

PPP light

in Dutch urban area development

A exploratory study into lighter organisation forms of Public Private Partnership arising from changing circumstances in area development and a need for flexibility.

Britt Voerman

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A exploratory study into lighter organisation forms of public-private partnership arising from changing circumstances in area development and the need for flexibility.

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Preface

The interest and motivation to do my graduation thesis on this topic initially comes from my interest in area development and the way these developments come into being. I have always found it fascinating how cities, built up from different districts and neighbourhoods, develop. The idea of being able to develop an empty piece of land into a new part of the city, or a redeveloping a neighbourhood into a more suitable and future-proof living environment, is something I consider both inspiring and meaningful. Throughout this research process, and with the guidance of my supervisors, it became increasingly clear to me that area developments are highly complex challenges. At the same time, the urgency of area development, both within existing urban areas and beyond, is bigger than ever. This strengthened my intrinsic motivation to contribute to this field, which is why I chose to focus my graduation research on public-private partnerships within the current context of Dutch area development.

During my research, I discovered how cooperative and supportive the professional field was. I appreciated how often it was confirmed that my graduation research could provide relevant input for current forms of partnerships in area development. My experience has shown that when you approach experts from practice with genuine interest, people are willing and open to contribute. For this reason, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this graduation thesis. Not only for providing valuable input that enabled me to conduct this research, but also for the openness and willingness with which they received me and shared their knowledge and experiences with me.

This thesis would not have been possible without my supervisors, whom I would like to thank sincerely. First, I am grateful to Fred Hobma, whose enthusiasm for this subject continuously motivated me throughout the graduation process. He guided me through the graduation track in a supportive and encouraging way, regularly complimented my work, and contributed his knowledge to my research in a relevant and valuable manner. Fred has taught me a lot about the legal aspects of area development. I would also like to thank my second supervisor, Erwin Heurkens. He was a pleasant supervisor who supported me well with the theoretical aspects of this thesis. Conversations with him often led to valuable insights, and I appreciated that we were frequently aligned in our thoughts about the next steps to take in my research. This gave me confidence in both myself and my research. I would like to thank both supervisors for their interesting, supportive and stimulating guidance over the past months.

Lastly, I would like to thank Iris Kramer, my graduation supervisor at Molsbergen Development B.V., who provided me with great support in applying my research in practice. Her experience in collaborating with partners in the spatial sector has helped me to shape my research. Her enthusiasm and interest in both me and my research have been of great importance to this study.

My interest and motivation for this graduation topic, combined with the supportive and stimulating guidance of all three supervisors, each bringing their own perspective on public-private partnerships in Dutch area development, has resulted in a broad and integrated thesis. I hope you will read this thesis with pleasure and that its findings may prove valuable within your own field.

Britt Voerman

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Abstract

Urban area development in the Netherlands is increasingly characterised by fragmented landownership, inner-city transformation tasks and growing financial and procedural uncertainty. The literature points to a growing need for flexibility in area development, changing institutional circumstances and the increasing complexity of fragmented land ownership. At the same time, public and private parties remain dependent on each other to realise coherent and integrated area developments. This creates a growing need for lighter organisation structures and more flexible forms of Public-private Partnerships (PPP). However, knowledge about how these lighter forms of PPP are shaped in practice remains limited. This research examines how public and private parties shape lighter forms of PPP in Dutch urban area development. The study builds on institutional aspects and inter-organizational arrangements of PPP as theoretical framework to analyse how financial, legal, organisational and relational agreements are structured within this light public-private partnership. A qualitative multiple case study was conducted, consisting of seven Dutch urban area developments. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with both public and private actors involved in the cases. The findings were analysed through cross-case comparison and validated through an expert panel. The results show that PPP light mainly emerges in situations where integrated implementation and coherent area development remain necessary. PPP light arises from the desire to maintain autonomy, the need for flexibility during long-term developments, limited municipal landownership, and situations in which full integration of land, risks and revenues is considered undesirable or unfeasible. In these situations, collaboration is formalised through agreements focused on shared area-wide challenges, while individual parties retain control over their own land positions, business cases and development pace. Recurring inter-organizational arrangements are reflected in agreements on cost-sharing, process coordination, flexible and jointly developed spatial frameworks, and a organised decision-making and consultation structures. Trust and communication prove essential in all forms of PPP, while PPP light can function as a vehicle to integrate relational aspects into all PPPs. PPP light exists in different gradations, ranging from limited coordination structures to more intensive forms of collaboration. PPP light distinguishes itself from traditional PPPs through individual land ownership and the absence of a joint legal entity or shareholder structure. It differs from incremental development collaboration (*organische gebiedsontwikkeling*) as the cooperation goes beyond one-to-one and solely cost recovery agreement that indicates exclusively public-private collaboration. The research contributes to academic knowledge on emerging of lighter organisation PPP forms within contemporary urban area development and provides practical insights into how partnerships can be organised under conditions of uncertainty, increasing complexity and fragmented landownership that parties do not wish to jointly exploit.

Keywords – PPP light, circumstances, flexibility, inter-organizational arrangements, characteristics

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are often seen as a suitable way of combining the strengths of public and private sector in achieving shared goals and delivering public services. In the Netherlands, PPPs were widely used in large-scale residential development projects in the 1990s, particularly under the Vinex policy. However, following the 2008 financial crisis, the number of PPP projects declined. In recent years, however, developers, local authorities, regional authorities, government departments and researchers have been calling for a revival of public-private partnerships in light of the growing complexity of urban development. This renewed interest suggests a possible resurgence of PPPs as a governance strategy to address multiple societal challenges. Projects must be realised faster, better, and at lower cost. Faster, in order to increase the planning pipeline and housing production; better, with regard to, among other things, sustainability and mobility; and cheaper, given the increasing need for affordability, the financial constraints and reluctance of the governments, and high tendering costs. At the same time, the demand within urban development has increasingly shifted towards inner-city areas and the preservation of existing buildings.

These developments have made area development projects progressively more complex. In addition, fragmented land ownership in urban developments forms an important barrier and planning adjustments are more frequently required and are generally difficult to predict in advance (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2019). As a result, traditional PPP models appear to be increasingly inadequate in responding to contemporary development dynamics (NEPROM, 2019). According to Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling (2019), this inadequacy is related to the limited flexibility of traditional PPP structures, the preference for less burdensome legal entities, and the need for more adaptive forms of collaboration. This became particularly visible during the financial crisis, when several joint ventures were dismantled because they proved too inflexible and strongly oriented towards long-term commitments.

Consequently, current Dutch area development practice increasingly calls for more flexible and future-proof PPP models with lower capital requirements, allowing greater adaptability in both programme and pace, while reducing complex governance structures and enabling development processes to proceed more efficiently and quickly. This has led to the emergence of lighter organisation of public-private organising partnership, often defined as PPP light. These lighter organisation forms of public-private partnership are increasingly applied in practice to jointly organise complex development tasks. In practice, PPP light seeks to balance flexibility and freedom in the agreements binding the parties, allowing adjustments to changing circumstances and emerging opportunities, while at the same time providing clarity regarding the process. This enables parties to tailor partnership agreements to their specific needs, without formalising the public-private partnership upfront through the establishment of a separate legal entity (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2019). The characteristics of PPP light appear to reflect a more pragmatic approach aimed at making the partnership workable to enable the realisation of the area development. As a result, different PPP light variants have emerged. Within these variants, parties work in a goal-oriented manner and focus on what works effectively in practice, rather than strictly following fixed models or predefined structures when the situation requires flexibility.

However, despite its growing application in practice, there is no clear picture of the current state of this lighter form of PPP in urban development practice. This research aims to shed light on the current application of public-private partnership light in urban development and seeks to map how these partnerships are currently structured and applied in practice.

1.2 Context

In the 1980s and 1990s, the private sector increasingly entered the field of spatial planning in the Netherlands, and more market mechanisms emerged in urban development (Daamen, 2010). There was a shift from a rather hierarchical government approach to a more shared, cooperative approach with the private sector (Hobma et al., 2019). Local governments could no longer exclude private parties from urban development processes. The growing scale and complexity of urban development projects, combined with ambitious goals of public entities, made private investment and participation necessary to achieve these public goals. The financial crisis of 2008 further emphasized the importance of private sector involvement, as the public sector faced increasing financial constraints and was thus forced to seek alternative sources of funding. In urban development, it became clear that private developers were able to make progress, as they possessed the capital and capacity to bear the risks associated with large-scale development projects (Bult-Spiering & Dewulf, 2006). A position that local governments can no longer fulfil due to their reduced land ownership, costs from land development, and financial austerity measures (Heurkens, 2012).

The increasing importance of the private sector in urban area development and, as a result, the more intensive cooperation between the public and private sectors has led to changes in the organisation of the realisation of urban development projects. This change is most visible in the way public-private Partnerships (PPP) are organised and applied as a partnership model within urban area development. A PPP is an institutionalised form of cooperation between public and private actors who, on the basis of their own indigenous objectives, work together towards a joint target, in which both parties accept investment risks on the basis of a predefined distribution of revenues and costs (Nijkamp et al., 2002).

PPP models are used within urban area development to organise collaboration between public and private actors in the realisation of complex spatial projects, where the combination of public ambitions and private resources, expertise, and investment capacity becomes necessary to achieve development goals. In Dutch area development, there is a wide variety of PPP models, which differ strongly in the institutional aspects that determine the distribution of risks, responsibilities, and control (Heurkens, 2012). The joint venture model, in which public and private parties jointly participate in a development entity; the building claim model, where private landowners transfer land to public authority in exchange for development rights; and the concession model, in which the government grants a private party the right to realise and operate a service, project, or urban area development. All these models focus on bringing fragmented land ownership together into a single ownership structure. Fragmented land ownership refers to the situation in which agricultural land is subdivided by land traders into many small plots for sale to private individuals as investment objects, anticipating future residential development. When multiple landowners are involved, this fragmented ownership can form a significant barrier to area transformation, as decision-making, land acquisition, and coordination between parties become more complex and time-consuming (Hobma et al., 2019).

The PPP models differ in the authority under which these land positions are brought together. The building claim model is applied when private parties own land within the development area and are able to pursue self-realisation. In this model, private landowners transfer their land to the municipality, which remains responsible for land development (bouw- en woonrijp) and gives out the land after this. In return, private parties receive development rights for a number of plots within the project area, within which they are allowed to build under the public regulatory framework. The advantage of this model is that municipalities retain control over land development and quality, while private parties reduce financial risks (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026). In contrast, within the concession model, the municipality mainly defines the public frameworks and quality requirements, while the realisation,

development, and associated risks are largely transferred to private parties. As a result, the public sector takes a less active role in the land development process (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026).

In a joint venture model with a separate legal entity, land acquisition is carried out through a joint public-private enterprise, with shareholding by both parties (BV/CV). The land development company (GEM) is responsible for plan development and land development operations (land acquisition, development for building and residential use, and distribution of construction-ready plots) (NEPROM, 2019). Within this model, parties share their contributions, decision-making power, and associated risks (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026).

These partnership models represented the prevailing approach in urban area development. They were widely used to address fragmented land ownership and to enable large-scale integrated developments. However, these PPP models require substantial upfront capital investments from the initiating parties, as all land and buildings within the development area had to be acquired before development could take place (Hobma et al., 2019). Since the financial crisis (2008–2013), parties were less willing to enter into partnership models due to the financial constraints faced by banks and governments, the decrease in trust between parties and the lack of flexibility to better anticipate on unforeseen developments. This triggered the initial shifts toward alternative ways of organizing public-private partnerships within area development projects (Hobma et al., 2019).

1.3 Research gap and aim

Despite its growing application in practice, PPP light remains underexplored in academic literature. PPP light is primarily known from practice, while academic knowledge currently extends little beyond general and narrowly defined characteristics. As a result, there is still limited in-depth understanding of the characteristics of PPP light.

This raises the question of whether a more specific definition can be given to PPP light. Although traditional PPP models are well defined, insight into the circumstances underlying the choice for lighter forms of collaboration, the agreements made within PPP light and when a partnership can be characterised as PPP light remains limited due to the absence of a clearly defined literature.

The aim of this research is therefore to provide insight into PPP light as a partnership model. This research contributes to the conceptualization of PPP light within area development and additionally aims to provide literature-based insights that can support and optimise the future application of PPP light in area development practice. The knowledge gained is relevant for policymakers, municipalities, developers, and other stakeholders who work with, or are interested in, innovative partnership structures within the spatial domain.

1.4 Research questions

Based on the problem statement and the research gap the following research question is formulated.

How do public and private parties shape the characteristics of lighter forms of PPP in Dutch urban area development?

To answer this main question, the following three sub-questions have been formulated.

Sub question 1 Which circumstances in Dutch area development are identified in literature that influence the emergence of lighter forms of PPP organisations?

Sub question 2 In what way is PPP light applied by parties in practice, and which financial, organisational, legal, and relational inter-organizational arrangements are made?

Sub question 3

When can a partnership be defined as PPP light, in comparison to incremental development collaboration and traditional PPP models, and to what extent are these characteristics recognised and validated by experts?

Definition shape:

In this research, the term **shape** refers to the way public and private parties set up, organise, execute, and realise lighter forms of PPP in practice, including the way parties work together through financial, organisational, legal, and relational arrangements.

Definition incremental development collaboration (organische gebiedsontwikkeling):

Incremental development collaboration refers to a form of public-private collaboration in which parties pursue area development through gradual coordination and consultation, while largely maintaining their individual organisational autonomy and responsibilities. Collaboration develops incrementally over time based on emerging opportunities, shared interests and project needs, without the establishment of a formal partnership organisation or integrated governance structure.

1.5 Research relevance

1.5.1 Scientific relevance

Despite the growing application of these light public-private partnership models in practice, limited scientific knowledge is available regarding their characteristics, the formalisation of partnerships through financial agreements, organisational structures, and the added value of the relational aspects within these lighter PPP models. Existing literature provides substantial knowledge about traditional PPP models (joint venture, building claim, and concession), including why these models are applied in area developments, the division of roles between public and private parties, how these partnerships are organisationally structured, and which agreements underpin them. In contrast, the current literature provides only limited insight into lighter variants of partnership and hardly any academic literature is available on the characteristics, the agreements between public and private parties, the organisation, and functioning of these lighter public-private partnership models. This research therefore contributes to filling the scientific knowledge gap by developing insights into PPP light as an already existing partnership form within Dutch area development practice, for which little to no academic literature is currently available. By answering the main research question, this study contributes to the academic literature on partnership models and inter-organizational collaboration in area development and provides a foundation for further research into lighter PPP structures within the contemporary urban context.

1.5.2 Practical relevance

The persistent housing shortage in the Netherlands has placed increasing pressure on the realisation of area developments and has intensified the urgency of accelerating housing production. These developments take place within a context of complex and interrelated challenges, such as sustainability, affordability, densification, inner-city transformation, and fragmented land ownership, making the task faced by public and private parties increasingly challenging. As a result, public, private, and societal actors have become increasingly dependent on one another. No single party possesses all the required resources, capacities, land positions, and competences individually, as the current spatial and housing challenge has become too large and complex to be addressed by one actor alone (Kersenhout et al., 2026).

This makes the organisation of effective public-private partnership increasingly important in contemporary area development practice. Therefore, this research is practically relevant because it provides insight into how PPP light can contribute to organising the partnership (better) within complex

urban area development projects. The findings of this research can support municipalities, developers, societal actors, investors, and other involved stakeholders in making more informed choices regarding the organisation and governance of public-private partnerships in future area developments. In addition, the research provides practical insights into how partnership agreements, such as the division of risks and revenues, the allocation of tasks and responsibilities, and relational agreements regarding trust, can be organised within PPP light models. These insights may contribute to more efficient development processes and support the realisation of housing construction and other societal objectives within the Dutch urban context.

1.6 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 positions the research within the existing literature and presents the theoretical framework on which the study is based. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, including the qualitative multiple-case study approach, presents the research model, discusses the case selection criteria, outline the process of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 analyses the six PPP light cases, focusing on the reasons for choosing a lighter organisational form, the legal-contractual model and the financial, legal, organisational and relational arrangements that shape the PPP. Chapter 5 compares the case findings through a mega-matrix and identifies the overarching elements of PPP light. These insights form the basis for the definition of PPP light, which is further elaborated in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 presents a synthesis of the findings and explains what PPP light entails as a lighter form of public-private partnership. Chapter 8 reflects on the contribution, limitations and future research directions. Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by answering the central research question.

2. Literature review

This chapter describes the initial concepts that are important for gaining insight into PPP light. First, an initial interpretation is provided of the circumstances that influence the organisation of public-private partnerships. Second, this literature review addresses relevant aspects for analysing public-private partnerships. This initial outline of the literature review positions the research and outline the theoretical framework within which this research is conducted. It will concluded with the approached conceptual framework.

2.1 Changing circumstances in Dutch area development

Different physical, market-related, and political conditions are identified that influence the Dutch area development and let to a change of the organisation of public-private partnerships. This literature study identifies several of these circumstances.

Area development is not a static concept, but is constantly evolving. Developments both influence and are influenced by their surrounding context, including current circumstances and societal challenges. Although area development has always involved a complex interplay of factors, the nature of this complexity has fundamentally shifted in recent years. Whereas the main challenge previously centred around clear divisions of roles and risks between government and market parties, current practice increasingly requires an intensively interconnected system of public and private actors, housing corporations, societal organisations, and involved citizens in order to successfully realise area developments. This growing complexity is driven by a combination of new ambitions, uncertain market conditions, and increasingly restrictive boundary conditions. Examples include nitrogen regulations, limitations caused by grid congestion, the urgency of climate adaptation, soil conditions, and the challenging balance between housing affordability and the investment capacity required from governments (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026).

Changing task and developments	What does this task involve?	Meaning for PPP
Increasing complexity	More ambitions, risks, actors and conditions come together in one development process.	More interests and conditions make projects harder to organise and decide on.
Climate adaptation & sustainability	Water, heat stress, biodiversity, energy, soil and mobility must be included early.	Requires early coordination between different policy fields and stakeholders.
Nitrogen and grid congestion	External constraints can delay or block housing and infrastructure projects.	Requires flexible, integrated and problem-solving collaboration.
Housing crisis and affordability	More affordable housing must be delivered faster while keeping projects feasible.	Requires cooperation focused on speed, feasibility and shared responsibilities.
Balance between housing, work and economy	Space must be balanced between housing, economy, facilities and quality of life.	Requires joint considerations between competing spatial programmes.
Social task	Developments must contribute to inclusive, accessible and socially vital areas.	Requires holistic view in order to translate the social task.
Urban and non-urban development	Both inner-city densification and expansion outside the city are needed.	Requires organisations to deal with new spatial choices and location-specific dilemmas.
Capacity shortage	Fewer people need to deliver more work.	Requires efficient processes, clear task division and better use of available expertise.

Table 1 Changing tasks and development in urban area development included meaning for Public-private Partnership based on Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling (2026) (own table)

These changing developments require parties to approach area development differently, with a stronger focus on collaboration and greater transparency regarding interests and actions. In this context, collaboration is not an objective in itself, but rather a means to achieve more effective and higher-quality area development.

Need for flexibility

The previously described (societal) urgency and current market conditions increasingly require greater flexibility in public-private partnerships, particularly in complex area development projects. Both development strategies and the partnerships themselves need to become more adaptable, as projects may otherwise stagnate or slow down the progress. Whereas traditional and rigid procedures can lead to delays, a more flexible approach provides room to optimise plans throughout the process (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026).

Within lighter forms of public-private partnerships, the focus lies on increasing flexibility by moving towards less burdensome legal structures and placing greater emphasis on interpersonal aspects of collaboration. This flexibility refers to the ability to adapt agreements, responsibilities, and collaboration arrangements in response to changing circumstances throughout the development process. This is achieved by focusing less on formal content and procedures, and more on interaction, trust, and mutual relationships between parties, allowing adjustments to be made without fundamentally restructuring the partnership (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2019).

What is known is that PPP light is applied to a certain extent within area development practice. The 'light' character is often attributed to partnership structures that are organised in a less formal and less heavily institutionalised manner. Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling (2026), for example, describes the contractual joint venture as a lighter PPP form in which public and private parties formalise their collaboration contractually, without establishing a separate legal entity. Within this form, parties can organise the partnership in a flexible and project-specific manner, allowing for different degrees of formalisation.

Within this partnership form, a distinction is made between two variants. A more traditional variant uses a cooperation agreement (SOK), in which contractual arrangements between the partnering parties establish clear substantive and procedural agreements necessary to achieve the shared development objectives. A lighter variant, also referred to as Developing Apart Together (DAT), is characterised by more limited and flexible arrangements, with few joint investments, limited mutual obligations, and a light governance structure. Parties collaborate based on shared principles and collective objectives, while remaining largely independently responsible. This provides greater flexibility, but also increases informality and the risk of breakdown when trust or commitment is lacking (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026).

In addition, the 'light' character is often associated with partnerships that place greater emphasis on the interpersonal side of collaboration, where lighter PPP forms are assumed to indicate higher levels of trust between parties. In practice, however, lighter PPP forms do not automatically imply either more or less trust. The chosen partnership form primarily depends on the nature and scale of the development challenge, land positions, and the scale of the required investments. Trust therefore appears to depend less on the legal or organisational weight of the partnership itself, and more on the extent to which clear agreements exist regarding expectations, commitment, flexibility, and the management of changing circumstances and conflicts (Kersenhout et al., 2026). Consequently, the 'light' character seems to relate less to trust itself and more to the organisational, legal, and procedural way in which the partnership is structured, while trust functions as a broader condition for the functioning of public-private partnerships in general.

PPP light also appears to be more effective in procedural terms, as complementary knowledge and experience are brought together more efficiently, offers better opportunities for financial steering focused on efficiency and risk management, and substantively contributes to the improvement of plans and final outcomes (NEPROM, 2019).

As a result, the content of the lighter partnership agreements is less strictly defined in terms of detailed agreements. Instead, the partnership is primarily organised through contractual and procedural agreements between the parties, with a stronger focus on relational aspects such as interaction, mutual understanding, and building trust between parties in order to sustain the collaboration and jointly realise the area development.

Physical circumstances and fragmented landownership

In terms of physical conditions and land ownership, PPP can contribute to improving spatial quality, speeding up the implementation of area development and increasing cost efficiency. The need for partnerships is increasing due to the scarcity of space and the associated increase in the complexity and implementation costs of spatial policy (Nederlandse Overheid, 2004).

Due to a shifting demand towards urban areas and a policy focus by governments to realise new spatial developments as much as possible within existing urban areas, the aim is to meet the demand arising from the continued growth in the number of households and to reduce scarcity in the housing market. To achieve this, the transformation of existing inner-city areas is necessary. Such transformations are often characterised by complex and long-term processes. The ownership of the land on which development must take place is often fragmented. Landowners have diverse interests, perspectives, and future plans, while there are also frequently high initial costs and unprofitable gaps (the negative difference between investments and the value of the new development) (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2019). Not all landowners are willing or able to proceed with (re)development. When municipalities or private developers nevertheless wish to transform a site, they must acquire land ownership in order to achieve a functional planning boundary. Fragmented land ownership in the presence of multiple landowners can therefore constitute a major barrier to area development (Hobma et al., 2019).

Due to circumstances such as governments' reluctance to invest in capital-intensive assets and the disappearance of government subsidies, the approach to fragmented land ownership in inner-city areas has come to be viewed in a different light. Whereas in the past, fragmented land ownership was often addressed by bringing all properties under a single owner, this approach is now increasingly being abandoned. Public and private parties jointly work on a transformation plan, after which each party realises the (re)development on its own land. Initiators of transformation therefore refrain from full acquisition, although limited strategic acquisition may still take place to create so-called 'shifting space' (Hobma et al., 2019).

Another recent development within PPP in dealing with fragmented land ownership is so-called 'ownership-sensitive' planning. Whereas previously the planning boundary formed the point of departure and land within this boundary was acquired, current practice starts from existing ownership relations. Acquisition is therefore no longer self-evident; its costs are explicitly weighed against the risks of acquisition (Hobma et al., 2019). Both developments require a flexible partnership between public and private parties, in which parties jointly develop plans for area transformation based on their own ownership positions.

Public, private and civic society relations

Due to a long term trend, the administrative roles and power relations between public, private, and civic society actors in Dutch urban development have changed over the past 50 years (figure 1.4). This shift has led to a transition from a hierarchically operating government to a more collaborative and cooperative governance model (Harvey, 1989). Under the influence of neoliberal policy, the socio-economic thinking of the Dutch government has changed. Whereas the government previously fulfilled an active and influential role, based on public responsibility and collective rights, this has increasingly shifted toward an Anglo-Saxon model. In this model, there is more room for market effects and the government is taking a more passive role, primarily facilitating the market (Heurkens, 2012).

Heurkens (2012) describes in his dissertation that this shift in power will continue toward a demand-driven development approach. In this context, the initiative will no longer automatically come from the market; instead, the needs of businesses and citizens (civic society) will increasingly become leading, while the government continues to take on a more facilitative role. This development will also influence the attitude of private market parties. The shift that has taken place over recent decades has altered the balance of power between public, private, and civic society actors and thus points to a different use of PPP. This approach to PPP is expected to be facilitated by public actors, with an increasingly leading role for private actors who, in partnership with civic society actors, formulate the development demand in order to realise a specific supply for urban areas. In this context, the familiar division of roles remains in place, although it is sometimes more diffuse than parties initially expect. Market parties mainly fulfil a role in the development, planning, realisation, and operation of projects within area development. Governments pursue societal objectives, but may adopt a more or less active role in achieving these goals (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026).

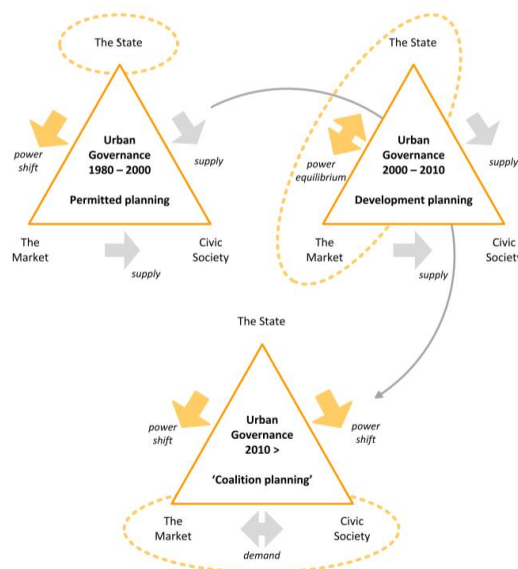


Figure 1 Dutch urban governance shifts over time (Heurkens, 2012)

2.2 Typology of PPP

To develop a typology of the organisation of PPP light driven urban development projects, it is necessary to determine which aspects are relevant for analysis. This research builds on the typology described by Heurkens (2012), which clearly defines the aspects of partnerships in area development and thereby provides tools for systematically analysing partnership models. According to Heurkens, a typology of PPP prescriptions consists of two main components: the structure and the process of the cooperation. Where the structure refers to the *what* and the process to the *how*.

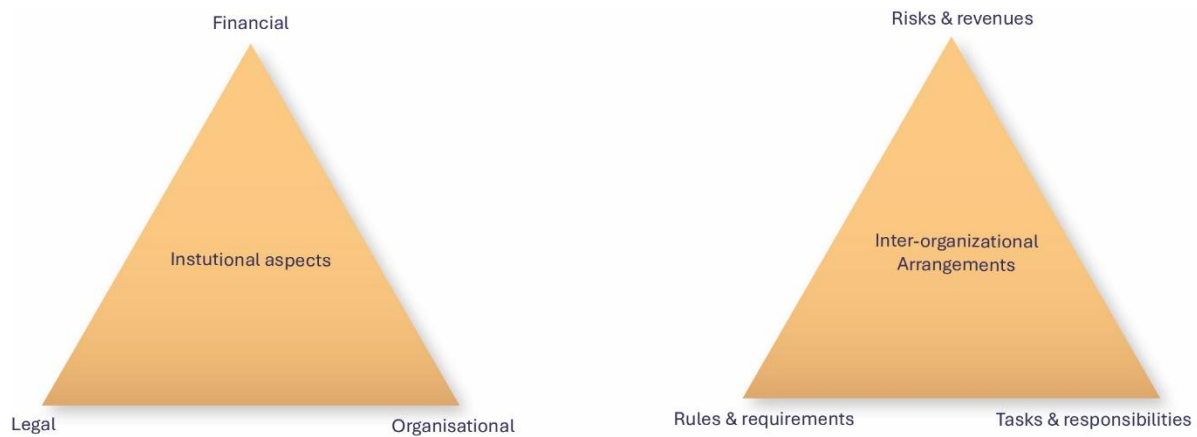


Figure 2 Institutional aspect of partnership and inter-organizational arrangements of partnership (Heurkens, 2012)

The structure of the cooperation refers to the component how the partnership is organised (What). This includes the legal form financial agreements and the organisational structure of the cooperation, while the process refers to the actual interaction. The structural elements determine the *institutional aspects* within which the cooperation operates (figure 2 left). These aspects must be taken care of by the involved actors to achieve the project related objectives of both public and private parties. This requires the establishment and allocation of various *inter-organizational arrangements* between actors. These arrangements are closely linked to the key requirements for realizing urban development projects and represent the concrete elaboration of the structural structure of the cooperation. Within public-private partnerships, public and private parties organise their collaboration by making agreements on the division of *tasks and responsibilities*, the allocation of *risks and revenues*, and the establishment of *rules and requirements* (figure 2 right). Each of these inter-organizational arrangements can be explicitly assigned to specific actors or shared between actors (Heurkens, 2012). In this research, both the institutional aspects and inter-organizational arrangements are used as an analytical framework to interpret the organisation of PPP light driven urban development projects, to analyse the characteristics of PPP light.

Although area development is often characterised by complex content, strict procedures, and processes that can be financial, legal, and organisational in nature, various publications on PPP show that relational aspects, such as mutual trust and interaction between the involved parties in PPP, are essential for the success of the partnership. Akro Consult (2025) describes this as the '*soft side*' of PPP. Trust, where the municipality and developer dare to share risks without formalizing everything, and communication, where regular, open conversations ensure progress and understanding, are the core aspects. Flexibility, something the parties actively strive for in public-private partnerships, is better achieved through daily actions and informal collaboration than by strictly formulated contracts.

NEPROM (2019) adds that trust in the contract partner forms the foundation for every successful PPP. This trust is not only strengthened by a shared understanding of the business case but also by the willingness to understand the individual interests and motivations (honesty and transparency) of the involved parties. Developing a common language is crucial in this process: it ensures that different experts (such as lawyers and technicians) recognise and acknowledge each other's perspectives on risks and quality. Additionally, communication is the binding factor between team processes from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds. Crucial to this are the active sharing of information, maintaining interpersonal relationships, and promoting predictable behaviour.

Since the hypothesis can be formulated that the *relational* aspect relates to the structure of the way in which the partnership is organised, the institutional aspects triangle and the inter-organizational arrangements of partnerships can be expanded (figure 3).

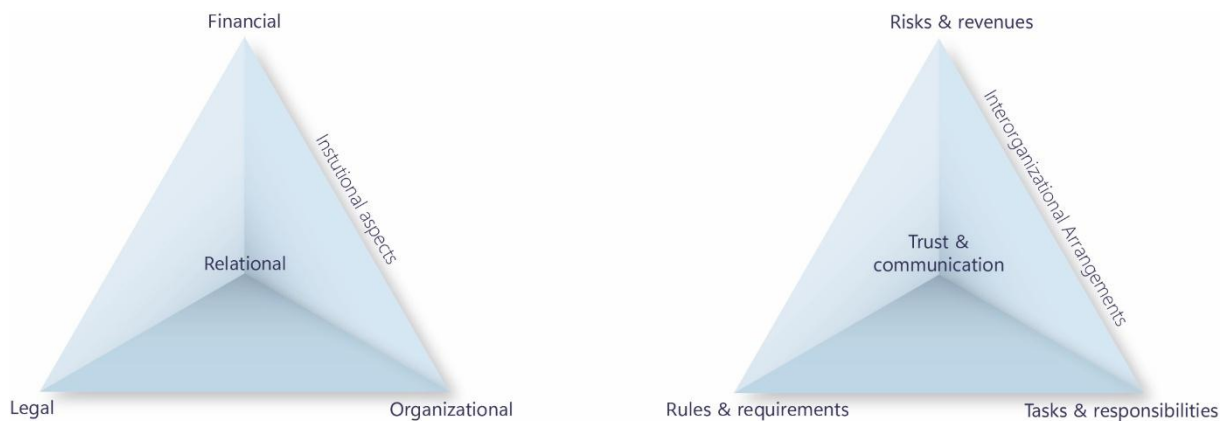


Figure 3 Typologie framework - Institutional Aspects and inter-organizational arrangements based on Heurkens (2012) by author (2026)

2.3 Conceptual framework

Figure 4 presents the conceptual framework of this research. The framework includes the main concepts derived from the research questions and illustrates their interrelationships. Each coloured block represents one of the research questions addressed in this study. The literature review forms the starting point and identifies changing circumstances that lead to PPP light arrangements, clustered according to the theoretical framework of Heurkens (2012). From the arrangements made within PPP light, the characteristics of PPP light can subsequently be identified. Together, these elements contribute to identifying and defining PPP light, which forms the central focus of this research.

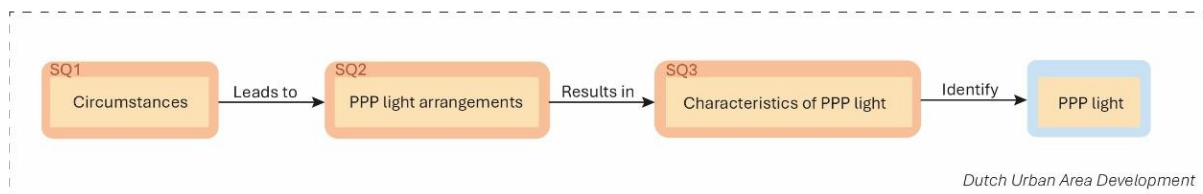


Figure 4 Conceptual model by author (2026)

3. Research methods

This chapter describes how the theoretical framework from Chapter 2 has been applied and evaluated in practice. It also explains the research design, as well as the selected case studies and the parties involved. In addition, attention is given to procedures concerning reliability, ethics, and data management.

