



# The Environment & Planning vision: Enrichment in governmental participation

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## Preface

Dear reader,

In front of you lies the master thesis of Sven Schroots. The thesis is carried out for the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and concludes the Master program Systems Engineering Policy Analysis and Management at the Delft University of Technology.

Firstly, I would greatly thank the people who helped me achieve the end result presented. Secondly, a special thanks to my graduation committee for guiding me in the process of writing this thesis. Thanks to Hanna Lára Pálsdóttir and the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Environment for making all facilities available, making it possible to participate in the Environment & Planning development team and a great time at the Ministry. Bas Waterhout thanks for the day to day guidance, support and, sometimes much-needed, redirecting. Ellen van Bueren thanks for the strict research view and sharp comments. Wil Zonneveld thanks for leading this fine graduation committee. I am proud to present the end result developed under your guidance. Finally, a great thanks to all the initiative takers who were so kind to answer all my questions. Without your help the thesis would be nothing more than a summary of literature.

I put a great effort in the work lying in front of you. It was a ones in a life time experience to write a master thesis and to conduct such a large research. I hope you enjoy reading the hundred thirty-paged master thesis just as much as I enjoyed making it.

Sven Schroots

Heemstede, September 2015





## Executive summary

Spatial planning is moving towards more decentralised forms (Janssen-Jansen & Woltjer, 2010). This statement can be drawn as conclusion to the Dutch National Spatial Planning policy documents throughout the years. Especially in the last 30 years a transition is made, from a national government approach with a strong relation between plan and policy instruments to a decentralised approach with boundary conditions. A transition in which the national government sees itself as a partner in a facilitating role (Alpkokin, 2012). Parallel to this transition is the transition of Dutch spatial planning from a facet policy, co-ordinating sector policies, towards a more sectoral approach. In these years the political priority has shifted changing the priority level of Dutch spatial planning with it.

In practice the decentralisation transition resulted in a national government that handed over responsibilities to provincial and local governments (Salet & Woltjer, 2009). The decentralized approach and shift in the political priority, translates in changing governmental approaches and new phenomena in planning.

In future Dutch policy the new Environment & Planning Act<sup>1</sup>, implemented in 2018, introduces the newest national planning policy: the new Environment & Planning Vision, of force in 2018 (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013). The Environment & Planning vision is not yet finalised, but the Environment & Planning Act has set goals to introduce more cross-sectoral and integration approaches for the Environment & Planning vision (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, 2013). Furthermore in co-ordination and collaboration the act aims on introducing more collaboration between national planning policy (the Environment & Planning vision) and the society, as in active citizens, (public-) private parties, NGO's, etc. (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013).

The thesis, done during an internship at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, aims to contribute to a better understanding of the potential of the new Environment & Planning vision in regard to the changing spatial planning landscape. It focuses on how new governmental steering can become useful (introducing integral, cross-sectoral and co-ordination) and how co-ordination between active citizens (i.e. energetic society) and national spatial planning can be influenced positively? The research question that correlates with focus is:

*How can the national government support the energetic society<sup>2</sup> with an Environment & Planning vision?*

The Environment & Planning vision is developed in a changed spatial planning landscape. Firstly, the national government is faced with a changing society. A society in which assertive citizens or social initiative takers are more and more active in the spatial domain. Secondly, the national government is searching for its own role in spatial planning. New steering perspectives are to be improved and explored while old steering perspectives are not compatible for current society and planning. The national government is faced with a challenge. On the one hand, the Environment & Planning vision should increase the amount of social initiatives, who help achieve solution to national policy challenges. But on the other hand, the Environment & Planning should serve the public interest while supporting one single part of society (energetic society).

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<sup>1</sup> The Environment & Planning act is new legislation on the physical living environment, implemented in 2018

<sup>2</sup> The energetic society are assertive citizens and with an unknown reaction rate, learning curve and creativity

To further analyze the main research question asked and to address the challenge for an Environment & Planning vision supporting the energetic society, four sub-questions are defined. The TIP-Design method is used to structure and aggregate the four sub-questions. The TIP-Design is a method that used three 'research angles' (Territorial, Institutional and Process) to get to a aggregated TIP-Design. The first three sub-questions are all linked to one element of the TIP-Design. The fourth sub-question is an additional sub-question analyzing extra design requirements:

**Territorial:** *How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?*

There is certain tension between the government and an energetic society because an energetic society chooses to contribute to social ambitions. These social ambitions were often largely facilitated by governments. The questions that arises is, how can the energetic society and the (national) government together or separately contribute to social ambitions? Is it possible that an energetic society can create public value<sup>3</sup> largely on its own, thereby contributing to social ambitions. Furthermore, can energetic citizens create public value with projects or initiatives in the physical living environment and maintain the 'public interest' (locally).

**Institutional:** *What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?*

The assumptions is that the current institutional environment does not entirely fit the relation between energetic society and national government. Changes could be needed to fit the changing relation between national government and energetic society. The Environment & Planning act is the legislative 'part of the change' set in motion. The Environment & Planning vision would be able to follow on that movement by changing the 'rest' of the institutional environment. Changes could be made in, for example, collaborative arrangements, subsidies or even daily interaction.

**Process:** *What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged in processes initiated by the energetic society?*

The energetic society starts processes or initiatives on its own or are stimulated to start these processes on their own. These initiatives have an impact on the physical living environment. Also the initiatives contribute to a social ambitions (set by local, regional or national government(s)). Assuming the social initiatives contribute to solving national policy challenges, the national government can collaboratively design the public value. The question analyzes what factors are most important for an energetic society when engaging in collaboration.

**Design:** *What requirements regarding content and shape should the Environment and Planning vision meet in order to connect it to the energetic society?*

The final design of the Environment & Planning vision could be written, shaped or visualized freely, since the Environment & Planning vision is free of form. What kind of content and shape fits an energetic society best? On the other hand the freeform gives the possibility to shape the Environment & Planning vision differently. The shape and content of vision in general are design criteria analyzed.

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<sup>3</sup> Public value lies in value that is claimed to be desirable by the society as a whole

The questions show that the point of view of the energetic society is put central in this thesis. The national government wants to know how to support these energetic citizens. So far the issue of governmental steering perspectives and the energetic society is only analyzed from a governmental point of view (NSOB and PBL, 2014; Hajer, 2011; Overbeek & Salverda, 2013). The thesis' expectations is that the energetic societal point of view could differ from a governmental point of view on this issue. Because, what if one asks the citizen, social- or private party (energetic society) on what these parties would like to see from governmental involvement, legislation and the role of a government. Turning the issue around may give different answers.

The research design addressed the gap between national government and perception of social initiative takers<sup>4</sup>. The research consist of two thematic case studies<sup>5</sup>: the Room for the River program and the Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration. The two thematic case studies are government-led (Room for the River program) and market/society-led (Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration). In the research two opposite steering perspectives are analyzed. Therefore the study analyzes the difference between social initiative takers with a social initiative in an environment in which the government is in charge (government-led) and an environment wherein the social initiative taker is in charge. Room for the River is a government-led program that addresses the national policy challenge of water safety in River basins. The program implements 34 projects in the river basins. Social initiative takers contribute to some of those 34 projects by introducing or implementing a social initiative. The Shrinkage & Vacancy has an opposite approach. The market and society drive most of the projects implemented, to improve the livability in shrinkage regions (mostly in collaboration with local authorities). Maintaining the livability is the national policy challenge in the Shrinkage regions. The policy exploration done by the two Ministries (Internal Affairs and Infrastructure and the Environment), scouts how the social initiative takers can be supported and facilitated.

So, the search for an answer to *how a national government can support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision* is done with two thematic case studies. These thematic case studies have two different steering perspective and are leading in incorporating social initiative takers. This study consists of a large amount of interviews with social initiative takers. To improve and to validate the results, a validation is built in with experts on the energetic society and spatial planning.

Social initiative takers are interviewed in both Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy. The interview questions and findings are ordered using the TIP-Design elements (territorial institutional, process and design). The interpretation of the findings with the use of the validations and literature led to four conclusions. The four conclusions answer the sub-questions defined.

**Territorial:** Firstly, territorial social initiative takers create public value on small scale in collaboration with its direct surroundings. Therefore, investing in the self-sufficient social initiative takers, seems promising. The Environment & Planning vision should have confidence in social initiative takers as public value creators. However, the success of social initiatives is still highly dependent on local politics. The local politics decide if social initiatives are in the 'local interest'. So the Environment & Planning vision should collaborate with local politics to make complementary visions and to show that social initiatives are in the local interest and national interest.

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<sup>4</sup> Social initiative takers are active citizens, small group of active citizens which might be united in a corporation, foundation or club, small entrepreneurs or a small group of entrepreneurs.

<sup>5</sup> Thematic case study is an one-time method and is a aggregation of the survey and 'normal' case study

**Institutional:** If the Environment & Planning vision leads to a governmentally driven program, policy or projects, the Environment & Planning vision should describe boundary conditions for a 'social initiative taker' governance. The governance (1) should be based on equality between governments (local, regional and national) and social initiative taker, (2) should offer collaborative arrangements in which the social initiative takers have more influence, (3) should be stable in both the planning and the implementation phase and (4) should describe that the (national) government is a personal partner who is open and transparent on the progress and consequences. In market and society led policies, programs or projects the Environment & Planning vision should be complementary to regional and local Environment & Planning visions. Complementary with other visions, to offer social initiative takers uniform subsidy or collaborative arrangements and to address one shared national and local ambition. Also, intermediaries can be introduced or strengthened to be the link between national government, municipalities and social initiative takers.

**Process:** Thirdly, the Environment & Planning vision is developed in a spatial planning landscape with a growing amount of social initiative takers. The Environment & Planning wants to and should anticipate on this 'new' spatial planning landscape. Social initiative takers want collaborations based on equality, trust, knowledge integration and shared ambition. These four criteria could be used to address the social initiative taker correctly. Knowledge integration could be arranged nationally by the Environment & Planning vision. A shared ambition could be gathered by collaboratively creating national and shared ambitions. Equality and trust could be written down as boundary conditions or considerations for collaborations between social initiative takers and the national government (or any other government).

**Design:** Fourthly, the design should be made to fit the social initiative taker as respondent. The content and shape should be clear, unambiguous and visual. However, the design is more than shape and content alone. The Environment & Planning vision as product is the legal basis for future governmental handling and legislation. Also, the vision is the basis for the program and projects implemented in the future. To implement the design suggestions the Environment & Planning visions could separate the official Environment & Planning vision and the unofficial more appealing Environment & Planning vision.

So, **how can the national government support social initiative takers (as part of the energetic society) with the Environment & Planning vision?** The Environment & Planning vision, implemented in 2018, should use the territorial, institutional, process and design suggestions, boundary conditions and considerations. To support the Environment & Planning vision, its developers have to collaborate in all level of government. The social initiative takers are locally active, bringing all kind of 'local' problems (when implementing or planning the social initiatives). Complementary Environment & Planning visions (regional, local and national) could make the link between national subsidy structures, national ambitions, or even national legislation translated into local context. Also, intermediaries could play a large role in making sure that nationally offered help and/or finances find the social initiative takers. Furthermore, the Environment & Planning vision should possess suggestions, considerations, arrangements or even boundary conditions on trust, equality, knowledge integration and shared ambitions for collaborations between social initiative takers and the (national) government. Finally, the suggestions, arrangements, boundary conditions, policies, programs, etc. have to be bundled in an Environment & Planning vision that uses visualization, clear



language and is unambiguous. Make the Environment & Planning vision appealing: Dreamy on the long term and clear on the near future. And actively communicate the end result.

However, the vision has a certain status. Also, try separate the official Environment & Planning vision which is the legal basis for future decisions and a to be develop unofficial Environment & Planning vision. The unofficial Environment & Planning vision can be the more appealing vision which can be communicated easily, but is also consistent with the official Environment & Planning vision.

Also, the success of a Environment & Planning vision supporting social initiative takers is dependent on the collaboration between local and national. If a social initiative is in the interest of the municipality is decided by local or regional politics. Not only the national institutional environment should be changed, but also the regional and local institutional environment is important. The eventual Environment & Planning vision has to fit the current decentralized spatial planning 'system'.

Concluding, accepting the social initiative taker in its totality is important. The social initiative taker need to be recognized as contributor to the society. Make social initiative takers part of the solution, not 'the' solution. Many times a small contribution is also a large contribution. Social initiatives have potential, but improvements have to be made in order to fit their practice to the systematic world of governments. The Environment & Planning vision is a product with enough status to make a large contribution to the changes needed and could make a gesture to bridge the gap between the systematic institutionalized governmental world and social initiative takers.



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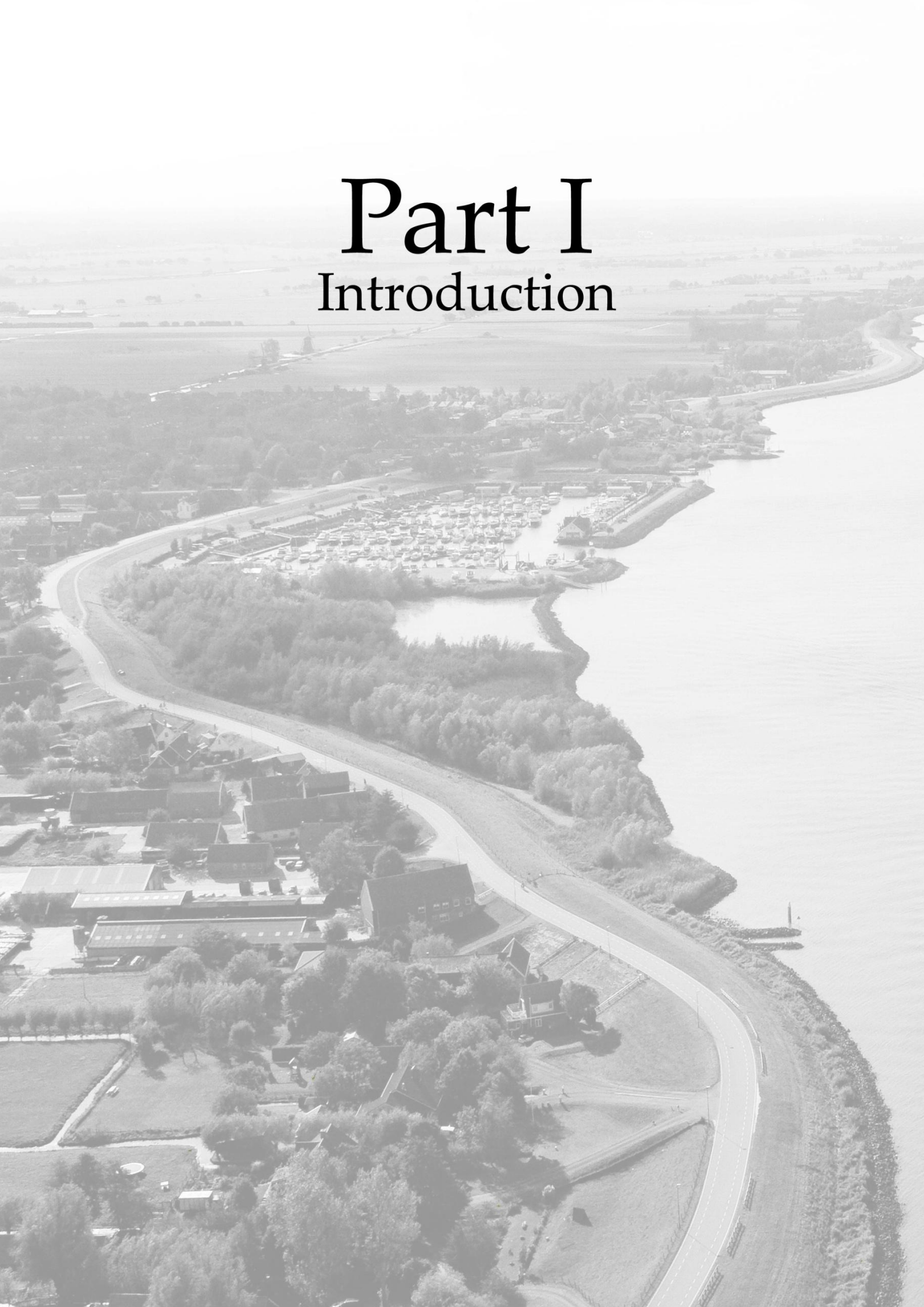
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# Part I

## Introduction





## 1. Introduction

Spatial planning is currently moving towards more decentralised forms (Janssen-Jansen & Woltjer, 2010). This statement can be drawn as a conclusion from the Dutch National Spatial Planning policy documents throughout the years. Especially in the last 30 years, a transition was made from a national government approach with a strong relation between plan and policy instruments to a decentralised approach with boundary conditions. A transition in which the national government sees itself as a partner in a facilitating role (Alpkokin, 2012). Parallel to this transition is the transition of Dutch spatial planning from a facet policy, co-ordinating sector policies, towards a more sectoral approach. In these years the political priority has shifted, changing the priority level of Dutch spatial planning with it.

In practice the decentralisation transition resulted in a national government that handed over responsibilities to provincial and local governments (Salet & Woltjer, 2009). Since 2006 the principle of “decentralized if possible; centralize if necessary” structures the spatial planning policy (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, 2006). In international literature the principle of decentralisation often receives praise and is seen as a potential positive movement (Eser & Konstadakopilos, 2000). However, there are strong reservations about the way decentralisation is executed. In particular in the Netherlands, where tasks are being decentralised but resources are not (van der Valk, 2002). Even among researchers there seems to be lack of consensus on decentralization of spatial planning (Friedmann, 2004). Some researchers claim that decentralisation is the best way of dealing with the more complex environment spatial planning is facing, others emphasise that the national government still has an important role to play within today’s changing conditions. This opinion goes hand in hand with claim that the centralized role of the public parties, especially the national government, should not be given away (Albrechts, 2010). In short there seems to be a tension about whether decentralization or centralization of spatial planning policy is needed.

This debate is not only an academic one. In Dutch politics the debate on decentralization and “how far to go” is an ongoing process. The last few cabinets changed the perception of spatial planning and policy in general. The result is an ambition to reduce the size of the government, to reduce the amount of legislation and to give a more central role to the civil society in problem solving.

The decentralized approach and shift in political priority translates in changing governmental approaches and new phenomena in planning. When decentralizing the spatial planning policy, a government changes from a hierarchical approach to a more horizontal collaboration approach. More generally, Williams (2012) emphasises in his book about collaboration in policy and practice that cross-sectoral, co-ordination and integration among different policy areas and between stakeholders is becoming essential to the functioning of the government.

In future Dutch policy the new Environment & Planning Act<sup>6</sup>, implemented in 2018, introduces the newest national planning policy: the new Environment & Planning Vision<sup>7</sup>. This policy will be of force

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<sup>6</sup> The Environment & Planning act is the new law on spatial planning and ‘more’. The act describes how an integral approach is needed on the physical living environment and how the physical living environment is regulated. The term “physical living environment” is further explained in Appendix II: Terminology list

<sup>7</sup> The Environment & Planning vision is one of the six core instruments of the Environment & Planning act. The other instruments are: Plan/Program, Decentralised rules, General governmental rules, Permit for surroundings and the Project decision (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013)

in 2018 (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013). The Environment & Planning vision is not yet finalised, but the Environment & Planning Act has set goals to introduce more cross-sectoral and integration approaches for the Environment & Planning vision (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, 2013). This means almost reintroducing the integration approach, only structured in a different way. Furthermore in co-ordination and collaboration, the act aims on introducing more collaboration between national planning policy (the Environment & Planning vision) the society and in active citizens, (public-) private parties, NGO's, etc. (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013). the transition from central to decentral and the consequences discussed in Williams' book (2012) are also seen in Dutch practice: Co-ordination between national planning policy and society and between cross-sectoral and integrated policy.

This research aims to contribute to a better understanding of the potential of the new Environment & Planning vision in regard to this changing landscape. It focuses on the question in which way new governmental steering can become useful (introducing integral, cross-sectoral and co-ordination) and how co-ordination between active citizens and national spatial planning can be influenced positively. The research question that goes with this focus is:

*How can the national government support the energetic society<sup>8</sup> with an Environment & Planning vision?*

The changing societal and governance landscape asks for a different approach. The Environment & Planning vision could be a first step. So, what are the problems for an Environment & Planning vision that supports the energetic society? Firstly, the national government is faced with a changing society. A society in which assertive citizens or initiative takers are more and more active in the spatial domain. Policy making for and with these energetic citizens is still new. Secondly, the national government is searching for its own role in spatial planning. New steering perspectives are to be improved and explored while old steering perspectives are not compatible for current society and planning.

The questions show that the point of view of the energetic societal is put central in this thesis. The national government wants to know how to support these energetic citizens. So far the issue of governmental steering perspectives and the energetic society is only analyzed from a governmental point of view (NSOB and PBL, 2014; Hajer, 2011; Overbeek & Salverda, 2013). The expectation is that the energetic societal point of view could differ from a governmental point of view on this issue. What if one asks the citizen, social- or private party (energetic society) on what these parties would like to see from governmental involvement, legislation and the role of a government? Turning the issue around may give different answers. Turning the issue also reveals the real needs of an energetic society and shows the governmental steering perspectives in a different light which should facilitate a 'new' answer in contrary to present literature studies. A new light on the issue to analyze *how a national government can support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision*. The study consists of analysis of the what the energetic society would like to see in different steering perspectives. Showing the perception of the energetic society as if they were in charge and showing

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<sup>8</sup> The energetic society is a translation of the earlier discussed active citizens, but also contains social entrepreneurs. The energetic society as term is further discussed in the section 1.4.1 and Appendix II: Terminology list

the perception of energetic citizens as if the government would implement a large scale project or program.

However, setting the energetic society central in a study is difficult. Is the energetic society one actor? Where is that actor found? And is he or she approachable for questioning? In short, operationalization seemed tough. The energetic society has several appearances, from a neighbor hosting a neighborhood party to a large-scale social entrepreneur with multiple businesses. The energetic society cannot be seen as one uniform actor. Most important for the Environment & Planning vision are energetic citizens who improve the physical living environment. Citizens who contribute to society by implementing a project to enlarge the renewable energy supply for example. These citizens are referred to as social initiative takers<sup>9</sup>. So, the energetic society analyzed is: social initiative takers with projects/initiatives in the physical living environment.

The study was conducted during an internship at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. Problem is that social initiative takers are locally active. Which means the gap between this relatively new actor and the Ministry is large. Some social initiative takers were known on national scale, but no clear case study was present. Summed up, the study should show the perception of social initiative takers on different steering perspectives and bridge the gap between the Ministry and the social initiative taker.

The research design addressed the gap and perception of social initiative takers. The research consists of two thematic case<sup>10</sup> studies: the Room for the River program and the Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration. The two thematic case studies are government-led and market/society-led<sup>11</sup> (two opposite steering perspectives). Also, the thematic case studies make it possible to bridge the gap and address national policy challenges. Policy challenges which could be addressed in the Environment & Planning vision. Room for the River is a government-led program that addresses the national policy challenge of water safety in River basins. The program implements 34 projects in the river basins. Social initiative takers contribute to one or more of these 34 projects by introducing or implementing a social initiative. The Shrinkage & Vacancy case study has an opposite approach. The market and society drives most of the projects implemented to improve the livability in shrinkage regions (mostly in collaboration with local authorities). Maintaining the livability is the national policy challenge in the Shrinkage regions. The policy exploration done by the two Ministries (Internal Affairs and Infrastructure and the Environment) scouts how the social initiative takers can be supported and facilitated.

Concluding, the search for an answer to *how a national government can support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision* is done by two thematic case studies. Two thematic case studies who have two different steering perspective and are leading in incorporating social initiative takers. The study consists of a large amount of interviews with social initiative takers. The following sections will give a more detailed description of the problems, most importantly the stakeholders,

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<sup>9</sup> Social initiative takers: The initiative takers are active citizens, small group of active citizens which might be united in a corporation, foundation or club, small entrepreneurs or a small group of entrepreneurs. The initiative takers are social initiative takers because the initiative takers create social value with their initiative. The detailed description of the social initiative taker is found in section 1.4.1 and Appendix II: Terminology list

<sup>10</sup> Thematic case study method is a one-time method and is explained in detail in section 2.2.1

<sup>11</sup> Difference between a government- and market/society-led steering perspective is discussed in section 2.2.2

research questions and thesis relevance. From chapter 2 onwards the research done and research results will be discussed.

## 1.1 Problem exploration

There is a transition in governmental steering and co-ordination due to the decentralization of the spatial planning strategy (Williams, 2012, pp. 12-13). To understand the problems of these changes the institutional landscape should be analyzed. The time in which a national government<sup>12</sup> performed in a hierarchical matter in spatial planning is gone. In the meantime, how the government positions itself has gone through different phases (see figure 1). The newest form of governmental steering is where the government acts as a participating government with social entrepreneurship and active citizens as partners in spatial planning. These social entrepreneurs and active citizens are referred to as 'the energetic society' (Hajer, 2011).

The energetic society initiates processes: bottom-up initiatives. Facilitating and stimulating the energetic society and their bottom-up initiatives are the core values of a participating government. However the success of a participating government remains low so far. A successful participating government that guides and facilitates bottom-up processes is only found on accidental bases (NSOB and PBL, 2014). Within the current institutional environment, bottom-up initiatives and ideas are being disrupted rather than facilitated (Overbeek & Salverda, 2013). However the government would like to use the energetic society and could use its help in addressing and solving spatial planning issues.



