

## Technical Summary of the Draft Spatial Policy Document

---

### PART I – ANALYSIS, CHALLENGES AND VISION

#### **The Spatial Policy Document**

The Spatial Policy Document is the new National Environmental Vision and is directed at the national level, covering European Netherlands including the territorial waters, as defined in the Environment and Planning Act. The Spatial Policy Document concerns the living environment in the broadest sense. In other words, not only traditional spatial topics, but also safety, health, environment, landscape and urban values, cultural heritage, nature and climate. And not only buildings, infrastructure and land use, but also subsurface space, the North Sea and the air.

Making coherent spatial choices lies at the heart of the Spatial Policy Document. In doing so, the document provides direction for the spatial development of the Netherlands, with the ultimate aim of achieving an optimal balance between protecting and utilising our physical living environment. In line with the Environment and Planning Act, this means achieving and maintaining a safe and healthy physical living environment and high environmental quality. To achieve the policy objectives of the Spatial Policy Document, the choices will be elaborated in an implementation agenda, ongoing and new programmes, projects and, where necessary to safeguard a national interest, in rules that directly apply to provincial environmental regulations, water authority regulations, project decisions or municipal environmental plans. At the same time, sufficient scope and opportunities remain for decentralised considerations and area-specific solutions.

#### **Challenges**

The daily needs of what may in future be twenty million Dutch citizens place demands on the organisation of our country. Where and how we make space for living, working and accessibility, for generating energy and for economic development. The space allocated to agriculture and nature, and how we manage water and soil, are equally important. Population and economic growth require space for living, working and leisure. We will need to build more than one and a half million homes to eliminate the current shortage of 400,000 homes and to meet the larger and changing demand. Social and commercial facilities, recreational green areas, transport infrastructure and utilities will need to grow accordingly.

National networks of high-voltage power lines, pipelines, waterways, motorways and railways ensure a reliable energy supply, swift travel from home to work and the delivery of goods to shops or parcels to households. In recent decades we have expanded and reinforced these national networks. Yet, due to rapid population and economic growth, bottlenecks have nevertheless arisen in the national road network, on the railways and in the electricity supply. From the perspective of strategic independence and security of supply of energy and goods, we are working hard to harness new energy sources. The energy system will need to be adapted accordingly and certainly expanded. Places where the economy grows and where talent is attracted are indispensable for the strategic autonomy of our continent and our country.

We will need to create space for strengthening flood defences and for water itself. To withstand heavy rainfall and to ensure sufficient freshwater supplies during periods of drought. We must also use the available freshwater more sparingly and it must be clean. Water challenges cannot be considered separately from those relating to soil. Both water and soil are directly linked to agriculture and food security. Dutch agriculture is among the most productive in the world. The sector is vitally important for the whole of Europe. To remain future-proof, it will need to adapt to changing conditions in the water and soil system. Finally, national security, the protection of our own territory and that of our allies, requires additional space for Defence in the Netherlands.

Due to increasing pressure on space, tensions arise in some areas between societal demand for food, space for housing, work and mobility, and the pursuit of a healthy living environment. In fact, population and economic growth over recent decades has generally placed the spatial system of our country under increasing strain. Addressing the major spatial challenges mainly requires a long-term, consistent and integrated effort. By looking ahead and making structuring choices now, we can prevent future crises.

## **Vision**

We want to make our country strong and future-proof. This concerns all Dutch citizens. The challenges we face towards 2050 are large and diverse, while the societal and global context is changing rapidly. This is a challenge, but also an opportunity to give new impetus to the quality of the living environment.

We want to offer future generations of Dutch people a good quality of life, with an attractive, safe and healthy living environment. The current uncertain times confront us with a hard truth: our ambitions can only be achieved if we ensure a strong Netherlands within a strong Europe. Yet an international outlook requires attention to the local environment. To make the Netherlands stronger as a whole, we must build on our existing strengths and qualities and seize opportunities locally.

Every region must contribute to addressing the challenges in the physical living environment. This means keeping strong what is already strong and strengthening what needs to be stronger. At the same time, this offers perspective to each region. The Spatial Policy Document aims to do justice to the distinctive strengths of different parts of the Netherlands. So that each region has a fitting role in the functioning of our country and regions complement each other. This will only succeed if we work together, with society and with fellow governments.

Not choosing is not an option and will instead lead to shifting burdens, inefficient use of space and a loss of quality of life. And, in the longer term, to higher costs. That is why the Spatial Policy Document presents choices with a planning horizon of 2050, while also providing a perspective towards 2100.

The major spatial challenges call for new solutions and a fair distribution of scarce space, balancing benefits and burdens.

We therefore apply three guiding principles in this Spatial Policy Document:

1. Multiple use of space: Space is scarce and valuable. Wherever possible, we seek opportunities for combining functions and for efficient use of space while maintaining spatial quality.
2. Area characteristics are key: We protect and utilise what exists and develop new, distinctive spatial quality. We work on solutions that are appropriate locally and regionally.
3. Preventing the shifting of burdens as much as possible: We do not simply pass problems on to other areas or to future generations, and we strive for a fair distribution of benefits and burdens.

The Spatial Policy Document connects the most closely interrelated sectoral topics within four integrated themes and makes national choices for the whole of the Netherlands in coherence: **Housing, Work and Accessibility**, **Economy and Energy**, **Agriculture and Nature** and **Water and Soil**. Each of the four themes has its own internal logic, but they are also interconnected, so that together they provide direction for the development of our country.

**Map:** Vision map (with both legends)

## **PART II – INTEGRATED THEMES AND SECTORAL ELABORATION**

### **Housing, Work and Accessibility**

#### **Outline of the theme Housing, Work and Accessibility**

The Netherlands is one of the most dynamic parts of Europe. People and businesses are drawn by the jobs and high quality of life in our attractive cities and regions, the opportunities for personal development, the well-educated workforce and the reliable infrastructure. Accommodating this growth is vitally important for the regions, our country and Europe as a whole. The influx of people and businesses into our metropolitan regions forms the engine of a development from which the whole of the Netherlands will ultimately benefit. If the Netherlands continues to grow moderately towards 20 million inhabitants by 2050, around 1.65 million additional homes will be needed by then. This represents an increase of twenty percent on top of the eight million homes currently in

our country. Population growth also creates demand for more space for work, facilities, sport and green, accessible places for recreation and experiencing nature. It also requires the expansion of infrastructure for mobility, energy and water. Towards 2050, we want to bring more balance to the development of our country by making the best possible use of the strengths and opportunities of the different Dutch regions. This can only be achieved if they remain attractive for their residents. Growth and development should therefore enhance the quality of the living environment.

**Map:** The Netherlands in North-Western Europe

**Map:** Integrated Theme Map

### **Direction for the Future: Distinctive Regional Development with the VISTA Strategy**

Each region has its own characteristics, challenges, ambitions and corresponding development opportunities. In the short term, we implement agreements already made, for example on housing construction. For the longer term, the national government wants to work with all regions on distinctive development directions. To this end, we distinguish several spatial-economic strategies in broad terms. Factors considered include location within the national mobility network, urban mass, growth in population and jobs, social challenges, economic sectors, the presence of knowledge institutions and opportunities and constraints arising from landscape, water and soil. Combined with the ambition for urban and regional development towards 2050 outlined above, this leads to five strategies: Strengthen, Initiate, Stimulate, Transform and Accommodate. All of these require an active role from the national government, in cooperation with regions, provinces and municipalities.