The research approach uses deductive codes, based on existing theory, and inductive codes derived from empirical material from multiple case studies.

3.1 Qualitative multiple-case study design

This study uses a qualitative multiple-case study design to answer the main research question, by integrating literature with empirical data. This research design makes it possible to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem and the perspectives of various stakeholders within different area development projects in the Netherlands. The research builds on existing literature and studies, while at the same time providing new knowledge based on empirical material. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, multiple practical examples make it possible to draw comparisons between different contexts and the parties involved.

PPP light is a relatively new topic within Dutch area development. Nevertheless, the literature review, the grey literature consisting of publications, shows that partnerships are increasingly being organised according to this model. The aim of this thesis is to define the characteristics of PPP light, so that these can serve as a guide for more effectively shaping and supporting Dutch area development projects, with specific attention to the collaboration between the parties involved.

A multiple-case study design is suitable for this purpose, due to the opportunity it provides to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context (Yin, 2006). A case study is particularly suitable for consciously incorporating contextual circumstances, in the belief that these are highly relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. In this context, the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly visible or evident. In other words: it is difficult to distinguish clearly between the phenomenon (what you are investigating) and the context (the surrounding situation) (Yin, 2003). In practice, the two are often intertwined, and the subject under investigation cannot be viewed in isolation from the environment in which it takes place. Take area development, for example: decisions, collaborations and outcomes are strongly influenced by the specific location, the parties involved, the policy context and timing. You cannot, therefore, study the phenomenon in isolation without taking that context into account. Because the phenomenon and context cannot always be separated, a technically distinctive situation arises: there are often far more variables of interest than there are data points available. This requires specific strategies such as the use of multiple sources of evidence (triangulation) and theoretical propositions to guide the research (Yin, 2003).

Since this master's thesis is exploratory in nature, both deductive and inductive methods are used. Yin (2003) emphasizes that theory development is an essential step prior to data collection. This is a typically deductive step, in which theoretical propositions are formulated and subsequently tested empirically. In inductive approaches, by contrast, researchers often deliberately refrain from formulating theoretical hypotheses at the start of the study, in order to analyse the data as impartially as possible. Even in exploratory case studies, such as this master's thesis, it must be clearly formulated in advance what is being investigated and on the basis of which criteria the outcomes will be assessed. This prevents the

research from proceeding in a directionless manner. A combination of first a deductive and then an inductive approach thus contributes to a focused and valid research process.

In Eisenhardt's (1989) theory, the case study method is primarily presented as an inductive process aimed at developing theory. This stands in slight contrast to Yin's (2003) approach, which assumes a more deductive, theory-driven start to the research, with the aim of testing or explaining the theory. According to Eisenhardt (2003), it is desirable to begin a study without pre-established theories or hypotheses, so that existing theoretical perspectives or propositions do not unnecessarily limit or influence the findings. Inductive theory formation based on cases is most suitable in the early stages of research into a subject, or when existing theories fall short. Despite the aim of commencing the research with as little bias as possible (no prior deductive theory formation), there is always a predefined research question, problem definition and construct validation, which is considered deductive in Eisenhardt's theory (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.2 Research model

This study uses the process-based approach to theory-building based on case studies, as defined by Eisenhardt (1989). This approach is suitable for this study because it is a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics within individual contexts. The process is characterised as highly iterative and is closely linked to empirical data, constantly switching between data collection, analysis and existing literature, hypotheses and knowledge. Eisenhardt (1989) distinguishes various steps within the research process, each involving actions relating to the conduct of the research. The table below applies this theory to the phases of my research.

Phase in research	Step Eisenhardt (1989)	Activity
Definition	Getting started	• Definition of research question • Possibly a prior constructs
Case selection	Selecting cases	• Neither theory nor hypotheses • Specified population • Theoretical sampling
Data collection	Crafting Instruments and Protocols	• Multiple data collection • Qualitative and quantitative data combining • Multiple investigators
	Entering the field	• Overlap data collection and analysis, including field notes • Flexible and opportunistic data collection method
Data analysis	Analysing data	• Within-case analysis • Cross-case pattern search using divergent techniques
Data conclusion and building theory	Shaping hypotheses	• Iterative tabulation of evidence for each construct • Replication, not sampling, logic across cases • Search evidence for "why" behind relationships
	Enfolding literature	• Comparison with conflicting and similar literature
	Research closure	• Theoretical saturation when possible

Table 2 Process of building theory in different research phases, based on 'Building theory from case studies' from Eisenhardt (1989) specified for the master thesis (own table)

These phases form the foundation for the conceptual research design presented in figure 5. This overview demonstrates how the theoretical concepts interact in order to define the partnership form PPP light from the inter-organizational arrangements, understood as a partnership organisation within Dutch area development. These phases are further explained in the following paragraphs.

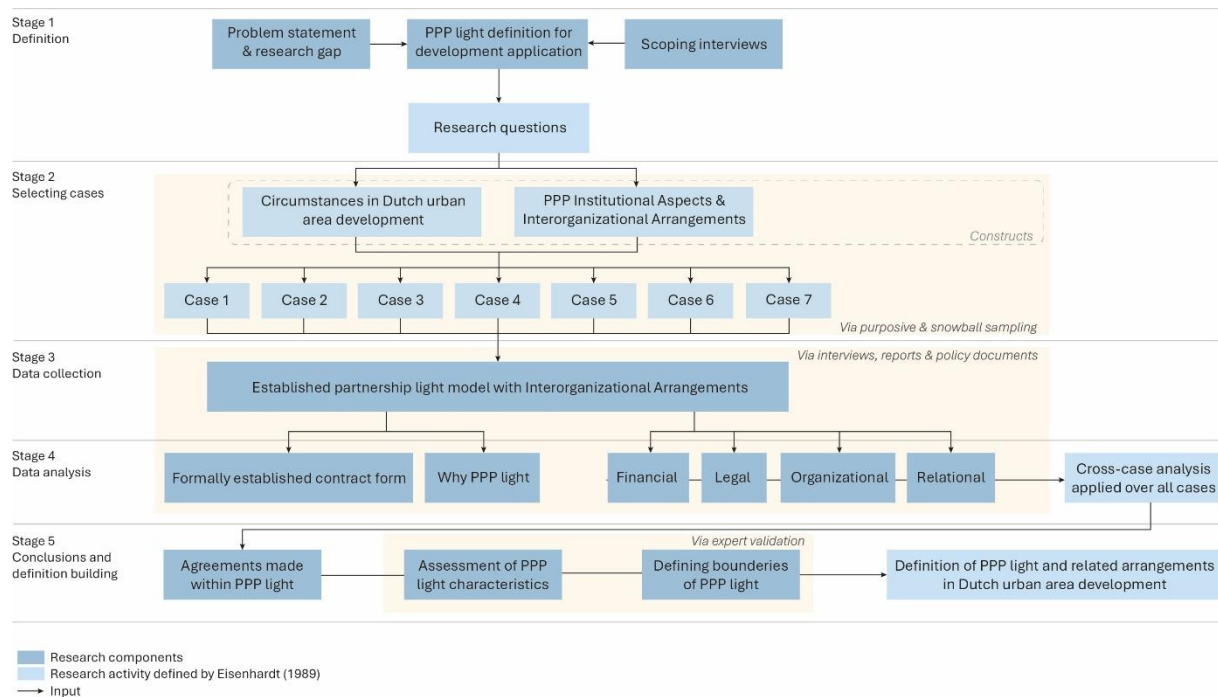


Figure 5 Research model by author (2026)

3.2.1 Definition

The focus of this master's thesis is on the emerging phenomenon of PPP light. This study analyses two aspects: the circumstances under which PPP light is applied as a partnership model, and the characteristics of PPP light itself and the arrangements made.

To analyse these circumstances and characteristics academically, the phenomenon is examined through the lens of the most recent literature. This literature comprises both academic articles and grey literature and focuses on the factors that have contributed to the emergence of PPP light, as well as on the underlying conditions and characteristics that provide insight into the potential suitability of this collaborative model within contemporary area developments. Together with the problem statement, this has led to the central research question and the three sub-questions introduced in Chapter 1.

The literature identifies three key factors that contribute to the development of a lighter organisation PPP models: need for flexibility, complex tasks within area development, fragmented land ownership, and shift of governance. In addition, four initial aspects are distinguished by which partnerships can be characterised. These are supplemented in the literature with insights into inter-organizational agreements, which provide further detail on the agreements within collaborations. Together with the factors that have to do with the development of PPP light, these inter-organizational agreements form the basis for specifying constructs, through which abstract theoretical concepts can be translated into concrete and measurable elements for this research. This allows that the phenomenon can be investigated within various municipal and organisational contexts (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.2.2 Case selection

It is important to define a clear population for the study, as this population defines the set of relevant research units and thus forms the basis for the selection of cases. By specifying an appropriate population, undesirable variation can be limited whilst at the same time clarifying the scope of the findings (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Furthermore, this study employs theoretical sampling, whereby cases are selected in a targeted manner based on their potential contribution to theory development. Within this approach, it is valuable to select

cases that differ from one another, making it possible to compare cases in order to refine findings and thereby contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of PPP light (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Based on this theory by Eisenhardt (1989), the following case selection criteria have been applied:

- The case must involve a partnership in a Dutch area development project that has been formally established between at least one public and one private party;
- The case must be established as PPP light by the actors involved in the partnership;
- The case must be formally established in a zoning plan or environment plan, thereby demonstrating that the development is beyond the initiation phase.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of cases, whereby respondents were selected on the basis of their relevance to the research (Tajik et al., 2024). Where necessary, snowball sampling was also used, whereby respondents were approached via social connections and referrals (Ting et al., 2025).

The case selection criteria used, in combination with purposive and snowball sampling, led to the selection of the following seven cases.

Case	Project
1	Entree Zoetermeer
2	Havenkwartier Rijswijk
3	Laakhaven centraal Den Haag
4	Merwerde Kanaalzone Utrecht
5	Piushaven Tilburg
6	Rijnpark Arnhem
7	Veilingkwartier Tiel

Table 3 Case selection overview (own table)

3.2.3 Data collection

This study used semi-structured in-depth interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics and agreements made within PPP light, as well as the underlying considerations of the parties involved. The in-depth interview method is suitable because it enables the acquisition of detailed knowledge, personal experiences, sensitive aspects and a broader understanding of the context (Roller, 2020).

Several interviews were conducted as part of this study. By utilising multiple data sources or more than one data collection method, data triangulation is used to validate the substantiation of constructs and hypotheses and to strengthen the findings (Eisenhardt, 1989). A total of 16 interviews were conducted in this context. For each selected case, both a public and a private party were interviewed, in order to further apply data triangulation and increase the reliability of the findings.

Project	Interview	Organisation	Role	Date	Location	Duration
Entree Zoetermeer	Interview 1	Municipality Zoetermeer	Area manager	09/03/2026	Project office Zoetermeer	01:19:24
	Interview 8	Breevast	Project developer	25/03/2026	Project office Zoetermeer	55:10
Havenkwartier Rijswijk	Interview 2	Studio Hartzema	Urban planner	09/03/2026	Office Rotterdam	01:12:40
	Interview 11	VanWonen	Project developer	03/04/2026	Online	55:54
Laakhaven Central The Hague	Interview 3	Tenman	Process manager	17/03/2026	Office Den Haag	1:48:43
	Interview 4	Municipality Den Haag	Project manager	17/03/2026	Town Hall The Hague	55:09
		Municipality Den Haag	Manager partnership agreement	17/03/2026	Town Hall The Hague	
	Interview 9	Synchroon	Project developer	26/03/2026	Office Utrecht	1:13:46

Merwerde Kanaalzone Utrecht	Interview 10	Municipality Utrecht	Project manager	27/03/2026	Town Hall Utrecht	53:46
Piushaven Tilburg	Interview 5	Municipality Tilburg	Project manager	18/03/2026	Online	57:34
		Municipality Tilburg	Project leader	18/03/2026	Online	
	Interview 12	Triborgh	Director	03/04/2026	Online	54:10
Rijnpark Arnhem	Interview 13	Municipality Arnhem	Develop manager	03/04/2026	Online	57:46
Veilingkwartier Tiel	Interview 6	BPD	Location manager & Partner B.V. Veilingkwartier	24/03/2026	Project office Tiel	01:05:24
	Interview 7	BMC	Partner Urbanisation and Area Challenges & Partner B.V. Veilingkwartier	24/03/2026	Project office Tiel	59:59

Table 4 Overview of interviews (own table)

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach. A focused interview approach was adopted, using pre-prepared questions, whilst at the same time allowing scope to explore relevant ideas, perspectives and experiences of the participants that emerged during the interview. This contributes to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

The combination of in-depth interviews with a semi-structured approach makes it possible to go beyond observable behaviour and gain insight into the motives, considerations and experiences of stakeholders involved in area development projects. The interviews yield detailed data, making it possible to analyse patterns and themes within and across cases. This contributes to a better understanding of both the circumstances in which PPP light is applied and the characteristics of this partnership model.

Prior to the interviews, both the interview questions and an informed consent form were shared with the interviewees concerned. This ensured that participation was voluntary and that the respondents were aware of the purpose and conditions of the interview, such as the recording and transcription of the conversation and the anonymous use of statements to support the research findings.

To close the study, an expert panel discussion will be organised. A panel discussion is intended to stimulate dialogue and debate on the circumstances and characteristics that define PPP light. By bringing together different perspectives, experiences and expertise within a specific field, both participants and audience members gain insight into a range of viewpoints. This process helps to validate or refine the findings, as well as to clarify, broaden and supplement the phenomenon from various angles. At the same time, the panel offers practical learning points, providing participants with concrete insights and 'takeaway messages' that can be applied to their own knowledge development or academic work (Iyer et al., 2024).

Expert	Organisation	Role
1	Akro Consult	Director
2	Metropole region Eindhoven	Strategic Advisor
3	Brink	Area developer
4	Molsbergen Development B.V.	Project developer

Table 5 Overview of expert panel participants (own table)

3.2.4 Data analysis

The data analysis is carried out in two steps. A combination of within-case and cross-case analysis is applied. This combination acts as a methodological safeguard against the tendency to draw conclusions too hastily on the basis of limited or striking information. By first analysing each case in depth individually

and then comparing patterns across the cases, information-processing biases are counteracted. At the same time, this approach makes it possible, on the one hand, to understand the unique characteristics of individual cases and, on the other hand, to identify broader patterns through cross-case analysis and replication logic. This process is iterative in nature, involving constant switching between both levels of analysis, and insights from one step may lead to renewed analysis or additional data collection (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The recorded interviews were transcribed using FireFlies software. The transcripts were then checked against the recordings to correct any inaccurately quoted statements. The analysis of the interviews was carried out in a structured manner using ATLAS.ti. This software is used to support the qualitative analysis process and facilitated the systematic coding, organisation and analysis of the interview data. In addition, the software provided clear visualisations of themes, codes, sub-codes and their interrelationships, which contributed to a transparent and structured analysis process. A codebook was drawn up prior to the use of ATLAS.ti. During data analysis, a combination of *deductive* and *inductive* coding techniques is used. Deductive coding involves the use of predefined codes based on and aligned with the established theoretical framework of Chapter 2. This results in clearly defined, *closed codes*. Inductive coding, in contrast, allows for the addition of new codes that emerge directly from the data. This leads to *open codes*, which capture unexpected themes and insights as they arise from the interviews (Van Staa & De Vries, 2014).

Table 6 shows the code book. In this scheme, the main themes of the study are divided into codes and then into sub-codes, in order to analyse the qualitative data. The codes are based alternately on deductive, theoretical insights from the literature review and inductive insights from the interviews.

Theme	Code	Subcode	Type
Establishment of PPP light	Fragmented ownership	Different initiatives from stakeholders	Deductive
		Purchase and physical difference of land	Deductive
		Operation and management need	Deductive
		Aiming for autonomy	Inductive
	Complexity	Scale & density	Deductive
		Integral programme challenges	Deductive
		External factors	Deductive
	Flexibility	Rigid policy frameworks and procedures	Deductive
		Change to persons involved	Inductive
	Experiences	Experiences	Inductive
Arrangements	Financial	Risk	Deductive
		Revenues	Deductive
	Legal	Rules	Deductive
		Requirements	Deductive
	Organisational	Tasks	Deductive
		Responsibilities	Deductive
	Relational	Communication	Deductive
		Trust	Deductive

Lessons learned	Lessons learned	Enables	Inductive
		Barriers	Inductive

Table 6 Code book for within case analyses (own table)

Cross-case analysis is then carried out as an additional step following the case analyses already conducted, in order to bring out the essence of this research. Cross-case analysis helps to counter cognitive biases, as interview data is analysed from different perspectives and conclusions are only drawn when patterns recur across multiple cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). This serves as the basis for the definition of PPP light within the theoretical framework set out in Chapter 2.

3.2.5 Data conclusions and theory building

Drawing conclusions based on case studies is an iterative process that requires close engagement with empirical data. In this study, the conclusions are therefore based on the collected data and not on preconceived abstract assumptions.

The cross-case analysis seeks to identify relationships between agreements made at the financial, legal, organisational, and relational levels. When comparable relationships are confirmed across multiple individual cases, patterns can be identified. As these patterns recur more consistently across different cases, confidence in the validity of the conclusions increases, according to the logic of replication (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Based on these identified patterns in agreements, characteristics of PPP light can then be derived. The empirical findings are linked to the theoretical framework, creating a 'fit' between theory and data. This strengthens the rationale and leads to a robust definition of PPP light.

3.3 Reliability

3.3.1. Credibility (in preference to internal validity)

Credibility refers to the extent to which the research findings provide a realistic and accurate representation of reality. In qualitative research, this is strengthened by using multiple sources and methods and by critically reflecting on the interpretation of the data (Shenton, 2004). In this study, credibility was increased through conducting expert interviews, including different perspectives, and continuously reflecting on the findings and interpretations throughout the research process.

3.3.2. Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability)

Transferability is about the extent to which the findings can be applicable to other situations or contexts. In qualitative research, this mainly means that the research context should be described clearly so that others can determine whether the findings are relevant to a comparable situation (Shenton, 2004). In this research, with the aim of defining PPP light as a partnership model, it is important that the way in which this definition was established is clearly explained. Therefore, the context of the area development cases used in this study, the respondents who participated, and the research process itself are described as clearly as possible.

3.3.3 Dependability (in preference to reliability)

Dependability relates to the reliability and consistency of the research process. This means that it should be clear how the research was conducted and which choices were made during the process (Shenton, 2004). In this research, dependability is ensured by documenting the research process, data collection and analysis step by step, and by reflecting on and referring back to these choices throughout the study.

3.3.4 Confirmability (in preference to objectivity)

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are based on the collected data rather than the personal opinions of the researcher. Therefore, it is important that choices and interpretations are explained transparently (Shenton, 2004). In this research, confirmability was supported by including quotes in the case study descriptions to show on which statements and findings the conclusions were based. In addition, analysing multiple case studies created the opportunity to compare different data sources and critically reflect on the findings. The results and methodological choices were clearly documented. To further strengthen the validity of the research, the findings were reflected upon and validated multiple times, allowing additional nuances to be added to the outcomes.

4. Results: with-in case analysis

For this study, seven case studies were selected. Differing in planning area size, programme, number of parties involved, partnership form and project phase. Despite these differences, the same interview questions were used across all cases to ensure a structured comparison. These cases are located in the municipalities: Zoetermeer, Rijswijk, The Hague, Utrecht, Tilburg, Arnhem and Tiel. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and, in some cases, site visits.

This chapter first introduce the case stud and subsequently describes how each partnership emerged, including the reasons for not adopting a traditional PPP structure. It also provides an overview of the agreements within each partnership regarding risks and revenues, rules and requirements, tasks and responsibilities, and trust and informal communication. Only project-specific agreements are discussed here. Agreements related to statutory cost recovery are excluded, as these are established in all area developments and therefore do not distinguish this partnership from other forms of collaboration. The arrangements that has been made, forms the basis for identifying the characteristics of PPP light at the financial, legal, organisational and relational levels outlined in Chapter 2.

4.1 Entrée Zoetermeer

4.1.1 Introduction

Zoetermeer is at the beginning of a major urban transformation. The Entree area, currently characterised by largely vacant office buildings, extensive parking lots and underutilised public space, has been designated for redevelopment. In line with the Strategic Implementation Agenda 2040, Entree will be transformed into a mixed-use urban district where housing, employment, mobility and liveability are integrated.

Entree plays a key role in this ambition as the transition area between old and new Zoetermeer. Located along the A12 and between two major public transport hubs, it serves as the city's main entrance and an important first impression for visitors. However, the area's current character is unattractive, while the Afrikaweg acts as a physical barrier (Gebiedsontwikkeling.nu, 2026).



Figure 6 Map development area Entrée Zoetermeer (Zoetermeer, 2025)

Profile Entrée Zoetermeer
Concept Transformation (4,5 ha) into a sustainable, mixed-use urban neighbourhood with a focus on mobility, sustainability and the integration of functions such as housing, work and leisure.
Programme and development • 6,750 – 7,250 dwelling ◦ Mix rental and owner-occupied properties, 27%-30% social housing and affordable owner-occupied homes, 25%-35% mid-range rentals and affordable owner-occupied homes. Remainder of the housing programme is left to the discretion of the developers. • Set of blocks with fixed envelopes; the buildings decrease in height • Social and commercial programme (primary school, supermarket, theatre, library) • Through cycle and walking route across the A12, cycle link to the city centre • Improved public transport connections
Land/plot allocation • Municipality (20%) (Entreepoort 2,3 & West 8) • Developers involved (80%): Breevast (east 1-8) + Other developers • Pre-emption law Municipality: West 3, 6&7
Finance • Subsidies and funds • Joint investment in branding and marketing
Governance & management • No legal entity; partnership established in individual AOK/BOPA per developer • Organised consultation structure; individual and joint steering groups, working groups and quality team • Own phase per development • Phasing: - 2015: First initiatives - 2019: Masterplan Entrée established - 2023: The planning permission procedure has been suspended; previous agreements have been extended via Addendum 1 for a period of approximately 1.5 years - Mid 2023: ◦ Decided to proceed with the (new) Environment Act instead of the original zoning plan. ◦ Environmental programme was chosen as new framework for development, setting out key objectives and policy guidelines for the area. - Mid 2024: ◦ The revision of the development plan was approved by the municipal council. ◦ Approximately 90,000 m² of office space was removed from the plan and replaced with housing - 2024 ◦ BOPA procedure per plot, accordance with the policy guidelines of the environmental programme ◦ A new development vision and visual quality plan were drawn up and linked to the environmental programme. ◦ October: Start construction Terra Nova - 2025: Start construction plan development Oost 5 and West 1

Table 7 Information case Entrée Zoetermeer based on interview 1 (own table)

4.1.2 Established partnership model

The municipality concluded anterior agreements with individual landowners wishing to proceed with development. The overall programme was allocated across the various plots, after which plot-specific framework agreements were established between each landowner and the municipality (interview 1, 01:48; 28:36). As a result, multiple parties are individually contracted with the municipality for their respective parts of the area (interview 1, 01:48; 28:36). To maintain collective commitment, a joint addendum was later signed by the market parties and the municipality to extend the duration of the individual contracts (interview 1, 02:17).

4.1.3 Why PPP light

The Entree development stagnated when the zoning plan was not adopted. Objections from landowners during the approval process led to the suspension of the procedure, causing the anterior agreements to expire by operation of law. Through Addendum 1, the duration of these agreements was extended. With the introduction of the Environment and Planning Act in 2024, the collaboration continued under the new legislation using BOPAs (out-of-scope environment plan activity). Which was a suitable contractual arrangements reflecting the scale and complexity of the area development (interview 1, 01:48–02:44).

To prevent renewed objections, the municipality and landowners established a closer collaboration from mid-2023 onwards to jointly prepare the framework-setting documents. This resulted in a more flexible partnership structure than is typically found in traditional PPPs (interview 1, 04:11). Given the fragmented landownership, existing development positions and significant differences in land values, a joint land exploitation (GREX/GEM) was considered as not feasible. Instead, each party retained responsibility for its own development within jointly agreed frameworks. The municipality's limited land position further reinforced its facilitating role, focusing on steering through frameworks and process management rather than participating in a risk-bearing joint land exploitation (interview 8).

To maintain control over strategic land positions and prevent speculation, the municipality applied the right of first refusal to plots for which no anterior agreements were expected in the short term. This right remains in force at several locations (Gebiedsontwikkeling.nu, 2026; interview 1, 21:09).

4.1.4 Inter-organizational arrangements in partnership model

The partnership within Entree Zoetermeer is structured through individual anterior agreements, joint process agreements and a layered consultation structure. Agreements cover cost distribution, programming, jointly developed frameworks, decision-making and flexibility. Informal coordination, trust and continuity within the project team further support collaboration between the municipality and market parties.

4.1.3.1 Financial

Joint activities

Each developer bears the risks associated with its own plot and development, while the municipality is responsible for the risks related to public facilities. Costs for branding, marketing, start-up activities and the project location are shared among all parties. Although multiple landowners are present in the area, only those contracted with the municipality and actively pursuing development participate in the partnership coalition to do the branding and marketing of the area together (interview 1, 31:20; 46:57).

Landowners without an anterior agreement can join the coalition once they decide to develop. Or these landowners can sell their land to a developer who wants to develop and then has to enter into an anterior agreement with the municipality (interview 1, 24:30; 57:27). To prevent free-riding, new market parties how are joining to collation, are required to pay an entry fee based on a distribution key, covering costs previously incurred for joint activities and ensuring a fair allocation of shared expenses (interview 1, 46:57).

Payment in instalments

Cost recovery is not invoiced all at once, but is divided into phases: upon the conclusion of the anterior agreement, the adoption of the environment program and the extension of the planning permission (interview 1, 01:14:55). The financial obligation is linked to the certainty that the developer receives regarding the realisation of the construction plan. This reduces the financial risk for the market party, because they only have to pay large amounts when the chance of realisation, and therefore of revenue, increases (interview 1, 01:16:57).

4.1.3.2 Legal

Use of legislation and planning instruments

Under the new Environment Act, a new set of agreements was made, in which the environment program became the central document for the further development of the area. This program functioned as an overarching document in which the main ambitions for the area were laid down, including policy rules. Instead of one large zoning plan, a BOPA is now used per plot. This provides the legal flexibility to grant a planning permission per plot when a party is ready for it (interview 1, 36:32). The environment program was further expanded with a new development vision, a renewed image quality plan, and specific noise and parking rules. These documents were developed in close collaboration with the contracted market parties and established the framework for future development (interview 1, 02:44).

"Blokken die nu op de plots ter ontwikkeling komen, komen voort uit de ontwikkelvisie. Er wordt ook getoetst aan de kaders die inde ontwikkelvisie en in het beeldkwaliteitsplan gesteld zijn. Deze opzet is redelijk het zelfde als water destijds in het ontwerpbestemmingsplan zat."

Interview 1 Municipality Zoetermeer, quote 13:48

Anterior agreement (AOK) as fundament

The anterior agreements (AOKs) form the private-law basis of the partnership and are concluded separately with each contracted party. This structure safeguards plot-specific flexibility that would be more difficult to achieve through a single joint agreement. Each AOK specifies the developer's contribution to public facilities, such as planning costs and public space, as well as programme requirements, including the balance between residential and working functions (interview 1, 28:36). Exchange possibilities between plots are possible, but there is no value equalisation.

"Er is verevening mogelijk, bijvoorbeeld door op Oost 6 100% sociale huur te realiseren, terwijl andere plots zoals Oost 4 of 5 geen sociale huur bevatten, zolang het maar voldoet aan de opgestelde afspraken die in de anterieure overeenkomst gemaakt zijn."

Interview 1 Municipality Zoetermeer, quote 09:03

The social programme is separated from the commercial programme. Developers may realise commercial functions by them self on their own plot, while social functions, such as a primary school, are accommodated on assigned plots. This provides flexibility in programming and allows decisions on social facilities to be made at a later stage based on actual demand (interview 1, 09:03). The AOKs do not prescribe a development timeline, allowing developers to determine their own pace. They also include agreements on role allocation and consultation structures, which are discussed later in this chapter.

Process agreements

Process agreements are used, because of the long term of the project. These are agreements on how decisions will be made in the future for matters that are still uncertain at present, such as the exact energy demand or future parking pressure (interview 8, 10:39). It has been agreed that parties may deviate from the 'main path' via a 'side path', provided this is substantiated and both parties benefit from it. For this purpose, the planning is recalibrated annually (interview 8, 30:49).

"Dus één, je moet goed kunnen samenwerken. Want anders krijg je een soort vechtproject. Twee, de basis afspraken, dus die anterieure overeenkomsten, die moeten goed zijn om dat pad met elkaar te kunnen bewandelen. Dat pad moet je vijftien jaar kunnen volgen. Maar daarnaast moet je aan twee kanten openstaan om af en toe een zijpad te kunnen bewandelen als dat goed is voor het project. En ik ben altijd van mening, als het goed is voor het project, is het goed voor de partijen."

Interview 8 Breevast, quote 32:50

4.1.3.3 Organisational

Layered consultation structure

The municipality is responsible for public space, while developers are responsible for preparing building plans, constructing the buildings and developing their own plots within the municipal frameworks (interview 1, 16:56; 17:50).

To coordinate these responsibilities and jointly develop the urban framework, a layered consultation and decision making structure is established. Two types of steering committees operate within this partnership. Individual steering committees allow the municipality to discuss plot-specific issues and progress with each landowner separately, including matters requiring administrative escalation (interview 1, 29:51). In addition, a joint steering committee consisting of all contracted parties. This committee meets every six weeks to discuss overall project progress and resolve issues collectively. If no agreement is reached, it can be referred to a higher level for a decision (interview 1, 29:51).

Below the steering committees are project groups, in which the owners alternately fulfil the role of chair. In the project groups, project developers and project managers from both the municipality and market parties coordinate the development of the area and discuss issues prepared by the working groups (interview 1, 30:11). These working groups focus on cross-plot activities to make them feasible and can be integrated, such as branding and network congestion, to make internal plan (interview 1, 31:07).

A quality team of external architects and urban designers assesses building plans against the development vision and image quality plan to safeguard consistency and quality across the area (interview 1, 15:33).

4.1.3.4 Relational

Informal communication

The partnership had previously been disrupted by a 'flood of objections' from market parties to municipal plans. This was due to too little trust from the market parties and a high level of distrust towards the municipality. By entering into dialogue, these objections could be withdrawn and the atmosphere became more positive (interview 1, 50:34).

"Ik ben meteen in gesprek gegaan, van he wat zit hier naar achter? Wat gaat er in de samenwerking niet goed? Waarom is überhaupt deze zienwijze nodig?"

Interview 10 Municipality Zoetermeer, quote 48:47

From then on, the explicit agreement was to first discuss problems in person, before resorting to formal procedures such as letters or objectives (interview 1, 55:06). This informal contact is further supported by informal activities, such as council excursions, through which trust is built and which ensures that parties give each other the patience and understanding required when unavoidable setbacks occur in a long-term project (interview 10, 54:20).

Shared project goal

There is an implicit understanding that project success takes precedence over the individual profit objectives of market parties or the political interests of the municipality. In practice, corporate interests may sometimes take priority, which is not always in line with the project objectives (interview 8, 34:17). The partnership therefore requires a continuous search for a shared goal, given that the conflicting interests can hinder the progress of the project (interview 8, 37:30). Although this commitment cannot be formalised through contractual agreements, it is reinforced by mutual consultation and placing the project objective at the centre, a basis is created for jointly searching for solutions. Trust and a shared sense of purpose are strengthened by flexibility in applying agreements (interview 8, 04:22), jointly recalibrating ambitions (interview 8, 29:02), addressing each other's challenges (interview 8, 19:45; 39:02), and maintaining transparency (interview 1, 01:04:55).

"Dit begint altijd bij het relationele aspect, communicatie en vertrouwen dit staat altijd heel hoog bij mij."

Interview 8 Breevast, quote 32:34

Focus on continuity

Efforts are made to preserve the 'chemistry' and accumulated knowledge within the project team, although this is sometimes complicated by the municipality's recruitment policies. Continuity of key individuals throughout the development process, from the initiative phase into implementation, supports project progress and knowledge retention. As area development is highly people-oriented, the departure of key figures at critical moments can disrupt the project (interview 8, 51:45).

"Het belangrijkste voor zo'n gebiedsontwikkeling is de samenwerking, het doelproject zijn met elkaar en continuïteit van mensen."

Interview 8 Breevast, quote 54:41

4.2 Havenkwartier Rijswijk

4.2.1 Introduction

To address housing shortages, Rijswijk aims to substantially increase its housing stock, with at least two-thirds of new dwellings classified as affordable, including 30% social housing. Efforts will be made to ensure future-proof housing in sustainable, green and liveable neighbourhoods. Collaboration with various partners is essential to realise these ambitions (Gemeente Rijswijk, 2025). Part of this ambition is realised in the Plaspoelpolder, a 126-hectare business district. Havenkwartier comprises approximately 20 hectares of this area and is being redeveloped into a mixed-use district with residential, commercial but limited public facilities (interview 2, 0:30). The emphasis here is on combining living and working, the reuse of existing buildings, in keeping with the character of the area and the existing ownership structures (Gemeente Rijswijk, 2023).