Figure 1: Four perspectives of governmental participation (language: Dutch) (NSOB and PBL, 2014)

The transition from a former governmental steering perspective to that of a participating government should not be underestimated. The transition will require deep changes in the institutional environment. A first step of this change is currently seen in the new Environment & Planning act. The new act contains goals to change the formal institutional environment and create more freedom and flexibility. These goals are (partially) set to facilitate bottom-up initiatives from an energetic society. The next step seems to be an Environment & Planning vision with a new steering perspective (as participating government). Besides a transition, the PBL & NSOB (2014) report describes a proper use of both "old" and "new" steering perspectives. A national government should

<sup>12</sup> From now on the national government refers to the Dutch national government



use an “old” top-down approach (figure 1: ‘overheid’) if needed, yet a “new” bottom-up approach (figure 1: ‘Markt en gemeenschap’) could be useful as well. Every issue has its own successful approach (or multiple approaches) (NSOB and PBL, 2014). The problem is how you use the steering perspectives appropriately in a changing society. The act shows that politics is an important factor influencing the transition. The act is initiated and set by the Minister and politics. Also the decentralization trend is mostly set in motion by politics.

More freedom and flexibility in legislation supported by a changing steering perspective of the government, gives the energetic society and their bottom-up initiatives more options and more room to maneuver. If facilitating the energetic society is done correctly, it is assumed that bottom-up processes can profit and new initiatives can arise more easily, whilst sustaining the ‘public interest’ (NSOB and PBL, 2014). However facilitating the energetic society correctly, while at the same time maintaining the public interest of the society as a whole seems difficult. When is facilitating the energetic society done correctly? Is facilitating the energetic society the same as serving the society and their public interest or can a government serve both with potential policies? There seems to be tension between these three aspects; the energetic society, society as a whole and the national government.

The difficulty with facilitating correctly is also seen in practice (Brouwer & Engbersen, 2013). The current institutional environment demonstrates that promoting and stimulating bottom-up processes is still a difficult process. In some cases the institutional environment or the participation of a government (national, regional or local) even gives adverse effects and unwanted outcomes (NSOB and PBL, 2014). The study done by Brouwer & Engbersen (2013) describes the difficulties of supporting bottom-up processes in ‘New Towns’ such as Zoetermeer. One of the conclusions of their study is that self-organization does not emerge automatically and that professional help and strategic timing is needed in order to let self-organization succeed. Another example is a pilot-project in Amsterdam. In this project the lead was given to the inhabitants of certain neighborhoods. A direct response of the inhabitants was to search for the strategic behavior and potential plans of the municipality. An open invitation of the municipality resulted in a response of distrust and suspicion (Verdoolaege & van Vliet, 2015).

The development of the new Environment & Planning act however does provide possibilities. By redeveloping the legislation and regulation, the possibility rises to further improve the institutional environment. Whether the Environment & Planning act will be sufficient to drastically change the institutional environment is doubtful. Although it would be a step in the right direction, the expectation is that the improvement will not provide the (entire) change needed, because the formal institutional environment is not the only factor influencing a participating government. Also informal institutions need to change in order to fully grasp the whole institutional environment (Williamson, 1998). Next to the institutional environment the structure of the participating process is essential. Facilitating a bottom-up process needs timing, modesty and a certain amount of involvement from governments (NSOB and PBL, 2014). Finally, the change in the institutional environment and process can be helped by framing the Environment & Planning vision content “correctly”. The content of the Environment & Planning vision could show the governmental and political aspirations and help set a new norm in the informal institutional environment. In addition it should smoothen the process due to clear aspirations and a clear goal in a collaborative process. This much needed change should be provided by the combination of institutional change, change in the process structure and a successful

Environment & Planning vision content. These three aspects are needed to force an alteration in the amount of (successful) bottom-up processes.

However, during this transition process towards a more participating role of the government, the redevelopment of the institutional environment and process structure, the core values are not to be forgotten. Guaranteeing and guarding the public interest is essential in the acts and policy of a government. The public interest can be harmed when redeveloping the institutional environment and process structure, therefore the public interest as core value needs to be taken into account when searching for successful policy (Kruitwagen & Gerwen, 2013). In particular when this policy focuses on a specific part of society: i.e. the energetic society. An example of how public interest can be harmed is shown in the public initiative of the 'Living Wall' (NSOB and PBL, 2014, pp. 7-8). The Living Wall is a sustainable sound barrier which citizens of Utrecht designed as a response to the municipal plans of a sound barrier. The plan was that residents would live inside the wall and that the wall should be larger than previously planned. This bottom-up initiative shows how citizens (and the energetic society) can develop plans themselves. However, a municipality or governmental party cannot just adopt these plans. Certain questions arise when a plan like this is designed by non-governmental parties. For example: Can environmental requirements be met for the residents of this Living Wall? Or: Does the height of the Wall causes an increase in decibels on the other side of the road? Questions like these cannot be left unanswered if , on first sight, a better alternative comes from the energetic society.

The past few paragraphs have analyzed two problems. Firstly, the national government is faced with a changing society. A society in which assertive citizens and/or initiative takers are more and more active in the spatial domain. Secondly, the national government is searching for its own role in spatial planning. New steering perspectives are to be explored and improved as old steering perspectives are not compatible for current society and planning. The Environment & Planning vision is a potential first step in addressing and solving these issues. Figure 2 shows the complex context for this new vision. How can the Environment & Planning vision, made by the national government, contribute to an increase of successful bottom-up initiatives while the public interest is maintained).

## PROBLEM EXPLORATION



Figure 2: Overview problem exploration

## 1.2 Introduction and problem exploration overview

The introduction explored the problems leading to this research. A new vision is to be shaped for a changing society and spatial planning landscape. The problem exploration analyzed problems for a new Environment & Planning vision (what is the problem?). The next section elaborates on what we want to know with the explanation of the main research question and sub-questions. Section 1.4 analyzes the most important actors/entities (who are important for these problems?). Section 1.5 continues with the TIP-Design method. The TIP-Design method helps structuring the sub-questions mentioned in 1.3. Concluding, chapter 1 will give the information needed in order to start the research in chapter 2, with: 1) An analysis of the problems and the most important stakeholders and 2) an elaboration on what we want to know for a new vision in a changing society and environment. An overview of what is analyzed in chapter 1 is in figure 3.

### INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM EXPLORATION OVERVIEW

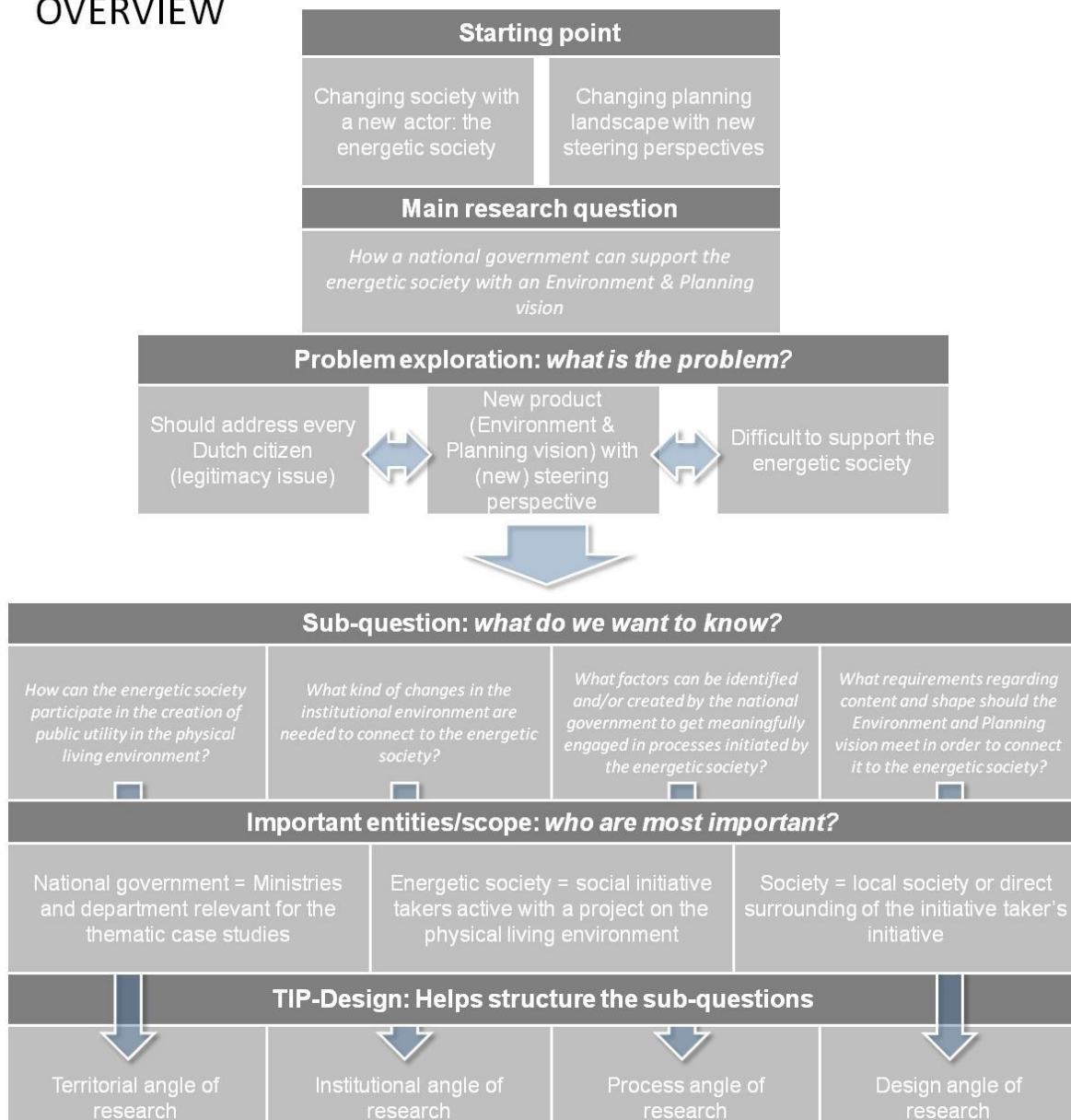


Figure 3: Overview of what is analyzed in chapter 1

### 1.3 Research question

A new vision (the Environment & Planning vision) is developed in a changing spatial planning landscape. New steering perspectives (of a participating government) and a new actor (the energetic society) are described in the previous sections. The Environment & Planning vision is a vision to be implemented in this changing society and landscape. The main research question introduced is:

*How can the national government support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision?*

This question looks for opportunities to bridge the gap between abstract national strategies, ambitions and policies of the national government and the local energetic citizens with social initiatives and projects, with the help of the Environment & Planning vision. Also important, the to be developed Environment & Planning vision should weigh the interests of the active, assertive and energetic society as well as the interests of the, non-energetic society. The following (sub-sections address these issues in four sub-questions. Together the sub-questions give a more detailed description of what we want to know and what is analyzed in this thesis. The Four sub-question address the problems mentioned in the problem exploration to find out what the Environment & Planning vision could do to support the energetic society.

#### 1.3.1 Sub-questions explained

There is certain tension between the government and the energetic society because an energetic society chooses to contribute to social ambitions. These social ambitions were often largely facilitated by governments. The questions that arises is, how can the energetic society and the (national) government contribute together or separately to these social ambitions? Is it possible that an energetic society can create public value<sup>13</sup> largely on its own, thereby contributing to social ambitions? The national government could use the offered help to solve certain national policy challenges. Challenges in which a more tailored solution by the energetic society could fit. Furthermore, if the energetic society chooses to create public value 'on their own', is it done with the grace of the rest of society? In other words, can energetic citizens create public value with projects or initiatives in the physical living environment and maintain the 'public interest' on a local scale(locally)? To grasp and analyze these dilemmas the following sub-research question is framed:

*How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?*

The participating role of the government says that the national government is facilitating and stimulating the energetic society. An energetic society, as is referred to in the previous sub-question, that is in charge of creating the public value with the help of governments. The role and steering perspective of a participating government asks for a different approach. The energetic society starts processes or initiatives on its own or are stimulated by others to start these processes. These initiatives have an impact on the physical living environment. Also the initiatives contribute to a social ambitions set by local, regional or national government(s). So, initiatives are therefore active on a terrain that was often guarded or facilitated by a governments. Knowing that the energetic society contributes to the social ambitions the choice for a participating role of the government is logical. However, the question is: how will a participating government work and what how can it help the energetic society? Knowing what is important in processes between (national) governments and

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<sup>13</sup> Public value lies in value that is claimed to be desirable by the society as a whole

energetic society helps getting meaningfully engaged in initiatives. To grasp this question the following sub-question on the process element is framed:

*What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged in processes initiated by the energetic society?*

The assumption is that the current institutional environment does not entirely fit the relation between the energetic society and the national government. Legislation is often made for a government who is leading in spatial development. Subsidies and collaborative arrangements are designed to facilitate large scale partners in national policy challenges. Changes could be needed to fit the changing relation between national government and energetic society. The current institutional environment is designed for less active citizens. The Environment & Planning act is the legislative 'part of the change' set in motion. The Environment & Planning vision should be able to follow on that movement by changing the 'rest' of the institutional environment. Changes could be made in, for example, collaborative arrangements, subsidies or even daily interaction. The institutional environment can facilitate a better relation between national government and energetic society. To research the connection between the national government and the energetic society the following sub-questions is framed:

*What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?*

A gap is present between the institutionalized (national) government and social initiative takers. The previous questioned will analyze how the gap can be bridged by improving the institutional environment and engagement process and by analyzing the creation of public value by energetic citizens. An Environment & Planning vision could use the improvements and information gathered to design the support for the energetic society. The last sub-question analyzes how the final design of the Environment & Planning vision could be written, shaped or visualized. Shape and content are relevant since the Environment & Planning vision is free of form, as is stated in the Environment & Planning Act (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013). Which kind of content and shape fits the energetic society best?, the freeform gives the possibility to shape the Environment & Planning vision differently. The shape and content are design criteria that need to be analyzed. Therefore the design element has the following sub-question:

*What requirements regarding content and shape should the Environment and Planning vision meet in order to connect it to the energetic society?*



This section introduced four sub-questions. Together the sub-questions give a more detailed description of what we want to know and what is analyzed in this thesis. The four sub-questions are summarized in figure 4 to give an overview.

## SUB-QUESTIONS

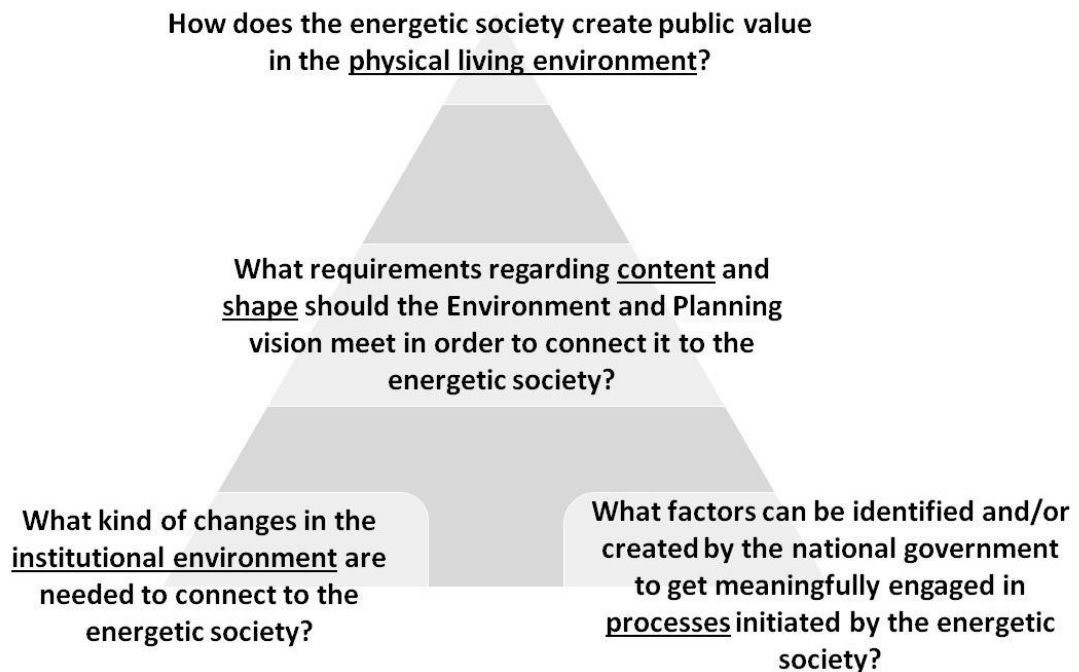


Figure 4: Sub-questions

### 1.3.2 Sub-questions components

The previous section introduced the sub-questions in detail. The next step is to “decompose” these questions to find what needs to be researched. For example: What do these sub-questions mean in terms of research? What is to be researched? Where do the sub-questions focus on? What kind of theories could be researched in regard to the questions? In short, how are these sub-questions used? The following chapter discusses what components are most important in answering the sub-questions.

*How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?*

The sub-questions consist of several components that are worth researching. The creation of public value is of course dependent on the detainment of the public interest. There is a tension between the direct surroundings<sup>14</sup> and energetic society (social initiative takers). The question is whether social initiative takers could create public value while serving or detaining the interest of its direct surroundings. The theory of Spatial Quality is used in section 2.2.5 to further explore the relation between creating public value and detaining the public interest.

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<sup>14</sup> The direct surrounding as in citizens who are faced with the social initiative of a social initiative taker and living nearby. Section 1.4.3 explains the direct surrounding in more detail.

Between the lines, the sub-question asks what drives social initiative takers to participate in the creation of public value. Important components for the creation of public value are (1) the motivation of social initiative takers and (2) indicators of what could incentivize social initiative takers in the future (or did in the past). As a counterpart, the questions asks if the initiative's surroundings interests (direct surroundings interests) are detained. The final component the sub-question addresses is the Environment & Planning vision's importance.

In short, the components of this sub-questions are: motivation and indicators of what could incentivize to create public value, the detainment of local interest and the influence of the Environment & Planning vision.

*What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged in processes initiated by the energetic society?*

The sub-questions address the collaboration between the actors; the (national) government and the social initiative takers. The question is if the national government could participate and help in an ongoing process (or bottom-up initiative) of social initiative takers. In section 2.2.5 the theory of collaborative planning is introduced, helping to describe important factors in collaborations. Important in a process is the collaboration between different actors. The (national) government has to approach an initiative taker or vice versa. After they found each other, they have to keep their collaboration going. In short the components of this sub-question are: Getting meaningfully engaged is determined by the approach, the collaboration and the long-lasting contribution to each other processes, goals and ambitions. The goal of meaningful engagement is to strengthen one another.

*What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?*

The institutional sub-question makes the assumption that changes are needed. Previously these changes were introduced in the continuous effect of a vision and organization culture. The continuous effect of a vision could help determine the scale on which a vision should be actively working. The Williamson model is used to determine the time scale and how embedded the vision should be (Williamson, 1998). The Williamson model is further explained in section 2.2.5. The organization culture is not expected to be changed in one day. Changing a culture could take a long time, depending on how embedded this culture is (Williamson, 1998). However, the expectation is that on daily basis and in collaboration forms certain recommendations can be given.

*What requirements regarding content and shape should the Environment and Planning vision meet in order to connect it to the energetic society?*

The requirements searched for are in terms of the shape and the content. The shape could be the communication, the writing style or the set up (such as visual, internet-only or social media. The content contains the goal or ambition on outline. This could be from a local scale relevant to them to a macro ambition on national or international scale. The detailed content, for example 20% of the energy supply should be renewable, is left behind. However in this ambition can be seen that it is framed on a macro level while giving a direction/aim (20% of the total). So both the shape and content are analyzed in an objective matter without referring to technical policy details.

## 1.4 Important entities

So far the national government, energetic society, society, the Environment & Planning vision and politics are the most important entities. For implementing a new Environment & Planning vision that supports the energetic society. But who are the national government or energetic society exactly? What is most important for these entities? And why is there a potential conflict between them? Section 1.4.1-1.4.5 answers all of these questions by analyzing each of the entities as shown in figure 5.

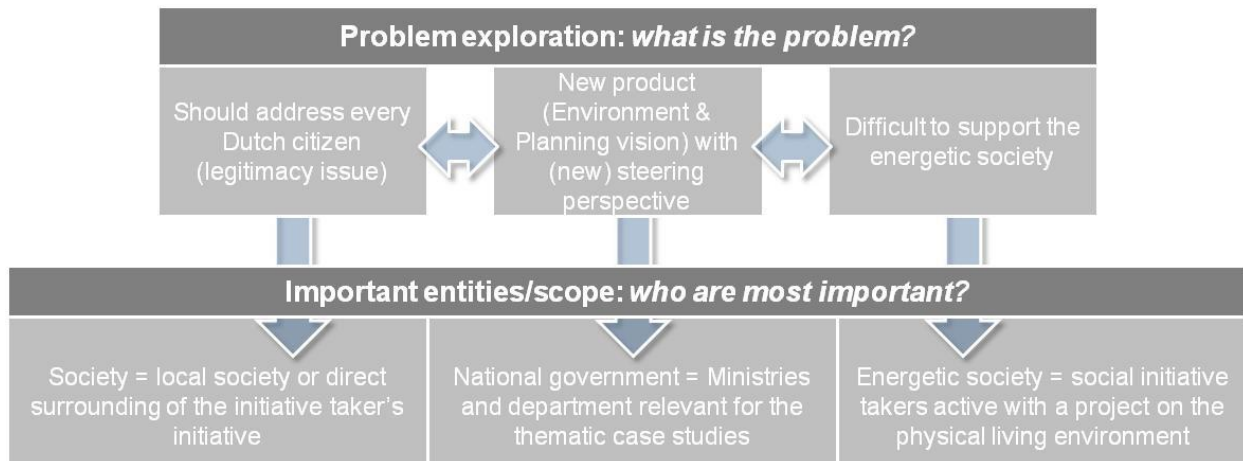


Figure 5: Section 1.4 in the context of chapter 1

### 1.4.1 Explaining the entities: Energetic Society and social bottom-up initiatives

The energetic society<sup>15</sup> consists of assertive citizens with an unknown reaction rate, learning curve and creativity (Hajer, 2011). The representation is often found in social entrepreneurs and active citizens who start their own processes and projects, bottom-up initiatives<sup>16</sup>, parallel to governmental (and other) processes (NSOB and PBL, 2014). These initiatives have two colors: either they do not interfere with governmental policy or they do interfere with governmental policy (on local, regional or national scale). The initiatives that do not interfere are seen as 'the commercial market' and are not analyzed. The initiatives that do interfere with governmental policy form the focus of this thesis. Assertive citizens start these initiatives out of idealism and/or from a private interest or as a response to (incorrect) governmental policy or actions (Ham & van der Meer, 2015; Wouda, 2014). It seems that the energetic society is a new entity in spatial planning. An entity that wants to influence his living environment.

Currently governments (mostly local) shape the living environment the citizens live in. However, active citizens and social entrepreneurs want to interfere in their living environment. So, some form of collaboration is needed. The perspective of governments (mostly local) on the living environment and the perspective of an energetic society on the living environment have to correspond. The biggest challenge for a government is to welcome initiatives that do not fit the perspective of policy makers (WRR, 2012). The tension between these governments, and the national government as

<sup>15</sup> From here on if there is referred to "the energetic society" there is referred to "social entrepreneurs and active citizens who start their own processes and projects, bottom-up initiatives, parallel to governmental (and other) processes".

<sup>16</sup> The interpretations of bottom-up initiatives differ. The definition of a bottom-up initiative used in this thesis is described in Appendix II: Terminology list

scope of this research in particular, and the energetic society is to be resolved. The tension between these parties is relevant to research, since future policy (the Environment & Planning vision) is researched in this thesis.

The energetic society is not one entity, but should be understood as a multi-actor, multi-purpose and in itself a non-consistent entity. It refers to a variety of active citizens, social entrepreneurs, NGOs and ad hoc associations, all striving for their own goal that can conflict with those of others (Wouda, 2014). The challenge lies in whether active citizens of the energetic society have a common understanding on the role, contents and potential added value of a national vision. In this research the expectation is that the energetic society will have some sort of a common understanding, but only on an abstract level. This means that there is possible tension between the energetic society and a local society and between energetic society and governments. Supporting the assertive citizens may interfere with the principle of equality. Meaning only the most assertive citizens guard their interest.

So what is the energetic society? An ambiguous group of assertive citizens with an unknown reaction rate, learning curve and creativity (Wouda, 2014; Hajer, 2011). What if one would like to analyze and understand such an indefinable entity? A definition is needed to find the actor energetic society 'in the field'. So, who is the energetic society in regard to this research? The answer is: The social initiative takers which started a social bottom-up initiative with an impact on the physical living environment. This answer consists of a 'who', 'what' and 'where': Who? The social initiative takers, What? Social bottom-up initiatives and Where? (impact on) the physical living environment. Who, what and where are further explained below.

Firstly the 'who'; the social initiative takers. The initiative takers are active citizens, a small group of active citizens which might be united in a corporation, foundation or club, small entrepreneurs or a small group of entrepreneurs. The initiative takers are social initiative takers because the initiative takers create social value with their initiative. The scope is set on the social initiative takers as these initiative takers could be part of future policy or are part of current policy. The initiative takers can contribute to a solution on social issues. For example: a policy on the energy transition is made. The national government decides on large scale energy transition trajectories, with solar fields and windmills. However, small energy corporations set up by active citizens could contribute to the energy transition with the installation of solar panels.