- **Strengthen** in areas with less extensive autonomous economic and population growth, focusing on development of housing and employment suited to the size and scale of the region, in line with regional demand while preserving and developing facilities. (Regions: North Holland-North, Zeeland, Groene Hart, Rivierenland, Achterhoek, area Harderwijk-Zeewolde, South-East Drenthe, Noordoostpolder and Friesland)
- **Initiate** in areas further from the core economic area, with potential for a step-change in economy and population. Here we focus on developing the regional economy, linked to knowledge institutions and campuses, followed by more opportunities for large-scale housing construction, amenities, etc. (Regions: Groningen-Assen, Twente and South Limburg)
- **Stimulate** in areas near the core economic core, where growth is already occurring. The focus here is on allowing these areas to continue growing in balance (housing, work and facilities), with particular emphasis on further stimulating growth in employment. (Regions: Zwolle, Lelystad, Stedendriehoek, Arnhem-Nijmegen, North Brabant (outside the Eindhoven region) and North and Central Limburg)
- **Transform** the spatial-economic system of the Southern Randstad. The focus here is on making the economy future-proof, enhancing the attractiveness of the living environment and at the same time continuing to meet housing demand through future-proof urbanisation. (Region: Southern Randstad)
- **Accommodate** the strong growth of economy and population in the most dynamic metropolitan regions. The focus here is on continuing to facilitate strong growth, but in balance with the quality of the living environment, combined with growth in facilities and infrastructure and with attention to housing affordability. (Regions: Amsterdam, Utrecht and Eindhoven)

**Map:** VISTA (Versterken, Initiëren, Stimuleren, Transformeren, Accommoderen = Strengthen, Initiate, Stimulate, Transform, Accommodate)

The spatial outlook for Housing, Work and Accessibility towards 2050 is developed from building blocks at the (inter)national, regional and local level. These building blocks provide guidance at all three levels for sound spatial planning. From making use of national connections and hubs to strengthen networks, through appropriate spatial strategies to reinforce different types of regions, to shaping the living environment in ways that improve environmental quality as much as possible and respect local characteristics. With these building blocks, we also give further spatial direction to the elaboration of the strategy for distinctive regional development strategies. Choices and directions for Housing, Work and Accessibility are made on the basis of three spatial principles: proximity of housing, work and facilities; efficient use of space; and strengthening and utilising existing qualities.

## **Building Block: A Development-Oriented National Network**

Thanks to good connections within the Netherlands and with other countries, all regions will soon reinforce each other. Cities located at road and rail junctions will form places within regions where housing and employment are concentrated. This will allow us to build on existing infrastructure and enable its efficient expansion. This will lead to a Netherlands consisting of spatially and economically complementary regions that are well connected to one another. Within those regions, we aim for proximity of housing, work and facilities. We choose compact and well-connected urbanisation locations, so that more people and businesses genuinely contribute to greater regional strength. In our metropolitan regions, we provide more space for the growing demand for urban housing and employment. This is accompanied by a major role for cycling, walking and public transport. Through inner-city densification, medium-sized cities will also offer more urban quality, but remain less dense in character. Here, we create space for housing with work and facilities nearby, at short distances from railway stations and motorway exits. New large-scale housing locations are situated within existing large and medium-sized cities or directly adjacent to them. In this way, we accommodate the growth challenges of our metropolitan regions while also harnessing the potential of the dozens of medium-sized cities elsewhere in our country.

By organising housing and employment development in this way, we ensure a wide range of residential and working environments and avoid inefficient use of space. The costly infrastructure for transport, energy, waste and water is utilised as effectively as possible. We also ensure that space is reserved for agriculture and nature and by taking account of water and soil challenges, the Netherlands remains safely habitable. Throughout the Netherlands, there is further scope for small-scale densification and expansion of towns and villages. This is also necessary to meet the changing demand for housing for the elderly and single young adults, for example. However, small-scale developments in small communities are primarily intended for local demand and to strengthen those communities.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- In addition to the seventeen large-scale housing areas previously designated, four new large-scale housing locations are now identified where national coordination is necessary: Hengelo/Enschede, Apeldoorn, Helmond and Alkmaar.
- We designate regional large-scale housing locations in metropolitan centres, central cities and regional hubs. In selecting and developing these locations, the competent authority must always make integrated spatial considerations, as intended in this Spatial Policy Document, with regard to interests such as water and soil, the economy including (strategic) business parks, infrastructure or agricultural land. The ultimate goal is to create housing while preserving as much existing economic activity and business parks, spatial quality and vital urban functions as possible. And where business parks are transformed, they must be compensated where necessary.
- We encourage the development of small-scale and medium-sized housing locations (including 'adding a street' and 'pave it up') in areas with more limited housing demand, as a supplement to the existing stock. In addition, across the Netherlands a small neighbourhood (up to 100 homes) can be developed within or adjacent to an existing settlement, provided it fits the spatial context.
- National investments in large-scale, structure-strengthening infrastructure align with this urbanisation effort and the VISTA Strategy.
- We are preparing a long-term implementation strategy for infrastructure and housing construction, with options to implement and finance subsequent investments in large-scale infrastructure.

## **Building Block: Strong and Distinctive Regions**

Every region contributes in its own way to a strong and prosperous Netherlands. This also requires the regions themselves to be robust. The rapid growth of Amsterdam, Rotterdam–The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven creates opportunities for the nearby urban regions of Zwolle, Stedendriehoek, Arnhem–Nijmegen and the Brabant urban belt. Initially, in terms of housing. However, thanks to a larger and well-educated population, it will also benefit the economy later. The major challenges facing our country also offer opportunities for regions further afield. In areas

such as North Holland North, Fryslân, Southeast Drenthe and Zeeland, there is scope to take on various national tasks, such as defence, the energy transition, innovative industry and associated housing construction. In particular, Groningen-Assen, Twente and South Limburg have a solid basis for a genuine step-change, thanks to their large cities, numerous businesses, universities and favourable location in the European core network of motorways and railways. We use housing construction and economic development to make existing cities and their regions stronger and future-proof. We make the best possible use of what already exists and ensure it benefits from what is newly added. Together with provinces, municipalities and regions we work on differentiated approaches to long-term spatial-economic development in relation to housing, based on the different opportunities and characteristics of regions. We do this based on spatial preconditions, such as the type of urbanisation locations, the mobility network and energy networks. National investments in regional large-scale structure-enhancing infrastructure align with this differentiated approach.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- We aim for a regional balance between housing and employment, with space for work growing alongside regional development.
- Together with provinces, municipalities and regions, and based on the VISTA Strategy (Strengthen, Initiate, Stimulate, Transform and Accommodate), we pursue differentiated approaches to long-term spatial-economic development in relation to housing. We do this based on spatial preconditions, such as the type of urbanisation locations, the mobility network and energy networks.
- By allowing green space to grow alongside overall urban development, we aim to ensure sufficient high-quality green areas in and around the city, and to strengthen connections with the landscape and nature outside the city.