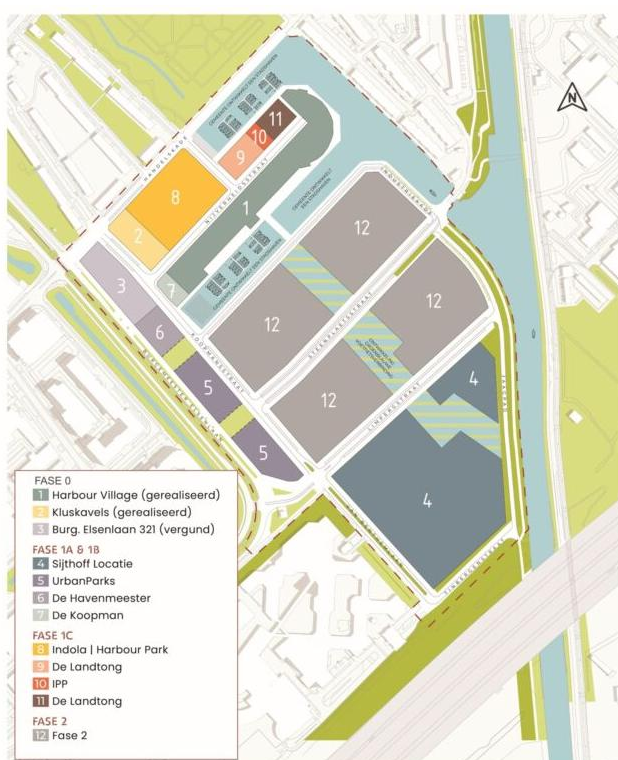


Figure 7 Map development area Havenkwartier Rijswijk (InRijswijk, 2022)

Profile Havenkwartier Rijswijk	
Concept	Inner-city transformation of a quarter (20 ha) of the Plaspoelpolder industrial area into a mixed-use area consisting of housing, offices and a small proportion of facilities.
Programme and development	• 2.800 dwelling • Social facilities, working places
Land/plot allocation	• 6 private developers with land position (ratio varies) • Municipality does not own land • Parties retain own position and ownership
Finance	• Developments are financed separately by each party • No joint development of the area • Fixed financial contribution of public space ○ ± €108/m² BVO residential

○ ± €50 per m ² commercial space
Governance & management
○ No joint entity established; partnership established in LOI, urban planning framework and anterior agreement per developer
○ Structured consultation framework; developer consultations, direct lines of communication
○ Own phasing per developing
○ Phasing:
○ 2015-2016: first initiatives and agreements about development framework
○ 2016-2018: preparation and establishment urban development plan
○ 2018-2025: start phase 0 first transformations
○ 2026 establishment Environment Plan
○ 2025-2029: Phase 1 outer plots: transformation of offices into residential units (redevelopment & demolish/new build)
○ 2029-2035: Phase 2 inner plots: retain existing office buildings + adding residential units on top.

Table 8 Information case Havenkwartier Rijswijk based on Municipality Rijswijk (2023) (own table)

4.2.2 Established partnership model

The development of the Havenkwartier 'Urban Parks' emerged because landowners anticipated the vision drawn up by the municipality to transform the large amount of vacant offices in the area. In doing so, landowners took the initiative themselves to transform their plots (interview 11, 1:33). To prevent these initiatives from leading to fragmented area development, the municipality considered steering to be necessary. Therefore, a joint plan was drawn up in collaboration with developing parties and landowners.

A Letter of Intent (LOI) formalised this partnership and established a shared commitment to the Urban Parks concept (interview 11, 1:33). Within this partnership, the municipality of Rijswijk and the developing parties jointly prepared and adopted the Development Framework Havenkwartier Urban Parks. This framework served as the binding spatial framework for the area and guided both municipal and private development decisions (interview 2, 05:34).

In addition, joint set up anterior agreements were concluded for each individual developing party. These agreements provided the legal and planning preconditions needed to actually enable the developments. In this, the agreements laid down the requirements the plans had to meet and the criteria on the basis of which they would be assessed (interview 11, 7:19).

"Toen heeft de gemeente op gegeven moment gezegd, ja, Dat is allemaal leuk dat elke ontwikkelaar nu aan het loket komt. Laten we kijken of er dan inderdaad meer een soort overall plan van kunnen maken. Toen is eigenlijk een soort PPS light construcie ontstaan waarin de samenwerking is ontstaan."

Interview 13 VanWonen quote 2:04

4.2.3 Why PPP light

The partnership in the Havenkwartier emerged naturally from the need to prevent fragmented development and create a coherent area. A partnership structure based on land contribution and joint exploitation was deliberately avoided. The municipality owned no land in the area, and the landowners wish a partnership organised through agreements, rather than a joint land development structure (interview 2, 5:14; 4:48). Furthermore, differences in land acquisition costs and timing, the presence of active businesses, and the complexity of land value equalisation made a joint land exploitation (GREX) infeasible. The municipality's limited land position and absence of a right of first refusal further reinforced this choice (interview 13, 14:32).

Landowners retained ownership and responsibility for their own plots, while development was coordinated through shared urban planning framework and agreements to integrate this framework together (interview 13, 5:48).

4.2.4 Inter-organizational arrangements in partnership model

The set of agreements within this collaboration is characterised by a high degree of flexibility and is based on the individual responsibility of the developing parties. This is underpinned by an overarching urban development framework, which ensures coherence within the area and functions as an assessment instrument from the municipality. Financial agreements ensure the distribution and coverage of risks. At the same time, the ongoing dialogue that is made possible by the short lines of communication between parties plays a crucial role.

4.2.3.1 Financial

Developers finance and bear the risks of their own plots, while the municipality is responsible for risks related to public space, including the waterfront and green areas. To secure financial contributions, developers make payments at predefined stages of the development process, with part of the contribution paid upon signing the agreement and the remainder during implementation or completion. This safeguards the commitment of parties already in an early stage of the developing the area together (interview 2, 15:55; 16:20). Commitment is further safeguarded through obligations and penalty clauses established in the anterior agreements. These apply equally to all parties and reduce the risk of developments not proceeding, as a result of which the financial contributions for the layout of the public space would also not be realised (interview 11, 16:26). The development framework and programme specify what each developer must realise, although programme exchanges between plots are permitted by mutual agreement. No financial equalisation arrangements are in place (interview 11, 32:41).

"Gelijke monniken, gelijke kappen, dat doet heel veel wonderen"

Interview 2 Studio Hartzema, quote 01:04:29

To maintain financial feasibility, certain public space elements are designed as optional and can be adjusted or omitted if required by the business case (interview 13, 13:03). Costs are further reduced through the joint use of consultants for studies regarding the development and the collective financing of area promotion, participation processes and planning activities (interview 11, 33:17; interview 2, 19:09).

4.2.3.2 Legal

Flexible agreements

An anterior agreement was concluded for each plot between the municipality and the relevant developer, setting out the conditions for development (interview 11, 07:19; 16:26). The urban development plan and development framework provide the overarching assessment framework, ensuring coherence between individual initiatives (interview 2, 03:51).

"Dit kader bood ruimte om de ontwikkelingen plotsgewijs uit te voeren, zodat elke ontwikkelaar op zijn eigen plot een ontwikkeling kon realiseren, terwijl de samenhang op gebiedsniveau werd gewaarborgd via het ontwikkelkader en later het stedenbouwkundigplan."

Interview 13 VanWonen, quote 4:33

Additional agreements on themes such as climate adaptation and nature-inclusive construction were established through covenants attached to the anterior agreements (interview 13, 07:18). A high degree of flexibility was deliberately incorporated into the partnership. Landowners were not obliged to develop immediately, but could do so when it was the right time to develop for them. The developments are not

mutually dependent on each other, parties can develop at their own pace (interview 2, 14:08). This increased their willingness to contribute to the shared objective and are not obligated to contribute (interview 2, 47:14).

“Als je mensen bindt, dat is fijn, want dan wil je samen iets. Maar als je alles en alles vast verstrengelt, dan komt er ook niemand meer in beweging, want er zitten ontzettend veel afhankelijkheden gemaakt. Dus het stedenbouwkundig plan is uiteindelijk om te binden en om beweging te krijgen. Vaak zie je als er eenmaal iets begint, dan heeft iedereen de neiging om ook te starten. Uit ervaring loopt dit wel vanzelf zonder harde afspraken.”

Interview 2 Studio Hartzema, quote 10:56

Plot design

As the municipality owned no land within the plan area, the landowners agreed that each would allocate 20% of its plot to public space. This arrangement, established through mutual consultation and incorporated into the urban development plan, was necessary to provide sufficient green space, water and water borders (kades) (interview 2, 6:42; 8:17).

Each landowner remained responsible for the design, financing and risks associated with this public space, while plans were assessed against the urban development framework to ensure coherence across the area (interview 2, 09:02). The framework established agreements on building lines, height limits, street layouts and spatial quality, while allowing developers considerable freedom in the architectural design of their own plots (interview 2, 08:17; interview 11, 34:03). The framework also included agreements on the housing and social programme to ensure diversity across developments. Developers committed to a distribution of 30% social rent, 30% mid-market and 30% higher-priced housing per plot. The social programme was allocated and determined on each plot.

Coordination on this takes place through mutual consultation and is not strictly legally laid down, but is mainly shaped in practice (Interview 11, 31:39). Developers can vary their programme in consultation, so there was room for mutual equalisation and adjustments (interview 11, 32:05). Programme adjustments and exchanges remained possible through mutual consultation, providing flexibility in implementation (interview 11, 31:39; 31:57; 32:05; 34:53).

“Als iedereen gewoon zijn eigen ding doet, blijft alles naast elkaar bestaan. Juist doordat iedereen op zijn eigen manier bijdraagt aan iets groters, ontstaat er meer gevoel van samenhang. En dat is gelukt. Zo is dat eigenlijk de regel geworden. Verder zijn er alleen afspraken over bouwgrenzen, rooilijnen en straten, maar niets ingewikkelds. Dus er is relatief veel vrijheid voor iedereen, zolang het maar past binnen het stedenbouwkundig kader.”

Interview 2 Studio Hartzema, quote 08:17

4.2.3.3 Organisational

Not strict and organised consultation structure

The consultation structure within the Havenkwartier combines formal monthly meetings with informal coordination through short lines of communication. During the monthly developer consultations, developers and the municipality coordinate the plans with each other, discuss progress, and coordinate practical matters, such as flora and fauna studies, wind studies, and the approach to nuisance during demolition works (Interview 11, 29:39). Participation in these consultations was voluntary, although everyone knew that involvement was considered beneficial for the partnership (Interview 11, 30:41).

Within this structure, the urban planner acts as supervisor, assessing building plans against the urban development framework. The project manager serves as the link between municipal departments and market parties, to ensure effective communication. Both participate in the monthly consultations

(interview 11, 7:19; 22:00). The relatively small-scale organisation of the municipality of Rijswijk enables direct communication through email, telephone and informal contact, allowing issues to be addressed quickly (interview 1, 20:43).

"Het plan moet alle belangen kieren. Dus het maakt niet uit aan welke kant ik als adviseur stond. Het moet als bruggetje dienen tussen de gemeente en de partijen."

Interview 2 Studio Hartzman quote 5:34

Program coordination

To prevent all developers from realising a similar housing product, agreements have been made on this. Coordination largely takes place through mutual consultation and is not strictly legally laid down, but is rather shaped verbally and in practice (Interview 13, 31:39). Within the development framework, for example, it has been agreed that plans must contain a certain programmatic distribution, such as a minimum percentage for different housing types. At the same time, there is room for flexibility and mutual coordination between developers. Parties can, if desired, vary their programme in consultation with each other, for example by exchanging housing types depending on their specific preferences or market demand. This creates a certain degree of differentiation within the area, while at the same time steering towards a balanced distribution (interview 13, 32:05). In addition, demolition works and construction traffic are coordinated with each other (interview 13, 29:39).

4.2.3.4 Relational

Shared goal

The relational aspect of collaboration has been of great importance within the area development of Havenkwartier Rijswijk. Explicit agreements have been made on communication and trust, but this also builds up over time.

"Het aspect van verbondenheid, de meer emotionele en persoonlijke relatie tussen mensen, is in zo'n project heel belangrijk. Uiteindelijk draait het om mensen: iedereen handelt, waar hij ook werkt, vanuit persoonlijke motivatie en de drang om iets te willen en te proberen. Juist daarom is het relationele aspect van groot belang binnen samenwerkingen."

Interview 2 Studio Hartzema, quote 19:09

The relational dimension of the Havenkwartier partnership is strongly based on trust, communication and a shared understanding of the project objectives. Although the partnership often assumes mutual trust and a shared interest, it is important not to automatically assume that all parties pursue the same goal. Precisely for this reason, it is necessary to make explicit agreements about the joint objective and the focus of the collaboration. Clear coordination on this helps to prevent misunderstandings and reduces the need to formalise all agreements in detail, which improving the workability of the collaboration. A project manager has an ultimate role in this (interview 2, 53:45).

"Wanneer betrokken partijen zich verbonden voelen met een gedeeld en ambitieus eindbeeld, ontstaat er bereidheid om individuele offers te brengen, zoals het afstaan van 20% van hun kavel."

Interview 2 Studio Hartzema, quote 01:20:33

Emotion management in conflicts

When tensions arise, for example due to new requirements from an ecologist or parking standards, parties are encouraged to first allow frustrations to be expressed before seeking solutions. So first take a moment to let off some steam and then get back together to find solutions. By resuming discussions after a new days when emotions have settled, solutions can usually be found through pragmatic

dialogue. Responding emotionally or relying solely on formal procedures is considered counterproductive (interview 2, 42:16).

Transparency and short lines of communication

Short communication lines between project managers, the supervisor and the alderman enable rapid coordination outside formal consultations. Regular non-mandatory meetings further support informal information exchange (interview 11, 29:39). At the same time, this can bring disadvantages, because informal coordination can lead to unclear or incomplete agreements of which not all involved parties are aware (Interview 2, 20:50). Transparency regarding project feasibility, interests and preconditions is therefore essential. Open communication helps parties understand each other's objectives and constraints, while withholding information can hinder collaboration.

4.3 Laakhaven Central The Hague

4.3.1 Introduction

Laakhaven Central is a subarea of the Laakhaven Hollands Spoor development and forms part of The Hague's Central Innovation District (CID). Located near the stations of Hollands Spoor, Den Haag Central and Laan van NOI. The area is designated for large-scale urban transformation and is guided by a development vision adopted in 2021 (interview 3, 01:14). Despite covering less than a quarter of a square kilometre, Laakhaven Central has a high development intensity. The area currently consists mainly of ageing industrial premises, offices and large-scale retail, much of which is vacant or temporarily occupied (interview 3, 02:29; 03:12). The redevelopment largely involves demolition and new construction. At the same time, existing businesses remain active and much of the land is privately owned, requiring both land acquisition and business relocation while the municipality lacks of ownership in the area (interview 3, 03:12).

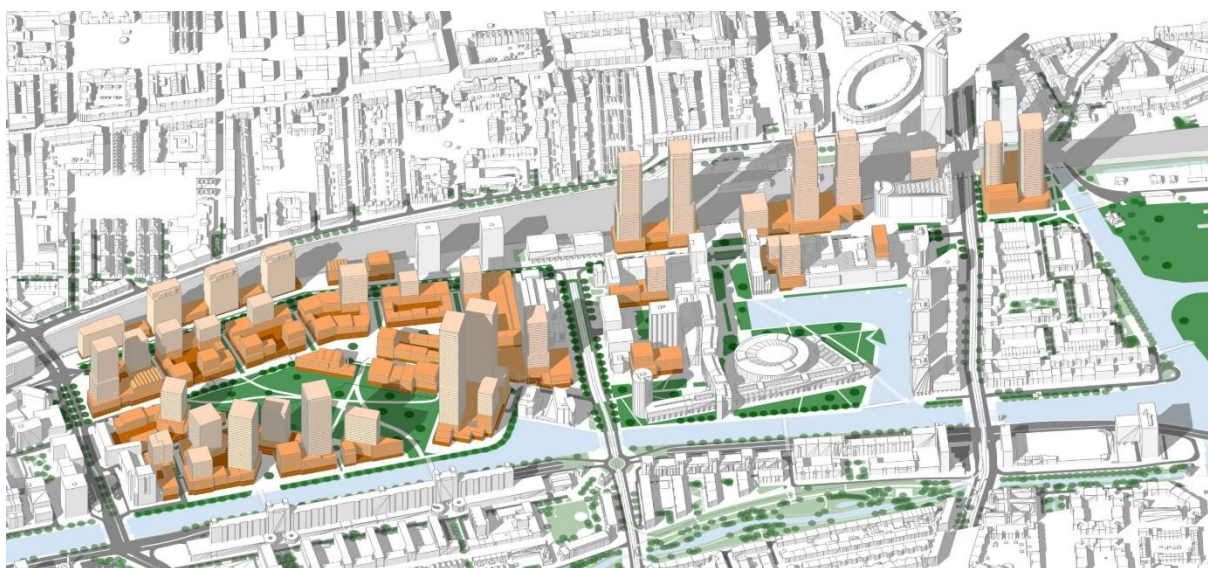


Figure 8 Map Laakhaven Central Den Haag (left side of development area) (Gemeente Den Haag, 2026)

Profile Laakhaven Centraal	
Concept	Transformation of a (dated) industrial, office and retail area into a mixed-use urban residential and commercial area. Strong emphasis on housing development, public spaces and site-wide facilities.
Programme and development	• 6,500 dwellings • 100,000 m² facilities in the ground floor plinth • Creating central public park • Integration of mobility solutions and a collective thermal energy storage system (WKO-system)
Land/plot allocation	• 6 market parties: Amvest, COD, Atenor, MyB, Ten brinke, MS vastgoed (totaal 65%) • Municipality 1 plot (35%), responsible for the buy-out of existing businesses • Land holdings remain the property of individual parties; no joint entity and land exploitation (GREX/GEM) ○ Developments are carried out on a plot-by-plot basis within jointly agreed parameters
Finance	• Planning cost shared equally between the local authority and market parties (5050) • Open-book approach applied to GREX and VEX • Various subsidy streams
Governance & management	• No joint entity; partnership set out in a collaboration letter to be further elaborated in the collaboration agreements (SOK)

- Layered consultation structure; steering group and working groups
- Phasing:
 - 2021 establishment development vision
 - 2024 start PPP; establishing of development strategy and public space plan
 - December 2025: zoning plan under public review; formal adoption by the municipal council is expected in Q1 2027
 - 2022-2026 plan shaping phase 1 Verheeskade, Calandstraat, Waldopstraat

Table 9 Information case Laak haven Central The Hague based on interview 3&4 (own table)

4.3.2 Established partnership model

The collaboration model was initially laid down in a letter of agreement. This letter of agreement contains the main outlines of the collaboration and functions as a formal contract in which the most important agreements are laid down (interview 4, 08:35). The letter states that parties will proceed jointly in the process, whereby they commit to collaborating until the signing of the cooperation agreement (SOK). On the basis of these agreements, collaboration then took place on the first steps needed to make the development vision affordable within the collaboration. A SOK is now being worked on, in which new and further agreements are being laid down (interview 3, 2:13; 23:03).

“Het gaat om een samenwerkingsovereenkomst waarin je op de relevante onderdelen duidelijke afspraken maakt, zodat je elkaar op lange termijn zekerheid kunt bieden. Ik heb ook zwaardere PPS constructie meegemaakt, maar uit ervaring blijkt dat een flexibelere aanpak goed werkt binnen gebiedsontwikkeling en de opgaven waar we nu voor staan.”

Interview 3 Tenman, quote 41:36

4.3.3 Why PPP light

The choice for a PPP light structure originated from the need to make the development vision financially feasible and enable implementation of the area development (interview 3, 05:02). Collaboration and a partnership structure between municipality and landowners remained absent for a long time due to limited municipal capacity and the perception that development was primarily a municipal responsibility (interview 3, 08:16; 09:27). Meanwhile, existing and new market parties continued to acquire land in anticipation of future developments (interview 3, 04:45).

As the municipality owned only approximately 35% of the land, partnership with other landowners became increasingly necessary to realise the development vision (interview 4, 07:34; 20:46). Without coordination, the municipality expected fragmented development and the absence of collective facilities such as a park. The submission of an individual permit application reinforced this concern (interview 3, 12:56; 17:14; interview 4, 19:24). These circumstances underlined the need to seek a partnership structure, formalise it, and work it out in a development strategy (interview 3, 12:56; 17:14; interview 4, 19:24).

“Dan wordt het geen integrale gebiedsontwikkeling en dan gaan we niet de voorzieningen realiseren, kunnen we niet aan de marktpartij vragen om mee te denken, kunnen we geen mooie afgewogen verdeling van de voorzieningen realiseren, want dat gaat ieder voor zich.”

Interview 3 Tenman, quote 49:46

To realise the development vision, the parties jointly explored an appropriate partnership organisation model, including governance arrangements and consultation structures (interview 3, 04:46). This process led to the selection of a PPP light structure. Neither the municipality nor the landowners considered the creation of a separate legal entity desirable, partly because of the associated risk allocation (interview 4, 41:29).

“Maar hier hebben die marktpartijen posities ingenomen, vooruitlopend op de gedachte dat er ontwikkelpotentie is. Daarmee hebben zij een grondpositie gekregen. Dat maakt eigenlijk dat je op een of andere manier wel moet samenwerken, want zonder deze partijen kan de gemeente het gewenste programma niet realiseren. Dat is eigenlijk het startpunt van de samenwerking.”

Interview 3 Municipality The Hague, quote 07:34

4.3.4 Inter-organizational arrangements in partnership model

4.3.4.1 Financial

Upfront distribution of costs

The PPP light character is reflected in the financial arrangements. Developers bear the financial risks associated with their own plots and developments, while the municipality is responsible for risks related to public space, such as parks and parking facilities. Planning costs, however, are shared fifty-fifty between the municipality and developers, with payments linked to project milestones to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. These costs include the preparation of the development strategy, zoning plan, public space plan and supporting studies (interview 3, 24:03; interview 4, 01:31; 13:58; 15:29).

The municipality and developers agreed to share planning costs upfront rather than recover them afterwards. This reflected their joint responsibility for the development and enabled parties to act more quickly when required during the process (interview 3, 24:03; interview 4, 01:31; 13:58; 15:29).

Parties also made joint agreements on cross-plot facilities, including parking solutions, the public park and the WKO system. To support these negotiations, the collaboration adopted an open-book approach, providing both the municipality and market parties with insight into the land and real estate exploitations (GREX, VEX). This gave the municipality insight into the financial capacity of developments to contribute to plot-transcending facilities, while providing developers with insight into available subsidy flows and financial deficits within the area development (interview 3, 30:17). On the basis of this mutual openness, parties jointly worked towards an agreement that was supported by both parties. This transparency enabled parties to jointly determine feasible contributions to shared facilities and the associated financial risks were borne collectively (interview 3, 30:17; 31:32).

“De light-variant zit hem juist in de eenvoud: werken via een gezamenlijke sok, maar zonder aparte entiteiten, grondbanken of complexe verrekenmechanismen. Er wordt vooraf een helder bedrag afgesproken, waarna iedere partij zijn eigen verantwoordelijkheid draagt in de uitvoering.”

Interview 3 Tenman, quote 46:48

4.3.4.2 Legal

Process agreements

For the legal aspect, parties agreed to jointly prepare the key planning documents for the area development, including the development strategy, as an elaboration of the development vision, and the public space plan (interview 3, 17:14). These agreements are anchored in the SOK, which serves as the legal framework for the collaboration. The SOK establishes agreements on governance, decision-making, the programme and its financial principles, while providing the basis for further legal instruments, such as the Temporary alternative measures (TAM) environmental plan (interview 4, 13:03; 18:17; 44:18).

To maintain flexibility, some agreements and conditions must be established at a certain moment in order to continue the process, the so-called process agreements, enabling room to adjust agreements later when the development requires this (interview 3, 46:48). In this way, a deliberate choice was made not to fully lock in the collaboration at the front end (interview 5, 33:57). In line with this flexibility, there

is no hard deadline for developers to proceed with development, but it has been agreed to meet the condition of simultaneous growth over a period of 10 to 15 years of area development.

“Een gebiedsontwikkeling duurt tien tot vijftien jaar en wordt niet in één keer gerealiseerd. Dus afspraken hoeven ook niet allemaal al vastgesteld te worden. Daarom monitoren we de woningbouw in relatie tot groen, sociale voorzieningen en parkeren, zodat afspraken waar nodig kunnen worden herrekend.”

Interview 4 Municipality Den Haag, quote 24:19; 34:12

4.3.4.3 Organisational

Organised consultation structure

The organisation of this partnership is supported by a layered consultation structure that organises planning, decision-making, and the distribution of tasks and responsibilities (interview 3, 38:10; interview 4, 31:34). This structure is formally established in the SOK. The consultation structure consisted of a steering committee and several working groups. Within the steering committee, project managers and involved market parties discussed the progress, planning and programme of the development, jointly making decisions and establishing agreements on tasks and responsibilities (interview 3, 54:41; interview 4, 18:17). Continuity and commitment were key principles within these discussions and were regularly addressed throughout the collaboration (interview 4, 15:56; 32:20). Participation in meetings and working groups was not mandatory but emerged naturally from the collaboration (interview 3, 57:40).

Supporting the steering committee are various working groups, established when needed and maintained as long as they contribute to the process. Participation varied by topic and depended on both available capacity and mutual trust between parties. The groups focused on themes such as GREX/FEX calculations, mobility, sustainability, urban development and decision preparation (interview 3, 56:24; interview 4, 27:05; 56:24). The various working groups were established when needed and remained active as long as they contributed to the process (interview 4, 56:24). Participation varied by topic and depended on both available capacity and the level of trust between parties. The working groups focused on themes such as GREX/FEX calculations, mobility, sustainability, urban design and decision preparation (interview 3, 56:24; interview 4, 27:05). The consultation structure and the allocation of tasks and responsibilities were formally established in the SOK.

“Er was geen verplichting om aan overleggen deel te nemen, maar voor een PPS light heb je aan beide kanten wel mensen nodig met mandaat, die weten waar ze het over hebben en richting kunnen geven aan het proces.”

Interview 3 Tenman, quote 58:34

In addition, parties explored opportunities for joint branding and promotion of Laakhaven Central, recognising the added value of presenting the area as a coherent development despite individual implementation by separate developers (interview 4, 53:04).

4.3.4.4 Relational

Continuity and transparency

At the relational level, continuity and transparency played an important role. Frequent consultations enabled parties to build strong working relationships (interview 3, 15:27). Trust was further strengthened through the open-book approach, which provided the municipality with insight into development revenues and market parties with insight into subsidy flows and financial deficits. Transparency also extended to the negotiation process, resulting in shared ground rules for collaboration (interview 3, 32:52; interview 4, 16:29; 29:24; 42:52).

Continuity of the individuals involved was considered important for the smooth progress of the project, as it helped preserve project-specific knowledge, experience and expertise (interview 3, 01:01:43;

01:06:23; interview 5, 48:32). Both the municipality and market parties therefore recognised the value of retaining key personnel throughout the development process. However, existing municipal policies, such as the periodic rotation of legal planners and land economists, can affect this continuity (01:11:09).

“Dat is ook mijn ervaring van de afgelopen tig jaar. Gebiedsontwikkeling, dat valt of staat ook door de mens. Dat zet ik echt bovenaan. Continuïteit van de mens, dat maakt het project. Dit is in mijn opzicht even belangrijk als de contractuele afspraken.”

Interview 3 Tenman, quote 59:29; 01:04:20

Aligning goals

Parties place a strong focus on delivering on agreements made and actually acting in line with stated ambitions, with the aim of working together to achieve the same end result. There is an atmosphere of getting the job done together, in which the joint development of this area is central. This requires commitment throughout both public and private organisations, as well as a clear understanding of the joint ambition and the relationships needed to achieve it (interview 3, 48:32). When interests or ambitions diverge, parties create space for discussion and direct feedback rather than rushing into definitive agreements. Concerns, differing perspectives and feasibility issues are openly addressed, helping to build mutual trust (interview 3, 49:35; 01:07:48). This trust is further reinforced through formal and informal interactions, including excursions, social gatherings and regular coordination moments (interview 3, 01:17:58).

4.4 Merwerde Kanaalzone Utrecht

4.4.1 Introduction

Over the coming years the area between the Merwede Canel and Europalaan will be transformed from an industrial zone into a urban, vibrant, healthy and green living residential area in Utrecht. As the city has expanded, including the development of Leidsche Rijn, the Merwede site has become more centrally located within the urban fabric. This more central location prompted policymakers to consider alternative uses for the area. After the zoning plan was adopted in 2024, construction of the first 2,700 homes started in 2025. In total, approximately 6,000 homes will be realised, complemented by local amenities and a car-free urban environment.

A distinctive feature of the development is the Merwede LAB, a collaborative platform through which landowners and other stakeholders jointly explore innovative solutions for both Merwede and area development more broadly. The LAB focuses on themes that lack established approaches or contractual frameworks, including mobility, sustainability, circularity, social design and healthy urban living. By addressing these issues in an experimental setting, participants can develop and share new knowledge and insights (PropertyNL, 2026).



Figure 9 Map development area Merwede Kanaalzone Utrecht (ORKA, n.d.)

Profile Merwede Kanaalzone Utrecht	
Concept	A former industrial site is being transformed into a modern urban neighbourhood with a car-free central area, limited parking on the periphery, and plenty of space for green areas, cycling, walking, and socializing. Amenities such as schools, restaurants, shops, and offices are within walking distance.
Program and development	• 6,000 dwelling rent- and purchase in various price ranges • Facilities within walking distance • Car-free neighbourhood with a limited number of parking garages • Development in phases: - o 2025: Start of construction for phase 1

o 2030–2033/34: Start of construction for phase 2.
Land/plot allocation • Between municipally Utrecht and market parties: 37-63% • Developers involved: Synchroon, AM, Blink, Boelens de Gruyter, BPD Bouwfonds Gebiedsontwikkeling, Greystar, G&S&, Lingotto, Orion Investment Partners, 3T Vastgoed • Parties retain own position and ownership, but exchange in program allocation based on landownership ratio.
Finance • Total investment all parties: €1,75-2 mrd • Fictitious land use for compensation for differences in value • Joint development of the area • Financial contribution in Merwede LAB, WKO-BV, Mobility-BV
Governance & management • No joint entity: Partnership established in joint collaboration agreement (SOK) • Structured consultation framework; administrative consultations, owners' meetings, working groups • Phasing - o 2027-2019: initial exploratory studies - o 2021: Environmental vision and urban development plan established - o 2022: Zoning plan established - o 2024: Zoning plan irrevocably established after Council of State proceedings - o 2025: Decision making phase 2 - o 2025: start of construction phase 1.

Table 10 Information case Merwede Kanaalzone Utrecht based on PropertyNL (2025) (own table)

4.4.2 Establishment partnership model

The collaboration agreement (SOK) forms the central legal foundation of the Merwede Kanaalzone partnership, functioning as both a collaboration agreement and an anterior agreement between the municipality and the participating market parties (interview 9, 42:47). Rather than concluding separate agreements with individual developers, the municipality of Utrecht established a single joint SOK with all market parties. This ensured a uniform set of rules for all participants and enabled the area development to be coordinated at the area level rather than through individual plots (interview 9, 07:36; 23:29). The SOK takes the form of a contract under private law and the agreements in it were elaborated in detail to safeguard the interests of both the municipality and the eight participating market parties.

4.4.3 Why PPP light

The parentship emerged from the need to develop a coherent plan for the entire area despite its fragmented ownership structure (interview 10, 06:42). Initial proposals by individual landowners were rejected by the municipality, which wanted an integrated urban development plan in which the quality of the overall area took precedence over plot boundaries and ownership structures (interview 9, 02:41; 12:04; interview 10, 07:04). Following the preparation of the preliminary design, additional developers joined the partnership (interview 9, 07:37).

Although a traditional PPP structure, such as a joint development company (GEM), was initially explored, it proved impractical. Significant differences existed between the parties in terms of land acquisition, purchase prices, site conditions, remediation requirements and development risks, making a fair allocation of costs and risks difficult to achieve, so a joint land exploitation was excluded (interview 9, 08:48; 16:47; interview 10, 08:01; 08:16; 09:18).

"We hebben niet de gronden overgedragen aan de gemeente, omdat dat leidde tot te veel transacties. Dit soort samenwerkingsvormen ontstaat dan ook vaak vanuit praktische bezwaren, en niet vanuit ideologische overwegingen."

Interview 9 Synchroon, quote 15:33; 18:18

The municipality was also unwilling to establish another traditional PPP following previous experiences, while private parties preferred to retain their individual development roles rather than participate in a joint legal entity (interview 12, 07:04). As a result, a PPP light structure was considered the most suitable form of collaboration.

"En uiteraard, de term PPS light klinkt ook heel populair. Dat klinkt natuurlijk als, daar kan je met beperkte kosten veel snelheid maken."

Interview 10 Municipality Utrecht, quote 10:24

4.4.4 Inter-organizational arrangements in partnership model

The partnership is structured through one joint, detailed cooperation agreement between the municipality and all developing market parties. This agreement includes arrangements on joint financial contributions to collective area-wide challenges. Decision-making is layered and organised. The partnership combines joint implementation of cross-plot themes with individual responsibility per plot. It also invests in knowledge sharing and intensive informal collaboration between parties. Within this project, the public sector summarized PPP light with the slogan *"Samen wat moet, zelfstandig wat kan"*. The agreements were made can all be traced back to this slogan, which was repeatedly used throughout the partnership (interview 10, 11:04).

4.4.4.1 Financial

Shared and divided financial risks and contributions

In line with the principle *"Samen wat moet, zelfstandig wat kan"*, collective challenges were addressed through a WKO-BV, a mobility-BV and the Merwede LAB (interview 9, 35:05). The costs and financial risks associated with these entities were shared collectively, as neither the municipality nor the market parties could efficiently bear them individually. This collective approach also reduced the risk of free-rider behaviour and encouraged continued commitment to the partnership (interview 10, 13:56; 16:41; 38:10; 39:11).

"Het gaat om een groot en intensief miljoenenbedrijf waar veel tijd en organisatie in zit. Voor ontwikkelaars betekent dit een stap buiten hun gebruikelijke rol in vastgoedtransacties, omdat er een mobiliteitsbedrijf moet worden opgezet en beheerd. Dit maakt het voor veel vastgoedpartijen niet direct aantrekkelijk vanwege de grote risico's en het hoge commitment."

Interview 9 Synchronon, quote 36:26

The same principle was applied to branding and area promotion. Rather than promoting individual developments, parties jointly financed and organised the promotion of Merwede as a single area, partially setting aside competition in favour of the collective interest of the neighbourhood (interview 9, 01:00:42; interview 10, 30:14).