Secondly the 'what', the social bottom-up initiatives. The initiative takers start processes: the initiatives. The research however is limited to initiatives which add social value and are bottom-up. Meaning the initiative takers are non-governmental. The initiative lies with active citizens, a small group of active citizens which might be united in a corporation, foundation or club, small entrepreneurs or a small group of entrepreneurs (WRR, 2012). Furthermore the initiative adds social value and could therefore be as a solution on a social issue.

Finally the 'where', the physical living environment. To set the scope the impact on the physical living environment is defined as a boundary condition. The physical living environment is a boundary condition set by the Environment & Planning act. The initiative researched need to have a certain physical impact on the living environment, for example a building, a park or nature.

Concluding, the energetic society does not exist. It is ambiguous and cannot be seen as one actor (Wouda, 2014). However, to research the energetic society, a scope is set defining the energetic society. In this research the energetic society is defined as: The social initiative taker which started a social bottom-up initiative with an impact on the physical living environment. The initiative is thus a project with a 'long-term' impact on the physical living environment.

The WRR (2012) says that there are two reasons for assertive citizens to take action. The first reason to take action is a reaction to or resistance against a certain change. Sometimes this means that citizens react on a change that brings unrest, for example a mega stall build in their environment. Or citizens are aggregated by a situation which is no longer acceptable, for example nuisance in their neighborhood. The second reason to take action is the reason of exploration. In an exploration a citizen is searching for a new situation which is better than the old situation. Citizens are inspired by leading examples in the Netherlands or abroad, are eager to try an idea or are looking for innovation. An idea, vision, dream or ambition is one of the key ingredients for this reason to take action (WRR, 2012).

Another research of the Department of Participation (2014), a department from the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, distinguishes four types of collaboration between the energetic society and a (national) government. The first type is classical public participation. Citizens help brainstorm on the issue, the problem statement, possible solutions and such. The second type are social initiatives with as little governmental involvement as possible. The ownership and lead lies with parties in a society. The government participates or facilitates where needed and keeps an appropriate distance. The third type is collaborations between social initiative takers and a government. These collaborations are often shaped by some sort of agreement, strive for a shared goal and support an equality in collaboration. The fourth type is social initiatives as reaction on policy or plans of a government. The government takes an initiative on which society does not agree. As a reaction the society offers an alternative solution.

These two researches show what makes the citizens take action and how a government sees itself in relation to these actions. Some actions are started by a government, some are started by active citizens, but all actions are followed by some sort of collaboration between government and energetic society (or active citizens). The reasons of starting an initiative seem to be in line with the response of a government and vice versa.

In this research three combinations of the WRR report and the Department of Participation report are relevant. The three relevant combinations are:

1. The energetic society that responses on governmental policy.
  - (WRR reason 1 and Department of Participation type 4)
2. The energetic society that responses on governmental policy.
  - (WRR reason 1 and Department of Participation type 2)
3. The energetic society that starts an initiative with a dream, or vision on what is possible.
  - (WRR reason 2 and Department of Participation type 2)

The first combination is researched in the case study on the Room for the River and further explored in chapter 3 and 4. In Room for the River the initiatives are responses to a large water safety program Room for the River. The second and third combinations are researched in the other case study

'Shrinkage & Vacancy and is further explored in chapter 3 and 4. The difference between the two case studies is two steering perspectives, two sides of the spectrum. Shrinkage & Vacancy is market/society driven while Room for the River is governmentally driven. The difference is further explained in section 2.2.2.

Summed up, the entity energetic society is in regard to this study the social initiative taker which started a social bottom-up initiative with an impact on the physical living environment. Most important for the social initiative takers is their initiative's interest.

#### **1.4.2 Explaining the entities: National Government and its steering perspectives**

The second entity is the national government. The national government has gone through different stages of governmental steering. The newest form of presenting itself is introduced in the problem exploration. The national government as participating government is best fitted to collaborate with social entrepreneurs and active citizens (NSOB and PBL, 2014). A participating government tries to collaborate with an energetic society by facilitating and stimulating their bottom-up initiatives and leaves most of the initiative to an energetic society. The steering as participating government does not always goes as planned (Overbeek & Salverda, 2013). However, NSOB and PBL (2014) describe that passed stages of governmental steering are still relevant in some cases. A participating government is a steering perspective most suitable for an energetic society. However, another more classical steering perspective could still be needed for large infrastructural or dyke operation. In these large operations time and budget are the most important factors. So, the steering perspective should fit its purpose, but are all faced with a more energetic society.

The collision between 'new' (bottom-up/participating) and 'old' (top-down/regulating or directing) steering perspectives and the energetic society brings tension. The tension between the energetic society and the national government is caused by a different approach to a shared ambition. The same goes for the tension between the society and a government. Is the public interest best served when certain initiatives from the energetic society are facilitated and stimulated? There is still an important role left for the government to serve and guard the public interest.

As explained the study focuses on the national government. So who is the national government in regard to this study? A national government has many faces. The different ministries and even different department inside a ministry differ in approach and could even be seen as a separate organizations. So if the focus lies on the national government, which part of the actor national government is taken in to account in this research?

The national government consists of several department and ministries. The Environment & Planning vision has not yet "downgraded" its scope and tries to incorporate every Ministry which is directly or indirectly involved with the physical living environment. However, the relevant National Government in this research consists of the department and ministries which are directly involved with the case studies introduced in section 2.2.2:

- the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment active on the case studies Room for the River and Shrinkage and Vacancy;
- the Ministry of Internal Affairs active on the case study Shrinkage and Vacancy and active on the theme "the energetic society";

- Rijkswaterstaat (a large department of the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment responsible for the design, construction, management and maintenance of the main infrastructure facilities) the construction of the Room for the River program

Concluding, the focus of this research is on the ministries and departments active on the physical living environment and active on either the Room for the River or the Shrinkage & Vacancy thematic case studies. The entity of national government is from now on seen as three important actors: the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, ministry of Internal Affairs and the department of Rijkswaterstaat.

Furthermore, the perspectives of governmental participation are briefly discussed in the problem exploration (section 1.1). The Dutch government has walked through various phases of governmental steering. Starting from the basis of a lawful government governmental steering it has made a transition towards a more participating government. This transition however does not mean that the other passed steering perspectives are ‘done’. Each societal problem, governmental program or actors faced in the program asks for a different approach or even multiple approaches per program or problem solution.

	Lawful government	Performing government	Network government	Participating government
Goal determination	Political primate with determination of public interests	Politics and terms in measurable performing agreements	Socially: determination in terms with partners of the network	Citizens and companies develop social value
Role of policy	Political ambitions to legislation, procedures and deployment of resources	Political ambitions to management agreements and realistic ambitions	Social preferences to underlying determent handling agreements	Social initiatives to constraints and support
Official	Careful, objective and integer	Result-driven, client-driven and expedient	Aware of surroundings, responsive and collaborative	Modest, controlled, careful, connecting
Governmental organization	Hierarchical, political primate and official loyalty	Goals, results and performance agreements	Connectivity and alignment with network of pre-selected actors	Prudence, distant and modest
Steering	Rights and duties execution, bureaucratic	Performance agreements, setting of goals	Compromises and closing of deals with network partners	With public value as starting value but with connection to bottom-up initiative

**Table 1: Translation of a schematic overview of governmental steering perspectives (NSOB and PBL, 2014)**

Steering started with a primary aim for the basics of a good government, righteousness and careful procedural approaches (NSOB and PBL, 2014). A more classical governmental model is a model in which political ambitions stood central and the national government was a kind of bureaucratic office. Later on, a shift was made from a careful aim to an aim for an effective and efficient government. The theory of New Public Management (globally) lead governments to aim for results and goals within predetermined boundaries (NSOB and PBL, 2014). During this period governmental

goals were measurable and result driven. A steering perspective in which the government and public performance stood central and political choices were less leading.

This governmental centrality passed and the 'outside world' gained more influence on governments. Working inside-out transferred to working outside-in. This can be seen in the spatial planning approaches. Interactive (or network) arrangements were set from where policy goals were reached through collaboration between government and market (Sehested, 2009). A shift was made from an approach with the government as central actor towards a more market oriented approach in which the government was 'just' an actor.

The latest shift is the shift towards an upcoming believe of an active citizen. The active citizen (or energetic citizen) as entrepreneur or as part of its environment initiates the production of social value in the public domain. Facilitating and/or participating in these initiatives is put central in this last participating government perspective.

This perspective of a participating government is the core perspective for this research. Participating government describes the collaboration with the energetic society as actor. How will a government facilitate processes (or bottom-up initiatives) which are to increase public value or act in line with the public interest? Public value is a core value for both the energetic society and the national government is where is aimed for, connecting policy as much as possible to what is happening inside the society (Alford, 2009). A participating government offers room for energetic society, facilitates public initiatives and works together with (un-)organized parties (NSOB and PBL, 2014).

Summed up, the entity national government depends on the thematic case studies chosen. In the Room for the River program the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and Rijkswaterstaat represent the national government. In the Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Infrastructure and the Environment are the most important actors. The steering perspective are the most important asset in regard to this study. This choice has consequences for the support of the social initiative takers and the local society.

#### **1.4.3 Explaining the entities: Society and the public interest**

The third entity is the society. The society has, as an entity, an interest: the public interest<sup>17</sup>. Although this entity is large (all Dutch citizens) and has a large variety of interests, the public interest can be seen as their interest as a whole. The public interest lies in interests that are claimed to be desirable by the society as a whole (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid, 2000). Using the public interest as norm for guiding state actions, goes back to classical times and remains potent today (Alexander, 2002). However, a government is not the only actor that guards the public interest. Societal actors are moving to the public domain and take initiatives. The growing interest for social bottom-up initiatives and self-organized (active) citizens can bring a risk of inequality (RLI, 2013). Starting initiatives requires a lot of competences, for example entrepreneurial skills, so help is sometimes needed (Brouwer & Engbersen, 2013). A Potential problem is that the most active citizens get supported by a government while these citizens are probably already most fortunate (Verdoolaege & van Vliet, Sociale Vraagstukken, 2015). A tension between the interests of governments, local society and energetic society could arise.

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<sup>17</sup> The definition of public interest used in this research is shown in Appendix II: Terminology list. The definition originates from a study by the Dutch scientific board ('de Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid' (2000))



The society is an entity shaped by the scope taken. A society can differ from a European society to a local society in Amsterdam. So what is the scope for the society in this research? The Environment & Planning vision is a vision for the Dutch mainland. The previous section on the energetic society introduced the energetic society. Meaning the society is the non-active or non-energetic society. What is also important is that the social initiatives are locally executed. Which means that the society faced with the social initiative lives nearby. The research, introduced in chapter 3, introduces case studies as research. The social initiative takers are the actors questioned in the case study. The influence of the direct surrounding to an initiative and vice versa is analyzed in this study. The questions asked in the case studies focus on this interaction. Concluding, the entity society is defined as the direct surroundings of a social initiative and is shaped by three boundary conditions: the society is Dutch, non-active or non-energetic and lives in the direct surrounding (or same municipality) as the social initiative taker. The direct surrounding means the citizens who are faced with the social initiative of a social initiative taker and are living nearby. For example: social initiative's direct neighbors, citizens from the same municipality, citizens overlooking the social initiatives and citizens who are directly or indirectly influenced by a social initiative.

Furthermore, the direct surrounding is faced with new and often innovative initiatives in their surroundings. The conflict between supporting the energetic society while maintaining the interest of the public is often named. But what is the public interest in this study?

In Dutch planning the public interest is a long lasting norm tradition for governmental action (Alexander, 2002). The WRR (2002) describes the public interest as: *Public interest lies in interests that are claimed to be desirable by the society as a whole*. The previously introduced scope on society introduced the society as the direct surrounding, or neighbors, of initiatives and the municipality of an initiative. The relevant public interest for this research is therefore a direct surroundings interests. The direct surroundings interests is the interest that is claimed to be desirable by citizens faced with an initiative.

Summed up, the entity society is in fact the citizens in the direct surroundings of the social initiative taker his initiative. The direct surroundings prefer that their interest are not harmed by the initiative(s). A conflict of interest could arise when an initiative taker and local citizen think differently about a project. So the actor local society is keen on his interest.

#### **1.4.4 Explaining the entities: The product - Environment & Planning vision**

The last entity in this study: The Environment & Planning vision. This vision is shaped by each of the previous stated actors and effects each of these actors. The vision is self-binding for the national government and influences the policy relevant for both the energetic society and society.

The focus of the study on the vision is, the potential effect of the vision if the design is made. This thesis aims at making recommendations for the Environment & Planning vision design. All three entities of the scope are taken into account for the recommendations for the vision. The recommendations made in this study are for an implemented Environment & Planning vision (the vision of 2018). Currently the Environment & Planning vision is in its development process.

So what is the Environment & Planning vision? The Environment & Planning vision is part of a large system reform. It is one of the six instruments of the Environment & Planning act (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013). Other instruments are program, decentralized rules,

general state rules, Environment permit and project decisions. Especially the instruments program and project decision are important for the Environment & Planning vision. The Environment & Planning vision describes the policy for the physical living environment. The program describes concrete measures to reach the goals and ambitions set in the Environment & Planning vision policies (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2014). However, where the program starts and the Environment & Planning vision ends is rather vague and is still to be explored. The project decision are described in the programs (or maybe even in the policies). The project decisions are linked to concrete projects in the physical living environment implemented by the national government. Concluding, the program and project are important for the Environment & Planning vision. This vision sets a certain ambition, goals and policy. Programs are the first step in reaching the goals and ambitions set. The project decisions are the next step. They accompany projects implemented in the physical living environment. Projects which are implemented to reach the goals and ambitions set in the policy. The project decision and program are instruments which can be used by the Environment & Planning vision to reach the goals and ambitions set in policy.

Furthermore, the Environment & Planning vision differs from its predecessors. Besides the large system reform, the vision has in contrast to many of its predecessors a large integral scope that incorporates all policy sectors with an impact on the physical living environment. Meaning the physical impact of many sectors (such as spatial development, mobility, water, environmental, nature, use of natural resources and cultural heritage) are to be incorporated in one Environment & Planning vision. The integral approach is described in the Environment & Planning act. The vision packs the physical living environment in one integral vision and replaces the former domain or sector approach (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013). So, several national policy challenges for the physical living environment (such as the Room for the River program and Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration) are addressed in a new integral vision, the Environment & Planning vision.

Moreover, the Environment & Planning vision is not only integral for the physical living environment. The vision tries to collaborate with the different levels of government and aims for integrality in scales (local, regional, national and European) and regions.

Concluding, the Environment & Planning vision is one of the six instruments of the Environment & Planning act. The Environment & Planning vision is part of the system reform planned, but is also a new vision in a changing society and spatial planning landscape<sup>18</sup>. Its integral approach is one of assets of the Environment & Planning vision to succeed in solving national policy challenges ahead (such as the energy transition). The vision is self-binding for the national government, but also tries to inspire, invite and collaborate with other important stakeholders. The Environment & Planning vision is an integral vision for the physical living environment who is self-binding, but also binds and inspires others.

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<sup>18</sup> As in the changing society and spatial planning landscape explained in the introduction (section 1) and the problem exploration (section 1.1)

#### **1.4.5 Explaining the entities: Politics**

Not included in this scope and seen as an external entity, is the political arena. As discussed previously the politics are certainly an important entity in shaping the spatial planning debate and outcome so far. But there is chosen to see politics as an external entity since this entity was less relevant to the research question (“How can the national government support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision”).

However, the (preliminary) conclusions and recommendations are “tested” on their political resilience. Politics are not analyzed in the research done (described in chapters 3 till 6), but are important both local and national.

Firstly, local politics (i.e. Town councils) strongly influence the success of social initiatives, because social initiative takers are mainly locally active. Spatial planning is decentralized. In the current spatial planning system the municipality is a leading entity. Spatial development is therefore often a choice of local politics. The mainly locally active social initiative takers are depending on decision made by local politics. An example of a choice of local politics is the change of zoning plans. An action that is often needed to implement the social initiatives. A choice that is made by local politics. Also, local politics are decisive on whether the social initiatives is in the interest of the ‘locals’. The local political actions depend on the reactions of locals, both negative and/or positive reactions. Concluding, both spatial development and public (or local) interest is a political choice made by town councils.

Secondly, national politics are important for strategic choices. The parliament has strong influence on the strategic choices made in the Environment & Planning vision. All choices made and the final vision will be evaluated by politicians. Examples of strategic choices made are subsidy structures used by social initiatives and choices made to support social initiative takers as partner in policy challenges.

The local politics (i.e. town council) and national politics (i.e. parliament) will influence the Environment & Planning vision and the possible support for social initiative takers. The final chapters (chapters 7 and 8) will reflect on the political influence on the conclusions and recommendations.

#### **1.4.6 Scope**

The overall scope of this research was introduced in figure 6. The exploration gave the researchable actors for this study. The energetic society is represented with social initiative takers which started a social bottom-up initiative with an impact on the physical living environment. Important for these social initiative takers are their project interests. The national government is limited to the national government, ministries or departments, active on the case studies, resulting in the ministries of Internal Affairs and Infrastructure and the Environment and the department of Rijkswaterstaat. The society is only researched on a local scale and is represented as the direct surrounding. These pragmatic representations form the scope for this research.

Furthermore the tension between the three scope actors is shown in figure 6. Both the ministries and social initiative takers are (or could be) active on the same public domain. Social initiative takers and their direct surroundings could get stuck in a conflict of interest. For example, a conflict on the blockage of the neighbors view or a conflict on new trees planted. The last tension possible analyzed is the potential tension between ministries and local society. A ministry struggles with its new role. How can the ministry still legitimize his actions? How can a ministry still work for all of society when

only the active ones are supported? Vice versa, the local society could have some expectations on the support of their interests. Support equal to the interests of someone else (for example a social entrepreneur). The chosen scope and tension between the chosen actors is found in figure 6.

## SCOPE

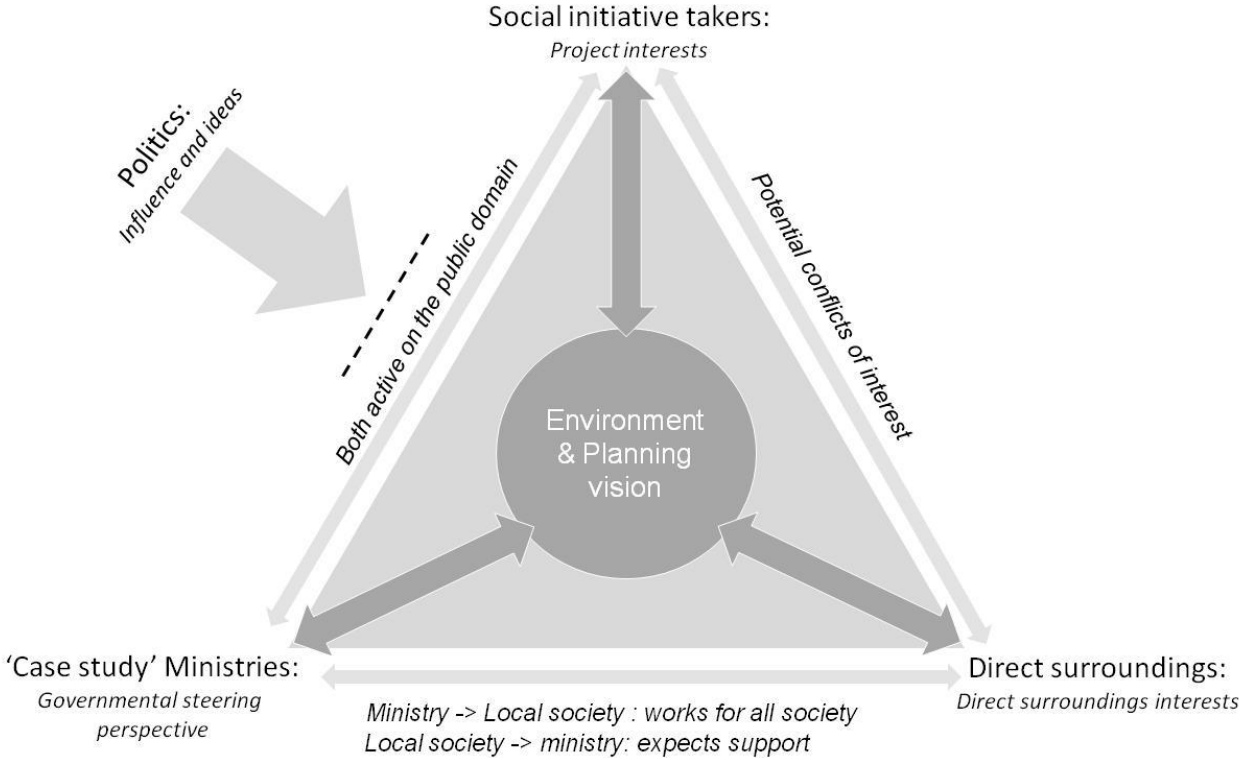


Figure 6: Scope

### 1.5 TIP-Design approach

The problems are explored, the most important entities are analyzed and the scope is framed. More importantly the sub-questions and main research questions are introduced. So far, all four sub-questions address a certain angle of research. Every angle of research helps developing an answer to the main research question asked. However, the four sub-question are not yet linked to one another. This is where the TIP-Design approach comes in. The TIP-Design approach structures the sub-question by linking every sub-question to a TIP-Design element. This section will show how the sub-questions are structured with the help of the TIP-Design approach. Section 1.5 starts with the explanation of the TIP-Design approach (section 1.5.1). The section continues with an analyzes of the Environment & Planning vision using the TIP-Design approach and ends with structuring the sub-questions using the TIP-Design approach. The TIP-Design approach in the context of chapter 1 is visualized in figure 7.

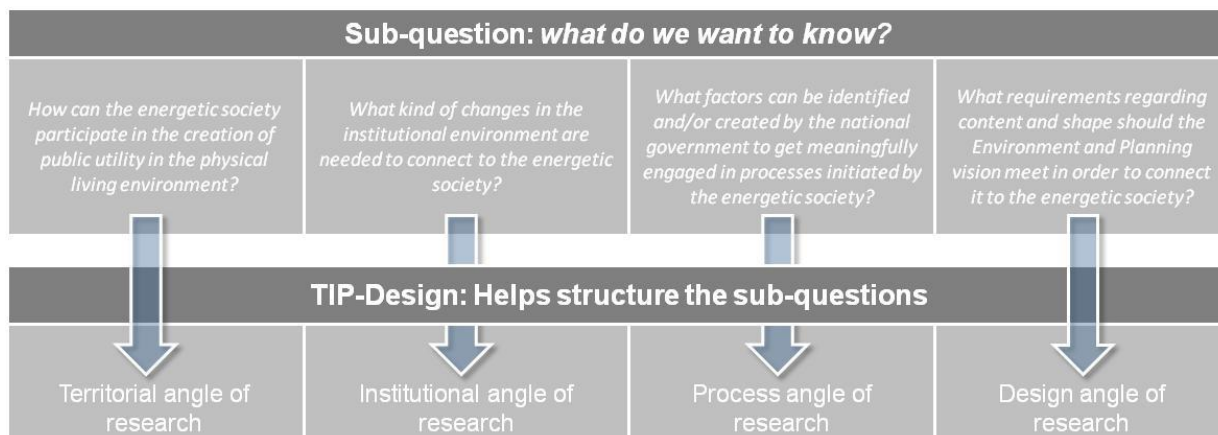


Figure 7: Section 1.5 in the context of chapter 1

### 1.5.1 TIP-Design approach explained

The TIP-Design approach is an approach that combines 3 elements: Territorial (T), institutional (I) and process (P). The TIP-Design approach is used to structure complex issues along the three elements and to develop a design that fits the complexity. Both social and technical elements are needed to make a design that fits complex issues (Dym, Little, & Orwin, 2014).

## TIP- DESIGN

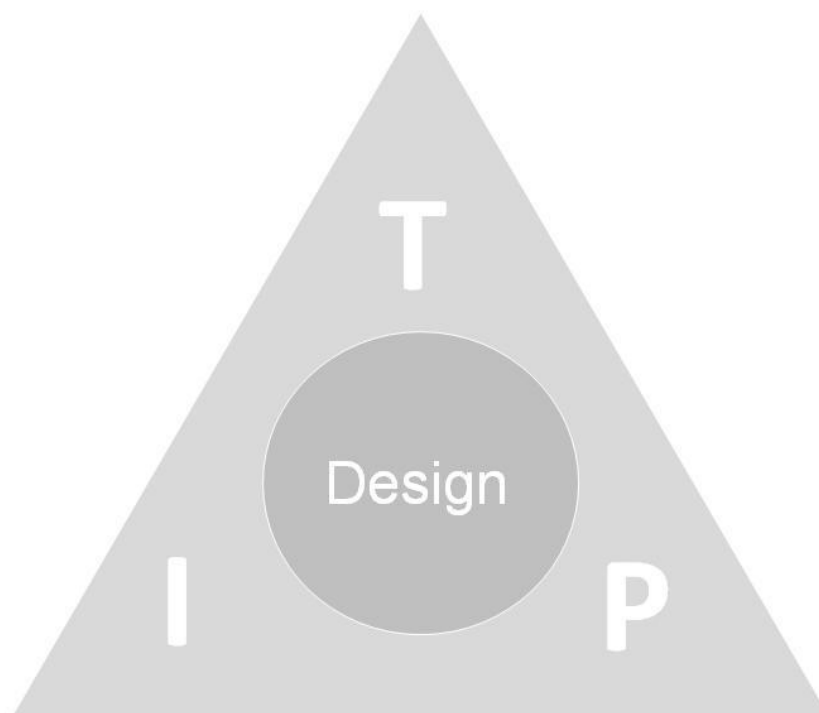


Figure 8: TIP-Design: In each corner an element (T,I,P) that analyzes requirements (triangle). In the middle the 'design' space (circle) wherein a design can be made

Each of the three elements is analyzed to find requirements for the design (the so called TIP-Design). The requirements shape the design space. The design space is the space wherein a design can be made, that fits all three elements. And therefore fits the complexity. The territorial element analyzes

the physical structure in a certain territory needed to shape the territory, for example adjusting the physical living environment with a project. The institutional element analyzes factors shaping the institutional environment, for example relevant legislation, collaborative arrangements, daily interactions or culture. The process element analyzes the social structure for shaping the social processes, for example the process of setting up an initiative. Side note: The elements seem separate, but could also be interrelated. Some requirements might address two elements (one more than the other). To simplify the TIP-Design approach there is chosen to keep the elements as separate as possible during this thesis. An overview of the TIP-Design approach is shown in figure 8.