### **Building Block: Complete and Pleasant Living Environments**

Ultimately, all spatial ambitions come together in the immediate living environment. The corresponding choices in plans and projects should improve the quality of the living environment as much as possible. The design of the local living environment also has a major influence on the feasibility of ambitions on a regional and national level. This is precisely where opportunities lie for combining functions and for innovative solutions. The variety of residential-work environments is a major added value. The supply of certain residential-work environments also influences the socio-economic functioning of cities and regions. Where different residential-work environments are or can be developed depends heavily on their location: in a big city or in a village, central or on the outskirts, near a major railway station or mainly accessible by car. We want to make best use of existing and new infrastructure and create as much proximity as possible between housing, work and facilities. We are committed to making existing urban areas future-proof through sustainability measures, restructuring, densification, improvements to public space, climate adaptation and more.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- In urban development, we aim to achieve quantitative and qualitative ambitions with locally appropriate deployment of residential-work environments.
- In realising new developments, we choose compact development, efficient use of space and proximity of housing, work, facilities and green areas.
- We are committed to making existing urban areas future-proof through sustainability measures, restructuring, densification, improvements to public space, climate adaptation and more.

### **Economy and Energy**

#### **Outline of the theme Economy and energy**

In these uncertain times, economic strength and strategic autonomy are more important than ever, as is enhancing security and resilience against external threats. We aim for a broad and varied economic base that provides prosperity for Dutch citizens and contributes to the strategic autonomy of Europe as a whole. In the coming decades, we will make our energy supply more

sustainable. We will also bring national defence up to standard. We will do this in balance with the living environment.

The coming decades present a unique opportunity to bring these goals closer, due to several major challenges. To achieve this, our basic approach is to save and use (environmental) space, energy and resources as efficiently as possible, to make better use of and protect existing (environmental) space, to optimise demand and supply in coherence, and to strategically expand (environmental) space.

This applies at all scales: from local business parks and regional business ecosystems to national corridors, transhipment hubs and the major energy-intensive industrial clusters. In elaborating this, we distinguish five spatial building blocks. With these building blocks, we give direction to the development of physical locations, various networks and their interconnections. Together, they form the spatial system that is crucial to the direction for economy and energy. At local level, we describe directions and choices for future-proofing all (business) sites for economy, energy and defence. At regional level, we describe directions and choices for strengthening regional ecosystems for economy and energy. At national level, we describe directions and choices for protecting and further developing (inter)national corridors and transhipment hubs, for making energy-intensive industrial clusters more sustainable, protected and stronger, and for optimally utilising the North Sea.

**Map:** The Netherlands in North-Western Europe

**Map:** Integrated Theme Map

### **Building Block: Future-Proofing All Business Parks**

Business parks provide jobs locally, provide space for activity, innovation and transitions, and play an important role in the regional and thus our (inter)national economy. We therefore value existing business parks and want to retain them for the economy, energy and defence. Business parks with unique characteristics receive additional protection. For example, those that are multimodally accessible, large-scale, water-related, or suitable for enterprises with environmentally burdensome functions. By making better use of business parks, the space available is used as efficiently as possible. Optimising the use of existing and new sites also creates opportunities for nature-inclusivity, climate adaptation and the energy transition: smart local energy generation and exchange with nearby residential areas (including in 'Energy Hubs').

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- We choose to protect business parks as much as possible, to make better use of them, and to expand them strategically where necessary.
- We pay particular attention to protecting sites with unique characteristics, such as those hosting activities with high environmental impact, large-scale and water- or quayside sites, and sites with good multimodal accessibility
- Strategic expansion will take place if the planned capacity of existing business parks is insufficient for the development of economic activity, locally, regionally or supra-regionally, within the (sub)region.
- We ask decentralised authorities to work with us in this effort.

### **Building Block: Strengthening Regional Ecosystems**

Each region has a unique spatial and economic potential to contribute to regional and national earning capacity and to the achievement of major societal challenges and transitions. To harness regional development opportunities for economy and energy, we build on regional characteristics. The Netherlands has a diversity of ecosystems. How a regional ecosystem functions depends both on local connections with the local market and workforce and on (inter)regional connections with more distant companies and markets. In addition, geographical location in relation to infrastructure networks, energy availability, freshwater supply and the quality of the living environment, for example, also play a role in the development opportunities of regional ecosystems. Together with the regions, we will work on strengthening the regional economy and further developing the energy system based on region-specific opportunities and the regional coherence between energy demand, supply, storage and transport. We examine how each region,

on the basis of its own strengths, can contribute to a strong Netherlands. As the national government, we will support this development by contributing directly to the necessary conditions. Among other things, by focusing on the right infrastructure for energy, goods and raw materials.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- We ask provinces and municipalities to take up their spatial-economic role in regional cooperation, based on the opportunities and characteristics of the region. The four principles of spatial strategy can form the basis for this (efficient utilisation, protection, supply and demand in conjunction and strategic expansion). The coherence with the development of the decentralised energy system is also important.
- As the national government, we contribute by considering the coherence between regions, ensuring sufficient space for economic activities that are harder to accommodate, and by helping to provide the necessary conditions.
- For decisions concerning the defence industry, we also align with the opportunities of regional spatial-economic ecosystems, regional characteristics and jointly desired development directions.
- In the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agenda, the national government and regions jointly aim for greater coherence between demand and supply and for harnessing regional opportunities and characteristics for the decentralised energy system. In the decentralised energy system of the future, much more local exchange, generation and storage will take place, and supply and demand will be better aligned.

### **Building Block: Protecting and Further Developing (Inter)national Corridors and Transhipment Hubs**

International transport of goods and raw materials by waterways, railways and roads gives the Netherlands a distinctive position within Europe. But this system is also crucial for supplying companies and consumers within the Netherlands with goods and raw materials. The transition to a circular economy and a sustainable and reliable energy system also has an impact on the development of (inter)national networks for energy, goods and raw materials. The corridors, the transport network and (military) transit points in ports also contribute to military mobility and tasks under Host Nation Support. We are committed to protecting and utilising the existing corridors and clusters for transport and transhipment of goods and raw materials, and to their further development through targeted investments to provide the right conditions. We prioritise the substantial expansion and reinforcement of energy infrastructure because it is an important precondition for other developments. In doing so, we also look at where acceleration is possible in processes and procedures. We want to encourage transport via pipelines in order to minimise above-ground transport of hazardous substances. The Delta Rhine Corridor is an important new link for this purpose.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- Protecting and better utilising the current corridors and clusters by further developing them and adding economic and social value through national investments that provide the appropriate conditions.
- The national government will designate a number of national hubs for protection, development and search areas for strategic expansion. These designations will be accompanied by necessary cross-government investments and spatial reservations.
- We prioritise the challenge of solving grid congestion and substantially expanding and reinforcing our energy infrastructure. This is a precondition for achieving ambitions in areas such as housing, mobility and the economy.
- The national government will facilitate the Delta Rhine Corridor to build new underground infrastructure between the Port of Rotterdam and the German border near Venlo. By 2032/2033, the DRC will include one hydrogen pipeline and two CO<sub>2</sub> pipelines.