At the same time, risks that could be managed individually remained the responsibility of the respective parties (*zelfstandig wat kan*). Developers bore the risks associated with their own plots, including land conditions, existing constraints and building development. Responsibility for site preparation and infrastructure provision rested with the municipality (interview 9, 31:59). Until land was transferred, the associated financial risks remained with the landowner; thereafter, they were assumed by the municipality. The developers received development rights for residential programmes within the planning area (interview 9, 11:08; 32:34).

"Het moment van overdracht is niet strikt vastgelegd. Daardoor kunnen we in overleg de timing bepalen, en dat werkt goed in de praktijk. Het geeft flexibiliteit om samen tot een passend moment te komen."

Interview 9 Synchronon, quote 33:19

Fictitious GEM

A fictitious joint land exploitations model was established in which funding allocations and land values were shared across all participating landowners. This allowed functions to be located in the most suitable places, regardless of plot boundaries (interview 10, 20:11). In this fictitious model differences in land values, development potential and the profitability of commercial and social functions were addressed to redistribute costs and revenues between parties. This ensured that the joint development could be realised as a coherent whole rather than through individual negotiations (interview 10, 20:39; 23:14).

The arrangement can be regarded as a light variant of a traditional joint development company (GEM). It enabled value equalisation between parties without requiring land transfers or the establishment of a formal joint land development entity (interview 10, 24:43).

4.4.4.2 Legal

One partnership agreement

A single cooperation agreement was concluded between the municipality and all private parties, rather than separate agreements with individual developers. The agreement sets out the key arrangements, safeguards public interests and defines the development rights of the market parties (interview 9, 42:27; 43:17). By establishing a uniform set of rules and conditions for the entire area, it supports the implementation of a single urban development plan based on cross-plot collaboration and the allocation of functions to the most suitable locations (interview 10, 11:04; 24:29).

Fixed agreements

Although the development initially started from a flexible approach, both the municipality and market parties increasingly felt the need to formalise agreements in greater detail (interview 9, 20:45; 31:29). This was driven by previous legal experiences, concerns about differing interpretations of agreements and a lack of trust in developers (interview 9, 18:48; 20:45; 23:29; 31:19; interview 10, 26:53). As a result, key agreements were embedded in both private and public law, reflecting a political desire to maintain control and provide certainty in a multi-party collaboration (interview 9, 23:29).

This approach resulted in a highly detailed urban development plan and image quality plan, containing extensive requirements on programme allocation, mixed-use development, block dimensions, building heights, minimum floor areas and roof design, with limited scope for deviation (interview 9, 10:05; 22:15; 25:19; 28:39; 31:19; 38:52; interview 10, 15:53).

"De samenwerkingsovereenkomst was zo leidend en strak opgetuigd dat iedereen zijn eigen plot kon ontwikkelen zonder afhankelijk te zijn van anderen. Flexibiliteit was niet aan de orde. Alles lag daarin vast, inclusief het stedenbouwkundig plan, het beeldkwaliteitsplan en de programmatische afspraken."

Interview 9 Synchron, quote 58:25

Detailed agreements were also established for land transfers to the municipality. These specified the conditions land had to meet before transfer, at which point responsibility shifted from the developer to the municipality for site preparation and infrastructure provision. Although the overall phasing was agreed in advance, the timing of individual land transfers remained subject to dialogue between the parties (interview 9, 31:19).

"Daar hebben we dus niet hele precieze afspraken over gemaakt en dat kunnen we dus nu al pratende met elkaar een goede timing voor vinden. Dus dat het gaat eigenlijk goed."

Interview 9 Synchron, quote 33:19

There was a lot of negotiation about these arrangements, but in the end all the parties agreed with it, so that progress could be made with the developments (interview 9, 31:19). The Merwede LAB also required strictly defined agreements in advance and did not emerge naturally (interview 10, 38:10).

"Ja, dus die afspraak sta ik nog steeds achter. Alleen aan gemeentezijde is het fanatisme op precies het cijfertje halen wel heel rigide."

Interview 9 Synchron, quote 29:13

4.4.4.3 Organisational

Georganiseerde overlegstructuur

An owners' collective has been established in which all parties are represented, with pre-agreed arrangements regarding the number of delegates per party and the frequency of meetings. Additionally, a directors' committee was established to discuss matters that fall outside the mandate of the owners' collective or deviate from the SOK. Directors were appointed for the different entities, including mobility, energy and the Merwede LAB (interview 9, 45:25). The decisions made were then reported back to the collective, where there was scope for critical reflection (Interview 10, 33:32).

Decision-making takes place primarily within the owners' collective, with proposals being prepared in working groups and discussed jointly. The working groups are organised around specific themes, such as sustainability, housing and mobility. Within these groups, municipal advisors and developers collaborate as equal partners in preparing proposals and plans for decision-making (interview 10, 32:01). Finally, a check/review team is responsible for assessing plans against the agreements laid down in the SOK. This team evaluates proposals strictly against the established quantitative criteria (interview 9, 28:52).

Agreements of 'samen wat moet'

The allocation of tasks and responsibilities followed the principle of "*samen wat moet, zelfstandig wat kan.*" Consistent with the *zelfstandig wat kan* principle, the municipality remained responsible for public facilities, while private parties retained responsibility for the development of their own land (interview 10, 19:16). Certain challenges, however, required a collective approach. Themes such as mobility and sustainability extended beyond individual plots and were therefore addressed jointly through initiatives such as the Merwede LAB (interview 10, 12:02; interview 9, 15:33). The development of a car-free neighbourhood, collective mobility solutions and a shared energy system, including heat and cold storage (WKO) and thermal energy from the canal, required joint decision-making and implementation (interview 10, 13:05; 15:53). Responsibilities for these collective tasks were allocated according to expertise and account ownership (interview 9, 12:55).

4.4.4.4 Relational

Agreements on behaviour

Relational agreements were not formally embedded in the contract but were expressed through shared behavioural norms and partnership principles discussed during dedicated sessions (interview 10, 46:53). Responsibilities were allocated largely through informal coordination, while parties were held accountable when commitments were not fulfilled (interview 10, 33:32; interview 9, 47:41). This approach proved effective because participants understood their role within the broader development and acted accordingly in pursuit of the shared objective (interview 10, 33:32)

Informal sessions and knowledge sharing

Informal sessions were crucial for bringing parties together, strengthening mutual collegiality and fostering an understanding of each other's interests (interview 10, 30:14). Multi-day working sessions provided insight into administrative considerations and decision-making (interview 9, 51:52). Open discussions, rather than strategic behaviour, led to greater trust and better joint decisions (interview 10, 28:25).

In addition, the long-term collaboration ensured that the parties got to know each other well, making contact between them easier, with parties able to simply call one another to exchange experiences and solutions (interview 9, 48:58). Knowledge sharing was an essential part of the collaboration and was facilitated by the Merwede LAB. Issues on which no decision could yet be made were jointly investigated and critically discussed here, which contributed to mutual understanding and faster adoption of insights (interview 9, 49:38). At the same time, the municipality remained careful about formalizing innovations, encouraging them rather than making them mandatory, so that there remained opportunities for further dialogue on further development (interview 10, 42:31).

“Door de complexiteit en het grote aantal parallelle onderwerpen verloren we het overzicht. Daarom zijn we meerdaagse sessies gaan organiseren, waarin iedereen we integraal konden samenwerken. We trokken met elkaar op, bleven overnachten en hadden diner met elkaar. We konden informeel allerlei dingen oplossen en dat werkte als een speer. Dus binnenkort gaan we er weer een keer eentje doen.”

Interview 9 Synchron, quote 51:52

4.5 Piushaven Tilburg

4.5.1 Introduction

In 2001, the municipality of Tilburg decided to transform the ageing Piushaven industrial area into a vibrant mixed-use urban district. The redevelopment aimed to connect the city centre with the Moerenburg landscape park while preserving the area's distinctive industrial character. Under municipal leadership, the transformation evolved through a dynamic development process involving residents, entrepreneurs, developers, skippers and other stakeholders.

The area development is now in its final phase. Historic buildings have been preserved and repurposed for residential, commercial and community functions, while the industrial character of the area has been retained. A new urban district has emerged around the waterfront, combining living, working, entrepreneurship and recreation (Gemeente Tilburg, 2021).

The water forms the spatial backbone of the development, along which individual plots have been redeveloped in phases. Differences in programme, scale and function between these subprojects led to the adoption of a flexible and adaptive development strategy, aligned with the pace and dynamics of the area (interview 5, 04:40).

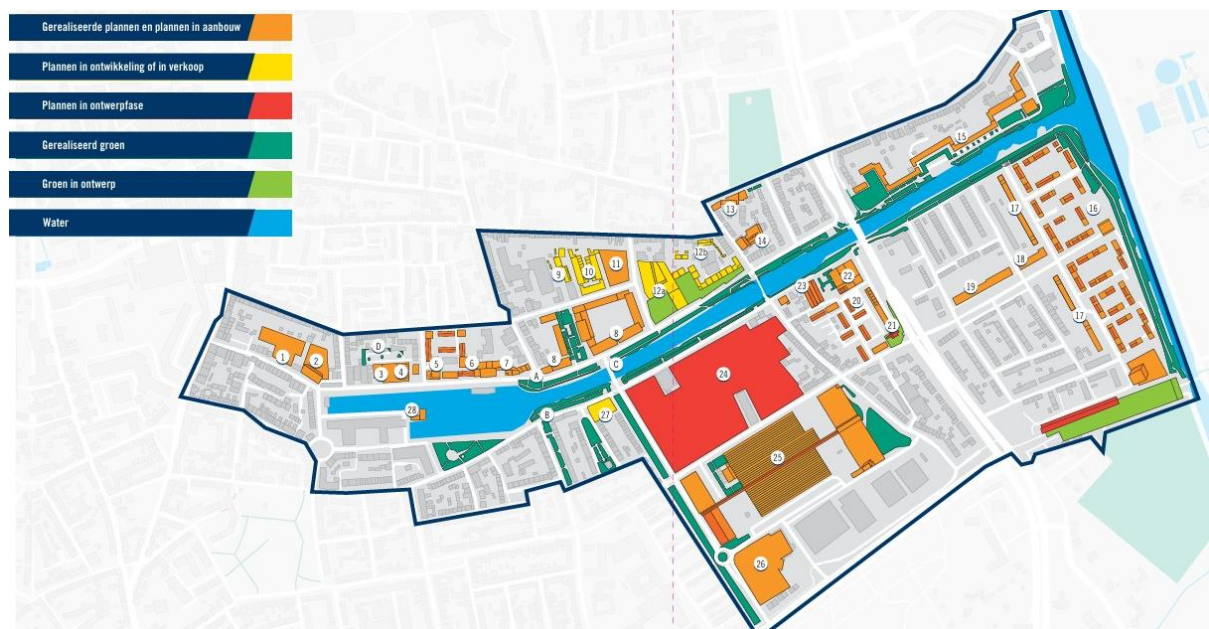


Figure 10 Map development area Piushaven Tilburg (Gemeente Tilburg, 2021)

Profile Piushaven Tilburg	
Concept	Transformation of a former industrial and harbour zone into a mixed-use urban residential and working area by the water, with housing, work, hospitality, recreation, culture and public space, in which the water and industrial heritage play a central role.
Programme and development	• 2,500-3,000 dwelling in 17 sub-plans • Social functions, recreation, hospitality, culture • Circa 38,000 m2 for services, hospitality, retail and healthcare
Land/plot allocation	• Start with 5 different developers. In the end 10 different developers; different in local developers and national developers. • The municipality initially owned land but sold it to Triborgh, after which it no longer held land positions within the development area. • Triborgh is a consortium consisting of five builders and two housing associations.

Land ownership remained separate, with no collective land contribution.
Finance - Investment/contribution to Levend Podium; €289 per 100m2 GFA (later €100 per dwelling) - Investment/contribution to area promotion €250 per m2 GFA (later €100 per dwelling)
Governance & management - Each development followed its own phasing, no collective phasing agreement - No joint legal entity was established; collaboration was governed through a framework agreement, supplemented by separate agreements where additional conditions were required. - Structured consultation framework, consisting of the round table, project leaders' consultation, quality team and planning teams. - Development started in 2003, most projects are completed (75–85%). Remaining projects, currently under construction, in planning, or in the final stages of delivery, are expected to be completed by around 2032.

Table 11 Information case Piushaven Tilburg based on Municipality Tilburg (2021) (own table)

4.5.2 Established partnership model

The area development of the Piushaven is characterised by intensive collaboration between the municipality and multiple developing parties (Gemeente Tilburg, 2021). To support this collaboration, a framework agreement was established in 2005, serving as a joint foundation document for all involved parties. Both existing and new parties were required to commit to and sign this agreement in order to participate in the development (interview 5, 03:11).

This framework agreement was deliberately chosen as an overarching contractual framework, as it provided a suitable basis for governing a long-term and phased area development involving multiple private actors. It included agreements on the process, finances and programme (interview 7, 2:46), rather than detailed substantive arrangements for the entire development period. The partnership model adopted in the Piushaven can therefore be regarded as a flexible framework, in which not only the end vision was central, but also the organisation of continuity, connection and collaboration throughout the development process (Gemeente Tilburg, 2021).

4.5.3 Why PPP light

Within the development of the Piushaven, a PPP light construction was chosen because of the ownership structure, the public objectives, and the need for flexibility. After it became clear that the harbour area would be redeveloped into a residential area, several developers acquired strategic land positions. The municipality held only limited land positions within the area. As a result, a fragmented ownership structure emerged, involving many different landowners (interview 5, 01:43; interview 12, 10:40).

For the municipality, the main challenge concerned accessibility, infrastructure, and public space. PPP light made it possible to keep land ownership separate while still collaborating intensively. A traditional PPP, in which land is contributed collectively, was less suitable for this situation and there was no demand for such a structure. In addition, there was sufficient willingness among the parties to jointly develop the area, each on their own plot, making a heavy legal structure unnecessary. A lighter form of partnership provided a sufficient basis for this.

PPP light provided room for flexibility and adaptability. The framework agreement established in 2005 remained the guiding document, while urban development plans were revised approximately every two years. This made it possible to respond to changing circumstances without fixing agreements for the entire development period in advance (interview 12, 09:13).

"Binnen een traditionele PPS-constructie brengen alle partijen hun gronden in. De gemeente had nauwelijks grondposities en de partijen met grondposities waren bereid het gebied als geheel te ontwikkelen, terwijl ieder verantwoordelijk bleef voor zijn eigen gronden. Daardoor was het inbrengen

van gronden niet nodig, en een zwaardere PPS-constructie dus ook niet. Dat was waarschijnlijk de reden om voor een PPS light te kiezen

Interview 12 Triborgh, quote 10:40

4.5.4 Inter-organizational arrangements in partnership model

The partnership within Piushaven is structured through a framework agreement that sets out arrangements on among other things financial contributions to area promotion (*Levend Podium*), programme allocation and public space. It is supported by an extensive consultation structure. The partnership is characterised by a flexible and adaptive approach, with a strong emphasis on trust, informal coordination and connection between the municipality, developers and the surrounding area.

4.5.4.1 Financial

Joint area promotion

The framework agreement, to which all parties committed themselves, also included financial arrangements. Two important financial agreements concerned the joint payment contribution to *Levend Podium*. These payments were linked to predefined payment dates. *Levend Podium* was a collective initiative aimed at the promotion and positioning of the entire area (interview 5, 24:21). Within this initiative, activities, meetings and area-focused events were organised to increase the visibility and attractiveness of the area. Responsibility for this initiative was shared between public and private parties, as both had an interest in creating an attractive and successful area. The coordination of the initiative was temporarily assigned to one of the developers and rotated periodically between the parties (interview 12, 36:26).

The joint financing of *Levend Podium* was laid down in a separate agreement. Each developer paid an contribution to this collective fund. This contribution amounted €289 per 100 m². Further more every developer paid an operational contribution per 100 m² of GFA. This contribution was in 2005 amounted to €7,500 per 100 m² of GFA and which increased to €9,500 in the years that followed. This amount was indexed during the first years and later is was frozen. This was necessary to enable the municipality to fund all the improvements to the access routes (roads, bridge, bank reinforcement, etc.). In addition, a second financial arrangement applied: a contribution of €250 per m² of GFA for area promotion (interview 5, 29:39). As well for *Levend Podium*, as the operational contribution, as the area promotion, the contribution was first determined by the square meters of the programme rather than the number of dwellings. Later the contribution to *Levend Podium* and area promotion was €100 per dwelling. This illustrates how the financial arrangements were adjusted over time to reflect changing development conditions and priorities. Rather than being fixed from the outset, contributions could be renegotiated as the project evolved.

"De gebiedspromotie was collectief. Op een gegeven moment was het budget voor het Levend Podium op, waarna de gemeente en de ontwikkelaars besloten de promotie te verlengen. Dat initiatief liep namelijk goed. Zij hoefden daardoor hun eigen communicatiebudget niet meer volledig in te zetten voor gebiedspromotie en konden zich meer richten op de verkoop van woningen."

Interview 5 Municipality Tilburg, quote 26:18

The agreement also stipulated that financial risks associated with subareas not acquired by market parties were borne entirely by the municipality, as these formed part of the public domain. This created a clear allocation of risks between the public and private parties (interview 5, 19:07).

4.5.4.2 Legal

Framework agreement and governance document

The framework agreement forms the formal basis of the public-private partnership and also functioned as a feasibility study (interview 5, 46:44). In addition, the Municipality of Tilburg prepared a governance document, which set out the principles that both the municipality and market parties were required to follow in the further development of the area. This document served as an important starting point and constituted the most directive framework within the partnership. The agreements were based on a shared urban development vision, which was periodically revised and re-adopted by the municipal executive (interview 5, 36:17; interview 12, 28:58), ensuring a shared and adaptive development direction that could be translated into formal rules and conditions.

"De stedenbouwkundige visie fungeerde als een instrument waarmee we werkten en die gemeente om het jaar door het college lieten vaststellen. De raad werd daarbij informeel meegenomen: we informeerden hen over de plannen en ontwikkelingen, wat werd gewaardeerd."

Interview 5 Municipality Tilburg, quote 36:17

The governance document sets out the principles for the development of building plans and the design of both private plots and public space. For each subarea, it includes an indicative programme specifying the number of dwellings and the amount of commercial and community floor space. Although these figures were not fixed and were further elaborated in the subarea plans, a minimum requirement of 20% social housing applied across the entire plan area. This was later revised to 30%. And currently, a requirement is also that 10% of the housing must be mid-range rental housing and affordable owner-occupied housing. This quota was allocated to the individual subareas and could not be exchanged between them (interview 5, 22:49; 42:04).

The document also establishes ambitions and conditions relating to quality, environmental performance and assessment criteria (interview 12, 28:42), as well as the obligation to provide public green space within each subarea (interview 12, 19:12). Market parties were responsible for financing and delivering public space within their developments and for adjustments to adjacent public areas. The municipality was responsible for area-wide infrastructure and took ownership of public space for €1 after completion, assuming responsibility for its management and maintenance thereafter (interview 12, 20:48).

The governance document also formed the basis for the zoning plan, which was refined throughout the process based on concrete development proposals. Where necessary, additional agreements were laid down in anterior agreements supplementing the framework agreement (interview 12, 13:10). Separate formal agreements were also concluded with individual developers to safeguard mutual commitments (interview 5, 48:57)

A deliberate decision was made not to develop the area all at once or impose a strict development sequence. Each developer was able to determine their own pace and phasing based on their specific circumstances and market conditions (interview 5, 03:43). Developers therefore had the flexibility to postpone or adapt their plans when necessary.

"Tijdens de crisis waren er partijen die financieel draagkrachtig genoeg waren om te zeggen: 'ik laat mijn plan even liggen en wacht tot de crisis voorbij is'"

Interview 12 Triborgh, quote 34:22

4.5.4.3 Organisational

Structured consultative framework and layered organisation

At multiple levels, the partnership was designed to create commitment and connection between the parties involved (interview 5, 10:29). This took shape through a well-organised project organisation and consultation structure, consisting of several interconnected organisational groups. The project organisation was laid down in the framework agreement, in which parties agreed to make every effort

to resolve issues through consultation whenever consensus could not be reached. All participating developers committed themselves to this consultation structure (interview 7, 10:29).

“De samenwerking was een duidelijke wisselwerking: private partijen wilden ontwikkelen en de gemeente werkte actief mee. Daarbij werd niet alleen gefaciliteerd, maar ook gezamenlijk meegewerkt aan de uitvoering.”

Interview 5 Municipality Tilburg, quote 18:05

The so-called round table took place twice a year and brought together the developers and the municipal supervisor as representatives of the municipality. It focused primarily on themes of collective importance to the area. The *Levend Podium* was developed and coordinated within this forum, which also served as a platform for communication and coordination. Parties informed each other about project progress and aligned joint challenges and ambitions (interview 5, 09:29).

A second layer within the governance structure was the project leaders' consultation. Prior to the round table, project leaders from the various developments met with municipal representatives and the quality team. These were the parties responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the developments. The purpose of this consultation was to exchange information on plans and developments, discuss proposals, and coordinate key issues affecting the area as a whole (interview 5, 35:50; 36:19). Practical agreements were also made, such as the phasing and distribution of housing programmes, preventing similar products from entering the market simultaneously. This coordination took place through dialogue rather than formal regulation (interview 12, 34:05).

A third layer was formed by the quality team, which focused on the spatial quality of the area. The team consisted of the urban designer, municipal supervisor, project developer and at least two members of the environmental advisory committee, who discussed plans with the developer of the relevant plot (interview 5, 10:29; interview 12, 22:04). Meeting monthly, the quality team reviewed and refined plans with a strong focus on dialogue, quality improvement and identifying opportunities rather than restrictions. Developers presented drawings and visualisations, which were then discussed collectively. Instead of relying on a fixed image quality plan, the team worked through case-specific solutions developed through consultation (interview 5, 13:59; 46:12). The quality team formed an important link to the environmental advisory committee and the municipal council. By involving committee members at an early stage, key concerns could be addressed in time, allowing the formal review process to proceed more smoothly and efficiently (interview 5, 11:42; interview 12, 23:44).

“Wij hebben ons intensief bemoeid met het vooroverleg, via de ronde tafel, het projectleidersoverleg en het kwaliteitsteam. Het liefst waren wij al betrokken op het moment dat een ontwikkelaar begon met de selectie van een architect.”

Interview 7 Municipality Tilburg, quote 13:59

On the public side, developers were required to work with a planning team when preparing plans for their plot. This team had an advisory role and consisted of residents, property owners and businesses from the surrounding area. Developers were obliged to consult the planning team and could gather input on aspects that still allowed for adjustment, such as planning and programme (interview 5, 14:55). The meetings were chaired by an independent facilitator. The urban designer and project developer attended at least the first and final meeting of the planning team: at the start of the design process and when the plans were ready for discussion by the quality team. The advice of the planning team was subsequently considered within the quality team (interview 5, 15:53). In this way, collaboration between public and private parties was also embedded at this level.

A separate planning team was established as well on the public side for the design of the public space (interview 5, 19:19). This team was responsible for projects such as the parks on both sides of the waterfront and the construction of a bridge. By clearly defining tasks, responsibilities and requirements in advance, roles were clarified and discussions or delays during implementation were minimised.

"Inmiddels is werken met plantteams meer gebruikelijk, maar op het moment dat dit werd ingevoerd was het nog vernieuwend. Juist toen bleek deze werkwijze zeer goed te functioneren. Iedereen had zijn eigen taak en door elkaar hier niet mee te belasten, kon iedereen zich volledig focussen op zijn eigen verantwoordelijkheid."

Interview 5 Municipality Tilburg, quote 13:59

4.5.4.4 Relational

Focusing on building trust and intrinsic motivation for the long term

Within the Piushaven development, the relational aspect proved to be of great importance in the collaboration between public and private parties. Although the framework agreement provided a formal basis for trust (interview 12, 47:02), the success of the project largely depended on how parties worked together in practice. The PPP is fundamentally driven by the intrinsic motivation to achieve shared ambitions and requires investment in relationships, trust and a team culture in which parties feel comfortable addressing each other openly (interview 5, 54:42).

"Het is belangrijk om elkaar veel ruimte te geven en steeds het gezamenlijke belang te blijven benadrukken. Al is het maar een klein stapje, je moet doorgaan met die oliemachine van samenwerking: het plezier, de verbinding en het samen verder komen."

Interview 6 Municipality Tilburg, quote 48:05

Through long-term and intensive collaboration, parties got to know each other well, enabling open discussion of challenges and disagreements (interview 12, 36:26). This was actively supported through informal activities, including multi-day sessions, joint dinners and speed-date sessions between councillors, developers and stakeholder groups representing interests such as heritage preservation, green space, parking and liveability (interview 5, 05:51; 36:17). The Piushaven communication centre further facilitated dialogue between the municipality, market parties and the surrounding community (interview 5, 37:55).

"Je kunt het allemaal leuk opschrijven, maar je moet het nog doen. En dat is absoluut mensenwerk. Soms ging de samenwerking niet goed en dat moet je het durven zeggen. Het proces en elkaar durven aanspreken op momenten dat het moet, is super belangrijk."

Interview 5 Municipality Tilburg, quote 07:44

The joint investment in *Levend Podium* also contributed to the collaboration between parties. Because parties jointly invested in area promotion, contact emerged not only between developers and the municipality, but also between developers themselves. In addition, difficulties and challenges were shared in order to jointly arrive at solutions, meaning that parties did not have to come up with everything on their own (interview 12, 38:21). As a result, a joint development team emerged in which knowledge was shared and trust was built (interview 12, 37:41; 49:29). Partly because of this mutual connection, the initiative continued for approximately ten years, although it was initially expected to last three years (interview 5, 50:27).

"Verbinden is het belangrijkste aspect geweest van de samenwerking in de Piushaven."

Interview 5 Municipality Tilburg, quote 05:51

Short informal connection

The municipal council and executive board had to be continuously involved in the plans throughout the project in order to maintain their trust and approval. For this reason, short and informal lines of communication were maintained between the council, municipal executives, investors, developers and residents. In addition, the urban development vision was revised approximately every two years to respond to changing needs (interview 5, 32:31; Municipality Tilburg, 2021). This direct communication structure made it possible to resolve tensions and conflicts through personal contact or telephone conversations, thereby often preventing legal escalation (interview 5, 48:26; 49:52).

"Al werkend en al pratend zijn we tot afspraken gekomen, en juist daar bereik je het meeste mee. Dan hoor je de persoonlijke relatie terug, zie je de motivatie en ontstaat het echte meedenken."

Interview 5 Municipality Tilburg, quote 45:54

6.6 Rijnpark Arnhem

6.6.1 Introduction

Rijnpark, part of the Spoorzone Arnhem-Oost redevelopment, is being transformed on initiative of the Municipality Arnhem, from a monofunctional business district into a mixed-use urban area with approximately 7,000 dwellings, 5,000 jobs, public facilities and a large city park. The area currently accommodates hundreds of businesses and two major railway depots, making the redevelopment a complex inner-city transformation (Gebiedsontwikkeling.nu, 2025). A particular challenge is that many existing buildings are less than five years old, resulting in substantial capital destruction as the area is gradually redeveloped into a new urban district (interview 13, 01:59).

As part of the Novex programme, Rijnpark received national subsidies to support its development (interview 13, 04:18). To maintain control, the municipality put pre-emptive right on both phase 1 and 2, after the subsidies were awarded (interview 13, 04:02).



Figure 11 Map development area Rijnpark Arnhem (Gebiedsontwikkeling.nu, 2025)

Profile Rijnpark Arnhem	
Concept	An existing industrial estate, including two large railway yards (total 70 hectares), is being transformed into a future-proof mixed-use urban district that will bring added value to both the local neighbourhood and the city. Thanks to its central location, close to the city centre, as well as its distinctive character and scale, the site represents an attractive development opportunity for the city.
Programme and development	• 12,000 dwelling spread across 10 area developments of varying sizes. • Rijnpark: ◦ 7,000 new build dwellings (2/3 affordable prices) ◦ 5,000 working places • Facilities for the future neighbourhood
Land/plot allocation	• Seven developer consortia each hold a land position that is transferred to the municipality when the relevant subarea enters the development phase. Until then, ownership remains with the landowners. • Land holdings are not acquired all at once but are transferred and prepared for development step by step. • 3 housing associations
Finance	• Government subsidies: Housing and mobility subsidy

• Contribution value to be determined, including the timing of transfer and inflation adjustment • Financial security for owners through predictable compensation and planning • Land allocation based on residual land value assessment
Governance & management • No joint identity; cooperation set out in broad terms in the agreement and working towards a joint collaboration agreement • Consultation structure; steering group and working groups • Phasing across the entire area development through the allocation of building claims • Phasing ○ Fase 1: Rijnpark Noord (NW&NO) & Rijnpark Zuid west (ZW1&ZW2&K3Delta)- 3,500 dwelling, 1400 working places, businesses, social and community facilities; 2023 pre-emption right established municipality Arnhem ▪ 2026 design environmental plan ▪ 2028-2033 realisation ○ Fase 2: NS-emplacment & oeververbinding – 3,500 dwellings, 3,600 working places, businesses, social and community facilities, bike- and walking routes; 2025 pre-emption right established Arnhem ▪ After design phase 1

Table 12 Information case Rijnpark Arnhem based on design program (Municipality Arnhem, 2025) (own table)

4.6.2 Established partnership model

Within this area development, a build-claim light model was selected as the partnership structure. Following the preparation of a framework agreement and an exploration of alternative PPP models, this approach was considered the most suitable by the municipality, housing associations, landowners and market parties (interview 13, 8:55).

The build-claim light model is characterised by a clear division of responsibilities, with the municipality of Arnhem taking full responsibility for the public land development. Unlike a traditional build-claim model, land is transferred selectively rather than upfront. The municipality acquires land when required, prepares it for development and defines the building plots (Gebiedsontwikkeling.nu, 2025; interview 13, 11:42). This prevents the local authority from immediately becoming the owner of the entire area. Landowners retain their land holdings for as long as possible and continue the exploitation, with the associated risks remaining their responsibility, until the their land is actually brought into development (interview 13, 11:55). A second key feature is the prior agreement on land contribution values. Based on these values, The municipality re-allocated development rights tot he landowners. This is allocated proportionally to landownership positions (ratio land contribution), ensuring that parties receive development rights corresponding to their original land holdings when realisation of the area takes place (interview 13, 13:42).

The partnership is currently governed by two framework agreements, one with the housing associations and one with the market parties, which are intended to be merged into a single overarching cooperation agreement (interview 13, 22:26)

4.6.3 Why PPP light

Before selecting the build-claim light model, several PPP structures were explored. Traditional PPP models, such as a joint venture, received insufficient support from both the municipality and the market parties. Public and private parties did not wish to fully contribute all land ownerships and responsibilities into one authority. In addition, the municipality was unwilling to bear all land acquisition costs upfront (interview 13, 13:04). PPP light was able to create more flexibility and less capital-intensive process for the partners. Also the municipality retains control over the content and program. The model thus

combines public oversight, programme consistency and lower entry risks for market participants (Gebiedontwikkeling.nu, 2025)

The build-claim light model was ultimately considered the most suitable approach because it aligned with the preferences of both public and private parties. Its clear allocation of roles and responsibilities also enabled faster decision-making than a traditional PPP structure, which was considered essential given the societal urgency of the project and the conditions attached to the available subsidies (interview 13, 43:21; 48:47; 49:27).

“Wij kiezen niet voor een klassiek bouwclaimmodel waarin marktpartijen alle gronden aan de voorkant in één keer overdragen aan de gemeente.”

Interview 13 Municipality Arnhem, quote 11:42

4.6.4 Set of agreements in partnership model

The build-claim light partnership is organised through a principle agreement and a forthcoming overarching collaboration agreement, which establish arrangements on land contributions, build-claims and programme allocation. The municipality is responsible for the land exploitation/development, while market parties and housing associations retain ownership of their land until it is selectively transferred for exploitation and give out into build-claims proportional to landholdings. The partnership is supported by a layered consultation structure and characterised by intensive coordination, continuity and trust between the participating parties.

4.6.4.1 Financial

Bouwclaim-light

Within Rijnpark, land is not developed individually but is brought together selectively and in phases. The build-claim light model differs from a traditional build-claim arrangement in the allocation of financial risks and revenues, particularly within the land exploitation (interview 13, 30:56). Full responsibility and risk for the land development rest with the municipality, including planning costs, demolition, site preparation and relocation activities (interview 13, 22:06).

The build-claim light model differs from a traditional build-claim arrangement in the allocation of financial risks and responsibilities, particularly within the land exploitation (interview 13, 30:56). Rather than contributing all land upfront, land is transferred selectively and in phases. Until redevelopment takes place, landowners retain ownership and remain responsible for the management and exploitation of their land, with the associated risks remaining entirely their responsibility (interview 13, 11:55). After land transition, the municipality bears full responsibility and financial risk for the public land exploitation, including planning costs, demolition, relocation activities and site preparation (interview 13, 22:06).

Unlike a traditional build-claim model, developers are not obliged to purchase land after contributing it. Instead, they receive a preferential position and may choose not to acquire land. This provides greater flexibility for developers but increases the municipality's financial risk. Land acquisition by developers also takes place in phases; this arrangement is discussed further under the legal aspects.

Ten opzichte van een traditionele PPS ligt de risicodeling in dit model fundamenteel anders, wat het des te belangrijker maakt om hierover heldere en expliciete afspraken te maken.”

Interview 13 Municipality Arnhem, quote 30:56

The value at which the municipality acquires land has been determined in advance. This so-called land contribution value is linked to a predefined moment in the phasing and indexed for inflation (interview 13, 13:42; 14:06). This provides landowners with financial certainty and allows them to anticipate the

transfer in a timely manner (interview 13, 12:37). In return, they receive development rights proportional to their landholding and the associated programme.

4.6.4.2 Legal

The agreements were initially laid down in a principle agreement and are currently being elaborated into an overarching cooperation agreement. This agreement will specify the rules and conditions governing both land contributions and the intended development programme.

Arrangements about land development

The build-claim entitlement is determined by the proportion of land contributed by each landowner (interview 13, 14:34). Based on this share, parties receive development rights corresponding to a proportionate share of the total programme. The exact allocation depends on the final programme and is guided by what best serves the overall development (interview 13, 15:41).