### **1.5.2 Filling the TIP-Design pyramid**

This thesis assesses the possibilities for the Environment & Planning vision as design. The possibilities for an Environment & Planning vision design that supports the energetic society. The three elements of TIP were explained. So, what if the Environment & Planning vision were to be analyzed using the TIP-Design method?

Introduced in the problem explanation is the integral character of the 'new' Environment & Planning vision. The first of three elements is the territorial element. The territorial components of the Environment & Planning vision is represented by the physical living environment. The vision replaces several sector policies. The sector vision and policies replaced contain the policy on spatial planning, mobility, water, environmental, nature, use of natural resources and cultural heritage (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 2013).

The second element is institutional. The Environment & Planning vision is a result of a changing institutional environment. The Environment & Planning act will be introduced in 2018 and is likely to state 2018 as the starting date for an Environment & Planning vision. The act is based on many elements of which one is a 'cultural' change in spatial planning. This change is seen in the influence of the (energetic) society on the political and governmental landscape. In this research is searched for further improvement of the instructional environment. The institutional element of the TIP-Design is formed by what could be further improved: the organizational (or public servant) culture, what the impact is on the institutional effect of the energetic society: continuous effect vision and the boundary condition formed by the Environment & Planning act.

The third is process. Steering perspectives are part of the policy which is incorporated in the Environment & Planning vision. The steering perspective describes the potential role of the government. The participating government is often named in combination with the energetic society and their bottom-up initiatives. The participating government describes a potential role in which collaboration, facilitation and stimulation. A role as facilitator, stimulator and potential partner in collaboration are all possibilities. Therefore, the role of the national government (facilitation, collaboration, stimulation) is seen as the process element. The sum of all these TIP elements and the potential design criteria is shown in figure 9.

# TIP-DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING VISION

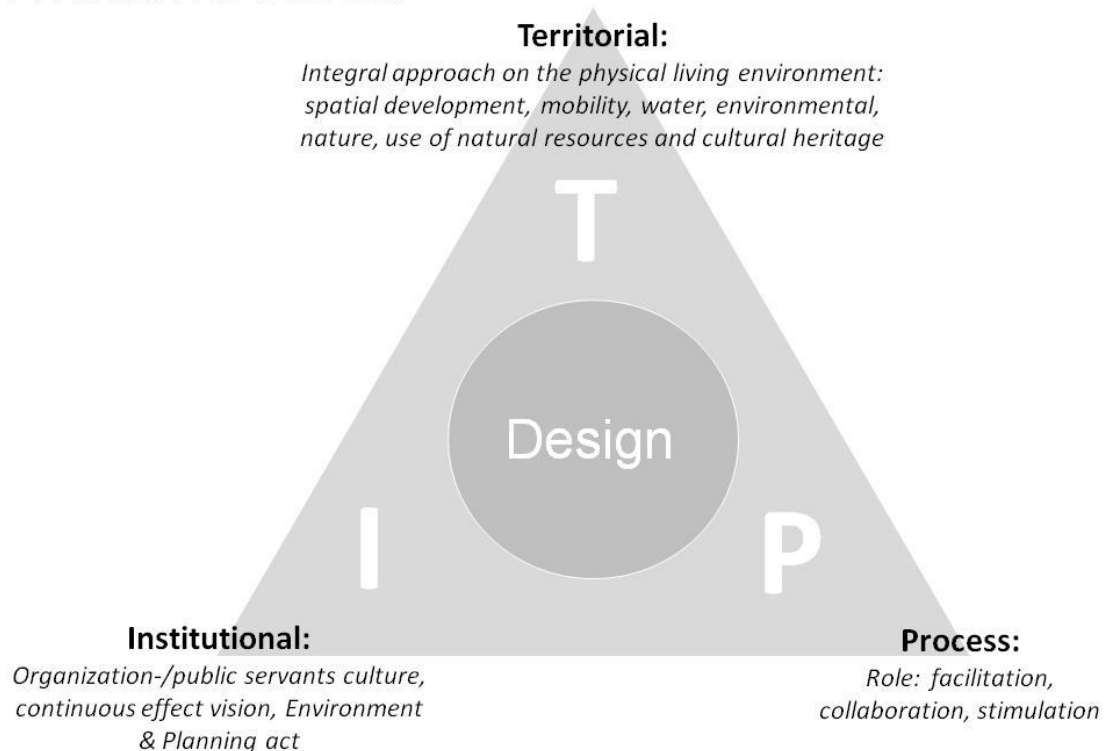


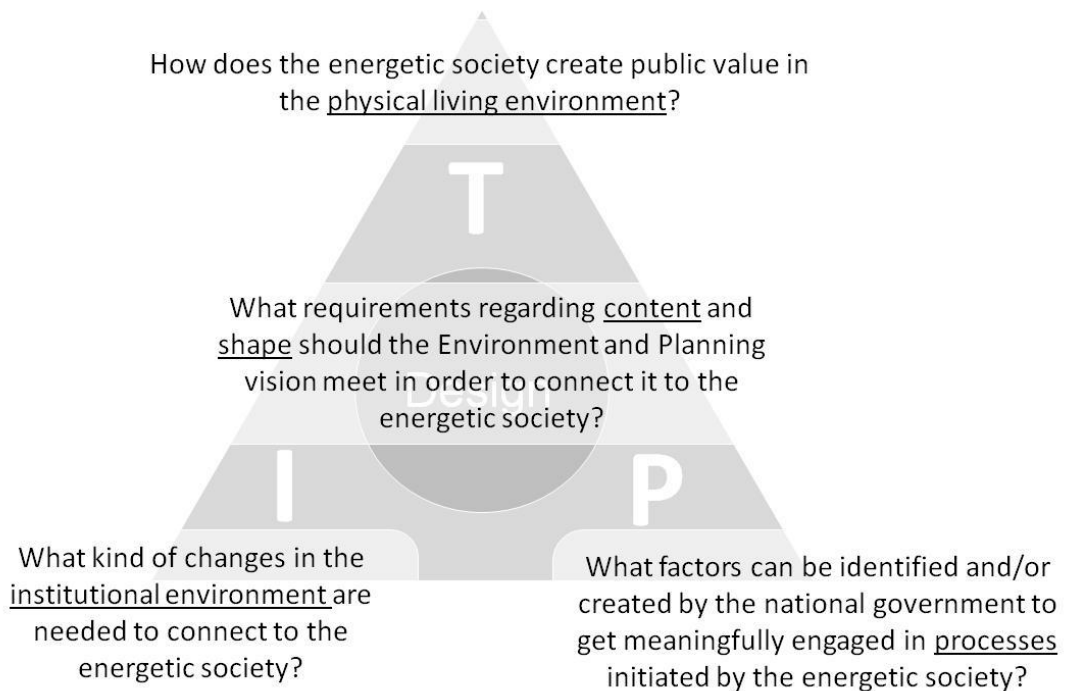
Figure 9: TIP-Design for the Environment & Planning vision

### 1.5.3 Using TIP-Design to structure the sub-questions

So far, the Environment & Planning vision is used to analyze the territorial, institutional and process element of the Environment & Planning vision. Now that the elements are analyzed, they are used to structure the four sub-questions asked. Each sub-question is linked to a TIP-Design element. Previously the sub-questions were introduced as separate sub-questions. Sub-questions who each address a certain angle of research. With the help of the TIP-Design approach the sub-questions are aggregated in one framework. The framework uses the territorial, institutional and process elements to structure. The framework is shown in figure 10.

Firstly, the sub-question “*How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?*” addresses the integral approach of the territorial element. In figure 10, the integral approach on the physical living environment is analyzed as the territorial element of the Environment & Planning vision. The sub-question asked how the energetic society influences the physical living environment, or in other words territorial element. The energetic society and the Environment & Planning vision are both active in the physical living environment. Thereby connecting the sub-question with the territorial element.

## SUB-QUESTIONS & TIP-DESIGN



**Figure 10: Sub-questions and TIP-Design aggregated in one framework**

Secondly, the sub-question “*What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?*” addresses the institutional environment partly shaped by the Environment & Planning vision. The sub-question asks for changes to be made in the Environment & Planning vision. In other words, what kind of changes can be made in the institutional environment by the Environment & Planning vision. Changes that could benefit the energetic society. The institutional element of the Environment & Planning vision is directly addressed in the sub-question.

Thirdly, the sub-question “*What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged in processes initiated by the energetic society?*” addresses the process between national government and energetic society. The sub-questions assumes that the national government wants to engage in a process initiated by the energetic society. In other words, the national government wants to collaborate with and potentially facilitate the energetic society. Thereby connecting the sub-question with the process element (see figure 10).

Finally, the sub-question “*What requirements regarding content and shape should the Environment and Planning vision meet in order to connect it to the energetic society?*” is a deviating question. This sub-question does not clearly describes one of the three elements (territorial, institutional or process). However, the sub-question is linked to a ‘fourth element’: Design. Each element searches for requirements from a certain angle. Together the TIP elements shape the design space with requirements. The last sub-questions also searches for requirements. It directly searches for design requirements (content and shape). Design requirements that were not yet analyzed by any of the other three sub-questions and or elements. The last sub-question is important since the Environment



& Planning vision has freedom of form. The freedom of form gives possibilities to shape the design freely. Therefore the shape is analyzed as possible design requirement. Furthermore, the aim, shape and scale of the content will be analyzed. The content in this regard are the goals and ambitions of the vision. The last sub-question helps further defining the design space for the Environment & Planning vision which supports the energetic society. From now on the last sub-question is linked to a 'fourth element', the element of design.

Concluding, the sub-questions are answered in the recommendations and conclusion (chapter 7 and 8). The answered sub-questions are requirements for the Environment & Planning vision design. This thesis gives design requirements from the three different angles (TIP) and frames additional design requirements with the fourth sub-question. Together the design requirements, written in the recommendations and conclusions, shape the design space wherein an Environment & Planning vision can be designed which supports social initiative takers (i.e. energetic society).

## **1.6 Relevance**

The problem, important entities and actors and main- and sub-question are introduced, but what is the relevance of this thesis? This section describes the relevance in two parts. Firstly, the knowledge gap explains the 'gap' in literature and research done so far. Secondly, the practical and research relevance explains what the contribution of this study is.

### **1.6.1 Knowledge gaps**

The introduction has issued the changing landscape, new found issues, the decentralization trend and the Environment & Planning vision. The knowledge gap chapter shortly discusses the research done on this matter and discusses where the knowledge gap is (inside the 'big picture').

The changing landscape due to decentralization, the changing perspective on governmental steering and the identification of an energetic society raises questions (What do we know? and What do we want to know?) and ask for further exploration. Quite an amount of research has been carried out on the subject of governmental participation and the energetic society. However the complete overview on this relatively new and complex issue is still incomplete. Current studies concentrate on the search for an answer on the role and content of steering perspectives and how the energetic society can be facilitated (NSOB and PBL, 2014; Hajer, 2011; Overbeek & Salverda, 2013). These researches focus on the issue from a governmental perspective. A different view however gets little attention. What if one asks the citizen, social- or private actors on what these actors would like to see from a governmental involvement, legislation and the role of a government. Turning the issue around may find different answers and reveal the real needs of an energetic society.

How the energetic society would like to see governmental participation remains underexposed. The issue however asks for a non-governmental perspective on their bottom-up initiatives. The initiators would like to succeed in their plans, but their initiatives often fail due to insufficient or incorrect governmental steering (Kruitwagen & Gerwen, 2013; NSOB and PBL, 2014; Overbeek & Salverda, 2013). Boelens (2010) describes in his article how a bottom-up initiative, initiated by regional hospitals and local hotels, is stranded due to municipal strategies. His example describes how an effort is blocked, due to incorrect steering while the municipality and the bottom-up initiative strive for the same goal.

In this study the view of an energetic society on abstract policy (Environment & Planning vision) is explored. In short, how an energetic society would like to see the governmental participation in the Environment & Planning vision and content of the Environment & Planning vision (for example the freedom of form). 'We' know on a large scale what the aspects of a participating government could be, but 'we' also 'need' to know how the energetic society would like to see a participating government (in general). This study aims at filling the gap towards the 'need to know' in the light of the new Environment & Planning vision. Therefore the goal of this research is to contribute to the literature with a new perspective. A perspective in which the national Environment & Planning vision can play an important role in facilitating the energetic society. And where the energy in the energetic society is recognized and used (NSOB and PBL, 2014).

### **1.6.2 Practical and research relevance**

This research has two types of relevance. The first is theory based. The research will contribute to the research and literature on the energetic society and vision (forming). The second is the practical relevance for the Environment & Planning vision as product.

Literature relevance builds on the literature background and the knowledge gap. As introduced in the previous section the amount of research on the energetic society is limited. Little is known of what the energetic society (i.e. social initiative taker) could drive as an actor (or rather, as a set of different actors). To find the knowledge needed, it is important to look at the matter through the eyes of the energetic society (Ham & Meer, 2015). Information on what they would like to see in a vision could help structure the discussion. How could the national government and the energetic society help one another in finding the best policy on their physical living environment (or on any other subject). This study will help identify how an energetic society sees a national vision. As Maarten Hajer (2011) says in his report on the energetic society the connection between planning and the energetic society is one that needs to be made in the near future.

The practical relevance of this research lies in generalizations or the lack of generalizations possible. A general perspective of an energetic society on the Environment & Planning vision could help. It could help writing the Environment & Planning vision adjusted to the needs of the energetic society (i.e. social initiative taker). The recommendations could be used to strengthen the content, process and institutional context of the Environment & Planning vision. If generalization is not possible the vision could be made case specific. The fact that case specific visions or vision forming is needed, could also help structuring the process and the content. So either way the research could help writing and positioning the Environment & Planning vision.

## **1.7 Structure**

This thesis report starts off with the introduction, problem exploration and research questions just read. The introduction, problem exploration and research questions were part I of this thesis. This section describes how the thesis proceeds.

The research consists of three parts: Part I: Introduction, Part II: Research and Part III: Conclusion. Part II starts off with research design. The third chapter explains how the research is set up, the methodology of this research, and what the deliverables and objectives of this research are. The fourth chapter analyzes the first thematic case study (Room for the River). The Room for the River study is introduced and researched through interviews. This chapter concludes with a conclusion. The fifth chapter analyzes the second thematic case study (Shrinkage & Vacancy). This chapter is also

concluded with a conclusion. The sixth chapter finalizes the results of the two thematic case studies. The sixth chapter compares the case study results with each other and to the theories.

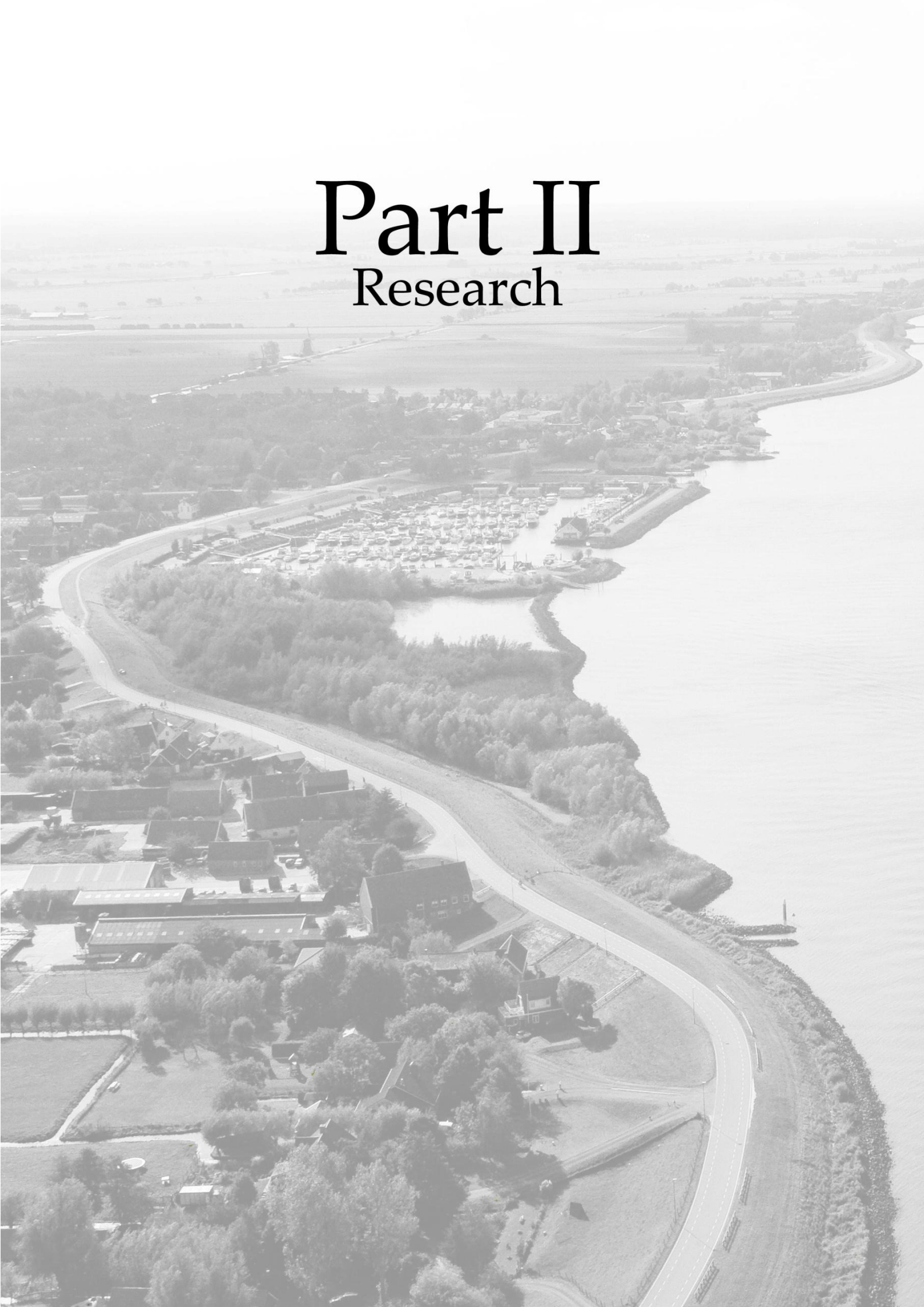
After the research is conducted Part III: Conclusions and Recommendations starts. The third part of this thesis begins with the seventh chapter on the conclusions. In the conclusion chapter the conclusions of the research are linked to the sub-questions and research question asked. In the eighth chapter recommendations for the eventual Environment & Planning vision are given. The ninth chapter reflects on the research done and frames the largest discussion points. The tenth chapter discusses the future research possibilities.

The structure of this report is also repeated in every chapter and section. Each chapter and section starts with a small introduction of what is discussed in that particular chapter or section. These small introduction explain the structure of this report in more detail and introduce the chapter ahead.



# Part II

## Research





## 2. Research Design

This chapter continues the thesis with 'what is done in order to find answers on the questions asked', in other words the research. The chapter explains the research design for this thesis. The chapter starts off with the steps taken in this study, the research structure. Followed by the methodology of this study. The methodology consists of the demarcation, the case study introduction, the approach for questioning, methodology vs. (sub-)research questions, theories and validation plans. The final section describes the research objectives and deliverables.

### 2.1 Research structure

The research design consists of three parts. These three parts can be summarized as being the introduction of the research based on literature research and problem-analysis (part 1), the qualitative (thematic case studies interviews) research (part 2) and the conclusions, reflection and recommendations (part 3). The summary of the three parts is given in figure 11.

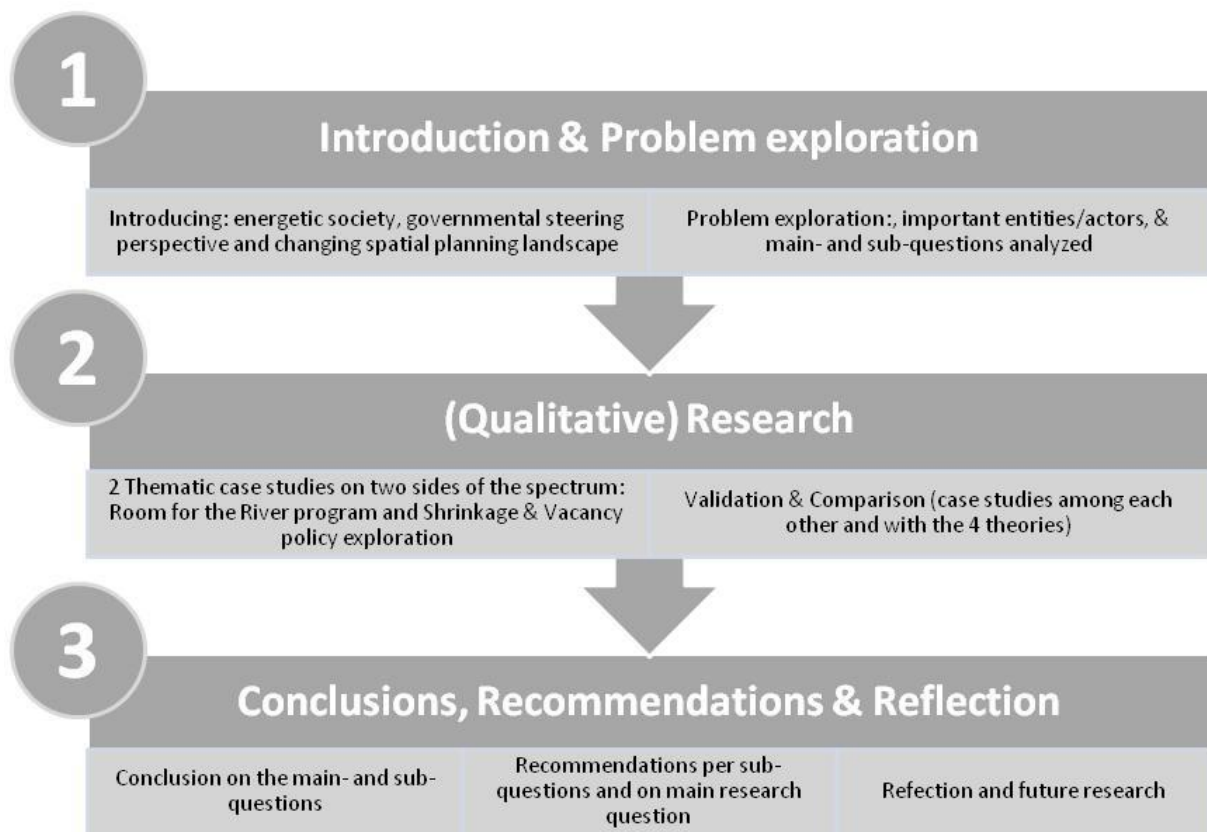


Figure 11: Research structure

The first part is shown in the previous two chapters and is largely based on literature research and exploratory interviews (found in appendix IV).

The second part is the largest part in which the data is collected, needed to define recommendations and to get an answer on the research question asked. The qualitative research should give insight on the energetic society's view on visions in general. The qualitative research consists of two thematic case studies and validation. The two thematic case studies are opposites and reflect two type of governmental steering perspectives. The Room for the River program is a program started and led by the national government (Rijkswaterstaat and Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment).

Shrinkage & Vacancy is led by regional stakeholders. The national government (Minsitry of Internal Affairs and Infrastructure and the Environment) has a facilitating role. The policy exploration is led by the market and society in these shrinkage regions. So, the two thematic case studies each reflect another (opposite) steering perspective<sup>19</sup>. The second part concludes with a comparing study of the results of the two thematic case studies and results of a validation done.

The third part is the final part of the thesis. This part addresses the conclusion, recommendation and future research. It concludes the thesis and describes the answer is on: *How can the national government support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision?*

So how is this thesis conducted? The combination of literature research, data collection and validation is used to strengthen research results. Firstly, the literature research is used to determine what the basics are generally and case specific. The literature research is assisted by exploratory interviews with experts on the energetic society. Secondly, the qualitative research gives the data needed for research. And thirdly, the data is translated to case specific and general results. The validation (in a feedback session with experts) will help determining if the translation is done correctly. Also, the validation helps if the data, conclusion, and literature on the matter reflect 'reality'. By conducting these three step-approach the case results will be given 'empirical body' in both case specific and general respects.

The research process, after kick-off, consists of six parts. The steps show how the research and thesis is conducted. Also the steps describe the thesis process:

- Literature research as input for data collection, as imaging and to help structure conclusions
- Data collection (case study and general interview round)
- Translation of data to answers on research questions (outcomes of research)
- Preliminary conclusions are drawn based on the research questions
- Validation of the preliminary conclusions
- The recommendations and conclusion as validated preliminary conclusions

To give an overview of this research process the following model is drawn.



