overall design) has generally been successful. But does the resulting spatial structure deliver the required spatial quality? There are grave doubts about the effects on mobility. We can produce no figures to support a view on whether it will improve the resource base for urban amenities. We may assume that the addition of large concentrations of new residents within the urban regions will provide the right conditions to achieve this. The preservation of open areas will continue to demand a great effort. Evaluation of the restrictive policy for the Green Heart has shown that after a long period of steady, higher-than-average increase, population growth has been stable from 1980 on -- although in the larger centres this remains above the national average. The reduction in growth has been caused by considerable outward migration from the Green Heart combined with a lower inward migration. The relatively young population of the larger centres is responsible for a rapid population growth which will only partly be absorbed by the urban regions (Van Straten et al., 1996).

Rural areas

The planning remit for the rural areas identified in the VINEX was to find a way to manage rural areas in a sustainable way by harmonizing the spatial, water management and environmental aspects of rural land uses. The following three

objectives were identified:

- 1 To enhance spatial diversity;
- 2 To protect and improve environmental quality;
- 3 To maintain the quality of life in rural areas.

The first Dutch rural planning policy appeared in the Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning (work started on this in 1973). As this was separate from the urban policy, there were two separate policy documents. These have been brought together in the VINEX. The two policies have not been integrated, though -- there can be no more difficult task than this in spatial planning. Urban and rural planners follow different courses of study, work in separate departments, and each have their own language. Urban planning has traditionally been done "inside" the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment; housing and spatial planning have been the responsibility of one minister since 1946. Housing has been and still is, although now to a much lesser degree, subsidized by the housing department within the ministry. Subsidization provided an opportunity to maintain a grip on the implementation of spatial planning policy. Rural areas are governed by the agriculture, recreation and nature policies of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. This ministry, unlike the planning ministry, has a budget for the implementation of its policies, which it does on its own terms. If spatial planning is to have any influence over rural development, it has to come up with a convincing argument. Sometimes this works; often it does not.

Three sorts of policy have been devised to achieve the three already mentioned objectives. These are the rural strategies, the agriculture and environment policy, and the quality-of-life policy.

Rural strategies

The rural strategies were introduced to tackle the first objective, namely to enhance spatial diversity in rural areas. These strategies replaced the zoning policy in the Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning, which was introduced in 1977. The rural strategies were based on developments in various sectors. One of these is agriculture, the biggest land use in the rural areas. For some time now, this sector has been subject to many developments: intensification, increase in farm scale, new and broader mixes of farm activities, and extensification. Other sectors undergoing change are nature (which is subject to habitat restoration), recreation, and forestry; developments in these areas are also claiming land in the countryside. The Nature Policy Plan of 1989 launched the National Ecological Network. This envisions the creation of a network of interconnected core nature areas and wildlife corridors throughout the country. A policy was needed in order to coordinate all these various developments.

Since the end of the eighties, there has been an increasing desire to bring about a greater degree of harmony between spatial planning, water management and environmental policy. The first National Environmental Policy Plan, published in 1989, addressed issues of sustainability and environmental quality in rural areas. The

Third Policy Document on Water Management, also published in 1989, introduced the water system approach, which offers a means of adopting area-based water management policies (groundwater and surface water systems). These policies were to be integrated within the spatial planning framework. The rural strategies were unveiled in the "supplement" part of the Fourth National Policy Document. They set out to achieve the following:

- to offer prospects for spatial and economic development in the long term; and
- to create the conditions for the sustainable development of the countryside through the harmonization of spatial planning, water management and environmental policies.

The rural strategies have to be implemented by the other levels of government. In other words, rural policy has to be incorporated in regional plans and take final legal shape in local land use plans.