Once build-claims have been allocated following the land exploitation/development phase, the original location of a party's landholding is no longer decisive. Instead, development rights are assigned to specific building plots based on the allocated build-claims (interview 13, 16:08). Because these claims are derived from a cross-section of the overall programme, all parties receive a relatively balanced share of the various functions and revenues within the area development (interview 13, 16:49).

Collaboration agreement

The parties are working towards an overarching cooperation agreement that will formally establish the rules governing land contributions and land transfers. In consultation with both the municipality and the developers, agreements are made on the phased process through which the development evolves from a global plan into a detailed urban framework with designated building envelopes and plot passports. These documents specify, among other things, the programme and associated land values. Based on a residual land valuation method, developers can carry out their build-claims on specific plots and acquire the land at a market-conforming price (interview 13, 24:12).

"Hoe maken we afspraken, wetende dat de werkelijkheid altijd anders verloopt dan vooraf gedacht? Hoe sturen we op de juiste momenten in de tijd? Wanneer wordt welk deel ontwikkeld, en hoe weet een eigenaar wanneer hij zijn vastgoed gereed moet maken voor overdracht? Hoe ver van tevoren wordt dit duidelijk gemaakt? En als dat moment daar is, hoe verloopt dat proces dan precies? Hoe wordt de grondprijs bepaald bij het bouwrijp maken en hoe wordt deze vertaald naar de bouwclaim? Dit zijn allemaal vraagstukken die zeer zorgvuldig moeten worden uitgewerkt binnen een dergelijke samenwerkingsovereenkomst."

Interview 13 Municipality Arnhem, quote 23:33

Clear agreements have also been made regarding the housing programme. A total of 40% of the development must consist of social housing. The principle agreement with the housing associations specifies that part of this programme will be delivered by developers on a turn-key basis, while the remainder will be realised by the housing associations on their own land positions (interview 13, 17:47).

4.6.4.3 Organisational

Organised consultation structure

The partnership involves three main parties: the municipality, housing associations and market parties. Both the housing associations and the market parties have organised a single point of contact for coordination with the municipality (interview 13, 18:44). The consultation and decision-making structure broadly resembles that of a traditional PPP, although the distribution of risks, responsibilities and

decision-making authority differs due to the build-claim light model and is tailored to the specific project context (interview 13, 28:40).

"Het is van belang om een zo robuust mogelijk afsprakenkader te hebben, zodat je snel kunt doorwerken, effectief kunt escaleren en besluiten kunt nemen, zonder onduidelijkheid over verantwoordelijkheden of bevoegdheden."

Interview 13 Municipality Arnhem, quote 34:31

The partnership is organised through a layered governance structure centred around an integrated project team in which the main parties collaborate. Supporting this team are several working groups focusing on specific themes, including urban design, planning procedures, civil engineering, the social area plan and contract development. These groups prepare the substantive work discussed within the project team (interview 13, 25:30).

Above the project team sits a steering committee, followed by an executive board. This structure is supported by a traditional escalation ladder that safeguards decision-making and coordination at different levels. During implementation, after build-claims have been allocated, plans are reviewed by the quality team against the urban development framework before planning permission is granted (interview 13, 28:09). Together, the core of the organisation is therefore formed by an integrated project team with supporting working groups, which are jointly responsible for the substantive development and progress of the area development (interview 13, 25:30).

"Bouwclaim light model vraagt om een passende organisatie. We zijn geneigd om het traditionele organisatie te hanteren, maar we zijn het nog uit aan het kristalliseren."

Interview 13 Municipality Arnhem, quote 27:33

4.6.4.4 Relational

Dialogue and continuity

Within the relational dimension of the partnership, considerable attention is given to thoroughly testing and discussing the cooperation agreement through a form of 'serious gaming'. As this is a relatively new partnership model, different scenarios were jointly explored to develop a robust agreement and create a shared understanding of the process and mutual expectations (interview 13, 33:30).

The collaboration is highly dependent on the people involved. Trust is actively developed through joint sessions aimed at increasing understanding of each other's interests and perspectives, including a mutual gains session (interview 13, 38:08). The experience, expertise and relationships of the participants strongly influence how the partnership functions in practice.

Continuity within the team is therefore considered essential. Stable relationships help preserve trust, knowledge and effective collaboration, whereas personnel changes can disrupt these dynamics and the project process. For this reason, the aim is to retain the same team as far as possible, unless it becomes apparent that the necessary capacity or expertise is lacking (interview 13, 40:02).

"In elke samenwerking blijft het maatwerk en mensenwerk, ongeacht de gekozen variant. Het opbouwen van vertrouwen is daarbij essentieel, waarbij juist ook de kleine dingen het verschil maken."

Interview 13 Municipality Arnhem, quote 36:17; 38:32

*The **Veilingkwartier Tiel** case was not included in the in-case analysis, because the public-private partnership does not meet the defining characteristics of PPP light. The partnership is based on a joint GREX within a GEM, with shared ownership, shared risks and joint decision-making. As a result, the partnership organisation can be classified as a traditional PPP rather than a PPP light organisation. A further explanation is provided in Appendix C.*

5. Results: Matrix analysis

This chapter presents the different case analyses. First, attention is given to the identification of PPP light within the selected area developments, describing which collaboration model was chosen to structure the cooperation, why this form of collaboration was considered necessary, and why no traditional PPP structure or jointly established entity was pursued. Subsequently, the agreements identified on the financial, legal, organisational, and relational aspects are presented in a Mega Matrix (Appendix A). Finally, the recurring patterns across the cases are identified, analysed, and discussed.

5.1 PPP light establishment

Tabel 5.2 presents an overview of the established partnership model, the necessity for collaboration, and the reasons why the application of a traditional PPP, joint land acquisition, and the establishment of a GEM were considered unsuitable for the respective area developments.

	Established partnership model	Type partnership necessity	Why no traditional PPP/GEM
Entree Zoetermeer	• Individual anterior agreements (AOKs) per developing landowner • Collective coalition for branding	Ensuring coherent area development (bottom-up)	• Large number of private land positions (80%); • developers wanted to retain independence; no dependence on other sub-developments; • the municipality played a facilitating role; • complex organisation of a GEM due to the large number of private landowners; • need for flexibility within phased urban development.
Havenkwartier Rijswijk	• Letter of Intent (LOI) • Development framework • Additional interior agreements (AOK) per developing landowner	Ensuring coherent area development (bottom-up)	• Land fully owned by private parties; • retaining control over land and development; • complex organisation of a GEM due to significant variations in acquisition timing and land values; • adaptive and flexible development collaboration; • need for speed and flexibility.
Laakhaven Centraal Den Haag	• Letter of Agreement → a single joint cooperation agreement SOK involving all parties	Integral comprehensive implementation (top-down)	• Large number of private land positions (60-70%); • retaining individual development and risks; • avoiding complex entities and land banks; • focusing on issues that go across individual parcels; • need for efficiency and speed.
Merwede Kanaalzone Utrecht	• One single shared SOK involving all parties	Strong integral comprehensive implementation (top-down)	• Large number of private land positions (63%); • retaining individual development and risks; • physical differences and varying risks per land parcel;

			• joint land development and equalization too complex due to significant variations in acquisition timing and land values.
Piushaven Tilburg	• Framework agreement • Additional anterior agreement (AOK) per developing landowner	Integral comprehensive implementation (top-down)	• Strategically located and fully owned by private parties; • retaining control, pace, and phasing; • sufficient intrinsic motivation to collaborate, making GEM unnecessary; • facilitating role for the municipality, primarily responsible for public spaces; • need for flexibility due to market conditions.
Rijnpark Arnhem	Agreement in principle → a single shared SOK involving all parties (light building claim)	Integral comprehensive implementation (top-down)	• Retain developer autonomy during implementation; • prevent development dependencies and delays; • need for municipal control, full land development; - limit acquisition costs; • lack of support for GEM and joint land development.

Table 13 Matrix partnership establishment, necessity and why no traditional PPP/GEM (own table)

5.2 PPP light inter-organizational arrangements

In appendix A is a Mega Matrix overview of the agreements identified across the financial, legal, organisational, and relational aspects of the selected area developments presented. The overview is based on the conducted case analyses and is derived from interviews with public parties and multiple private parties involved in the developments. The agreements included in the matrix represent the observed arrangements established between public and multiple private actors within the specific cases. Similar to the individual case analyses, this Mega Matrix is therefore case-specific and reflects the agreements identified within the selected area developments. This matrix is the input for the following paragraphs.

5.3 Patterns

5.3.1 PPP light establishment

Across the six area developments, the formalisation of collaboration shows significant variation in the way cooperation between parties is formal contractually organised. In the cases of Havenkwartier and Piushaven, collaboration is structured through a collective urban development framework and framework agreement, formally binding all parties involved. In the Entrée case, cooperation is primarily organised through individual anterior agreements between the municipality and each developer separately, while collective area branding creates an additional overarching connection between the parties.

Laakhaven Centraal and Rijnpark initially operate through a letter of intent and principle agreement. These documents mainly function as a first step towards collaboration and are intended to be further elaborated into one collective cooperation agreement (SOK), to which all involved parties commit.

In the Merwede case, collaboration is directly organised through one collective SOK in which all parties participate, allowing agreements to be arranged integrally rather than through separate agreements per individual developer. Overall, the comparison demonstrates that the formalisation of collaboration ranges from letters of intent and individual agreements per landowner (interior agreement), combined with collective arrangements that connect parties, to fully integrated cooperation within one joint agreement.

Depending on the ownership structure and the level of interdependence between public and private actors, different collaboration needs can be identified. In the cases of Entrée and Havenkwartier, there is primarily a coordinating necessity aimed at *ensuring coherent area development*. This originates from the risk of fragmented and disconnected developments emerging if parties were to act independently (interview 1, 36:26; interview 11, 2:04). In these cases, the area development can be characterised as more bottom-up initiated, where the initiative initially originated from private landowners, after which the municipality intervened to prevent fragmentation and maintain control over the overall spatial quality and coherence of the development. The collaboration therefore has a mainly coordinating character: technically, parties could still develop independently, but chose to commit themselves to a collective and coherent area development.

On the other hand, the cases of Piushaven, Laakhaven Central, and Merwede demonstrate a stronger *integral implementation necessity*. In these cases, collaboration is based more on mutual interdependence, as the area development challenges need to be addressed collectively from a physical, financial, or functional perspective. This form of collaboration can be characterised as a more top-down approach, in which the area development itself is considered necessary, while the land required for implementation is fragmented and owned by multiple landowners, creating interdependencies with the private parties. At the same time, these area developments are often large-scale and involve collective challenges that need to be addressed in cooperation with the municipality (interview 5, 1:43; interview 10, 12:02; interview 4, 7:34).

In between these two forms lies the overlap between the necessity for coordination and mutual interdependence. In the case of Rijnpark, coordination is combined with municipal control (interview 13, 9:28). Through the building claim-light structure, the involved parties are committed to coordination led by the municipality, through full land acquisition, creating a situation in which developers become partly dependent on the municipality, while the municipality simultaneously depends on the participating parties to utilise the building claims and realise the area development.

Based on this, a spectrum can be identified between, on the one hand, a coordinating necessity for the emergence of PPP light and, on the other hand, a necessity driven by mutual interdependence between parties. Although these collaboration needs can be analytically distinguished, in practice they appear to be strongly interconnected, with the boundaries between both forms gradually overlapping.

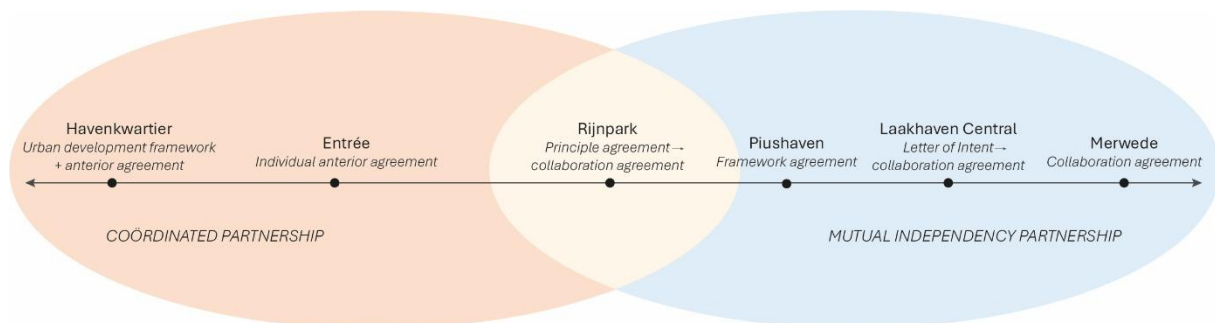


Figure 12 Spectrum coordinated partnership and mutual independency partnership by author (2026)

The case studies also provide and explain the underlying reasons why, despite fragmented landownership among multiple private parties, no choice was made for joint land contribution and a joint land exploitation structure (traditional PPP).

For the market parties involved in the case studies, there is no desire for joint land contributions, as they wish to retain ownership, control and autonomy over their own land and development. The aim is to collaborate exclusively on cross plot challenges, rather than on the entire area development. This preserves the individual business case and the separate risk bearing capacity for each landowner. Furthermore, the option remains to develop in phases and at each party's own pace, without mutual development dependencies between parties (table 14 row 2, 6/6 cases).

The consolidation of land and its joint development are considered complex, alongside the desire to keep the business case and risks separate, and are therefore not being pursued. Both market parties and the municipality wish to avoid a complicated process of offsetting and balancing risks. In this case studies, this arises from differences in the timing of land purchases and land values (Havenkwartier), differences in remediation or site preparation costs (Merwede), or the presence of too many landowners (Entree, Laakhaven Central) (table 14 row 3, 4/6 cases).

In every case, municipalities have no or limited land holdings, meaning that in all cases (except Rijnpark) the municipality cannot steer or initiate joint land exploitation, and the exploitation remains the responsibility of the individual landowners. The municipality does not pursue an active land policy, but is dependent on market parties, thereby assuming a more passive role and acting in a more facilitative capacity. In this context, the municipality steers through frameworks instead of through ownership, and joint exploitation does not take place (table 14 row 4, 5/6 cases).

The need for flexibility and adaptability in collaboration, allowing partnerships to respond to changing market conditions and evolving project circumstances without requiring fundamental changes to the partnership structure, is described as a key requirement. The rigid or inflexible structure which, based on the case studies, is associated with the establishment of the GEM, is considered inflexible and is therefore undesirable (table 14 row 5, 6/6 cases).

Table 14 provides an overview of the reasons for not adopting a joint land exploitation (GREX) and/or establishing a GEM within the selected area developments.

	Aiming for autonomy	Complexity	Facilitative municipal land policy (lack of ownership)	Need for flexibility
Entree Zoetermeer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Havenkwartier Rijswijk	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laakhaven Central The Hague	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merwede Utrecht	✓	✓	✓	✓
Piushaven Tilburg	✓		✓	✓
Rijnpark Arnhem	✓			✓

Table 14 Overview of reasons for not adopting a joint land exploitation (GREX) and/or establishing a GEM, based on four overarching themes identified in Mega Metrix appendix A (own table)

5.3.2 Inter-organizational arrangements PPP light

The Mega Matrix describes all agreements identified within the selected cases in a case-specific manner (Appendix A). By bringing these case-specific agreements together, the Mega Matrix enables the identification and analysis of overlapping agreements across the selected cases. In doing so, a transition is made from specific, case-bound agreements towards broader recurring patterns in collaboration arrangements. These overlapping agreements reflect similar arrangements established to collectively achieve particular objectives within the area developments. The following tables (tables 15, 16, 17 and 18) provide an overview, per aspect (financial, legal, organisational, and relational), of the identified

overlapping agreements, the broader themes these agreements relate to, and the cases in which they emerged.

The check marks in the tables indicate that the corresponding agreement was explicitly mentioned in the interviews within the collaboration of the area development. The absence of a check mark does not automatically mean that a specific agreement was not made within the collaboration structure of the area development. It only indicates that the agreement did not explicitly emerge from the interviews. The tables are intended to provide a high-level overview of the agreements that form the foundation of PPP light collaborations. The focus therefore lies on recurring patterns and the majority of observed agreements across the cases, meaning that individual deviating cases do not undermine the broader findings.

Following each table, a brief explanation is provided of the identified overlapping agreements and how these are reflected within the area developments.

Financial	Risks		Revenues	
	Developers bear risk for own plot/development, municipal for public space	Payments & contributions phased and linked to progress/milestones	Revenues remain with the individual development/plot	Joint financing of area promotion and collective facilities/activities
Entrée Zoetermeer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Havenkwartier Rijswijk	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laakhaven Central The Hague	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merwede Utrecht	✓		✓	✓
Piushaven Tilburg	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rijnpark Arnhem	✓	✓	✓	

Table 15 Overview agreements financial based Mega Matrix Appendix A (own table)

The financial agreements within the selected area developments mainly focus on the distribution of risks, costs, and revenues between public and private parties, while individual financial responsibility per plot remains central. In all cases, market parties bear the financial risk for their own land position, real estate development, and exploitation, while public parties remain responsible for public facilities, infrastructure, and public space. The previously mentioned absence of a joint land exploitation is also confirmed by the financial agreements made. In almost all cases, market parties remain individually responsible for the land exploitation of their own development. In Merwede Utrecht a fictitious joint GREX is used to financially equalise value differences between functions and land positions (Appendix A, MU, revenues, cell 14), but a real joint GREX is absent. In Rijnpark Arnhem, the public land exploitation is fully carried out by the municipality, while developers receive building claims in return (Appendix A, RA, risks, cell 14). Here as well, there is no joint GREX between public and private parties. Regarding land exploitation, this means that in none of the cases it is carried out jointly; with the exception of Rijnpark Arnhem, this responsibility primarily lies with the market parties in all cases.

At the same time, joint financial agreements are made for cross-plot challenges and activities, such as area promotion, mobility solutions, energy systems, quality improvements, or collective facilities. The way this is organised differs per case; ranging from fixed exploitation contributions (table 5.3, HR, LC, revenues, cells 6 and 9), and joint funds with entry fees (Appendix A, EZ; PT, revenues, cell 3; 15), to separate entities such as a mobility company or WKO company (Appendix A, MU, revenues, cell 13). In addition, payments are regularly linked to phasing, development milestones, or permit procedures, so that financial risks remain manageable throughout the process.

The essence of these financial agreements lies in combining individual financial autonomy with selective collective investments when required by the area development. There is deliberately no fully integrated land exploitation or joint financial entity, as is common in traditional PPP structures, because differences in land positions, purchase prices, risks, and development pace were too large for this. Instead, each party remains financially responsible for its own development, while financial collaboration is consciously organised around specific collective themes to enable the integrated area development.

Legal	Rules		Requirements		
	Jointly developed and legally established collaboration agreement between all parties across the planning area, including shared area guidelines	Individual agreements for each plot or developer within the collective arrangements	Established rules for the program, quality, and public space; no space to changes per plot or exchanges program with other plots	Possibility to evaluate and adjust agreements and total area plans throughout the process	No fixed development timelines, allowing for flexibility and risk management
Entrée Zoetermeer	Planning framework	✓	flexible	✓	✓
Havenkwartier Rijswijk	Planning framework	✓	flexible	✓	✓
Laakhaven Central The Hague	✓		✓	✓	
Merwede Utrecht	✓		✓	✓	✓
Piushaven Tilburg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rijnpark Arnhem	✓	✓	✓		

Table 16 Overview agreements legal based Mega Matrix Appendix A (own table)

The legal agreements within the selected area developments mainly focus on establishing joint area wide frameworks, while at the same time leaving space for individual development per plot. In almost all cases, there is a jointly established legally binding agreement or spatial planning framework.

However, the jointly established spatial planning frameworks do not function as the legal instrument in which the collaboration itself is embedded. Within Entree Zoetermeer and Havenkwartier Rijswijk, joint development visions, urban planning frameworks, and other spatial planning documents were established together (Appendix A, EZ; HR, rules, cell 1; 3), but the legal safeguarding of the collaboration was ultimately laid down in separate anterior agreements per developer. This means that the collective frameworks provide direction for the area development as a whole, while the formal legal agreements regarding the collaboration are established separately per party.

For Laakhaven Central, Merwede, Piushaven, and Rijnpark, legally binding agreements were established in which the public party and all involved market parties are jointly bound to the same contract. Within these agreements, public and private parties jointly made agreements regarding the collaboration and development of the entire planning area, such as through a agreement letter/cooperation agreement (Laakhaven Central), a cooperation agreement (Merwede Utrecht), a framework agreement (Piushaven Tilburg), or a principle agreement/cooperation agreement (Rijnpark Arnhem).

Within these collective legal frameworks, additional agreements are in some cases made per developer or plot, such as in Piushaven Tilburg and Rijnpark Arnhem. The collective agreements are supplemented there with additional agreements per developer, for example through anterior agreements, building claims, plot passports, or additional covenants. In these cases, additional agreements and further detailing could be established specifically per development, without losing the collective coherence and steering at area level (Appendix A, PT; RA, rules, cell 9; 11).

The content of the legal agreements mainly focuses on programme distribution, quality requirements, public space, social housing, building regulations, and the organisation of collective facilities. In most

cases, these programme agreements are fixed per plot or development, and exchanging programmes or functions between market parties is not possible. This means, for example, that developers cannot jointly redistribute the share of social housing. Only in Entree Zoetermeer and Havenkwartier Rijswijk does greater flexibility in programme allocation exist, where programme components or functions can be exchanged between plots, as long as the overall area programme and collective agreements at area level remain balanced (Appendix A, EZ; HR, requirements, cell 1; 4).

In addition, all agreements deliberately include flexible process arrangements, allowing plans, ambitions, and preconditions to be jointly reconsidered or adjusted during the development process. This is reflected, among other things, in the use of process agreements for future (market) uncertainties, such as mobility, parking, or energy systems, and in the use of phased permit procedures and phased plan elaboration, as seen in Rijnpark Arnhem.

The essence of these legal agreements lies in combining one joint legal and/or spatial planning framework for the entire planning area. In most cases, an overarching legal system is used, jointly established by public and private parties, which provides direction for both the collaboration and the development of the entire area. The flexibility does not lie in individually adjusting agreements per development, but rather in jointly organising the overarching framework in a flexible way, allowing changes and reconsiderations at plot level to be implemented.

Organisational	Tasks		Responsibilities	
	Joint implementation of area promotion and branding	Collective coordination of programme, planning and development	Layered decision-making and consultation structure	Use of independent quality control through a supervisor or quality team
Entrée Zoetermeer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Havenkwartier Rijswijk	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laakhaven Central The Hague	✓	✓	✓	
Merwede Utrecht	✓	✓	✓	✓
Piushaven Tilburg	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rijnpark Arnhem		✓	✓	✓

Table 17 Overview agreements organisational based Mega Matrix Appendix A (own table)

The organisational agreements mainly focus on the organisation of the collaboration, the division of tasks and responsibilities, and the way coordination between public and private parties is arranged. At the same time, the traditional division of roles largely remains in place: municipalities remain responsible for public facilities and public space, while market parties are responsible for the development of their own plot or real estate project.

Within all cases, there is a layered consultation and decision-making structure, consisting of steering committees, director meetings, project groups, working groups, and planning teams with periodic meetings between municipalities and market parties. These consultation structures are organised to monitor the progress of the area development, prepare joint decisions, coordinate developments, and align plot-overarching themes such as mobility, sustainability, demolition and construction activities, infrastructure, and public space. In almost all cases, this structure is complemented by the use of independent quality control, for example through a supervisor (Havenkwartier Rijswijk) or a quality or check team. These teams assess plans against jointly established urban frameworks, development visions, and quality ambitions in order to safeguard coherence and spatial quality throughout the entire area. This creates an additional organisational layer between individual developments and the wider area ambitions.

The cases show that cross-plot tasks are closely connected to the financial agreements. Collective coordination of programming and planning, and the joint execution of themes such as mobility, energy systems, and area promotion are linked to the collective distribution of risks and revenues and are therefore strongly related to each other.

Most attention regarding cross-plot tasks was given to the joint organisation of area promotion. For this purpose, collective initiatives were established in Entree Zoetermeer, Havenkwartier Rijswijk, Merwede Utrecht (Merwede LAB), Piushaven Tilburg (Levend Podium), and Laakhaven Central (Appendix A, EZ; HR; LC; MU; PT, tasks, cells 1; 3; 6; 7; 9) to jointly brand the area development. In addition, efforts are made to share knowledge and expertise between the different plot developments (table 5.3, MU, tasks, cell 8).

The essence of these organisational agreements lies in organising a layered consultation and decision-making structure in which both public and private parties collaborate intensively, without establishing one fully integrated project organisation such as a GEM. Within this consultation structure, collective coordination and alignment are safeguarded. The collaboration remains based on separate responsibilities per party, but with collective coordination on themes that cannot be solved individually. As a result, the organisational collaboration not only focuses on formal decision-making, but also on jointly organising the execution of collective area wide challenges.

Relational	Trust		Communication		
	Trust based on continuity in people and long-term relationships	Collaboration based on shared project goals, collective ambitions and mutual interests	Regular informal gatherings and social events	Resolving conflicts through dialogue rather than legal procedures	Transparency and openness as the foundation for trust
Entrée Zoetermeer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Havenkwartier Rijswijk	✓	✓		✓	✓
Laakhaven Central The Hague	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merwede Utrecht	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Piushaven Tilburg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rijnpark Arnhem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 18 Overview agreements relational based Mega Matrix Appendix A (own table)

In contrast to the financial, legal, and organisational agreements, relational agreements are hardly formally embedded in contracts or structures. The relational aspect is mainly found in the interaction between the involved people and the focus on maintaining the collaboration over a long period of time, fitting the long-term character of area developments.

The relational agreements within the selected area developments mainly focus on building trust, which is strengthened through continuity and by creating and sharing a common goal. In all cases, it is emphasised that area development is ultimately people oriented work, in which the long term involvement of individuals is essential for maintaining knowledge, trust, and progress within the project. In addition, all cases strongly emphasise the importance of a shared ambition and collective project goal. The collaboration is therefore not only focused on individual interests or profit maximisation, but on jointly realising an integrated area development.

The relational agreements are further characterised by a strong emphasis on informal communication, short communication lines, and resolving conflicts through dialogue instead of legalisation. All cases emphasise the importance of short and informal lines within the collaboration. It appears that this informal coordination is easier to achieve in relatively small-scale collaborations and municipalities, such as in Havenkwartier Rijswijk and Piushaven Tilburg (Appendix A, HR; PT, communication, cell 6; 19), where

parties can reach each other more easily and direct contact is simpler to organise. In several cases, it was explicitly agreed that problems would first be discussed informally before formal legal steps would be taken.

Furthermore, in almost all cases, conscious efforts are made to strengthen relationships between parties through informal gatherings, excursions, dinners, and working sessions, although each area development gives its own interpretation to this. Transparency and openness are also approached differently across the cases. Within Laakhaven Central and Merwede, this is done by giving public and private parties mutual insight into the GREX and VEX relations. In other cases, transparency is created through openly sharing problems and difficulties within the process (Entree Zoetermeer), actively sharing knowledge and experiences (Piushaven Tilburg and Merwede Utrecht), or by jointly discussing the area development, strategies, and scenarios with the involved parties (Rijnpark Arnhem).

6. PPP light definition

6.1 Expert validation

To validate the definition of PPP light, which was derived from the analyses of individual cases and the recurring patterns between the different cases, a validation session with experts was organised. During this group discussion, the preliminary definition was discussed and tested from different perspectives on public-private partnership in area development.

Experts with diverse backgrounds and fields of expertise participated in the session. Akro Consult facilitates and advises partnership processes between different stakeholders within area developments. Brink is involved in various area developments as an advisor in the field of development strategies and partnership forms. In addition, Metropoolregio Eindhoven was represented from the perspective of research into trust within public-private partnership as an accelerator of housing development. Finally, Molsbergen Development contributed the perspective of the private developer on the way in which developers experience and shape public-private partnership.

Expert panel	Organisation	Role	Expertise in
Expert 1	Akro Consult	Partner	Changing PPP approaches, the underlying contextual drivers; advising on partnership processes.
Expert 2	Brink	Area developer	Development strategies and public-private partnership models.
Expert 3	Metropoolregio Eindhoven	Strategic Advisor/ sr. Process Manager, Housing sub-programme	Soft factors (trust, transparency, and continuity) as accelerators of decision-making processes and housing development.
Expert 4	Molsbergen Development B.V.	Project developer	Practical insides into feasibility and future applicability of PPP between stakeholders in area developments.

Table 19 Expert validation data overview (own table)

The expert validation had a twofold purpose. First, it served as confirmatory validation, assessing the extent to which the four general propositions align with the financial, legal, organisational, and relational characteristics of PPP light. Second, the session functioned as a definition validation, in which practical nuances regarding the independent character of PPP light as a partnership form were identified and incorporated into the final definition formation.

The validation took place in the form of a semi-structured interview with four experts, in which the preliminary findings and the conceptual definition were presented and discussed. The experts were invited to respond to each proposition, critically reflect on the proposed characteristics, and provide suggestions to strengthen the characteristics of PPP light.

The expert session was transcribed, after which the feedback from the experts was integrated into the definition formation by refining assumptions and adding additional definition-oriented conditions. This validation is therefore considered a practice-oriented verification of the definition. The findings should therefore be interpreted as strengthening the clarity, applicability, and plausibility of the final definition of PPP light.

Findings: statement validation

The four propositions were presented to the expert panel and directly linked to the four aspects in which the agreements within this research were clustered, as well as to the patterns that emerged from the data analysis. The empirical findings were partly confirmed, while at the same time supplemented with important nuances. In several cases, assumptions were questioned and suggestions were provided to define the propositions and corresponding characteristic agreements more precisely and clearly. These

insights contribute to the refinement of the final definition of PPP light, which is the objective of this research.

Statement 1 – Financial

“PPP light is financially characterised by the separation of risks and revenues, while costs related to public functions are distributed proportionally.”

“PPS light kenmerkt zich financieel door het scheiden van risico's en opbrengsten, terwijl kosten voor publieke functies naar ratio worden verdeeld.”

The statement is not confirmed by the expert validation and requires nuance on several points. The statement appears to be formulated too absolutely. An important point of discussion within the expert panel concerned the use of the word “separation.” According to the panel, the complete separation of risks and revenues does not align with the core of public-private partnerships. Within partnerships, risks and revenues are, according to the experts, more often distributed rather than fully separated, because PPP inherently implies that parties jointly carry responsibility for the development of the area (Akro Consult). At the same time, the expert panel acknowledges that in many area developments, risks and revenues in practice largely remain linked to individual land and property positions. Developers remain responsible for their own plot development, while public parties remain responsible for public functions and investments (Metropole region Eindhoven). As a result, collaboration takes place at the area level, while financial responsibilities remain largely organised individually.

The financial aspect within public-private partnerships can be organised in different ways. On the one hand, agreements can be structured in such a way that risks, revenues, investments, and costs are jointly distributed, whether or not within a joint entity or contractual partnership structure. On the other hand, it is emphasised that when financial aspects remain fully separated and parties act solely from their own land position or development, there is in fact hardly any real PPP remaining (Akro Consult, Molsbergen Development).

Financial agreements regarding risks, revenues, investments, and cost recovery must always be made in every area development. Substantively, financial agreements hardly differ between the different PPP forms. According to the experts, the distinction between PPP light and traditional PPP therefore does not primarily lie in the content of the financial agreements themselves, but in the way these agreements are financially and organisationally structured and formalised (Akro Consult).

The way in which risks and revenues are ultimately distributed is strongly related to project-specific characteristics, such as ownership relations, project complexity, the role of the municipality (facilitating or participating through land ownership), and the overall desire or necessity to establish a joint land exploitation or entity (Brink). From this project context, the financial agreements subsequently emerge, including the choice for either a more collective or a more separated financial organisation of the partnership.

Based on the expert validation, it can be concluded that PPP light is, in the first instance, not financially characterised by a fixed structure for separating or distributing risks and revenues. According to the expert panel, financial agreements within PPP light are highly context-dependent and directly connected to the way the partnership is organisationally structured. The chosen organisational form is closely related to project-specific characteristics. From this context, an appropriate distribution of financial risks, revenues, investments, and costs subsequently emerges. The expert validation therefore demonstrates that no fixed one-to-one relationship exists between PPP light and a specific financial distribution structure compared to traditional PPP forms.

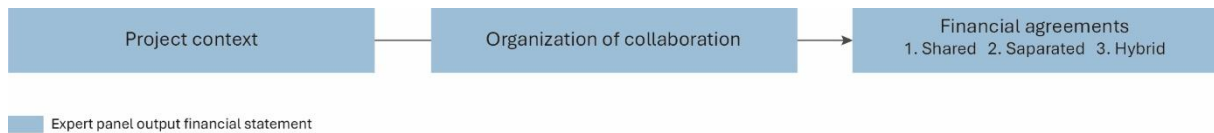


Figure 13 Process of establishing financial arrangements based on project context and collaboration structure derived from statement 1 by author (2026)

Statement 2 – Legal

“PPP light is legally characterised by the use of a basic agreement (such as a collaboration agreement or anterior agreement) that is sufficient to safeguard the collaboration, without requiring extensive contractual arrangements.”

“In PPS light kenmerkt zich juridisch door het gebruik van een basisovereenkomst (zoals een SOK, AOK) wat voldoende is om de samenwerking te borgen, zonder dat uitgebreide contractvorming nodig is.”

For the legal aspect, it is concluded that when referring to a PPP, it concerns a legal organisational form. PPP light emerges when a project is suited to such a form of collaboration (Akro Consult). PPP traditional is applied when there is a need for a strong joint implementation organisation, central steering, and legally tightly defined agreements. PPP light, on the other hand, emerges when there is no necessity for a joint entity, for example when such an entity would create too much complexity or delay. In this context, it becomes clear that PPP light is legally characterised mainly by a lighter organisational form with lighter contractual structures. The ‘light’ character lies in the way the collaboration is legally and organisationally structured, from which the essential agreements that need to be made emerge (Akro Consult).