Figure 12: Research steps

Although three parts are distinguished in reality, during the process the research will often grasp back and forth as an iterative process in order to fulfil all tasks appropriately. The research will be conducted in a period of six months.

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<sup>19</sup> A more detailed elaboration of the two thematic case studies is given in section 2.2.2



## 2.2 Methodology

The methodology introduces the chosen methods for this research. The first section analyzes the thematic case studies: what a thematic case study is, how it's developed and how it's used. The chapter continues with the explanation of the two angles (government-led vs. market/society-led) for the thematic case studies (Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy). These two sections are followed by the approach for the questioning in the case studies. The next section 2.2.5 introduces a theory for each of the sub-questions. The theories are the basis for the sub-question expectations and interview questioning. The section 2.2.6 summaries the findings of section 2.2 and introduces the overall interview questioning. The last section describes the validation process.

### 2.2.1 Thematic case studies

The thematic case study is the qualitative research method conducted in this research. This method is a non-existing case study type and is shaped by various steps taken during this research. So what is a thematic case study? A normal case study is a study in which a detailed area, region or project (something tangible) is analyzed. In the case study all stakeholders involved are interviewed and the interrelationships are explored. A thematic case study is not a normal case study. The method of this research is a study led by a theme. The themes for the two case studies to be conducted are the program Room for the River and the policy exploration theme Shrinkage & Vacancy. The thematic case study does not aim to analyze the interrelationship and stakeholders involved, but instead uses the chosen theme to identify a certain 'indefinable' stakeholder. In this research the indefinable stakeholder is the social initiative taker. The theme is used to identify a certain type of stakeholder and cluster them so that similarities can be found. Concluding, the thematic case study is a method that uses a (policy) theme to cluster and identify a certain group/stakeholder (social initiative takers). One group is interviewed and the thematic case study results in theme based findings: Room for the River program and Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration.

And how did the thematic case study became the chosen method? The thematic case study approach has emerged due to a number of subsequent steps taken during this research. The first step was the focus selection: The national Environment & Planning vision. A choice that gives this study a national scope.

The second step was the selection of the other focus: The energetic society. The study has the energetic society, together with the Environment and Planning vision, as theme. However, an early exploratory interview with the Direction participation (Department of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment) revealed a problem: *"The energetic society cannot be seen and treated as one uniform actor. The energetic society does not exist"*. This quote shows the difficult situation that is created. On a national scope the energetic society was non-existent.

The third step was that the gap between the national Ministry and the local energetic society had to be bridged. Some sort of case study was needed in order to 'personalize' the energetic society and eventually the social initiative takers. The exemplary trajectories Room for the River and Shrinkage and Vacancy were chosen because of their claimed pro-active attitude towards social initiative takers. The two thematic case studies were chosen from six candidates. Appendix III shows a score card in which all six candidates are evaluated. The choice for Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy is based on the score card and the literature research done for that score card. But the choice is also influenced by more practical reasons. Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy

were both thematic case studies led by the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and were 'within reach' regarding the thesis period. The internship also influenced the choice. Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy were both practical. And represented a progressive approach towards social initiative takers according to the personal network inside the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and literature. So the score card, the literature research done and the internship have together led to Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy.

The fourth and final step was the step of which the thematic case study was the result. The case studies had to be conducted in a preset period and had to be relevant for the Environment & Planning vision (national scope). Also, the added value of this study is the focus on the energetic society. What are the needs of the energetic society (social initiative takers)? The added value requires interviews with social initiative takers. The result is a study on social initiative takers who are identified with the help of a theme and are spread over the Netherlands (national/no regional scope). A thematic case study is still relevant for the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (my internship location) and was also able to bridge the gap. The four steps explain the choice for a thematic case study.

A normal case study was hard to reach. The previous stated gap was exemplary for the gap between the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and social initiative takers. None of the exploratory interviews held within the Ministry gave a clear case study that could be conducted. So the more pragmatic 'broad brush' method of a thematic case study was chosen in order to bridge the gap and reach the result wanted within a given 'normal' time frame. Also, in order to facilitate in a weighted answer on the research questions asked and as compensation for the method, a large amount of interviews was conducted (approximately twenty interviews).

As introduced two thematic case studies are to be conducted: the program Room for the River and the policy exploration of Shrinkage & Vacancy. Both thematic case studies are started from a different steering perspective (the difference is discussed in section 2.2.2). The thematic case study of Room for the River shows a past performance thematic case and is governmentally driven (further explored in the next section (2.2.2)). The approximate deadline for the Room for the River program is 2015. Room for the River is in its end stage of implementation. Room for the River is a perfect thematic case for research on a national governmental steering perspective. This centralized and somewhat traditional approach of planning policy reviews a past performance and the friction between a traditional approach and "new" energetic society.

The thematic case study of Room for the River is followed by the thematic case study on Shrinkage & Vacancy. Shrinkage & Vacancy is a policy challenge for the future and market and civil society driven. The upcoming shrinkage in the peripheral region of the Netherlands reveals the problems with the planning policy of the past century, which was focused on growth. Shrinkage strongly influences the livability in peripheral municipalities now and in the future. The citizens of these peripheral municipalities are confronted with a withdrawing municipality and a growing appeal to their initiatives to maintain the livability. Shrinkage & Vacancy is therefore a thematic case in which the energetic society is verily active and a national governmental is faced with multiple regional and local problems on national scale. The large amount of social initiatives and initiative takers in these regions, the current facilitating role of the national and the importance of this issue for the future

(and therefore the Environment & Planning vision) make this a contrasting thematic case to Room for the River.

Each of the two thematic case studies have (1) a national policy challenge to be addressed in the Environment & Planning vision and (2) a national program of policy (exploration) to be conducted. During the implementation of the program or policy the energetic society (i.e. social initiative takers) is either part of the problem or the solution. In the implementation the potential interviewees/respondents are found for research. Through these small steps the social initiative takers are connected to the national policy challenges and Environment & Planning vision. The link between the social initiative takers, thematic case studies and Environment & Planning vision is shown in figure 13.

## FROM CASUS TO RELEVANT PROJECT

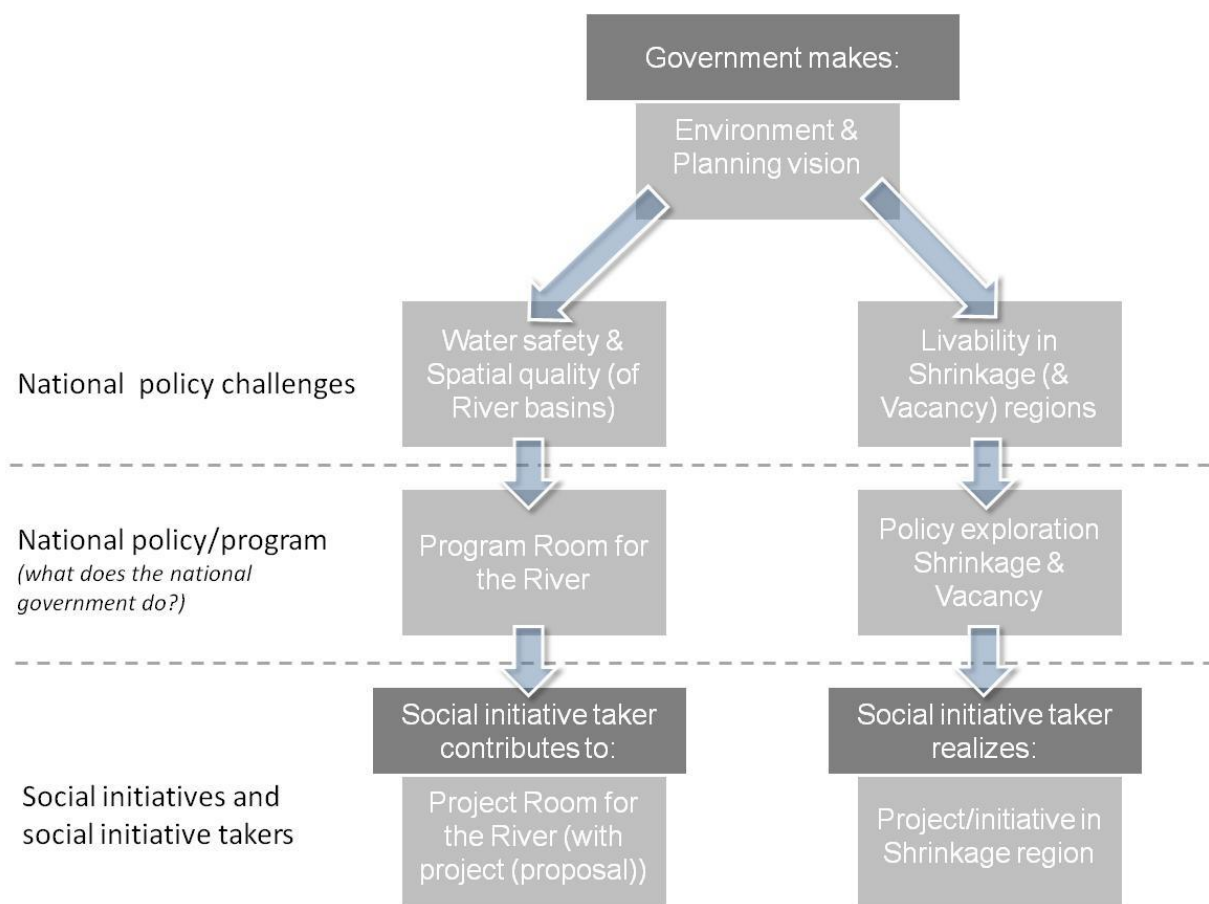


Figure 13: From casus to relevant project. The link between social initiative taker and Environment & Planning vision

All the information above shows that a qualitative research is chosen as a method. Interviewees are selected in collaboration with experts from the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment and from the ministries direct network. With the network, the interviewees can be reached and interviewed in the limited period of time given. The interviews are semi-structured and in-depth if needed. Other methods, for example an interview round or survey with pre-set interview questions, have relatively low feedback options for the interviewees and are less accurate in finding soft variables<sup>20</sup> (which are expected as an outcome). Certain uniformity between the interviews in each thematic case will facilitate the option of generalization in a later stage.

### 2.2.2 Demarcation | The larger picture: Two angles for two thematic case studies

This section explains what the choice for Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy means for this thesis. How do these two thematic case studies fit in the larger picture? Also, what is the demarcation that it implicates?



Figure 14: Governmental steering model (in Dutch) (NSOB and PBL, 2014)

The governmental steering perspectives are introduced in the problem exploration (the model is shown again in figure 14). The model shows the two axes: The choice between political choice or public performance (vertical axes) and driven by the government or the market/civil society (horizontal axes). The axes 'driven by government or market/civil society' is used in this study. The choice will help reflect on the potential differences between the Room for the River program and the Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration. The difference between a program driven by a governmental actor (Rijkswaterstaat) or a theme driven by market and civil society actors. The axes and thematic case studies are shown in figure 15.

<sup>20</sup> Soft variables: The soft variables expected are variables that might appear in different forms for every interviewee and are often not uniform in their appearance.



**Figure 15: Thematic cases positioning**

The model made by NSOB and PBL (2014) is a complex model with four different governmental steering perspectives. To reduce the complexity, the choice is made to research one axis. The axis most relevant to the Environment & Planning vision and social initiative taker. The two thematic case studies chosen should show the difference in approach and the consequences for the social initiative taker. So, what is the exact difference between the two steering perspectives? How is the difference seen in the either Room for the River and Shrinkage and Vacancy? And what are the consequences of the steering perspectives for the Environment & Planning vision and social initiative takers?

The axis chosen has two 'extremes': Governmentally driven and market & civil society driven. Governmentally driven means that the government is in charge of the implementation. The government strictly manages the policy formulation and implementation. The solution is brought to other stakeholders in the setting chosen by the national government. Others have to adapt to the choices the government makes (NSOB and PBL, 2014). The Room for the River is a good example of such a policy implementation. The policy of Room for the River is formulated at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment as solution to a national policy challenge: the water safety in river basins and the hinterland. The program is implemented by the national department Rijkswaterstaat. The boundary conditions, goals, coalitions, governance and priorities are determined by the national government. The consequence is that social initiative takers have to adapt to the rules stated in one of the 34 projects and the program. Social initiative takers are not free in designing their initiative. A large amount of boundary conditions is present and the initiative should contribute to the goals set by Room for the River.

Market & civil society driven has opposite components. Market and societal actors determine what their goals, priorities and coalitions are. Governments can participate, but is not automatically a partner in collaboration (NSOB and PBL, 2014). The Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration is a clear example of national government participating in the processes of others. Regional stakeholder are in charge when it comes to the national policy challenge: livability in Shrinkage regions. Municipalities, social initiative takers, active citizens, entrepreneurs and businesses are in charge of maintaining the livability. The national government facilitates where possible and when it is asked. Social initiative takers are fully in charge of their initiatives. The initiative takers could operate solely (or at least without the help of a national government).

Also important for the demarcation of the thematic case studies is the national scope chosen. Environment & Planning vision addresses themes important for a national scale. The national scale made it necessary to question interviewees spread over the Netherlands. Shrinkage & Vacancy is said to be different in every region of the Netherlands (Crooy, 2015). A region as Parkstad Limburg is only slightly comparable to a region as the Achterhoek. Every region has its own culture, stakeholders and problems. However, the Environment & Planning vision should state a policy on all regions. The vision should state a vision on national scale. A national view is needed on this case study to translate the results to a national Environment & Planning vision. Same counts for Room for the River. Every sub-project inside Room for the River has its own stakeholders (different contracting companies and leaders of a plan study or implementation phase). The national scope chosen in this study makes that the potential interviewees should be nationally spread. The Environment & Planning should give a national view on matters as Shrinkage & Vacancy and Room for the River (river basin policy). The interviewees questioned should reflect that national view.

Concluding, the demarcation is shaped by two factors. Firstly, the thematic case studies highlight both perspective of the axes, a program started from a governmentally oriented steering perspective and a theme led by the civil society and the market on the other side. Secondly, both studies follow the national scope chosen and potentially generalize answers of interviewees to the use of national policy.

### 2.2.3 Approach for questioning

The thematic case studies will use interviews to research the thematic case studies in a qualitative matter. To give an overview, the numbered questions are asked and answered in the following subsection: 1) who are the respondents, 2) why are these respondents chosen, 3) what is questioned, and 4) how the total package of interviewees and thematic case study will look like.

#### Who are the respondents?

In this thesis there is one type of respondent in two different contexts:

1. *Social initiative takers (Room for the River)*: Social initiative takers which are active with a bottom-up initiative with a physical impact on the living environment. The social initiative takers are active in and around sub-projects of the Room for the River program. In terms of actors: social entrepreneurs and active citizens with an initiative in the public domain
2. *Social initiative takers (Shrinkage & Vacancy)*: Social initiative takers which are active with a bottom-up initiative with a physical impact on the living environment. The initiative takers are active in Shrinkage regions. In terms of actors: social entrepreneurs and active citizens with an initiative in the public domain

#### Why are these respondents chosen?

- *Social initiative takers (Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy)*: Knowledge on what moves them and could motivate and stimulate them in the creation and undertaking of an bottom-up initiative. Also the knowledge on how the government plays a role in their process and influences their process

## What is questioned?

- Questions asked are aimed at giving insight on: “What can be learned by current visions and programs who try to support the energetic society (i.e. social initiative takers)?”
- The questions contain all four elements of the TIP-Design and therefore addresses all four sub-questions. The questions will address all these elements, but also address their personal initiatives. The questions are relevant to them and to the research. The following components are addressed:
  - Technical: Social initiative takers’ incorporation of his surroundings and his public value creation
  - Process: Important criteria for meaningful engagement
  - Institutions: Initiative takers’ experience with governments, collaboration with governments and legislation
  - Design: Wanted shape and content (context) of vision, policy, programs, etc.

## How will the total package of interviewees and thematic case study look like?

The following table summarizes the previously discussed matters and structures them. The table shows the complete picture of what each thematic case study and the general interview round are expected to give as output.

Research	Kind of policy	Three types of respondents	Added value for study	Findings on interviews
<b>Thematic case study: Room for the River</b>	Governmental driven steering perspective	Social initiative takers: The social initiative takers which started a social bottom-up initiatives with an impact on the physical living environment; Responsive on governmental policy (Room for the River)	The thematic case study is chosen to approach a good representation of the energetic society. The variety of thematic case studies is chosen because each thematic case study is expected to have a different TIP-design focus	Found in chapter 4
<b>Thematic case study: Shrinkage and vacancy</b>	Market/ civil society driven steering perspective	Social initiative takers : The social initiative takers which started social bottom-up initiatives with an impact on the physical living environment; Responsive on governmental policy and social initiative		Found in chapter 5

**Table 2: Overall view on interviewees**

### 2.2.4 Internship at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment

A large amount of the thesis period is done as an intern at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (department of Spatial Development). The choice for the thematic cases studies, respondents, general interviewees (experts) and validation session were influenced by the internship at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. The internship at the Ministry gave an opportunity to reach the civil servants active on both the Room for the River program and Shrinkage

& Vacancy policy exploration. However, the choice for a Ministry made that the gap between me and the social initiative takers (potential respondents) was verily large. Furthermore, the choice for the Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy were influenced by the internship. Concluding, the internship had both positive and negative consequences.

The positive consequence was that a large network of activities, experts and meetings could be used for this study. The different networks are used to reach the correct civil servants in the thematic case studies and to facilitate sufficient back ground information and literature. An experience that positively reflects on this master thesis.

However, the gap between social initiative takers (and initially the energetic society) and national government is large. After the research design (in theory) was made, a search for case studies was started. Exploratory interviews were held with civil servants of the Shrinkage & Vacancies exploration and the Room for the River program. The interviews were held to find social initiative takers and/or case studies. However, no clear case studies were present or known by these civil servants. At the scale of the internship (national scale) no clear case studies were known. In my attempt to bridge the gap (explained in detail in section 2.2.1) the thematic case study created seemed the only option. The exploratory interviews gave enough possibilities to reach sufficient social initiative takers in their work field (i.e. Room for the River program or Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration). An option in which the social initiative takers could be reached (name, address, initiative and telephone number). Problem was: all the social initiative takers found were either successfully implemented or still ongoing. So, the social initiative takers found as respondents are implementing or planning a successful initiative. And only the social initiative taker is questioned.

Also, the choice for Room for the River and Shrinkage & Vacancy were somewhat subjective. The two thematic case studies were advised by Ministerial civil servants. The thematic case studies are either recently researched and implemented or currently explored. Furthermore, the thematic case studies are a good representation of how social initiative takers are incorporated in policy. And most importantly, the choice for the two thematic case studies was practical. The responsible civil servants were already approached or could be approached easily. Because the Ministry of Infrastructure & the Environment was (co-)responsible for Room for the River program and Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration.

In the end, the internship gave a lot of possibilities for gathering and improving the information for this thesis. But the internship also gave the limitation of the thematic case studies. The research is therefore only exploratory. The result of this research is a first scan of the connection between social initiative takers and national (spatial) visions (from a social initiative takers point of view).

### **2.2.5 Theories for sub- and interview questions**

From the knowledge so far, the expectations are that few factors are crucial for the support of the energetic society. These factors should appear after research. A certain expectation 'lives' in all four aspects. These expectations will guide this research in its search for answers. The expectation that guides this research is:

*Activating an energetic society to facilitate innovative solutions in spatial planning depends on the roles of government towards bottom-up initiatives, specific formal and informal characteristics of the institutional environment, the ability of an energetic society to help*



*reach social ambitions in the living environment and the adaptive shape and content of the vision.*

The general expectation is further explored per sub-question (and therefore per TIP-Design element). Section 2.2.5 starts off with the territorial theory, followed by the institutional, process and design elements. Each element is discussed in theory and what the expectations for interviews are on basis of the theory.

***Territorial theory: Spatial Quality***

Territorial in the context of the Environment and Planning vision, is the physical living environment. The territorial sub-question (*How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?* ) addresses the creation of public value in the physical living environment. A social initiate taker starts a social initiative in the physical living environment. With this social initiative, the social initiative taker hopes to create public value. Or in other words the social initiative taker wishes to solve a certain social issue or wishes to contribute to a certain policy issue with the social initiative.

However, the creation of public value in the physical living environment is difficult. The living environment, for example neighbors, citizens of the same municipality or citizens with a view on the initiative, reacts on the social initiative. Sometimes the reaction is positive sometimes it is negative. In the eyes of the neighbor the plan could be ‘ugly, pretty, good or bad’. While, in the eyes of the social initiative taker, the social initiative is ‘contributing to society or saving the environment, pretty or original’. Opinions on a planned or implemented social initiative can differ (severely).

To measure the public value of the social initiative and the different opinions in the ‘direct surrounding’, spatial quality is used. Spatial quality is used to measure the quality of spatial development (in the physical living environment). Spatial quality is measured with the help of three values. The three values are: experience value, users value and future value. An increase in one of the values (or a combination) means an increase in spatial quality. The experience value addresses the value one has experience when the area is seen, heard, smelt and/or felt. It can also be the experience of the area’s history. The users value describes the value for the users. And the future value describes the value increase of an area in the future. The interpretation of these values can differ between people (Ruimte met toekomst, 2015). The experience value of a social initiative is probably higher for a social initiative taker than for the neighbor. Table 3 shows how the values could be interpreted in different contexts.

	Economic purpose	Social purpose	Ecological purpose	Cultural purpose
Users value	Accessibility; Smart positioning	Fair distribution; Ownership	External safety; Clean environment	Cultural diversity; Freedom of choice
Experience value	Image; Attractiveness	Equality; Social security	Peace and quiet; Healthy living environment	Uniqueness; Cultural effect
Future value	Agglomeration; Flexibility	Social support; Everyone ‘on board’	Healthy ecosystem	Cultural heritage; Integration

**Table 3: Examples of the spatial quality values (Ruimte met toekomst, 2015)**

Side note: spatial quality does not measure all of the public value created by an initiative. Spatial quality is not equal to the public value. For example a social initiative can create public value because it creates solar power, but the social initiative also enhances the quality of the living environment. The public value is created due to the increase in spatial quality, but also due to the solar power.

So how works spatial quality in practice? The spatial quality is evaluated by more than one person (Ruimte met toekomst, 2015). A social initiative could increase the quality of the physical living environment. In the eyes of the social initiative takers and partners, the social initiative is considered as a quality improvement. However, spatial quality is no uniform factor. The spatial quality can be interpreted different with for example neighbors. So, to further increase the spatial quality the social initiative taker could incorporate the interests of others. For example, the experience value of a neighbor decreases because of a planned tree blocking his sight (decrease in experience value). Problem is that the social initiative needs that tree for the shade (users value). In a shared process the neighbor and social initiative taker could exchange their thoughts and interest in order to find a solution. Solution: the tree is planted somewhat to the right. Result: The neighbor experience value is increased and the users value remains equal. The development of the social initiative is still the same. The tree is still planted. A simple example of how a shared process could lead to a solution for both parties.

Concluding, this study (in regard to spatial quality) focuses on the quality of social initiatives planned or implemented in the physical living environment. The focus has two important indicators. The first indicator is the creation of quality by a social initiative. A social initiative should and could create spatial quality. A social initiative that increases the quality of the physical living environment is considered to be a 'good' social initiative. The second indicator is the assessment of interests. This indicator addresses how the social initiative is implemented or planned in the physical living environment. The spatial quality is no uniform factor. Both the direct surrounding and social initiative takers (and partners) should consider the social initiative as a quality improvement.

So what does Spatial quality means in terms of interview questions and expectations? The link between interview and territorial theory is shown in table 4.

**Potential questions for interview (territorial):**

- What kind of public value is created by the social initiative?
- How do social initiative takers incorporate the perception on quality of their surroundings?

**Expectations for sub-questions (territorial):**

- Social initiative takers create public value and are capable of merging their perception of spatial quality with the perception of others (local society). The implemented initiative is a 'win-win'

**Indicators 'measured' in interviews (territorial):**

- Public value creation
- Project interests vs. interests direct surroundings (neighbors)

**Table 4: Territorial summary**

The theory of spatial quality helps analyzing the sub-question: *How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?* Spatial quality has three factors: experience value, users value and future value. The perception of the spatial quality is based on these three values. Social initiatives in the living environment could improve or decrease the spatial quality of an area. Two persons can have a different opinion on whether it is quality improvement or not. The expectation is that social initiative takers take into account the meaning and interest of the direct surrounding<sup>21</sup>. So, the spatial quality of the area rises due to their social initiative (public value). And the interests of the direct surroundings (citizens) are used to make a shared perception on spatial quality. The social initiative takers align the direct surroundings interests and the initiative's interest on spatial quality. Tested is whether the social initiative takers really reckon with its direct surroundings. Also tested is the public value creation of social initiatives. The public value creation is tested as a territorial project (an initiative/project in the physical living environment). The following indicators are measured in the interviews:

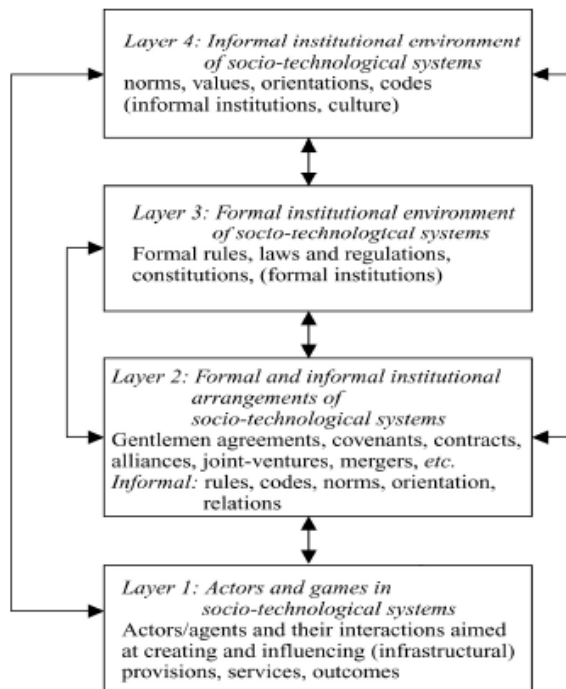
- **Public value creation**
  - Social initiative takers create public value on the physical living environment. Public value lies in value that is claimed to be desirable by the society as a whole. Spatial quality is seen as a factor that could increase the public value.
- **Project interests vs. direct surroundings interests**
  - The social initiative takers and citizens in the direct surrounding may have a different view on spatial quality.