At this time, the provinces themselves were already working out their own type of rural strategies and they continued with that effort. The new central government policy did not offer much support. It was not accompanied by any specific policy instruments and was framed in general terms. The ministry tried to bridge this gulf by funding planning studies for nine selected regions. These shed light on the problems of working the strategies through. We touch upon two of these problems here. First, provincial regional plans cover only a ten-year period, whereas developments in rural areas need a longer-term view. Second, it was not clear how the strategies could be used to guide developments. Rural areas have already been divided up for policy reasons into other entities, such as the National Ecological Network, which can count on financial support. The rural strategies lack such (financial) backing. At present, all regional plans work with one form of rural strategy or another. Although the developmental approach is attractive, it conflicts somewhat with the character of regional plans. Those plans indicate the types of permitted development or land use to which proposals must conform. Almost all provinces address the issue of harmonizing spatial planning, water management and environmental policy. The RPD monitors the implementation of policy through the planning inspectorate (Katteler and Borghouts, 1993; Katteler and Borghouts, 1994; Driessen *et al.*, 1995; De Lange, 1995).

Agriculture and environmental policy

The second policy objective for the rural areas is the maintenance and improvement of environmental quality. This involves a convergence of environmental and spatial planning policy. The area-based spatial planning and environmental policy was introduced in the initial policy proposals for the Fourth National Policy Document on Spatial Planning in 1988. It was also presented in the National Environmental Policy Plan of 1989. The proposal was that provincial and municipal authorities would voluntarily draw up action plans for 11 areas in cooperation with central government. In six "polluted" areas (where there is a heavy burden on the environment), these action plans would lead to improvements in environmental quality and promote the desired physical development. The environmental quality within five "clean" areas would be maintained. Two of the "polluted" areas and all

the "clean" areas lie in rural areas. In these two polluted areas (Gelderse Vallei and De Peel), the soil, groundwater and surface water are heavily contaminated. The problem is due to the considerable amount of manure produced by the many intensive livestock farms (mostly pig farms).

This policy was further elaborated in the Area-Based Environmental Policy Action Plan (1990), now referred to as the "ROM area-based policy" (ROM = *ruimtelijke ordening en milieu*: spatial planning and environment). It was a new, rather experimental approach to policy-making. The prime goal was to get government and interest groups around the table and break the stalemate in policy development and implementation. Moreover, the quality of solutions to both planning and environmental problems (separately and in combination) would be better than if policy were pursued as before. Distinctive methods were devised which were geared to the specific conditions in each of the areas. It soon became apparent that the socio-economic prospects for the inhabitants of these areas would have to be brought into the policy-making process. People are prepared to work on solutions to environmental problems, but they also want to be assured of an income. Money from the various government departments was made available for this policy. The exact amount of money and the particular departments involved depended on the problems specific to each area. Action plans have been drawn up for all but one of the areas. Furthermore, a start has been made with the implementation of policy for the clean areas -- namely, the Green Heart, Midden-Brabant and Mergelland -- and two polluted areas, Gelderse Vallei and De Peel. The implementation programme continues to be an exploratory process. The policy will be evaluated half way through 1997. It will then be clear if any lessons can be learned and how the process can be improved for the future (Glasbergen and Driessen, 1993).

Quality of life in the rural areas

The third topic in the VINEX is the quality of life in the rural areas. The section devoted to rural areas in the Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning (Derde nota, deel 3, 1977) contained a policy for housing and social services. The spatial planning decision (1983) states, among other things, that social cohesion and amenities should be maintained and improved wherever possible. Responsibility for this policy lay with the provincial and municipal authorities. The former Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Culture also played a role in promoting the welfare of residents in villages and hamlets. Central government planning policy, therefore, simply posed that people should not become socially isolated because they are physically isolated.

In the second half of the eighties, employment continued to decline in certain rural parts of the country. The economically active members of the population moved out and the availability of everyday amenities worsened. A four-year quality-of-life project was initiated in 1991 to improve this situation. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sport provided financial support for research, plan-making and project implementation, which would otherwise not have taken place. Six areas were designated, most in the north of the country and one in the south-west (Figure 1).

Two others in the east were added later. Ideas were to come from the provincial and municipal authorities in question, stimulated by central government. The effects of the project were largely psychological. Apart from the area in the province of North Holland, growth in employment lagged behind the national average. Shops and services continued to disappear and public transport experiments had to be stopped. Nevertheless, some advantage was gleaned in the form of a number of facilities for recreational use of the countryside. Also, residents did become aware that their region was "alive". For example, they saw the development of a number of interesting new initiatives in the areas of social services and cultural activities.