The expert panel confirms that it is not necessary to establish a separate legal entity for a partnership to be considered as a PPP. According to the experts, a PPP can also be organised contractually, as long as an agreement is in place that functions as a legal vehicle and contains arrangements that legally safeguard the collaboration (Brink). In addition, it is established that a collaboration can only be considered fully developed incremental (organische gebiedsontwikkeling) when there is no form of collaboration agreement between the parties. It is emphasised that within area developments an anterior agreement is always concluded, in which the minimum legal agreements regarding cost recovery are legally recorded (Brink). Once parties make additional agreements, for example through a letter of intent, collaboration agreement, or other private-law agreement, in which arrangements are included regarding mutual cost distribution, decision-making authority, joint and separated responsibilities, or process agreements, the collaboration can no longer be considered fully as a incremental development, but instead becomes a form of PPP light (Metropole region Eindhoven). Which additional agreements are made differs per situation and depends on the context and collaboration needs of the project, resulting in different degrees of PPP light, ranging from lighter to heavier PPP light structures (Akro Consult).

With the insight describing the difference between incremental development collaboration and PPP light, the distinction between PPP light and PPP traditional is subsequently confirmed. PPP traditional is described as a heavily organised structure, arranged as a company/entity with a BV/CV structure, shareholders, governance arrangements, and extensive contractual structures (Akro Consult). These traditional PPP forms involve many formal agreements and regulations, making it less easy for parties to withdraw from the collaboration (Akro Consult). According to the expert panel, this organisational heaviness is the main distinction from PPP light. A fully established BV/CV structure therefore does not fit the ‘light’ character of PPP light (Akro Consult, Brink). In this way, a distinction can also be made between PPP light and traditional PPP forms; when there is no BV/CV structure, it is automatically considered PPP light (Metropole region Eindhoven).

Based on the expert validation, it can be concluded that a PPP is established from a specific implementation objective within an area development. PPP light is characterised by less legally rigid

agreements at the front end of the process, with more room for agreements to further develop in a gradual manner during the collaboration process. There is not one specific 'basic collaboration agreement' that defines PPP light (Brink). The chosen contract form/collaboration agreement and the degree of formalisation depend on the way the partnership is organised and which agreements are necessary to legally safeguard it. As a result, different degrees of PPP light can exist, ranging from lighter to more heavily formalised PPP light structures.

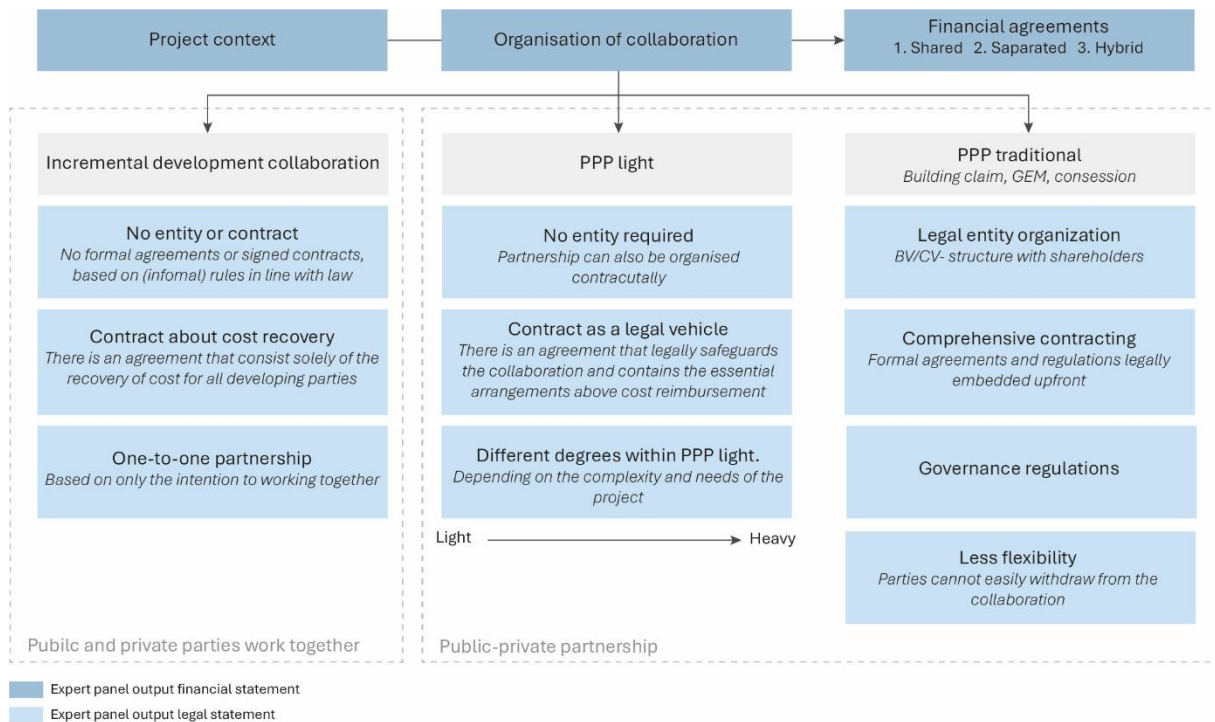


Figure 14 Defining the legal boundaries and degrees of PPP based on organisation of collaboration and contractual formalisation derived from statement 2 by author (2026)

Statement 3 – Organisational

“A clear hierarchical organisation and decision-making structure is not a characteristic of PPP light; informal coordination through consultation structures is sufficient.”

“Een duidelijke hiërarchische organisatie en besluitvormingsstructuur is geen kenmerk van PPS light; organische afstemming via overlegstructuren is voldoende.”

The expert validation shows that the statement is not fully supported. According to the experts, an organisational, escalation, and decision-making structure always remains necessary, regardless of whether there is an incremental development collaboration, PPP light, or PPP traditional. According to the experts, a PPP emerges once parties consciously establish a decision-making or organisational design/form together and make agreements about it. Informal alignment only and no agreements about this, is insufficient when parties need to make joint decisions or organise shared interests (Molsbergen Development; Metropole region Eindhoven). It must be clear who is responsible, at what level decisions are made, and how parties act in the event of conflicts.

The difference therefore does not lie in whether or not there is an organisational structure, but in the way this structure is organised (the design/form) and which agreements are made about it. In contrast to PPP traditional, PPP light does not need to be organised through a structure with shareholders, a board of directors, and a supervisory board (Akro Consult). The partnership within PPP light is organised differently, with different types of agreements, based on mandates, consultation structures, and joint

working groups, while parties retain their own responsibilities and internal decision-making. This can be lighter, but this does not necessarily always have to be the case (Brink).

According to the experts, the shared interest plays an important role within this. Joint agreements on goals, frameworks, and ambitions strengthen collaboration and decision-making between parties. By explicitly recording these, they can later be referred back to when contradictions arise (Metropole region Eindhoven).

In conclusion, all forms of partnership forms require a kind of organisational and decision-making structure. However, PPP light requires more than merely informal alignment through consultation. The distinction from traditional PPP mainly lies in the agreements made about the *design* of this organisational and decision-making structure. In this regard, PPP light *can* offer more room for independent execution within agreed frameworks, although this does not necessarily have to be distinctive, since this is also possible within traditional PPP (Akro Consult). The decision-making and consultation structure within PPP light is therefore more often based on mandates rather than on a formal organisation.

At the same time, it is emphasized that PPP light is not by definition organised faster or more simply, because the collaboration remains dependent on coordination between individual parties (Brink). Explicitly recording shared interests and goals can thereby serve as a source of momentum and help accelerate decision-making when contradictions arise (Metropole region Eindhoven).

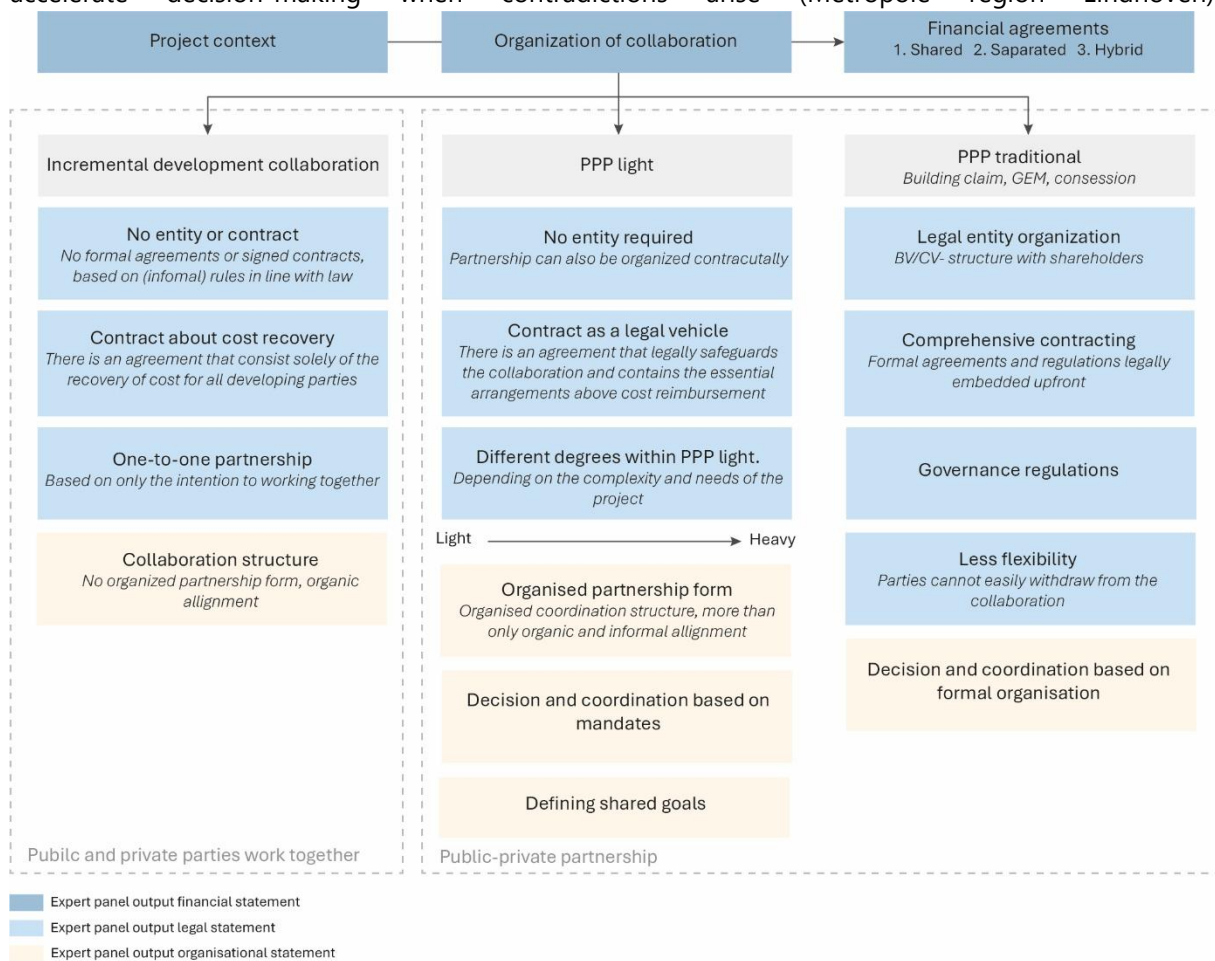


Figure 15 Defining the organisational boundaries of PPP light based on organisation structure of partnership derived from statement 3 by author (2026)

Statement 4 – Relational

“Agreements based on trust and informal communication are characteristic of PPP light.”

“Afspraken over vertrouwen en informele communicatie is een kenmerk van PPS light.”

Based on the expert validation, it can be concluded that agreements regarding trust and (informal) communication are considered an important aspect within PPP light. At the same time, it is emphasized that this is not exclusively characteristic of PPP light, but is becoming increasingly important within all PPP forms within area developments.

The experts emphasize that trust cannot be taken for granted, but must be consciously organised and supported through agreements (Brink). A distinction can be made between institutional trust, cognitive trust and affective trust (Metropole region Eindhoven). Within this statement, the focus is mainly on affective trust, which relates to the interpersonal side of partnership. For this reason, parties should make explicit agreements about how they interact with each other, how conflicts are resolved and how escalations are discussed without immediately taking legal action. Agreements regarding informal communication and behavioural norms are also considered important, such as what parties do or do not communicate to partnership partners and how parties continue to communicate throughout the process (Metropole region Eindhoven).

In addition, it is stated that agreements regarding trust can sometimes be even more important than extensive contracts, especially within large project organisations involving many stakeholders (Brink). It cannot be assumed that all parties share the same interests and expectations. Therefore, agreements should be established regarding how parties intend to collaborate, so that these agreements can be referred back to when tensions arise (Brink).

Furthermore, the expert validation acknowledges that area development has changed over the years. Whereas within PPP traditional structures the focus used to be mainly on agreements regarding money, roles, time and responsibilities, while relational agreements received limited attention, the interpersonal side of partnership has become increasingly important nowadays (Akro Consult). According to the experts, during the VINEX period characterised by PPP traditional structures, this relational aspect was often missing, resulting in situations where parties, despite extensive contracts, were unable to maintain the partnership when difficulties arose (Akro Consult). This demonstrated that agreements regarding trust were in fact crucial. The experts emphasise that relational agreements and trust are not exclusively connected to the emergence of the new partnership form PPP light, but rather stem from a broader shift towards the interpersonal side of area development and partnership in general (Akro Consult). As a result, agreements regarding trust and informal communication should, according to the experts, be present within all PPP forms. The fact that *agreements* are made regarding trust and communication indicates that this does not fully fit within incremental development collaboration, since such partnerships generally do not involve explicit agreements between parties (Metropole region Eindhoven).

From this perspective, PPP light can, according to the expert validation, contribute to incorporating relational agreements more explicitly and structurally within partnerships (Metropole region Eindhoven). In this regard, PPP light could function as a vehicle to standardise agreements regarding trust within PPP contracts. This may include agreements regarding transparency, continuously maintaining dialogue, discussing interests, investing in relationships and developing a better understanding of each other's positions and shared interests (Metropole region Eindhoven; Akro Consult). According to the experts, this contributes to mutual understanding and the ability to collectively steer towards the project interest without losing sight of individual interests (Akro Consult).

Based on the expert validation, it can therefore be concluded that agreements regarding trust and informal communication can be regarded as an important relational aspect within PPP light. However,

the experts do not support the idea that this is exclusively characteristic of PPP light. According to them, trust, informal communication and relational agreements are becoming increasingly important within all PPP forms. PPP light may distinguish itself by making these agreements a more explicit, conscious and structural part of the partnership.

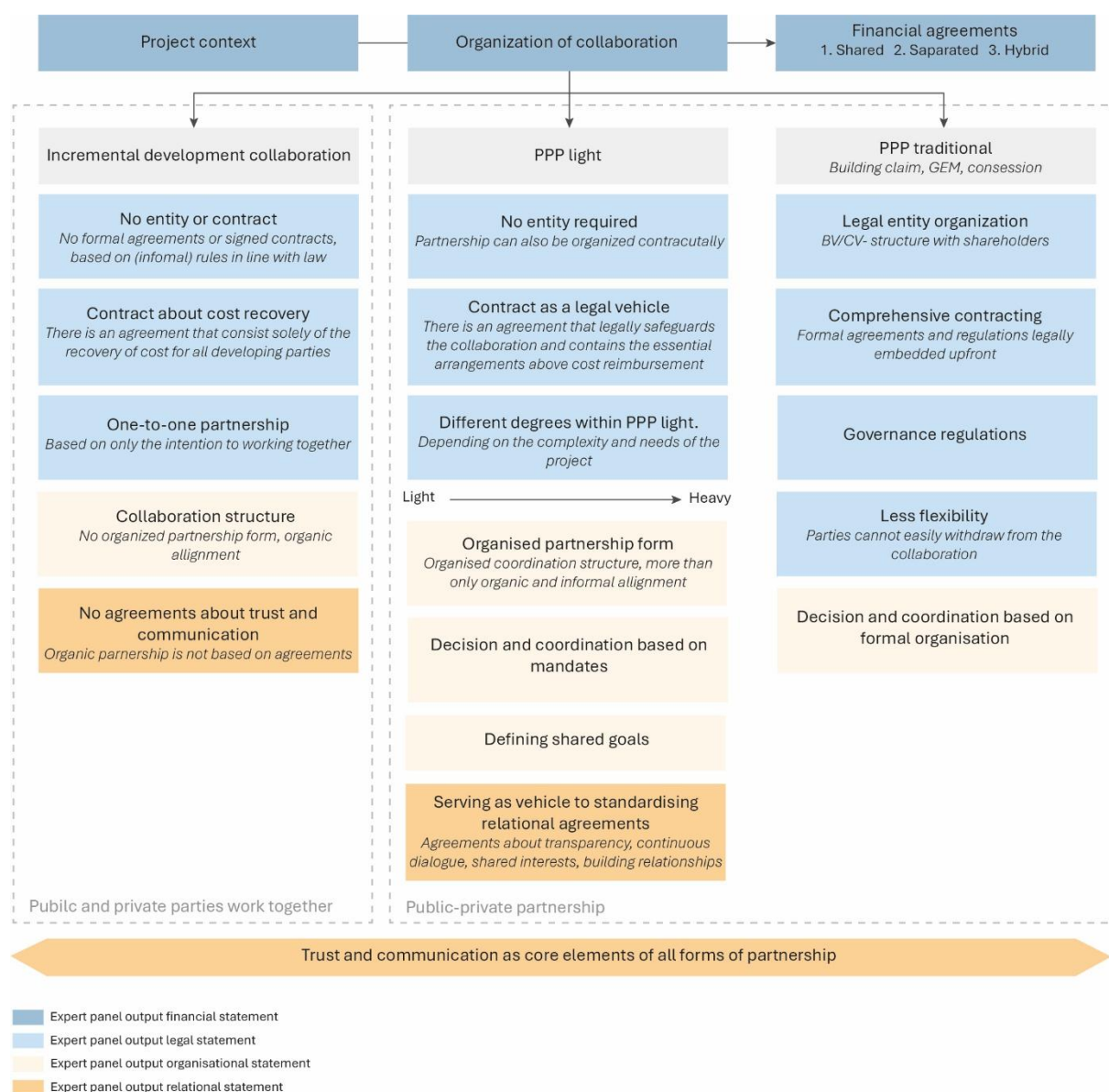


Figure 16 Defining the relational boundaries of PPP light based derived from statement 4 by author (2026)

6.2 PPP light definition

Based on the theoretical framework and the empirical findings of this research, a coherent definition of PPP light is formulated. The aim is to theoretically define this emerging partnership model, which is increasingly being applied in practice. The definition focuses on when PPP light exists, what PPP light entails, and which characteristics belong to it. To arrive at this definition, a step-by-step approach is taken towards the moment within an area development in which PPP light can be chosen as a legal vehicle. The considerations that precede this form part of the characteristics of PPP light.

Starting point; public private collaboration

Large-scale area development projects often start with purely public private collaboration. In the initiative phase, public and private parties work together on the area development task, but this cannot be defined as a PPP light. At this stage, extensive consultation takes place between public and private parties, for example regarding decisions on urban planning requirements laid down in development frameworks, such as building heights and programmatic requirements. Based on these frameworks, the market parties prepare a conceptual design and preliminary design, after which the municipality assesses these plans in order to enable the submission of a permit application once agreement has been reached on the urban planning framework. This can therefore be understood as public private collaboration. This phase can last a very long time. However, this is about consultation and collaboration between public and private parties, it can not be considered as public-private partnership, but is an incremental development collaboration between parties.

A partnership subsequently arises from a shared task: what parties want to achieve together, why they want to collaborate, and what they need from one another. In addition, the approach and intentions within the collaboration plays a role and clarifying which possible obstacles may arise within the collaboration and within the project itself (expert panel, Akro Consult). From this substantive motivation, an suitable organisational form subsequently emerges in which public and private parties determine how they jointly organise the partnership in order to collectively carry out the area development (expert panel, Brink). PPP light as the legal vehicle that results therefrom is therefore not an objective in itself, but a organisation form to shape the partnership for the area development.

Whereas within PPP traditional the establishment of a joint organisation or entity often forms the starting point, with its own structure, financial administration, and a clear objective to achieve decisiveness and speed in the area development through this vehicle, PPP light instead emerges from the substantive necessity to collaborate, after which the partnership, because parties need something from one another, organisationally and legally structured. The organisational form therefore follows from the partnership need, rather than the other way around (expert panel, Akro Consult).

Incremental development collaboration or a public-private partnership structure

Depending on the nature and complexity of the task and the needs and preferences of the involved parties, the collaboration can either organised as an incremental development collaboration or be organised in the form of a public-private partnership. This can be structured in either a heavy or a lighter organisational manner. In this regard, the degree of organisational structuring is related to the extent to which parties wish to formalize agreements in advance or instead leave room for a more flexible, adaptive, and 'relaxed' start to the partnership (Akro Consult). It is therefore very important to recognise the difference between public-private *collaboration* and a public-private *partnership*, which are two different ways of organizing how to work together. At the moment a legal *partnership* form is chosen as the execution organisation through which the area development is organised, the choice emerges regarding how heavily or lightly the partnership will be organisationally structured (expert panel, Metropole region Eindhoven).

Different forms of contract formation are connected to these different partnership forms, in which both partnership agreements, such as the division of roles, risks, and financing, as well as project-oriented agreements, are established and secured. The project must be suitable for organizing the partnership in a light or, conversely, a more heavily organisational manner (expert panel, Akro Consult).

When can a partnership be defined as PPP light?

Based on the expert panel validation, a definition of PPP light can be established. Statements 1 to 4 focused on the inter-organisational arrangements within which PPP light operates and the types of agreements that characterise this form of collaboration. statement 5 validated that PPP light can be defined as a distinct partnership model with clear characteristics that differentiate it from both traditional PPP models and incremental development collaboration.

Statement 5 – PPP light as partnership form

“Is PPP light truly a distinct form of collaboration with clear characteristics that differentiate it from other PPP models, or is it merely a collection of various agreements between public and private parties, sharing only the fact that it is neither a development claim model, a joint venture (GEM), nor a concession?”

“PPS light is echt een samenwerkingsvorm, met duidelijke kenmerken die het doet onderscheiden van andere PPS-vormen, of is het slechts een vergaarbak met allerlei afspraken tussen publieke en private partijen met als enige overeenkomst dat het geen bouwclaim, GEM of concessie is.”

The purpose of statement 5 was to identify these distinguishing characteristics and to show that PPP light should not be considered as a broad category relating to all forms of public-private collaboration which simply cannot be classified as traditional PPPs. This statement was intended as a concluding, comprehensive statement, with a view to position PPP light in the literature next to the already established PPP models.

To support this positioning, a comprehensive overview of PPP definitions is presented on the following page (Figure 18). In this overview, PPP light is positioned between incremental development collaboration and traditional PPP models. Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that PPP light takes an intermediate position between these two forms of collaboration. It involves a greater degree of structured cooperation than is typically found in incremental development collaboration, while remaining less institutionalised than traditional PPP models such as building claim, joint venture, and concession models.

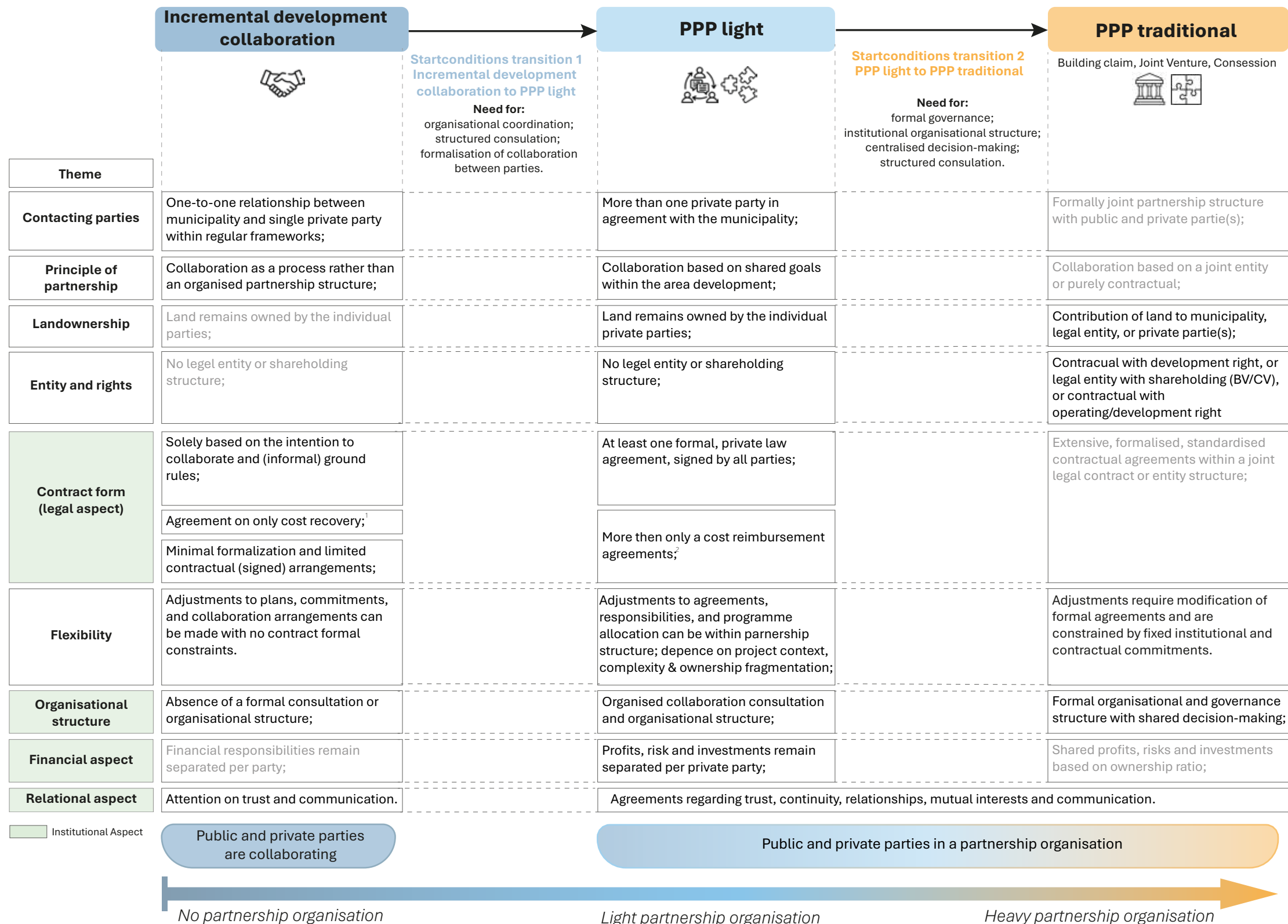
Several important observations can be derived from this overview. First, the overview is structured around themes that indicate whether a partnership can be classified as incremental development collaboration, PPP light, or traditional PPP. These themes represent the characteristics on which PPP light distinguishes itself from the two alternative collaboration forms. The themes shown in green relate to the institutional aspects (Chapter 2) that distinguish PPP light. In addition, these themes have been supplemented with other distinguishing themes that were validated by the expert panel via statement 5. For each theme, a description is provided of how that characteristic is within each collaboration form. These description outlines the defining characteristics of the respective theme within the collaboration model. Themes for which this research and the expert panel concluded that PPP light does not differ substantially from either incremental development collaboration or traditional PPP have not been included in the overview. As these characteristics do not contribute to the definition forming of PPP light, they were considered outside the scope of this overview.

Second, the overview defines the general boundary conditions that indicate the partnership transitions from one partnership form to another. Based on the distinguishing themes, minimum requirements have been identified for a partnership to qualify as PPP light, as well as maximum conditions. The transition

from incremental development collaboration to PPP light occurs when there is a need for organisational coordination, structured consultation, and the formalisation of collaboration between parties. In contrast, the transition from PPP light to traditional PPP occurs when formal governance structures, institutionalised organisational arrangements, and centralised decision-making become necessary. These transition conditions are displayed at the top of the overview.

Third, the expert panel emphasised that PPP light does not represent a single fixed model but rather encompasses varying degrees of organisational intensity. The overview should therefore be interpreted as a continuum rather than a strict categorisation. The left side of the framework represents the minimum conditions required for PPP light in comparison to incremental development collaboration, while the right side represents the maximum conditions under which PPP light transitions into traditional PPP. Moving from left to right therefore reflects an increasing degree of organisational complexity, formalisation, and institutionalisation.

The overview of the distinguishing characteristics, developed from the findings of the mega matrix presented in Chapter 5 and subsequently validated through the expert panel discussion through Statements 1 to 5, is presented below. This overview synthesizes the key characteristics identified throughout the analysis and reflects both the empirical findings and the insights obtained from the expert validation discussion.



Text Directly derived from the data collection analysis

Text Not directly derived from the data collection analysis

¹ Cost recovery concerns statutory costs, such as site preparation and servicing, the development of public space, planning costs, and investigations. The government recovers these costs from the initiating party, so that society does not bear the costs of private development plans (Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, n.d.).

² For example, agreements regarding joint promotion and/or marketing (funds, participation, consultation structure, the joint preparation of an urban development plan, and joint plan development).

Figure 17 Overview organic collaboration, PPP light and PPP traditional based on matrix analysis and expert validation by author (2026)

Based on this overview, the characteristics of PPP light presented in the middle column can be used to determine when a partnership can be considered as PPP light. **A partnership form can be defined as PPP light when:**

- within the partnership structure, both the municipality as the public party and multiple private parties (or a consortium) are contracted and participate;
- the partnership is based on shared goals and is organized to achieve these shared goals;
- land ownership remains with the individual market parties and is not brought together to one authority;
- no legal entity or shareholder structure is present;
- the agreements made are established in at least one private law agreement, signed by all parties; But there is no fixed contract form, it can be for example a collaboration agreement or letter of intent
- the agreements within the partnership go beyond agreements solely concerning cost recovery (law regulated);
- there is more flexibility to adapt governance arrangements and contractual agreements to changing circumstances during the area development process; the degree of flexibility diverse and is depended on the context of the project;
- for the organisational aspect: a decision-making and consultation structure must be present, jointly established and agreed upon by all parties involved, relating to the integral area development;
- for the relational aspect: Agreement are made regarding trust, continuity, relationships, mutual interest and communication
- agreements are jointly elaborated and established during multiple consultation moments.

A partnership form can not be defined as PPP light when:

- the land is brought together within one authority; one joint land exploitation (PPP traditional);
- a separate legal entity with shareholders has been established (PPP traditional);
- there is a one-to-one development agreement solely based on the intention of working together with ground rules to ensure this collaboration (incremental development collaboration);
- exclusively a cost recovery agreement has been established (incremental development collaboration).

Although the figure above visualizes a clear distinction, suggesting that the transition from purely incremental development collaboration to PPP light is a strict and clearly identifiable shift, this is often not the case in practice. In reality, the transition from incremental development collaboration to public-private partnership in the form of PPP light is difficult to define precisely. Area development projects can involve incremental development collaboration over a very long period of time, while the cooperation gradually becomes more intensive and organised as the project progresses, yet still without a partnership functioning as a legal vehicle. Second, although the figure also identifies several indicative characteristics of PPP light, such as agreements that go beyond solely cost recovery mandatory by law, at least one formal private law agreement involving more than one private party, and an organised decision-making and consultation structure, these characteristics do not translate one-to-one to practice. Every area development project can organise these aspects differently and vary in intensity, making it difficult in reality to determine whether a collaboration can be defined as PPP light or incremental development collaboration.

Figure 18 below illustrates the development of collaboration within area development along a continuum from incremental development collaboration to PPP light and then to traditional PPP. As

collaboration evolves from incremental development to PPP light and ultimately to traditional PPP, the degree of organisational structuring within the partnership increases (x-axis), and the level of formalisation (y-axis) rises, for example through more joint agreements, coordination, and decision-making. The dashed lines indicate indicative transition points between the different forms of collaboration. The spacing between the lines visually reflects the degree of diffuseness: the transition from incremental development collaboration to PPP light is relatively diffuse, represented by the wider spacing between the dashed lines. The transition from PPP light to traditional PPP is less diffuse, shown by the closer spacing between the lines. This reflects the difference in clarity of minimum conditions: from incremental development collaboration to PPP light, the 'boundary conditions' are less defined, whereas in traditional PPP, better-defined minimum 'boundary conditions' apply, such as at least an organised legal entity with a shareholder structure.