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<sup>21</sup> Direct surrounding refers to the citizens living in the direct surrounding of an initiative. In other words the initiative's neighbor

### ***Institutional Theory: Williamson model***

The model of Williamson (1998) gives four levels of institutions on which the foundations of the institutions could be lying. Each layer represents a certain adaptation period of an institution and how embedded an institution is in a system (or in more detail: in decision making). The higher the layer the more embedded institutions are. The lowest layer can be embedded continuously. The second layer has a period of 1 to 10 years. The third layer has a period of 10 to 100 years and the fourth layer a period of 100 to 1000 years (Williamson, 1998). The period is based on a generalisation of the content of the layer, for example: layer four includes changing a culture, which takes more time changing than a norm in a certain work field. The layers are described in the model in figure 16.



**Figure 16: Williamson model (Koppenjan & Groenewegen, 2005; Williamson, 1998)**

The model describes norms, formal- and informal institutions. For this research formal institutions (layer three) will be limited to the Environment & Planning act, since no formal covenants, contracts, etc. are evaluated. The informal institutions are split in daily interactions and practice between actors (for example governments and the social initiative takers (layer one)) and informal orientations and relation (or even hierarchical relation (layer two)) between the actors. Finally, norms and values (layer four) describe the norms and values embedded in the civil servants or governmental organizations (on every relevant level). The focus of the interviews (research) lie on the first and second layer. These two layers are the less embedded and are most fit for changing them in a new vision.

So what does the Williamson model mean in terms of interview questions and expectations? The link between interview and institutional theory is shown in table 5.

#### Potential questions for interview

##### (institutional):

- How do social initiative takers experience governmental organizations?
- What is needed in terms of collaborations, policy and legislations?

#### Expectations for sub-questions

##### (institutional):

- Expectations are that on each institutional layer suggestion be done in order to improve the experiences with governmental organizations

#### Indicators 'measured' in interviews

##### (institutional):

- Collaboration arrangements
- Interaction government and social initiative taker

**Table 5: Summary institutional**

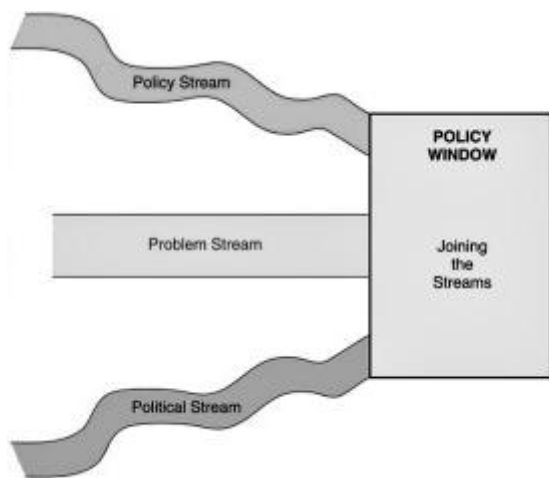
The Williamson model is used to help analyze the sub-question: *What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?* This model is used to define the expectations. The expectation is that social initiative takers suggest improvements or changes on every institutional layer. However, the first and second level are expected to be the most important. The first and second level are the least embedded. Therefore the first and second level are easiest to adjust. The social initiative takers are questioned on the whole institutional environment. It is chosen to explicitly question collaborative arrangement (layer two) and the interaction between government and social initiative takers (layer one). Concluding, the indicators measured are:

- **Collaboration arrangements**
  - What kind of gentlemen's agreements, covenants, contracts, alliances, etc. are used?
- **Interaction government and social initiative taker**
  - Social initiative takers are faced with different governments (local, regional, national) with different roles. How is the interaction between the social initiative taker and these governments?

#### ***Process Theory: Collaborative planning***

As introduction to the process theory another theory, the theory of the policy window, is used. The policy window describes how three capricious streams (political, policy and problem) under ambiguous conditions could collide (Sabatier, 2007). When the three streams collide, a policy window is open. In this window the problem is recognized, policy alternatives (solutions) are available and the political conditions are right (Kingdon, 1995). Identifying these streams and moving along with these streams could (from a ministerial perspective) help finding and predicting the policy windows. In this research the focus is laid on the problem stream. The problem stream could be interpreted as societal problems. Problems the (energetic) society will encounter. If one wants to identify the problem stream and wants to move with the problem stream from a policy stream view,

intensive collaboration could be a good option. Intensive collaboration will bring the problem stream closer to the policy stream. Collaboration makes that the owner of the problem stream is easier to reach. Figure 17 shows the policy window and Kingdon's stream model.



**Figure 17: Kingdon's stream model**

This is where the process theory of this research comes in. The theory of collaborative planning describes the social processes of knowledge production and communication and the power embedded in social processes (Smedby & Neij, 2013). Ansell and Gash (2007) describe the theory of collaborative governance, which is very closely related, as: *“A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engages non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets”*

Collaborative planning<sup>22</sup> is chosen because it helps the collaboration between policy makers and (energetic) society (Wanna, 2008). As described by Ansell and Gash (2007), collaborative planning is a collective decision-making process between governments (local, regional and national) and non-governmental actors. Meaning, there will be knowledge integration between parties with the goal to collaboratively make public policy. Identifying, recognizing and connecting the streams (policy and problem) by successful collaboration is the link between the policy window theory and collaborative planning. Therefore the connection between policy makers (as in policy stream) and energetic society (as 'owners' of the problem stream) can be made by collaborative planning.

So, how can collaborative planning help getting meaningfully engaged<sup>23</sup>? Inside collaborative planning is often spoken of dialogue as method for guiding (successful) collaborative processes (Booher & Innes, 2000; Smedby & Neij, 2013; Healey, 1997). Although results of collaborative planning are not always as positive (Faehnle & Tyrväinen, 2013), the theory still has sufficient stature to support this research. The theory is claimed to be insufficient in supporting actual power relations and has a naïve believe in a perfect dialogue (Smedby & Neij, 2013). But the theory fits this research

<sup>22</sup> In literature the terms collaborative planning and collaborative governance are often used besides one another. In this research is chosen to describe both collaborative planning as collaborative governance as 'collaborative planning'

<sup>23</sup> Meaningful engagement is stated as 'goal' in the process sub-question

because the success criteria found in articles, describe phenomena that align with phenomena found in exploratory interviews (Faehnle & Tyrväinen, 2013; Wouda, 2014; Innes & Booher, 2003).

To structure the search for potential success of collaborative planning in the past and future, the success criteria are used. The success criteria found in literature are “researchable” criteria For example a shared meaning, knowledge integration, trust, leadership in the process or mobilization (Smedby & Neij, 2013; Faehnle & Tyrväinen, 2013; Booher & Innes, 2000; Höppner, 2009; Innes & Booher, 2003). These researchable criteria give a starting framework from which the interviews can be conducted. The interviews ask for the important criteria according to the social initiative taker. The feedback on the interviews will show if social initiative takers have a comparable view on collaboration. The comparison between theory and findings (from the interviews) will show what factors are important for meaningful engagement.

So, what does collaborative planning means in terms of interview questions and expectations? The link between interview and process theory is shown in table 6.



**Table 6: Summary process**

Collaborative planning helps analyzing the sub-question: *What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged in processes initiated by the energetic society?* Based on the collaborative planning the expectation is that the most important factors are shared meaning, knowledge integration, trust and leadership (in process). If the expectations were to be true, the social initiative takers would express that these four factors are most important for them in a collaboration with a government (local, regional or national). To test whether the view of social initiative takers is comparable to collaborative planning, shared meaning, knowledge integration, trust and leadership (in process).

The process indicators measured:

- **Shared meaning**
  - Is there a shared meaning/ shared ambition between social initiative takers and governments (local, regional or national)
- **Trust**
  - Trust between government and social initiative taker
- **Knowledge integration**
  - Integration of knowledge making the social initiative taker and government equal in collaboration
- **Leadership in the process**
  - Leadership in the social initiative and its influence

### *Design theory: Storytelling theory*

Storytelling in (spatial) planning is introduced by Throgmorton (1992; 2003). He argued that planning can usefully be construed as persuasive and constitutive storytelling about the future. Persuasive storytelling describes that planners as writers, can write texts that arranges or shapes future action. Constitutive storytelling describes how planners (as authors) choose to characterize (name and describe) the people (who inhabit and activate their stories). Furthermore, constitutive storytelling describes how these characterization shapes, how those people are expected to act and relate to one another (Throgmorton, 2003). So how storytelling can shape (future) action (persuasive) and how storytelling can shape their actions and relations (among each other).

The sub-question on design (*What requirements regarding content and shape should the Environment and Planning vision meet in order to connect it to the energetic society?*) asks for Environment & Planning vision that fits a potential new target audience (energetic society/social initiative takers). Storytelling can help make a vision durable and adaptive. Storytelling describes a theory in which a persuasive story could be durable and adaptive. For example, if the story of a society and their (normatively based) possible future is told. Also, further in his article, to make a robust durable and adaptive 'story' Throgmorton describes that inside the story there should be room for every own story (Throgmorton, 2003, p. 146). These durable and adaptive stories are comparable to book stories. Every book story has a storyline that functions as the core of the story. Besides this storyline the writer could make "side-stories" in which a whole new character with its own story is introduced or an irrelevant flash-back is described. Later on, the side-stories seeming irrelevant connect with the core storyline. If connected the side-stories strengthen the storyline and the book as a whole. This small elaboration shows how storytelling (in a book) is comparable to the storytelling theory of Throgmorton (2003). Small side-stories can arise and live besides the core storyline and eventually strengthening this core storyline. The many potential side-stories (of social initiative takers) could connect to the core story (of the Environment & Planning vision). So a durable and adaptive Environment & Planning vision reached through persuasive storytelling.

So, comparable to a story the vision could be adjusted to the respondents, the social initiative takers. The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, as responsible actor for the vision, has just as a writer the responsibility and the possibility to reach his respondents. However, there is also a possibility that the energetic society would like to help the writer, the Ministry, in making a persuasive story. Research will show if the energetic society has a positive response on several



components of storytelling. And if the energetic society can reflect on how they want to be approached by the Environment & Planning vision.

Throgmorton (1992; 2003) describes design principles for planning documents. The thread through a book and freedom for every own story describe the design principles: (1) make planning adaptive, (2) make room for every side-story inside a vision story and (3) make a storyline in your vision story. The ambition will fill the storyline of the Environment & Planning vision. Steering perspective, of a participating government for example, describe how a vision can be made adaptive. Bottom line, the design is to be filled by the other three elements (T,I,P). Only the non-related indicators are analyzed.

So what does storytelling means in terms of interview questions and expectations? The link between interview and design theory is shown in table 7.

**Potential questions for interview (design):**  
-Could social initiative takers see themselves participate in the a story?  
-When is the story best fitted for social initiative takers?

**Expectations for sub-questions (design):**  
- Expectations are that we should make planning adaptive, make room for every side-story inside your vision story and make a storyline in your vision story

**Indicators 'measured' in interviews (design):**  
-Participation in governmental issues  
-Appeal to governmental documentation

**Table 7: Summary design**

Storytelling helps analyzing the sub-question: *What requirements regarding content and shape should the Environment and Planning vision meet in order to connect it to the energetic society?* Based on the Storytelling theory the expectation is that planning should be adaptive, should make room for every story and sell the vision as a story (with clear storyline). If the expectations were to be true, the social initiative takers have the urge to participate in solving national, regional or local policy challenges. Also, the social initiative takers would like to see policy or visions as an appealing story. The design of the perfect (or good) policy or visions should have that effect on social initiative takers. To test whether the view of social initiative takers is comparable in regard to Throgmorton's storytelling theory, the indicators participation in national policy challenges and appeal to governmental documentation are tested.

The design indicators measured:

- **Participation in policy challenges**
  - National government (or local, regional) frame an ambition and/or goal for a national policy challenge. Do social initiative takers feel connected to this ambition and/or goal?
- **Appeal to governmental documentation**
  - What are social initiative takers thoughts on current documentation received made by a government (mostly local or national). For example program, policies, vision, plans, etc.

### 2.2.6 Methodology and interview questions

The sub-questions, method, theory and indicators ‘measured’ are all connected. The connection is made in four steps summarized in table 8. These steps taken have resulted in the core of the interview format (found in Appendix V). Firstly, the main research question: *How can the national government support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision?* is decomposed in four sub-question. Secondly, each of the sub-questions represents one method/element of the TIP-Design. Thirdly, all of the sub-questions have a theory that helps operationalize them. Fourthly, the operationalization results in two or three indicators, which are measured with the help of qualitative research (interviews).

Sub-question	Method (TIP-Design)	Theory per method	Indicators ‘measured’ in interview questions
How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?	<u>Technical</u> design	Spatial Quality	-Public value creation -Project interests vs. local interests
What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?	<u>Institutional</u> design	Williamson model	-Collaboration arrangements -Interaction government and social initiative taker
What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged in processes initiated by the energetic society?	<u>Process</u> design	Collaborative planning	-Shared meaning -Trust -Knowledge integration -Leadership in the process
What requirements regarding content and shape should the Environment and Planning vision meet in order to connect it to the energetic society?	(TIP)- <u>Design</u>	Storytelling theory	-Participation in policy challenges -Appeal to governmental documentation

**Table 8: Methodology and interview questions**

Central in the interview format are the questions on the indicators. The questions on the indicators are found in the previous section (tables 4,5,6 and 7). However, questions on the theory indicators are not the only questions. The interview questions on the indicators are complemented by additional on introductory questions, questions on governmental steering perspectives (*process*) and questions on organization culture. The additional questions and questions on theory indicators, complete the interview format used in the two thematic case studies. The interview format can be

found in Appendix V. The complete overview of the methodology, sub-questions, theories and thematic case studies is found in figure 18.

## METHOD OVERVIEW

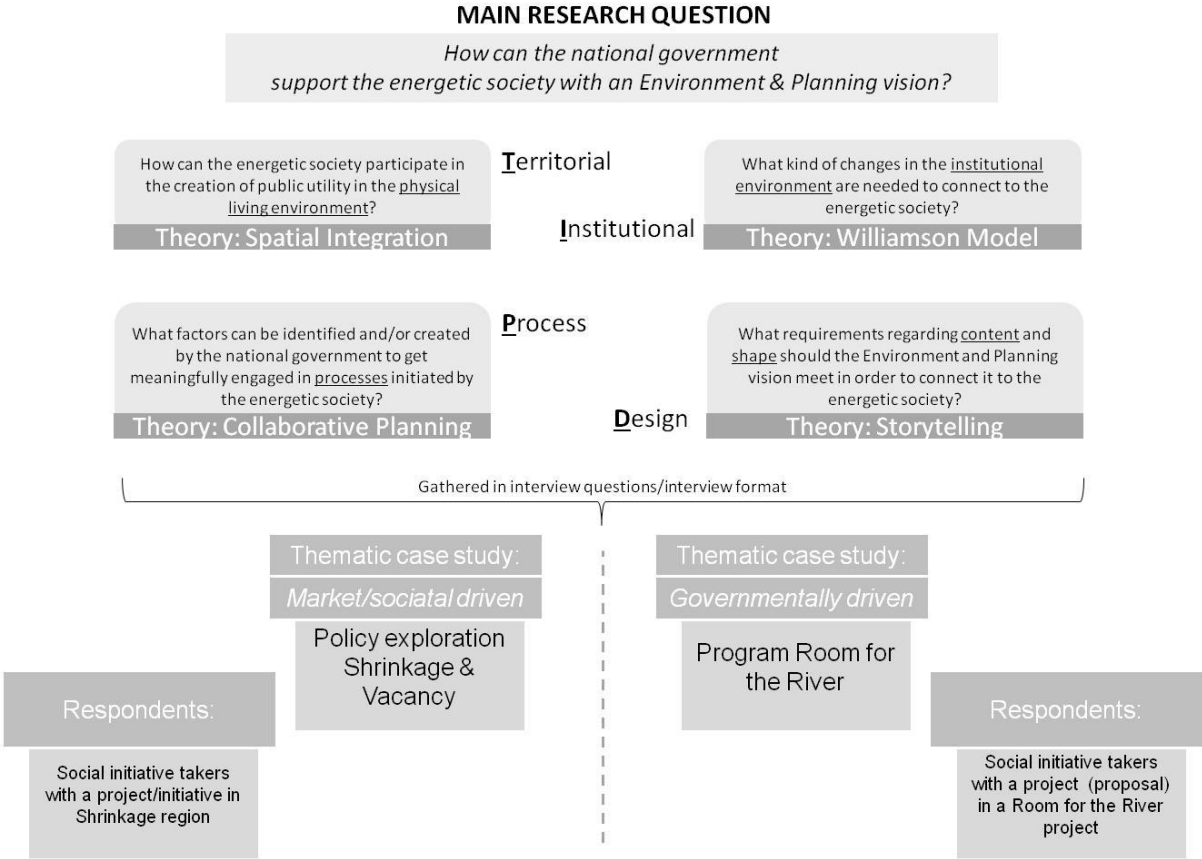


Figure 18: Method overview

### 2.2.7 Validation

After conducting the research, structuring the outcomes and developing preliminary conclusions there is a validation step. This step is to check whether the developed preliminary recommendations and conclusion are a sufficient reflection of the reality. To check whether it is a sufficient reflection of the reality, the view of experts is used. The experts are heard in one validation session and general interviews.

#### Validation session

To foresee in the expert knowledge needed for a good validation, a feedback group session (workshop) is foreseen in this thesis plan. The validation session is scheduled between preliminary recommendations and conclusions. The feedback group could consist of experts on the spatial planning from the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment.

#### General interviews

The general interview contains of interviews with experts on spatial planning and the energetic society. The information gathered by interviewing these experts is seen as an addition to the results of the thematic case studies.. Also a survey has been considered but it was concluded that given the

time constraints of this project general interviews were a more appropriate method for gathering empirical data and (possibly) validating early results.

Furthermore, an interview round among a large group which are a 'real' representation of the energetic society is no possibility. The reach of the personal network or professional network will not stretch far enough to reach a real representation within the time period of this thesis. Therefore the choice is made to use an additional (general) interviews with experts to strengthen possible case study outcomes. The experts have knowledge and a wide scope on what an energetic society might need from a government. Experts help make the connection between the national scale and the local initiatives.

The focus of these general interviews is broad. A thematic case study will go further in depth. The general interviews (as method) will concentrate on finding broad and general results that give feedback on possible outcomes found in the thematic case studies and literature. The general interview round will give a broad look on the research questions asked, where the conformation or disconfirmations of expected outcomes based on literature, is put central.

### **2.3 Research objectives and deliverables**

The problem exploration, research questions and theories give a certain expectations on the expected results of this research. The 'summary' of these expectations are captured in the objectives and deliverables of this research. The objectives and deliverables show the previously discussed focus on the feedback of the energetic society (i.e. social initiative takers):

#### **Objective**

- *Problem-analysis* of motivation for bottom-up initiatives
- *Evaluating* governmental steering perspectives
- *Evaluating* the process between (relevant) national government and social initiative takers
- "Reaching to and feedback from" the energetic society (/social initiative takers) on visions on national scale

#### **Deliverables**

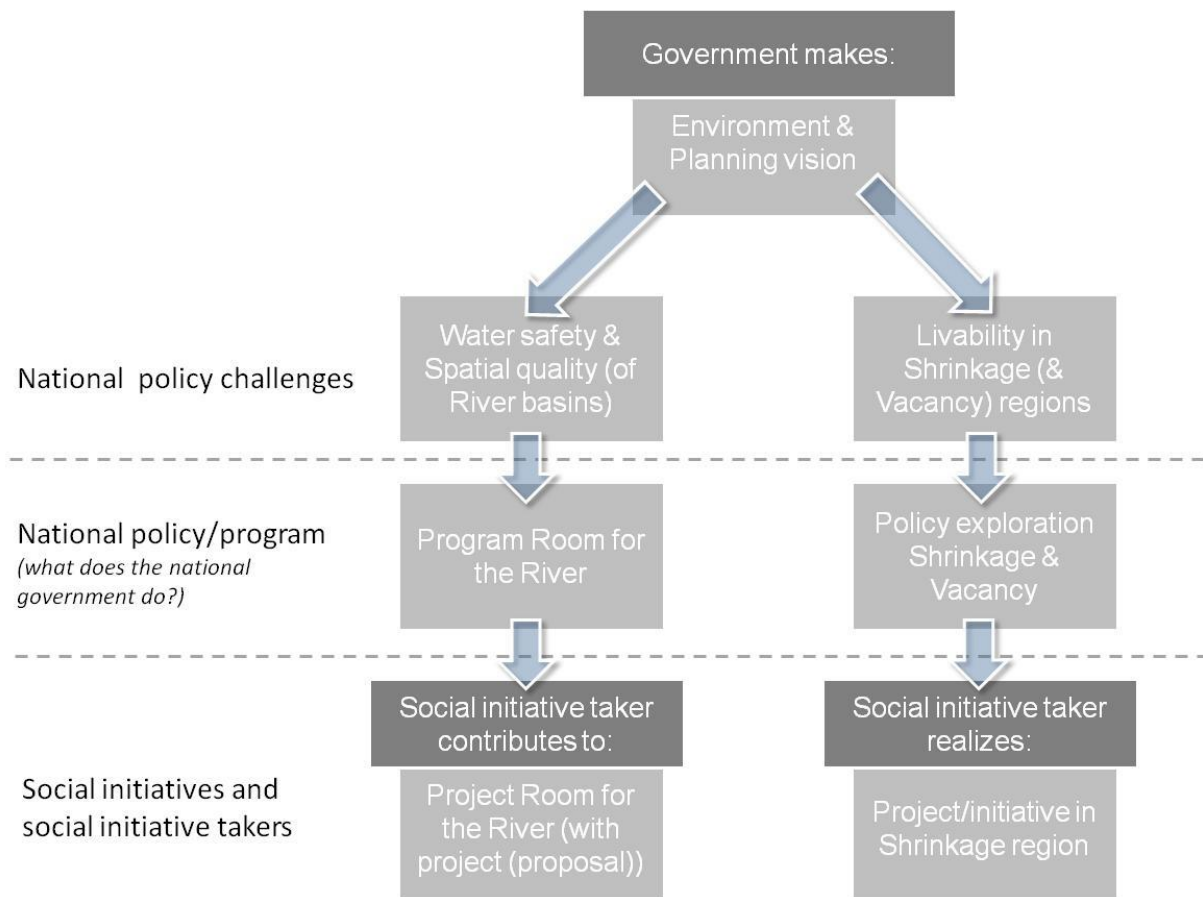
- A broad energetic society (/social initiative takers) conclusion on "what the energetic society would like to see in a national Environment & Planning vision "
- Thematic case specific/ Thematic case broad results on the impact of vision and what a vision can mean for the energetic society (/social initiative takers)
- Generalized results on "what the energetic society (/social initiative takers) would like to see in a national Environment & Planning vision "
- TIP-design as recommendation of how an energetic society (/social initiative takers) could be best incorporated in a national Environment & Planning vision

### **3. Government driven thematic case study: ‘Room for the River’ program**

The chapter on the thematic case study “Room for the River” is a study on the subject of water safety and spatial planning in the river basins of the Rhine, Waal, Lek and the IJssel. The thematic case study consists of interviews with social initiative takers from adjacent municipalities along the Rhine, Waal, Lek and the IJssel. The thematic case study gives a national view on the impact of the “Room for the River” program on social initiatives in the river basins. The decentralized-centralized approach (multi-level governance (Rijke, van Herk, Zevenbergen, & Ashley, 2012)) makes that each of the 34 projects stands on its own. The multi-governance approach resulted in projects that fit “external” contribution and projects that do not fit external contribution. For example, a height reduction of groins is merely in the river beds and does not include external contributions. A by-pass realization is a new spatial planning project affecting the river bedding and its inhabitants and is therefore (due to a possible multi-governance approach) fit for external contribution. The thematic case study includes several projects that had external contributions. The interviewees have contributed to these projects as social initiative takers.

The connection to the Environment & Planning vision is made through the national policy challenge addressed. ‘Room for the River’ is a policy designed as a solution to increase the water safety in river basins and the hinterland. The program implements the 34 projects in the river basins to increase water safety. Each of the social initiative takers contributes to one of the 34. These steps are shown in figure 19.