### **Building Block: Making Energy-Intensive Industrial Clusters Sustainable, Protected and Stronger**

Energy-intensive industry is concentrated in the five industry clusters North Netherlands, North Sea Canal Area, Port of Rotterdam-Moerdijk, Zeeland-West Brabant and Chemelot in Limburg. These are important hubs in an international network for the transport of goods, raw materials and

energy carriers. They also host key basic industries that underpin strategic autonomy and the wider economy in the Netherlands. These clusters are therefore of national importance for our economic development and for the energy and resource transition. We regard these clusters as nationally significant and will work with the parties within them on a long-term strategy, with a strong coordinating role for the national government. Within and, where possible, around the clusters, port and industrial functions and energy functions will be given priority. We will explore courses of action for making better use of space, for strategic specialisation and for strategic expansion of the clusters. Establishing the physical boundaries and environmental contours is one way to exercise stronger control over achieving the ambitions for the clusters.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- The five energy-intensive clusters are areas of national importance. We will strengthen national coordination of spatial planning in and around the clusters. Together with the clusters, we will draw up a sharper long-term strategy, ensuring that crucial (national) functions are safeguarded.
- The physical boundaries and environmental contours of the industrial clusters will be established by the national government.
- Port and industrial functions and large-scale energy functions will be given priority within and, where possible, around the five industrial clusters over other functions.
- We will promote more multifunctional use of space, more intensive use of existing plots and more efficient use of new plots. We are committed to handling high-value sites carefully, such as those with environmental zoning or multimodal accessibility.
- In view of expected scarcity of space, we will examine (potential) strategic expansion sites. Concrete projects or explorations are already under way in Moerdijk, the Port of Rotterdam, the North Sea Canal Area and North Netherlands.

### **Building Block: Optimal Use of the North Sea for the Economy and Energy**

The North Sea is one the most intensively used seas in the world. For the economy and energy, it is vital to make optimal use of the space on the North Sea for these functions, while carefully balancing them with other tasks at sea, including nature and fisheries. Space on the North Sea is scarce: it is needed for wind energy, shipping, fisheries, aquaculture, nature, cultural heritage, aviation, military training areas, sand extraction, oil and gas production, CO<sub>2</sub> transport and storage, hydrogen transport and storage, energy and data cables, recreation and securing infrastructure.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- Safeguarding and reserving sufficient space for the development of a new energy system, with a major role for offshore wind, but also for the necessary cables, pipelines, storage and, potentially in future, conversion to hydrogen.
- Providing space for the landing of new subsea data cables and the connection of digital and telecommunications cables.
- Preserving and expanding the current space for Defence (NPRD), both for training and for the defence of territorial waters and critical infrastructure.

### **Agriculture and Nature**

#### **Outline of the theme Agriculture and Nature**

Agriculture and horticulture in the Netherlands are vitally important for our food supply, our economy and as stewards of the Dutch landscape. Nature is vital for a healthy and liveable country, and biodiversity is our natural capital. Sound natural systems contribute to clean air, healthy soil and clean water, and biodiversity is essential for agriculture, for example for pollination and disease control. Strengthening biodiversity is therefore necessary, as is reducing nitrogen and adapting to changing conditions in the water and soil system. We are working towards future-proof agriculture and horticulture with a good long-term perspective and towards robust and healthy nature. A framework will be introduced for the withdrawal of agricultural land, under which public authorities must first examine possibilities for combining functions or making land available for other uses. This framework will be laid down in administrative agreements with public authorities, without legal anchoring and with limited bureaucratic burden. We adopt a broad concept of nature

to achieve robust and healthy ecosystems: restoring nature and linking nature development to other functions. In this way, we limit the required expansion of nature areas. At the same time, we will make use of the characteristics and qualities of the valuable cultural landscapes for this development. This is elaborated in four building blocks: good regional coherence of agriculture and nature with water and soil, agricultural areas with multiple tasks, clustering of greenhouse horticulture, and a robust natural system.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- A framework will be introduced for the withdrawal of agricultural land, under which public authorities must first examine possibilities for combining functions or making land available for other uses. This framework will be laid down in administrative agreements with public authorities, without legal anchoring and with limited bureaucratic burden.

**Map:** The Netherlands in North-Western Europe

**Map:** Integrated Theme Map

#### **Building Block: Regional Coherence of Agriculture and Nature with Water and Soil**

Farmers, horticulturists and nature managers will increasingly need to consider changing conditions resulting from climate change, among other factors and adapt land use accordingly in order to remain future-proof. The conditions of the water and soil system, the historically developed characteristics of agriculture and the landscape and the challenges for nature, water and climate differ from one area to another. It is therefore crucial that this is addressed in an area-based manner, drawing on knowledge from the regions themselves. To achieve this, we work with regional approaches based on the structure of agriculture, the changing conditions of the water and soil system, and the landscape characteristics of areas. This is done in close cooperation with provinces, municipalities and water boards, and with the involvement of farmers.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- To start from the conditions of an area and adapt functions where necessary, we work with regional approaches based on the structure of agriculture (including supply chains), better aligned with conditions from the water and soil system and the landscape characteristics.
- Sectors and agricultural entrepreneurs must consider changing water and soil conditions (including increasing drought and/or salinisation) by making changes in their own business operations. The national government does not prescribe how.

#### **Building Block: (Agricultural) Areas with Multiple Tasks**

There are (agricultural) areas that face combined and therefore complex challenges. Issues such as water and soil quality, climate and nitrogen converge in these areas. The problems in these areas are therefore greater and more urgent. This is the case around Natura 2000 sites, in peat meadow areas, in stream valleys and in groundwater protection areas. In these areas, we must find a good balance between the different challenges and functions. In such areas, agriculture will contribute more to strengthening nature and landscape, for example, and to improving water quality, hydrology and achieving climate goals. As the national government, we encourage this movement, among other things through the system of agri-environmental management. This is tailored to each area and worked out jointly with other authorities and with the involvement of stakeholders from the area, including farmers.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- As the national government, we encourage this movement through the system of agri-environmental management, which is already widely used. An expansion of a total of 180,000 hectares of the area under agri-environmental management is planned. This is on top of the current 161,000 hectares. The deployment of agricultural nature management will be concentrated in these areas.
- **Around Natura 2000 sites:** Around Natura 2000 sites, it is important that land use is compatible with the conditions required for the Natura 2000 site. In part of the nitrogen-sensitive areas, additional efforts will be made in the immediate vicinity to reduce nitrogen emissions to the air. For many nature areas, nitrogen is not the only pressure factor. Area-specific contributions must also be made to other pressures, such as hydrology. This

includes reducing the inflow of nutrients and crop protection products into the area via groundwater and surface water, raising water levels and reducing water abstraction needed for healthy nature.