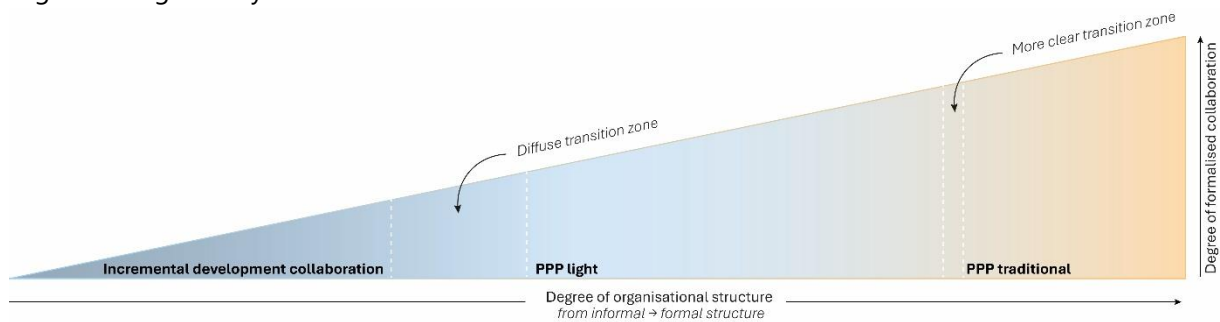
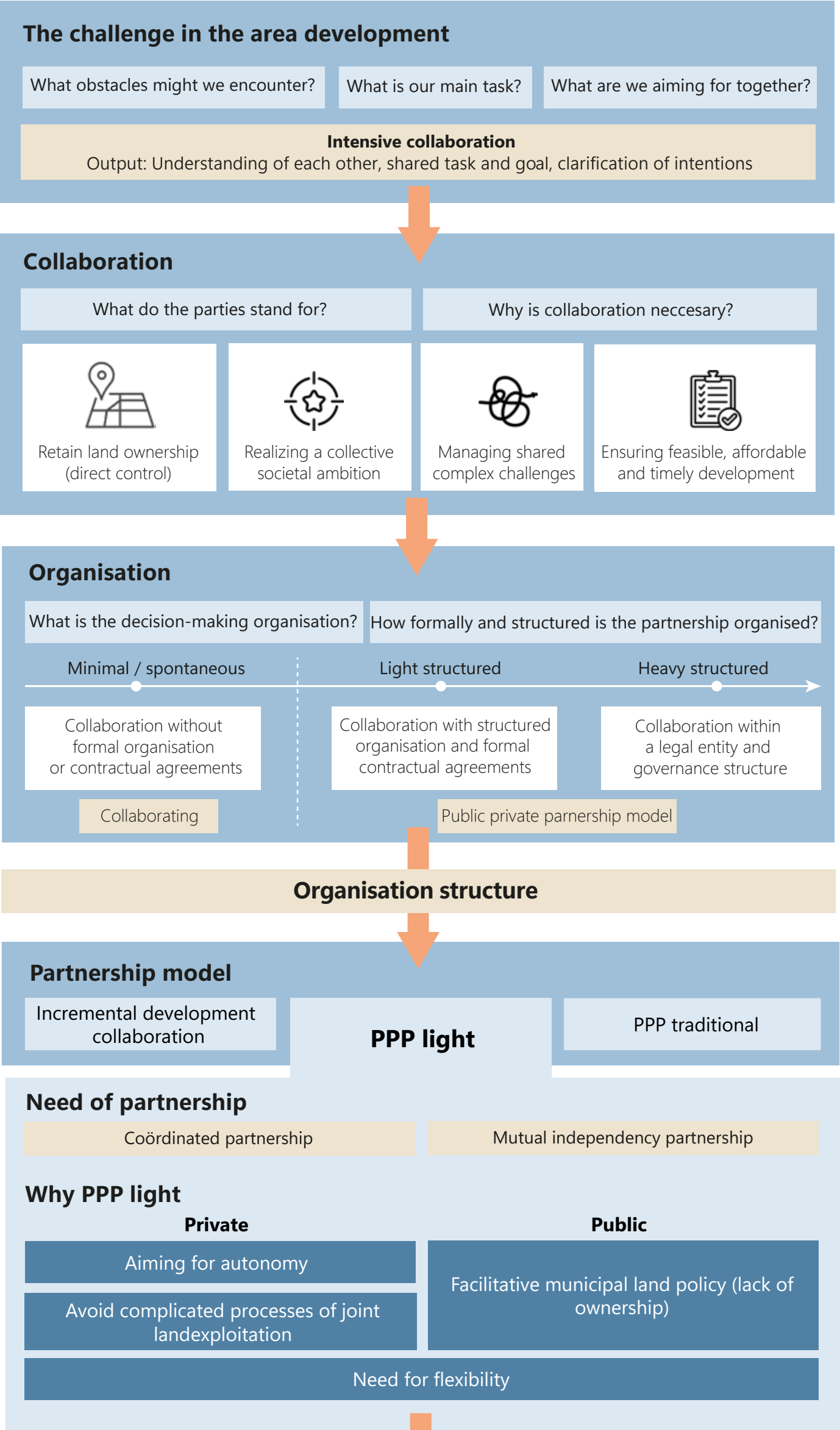


Figure 18 Diffuse transition zone from incremental development collaboration to PPP light to PPP traditional by author (2026)

The next page provides an overview of how a partnership is established within an area development project (figure 19). It is based on the steps that lead up to the formation of a public-private partnership and on the PPP light definition validated through the expert panel discussion described in Chapter 6. This figure provides an overview of the sequential steps and key considerations involved in establishing a collaboration within area development. It begins with identifying the challenges and objectives of the project, followed by a focus on the forms of collaboration forms and organisation, ranging from minimal and informal cooperation to structured and formal partnerships. The figure then illustrates the process of selecting an appropriate partnership model, with PPP light as the central focus. It shows why PPP light is applied and how public and private parties make agreements on financial, legal, organisational, and relational aspects within this framework, ensuring that the collaboration is effective and feasible.

Overview of steps and considerations for establishing partnership in area development



7. Synthesis

With the insights of previous chapter, the final definition of PPP light, together with its corresponding inter-organizational arrangements, can be formulated. This is done through the following questions.

Can PPP light be defined as a distinct partnership form?

PPP light can be defined as a distinct and independent partnership form and distinguishes itself through a more intensive level of collaboration between parties than in incremental development collaboration, while not establishing a traditional PPP structure. Within PPP light, there are formal agreements, an organised decision-making and consultation structure, and joint coordination, in which the collaboration goes beyond merely jointly establishing a plan with standard cost recovery agreements, but without a joint legal entity, shareholding structure, fully shared land exploitation, or bringing together of land position under one public or private party. **PPP light therefore has clear characteristics that distinguish it from both incremental development collaboration and PPP traditional forms.**

Is PPP light the ‘remaining’ partnership category?

PPP light is not simply everything that is neither incremental development collaboration nor PPP traditional. It is a **recognizable intermediate form with its own characteristics and minimum conditions**. There is at least one private law agreement in addition to a cost recovery agreement, the partnership is consciously organised, and parties make formal agreements regarding roles, responsibilities, risks, costs, process, and collaboration. The difference with PPP traditional mainly lies in the degree of organisational and legal heaviness.

What characterises PPP light?

PPP light is characterised by a lighter organisation structure with a set of financial, legal, organisation and relations arrangements that formalise the partnership structure and establish commitments and coordination mechanisms between public and private parties beyond what is legally mandatory. The arrangements include agreements regarding joint promotion and marketing, participation organisation, a periodic consultation structure, the joint preparation of an urban development plan, and collaboration in plan development. Examples include agreements on public space realisation, phasing and coordination of developments, the alignment of programmatic ambitions, mobility and accessibility measures, sustainability ambitions, and financial contributions to collective facilities.

Furthermore, PPP light is characterised by an organised but light(er) legal partnership structure, in which land remains in separate ownership, there is a certain division of roles, investments, profits, and risks, and **no separate legal entity is established**. At the same time, there is at least one formal agreement in which parties jointly establish collaboration arrangements, in the partnership is a decision-making and consultation structure, and joint steering of the area development. **PPP light is less heavily organised than PPP traditional, while being clearly more organised than incremental development collaboration.** That means that PPP light, depending on the project context, can function as a flexible partnership form.

With that, PPP light is also characterised by **varying degrees of organisational structuring, contractual formalisation, and coordination** between public and private parties, ranging from a relatively light form of PPP light to a more heavily organised form.. The extent of organisational structuring, contract formation, and mutual coordination differs per project and depends on the nature and complexity of the area development and the need for partnership between parties. On the lighter side of PPP light, the partnership remains close to incremental development collaboration. There are limited formal agreements, a light consultation structure, and parties retain a high degree of flexibility

and autonomy. There are limited formal agreements, a light consultation structure, and parties retain a high degree of autonomy to adapt responsibilities, planning decisions, and collaboration arrangements throughout the development process. The boundary between incremental development collaboration and PPP light is therefore vague and difficult to define, because a partnership always starts with parties collaborating with one another, which can subsequently evolve into PPP light as an organisational and partnership form (legal vehicle). However, the best-defined starting conditions are the presence of at least one partnership agreement in which agreements extending beyond solely cost recovery are jointly established, together with a defined organisational, decision-making, and consultation structure between the public party and more than one private party. PPP light becomes more heavily organised, the number of agreements, the degree of organisation, and the level of joint coordination increase. Parties may, for example, establish more extensive agreements regarding roles, risks, financing, process, and joint interests. Despite this heavier structuring, the partnership can be still defined as PPP light as long as there is no separate legal entity with shareholding is established, land positions are not brought together, and profits and risks are not fully jointly shared as within PPP traditional constructions. PPP light therefore remains an **intermediate form between incremental development collaboration and PPP traditional**, in which the partnership is organised, but **not fully integrated into one joint institutional organisation**.

What are the inter-organizational arrangements for PPP light?

Financial Risks and revenues

Within PPP light, financial risks and revenues arrangements largely remain connected to the individual land and real estate positions of the parties involved. Developers bear the risks related to their own plot development, exploitation, and sales, while the municipality remains responsible for public investments such as infrastructure, public space, and collective facilities. There is no single joint land exploitation in which all risks, costs, and revenues are fully combined. The partnership therefore mainly focuses on collectively enabling the area development, while individual business cases remain separate.

These agreements are made to maintain autonomy and flexibility in adapting responsibilities, commitments and collaboration arrangements within the partnership. Private parties want to retain control over their own development, investment moments, and phasing. At the same time, this structure prevents parties from becoming financially dependent on other sub-developments within the area. In addition, differences in land values, acquisition moments, remediation costs, and development pace make full financial equalisation complex and difficult to implement.

Within PPP light, collective financial agreements are established regarding **cross-plot challenges, such as area promotion, mobility, energy systems, and collective facilities**. These contributions are often organised through collectives, funds, or joint investments. Financial contributions and payments are regularly **linked to phasing, permit procedures, or development milestones**, allowing risks to remain manageable throughout the development process.

PPP light is therefore characterised by the **joint financing of collective area-wide interests**, while risks, costs, and revenues related to individual developments remain with the respective parties. Although financial inter-organizational arrangements are important within every partnership form, the distinction from PPP traditional mainly lies in the more adaptive way in which financial agreements are organised and formalised within the collaboration. In addition, within PPP light, financial agreements are made regarding cross-plot aspects in which multiple parties are jointly involved, instead of each individual party separately making financial agreements with the municipality, as is more characteristic of incremental development collaboration.

Legal Rules and requirements

Legal arrangements are used to safeguard the collaboration and the joint area development. The legal collaboration agreements are **jointly developed and legally established**, in which public and private parties make agreements regarding the collaboration within the development of the area. This can vary from a cooperation agreement, framework agreement, or letter of intent.

The degree of legal formalisation differs per area development. Agreements can be safeguarded within **one collective agreement involving all parties**, or through collectively established development frameworks combined with separate anterior agreements per developer. The legal structure therefore reflects the extent to which parties want to jointly steer and organise the collaboration.

The legal rules arrangements within PPP light generally translate into lighter contractual structures that safeguard a lighter organisational form. The 'light' character does not lie in one specific type of agreement through which arrangements are safeguarded, but in the way the collaboration is legally organised.

An important legal requirement arrangements within PPP light is the emphasis on flexibility and adaptability throughout the development process, particularly by organising collaboration through lighter legal arrangements that allow commitments and agreements to be modified without dissolving or restructuring the partnership. Area developments have long implementation periods and are influenced by changing market conditions, policy changes, and societal developments. To respond to this, agreements often include process arrangements that allow room for adjustments and reconsideration. Agreements are made regarding **evaluation moments, phased plan elaboration, and the joint adjustment of ambitions and preconditions throughout the process**. The flexibility therefore does not lie in completely abandoning agreements, but in jointly organising room to further refine plans during the development process. Furthermore, **no fixed development deadlines are established**, allowing for flexibility in the timing and sequencing of development activities and risk management throughout the development process. At the same time, agreements regarding programme, housing categories, spatial quality, and public space are often firmly established and linked to specific plots, while agreements can be made that allow programme components to be exchanged between parties, providing flexibility in the allocation of functions and programme elements across the development area..

The essence of these legal agreements therefore lies in the **combination of collective steering and adaptability**. PPP light provides sufficient legal safeguarding to jointly guide the area development, while simultaneously maintaining room to collectively respond to uncertainties and changing circumstances throughout the process.

Organisational Tasks & responsibilities

Within PPP light, the development and realisation largely remains with the individual parties, while **collective issues are coordinated jointly**. To enable this, organisational inter-organizational arrangements are established that structure the collaboration between public and private parties and organise joint decision-making. This is organised through **structured consultation and decision-making arrangements, such as steering groups, project groups, and thematic working groups**, while individual development plans are monitored by an independent quality team. In addition, agreements are made regarding responsibilities and escalation procedures, clarifying how parties collectively act when dependencies or conflicts arise. This organisational structure is used to monitor the progress of the area development, prepare joint decisions, and coordinate cross plot themes such as mobility, infrastructure, sustainability, public space, phasing, and programming.

An organisational structure remains necessary within every form of public-private partnership. The distinction between incremental development collaboration, PPP light, and PPP traditional mainly lies in

the way the consultation and decision making structure is organised and embedded in inter-organizational arrangements. Within PPP light, this is often organised through consultation between representatives of all involved parties and their mandates.

Relational Trust & communication

The relational aspect focuses on the way parties collaborate and how trust is built and maintained within long-term area developments. Inter-organizational arrangements relate to how trust and informal communication are safeguarded within the collaboration, functioning as a connecting layer underneath the financial, legal, and organisational agreements within the partnership. According to Kersenhout et al. (2026), trust functions as a stabilising mechanism within an unstable institutional context. Trust grows throughout the collaboration and thereby forms a relational capacity that strengthens the adaptive capacity of the collaboration within long-term processes.

Within area developments, an iterative process and continuous alignment are necessary because developments are long-term, capital intensive, and subject to changing circumstances. Trust makes it possible to act without all risks being fully covered. It provides sufficient certainty to make decisions and maintain progress when information is still incomplete (Kersenhout et al., 2026).

Trust is not automatically present within a collaboration, but must be consciously organised and supported. Relational inter-organizational arrangements can support this by establishing clear agreements regarding trust, communication, and collaboration between parties. Trust does not replace formal rules, but ensures that these rules remain workable in practice. The relational aspect therefore does not stand apart from formal frameworks, but instead functions in interaction with contracts and procedures (Kersenhout et al., 2026). Within PPP light, agreements are made regarding the following aspects.

Informal communication and meetings

Agreements are made regarding **informal communication and meetings**, which stimulate short communication lines and accessible contact between parties. Informal communication and meetings are consciously used to strengthen relationships between parties and increase mutual understanding. The organisation and financing of these activities also require attention. Activities such as process guidance, working sessions, excursions, or informal meetings require time and money, making agreements necessary regarding who organises, finances, and accounts for these investments. The way these costs are distributed can also carry relational meaning. Joint financing can contribute to a sense of shared ownership within the collaboration, while one-sided financing may raise questions regarding influence or dependency. Trust should also be approached as an investment category, defined as relational quality or process safety (Kersenhout et al., 2026).

Transparency

In addition, agreements are made regarding **transparency between parties**. This can relate to openness about land exploitations, financial considerations, and development strategies, but also to jointly discussing risks, bottlenecks, and interests throughout the process. Kersenhout et al. (2026) add that when organisations explain why decision-making takes time, which financial bandwidths exist, which internal tensions are present, and which political considerations play a role, greater understanding arises regarding each other's position, enabling parties to search for solutions together more effectively.

Conflicts and dialogue

There are informal (not written) agreements regarding **resolving conflicts through dialogue**. Parties first attempt to solve problems jointly and informally before legal procedures are initiated. Kersenhout et al. (2026) describe this as productive conflict as a condition for trust, in which substantive discussions, conflicting interests, different ambitions, and varying tempos are seen as normal and functional within a

well-functioning collaboration. Trust prevents substantive conflicts from escalating relationally or becoming paralysing.

Continuity

Agreements with regard to **continuity of people important for the functioning of the collaboration** are made. Area developments often have long implementation periods, meaning that continuity in staffing within area transformation projects influences trust, knowledge development, reduced dependency, and mutual understanding. When project leaders and administrators remain involved for a longer period, a collective memory develops. This strengthens the stability of the collaboration and increases the effectiveness of decision-making. Kersenhout et al. (2026) add that the presence of organisations' 'own people,' instead of only hired external staff, contributes to recognisability, accountability, and sustainable relationship building.

At the same time, continuity of people cannot always be fully controlled, so not always written down in arrangements. Changes may arise due to factors outside the direct influence of the collaboration, such as career development or personal circumstances. However, the way transitions are organised can be managed through agreements between parties. Careful overlap between departing and new participants, together with a clear transfer of knowledge, relationships, and established agreements, are important in this regard. Kersenhout et al. (2026) support including continuity as inter-organizational relational arrangements. According to them, greater stability emerges when collaboration does not rely solely on personal chemistry or long-term relationships, but is embedded within clear arrangements. This is especially relevant within area transformations, where personnel and administrative changes are unavoidable.

Ambitions and goals

Agreement regarding **jointly discussing ambitions and establishing shared project goals** are important to make. By establishing shared principles, ambitions, and objectives, a shared frame of reference is created to which parties can return when tensions or conflicts arise. This shared interest does not remain stable, but changes throughout the process and therefore requires continuous maintenance (Kersenhout et al., 2026). Inter-organizational arrangements can contribute to this by including agreements regarding regularly addressing the collective task, openly discussing differences in tempo or priorities, and recognising tensions.

Trust mainly emerges in relation to flexibility. Within PPP light, flexibility is often more strongly safeguarded legally, but according to Kersenhout et al. (2026), flexibility is ultimately mainly supported through clear process agreements regarding how parties deal with setbacks, conflicts, and renegotiations. As a result, not only the legal heaviness of a PPP determines the level of flexibility within the partnership, but also the clarity regarding expectations, commitment, and the way parties interact, as these factors shape the level of trust between parties involved. **Trust therefore contributes to the ability of parties to adjust agreements and collaboration arrangements when circumstances change.** In this way, even a organisational heavier PPP structure with strong attention to trust and relational inter-organizational arrangements can still provide flexibility. This can, for example, be achieved through agreements regarding clearly formulating shared goals, transparency, continuity of involved actors, and safeguarding informal communication. PPP light, as an emerging PPP model, can function as a legal vehicle to make relational organisational arrangements a more explicit part of PPP structures.

8. Discussion

8.1 Scope and limitations

To assess the extent to which the result can be generalised, it is essential to consider the scope and generalisability of the study as well as the data availability and visibility that shape the interpretation of the findings.

A first limitation concerns the **scope** and generalisability of this research. As this study is based on a limited number of cases within a specific context, the findings cannot be statistically generalised. Instead, their transferability to other contexts depends on the extent to which those contexts share similar characteristics (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The six cases, allows for in-depth insight into how PPP light is shaped in practice, but also means that the findings are context-specific. The cases are therefore not representative of all Dutch area development projects or all lighter forms of public-private partnership. In addition, the case selection was based on collaborations that actors themselves described as PPP light. Since no established definition of PPP light existed at the start of this research, parties may have interpreted the 'light' character differently. This means that the empirical basis of the research is partly shaped by practice-based interpretations of the concept. Therefore, the findings should be understood as an explorative contribution to defining PPP light, rather than as a universally generalisable definition.

A second limitation concerns the availability and collection of **data**. Although semi-structured interviews enabled an in-depth exploration of respondents' experiences, the relatively unstructured character of this method may have reduced consistency across interviews. As follow-up questions varied depending on the respondent and interview context, some topics may have received greater attention than others, potentially affecting the comparability of responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In semi-structured interviews in which respondents were asked about the formation of the collaboration, the choice for PPP light and the agreements made within the partnership. Although this provided valuable insights, the answers may not have been fully comprehensive. Certain agreements, considerations or informal practices may not have been mentioned. The fact that the questions are asked in a semi structured way in stead of fully structured way may therefore reduce the comprehensiveness of the answers, because respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on their answers, new themes and follow-up questions emerged during the interviews. In a fully structured interview, the researcher is required to adhere more closely to the predetermined questions, limiting the possibility to explore unexpected insights in greater depth. The semi-structured approach provided room to further explore relevant topics as they emerged during the interviews, enabling a richer understanding of the partnership processes and underlying considerations of the respondents. Furthermore, the results depend on how respondents remember and interpret the partnership process and agreements made. Therefore, this research provides an interpretative analysis of PPP light and the agreements made, but does not causally test why specific choices were made. In addition, the interviews were limited in time. Not every topic could be discussed in the same level of detail. To strengthen the data collection, interviews were complemented with documentation and, where possible, contractual material. However, written agreements do not always fully reflect how partnership agreements are shaped in practice. Moreover, contractual documents were not always accessible for every case, meaning that the cases, also in this respect, could not all be analysed with the same level of detail. As a result, part of the actual functioning of the partnership may have remained less visible.

A third limitation concerns the analytical approach and the **interpretation** of the data by the researcher. An analytical approach was adopted to provide structure to the research process by guiding how the data were organised, analysed, categorised into themes, and translated into conclusions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, the analysis was guided by theoretical concepts related to PPPs and

interorganisational arrangements. Consequently, the identification and categorisation of PPP light arrangements were influenced by this analytical lens. Alternative theoretical perspectives may have resulted in different classifications, interpretations, or emphases within the findings.

In addition, qualitative research is inherently interpretive. Researchers play an active role in collecting, selecting, analysing, and presenting data, meaning that findings are inevitably influenced by the researcher's background, experiences, assumptions, and analytical choices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than attempting to eliminate this influence entirely, qualitative researchers are encouraged to acknowledge and reflect upon it. In this study, the researcher determined which interview fragments were relevant for the analysis and interpreted patterns, similarities, and differences across the cases. As researchers interpret what they hear and how they understand it, alternative interpretations of the data and the nuances within respondents' statements remain possible. Consequently, another researcher may have placed emphasis on different aspects of the data and arrived at somewhat different conclusions.

Following Creswell and Poth (2018), this limitation was addressed through reflexivity and transparency regarding the analytical lens adopted in the study. By explicitly describing the theoretical framework and analytical choices, readers are able to understand and evaluate how the findings and conclusions were constructed. Furthermore, following Creswell and Poth (2018), the interpretations derived from the interviews and the expert panel were shared with the participants for verification. This allowed respondents to confirm whether their views had been accurately understood and represented, thereby reducing the risk of misinterpretation and enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

8.2 Contribution to the body of knowledge

It was already known from existing literature that area development is complex, and that this complexity is increasing. This includes challenges such as housing shortages, climate adaptation, the energy transition, nitrogen regulations, grid congestion, affordability, mobility, circularity and spatial scarcity (Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026). Area development often involves long-term processes in which the interests of multiple private and public actors come together. It therefore requires collaboration between different parties, as no single party can realise the full development task independently. Public and private parties need each other (NEPROM, 2019). Public authorities have public powers, policy objectives, planning instruments and responsibility for societal interests. Private parties bring market knowledge, development capacity, investment capacity and implementation power (Bult-Spiering & Dewulf, 2006). Public-private partnership is therefore seen as an important part of area development.

Within the literature, much is already known and written about public-private partnership in area development, especially in the form of traditional PPP models. This has provided clear insight into models such as the building claim model, joint venture model and concession model. It is known what these models entail, which contracts underpin them, which agreements are made regarding the sharing or separation of risks and revenues, and how their organisational structures are arranged (Heurkens, 2012; NEPROM, 2019; Nijkamp et al., 2002; Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2026). At the same time, it is also known that traditional PPP models are not always suitable or the preferred way to work together (NEPROM, 2019; Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2019). Heavy legal or institutional structures can provide certainty, but can also be time-consuming, complex, costly or inflexible (Hobma et al., 2019). In some area developments, however, there is still a need for structure. This combination of increasingly complex area development, the necessity of public-private partnership and the recognition that traditional PPPs are often not suitable or preferable has increased the need for more flexible and lighter ways of organising collaboration (NEPROM, 2019; Reiswijzer Gebiedsontwikkeling, 2019). As a result, lighter forms of PPP have emerged.

Before this research, it remained unclear what lighter organisational forms of public-private partnership, referred to as PPP light, entailed. Although the need for more flexible forms of collaboration had been recognised, limited academic insight existed into how such lighter forms were organised in practice. In particular, it was unclear which financial, legal, organisational and relational institutional arrangements were made within PPP light. It was also not yet sufficiently understood why public and private parties choose a lighter organisational form instead of a traditional PPP, or through which contractual arrangements such partnerships is secured. This research addresses this gap by defining PPP light as a distinct partnership form within the broader spectrum of public-private partnership. PPP light is not merely a residual category, but a recognisable intermediate form with its own characteristics and minimum conditions. The organisation is more present than in incremental development collaboration, because parties make formal agreements that go beyond cost recovery agreements and what is legally required. There is a consultation and decision-making structures establish by all parties involved, and a joint coordination of the development. At the same time, it remains lighter than traditional PPP, because no separate legal entity, shareholding structure, fully shared land exploitation or full integration of land positions is established.

Based on the six case studies, the inter-organizational arrangements through which PPP light is shaped in practice are defined. By distinguishing between financial, legal, organisational and relational agreements, the study demonstrates how parties organise, steer and stabilise collaboration within a lighter partnership form. At the same time, these agreements are highly context- and case-dependent and therefore cannot be applied uniformly to every development case. This context dependency is, however, also characteristic of other forms of PPP. PPP light is therefore not one fixed model. Rather, it can vary in degree of organisational heaviness, depending on the project context, complexity and need for coordination between parties. This means that PPP light can range from relatively light arrangements to more structured arrangements.

In this way, this research contributes to the body of knowledge by clarifying the definition, minimal and maximum conditions and the organisation of lighter PPP forms. It fills the knowledge gap in the literature by providing a more nuanced understanding of lighter public-private partnerships and how these are organised with inter-organizational arrangements in area development.

8.3 Recommendations for practice

The recommendations for practice are prescriptive in nature, but are derived from the empirical findings of this study. They translate the insights from the case studies and the expert discussion into practical guidance for practice. Since the main focus of this research is to arrive at a conceptual definition of PPP light, the practice-oriented recommendations are not extensively discussed in the main report. To address them nonetheless, the 3 most mentioned recommendations are briefly outlined in this section.

Recommendations for practice derived form the case studies
Establish clear agreements where necessary while maintaining flexibility
Develop the area spatial framework jointly from the start to align all ambitions
Actively manage and organise the interpersonal side of the public-private partnership

Table 20 Recommendations for practice (own table)

The first recommendation is to ensure that PPP light includes clear agreements without becoming too rigid. Because there is no heavy joint legal entity, roles, responsibilities, risks and decision-making structure must be clearly defined. At the same time, flexibility to adapt governance arrangements and contractual agreement is needed because market conditions, policies, programming and technical preconditions change over time. Parties should therefore formalise what must can be formalised and organise uncertainty through process agreements, reassessment moments and clear consultation

structures. Mandate, knowledge, continuity and role consistency should be safeguarded throughout the process. This balance between clarity and flexibility is visible across the cases. In Piushaven, the framework agreement remained the basis, while urban design plans and programmatic requirements were reassessed and adjusted through anterior agreements. In Rijnpark, the lighter variant of the traditional PPP model, the so-called building claim light arrangement, contributed to achieving this balance. This PPP model provided a clear division of roles and responsibilities. At the same time, the model retained the flexibility required for a large-scale, long-term development process. Through the phased conversion of land positions into developable plots, investments, risks and development decisions could be aligned with project progress and changing circumstances, while the agreed governance structure and role allocation remained intact.

The second recommendation is to jointly develop the area framework from the start and engage all parties in an early dialogue to align their ambitions, interests and expectations regarding the future development of the area. Public and private parties should ensure that this framework is spatially desirable, financially feasible and organisationally executable. Public ambitions only become workable when they are confronted at an early stage with the interests and feasibility concerns of market parties, while market parties should also understand the public objectives that municipalities are required to deliver. This allows parties to formulate shared goals and ambitions and to jointly work towards the realisation of the area development. Understanding each other's motivations and working practices helps prevent misunderstandings and preconceptions. Entree Zoetermeer clearly shows this. Market parties were initially insufficiently involved in formulating the framework conditions, which led to many objections. In the renewed process, the ambitions of the masterplan remained the guiding structure, but were translated with market parties into a workable development vision and cooperation agreements. In Laakhaven Central, the original development vision had already been politically adopted, but was financially insufficiently feasible for market parties. Joint work on the development strategy, public space plan and business case made the framework more realistic and executable. Merwede also shows that high ambitions only become feasible when parties continue to steer collectively on shared ambitions, especially on difficult themes such as energy, grid congestion, mobility and bicycle parking.

The third practical recommendation is to actively organise the interpersonal side of partnerships. This requires deliberate attention to building and maintaining trust throughout the collaboration. Parties should invest in a joint start-up phase, taking the time to get to know one another, understand each other's motivations and discuss expectations regarding the partnership. Consistency and transparency should be organised by ensuring that agreements are internally supported within each organisation and by keeping partners informed about decisions, changes and situations in which commitments cannot be fulfilled. Potential tensions within the partnership should be identified and discussed openly before they escalate to higher organisational levels. The more concretely issues are articulated, the more effectively parties can respond, whether through adjustments to agreements, responsibilities or mandates. Regular reflection moments and shared learning experiences can support this process and strengthen mutual understanding. In addition, parties should actively create opportunities for informal interaction. These activities should be recognised as a legitimate part of the partnership process and included in project budgets where appropriate. Regular contact and collective moments help build trust, maintain commitment and strengthen relationships between individuals. Multiple cases demonstrate the importance of actively organising the interpersonal side of partnerships. In Piushaven and Merwede, for example, a joint fund for collective activities strengthened collaboration by encouraging parties to work together towards a shared objective: putting the area on the map collectively.

The strength of PPP light lies in combining individual autonomy with joint coordination. This requires clear agreements, an appropriate consultation structure, mutual trust, and a clear distinction between which tasks are addressed jointly and which are carried out separately.

8.4 Recommendations for future research

Several directions for future research emerge from this study. First, future research could focus on comparing PPP light with traditional PPP models and incremental development collaboration forms of public-private collaboration. In this study, PPP light is defined as a structured but lighter form of partnership organisation. The results indicate that, depending on the context, traditional PPP and incremental development collaboration also remain effective and widely used approaches alongside PPP light within area development. It is therefore relevant to investigate under which circumstances each form of collaboration is most appropriate. This includes examining both the characteristics of an area development that influence the suitability of a particular partnership model and the preferences of public and private parties. The Netherlands encompasses different types of area development, including rural developments, inner-city redevelopment projects, and urban expansion areas. Future research could examine how the characteristics of these development contexts influence the suitability of different public-private partnership models and assess whether the specific arrangements identified for PPP light in this study can function as an effective and efficient partnership model across these varying contexts. This would contribute to the literature and practical insight by testing the broader applicability of PPP light within the variety of area development types. Based on this, future research could contribute to the development of an assessment framework or decision tree for selecting a partnership model that aligns with both the needs of public and private parties and the specific characteristics of the area development. This framework could guide the choice between incremental development collaboration, PPP light, and traditional PPP for the specific area development with its own characteristics. In this context, the transition zones introduced in this study, from incremental development collaboration to PPP light, and from PPP light to traditional PPP, could be further refined. Such follow-up research would contribute to the further positioning of PPP light within the literature and provide practical guidance for public and private parties in area development.

Secondly, future research could focus on improving the effectiveness of PPP light through more practice-oriented research. This study has shown that PPP light and the arrangements established within it often emerge in response to specific challenges in area development, such as fragmented land ownership and increasing land speculation. Future research could therefore focus on a single contemporary challenge within Dutch area development and examine how PPP light can be designed to effectively address this issue. Particular attention could be given to how the governance arrangements, contractual agreements, and collaborative structures identified in this study should be configured under these specific circumstances. Such research would contribute to both practice and theory by providing greater insight into which arrangements are most effective under particular area development conditions and challenges.

Third, this research demonstrates that PPP light provides room for flexibility. This flexibility stems from the fact that parties are not dependent on a heavily institutionalised partnership structure, allowing collaboration arrangements to be adjusted throughout the development process when circumstances change. This parties are not dependent on a heavily institutionalised partnership structure. At the same time, steering remains necessary to achieve both public and private objectives. Within PPP light, such steering is exercised through public-law instruments, such as the environmental plan (*omgevingsplan*), and private-law instruments, such as collaboration agreements and other inter-organisational arrangements. Future research could examine how flexibility can be effectively organised within these two legal domains. In particular, research could investigate what extent flexibility can be integrated and

how this can be translated into public law instruments, for example by creating room for adaptation throughout the development process, or alternatively within private-law instruments by designing agreements between parties in a more adaptive manner. Greater insight into how flexibility can be distributed between public-law and private-law steering mechanisms could contribute to the further development and effectiveness of PPP light in area development. Such insights may help partnerships become more resilient and adaptive to changing circumstances and unforeseen developments that characterise long-term area development processes.

Recommendations for future research
Identifying the conditions influencing the suitability of different PPP models to support informed model selection in area development
Shaping PPP light arrangements to specific area development challenges
Determining how flexibility can be embedded in public-law and private-law instruments to strengthen the adaptability of PPP light to changing and unforeseen circumstances

Table 21 Recommendations for future research (own table)

These recommendations and the research position of this thesis should be seen as a starting point rather than an endpoint. By linking future research to practice-based data, a more robust definition of PPP light can be developed. This can contribute to a better understanding of how public-private partnerships can be organised more effectively and efficiently in future Dutch area development.

9. Conclusion

The aim of this master thesis is to provide insights into PPP light as a partnership model: a form of collaboration that is already being applied in practice, but remains largely absent from academic and theoretical literature. By analysing the inter-organizational arrangements within PPP light, this research makes it possible to formulate a clearer definition of PPP light. This contributes to a better understanding of how lighter forms of PPP can be organised and optimised within Dutch urban area development. In doing so, PPP light can support a more efficient development process that is better able to respond to the growing complexity of urban area development, driven by a combination of new ambitions, uncertain market conditions, and increasingly restrictive boundary conditions.

The main research question in this study was:

How do public and private parties shape lighter forms of PPP in Dutch urban area development?

To answer this main question, three sub-questions were formulated, which are discussed in the following sections.

Sub question 1: Which circumstances in Dutch area development are identified in literature that influence the emergence of lighter forms of PPP organisation?

The literature shows that the emergence of lighter forms of PPP organisation is driven by the increasing complexity of Dutch area development. New societal ambitions, uncertain market conditions, and restrictive boundary conditions, such as nitrogen regulations, grid congestion, climate adaptation, housing affordability, and capacity shortages, make traditional, rigid forms of PPP less effective. These circumstances increase the need for flexibility within public-private partnerships. Lighter forms of PPP seek to enhance this flexibility by applying less heavily institutionalised and less legally burdensome partnership structures, shifting the focus from extensive formal agreements towards more project specific collaboration based on interaction, trust, mutual understanding, and coordination between parties. In this context, the 'light' character mainly relates to the organisational, legal, and procedural structure of the partnership, in which parties collaborate with limited joint obligations and greater autonomy based on shared development objectives.