## FROM CASUS TO RELEVANT PROJECT



**Figure 19: The connection between Environment & Planning vision and social initiative takers**

This chapter starts with an introduction to the ‘Room for the River’ program in section 3.1. Furthermore the stakeholders involved are introduced to sketch the environment in which the program is carried out. Section 3.4 discusses the analyses of the responses, the interviewees which are interviewed and the projects in which they have participated.

### 3.1 ‘Room for the River’ introduction

The Netherlands has had an everlasting fight against floods. The inhabited areas are largely situated below sea level and are still subsiding, while the sea level is rising (Stokkom, Smits, & Leuven, 2005). Currently approximately 25 percent of the Netherlands is below sea level. The river discharges will grow and the sea level will rise in the future due to climate change. The Dutch position as a delta makes that the Dutch have a long tradition in water management. In this tradition water management was purely seen as a matter of civil engineers controlling nature (Rijke, van Herk, Zevenbergen, & Ashley, 2012). The level of control of civil engineers in the past decades is illustrated by Saeijs (1991, p.245) as: “God created man, but the Dutch created their own land”. From the mid-1980s river management gradually imported the upcoming issues of water quality, environmental concerns and nature conservation. Dutch water management shifted from a ‘battle against water’ with civil engineers as the sole designers towards ‘accommodating water’ with integrated water management and controlled eco systems (Wiering & Arts, 2006; Saeijs, 1991).

However, a similar transition in policy was not yet made. A near-flood in 1993 and 1995 was needed to create the policy window needed for the transition towards integrated water management. The more imposing of the two, the near-flood of 1995, nearly caused dike breaches and led to the evacuation of 250.000 people and 1 million cattle (Rijke, van Herk, Zevenbergen, & Ashley, 2012). The near-floods created a strong sense of urgency among politicians, public, public administration and water professionals. The water could no longer be controlled and a Delta Plan for large rivers was needed. The Delta Plan was followed by the 2,3 billion euro 'Room for the River' program, initiated in 2006 (Stokkom, Smits, & Leuven, 2005). 'Room for the River' The integrated water management perspective gave shape to the dual ambition of the program. The 'Room for the River' program aims for increasing the current maximum discharge capacity from 15.000 m<sup>3</sup>/s to 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>/s while improving the spatial quality of the river regions. Improving the spatial quality includes urban and landscape improvements, more recreation possibilities and local economy improvements (Program management Room for the River, 2011). With this dual ambition 34 'sub'-projects were to be executed in the Rhine, Waal, Lek and the IJssel rivers and river regions.

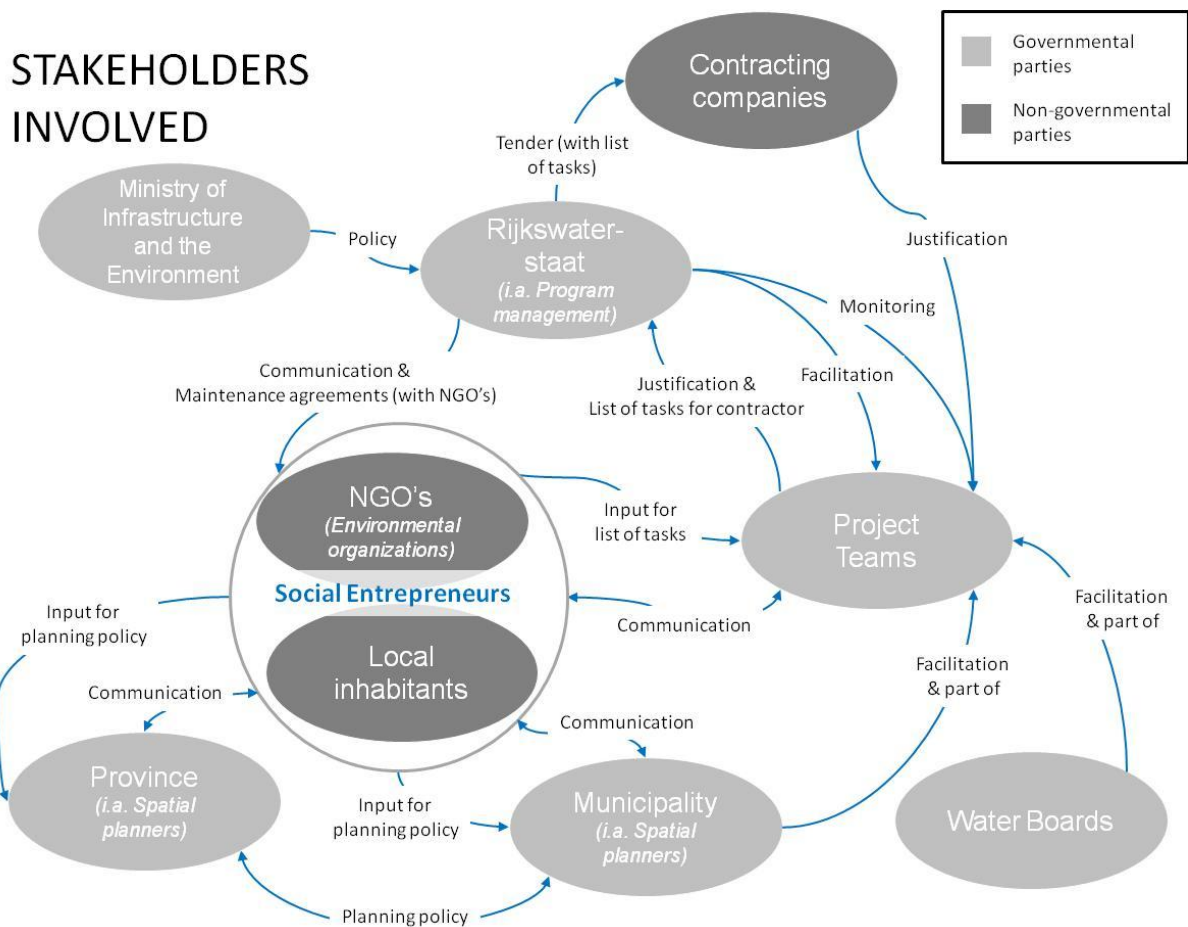
The program had three new aspects for water management in the Netherlands. Firstly, a multi-level governance approach was initiated, making the program a joint effort of Rijkswaterstaat, provinces, municipalities and water boards (Program management Room for the River, 2011). Secondly, the program had a dual ambition of improving water safety and spatial quality. Thirdly, 'Room for the River' was the first Dutch policy to accommodate water by making 'Room for the River'. Sustainability was a decisive factor in this policy, accommodating water was seen as the most sustainable option (Stokkom, Smits, & Leuven, 2005).

The local society<sup>24</sup> was important for the 'Room for the River' program and should not be neglected. Especially during the implementation and planning of the 34 'Room for the River' projects. During previous water management policies and projects water management agencies had 'disclosed' themselves from the public (Wiering & Arts, 2006). To make a change the 'Room for the River' introduced a multi-level governance and a dual ambition. A shift was made from disclosure of water managers to communication and public interaction. These two changes (dual ambition and multi-level governance) were not merely introduced to increase public interaction. However the changes did help increase the public interaction (van Twist et al., 2011; Wiering & Arts, 2006). The dual ambition has successfully implemented integrated outcomes, while the decentralized decision-making process (multi-level governance) has led to more local support of the projects (Rijke, van Herk, Zevenbergen, & Ashley, 2012). On the other hand, the dual ambition helps create boundary conditions for an integral approach and process that fits local and regional wishes and context. The integral approach and process lead to creativity in solutions and support by (municipal) administrators, the civil society and the public (van Twist et al., 2011, p. 15). Overall, the multi-level governance and dual ambition made 'Room for the River' a successful integral water management project.

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<sup>24</sup> Local society as in active and non-active citizens faced with the Room for the River project. Active citizens are for example protesting citizens but also social initiative takers

### 3.2 Stakeholders involved



**Figure 20: Stakeholders involved ‘Room for the River’ program (Rijke, van Herk, Zevenbergen, & Ashley, 2012; Wiering & Arts, 2006)**

Combining spatial planning and water management with the help of a multi-governance approach and clear communication with external actors is a process that includes many stakeholders. The previous section has introduced the overall program, but how are these actors linked in the ‘Room for the River’ program and its sub-projects? What are the roles and interdependencies between stakeholders involved and how do other stakeholders relate to the respondents of this study: the social initiative takers? To analyze the stakeholders ‘in the field’ an overview is made of the stakeholders, their interdependencies and their “role”. In figure 20 an overview is given of the overall project including the most relevant stakeholders for social initiative takers in ‘Room for the River’ and their interdependencies.

The figure shows the complex multi-governance of the ‘Room for the River’ program and its projects. The most important stakeholders for this thematic case study are the NGO’s and local inhabitants, since these include the social initiative takers (the interviewees/respondents). Figure 20 contains two messages which are important for the findings in this thematic case study. Firstly, the NGO’s and local inhabitants provide input to different actors depending on the project phases (planning or implementation). In the planning phase the input for planning policy is send to the actor leading the planning process (municipality or province). In the implementation phase the input is delivered to the project team. The input is called a ‘list of tasks’ with preferences of social initiative takers in terms of their initiatives. The list of tasks is sent to the contracting company via Rijkswaterstaat.



The second message is that the social initiative takers (NGO's and local inhabitant) are highly dependent on the municipality, provinces (in the planning phase) and project teams (in the implementation phase) for their communication. The social initiative takers are not leading in the implementation and planning making them dependent on other actors. Initiative takers have to rely on the project teams fulfilling their wishes and needs.

Figure 20 thus reveals that the social initiative takers are highly dependent on other actors in the planning and implementation phase. This overview however is a nor representative for all 'Room for the River' projects. The 'Room for the River' program consists of 34 small projects and therefore this overview is just a general perspective on integrative projects (dual ambition). The figure represents the interdependencies, but the power of these interdependencies may differ in specific projects. In some thematic cases the interaction between provinces, municipalities or project teams and initiative takers is stronger than presented in figure 20.

### 3.3 Interviewees/Respondents

Until now the respondents for this thematic case study are described as "Energetic society: The social initiative takers which started social bottom-up initiatives with an impact on the physical living environment; Responsive on governmental policy ('Room for the River')" (section 2.2.3). However, who are these social initiative takers in the context of 'Room for the River'? The program 'Room for the River' has introduced the multi-level governance to improve the collaboration and communication with the 'public' (Rijke, van Herk, Zevenbergen, & Ashley, 2012). The public, and the local inhabitants described in figure 20, are inhabitants of river basin municipalities which are faced with the 'Room for the River' projects. Rijkswaterstaat grants the river basin municipalities additional compensation aiming for better collaboration and communication with the public and NGO's. The multi-level governance approach has led to significant inclusion of the public and NGO's (van Twist, et al., 2011).

The significant inclusion of the public and NGO's has also led to bottom-up initiatives in the river basin region. The atmosphere created by the multi-level governance (among other factors) gave bottom-up initiatives the possibility to be included in the planning policy. In hindsight the social initiative takers in 'Room for the River' can be described as: social initiative takers which responded to the 'Room for the River' program (and its projects) by introducing and including their (bottom-up) initiative in the project's planning study.

On a side note, the organizational background of initiative takers varies. Some of the interviewees are from an organization that was already active on, for example, nature. As a result these interviewees were already involved in a foundation or association.

The interviews are found in Appendix VI. The search for initiative takers who were willing to participate resulted in the following list of interviewees:

- Respondent 1 – Founder of IJsselandschap and initiative taker of 'Natuurderij Keizersrande' – Keizers- en Stobbenwaard en Olsterwaarden (Deventer)
- Respondent 2 – Project leader Marina Deventer - Keizers- en Stobbenwaard en Olsterwaarden (Deventer)
- Respondent 3 – Founder Committee Bossenwaard – Honswijkerwaarden, stuweiland Hagestein, Hagesteinse uiterwaarden en Heerenwaard (near Utrecht)



### 3.4 Findings ‘Room for the River’

The findings are separated in the four elements of TIP-Design; technical, institutional, process and design. The findings are presented as answers to the four sub-questions asked as can be seen in figure 22. This section starts with the technical element, followed by the institutional, process and design elements. The findings are based on the answers given during the interviews with initiative takers.

## SUB-QUESTIONS

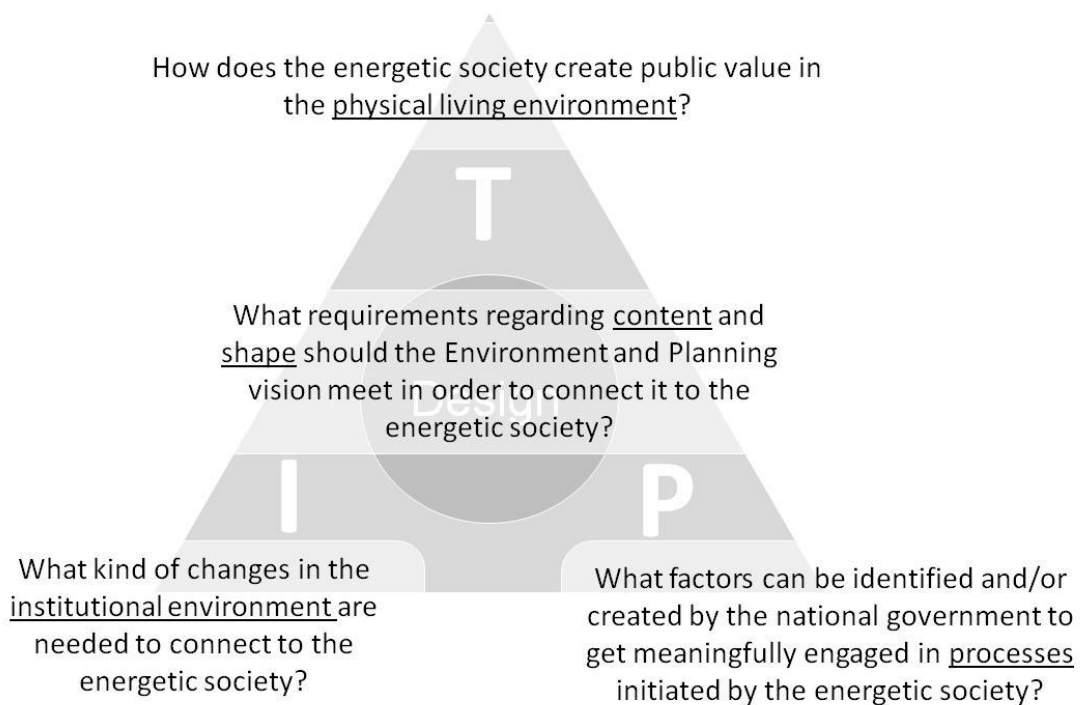


Figure 22: Thesis sub-questions

#### 3.4.1 Territorial

The interview questions consist of several questions that contribute to the sub-question: *How can the energetic society participate in the creation of public value in the physical living environment?* This ‘technical’ sub-question contains the two theoretical indicators and an additional component: The motivation for developing a social initiative. The indicators and components questioned are:

1. Motivation for developing a social initiative
2. Public value creation
3. Project interests vs. interests direct surroundings (neighbors)

##### 1) Motivation for developing a social initiative

Motivation for the development consists of three potential components: a reaction to ‘Room for the River’, the personal background of social initiative takers (/interviewees) and their initiatives or plans before ‘Room for the River’.

Firstly, all initiative takers respond to the 'Room for the River' program coming their way. Most of them are first confronted with the program at an information meeting by the planning authority (provinces, municipality or Rijkswaterstaat). It is a window of opportunity opening for them. The program introduces solutions to the water issues and the approach of quality improvements in the area. The initiative takers took the 'Room for the River' project<sup>25</sup> as a chance to improve their current activity, start a new initiative or as an invitation for participation (with initiatives as result) rather than a threat.

Secondly, a general pattern is that the initiative takers have a personal background 'in the field'. Many of the interviewees are involved in the initiative due to their expertise. For example the initiative taker of 'Play Nature' brings in her job expertise (*"I bring in my job expertise in my voluntary work"*).

Thirdly, some of the initiative takers are inhabitants of a planning area<sup>26</sup> and already active in that area. The difference is that they have improved or shifted their activities towards a new social initiative that fits the local 'Room for the River' project.

## **2) Public value creation**

The dual ambition of the 'Room for the River' program works for the initiative takers. Their contribution to the projects dual ambition is significant in their eyes. The motivation towards on water is broadly carried out by interviewees and the improvement of (spatial) quality is linked to their initiatives.

A general pattern is that the interviewees feel connected to the project. Some of them are almost a spokesperson for the project, they have great knowledge on the water ambition and the project as a whole. Most of the interviewees are almost as a guide for the project. Being inhabitant of the area and the realization of their initiative makes the interviewees feel strongly connected to the project.

Furthermore, the contribution of initiative takers often lies with the improvement of the spatial quality in the area. Tacit knowledge of the project's planning area and citizens in the direct surroundings is used by interviewees to help the project. The ambition of the initiative taker is that after implementing 'Room for the River' the spatial quality of the area should be higher, resulting to their initiative in the area.

## **3) Project interests vs. interests direct surroundings (neighbors)**

A general pattern is that the initiative takers try to include their direct neighbors, the local society, by informing them on initiative takers' plans. The informing is vice versa; Initiative takers inform neighbors on their initiative and neighbors tend to share their needs and interest with the initiative takers. This information exchange is however not structural. The information is shared, but the collaboration between the neighborhood and initiative takers is not as good as they would have liked it to be. The information on the needs of others is gathered by the interviewees and incorporated in their initiative. Project leader of the marina Deventer explains: *"Together with the municipality a plan*

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<sup>25</sup> The projects mentioned are the sub-projects of Room for the River executed near the interviewees. The social initiative takers are connected to their initiatives. "Project" is the Room for the River project (one of the 34). "Initiative" is the initiative or project started by initiative takers

<sup>26</sup> Planning area or project's planning area is the area on which one of the 34 Room for the River projects is to be implemented

*on a plantation is made. Everything is done in collaboration with them (neighbors, ed.). Must the tree be planted left or right? Then we do it right."*

Although the intentions are mostly pure, conflicts are still a possibility. All of the initiative takers inform their neighbors and want to include the interests of their neighbors. However, the thematic case of De Vreugdehoeve shows that if the interests of a neighbor and initiative taker do not line up, a conflict can arise.

Finally, the municipality is often a facilitator in the process in terms of bringing the initiative and society together. A general pattern is that the municipality is often closely connected to the project. For example, the municipality is the owner of the new marina in Deventer and the play nature near Utrecht and is therefore also included in the connection between neighborhood and initiative.

### **3.4.2 Institutional**

*What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?*

This institutional sub-question is translated in several interview questions that discuss the two theoretical indicators (1 & 2) and two additional components (3&4):

1. Collaborative arrangements
2. Interaction government and social initiative taker
3. Continuous effect of a vision
4. Social initiative (takers)

#### **1) Collaborative arrangements**

The complex governance makes that stakeholders are always involved in a sort of arena setting with a large amount of interests at stake. In terms of Williamson 'arrangements' and 'actors and games' these are the two least embedded institutional layers. These two form the focus of ...: arrangements in the form of collaboration and actor and games in the interaction between initiative takers and civil servants and their organizations.

The context for collaboration is complicated. The complexity is further hampered by the fact that initiative takers are often not fully in charge of their initiatives. The social initiatives are highly dependent on other stakeholders involved in the 'Room for the River' project. For example, in the case of the Deventer Marina the marina is dependent on the water board for the implementation as well as the municipality as owner of the property.

The collaboration between initiative takers and other stakeholders is often formal. The collaboration is frequently shaped in a sort of 'triangle'. In this triangle the contracting actor and project executioner have made a contract in which the initiative (or part of) is incorporated. The initiative taker has no contract with both stakeholders. The result is a situation in which the social initiative taker is dependent on the executioner (project leader) and contracted company (technical executioner).

Furthermore, most of the initiative takers (or their predecessors) have taken place in an advisory board. The interviewees explain that the advisory boards are set up in the planning phase. The interaction in that stage is often good. After the planning phase the advisory boards are either abolished or continued. The experience with either of these scenarios is that continuing the advisory board has a positive influence, good collaboration and open dialogue on what is best, on the

process. Quitting the board has a negative influence on the process, for example a wrong translation of the wishes and needs of a social initiative by the municipality or water board.

Finally, what is important for these collaboration arrangements? The interviewees name transparency and openness as the most important factors in good collaboration. Transparency and openness are needed because the collaborations and their communication are often formal and do not provide sufficient (usable) information.

### ***2) Interaction government and social initiative taker***

A first pattern shown is the often very formal interaction between social initiative takers and other stakeholders, especially during the implementation phase of the projects. Mail, signed letters or other formal communication forms are named as forms of information sharing. A problem with this formal attitude is that governments in charge of the implementation (municipalities, Rijkswaterstaat or water boards) are non-transparent and inflexible.

The second pattern is that a partner inside a public administration (organization) is found by social initiative takers or an advisory board is set up by the stakeholders in charge. A partner helps the initiative taker with the complexity of the project and facilitates the proper information exchange. An advisory board helps sharing knowledge, information and interest between stakeholders (the initiative takers and the project team, planning authority or other stakeholders). In an advisory board or in a relation between partner and initiative taker the information exchange improves and becomes more informal. In most cases an advisory board is present in the planning phase and sometimes in the implementation phase of the 'Room for the River' program.

Concluding, the initial interaction between initiative and other involved stakeholders (non-public stakeholders, for example the contracting actor and public stakeholders) is formal. When a trustee from an organization or advisory board (more intense collaboration) is found the interaction improves and is of a more informal nature.

### ***3) Continuous effect vision***

The 'Room for the River' program has no real continuous effect. In literature the continued effect of the project is questioned (Wiering & Arts, 2006). The interviewees are generally positive about the 'Room for the River' program and -projects. The programs' dual ambition is often named by interviewees. The water issue is referred to as the national issue in which they participate and (spatial) quality as their ambition in the project. However, a real continuous effect seems absent in the interviews. Interviewees speak of 'Room for the River' on project basis.

### ***3) Social initiative (takers)***

There are three significant findings on the profile of the social initiative taker and its initiative. Firstly, the context of some of the initiative takers needs certain expertise in order to succeed in their initiative: expertise (often tacit knowledge) on technical issues, such as nature development or engineering and expertise on the public sector in order to deal with the complexity of the 'Room for the River' project. Also expertise is needed to deal with the governments involved. The expertise or tacit knowledge is an asset of the initiative takers (or initiative partners).

Secondly, all of the initiatives are set up by foundations, individuals or groups who were already active in the 'neighborhood'. Either they have adjusted their initial proceedings or used the 'Room for the River' project to increase the quality and value of the project's planning area with a new initiative.

Thirdly, a pattern is that the interviewees need to have patience and stamina. They experience 'Room for the River' as a long term project. The project is demanding and tough on some of the interviewees and their partners. A long lasting project in combination with rigid negotiations can even result in initiative takers that quit the project. (*"My predecessor has experienced the entire process and he is, almost overwrought, pulled out due to the affair. It is voluntary work."*)

### **3.4.3 Process**

The interview questions consist of the steering perspective of the role of the government and the engagement of governments (and third actors) in initiatives. These two aspects should facilitate insights on the sub-question: *"What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged with a process for an energetic society?"* The findings are discussed in the following three components:

1. Role of the government
2. Engagement of governments
3. Difference between the planning phase and implementation phase

The first two components were initially assessed. The third component, The difference between planning and implementation, is an additional finding worth discussing. The theoretical indicators trust, shared meaning, knowledge integration and leadership in the process are also analyzed in the process findings. These theoretical indicators are found in all three components.

#### ***1) Role of the government***

The stakeholder analyses revealed a profile of complexity and interdependencies (especially for initiative takers). This profile is also seen in the interviews. Public stakeholders mentioned including the municipality, the province and the water board. The municipality is discussed first, followed by the province and water board.

A general pattern is that the municipality has a dual role as planning authority. The roles of the municipality are seen as (1) facilitating and (2) first point of information towards social initiative takers on the Room of the River project. The facilitating role however seems unnatural to municipalities. Often the role as facilitator is preceded by a regulating role. The municipalities see the projects as potential sight for development. After complaints the role is shifted towards a more facilitating role for locals (faced with the project) and initiatives. The committee Bossenwaard is an example of this shift. This committee started due to a conflict with municipal plans. Later the collaboration shifted and was improved due to the new role of the municipality (from director to participating or network). Furthermore the municipality is seen as two different actors: civil servants and aldermen. The difference is that civil servants are often willing to help initiatives. On the other hand some of the interviewees have asked the aldermen to 'make a statement', something that is not given to initiative takers (A problem in an already complex playfield of stakeholders). Civil servants and alderman are two different actors with different expectations. Also, the two actors do not always cooperate well.

The province is not included in all interviews. If a province is named, the province is the leading planning authority bringing actors together. The leading role of the province is often performed to everyone's expectation.

The water board is also not referred to in all interviews. The interviews that did include the water board give negative feedback on the role of the water board. The water board has a traditional role as water manager and water regulator. However, the scope of the river basin brings in and includes 'new' stakeholders and a dual ambition. In a leading or more project managing role the water board was inadequate. A leading or directing role with spatial planning (integral planning) seemed 'too much'.