- **Peat meadow areas** We want to preserve the low-peat landscape for the future. Agriculture remains an important economic and cultural-historical foundation of this landscape. The peat meadow area will continue to be an important agricultural area. In peat meadow areas, in view of European water, nature and climate objectives and to counteract negative effects of and displacement caused by subsidence, we are moving towards higher (ground)water levels. It is important to continue offering prospects to farmers in the area. By responsibly moving towards higher water levels with groundwater between 20 cm and 40 cm below the surface, depending on soil composition and water system conditions, subsidence is minimised and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced. Importantly, differentiation is possible depending on soil composition, water system conditions and local needs. This means that in exceptional cases, a motivated deviation below the 20 to 40 cm benchmark may be made. Public authorities, particularly the water boards responsible for water level decisions, will implement this with the involvement of farmers and others. After all, between them they have the necessary knowledge of the area. This area-based approach will also contribute to achieving a reduction of 1 megaton CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2030 from greenhouse gas emissions from peat soils.
- **Stream valleys:** In many stream valleys, achieving legal standards for surface water quality is under pressure. Meeting these standards is important for the vitality of stream systems. Under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), a deadline of 2027 applies. Reducing leaching and runoff of nutrients, veterinary medicines, biocides and crop protection products from agriculture is essential. Stream valleys are in some cases also important for conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites. In stream valleys, we partly look at adjustments in agricultural land use in upstream and downstream areas. The starting point is stimulating measures. More extensive land use with less fertiliser and crop protection, maintaining grassland, in some cases converting arable land to grassland, and creating the right conditions for nature in these areas help to comply with the WFD. In some situations, there are also opportunities for expansion of riparian woodland, linked to implementation of the Forest Strategy. The exact measures required differ per area. In addition, large-scale restoration of stream valleys on sandy soils is pursued to improve water quality and infiltration. The starting point for this is the development of buffer zones on both sides of the stream. This contributes to achieving water quality goals combined with other objectives in nature and water storage. Provinces have scope to decide on agricultural and/or spatial measures to meet the challenge. Local elaboration will determine more concretely where land use adjustments are desirable.
- **Groundwater protection areas:** We aim to improve groundwater quality in groundwater protection areas to safeguard our drinking water sources. Within this context, we prioritise areas of great complexity and multiple challenges. This prioritisation takes place in collaboration with provinces and water boards. For nutrients, this concerns the 34 most vulnerable groundwater protection areas, mainly on sandy and loess soils, where efforts have long been under way to reduce nitrate leaching from agricultural sources through changes in agricultural management. In addition, in various groundwater protection areas there is a task to reduce the use of crop protection products. We do this by working with provinces and water boards to develop measures that reduce nutrient run-off and crop protection, depending on the challenge in each area. The effectiveness of measures differs from area to area and therefore requires an area-specific approach. Another measure in this context is raising groundwater levels in the higher sandy soils by, as a starting point, 10 cm to 50 cm. Soil composition, water system conditions and area-specific needs are important preconditions. Here too, public authorities, with the involvement of farmers, will implement area-based raising of groundwater levels, with motivated deviations possible in exceptional situations.

#### **Building Block: Clustering of Greenhouse Horticulture**

We are committed to a durable, strong and innovative greenhouse horticulture sector that produces in a climate-neutral and circular way. To achieve this, we focus as much as possible on development through intensification, innovation and clustering in the existing greenports and cluster areas. We also encourage innovative linkages between greenhouse horticulture and other sectors to make optimal use of residual flows and available resources.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- For greenhouse horticulture, we focus as much as possible on growth through intensification, innovation and clustering in the existing cluster areas.
- If fragmented areas need to be replaced, decentralised authorities will first examine strengthening existing clusters and only then consider possibilities for new concentration areas at suitable locations, other than existing industrial or business parks, where geothermal energy is available and/or residual heat is released.

### **Building Block: Robust Natural System**

A robust and resilient natural system is essential for a healthy and safe living environment, food production and drinking water supply. For the development of a robust natural system, alongside restoring existing nature areas, we will place greater emphasis on combining nature development with other tasks and functions. In this way, we limit the required expansion of nature areas.

Examples include combinations with space for rivers, regional water systems (green-blue networks), developments in peat meadow areas, UNESCO World Heritage sites, Defence training areas, or green space in and around cities.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- We will bring nature into good condition through robust nature areas on land and water, and ensure a good basic quality of nature throughout the rural area.
- In conservation and strengthening, we will look at the actual state of nature.
- We build on existing agreements concerning the Nature Network Netherlands and the Forest Strategy. Any additional spatial task for the Forest Strategy will be limited as much as possible by focusing on conversion (revitalisation), expansion within the NNN and strengthening green-blue networks.
- We will achieve nature objectives partly through nature-inclusive land use and combinations of functions. Key solutions include strengthening the quality of existing nature, increasing diversity and reducing fragmentation. A substantial part of this involves agricultural nature. We will also look at opportunities to combine nature with other tasks, such as Defence training areas, green space in and around cities and measures for the main water system such as flood protection, space for rivers and large water bodies. Through the Programme for Large Water Bodies, nature in the major waters will be enhanced and water quality and ecosystems improved by reintroducing natural dynamics in part.

## **Water and Soil**

### **Outline of the theme Water and Soil**

Water safety and freshwater supply are crucial for the Netherlands, a country that lies largely below sea level, is crossed by major rivers and is increasingly facing the effects of climate change. Through technical interventions, we have been able to create a high degree of water safety and protection against flooding. KNMI's most recent climate scenarios show that extreme weather events are expected to become more frequent. We already see the effects in the form of increased flooding from extreme downpours on the one hand and longer dry periods with high evaporation and freshwater shortages on the other. This can cause major disruption, increase the risk of flooding and damage and have a significant impact on accessibility, liveability and safety in the Netherlands. To cope with these major challenges in the future, it is important to take proper account of the water and soil system in the way we plan and organise land use in our country. The way we organise land use must increasingly take changing conditions into account. This requires future-proofing new developments and, in some cases, adaptation of existing land use or business operations.

We therefore aim to make the water and soil system more robust and future-proof. By aligning more closely with the natural functioning of the system, long-term liveability is safeguarded, while at the same time strengthening the current system to optimise freshwater distribution, for example. We choose a coherent and more regional approach to these challenges. By bringing freshwater demand and supply into regional balance, we can make more efficient and effective use of the main water system.

To achieve these ambitions, an approach is needed at all scales. This is elaborated in three building blocks that provide direction and on which our decisions will be based. These building blocks also have a strong interconnection and interaction between them. At national level, we work on a future-proof main water system, at regional scale, we ensure regional systems are in balance and at the local level, we ensure climate-adaptive design of all functions.

**Map:** The Netherlands in North-Western Europe

**Map:** Integrated Theme Map

### **Building Block: Future-proof Main Water System**

Water safety and freshwater supply are of crucial importance for the Netherlands. The major rivers, large water bodies, primary flood defences and the North Sea coast safeguard much of the inflow and outflow of water and water safety, in conjunction with the regional water systems. The main water system also has economic importance (navigation) and ecological value. Climate change requires that sufficient space remains to maintain inflow, outflow and storage capacity, to strengthen dykes, and where necessary to enlarge space for rivers.