The planning and welfare ministries ceased to be active in these areas in 1995. At present, rural areas can apply for aid from the European Regional Development Fund and under the banner of "rural regeneration" (*plattelandsvernieuwing*). The latter is not a VINEX activity but a collaborative effort between four ministries -- Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries; Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment; Public Health, Welfare and Sport; and Economic Affairs -- and two organizations, the Inter-Provincial Consultative Body and the Association of Dutch Municipalities. Efforts are also being made to develop innovative ways for local government to tackle problems as well as to design tailor-made solutions to land use/water/environment and quality-of-life problems. Use is being made of the experiences gained during the quality-of-life and ROM projects. The local population comes up with ideas and government helps to put these into practice with subsidies and good advice (Leefbaarheid Platteland, 1995).

Policy options for the everyday living environment

In effect, spatial planning makes itself felt at the level of the everyday environment. This is why the Dutch system attaches great importance to plans and policies generated by the municipalities. The municipalities receive money for this from central government via the municipal fund.

The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment's involvement in the everyday living environment has a "hands-off" character. The ministry is concerned with patterns of development which occur in many municipalities. Central government has various means at its disposal to assist municipalities with their policies: (changing) regulations, creating favourable financial conditions, introducing administrative conditions for cooperation between government and private initiatives, and providing support in the form of research and demonstration projects. Examples from the past are the urban renewal programme and the stimulation of new high-density developments.

The VINEX sets out to maintain and improve spatial quality. One of the effects of this effort will be to improve the competitive position of the country in international markets. The everyday living environment is the scale at which both inhabitants and visitors directly experience spatial quality. It is the country's calling card, as it were, which is why the VINEX devotes so much attention to the issue. Spatial quality is expressed in terms of five basic values: a well-maintained physical

environment, a clean environment, a safe environment, a choice of physical environments, and spatial diversity.

- For a *well-maintained physical environment*, it is necessary to maintain and manage the built environment. This also applies to landscapes.
- For a *clean environment*, existing pollution must be cleaned up and (further) pollution of soil, air and water must be prevented.
- A *safe environment* involves first and foremost combating crime and designing the public domain in such a way that people feel safe.
- To guarantee a *choice of physical environment*, government must prevent the formation of ghettos in the cities and isolation in rural areas.
- *Spatial diversity* implies avoiding monotony.

Moreover, the Netherlands has to "*get in lane for the 21st century*." In other words, patterns of developments should always be flexible -- adjustable to the needs of the future.

Demonstration plans

Examples of central government support for local policy in the VINEX are the previously mentioned ABC location policy for businesses and services and the quality-of-life project for rural areas. One of the policy instruments for improving the quality of the everyday living environment introduced in the VINEX was the "demonstration plan" project. We go into this in more detail because it has been successful in stimulating ideas for the design of the everyday living environment. Between 1989 and 1993, central government, the municipalities, water authorities, the provinces, consultants, trusts, other independent organizations and (residents) associations were invited to send in ideas for improving the everyday living environment. There were five themes:

- The public domain (maintenance and design);
- Post-war housing estates (raising the quality of urban design);
- Recycling (sound use of groundwater and surface water, energy and waste materials);
- Rural areas (new ideas for plan generation);
- Work and mobility (influencing the development of personal mobility).

Of the 600 ideas submitted, more than 50 have been worked up into demonstration plans with financial support from the ministry. Two million guilders were available each year for preparing the plans and publicizing them. At least three-quarters of these plans have been implemented.

The demonstration plan project is an example of influencing development through communication, forging links between the goals of central government and those pursued by others. The strategy was successful because it focused on specific target groups at a time when they were making decisions affecting the everyday living environment. Central government policy was not imposed upon them; rather, it was adapted to support the work they were doing themselves. A study into the impact of the project has revealed an important effect, namely, the generation of ideas. Without the project, about 40 per cent of the ideas behind the selected plans would never have seen the light of day. The project has led to further enrichment of

half of the selected plans. Just 10 per cent would have gone ahead anyway without the project. An interesting phenomenon is that many ideas which were not selected during the project have found alternative routes for development (Kolpron Consultants, 1995). This project has allowed central government to help others choose their own direction for development.