In addition, inner-city transformations increasingly involve fragmented landownership, multiple stakeholders, high implementation costs, and long-term development processes. This has shifted area development away from large-scale land acquisition towards ownership-sensitive planning, in which parties collaborate based on existing ownership positions and shared transformation goals.

The literature further shows that changing relations between public, private, and civic society actors contribute to lighter PPP organisation. Dutch area development has shifted from hierarchical government-led planning towards more collaborative and facilitative governance models. Within this context, public parties increasingly facilitate development processes, while private and civic actors play a stronger role in initiating and shaping development ambitions.

Sub question 2: In what way is PPP light applied by parties in practice, and which financial, organisational, legal, and relational arrangements are made?

PPP light is applied in practice through partnership structures that vary in the degree of formalisation, ranging from letter of intent with separate landowner agreements, to collective framework agreements and integrated cooperation agreements involving all participating parties. The way the collaboration is organised depends largely on the landownership structure and the degree of interdependence between

public and private actors. In some area developments, PPP light mainly serves a coordinating function to prevent fragmented and disconnected developments, while in other cases collaboration is necessary because spatial, financial, and functional challenges can only be addressed collectively. The findings therefore show that PPP light is not one fixed partnership model, but rather a flexible spectrum of lighter organisational forms between incremental development collaboration and traditional PPP.

The case studies further demonstrate that parties consciously choose PPP light over traditional PPP structures with joint land exploitation and a GEM construction with a separately legal entity. Private parties aim to retain ownership, autonomy, and control over their own business cases, investments, risks, and development pace. At the same time, collective land exploitation is considered too complex due to differences in land values, remediation costs, acquisition moments, and the large number of landowners involved. Municipalities additionally stimulate PPP light through a more facilitative land policy, in which steering increasingly takes place through spatial frameworks and agreements instead of active landownership. Across all cases, flexibility and adaptability throughout long-term development processes are identified as key reasons for choosing lighter partnership structures over more rigid and heavily institutionalised PPP models.

Within PPP light, financial arrangements due risks, revenues, and exploitations largely remain connected to the individual land and real estate positions of the parties involved, while collective financial agreements are mainly made regarding area-wide themes such as area promotion, mobility, sustainability, energy systems, and various collective facilities. Financial contributions and payments are often linked to phasing, permit procedures, and development milestones, allowing risks to remain manageable throughout the process. Investments and risks are therefore only collectively shared on themes where mutual interdependence exists. PPP light is therefore financially organised through inter-organizational arrangements in which financial collaboration is structured selectively and adaptively, depending on the degree of mutual interdependence between parties and the collective area challenges that need to be solved jointly.

The legal arrangements within PPP light safeguard the partnership through lighter contractual structures, in which the degree of formalisation varies from collective agreements to separate anterior agreements within collective area frameworks. Within the legal arrangements, agreements regarding programme, spatial quality, and public space are often firmly established, while at the same time room remains for evaluation, phased plan elaboration, renegotiation, and adjustments, making it possible to jointly adapt plans and agreements at the area level throughout the process when circumstances change. At the same time, within the collective frameworks, possibilities remain for parties to determine programme components at plot level themselves. In some cases, programme components can additionally be exchanged between plots, allowing flexibility not only at the area level, but also between individual developments. The legal arrangements therefore focus on organising collective steering combined with flexibility, enabling parties to adapt plans, responsibilities, and commitments in response to changing circumstances without fundamentally restructuring the partnership.

The organisational arrangements focus on jointly coordinating, aligning, and decision-making around collective area challenges, while responsibilities for implementation largely remain with the individual private parties. Joint consultation and decision-making structures are agreed upon and applied through steering groups, project groups, and thematic working groups. In addition, agreements are made regarding joint area promotion, collective programming, phasing, and quality control through independent quality teams or supervisors.

Relational arrangements do not directly focus on formal agreements, as is the case with financial, legal, or organisational arrangements, but rather on agreements related to the relational and interpersonal side of the collaboration. Through these relational arrangements, trust, transparency, and informal

communication are consciously supported in order to keep collaboration and alignment workable within long-term area developments. Trust and communication are not considered something that is automatically present, but something that must be consciously organised and supported through clear agreements. These agreements relate to organising informal meetings, the way of communicating, dealing with conflicts, the importance of creating continuity among involved actors, and organising joint working sessions in order to strengthen mutual understanding and long-term relationships between parties. Furthermore, agreements are made regarding creating transparency and openness about interests, risks, and financial considerations, allowing parties to better respond to each other and reducing uncertainties within the collaboration. Relational arrangements ensure that legal, financial, and organisational arrangements remain workable and flexible in practice.

Sub question 3: When can a partnership be defined as PPP light, in comparison to incremental development collaboration and traditional PPP models, and to what extent are these characteristics recognised and validated by experts?

A partnership can be defined as PPP light when public and private parties consciously organise the partnership beyond solely incremental development coordination, while not establishing a joint traditional PPP structure. Within PPP light, land ownership remains with the individual parties, no separate legal entity or shareholder structure is established. So PPP light is more than solely public-private collaboration, but less than a traditional PPP in which land positions are integrated and a separate legal entity is established to do the area development with.

Within PPP light, parties jointly formalise the collaboration through at least one private law agreement that goes beyond legally required cost recovery agreements. In addition, there is a jointly organised and established consultation and decision-making structure in which agreements regarding the integral area development are collectively elaborated and coordinated. PPP light can therefore be positioned as a partnership form between incremental development collaboration and traditional PPP. Compared to incremental development collaboration, the partnership is more formally organised through collective agreements, joint coordination, and organised decision-making. Compared to traditional PPP, parties do not integrate land positions, land exploitations, risks, revenues, or investments into one integrated organisational or legal entity structure with shareholders. Within PPP light, trust and communication can function as a stabilising mechanism that enables collaboration within long-term, complex, and uncertain area developments. In this context, PPP light can function as a partnership vehicle through which interpersonal and relational aspects become a more explicit part of public-private collaborations.

The findings additionally show that PPP light cannot be defined through one fixed organisational model or one strict boundary. In practice, collaborations often start as incremental development collaboration and gradually evolve into more organised and formalised partnership structures involving multiple parties, without directly developing into a traditional PPP structure with a separate legal entity. As a result, the transition from incremental development collaboration towards PPP light is gradual and diffuse rather than a clearly identifiable shift. The degree of organisational structuring, contractual formalisation, and mutual coordination differs per area development and depends on the complexity of the project and the level of interdependence between parties. PPP light therefore consists of different degrees of organisational heaviness, ranging from relatively light coordination structures close to incremental development collaboration to more heavily organised forms that still remain lighter than traditional PPP.

The expert validation confirms this distinction and recognises PPP light as a distinct partnership form with its own characteristics and minimum conditions. At the same time, the experts confirm that the boundaries between incremental development collaboration and PPP light, remain gradual and context dependent in practice, while the boundaries between PPP light and PPP traditional are more clear.

In conclusion, **public and private parties shape lighter forms of public-private partnerships (PPP light) in Dutch urban area development** by organising collaboration through a less institutionalised and more flexible partnership structure. PPP light is established without creating a separate legal entity with shareholders in which land positions are brought together. The partnership is organised through lighter governance arrangements that allow parties to work towards shared objectives while retaining a greater degree of autonomy.

This research shows that the 'light' character of PPP light is not necessarily characterised by fewer formal agreements. Depending on the context, parties may still establish extensive contractual arrangements to manage risks and secure commitments. As a result, PPP light should not be understood as a fixed partnership model, but rather as a spectrum of partnership arrangements in which public and private parties determine, through the agreements they make, how lightly or heavily the partnership is organised.

Furthermore, the establishment of a PPP light is not an objective in itself. A partnership structure functions as a legal and organisational vehicle through which collaboration is organised to realise a shared area development ambition. Whether a lighter or more heavy form of PPP is appropriate depends on the characteristics of the project, the complexity of the development, the distribution of land ownership, and the preferences of the actors involved.

Ultimately, PPP light represents a pragmatic approach to collaboration in which public and private parties tailor the organisational structure of the partnership to the specific needs of the area development. In doing so, they seek to achieve shared goals while maintaining sufficient flexibility to respond to changing circumstances throughout the development process, with trust playing a more prominent role as a foundation for collaboration.

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Appendix

Appendix A Mega Matrix

Appendix B Glossary of translated terms

English	Dutch
Planning and spatial frameworks	Planning en ruimtelijke kaders
Area framework	Gebiedskader
Construction (plan)	Bouw (plan)
Development framework	Ontwikkeldkader
Development plan	Ontwikkelpplan
Development strategy	Ontwikkelstrategie
Development vision	Ontwikkelvisie
Environment and Planning act	Omgevingswet
Environment plan	Omgevingsplan
Environment program	Omgevingsprogramma
Environmental program	Milieu programma
Governance document	Regie document
Image quality plan	Beeld kwaliteitsplan
Masterplan	Masterplan
Out-of-plan Environmental Plan Activity	Buitenplanse Omgevingsplanactiviteit (BOPA)
Planning permission	Bouwvergunning
Public space plan	Buitenruimte plan
Spatial planning framework	Planologisch kader
Urban development framework	Stedenbouwkundig kader
Urban development plan	Stedenbouwkundig plan
Zoning plan	Bestemmingsplan
Contracts and instruments	Overeenkomsten en instrumenten
Agreement letter	Afspraken brief
Anterior agreement	Anterieure overeenkomst (AOK)
Building claim light	Bouwclaim light
Collaboration agreement	Samenwerkingsovereenkomst (SOK)
Cost recovery	Kostenverhaal
Framework agreement	Raamovereenkomst
Land development company	Grondexploitatie maatschappij (GEM)
Letter of intent	Intentieovereenkomst
Pre-emption law	Wet voorkeursrecht (WVG)
Principle agreement	Hoofdlijnen akkoord
Governance and project organisation	Governance en projectorganisatie
Directors committee	Directeurenoverleg
Owners' committee	Eigenaren overleg
Planning teams	Plantteams
Project leader meeting	Projectleider overleg
Quality team	kwaliteitsteam
Working groups	Werkgroepen
Steering committee	Stuurgroep

Appendix C Veilingkwartier Tiel Case

Introduction

The Veilingkwartier in Tiel is a former business site where the fruit trade once played an important role. The area is being transformed into a new urban district for living, working, learning and meeting. The Veilingterrein will accommodate 325 new dwellings, including a substantial share of affordable owner-occupied and rental housing. Several historic buildings will be preserved and given a new function. In addition, a new educational complex will be developed. This will create space on the former school location for a green residential neighbourhood with 89 dwellings, consisting of 79 owner-occupied dwellings in different price categories and 10 social rental dwellings. In total, the area development will add 414 new dwellings and contribute to the housing needs of different target groups in and around Tiel (BPD, n.d).



Figure C1 Map development area Veilingkwartier Tiel (Leenders et al, 2022)

Established partnership model

This case was not included as PPP light, because the partnership is organised as an established PPP structure with a joint land exploitation and a joint development company. The municipality and BPD established a separate project BV, in which both parties are 50% shareholders. This GEM has an independent task within the area development: preparing the land for construction and public space delivery, and issuing land to BPD and a housing corporation. The partnership is therefore not limited to coordination, consultation and contractual agreements between separate parties, but is embedded in a joint legal entity with its own shareholders and shared responsibilities (interview 6, 35:43).

This differs from the characteristics of PPP light. Within PPP light, land, risks, investments and revenues remain, in principle, separated per party, and there is no legal entity or shareholding structure. In this case, the opposite applies. The partnership is formally institutionalised in a GEM, in which the municipality and BPD participate jointly, make decisions jointly and jointly bear financial risks. This case therefore aligns more closely with a traditional PPP than with PPP light.

Why no PPP light, but a GREX and GEM (PPP traditional)

This specific partnership model, a GEM in the form of a project BV, was chosen because of the combination of land positions, location complexity, financial necessity and the desired degree of control. Both the municipality and BPD already owned land in the area. Instead of developing these land positions separately, the parties decided to contribute the land to a joint entity, the project-BV, in order

to develop the area integrally (interview 7, 27:38). Important to say and this was explicitly said in the interview that the GEM was not a heavy structure according to BPD and BMC, but just a separate entity, a small company with independent authority (interview 6, 35:43). Due to financial feasibility and risk allocation, the parties chose a project BV. The location was highly complex from an environmental perspective because of severe soil contamination, which made the costs of preparing the land for development very high. In addition, housing prices in Tiel are relatively low (interview 6, 11:03). As a result, a feasible business case was not possible without public subsidies and close cooperation. Through the 50/50 structure, both parties could share all costs, profits and risks, while public investments could also be included (interview 6, 14:31; 16:34). A project BV was specifically chosen because, according to BPD, it provides more clarity about financial flows and makes the legal settlement simpler (interview 6, 36:39). The project BV gave the municipality maximum steering possibilities through both public law instruments, such as zoning plans, and private law instruments, such as contracts (interview 7, 29:11). At the same time, the GEM created a shared incentive, because both parties have a direct interest in optimising the land exploitation. Both parties feel the consequences of setbacks and benefit jointly from successes, which creates more commitment and can accelerate the project (interview 6, 25:45; 26:39).

Set of agreements in partnership model

The agreements made within the project BV are briefly explained below according to the four aspects. This is done less extensively than in the main report, because this case is not used to draw conclusions about the overarching inter-organizational arrangements of PPP light.

Financial

Within the GEM, costs, risks and revenues are equally divided between the municipality and BPD. Both parties participate for 50%. The GEM purchases land, prepares the area for construction and public space delivery, and issues land. A project-specific agreement is that the subsidy flows run through the municipality instead of through the GEM. Because there are many subsidy flows, it is important that the municipality can properly account for these subsidies. Costs covered by the subsidy are declared by the GEM to the municipality. Because of this, commissioning of work always runs through the municipality (interview 6, 50:53). When the subsidy budgets are spent, the risk transfers to the GEM. This financial declaration creates less administrative work (interview 6, 57:26).

Legal

The partnership is formalised in a cooperation agreement and an anterior agreement (interview 7, 11:59). These agreements describe the tasks and responsibilities of the municipality, BPD and the GEM. This role division is necessary to prevent responsibilities from becoming mixed (interview 7, 12:26). At the same time, the case shows that not everything should be fixed too rigidly. What must be fixed should be fixed, and what can remain open should remain open. Not everything should be fixed down to the last detail (interview 7, 13:18; 13:29). The agreement on the land quote later proved to be insufficiently flexible, because it did not move enough with changing market conditions, construction costs and sales prices. In hindsight, process agreements could have been made here, allowing the agreement to move with the market (interview 7, 02:13–04:05).

Organisational

The GEM has its own project organisation with two directors: one from the municipal side and one from BPD. Decision-making takes place on the basis of consensus, in line with the 50/50 division. The GEM works with its own project team and external advisors. In this project, the municipality of Tiel operates in two capacities, which requires clear role separation. In its public role, the municipality sets frameworks through the environmental plan and safeguards the public interest (interview 6, 49:35). In its shareholder role, or private role, the municipality is 50% owner of the GEM and has a direct financial interest in a

positive land exploitation (interview 7, 22:34). The public side of the municipality, including the municipal and decision-making body of the mayor and aldermen, is involved during the design process, so that decisions are not only submitted for approval afterwards. This requires continuous coordination and balancing of interests between the shareholders of the GEM and their own internal organisations (interview 7, 24:49).

Relational

Within the partnership, much attention is paid to trust in order to work together (interview 6, 22:03; 37:44). The relationship is built by remaining role-consistent, adopting an open attitude and communicating openly (interview 7, 45:16). Parties must know who is responsible for what, but by understanding what is happening within each other's organisation, they can jointly search for a solution that helps both parties (interview 6, 19:03). Communication is essential to prevent parties from keeping their cards close to their chest, which would ultimately harm the result (interview 6, 19:51).

Within the GEM, it is important to remain role-consistent because the parties are not only shareholders, but also have their own internal organisations. It must therefore be clearly communicated from which role they are acting within the GEM (interview 7, 22:43). Personnel changes also require attention, because new people involved must understand the original intention of the partnership (interview 7, 46:35). Attention is paid to the intention behind the original agreements, which ensures a constant focus on the gem's purpose. New people are introduced to the history and shared frame of reference of the project, established by the parties involved (interview 7, 47:50). The partnership, role division and planning are periodically reflected upon. This is also recommended for all partnership organisations (interview 7, 50:37).

This relational aspect confirms that the relational inter-organizational arrangements a concerning interpersonal agreements within the partnership are not only important in PPP light, but also in heavier organisational partnership structures.

Appendix D Reflection

This reflection is based on the personal learning goals that I formulated at the beginning of this graduation research. First, with this research, I aimed to gain experience in conducting academic research at a scale and level of complexity that was new to me at that time. Reflecting on my research method and the way I approached the study, I can say that I have gained a great deal of experience in this. I have learned how to identify current issues, develop a research design based on them, apply this design independently in practice, and subsequently define relevant conclusions.

Because I was able to organise my research method and research design myself, I learned that working pragmatically, purposefully and persistently towards what you want to achieve with your research can bring you far. Through this goal-oriented approach and by starting the research process in time, I was able to collect a rich amount of data from practice. I experienced that conducting interviews was an enjoyable and especially interesting way to provide my research with data. At the same time, I found it difficult to maintain the scope of the research, because it is easy to deviate from the research topic during interviews. Also, for my next research in the future, I would recommend periodically reassessing the effectiveness of the interview questions throughout the process. By adapting the questions based on the knowledge I had already gained and the information I was still seeking after conducting several interviews, I might have been able to gather more relevant data, leading to richer insights.

One research method that I included in my research design was the organisation of an expert panel discussion. I learned a lot from this, and it also resulted in many interesting findings. Because this discussion was based on my preliminary findings, the experts were able to validate or nuance them. By going through these steps, from conducting interviews and analysing the data to formulating preliminary findings, validating them with experts, and finally developing definitive conclusions, I was able to work towards my research objective step by step. Therefore, I can say with confidence that the research contributed to reducing the knowledge gap. This was also confirmed throughout the research by respondents and experts from practice.

I chose this research topic because of my interest in partnership models within urban area development. With this research, I wanted to deepen my insight into this dimension. By conducting this research, I can say that I have gained a better understanding of the elements that contribute to the functioning of existing, but not yet researched, partnership models in practice. My motivation to contribute to knowledge development on a topic that has so far only been examined to a limited extent within the field contributed to my ambition to carry out this research carefully.

I succeeded in obtaining answers to the formulated main and sub-questions, which broadened my knowledge of both existing PPPs and the PPP light model examined in this research, and strengthened my academic development within the field.

Finally, I learned how to translate my academic knowledge into conducting empirical research. My supervisors, Fred Hobma and Erwin Heurkens, and my graduation internship at Molsbergen Development B.V. supported me in this process. I am pleased that, in addition to learning how to conduct empirical research, I can also say that my knowledge of urban area development in practice has expanded.

Appendix E Data Management Plan

Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: Master Thesis - PPP light in Urban Development

Creator: Britt Voerman

Affiliation: Delft University of Technology

Funder: Delft University of Technology

Template: TU Delft Data Management Plan template (2025)

Project abstract:

This research investigates the upcoming Public Private Partnership (PPP) model within Dutch urban area development, addressing the growing demand for more flexible and efficient partnership model: PPP light. PPP have shown limitations in adapting to the complex tasks of current urban area development, including inner-city area transformations with higher ambitions for sustainability, speed, and affordability, alongside increasing fragmented land ownership, financial constraints and restraints, and evolving public private dynamics. As a result, this study examines how PPP light model have emerged as a response, providing a more adaptable and robust, future proof form of cooperation. Central to this model are elements of flexibility, less burdensome legal structures, and the incorporation of more positive incentives, such as interaction and feeling. The research is usus a qualitative approach, beginning with a literature review to identify the circumstances in urban area development and de intrinsic issues of PPP. This theoretical foundation is supplemented by empirical data collected through case studies and interviews, aiming to define the characteristics of PPP light and understand the experiences of parties with PPP light in practise, and what lessons can be drawn from these for future users of PPP light. The study ends with a expert panel session, to synthese the findings of PPP light with experts. The study contributes to both academic literature and empirical applications. It fills the knowledge gap regarding the understanding of PPP light, a concept for which limited academic research currently exists The findings offer insights for policymakers, municipalities, and developers. By examining the characteristics, benefits, and limitations of PPP light, this research provides valuable insights for adapting partnership light model to future area developments.

ID: 193742

Start date: 10-11-2025

End date: 26-06-2026

Last modified: 27-05-2026

Master Thesis - PPP light in Urban Development

0. Administrative questions

1. Provide the name of the data management support staff consulted during the preparation of this plan and the date of consultation. Please also mention if you consulted any other support staff.

The DMP has been shared with my thesis supervisor Fred Hobma via DMPonline, and reviewed by them on 19/01/2026. A discussion has been held on this DMP. My responsible researcher for my ethical application agrees with this DMP.

The DMP has shared with the Data Steward Janine Strandberg and provided feedback is on 20/01/2026.

2. Is TU Delft the lead institution for this project?

- No – please provide details of the lead institution below and TU Delft's role in the project

The MSc thesis is done with the Internship company Molsbergen Development B.V. They will support me in identifying suitable cases that I can include in order to obtain results that will provide answers to my research question. They will also guide me throughout my graduation process.

I. Data/code description and collection or re-use

3. Provide a general description of the types of data/code you will be working with, including any re-used data/code.

Type gegevens/code	Bestandsindeling(en)	Hoe worden de gegevens/code verzameld/gegenereerd? <i>Voor hergebruikte gegevens/code: wat zijn de bronnen en gebruiksvoorwaarden?</i>	Doel van de verwerking	Opslaglocatie	Wie krijgt toegang tot de data/code?
Personally Identifiable Information (PII): participants' name, email, company name, job function	.pdf .xlsx	Contact information for participants taking part in interviews and expert panel session, received from supervisors network internship company network and own network. Around 6-10 interviews. Informed consent forms are signed digitally and contain participants' name + email + signature.	For administrative purposes: obtaining informed consent and communicating with participants	Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft	Britt Voerman, Supervisors of mastertheses Fred Hobma & Erwin Heurkens Internship company Molsbergen Development B.V.

Audio-recordings of interviews with participant description	.mp3	The interviews are conducted during on-site case visits. Audio-recordings are made on an external device (Microsoft Teams), before being moved to Project Data Storage (U:). Recordings are deleted after transcription. In total max. 10 recordings of interviews.	Capturing the opinions on PPP light in urban development project from participants experts involved in development projects.	external digital recording device, recording option Microsoft Teams. (temporary storage) + Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft (primary storage)	Britt Voerman Supervisors of mastertheses Fred Hobma & Erwin Heurkens
Anonymous transcriptions of interviews	.txt	Anonymous transcriptions created manually based on audio-recording (job title will be announced). Participants are asked to review the transcriptions of their interview before the transcript is finalised. In total 10 transcripts of interviews.	Privacy-preserving data on PPP light in urban development from participants experts involved in development projects.	Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft	Same as above
Anonymous quotations from transcripts of interviews	.txt	Anonymous quotations from transcripts of interviews (job title will be announced). Participants are asked to review the quotations before finalizing.	Support findings in MSc Thesis report on PPP light in urban development.	Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft	Same as above
Audio-recordings of expert panel with participant description	.mp3	The expert panel session will be held at an agreed location where participants will gather. In total one recording of expert panel session. Audio-recording is made on an external device (Microsoft Teams), before being moved to Project Data Storage (U:). Recordings are deleted after transcription.	Capturing the opinions on preliminary findings on PPP light in urban development project from participants experts involved in development projects.	External digital recording device, recording option Microsoft Teams. (temporary storage) + Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft (primary storage)	Same as above
Anonymous transcriptions of expert panel session	.txt	Anonymous transcriptions created manually based on audio-recordings (job title will be announced). Participants are asked to review the transcriptions of their interview before the transcript is finalised. In total around 5/6 participants will join the session.	Synthesising findings for MSc Thesis report on PPP light in urban development.	Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft	Same as above

Anonymous quotations from transcripts of expert panel session	.txt	Anonymous quotations from transcripts of expert panel session (job title will be announced). Participants are asked to review the quotations before finalizing.	Synthesising findings for MSc Thesis report on PPP light in urban development.	Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft	Same as above
Report/thesis	.pdf	Serves as record of the process as well as documentation	Long-term documentation	Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft	Britt Voerman, Supervisors of mastertheses Fred Hobma & Erwin Heurkens Internship company Molsbergen Development B.V.

II. Storage and backup during the research process

4. How much data/code storage will you require during the project lifetime?

- < 250 GB

5. Where will the data/code be stored and backed-up during the project lifetime? (Select all that apply.)

- Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft
- Another storage system – please explain below, including provided security measures

Project Data Storage (U:) drive at TU Delft: Primary research data storage. Only TU Delft team members (Master's student and supervisors) have access. Interviews and expert panel session data will be stored in separate folders, and within the interview folder, there are separate folders for audio-recordings and anonymous transcriptions. Informed consent forms and contact information are encrypted separately from research data to minimise risk of re-identification.

External recording device: External recording device is recording function in Microsoft Teams. This is used as a temporary storage location for recorded on-site interviews.

Interviews will be deleted from device as soon as they are moved to Project Data Storage (U:).

Atlas.ti: Anonymised transcripts of interviews

Internship mentor: The recording will not be shared with the intership company. Only anonymized quotations of the interviews transcripts in the final theses will be shared. In this small quotations only job titels will be mentioned, after approved consent with the participant. No names will be mentioned. These are small parts, no full interview transcripts will be shared in the thesis. Furthermore, no recordings or personal data will be shared with the intership company.

III. Data/code documentation

6. What documentation will accompany data/code? (Select all that apply.)

- Data – Methodology of data collection

The dataset will not be shared in a data repository, but the methodology of data collection will be explained in the MSc thesis, which is made publicly available in the TU Delft Repository.

IV. Legal and ethical requirements, code of conducts

7. Does your research involve human subjects or third-party datasets collected from human participants?

If you are working with a human subject(s), you will need to obtain the HREC approval for your research project.

- Yes – please provide details in the additional information box below

I intend to apply for ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee, but have not yet done so. Once I have applied for HREC approval I will update the DMP with my application number.

8. Will you work with personal data? (This is information about an identified or identifiable natural person, either for research or project administration purposes.)

- Yes

9. Will you work with any other types of confidential or classified data or code as listed below? (Select all that apply and provide additional details below.)

If you are not sure which option to select, ask your Faculty Data Steward for advice.

- No, I will not work with any other types of confidential or classified data/code

10. How will ownership of the data and intellectual property rights to the data be managed?

For projects involving commercially-sensitive research or research involving third parties, seek advice of your [Faculty Contract Manager](#) when answering this question.

By following intellectual property guidelines, the data generated by me does not qualify for third-party claims. The intellectual property belongs to me, as I am the creator and rights holder. My internship company is not involved in the assignment as part of the curriculum, and they do not want to acquire the results (IP). They only help me in my process (finding cases, structure the finding) but do not want the IP. Second, The IP is not created as part of an assignment within a research group or at a company. It is only my research.

11. Which personal data or data from human participants do you work with? (Select all that apply.)

- Proof of consent (such as signed consent materials which contain name and signature)
- IP addresses or other online identifiers – please provide details in the additional information box below
- Telephone number, email addresses and/or other addresses as contact details for administrative purposes
- Names as contact details for administrative purposes
- Job title and/or employer
- Audio recordings

If interviews or the expert panel session cannot be conducted in person, they will take place online. In that case, during online meetings IP addresses are automatically collected by the meeting software and the internet service provider, as they are essential for sending and receiving data over the internet. These IP addresses provide an indication of location and can (with a court order) be used to determine identity, which makes privacy settings and the use of a VPN (Virtual Private Network) important. The interviewee will be informed of this in advance.

12. Please list the categories of data subjects and their geographical location.

In-person (online) interviews: public (municipalities) and private (developers) actors who participate in in urban area development projects in the Netherlands.

In-person (online) expert panel session: The participants of the online expert panel session are professionals in the domain of area development done with a partnership between public (municipality) and private actors (developer). All participants are located in The Netherlands.

13. Will you be receiving personal data from or transferring personal data to third parties (groups of individuals or organisations)?

- Yes – please provide details about the data and third party(ies) below

My mentor at the internship company may be able to provide me with the names of participants who are relevant for interviews or focus groups. This will allow me to easily reach the appropriate individuals within the field. In this case, personal data such as names and job titles will be shared with the internship company, since this data/ contact details originate from the Internship Company.

However, the internship company may not be able to provide all participants. In that case, I will also send invitations for interviews and expert panel session via email. These invitations will be sent to public and private organizations that have been involved in urban development projects. I obtain this contact information through my own network or with the help of TU Delft. In the case of the interviews, personal data such as names and company names will remain anonymized for the internship company. Only anonymized quotations of the interviews will be shared in the report, which will be shared with the Internship Company. In case of the expert panel session, names and job titles and certain strategies may be mentioned, insofar as they are relevant to session.

In both cases, participation is entirely voluntary. Personal data collected during the interviews will not be shared with third parties. Quotations of the transcribed interview will be shared in anonymized form in the thesis. In this small quotations only job titles will be mentioned, after approved consent with the participant. No names will be mentioned. This will be shared with the TU Delft repository supervisors of my internship company.

14. Which countries will you be receiving personal data from or transferring personal data to? (Select all that apply.)

- Netherlands

15. What advice did the Privacy team give regarding data transfer? Record below their advice, the data transfer mechanism used, and any agreed security measures.

Name Privacy Officer: Rinus

Date of advise: 16/02/2026

Advice they gave:

1. Since you are an intern with the internship organization there is no need for additional data sharing agreements. From a GDPR perspective you are a part of the organization of the data controller (the internship organization).
2. This depends on the type of questions you will ask, and how the participants respond. It is always possible to leave out personal information in the transcripts. This is something you can address in the ICF (informed consent form).

16. What are the legal grounds for personal data processing?

- Informed consent

17. Please describe the informed consent procedure you will follow below.

I will inform the potential participants about the goals and procedures of the research project. I will also inform them about the personal data that are being processed and for what purpose. In this project this the only personal data that are being used is job function. For administrative purposes (only for myself) name, job title, email will be processed. This information will be provided to the potential participants as follows: a digital copy of the information will be emailed to participants before the interview. All participants will be asked for their consent for taking part in the study and for data processing by signing a digital informed consent form before the start of the interview.

In addition, an agreement may need to be established with the expert panel session participants, as personal data cannot remain fully anonymized in this session. The discussions may will involve strategies within the companies that the participants represent.

All of this is included in the templates of the informed consent materials, which is also a requirement of the HREC application.

18. Where will you store the physical/digital signed consent forms or other types of proof of consent (such as recording of verbal consent)?

Digital informed consent forms and contact information are stored in the TU Delft Project Data Storage (U:) and encrypted separately from research data to minimise risk of re-identification.

19. Does the processing of the personal data result in a high risk to the data subjects? (Select all that apply.)

If the processing of the personal data results in a high risk to the data subjects, it is required to perform a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). In order to determine if there is a high risk for the data subjects, please check if any of the options below that are applicable to the processing of the personal data in your research project.

If any category applies, please provide additional information in the box below. Likewise, if you collect other type of potentially sensitive data, or if you have any additional comments, include these in the box below.

If one or more options listed below apply, your project might need a DPIA. Please get in touch with the Privacy team (privacy-tud@tudelft.nl) to get advice as to whether DPIA is necessary.

- None of the above apply

23. What will happen with the personal data used in the research after the end of the research project?

- Personal data will be shared with others – please explain below which personal (pseudonymised) data will be shared, with whom, for what purpose, how and whether you have specified this in the informed consent form
- Other – please explain below

Anonymised quotations from interview transcripts will be used in the body of the thesis and included in the appendix. In this small quotations only job titles will be mentioned, after approved consent with the participant. No names will be mentioned. No full anonymised transcripts will be used in the MSc thesis.

Only small anonymised quotations of the expert panel session will be used in the report, just to synthesising findings of the research. No other data will be shared in the report.

Personal data (names for administrative purposes, email addresses, and phone numbers) used for contacting participants for interviews and the expert panel will be deleted after the completion of the research. Personal data that was not obtained through the internship company will not be shared with the internship company.

24. For how long will personal research data (including pseudonymised data) be stored?

- Personal data will be deleted at the end of the research project

Necessary personal data will be stored by me as the researcher for the duration of the project and for one additional month. During this period, this personal data will not be shared with third parties.

25. How will your study participants be asked for their consent for data sharing?

- In the informed consent form: participants are informed that their personal data will be anonymised and that the anonymised dataset is shared publicly

All participants will be asked for their consent for data to be shared anonymously in the body of the MSc thesis, which is made publicly accessible in the TU Delft Repository. This will be no full transcripts but only quotations that are necessary to support the findings. Participants who do not consent to their data being included publicly in the thesis will not be included in the research project.

V. Data sharing and long term preservation

27. Apart from personal data mentioned in question 23, will any other data be publicly shared?

Please provide a list of data/code you are going to share under 'Additional Information'.

- I do not work with any data other than personal data

29. How will you share research data/code, including those mentioned in question 23?

Select all that apply and provide additional details below.

- I am a Bachelor's/Master's student at TU Delft and I will share the data/code in the body and/or appendices of

my thesis/report in the TU Delft Repository

30. How much of your data/code will be shared in a research data repository?

- Not applicable - No data/code will be shared in a repository

31. When will the data/code be shared?

- As soon as corresponding results (papers, theses, reports) are published

32. Under what licence(s) will the data/code be released?

- Other – please explain below

The thesis is made publicly available in the TU Delft Repository under copyright. The data are not shared in a data repository with a data licence.

VI. Data management responsibilities and resources

33. If you leave TU Delft (or are unavailable), who is going to be responsible for the data/code resulting from this project?

The Responsible Researcher, mr. F.A.M. Hobma

34. What resources (for example financial and time) will be dedicated to data management and ensuring that data will be FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable)?

Research data are only shared within the MSc thesis: no additional resources are required.

35. Which faculty do you belong to?

- Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment (ABE)

This theses was written in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Science
in Management in the Build Environment

at the Delft University of Technology
June 2026

Britt Voerman
5040469

First supervisor: Fred Hobma
Second supervisor: Erwin Heurkens