We therefore ensure that the outer-dyke areas and the (inner-dyke) space around flood defences remain free of spatial developments that would hinder future reinforcement of the defences, and we reserve space for river widening to maintain discharge and storage capacity and to enable necessary reinforcements. This will ensure the main water system remains future-proof. We improve coherence with regional water systems to prevent local flooding, to retain as much water as possible and to reduce the load on the main system. We also identify large-scale areas for peak water storage, for example near the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal and the North Sea Canal, and optimise the buffer function of the IJsselmeer, Markermeer and Volkerak-Zoommeer as the most important freshwater storage areas.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- To ensure future space for high-water discharge and to prevent flooding, sufficient inner and outer-dyke space is reserved for the main water system. Such space is needed, for example, for river widening and dyke reinforcements. No new development will be allowed in the floodplains covered by the Policy Guideline for Major Rivers (BGR). Temporary functions or appropriate combinations of functions, such as energy infrastructure, may be permitted under conditions. This prevents future river widening or dyke reinforcement from becoming unnecessarily expensive or even impossible.
- To counter flooding, including drainage from the regional system into the main water system, sufficient local space is reserved for (peak) water storage, including the designated search areas near the North Sea Canal and the Amsterdam-Rhine Canal.
- The main water system will take on a different relationship to the regional water systems: This means, among other things, that in principle no investments will be made in technical measures to bring (fresh) water from the main water system to areas where this is not sustainable (in the long term).
- For our freshwater supply and water safety, it is important that the current freshwater reserves and storage capacity of the IJsselmeer and Markermeer are not excessively reduced and that opportunities are explored to increase buffer capacity. Caution is therefore required with land reclamation and building outside the dykes. Inner-dyke development should remain inner-dyke. At the same time, housing initiatives along the edges of the lakes are possible. The current rules in the Environment Quality Decree (Bkl) provide municipalities with the framework for this.

### **Building Block: Balanced Regional Systems**

The regional water and soil system, in conjunction with the main water system, plays a crucial role in the supply and discharge of (fresh) water. At the regional level, we see an accumulation of water challenges that must be addressed in coherence to safeguard all water and soil challenges and to keep the relationship with all spatial functions future-proof. We also see major regional differences in physical conditions, the combination of challenges and spatial developments. Regional spatial strategies will therefore be needed to make coherent choices and to guide developments.

Freshwater demand and the prevention of flooding play a central role in this. Saving water and

retaining as much regional water as possible is by definition a specific regional task. Adapting functions to changing water and soil conditions and finding combinations of functions can also be particularly effective at this scale.

We will therefore develop strategies with the regions that take account of changing water and soil conditions whilst addressing major societal challenges, based on regional knowledge of the water and soil system. Regions will become more responsible for their own freshwater supply by retaining, storing and saving more water. We will also protect groundwater protection areas for drinking water production and stimulate the development of new drinking water sources to meet rising demand. In addition, we will improve conditions for agriculture and nature and ensure that large new water users are located in suitable locations.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- Since freshwater is no longer self-evidently available everywhere and at all times, it is important that, in line with the preferred order of regional water management, efforts focus on saving, retaining and storing. This must be based on the regional systems.
- Freshwater demand and supply will be brought more into balance regionally.
- Given the limitations on freshwater availability, all water users must take account of and themselves implement measures to be more resilient to periods of extreme drought, water shortages, flooding and salinisation. For example, by adapting land use or business operations.
- In spatial planning, water demand must better align with the (declining) availability from the system. Large new water users will not be planned in locations where long-term freshwater availability cannot be guaranteed. For example, large electrolyzers are already preferably planned on the coast, where salt and brackish water can be desalinated and used.
- We will harness the potential of soil and subsoil for, among other things, soil energy systems, geothermal energy, extraction and storage of minerals and CO<sub>2</sub>, and the construction of infrastructure. By spatially organising the subsoil, it can be sustainably used for activities such as geothermal energy, while at the same time protecting drinking water sources, groundwater reserves and groundwater quality.
- It is important to protect groundwater protection areas for drinking water production, to improve groundwater quality and to develop additional new drinking water sources.
- We will pursue the restoration of stream valleys on sandy soils to improve water quality and infiltration. The starting point for this is the development of buffer zones on both sides of the stream.
- We will raise groundwater levels in the higher sandy soils by, as a starting point, 10 cm to 50 cm. Soil composition, water system conditions and area-specific needs are important preconditions.
- We will also improve hydrological conditions and limit groundwater abstraction in and around Natura 2000 sites on the higher sandy soils. This combination of measures serves to prevent desiccation.
- In peat meadow areas, we will move towards higher (ground)water levels in view of European water, nature and climate objectives and to counteract negative effects of and displacement caused by subsidence. It is important to continue offering prospects to farmers in the area. By moving towards higher water levels with groundwater between 20 cm and 40 cm below the surface, depending on soil composition and water system conditions, subsidence is minimised and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

### **Building Block: Climate-adaptive Design**

It is important to keep our daily living environment healthy, safe, attractive and affordable. Climate change is causing us to increasingly face extreme weather conditions, such as long periods of drought or, on the contrary, abundant rainfall. We will increasingly face flooding, heat and drought. This has a major impact on the living environment and poses risks to the economy, health and safety, among others. Climate change requires an adaptation of the design of our living environment (existing built-up areas and new locations for housing, work and business activity) in order to remain future-proof and to safeguard affordability (consider mortgages, insurance, municipal charges, etc., but also infrastructure). A timely and coherent approach (many effective approaches are available) ensures an attractive and affordable living environment in the long term as well.

We therefore provide more space for water storage and more greenery, so that locally we are prepared for more extreme weather. To this end, we will make use of the Spatial Assessment Framework for Climate-adaptive Built Environment and the National Yardstick for a Green Climate-adaptive Built Environment. For the built environment, the Spatial Assessment Framework serves as a supporting instrument for the national government, provinces, municipalities and water boards in the choice of location and design of new spatial developments. Specifically for new developments or redevelopment, the National Yardstick provides guidance for (re)developing a green, climate-adaptive built environment. This is not so much about building-technical requirements for the building itself, but primarily about area measures and the integration of the building. In line with the Spatial Assessment Framework, we give more attention to areas that can flood more than 20 cm, subsidence areas, infiltration areas and vulnerable urban areas with free drainage. Vital and vulnerable functions, such as hospitals and energy and telecommunications facilities, are preferably planned in places that are less vulnerable to flooding and subsidence and have minimal flood risks.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- In planning and developing the physical living environment, systematic account is taken of the current and future effects of climate change.
- Consequence limitations in the choice of location for spatial plans are explicitly identified in advance and incorporated into spatial considerations.
- Vital and vulnerable functions, such as hospitals, are preferably planned in places that are less vulnerable to flooding and subsidence and have minimal flood risks. The design is at a minimum aimed at preventing failure during (severe) flooding and at rapid recovery after a flood.
- For the built environment, the Spatial Assessment Framework for Climate-adaptive Built Environment supports climate-adaptive development. It is intended as a supporting instrument for the national government, provinces, municipalities and water boards in the choice of location for new spatial developments.
- Specifically for new developments, the National Yardstick provides guidance for developing a green, climate-adaptive built environment. This is not so much about building-technical requirements for the building itself, but primarily about area measures and the integration of the building.