Other projects

Following the demonstration plans, two other projects have been introduced which adopt a similar style. The ministry's "local quality" project (1994-1997) promotes the sustainable quality of the everyday living environment in the VINEX housing areas through the exchange of knowledge and experience. A new project, soon to get under way, is the interdepartmental incentive scheme for "high-density multi-functional land use". That project is geared towards combining and/or concentrating housing, commercial uses and infrastructure, without damaging the functional and future value of the site or the quality of the physical environment as perceived by the public.

Concluding remarks

The Netherlands has long been a decentralized unitary state. Accordingly, the emphasis of the spatial planning system lies with the municipalities. The VINEX has extended the role played by central government. On the one hand, it involves the state more in the implementation of policy (for example, the VINEX agreements and the ABC location policy for businesses and services). On the other hand, the VINEX expresses views about a number of central government tasks relating to very large-scale developments (Schiphol Airport, the High Speed railway connections and the Betuwe freight rail line). The Betuwe railway line has been controversial but is gradually becoming more accepted and appreciated. The VINEX has placed the framework for central government investments on the agenda and has considerably strengthened the process of balancing these to fit in with the desired pattern of development. In addition, a number of the area-based elaborations of policy resulting from the VINEX have proved to be successful. They have now become an integral part of spatial planning practice in the Netherlands.

The VINEX has generated considerable debate. Heated discussions took place in parliament on the expansion of Schiphol, the High Speed train, the Betuwe railway line, the Randstad, the Green Heart and many more topics. These debates have been reflected in the media, where spatial planning is a regularly recurring topic. Innovative ways of designing and building housing areas have been partly stimulated by the demonstration plan project.

What can be said about the success of these policies three years on from the publication of Part 4 of the VINEX? The widening of the traditional domain of urban and rural planning policy to include consideration of the Netherlands in an international context and of the everyday living environment has been a success. This has been discussed above. The traditional task of central government has been

the direction and coordination of planning processes. Channelling the flow of investment is a new and promising activity introduced by the VINEX. Examples of this are the transport connections to the European hinterland, the voluntary agreements for large housing areas, the ROM area-based policy, and the urban node policy, which for certain reasons has been less successful than the others. In cases where little or no money is available, it immediately becomes much more difficult to turn policy into action; experience with the rural strategies and restrictive policies is evidence of this. A second factor which has impeded the execution of policy is the limited degree of communication between the partners who have to implement the policies. In addition to the importance of financing, it is important that policy be clearly formulated and that the necessary information be made available. The ABC location policy for businesses and services exemplifies this approach. A great deal of energy has been invested in the publication of information and discussion between those involved in order to get the policy off the ground. Another example of good communication with interested parties and those directly involved is the demonstration plan project; in this case, the effort was supported by at least some funds. These new methods of working prompted a review of the planning system. One of the proposals is to devise a less complicated and less time-consuming procedure for deciding upon complex projects involving a large number of parties.

A new policy document is currently under preparation. In that document, the relation between spatial planning and environmental policy will receive thorough attention. It will probably be ready in the year 2000. The VINEX has taken up the challenge thrown down by the changing position of the Netherlands in a united Europe. This will remain a challenge, and will also be addressed in the forthcoming policy document. In the VINEX this was only expressed in terms of the competitive position of the country. A number of other aspects have been raised in three economic scenarios developed by the Central Economic Planning Office (Centraal Planbureau, 1992, 1996). Further European integration, for example, will make the harmonization of policy at the European level more important.

The VINEX focuses on developments which will bring about significant changes in land use patterns. A selective approach to policy will be a powerful tool to deal effectively with this. Maintaining a grip on the right lines of development remains a challenge for the next policy document. The fact that this is still largely a matter of chance was dramatically highlighted by the shock waves in the planning community caused by the (threat of) flooding in 1996. The main rivers and their forelands (the land between the river and the dikes) had drifted temporarily into the policy background, but are now right back in the spotlight.

Experience with the VINEX has led to a very important discovery. An area-based approach to tackling planning problems, in which all those involved sit around the table and work together to find solutions, achieves more than imposing solutions from above. It is to be hoped that the next policy document will continue along this path. Central government should also be selective in making policy. The provinces and municipalities ought to be responsible for all those tasks which they are able to carry out. This is the most appropriate approach to take within the Dutch tradition of government, that of the decentralized unitary state.

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