### **Sectoral Elaboration: Cultural Heritage, Environment and Defence**

The choices and directions from the integrated themes carry through into sectoral choices and directions. Those for cultural heritage, environment and defence are highlighted below.

#### **Cultural Heritage**

The national policy on heritage and the living environment focuses on involving cultural heritage at an early stage in developments and challenges. In this way, cultural-historical values are taken into account from the start of planning, heritage is integrated into plans as much as possible and unnecessary delays are avoided. This improves the predictability and lead time of new-build, restoration and redevelopment projects, as well as developments related to the energy transition and defence. Cultural heritage values and heritage are visibly and consciously used as a tool to give identity and history to places where new construction and other developments will take place. An area-based approach offers opportunities both to achieve policy objectives and to safeguard and strengthen the diversity of towns, villages and landscapes. To enhance environmental quality, we shape transitions in the physical living environment in such a way that they contribute to existing quality and/or add new qualities. At the same time, we recognise that the challenges are so great that this will not succeed everywhere, and we acknowledge that heritage and landscape are not statistical, so qualities may change in some places.

The national government is therefore developing a more detailed approach in the Heritage and Living Environment Programme (Aanpak Erfgoed en Leefomgeving). This programme specifically addresses the treatment of protected (world) heritage (archaeology, monuments, UNESCO World Heritage, protected town and village views and post-war reconstruction areas) and valuable cultural landscapes in times of transition. We do this based on the following principles:

- Supporting the realisation of transitions in the living environment.
- Introducing no additional regulations.
- Making maximum use of existing regulation to work in a development-oriented way.
- Within the existing regulations, efforts are being made where possible to make processes more predictable and simpler and to accelerate implementation. We do this ourselves and encourage other authorities to do the same.

*Concrete choices involved are:*

- Focus on increasing predictability, simplification and acceleration within existing rules to speed up procedures and provide clarity about what is and is not possible
- Work in a development-oriented way in valuable cultural landscapes, including through the Heritage and Living Environment Programme, Spatial Arrangements and other national programmes
- Develop a number of national large-scale flagship projects in which transitions are linked to cultural-historical and heritage values
- Promote a landscape- and heritage-inclusive area approach, including through the Heritage and Government programme.

**Map:** Sectoral Map: Protected Cultural Heritage

**Map:** Sectoral Map: Valuable Cultural Landscapes

### **Environment**

Article 21 of the Constitution states: "the government shall be concerned with the habitability of the country and the protection and improvement of the environment." With the Environment and Planning Act, the national government aims to better balance the protection and use of the physical living environment. We do this to achieve and maintain a healthy, clean and safe physical environment. Towards 2050, we want environmental quality across the Netherlands to be fundamentally in order, with sufficient clean drinking water available. The soil will be healthy and able to deliver the ecosystem services we need (such as water storage, cooling and food). The innovative Dutch economy will flourish as companies benefit from investment in future-proof technologies and services. Having the basics in order does not mean they are the same everywhere. Environmental quality may vary and is tailored to the specific characteristics of and coherence between functions in an area.

We base ourselves on current legislation and regulations. In other words, no national layers on top of European laws and regulations. Existing legal frameworks allow for many activities to be carried out. This is especially true if we make sound spatial choices and combine functions intelligently within the limited space our country has. As part of a broad balancing of multiple interests, we ensure that we include knowledge about what makes an area healthy, clean and safe at the front end of spatial planning. This is how we find the balance between protecting and using the living environment. This may involve combining, clustering, stacking or separating functions, or sometimes accepting that environmental pressures increase. In this way, we ensure that environmental and spatial challenges are weighed together. We do this by consistently applying the following three-step approach:

- **Prevent:** Wherever possible, we try to locate activities that cause noise or pollution or involve safety risks, in places where they cause as little harm as possible to people, animals and plants.
- **Mitigate:** We cannot always prevent growth in employment, transport and energy demand from leading to increased noise, air pollution or safety risks, or new spatial challenges such as housing conflicting with existing environmentally harmful activities. In such cases, we weigh which mitigating measures are appropriate to prevent exposure. For example, by erecting noise barriers along railways or constructing quiet road surfaces.
- **Accept:** Because mitigation is not always possible or realistic, in some areas we will have to accept that environmental pressures will increase and cannot be eliminated with mitigating measures. Where challenges conflict with environmental standards, we will look area-specifically at what is possible through experiments, pilots and tailored solutions. The government will then communicate transparently with residents of these areas.

## Map: Sectoral Map: Environment

### Defence

To identify the spatial needs of the Dutch armed forces and to guide implementation, Defence has launched the National Programme Space for Defence (NPRD). This programme identifies 13 needs requiring entirely new locations, the so-called supra-regional needs, and 44 needs involving physical expansion of existing defence sites and/or safeguarding the expansion of activities at existing sites through permits or other spatial planning arrangements, the so-called location-specific needs. In weighing its spatial challenges in the NPRD, Defence has sought opportunities to link with other spatial challenges and to contribute to regional vitality, for example through employment.

The choice of where Defence's needs can be spatially accommodated within the Netherlands depends on several factors. Effective and efficient operation of the armed forces is paramount, but local support, environmental and living-environment constraints, costs and speed of implementation are also important. The logical spatial coherence of defence activities and locations is also decisive in weighing new and expanded sites. Defence's space requirements are not independent of each other, nor are they independent of existing defence capacity. Many activities are spatially interlinked (for example, stationing helicopters and low-flying areas within half an hour's flight and dispersing radars for nationwide coverage). There is also a hierarchy in training areas. Areas with unique (for example natural) conditions are scarce and therefore more important than sites with fewer distinctive features. The same applies to areas where combined training on land, water and in the air is possible.

The spatial vision for 2050 brings Defence activities together in four aspects, which are interrelated and require proximity:

- *Military aviation infrastructure:* The protection of Dutch airspace requires a comprehensive infrastructure and distribution of airfields across the country. Lelystad Airport will be used as a new location for joint use with fighter aircraft. A specific new need concerns the construction of an unpaved runway for tactical air transport, which will be located at Deelen military airfield. The infrastructure for military aviation also includes helicopter low-flying areas and landing sites. The number of helicopter low-flying areas will be expanded. Several new areas have been designated to provide a wide range of training opportunities, allowing the legal planning regime to remain light. In other words, these low-flying areas leave ample room for other spatial challenges such as housing and onshore wind generation. Due to increased training needs, more helicopter landing sites are also required. These landing sites will all be located on existing military sites. A nationwide network of radar installations (part of the NATO network) forms the core of information provision for both fighter aircraft and helicopters. The defence pipeline network for fuel supply at airfields is also part of the air defence infrastructure.
- *Training and accommodation of units:* This main structure includes unit barracks and training areas and exercise facilities nearby. Modern warfare and therefore training, requires interplay between the different branches of the armed forces and integrated training of operations, in increasing unit sizes, with training areas of various scales. Units require larger training areas due to the introduction of new equipment. In addition, training in urbanised areas is necessary, which will take place at the existing Weerterheide training area. Expansion of amphibious training is also required. Several sites have been designated for this purpose, namely at Maasvlakte II, Marnehuizen, Vliehors and Groote Keeten. Strengthening and concentrating support units (medical, logistics, information) is also part of this substructure. A new barracks will therefore be built at a central point in the Netherlands, at Zeewolde-Spiekweg.
- *Military transport and storage:* This main structure includes the crucial transport links and storage locations (extending abroad as well), also in view of the Netherlands' role in Host Nation Support (HNS). Guaranteed port capacity will be made available at Maasvlakte II in the Port of Rotterdam. A new site for large-scale ammunition storage will be developed near Staphorst. In addition to this large-scale storage, a site will be developed for Rapid Deployable Capacity (SIC) at Kollumerwaard-West. Ammunition storage will thus take place both on a large scale and in the form of rapid deployable capacity. Transport routes and storage locations should naturally connect. The transport routes used in these cases fall under, among others, the TEN-T network and the routing of hazardous substances, for which regulations apply. Data

connections also form part of this sub-infrastructure. Their spatial impact is limited, but they are essential for Defence and influence location choices in some cases.

- *North Sea:* The North Sea contains critical infrastructure such as data cables and energy supply infrastructure and forms a European external border. Security measures will be scaled up and must also be trained. There are areas for live-fire exercises, flight training and mine clearance exercises. These areas will be expanded. Modern training, such as flying with (unmanned) helicopters, also requires more space. This will be accommodated at De Kooy air base near Den Helder. The training areas also require corridors leading to them.

With the NRPD, an important step has been taken towards the expansion of the armed forces, with preferred locations found for many of Defence's needs. For a small number of needs, however, this has not, or only partially, been achieved. This does not mean that these needs have gone away. An alternative track will therefore have to be pursued in the future to find suitable solutions. A changing political climate and shifting military developments may also in future give rise to an expansion of Defence's spatial needs.

**Map: Sectoral Map: Defence**

### **PART III – IMPLEMENTATION**

As a policy instrument, the National Environment Vision is binding on the national government itself, from core ministries to implementing organisations. Through cooperation, agreements, regulation and appropriate measures, we ensure that the directions and choices laid down in the Spatial Policy Document are carried through at provincial and local level. In doing so, the Spatial Policy Document provides direction for the development of the Netherlands, and the national government fulfils its coordinating role.

Exercising coordination in spatial planning for the Netherlands above all means working together and shaping the country in dialogue at all levels, in consultation with those directly involved and making choices about the use of the right instruments with the aim of achieving the objectives. Managing (the quality of) the living environment above all requires integrated considerations, combining sectoral goals and maintaining coherence in implementation. In all phases of both the policy and project cycle, this way of working calls for interplay between governments, market parties and society, for coherence in tackling challenges and in deploying instruments and resources and for coherence between policy and implementation.

The realisation of many tasks will ultimately take place in local and regional area and project developments through investments and initiatives by various public and private parties. It is there that the Netherlands will largely be reshaped and redesigned. Smart alignment of investments and investment schedules is a crucial success factor for effective area-based cooperation. Instruments such as regional investment agendas, public-private partnerships or alliance-building, can be helpful in this regard.

Another success factor for area-based cooperation is the creation of so-called intermediate spaces alongside the formal space in which planning and decision-making take place. These can be design workshops or other forms of informal meeting and collaboration between actors. In the intermediate space, there is room to jointly explore possibilities, without short-term interests and challenges immediately steering the conversation. Precisely these intermediate spaces are a good environment to learn from each other and develop new approaches. Strongly connecting these intermediate spaces with the formal space, as in the NOVEX process and in making the urbanisation strategies, is critical to success.

Area development is currently often too slow and too expensive. This puts pressure, among other things, on the construction of new affordable housing. More affordable land is a key part of government policy. Current legislation and regulation on land policy is therefore being modernised. In addition, the government, together with other authorities, market parties and housing associations, will tackle the accumulation of local rules and procedures and reduce regulatory pressure.

Through the NOVEX Programme, the government is pursuing integrated agreements with provinces in spatial arrangements and with other authorities and social partners in NOVEX areas. In NOVEX areas, intensive cooperation takes place on the basis of equality between all authorities and relevant partners on development perspectives, implementation and regional investment agendas towards 2040/2050. Sixteen NOVEX areas have been designated for rural areas, (air)port and industrial areas and urbanisation, and three regions with urbanisation strategies (Twente, Stedendriehoek and Limburg Central) have been designated where so many physical transformation challenges converge that public and private parties work together area-specifically to tackle them effectively

With the spatial arrangements, we aim to strengthen the coherence between all spatial challenges and choices that the national and provincial governments jointly face. The first spatial arrangements have an agenda-setting character. The national and provincial governments see the spatial arrangement as a growth model that will be updated periodically and in which the spatial challenges will become increasingly concrete. Over time, the Spatial Arrangement is expected to contain more agreements on actual choices to be made about the integration of challenges. Decision-making on matters such as adjustment of regulation, legal instruments and deployment of financial resources takes place through the appropriate sectoral structures of the national government and provinces.

Where a national interest or ambition must be enforced, this is done through standard-setting. For example, with general rules for citizens and businesses, instruction rules or decisions that directly steer provincial environmental ordinances, water board ordinances or municipal environmental plans. Another option is that the responsible ministry itself enables activities in the physical living environment through a project decision or a permit of national importance. In deploying instruments, the policy-responsible ministry involves other authorities and provides sufficient room for decentralised considerations and area-specific solutions, insofar as the national interest allows.

The nature of the challenges in the environmental domain requires a structural use of resources. The scale of the challenges demands substantial investments by market parties and governments. The necessary investments in energy or mobility infrastructure, for example, will in total amount to billions. The Spatial Policy Document is based on existing resources in the field of spatial planning. With the Spatial Policy Document, the national government commits to the policy objectives, not to the deployment of future financial resources to achieve them. National tasks are realised through the implementation of sectoral programmes. The necessary financing is found in existing departmental budgets. Up to 2030, approximately €25 to €30 billion per year is included in the national budget for environmental policy. The national government aims to steer the realisation of spatial challenges at area level in partnership, including as (co-)investor in area development. In addition to financing, this may also involve the use of national land.

Knowledge, spatial information and design-based research together provide better insight into spatial issues and possible solutions. The ambition is to further strengthen the synergy between knowledge, spatial information and design-based research. To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the new Spatial Policy Document, a targeted monitoring and evaluation approach is necessary. The Spatial Policy Document Monitor should primarily provide insight into the effectiveness of spatial developments and coherence at different scales. In addition, the plan monitor will show the possible impact of future spatial developments. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of policy and on improving the functioning of the Spatial Policy Document.