## *2) Engagement of governments*

The engagement of governmental actors in the social initiatives is, inside this thematic case study, strong. Either the water board or the municipality is often in charge of the implementation of the social initiatives. The social initiative takers are therefore more participating and involved in the social initiative. The interviewees mention two factors in the participation and involvement in the 'Room for the River' project:

- Meaningful participation and involvement (of initiative takers in their own social initiative)
- Openness on the considerations made

A general pattern is that the initiative takers want to be heard. Initiative takers want to have the feeling that they are heard and that their information is included in the project. Each of the interviewees and their partners possess a large amount of knowledge which is waiting to be used. Initiative takers want to be heard and use their tacit knowledge for a better result of the social initiative and the 'Room for the River' project. The initiative taker of 'play nature' explains: *"involve the stakeholders from the beginning of a plan in an 'adult way'. Don't let input feel as criticism, but interpret it as expertise."* Concluding, meaningful participation and involvement of initiative takers in their own social initiatives and the 'Room for the River' sub-projects can be facilitated by (1) significant participation (let initiative takers be heard and decide), (2) openness of the governmental actors on the considerations made and (3) an intense participation process in which the (tacit) knowledge of initiative takers is heard and used.

Also, documentation and information provision is a point of attention. Some interviewees are scared of missing out. No basis of mutual trust is felt on this point. In response, the interviewees are keen on gathering as much information as possible. However, in the case of De Vreugdehoeve and Play Nature the basis of trust is present. If this basis is present the information exchange between initiative taker and implementing or planning authority goes smoother.

Furthermore, a pattern is that social initiative takers see a shared goal or ambition which could make a difference. A shared goal or shared ambition improves their initiative's process and the project itself. If a social initiative shares his ambition with a governmental actor the process goes smoother (a process with improved mutual understanding and open conversations). A shared ambition or goal facilitates in drive, positive energy and a will for reaching the best solution in dialogue.

Another pattern seen is the need for an open process. The initiative takers find it important that the process between them and the government (mostly municipalities) is open. A government should be



open about the choices and considerations that are made. Initiative takers find it difficult to understand some of the choices and considerations made as the systematic world of governments is hard to understand for initiative takers. With an open process the mutual understanding will grow.

It is important to note that some of the interviewees are volunteers. A fact that they feel is forgotten. The interviewees are spoken to if they are any other actor in negotiation. The interviewees receive no compensation for their time investments. The interviewees consider this as unfair, since the negotiation and communication is structured as it is with every involved stakeholder. The interviewees are willing to invest time and effort in their initiative and the 'Room for the River' project, however they feel that the time and effort spend is unappreciated.

### ***3) Difference between the planning and implementation phase***

There seems to be a clear pattern in the difference of participation and involvement between the planning and the implementation phase. In the planning phase the collaborations between the initiative takers/initiatives and planning authorities is good. The Information exchange goes smooth and the interviewees are satisfied. In the implementation phase the collaboration is rigid. Doors are closed for negotiations and the information exchange is formal and sometimes even hostile.

How can e this difference be explained? Interviewees consider the planning authorities as open for their participation and involvement. The planning is flexible and adjustable on the basis of reasoning and dialogue. The process is open and initiative takers are significantly involved.

In the implementation phase (and in the shift towards execution) the participation and involvement decreases. The difference? 'Real' budget comes in. The project has a tight planning, the planning authority is substituted and (most importantly) changes have a direct financial consequence. Flexibility becomes inflexibility and transparency decreases. However, if a certain stability remains the transition is better. For example, the initiatives of 'Play nature' and committee Bossenwaard were included in an advisory board. During the transition from planning to implementation the advisory board stayed intact. This way initiative takers stayed involved and the advisory board had status in the implementation phase. A stability during unstable times. Rijkswaterstaat came in as directing party and a contractor was send in for the technical implementation. The advisory board helped the initiative takers and Rijkswaterstaat. The initiative takers knew that their initiative was executed and the directing party used their tacit knowledge for specific hand on solutions.

#### **3.4.4 Design**

The fourth TIP-Design element is design. The design does not facilitate in potential content on the physical living environment. For example, the vision should mention Shrinkage as a national issue, but the question on design asks for the context of the content, for example ambitions mentioned should be concrete and understandable. Both shape and content are reflected in the sub-question: *"What kind of content and shape are to be made in the Environment and Planning vision in order to connect it to the energetic society?"*.

The interviewees have shared their view on content (context) and shape. First the (1) content is discussed followed by the (2) shape. The theoretical indicators for design are 'participation in governmental issues' and 'appeal to governmental documentation'. The participation in governmental issues is analyzed in content. The appeal to governmental documentation is analyzed in shape.

### ***1) Content (participation in governmental issues)***

What does content mean for the interviewees? A general pattern is that the interviewees do had the feeling that they could contribute to the ambitions stated by the Room of the River program. Every initiative taker used the program's ambition in their own way, for example for recreational, nature development or educational purposes. Initiative takers feel that they are a part of the project, often in a positive manner (I have contributed), though sometimes in a negative way (the project only has negative consequences). The clear ambitions of the 'Room for the River' project contributed to this feeling of inclusion. The clear statement of 16.000 m<sup>3</sup>/sec max. discharge capacity helps. Although this amount is potentially meaningless for them the fact that the discharge capacity has to grow is simple and clear.

Furthermore a note for the content is to 'keep the content'. A vision or program document and its impact are 'slow'. Shifting between different contents could make initiative takers feel 'lost'. It takes time for all of the interviewees to get acquainted with the content and the impact of that content. The tip is: be robust on the content and keep communicating what the impact or progress is. In other words: *"I think that it is important for governments to realize that they have to abide by certain plans and that they also keep us posted on what is done and what's not and be clear about it."*

### ***2) Shape (appeal to governmental documentation)***

The possibility for advice on shape or potential documentation had little response. A pattern, in a small amount of responses, is that two components are important. Firstly, the documentation is too formal for the interviewees. It was hard to read and too wordy. Searching for the relevant content was referred to as difficult. Help with the documentation was however often within reach. Some of the interviewees had trustees inside a municipality or water board. Trustees helped them find the relevant content. The tips given for improving the documentation were: make the text shorter, to the point and less complicated and add visuals where needed.

## **3.5 Conclusion**

The section above analyzed all interviews. A large amount of conclusions on small aspects are shown. So what is the overall conclusions of the thematic case study on the 'Room for the River' program?

Each TIP-Design (T,I,P & Design) element has its own overall conclusion. On the technical element the public value creation and the local interests are questioned. The conclusion is that the intention of initiative takers is always to create added value and incorporate the interests of their direct surroundings. The successes with incorporating the interest are various, but the outcome, , is always good.

The institutional element shows that the initiatives are small stakeholders in a complex playing field. The relationships in this complex playing field could, in the eyes of the initiative taker, be improved. The most important improvements are: Keep the interactions between government and initiative takers informal (works better for initiative takers) and implement a collaboration form in which the initiative takers are significantly incorporated in the project and the social initiatives.

In process the role of the government differs per government and even within municipalities (the difference between civil servant and alderman or administrators). The only general line found in process is the engagement between these actors and the interviewees. The advice of the interviewees is to use their tacit knowledge in a trajectory in which initiative takers are significantly

incorporated. Adding their knowledge to the project could improve both the project as the engagement between government and social initiative taker.

The design element shows that if the product were to be developed for them, the content and shape should be clear, to the point and more 'their language' and keep the communication on that program or vision ongoing.

The overall experience with 'Room for the River' is that the program is new due to the dual ambition. The water managers are confronted with new (spatial) actors and a new sort of complexity. The planning authorities are well aware of the inclusion of social initiative takers (and other similar actors) in the planning process. The implementing actors (often water managers) are however new with the actors included in the program. Sometimes the collaboration goes well, sometimes it does not. A new project management approach seems needed in order to improve such programs for smaller actors such as the social initiative takers.

*So how should a government-led Environment & Planning vision (or parts of it) support social initiative takers?*<sup>27</sup> The question is, is an improvement in project management needed (and therefore a different literature) or is an improvement in policy (as the Environment & Planning vision) enough. The study showed that government-led policy could be designed to better fit the social initiative. Currently, the social initiative takers are small stakeholders in a large field of important and strong stakeholders. But findings have shown that the social initiative takers could contribute to big-budget projects. The aerial tacit knowledge and initiatives who increase the spatial quality are two examples of what the social initiative takers have to offer. In return the initiative takers would like to be a significant stakeholder in the entire process, both in the planning and implementation phase.

A government-led policy should possess a couple elements. Firstly, an intense collaboration form, such as an advisory board and/or a trustee from the project team should be offered to social initiative takers. Such a form of collaboration helps increase the transparency and openness of the project and their initiative. Also, the initiative takers create the feeling of contribution, being heard and equality. It is important to reach an informal setting between the initiative taker(s) and implementing authority or planning authority. Secondly, keep your collaboration going in both the planning phase as the implementation phase of the project. In the shift between these phases and in the implementation phase itself the collaboration decreases. Keep the collaboration ongoing to keep their contributions intact. Thirdly, the documentation and information should be made fitting for social initiative takers (and group members). Keep the documentation simple and visual to improve their understanding of an often complex project. And finally, give them the confidence and legitimacy to help implement the initiative in the local environment. With a little help the initiative takers are willing and capable of successful implementation in consensus with the direct surroundings.

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<sup>27</sup> This question refers to the main research question: *How can the national government support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision?* The social initiative taker is the actor researched and one of the representations of the energetic society. The 'government-led' refers to the government led steering perspective explained in section 2.2.2. The Room for the River program is a national government-led program



## **4. Market/Societal driven thematic case study: Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration**

This thematic case, focusing on the general issue of shrinkage, concerns an present or future theme that likely will be taken on board in the new national vision. In February 2009 Minister Van der Laan visited Parkstad (a shrinkage region in southern Netherlands). During his visit he made a clear statement: 'shrinkage needed a clear and strong agenda on national scale' (Crooy, 2015). One of the first steps the minister made was installing a Topteam Shrinkage lead by former Minister Hans Dijkstal. The Dijkstal commission observed shrinkage in several peripheral regions of the Netherlands and noted that the Dutch government needed to act on this shrinkage (Dijkstal & Mans, 2009). In the end of 2009 the first action plan on population decline (shrinkage) was founded. Currently shrinkage is a theme in which livability of an area is the core criteria for intervention. In October 2014 the last milestone was reached when a 'newspaper' named 'van Onderop' (Bottom-up in Dutch) was released. The newspaper partially described the national approach (the approach of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment & Ministry of Internal Affairs) on shrinkage as: help as participating government, as actor on the shrinkage issue and as collector or centre of shrinkage knowledge (Ruimtevolk, 2014).

Shrinkage is an issue where the energetic society, with bottom-up initiatives, directly helps strengthening the livability in the regions. Also, shrinkage regions are precursors in societal change (Crooy, 2015). This makes shrinkage is a perfect thematic case for research. It will facilitate answers on how Environment & Planning vision could help bottom-up initiatives. Furthermore, the role as participating government can be analyzed in both process and institutional aspects. The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment tries to gather knowledge and facilitate the knowledge exchange between these bottom-up initiatives. Facilitation should help future bottom-up initiatives with valuable information.

Section 4.1 starts with an introduction of the issue of shrinkage and vacancy in the Netherlands. This section is followed by an analysis of the stakeholders involved in general. The third section describes the respondents chosen and introduces the interviewees in this thematic case study. The fourth section describes the findings in this thematic case study. Chapter 4 finalizes with an overall conclusion on the Shrinkage & Vacancy study

### **4.1 Shrinkage and Vacancy introduction**

Shrinkage regions are regions that are confronted with declining number of inhabitants. In The upcoming 15 years several Dutch regions will be faced with this trend (PBL, 2010). The declining number of inhabitants in shrinkage regions has consequences for the housing- and labor market and the economic activity. The population of many of these (small) villages and/or cities is aging and many of the young inhabitants are moving out of the shrinkage regions in search for work. The trend of shrinkage leads to population losses, declining number of households and workforce in certain regions. Furthermore, facilities such as sport facilities, libraries, stores, schools, culture and housing are under pressure. The potential result is vacancy, declining housing prices and deterioration of the regional economy. Shrinkage regions are due to these reasons faced with the issues of maintaining the livability (Ruimtevolk, 2014).

So what is the definition of Shrinkage? The Dijkstal commission (2009) described Shrinkage regions on the basis of three criteria, which reads as follows:

- There is substantial and structural decline in population and households on regional scale (in which urban areas could be part of that region)
- The Topteam (comparable to the Dijkstal commission) aims on Shrinkage on the long term, whereby not only the population decline, but also a decline in the number of households is present
- This type of shrinkage has large consequences for the level of facilities and economic activities of the region, because the shrinkage is an structural problem for the necessary level of facilities and because the region is faced with loss of value

The regions who meet the criteria are spread all over the Netherlands. Every one of these regions has its own (administrative) culture and pallet of shrinkage issues (PBL, 2010). In short, every shrinkage region has its own context. However, generalization of Shrinkage issues is still possible (Dijkstal & Mans, 2009).

Several studies and commissions made an attempt at finding a correct solution to the Shrinkage issues. The experiences so far have showed that fighting shrinkage has little effect. On the other hand facilitating shrinkage is also a hard and unpopular process. The advice of the PBL (2010) is to recognize shrinkage in an early stage and solve or prevent future issues.

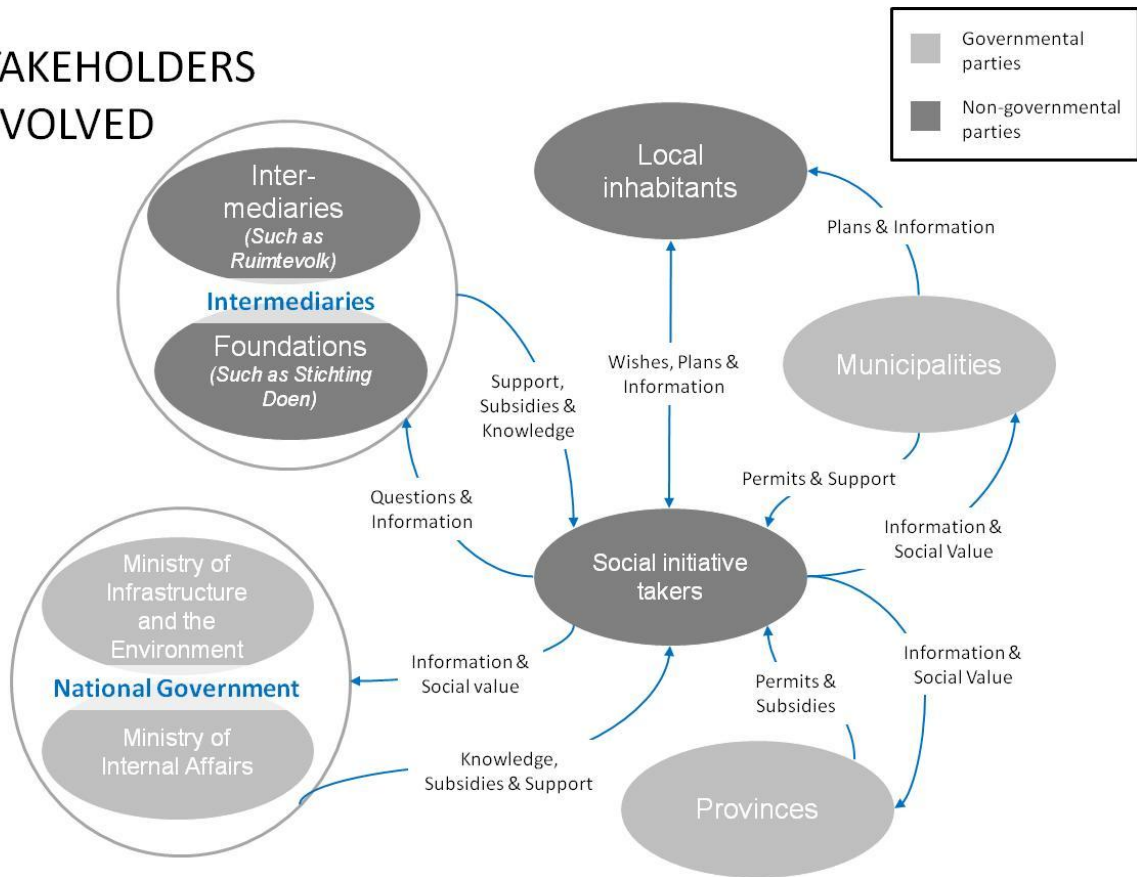
Another movement in Shrinkage regions is an upcoming participating society (comparable to an energetic society). More often citizens and entrepreneurs make innovative and creative contributions to keep shrinkage regions livable. So far, the commitment from the society has lead to multiple divergent initiatives on livability and future perspectives for the region.

The energetic society is a trend in shrinkage regions. Local society has more responsibility and collaborates with a smaller government. The fear is that some regions are in fact strong enough to facilitate themselves where other regions are less adaptable (Crooy, 2015). Building on the energetic society in the shrinkage regions can contribute to the livability. However, build with caution and recognize areas that are less adaptable.

## **4.2 Stakeholders involved**

In the search of inhabitants for increasing livability, the inhabitants of shrinkage regions are faced with many stakeholders. The social initiative takers are one of the many stakeholders active in Shrinkage regions. The enthusiastic and assertive citizens that do start a social initiative are faced with municipalities, provinces, intermediaries, foundations or even ministries. A general overview of the stakeholders that influence the social initiative takers is shown in figure 23. The overview also shows the complexity and interdependences in Shrinkage regions.

## STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED



**Figure 23: Stakeholders involved Shrinkage & Vacancy, made on the basis of interviews (Appendix VII) and PBL (2010) and Dijkstal & Mans (2009)**

Figure 23 reveals the many potential relations and interdependencies one social initiative taker could have. It should be noted that not all of the connections stated above are in reality a connection. The overview given is a generalization of stakeholders active in all Shrinkage regions. Specific Shrinkage regions or even villages in these regions may have a slightly different situation. However, the many potential connections show the complexity for social initiative takers. Social initiative takers are not often volunteers and find it hard to collect the connections needed for their specific initiative. In short, a social initiative taker is faced with a complex system. The social initiative taker has to find the right connections (subsidies, permits and support/knowledge/information) in order to let its initiative succeed.

Furthermore, figure 23 shows the interdependence of stakeholders in the Shrinkage thematic case. The task of social initiative takers is clear. They focus on information sharing, potentially with other initiative takers, and add social value with their initiative. The governmental tasks however are fragmented. The initiative takers/social initiative takers can be dependent on multiple scales of the governments (national, regional or local).

A remark on the figure is the uniformity of stakeholders it suggests. In reality the municipalities, provinces and ministries are not one uniform stakeholder. All of these administrations are large organizations in which some of the public servants are responsible for a certain segment which is important for a social initiative (taker). So making connections with a governmental actor is not as simple as it seems.

A last remark on figure 23 is that the intermediaries could be more important than this figure suggests. A strong feature of potential intermediaries is that they “know their way around”. Social initiative takers could use their help in finding the right subsidies, right permits and/or the right public servants. The intermediaries can make the same connections as a social initiative taker can (potentially better).

### 4.3 Interviewees/Respondents

Until now the respondents for this thematic case study are described as “Energetic society: The social initiative takers which start social bottom-up initiatives with an impact on the physical living environment; Responsive on governmental policy and social initiative” (section 2.2.3). But who are these social initiative takers in the context of Shrinkage? The social initiative takers in the context of Shrinkage are initiative takers who:

1. Are responsible for, or part of, initiatives which add social value (livability or social-economic)
2. Have an physical impact; an impact on the physical living environment
3. Active in a region labeled as Shrinkage or anticipate regions

The initiatives are widespread over different domains and sectors. Both a solar park in which solar panels are integrated in park scenery and a care home for inhabitants with dementia are examples of a social initiative in a Shrinkage region. The initiatives are connected, because they help the livability or maintain social-economic factors.

The people that are the driving force behind the initiatives are the ones interviewed in this thematic case study. The interviews are found in Appendix VII. The search for initiative takers who were willing to participate resulted in the following list of interviewees:

- Respondent 1 – Initiative taker Ecovillage Boekel – North-East Brabant (Boekel)
- Respondent 2 – Initiative taker ‘Hoeksche Waardenmakerij’ – ‘Hoeksche Waard’ (all of Hoeksche waard)
- Respondent 3 – Initiative taker ‘t Zorghuus’ – Northern Limburg (Venray)
- Respondent 4 – Initiative taker ‘Leutfabriek’ – ‘Zeeuws-Vlaanderen’ (Terneuzen)
- Respondent 5 – Owner Outbound; Motorhome products - North-East Brabant (Boekel)
- Respondent 6 – Co-founder Solarpark ‘de Kwekerij’ – ‘Twente’ (Hengelo)
- Respondent 7 – Initiative taker ‘Groen voor Rood’ – Northern Groningen (Delfzijl)
- Respondent 8 – Initiative taker BS22 – ‘Achterhoek’ (Oost Gelre)
- Respondent 9 – Initiative taker Swaneblake – ‘Hoeksche Waard’ (Korendijk)



Figure 24 shows where the initiatives are conducted.



Figure 24: Shrinkage region in the Netherlands (Respondents are active in named regions)

The previous described Bottom-up newspaper and national civil servants active on the Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration inside the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment are consulted in order to find the social initiative takers. In contrast to the 'Room for the River' program the examples of social initiative takers in Shrinkage region were numerous. A selection had to be made in order to keep the work load manageable. The selection was made on the advice of the national civil servants questioned, the impact on the physical living environment and spread. The initiatives should have a

clear impact on the physical living environment and the initiatives should be nationally spread. The selection made resulted in the approach approximately fifteen initiatives. The nine initiate takers interviewed were the ones that responded and were willing to participate.

#### 4.4 Findings Shrinkage and Vacancy

The findings are separated in the four elements of TIP-Design (technical, institutional, process and design). The findings are presented as answers on the four sub-questions asked. The overall view is seen in figure 25. Section 4.4 starts with the technical element, followed by the institutional and the process and the section concludes with the findings on design. The findings consist of an analysis of the answers given on the interview questions.

## SUB-QUESTIONS

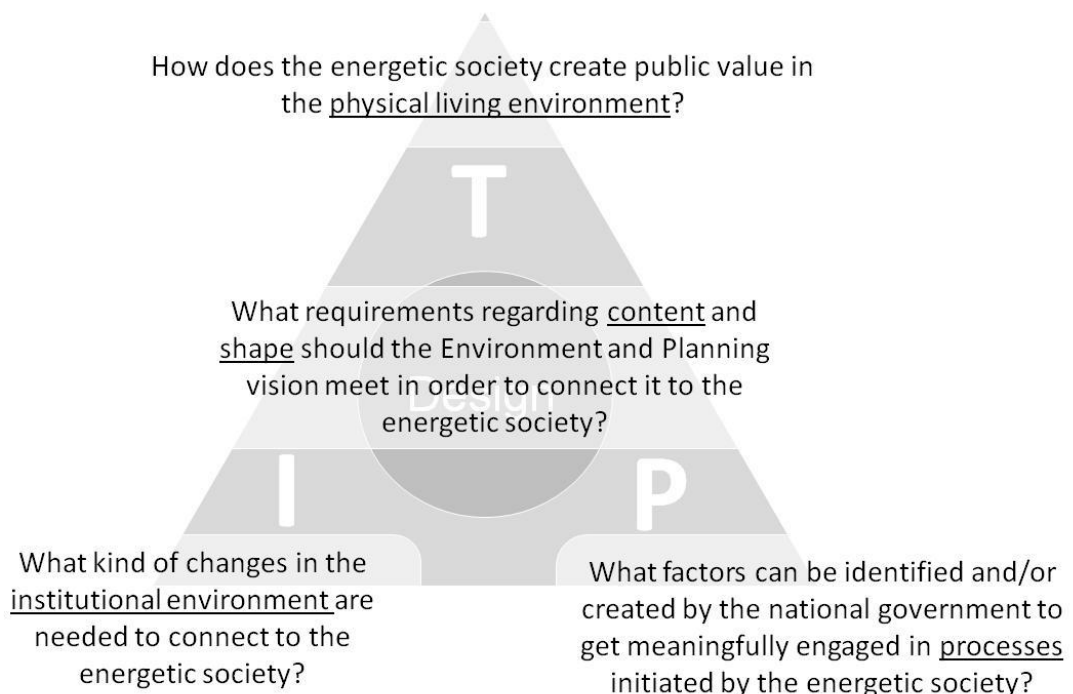


Figure 25: Thesis sub-questions

#### 4.4.1 Technical

The interview questions consist of several questions that contribute to the sub-question: *How can the energetic society participate in the creation of public value in the physical living environment?* This 'technical' sub-question contains the two theoretical indicators and an additional component: The motivation for developing a social initiative. The indicators and component questioned are:

1. Motivation for developing a social initiative
2. Public value creation
3. Project interests vs. interests direct surroundings (neighbors)

### ***1) Motivation for developing a social initiative***

The analysis shows two factors for the development of a social initiative. The first factor is the reactive response on governmental policy. Some of the social initiative takers respond to governmental policy which is in their perception incorrect or insufficient. In other words, a reaction on “bad policy”. The initiative taker of the Leutfabriek gave an example of the governmental policy that led to his social initiative: *“After the fusion a large municipal office of the municipality of Sas van Gent was empty. Properties were boarded up and windows scattered. at that moment the municipality of Terneuzen made a vision document in which owners of pauperized properties could be held accountable. So I said: “Look to at your own property first.”* The municipal office became the Leutfabriek.

The second factor is the motivation to create public value. All of the initiative takers are entrepreneurs in their own way. The social initiative takers are entrepreneurs with a social ‘heart’. The initiative is started to solve a local or abstract issue.

### ***2) Public value creation***

A general pattern is that there is an intrinsic value for improving the local living environment or solving a global issue. The motivation for starting the social initiative is very often driven by the creation of public value. Even entrepreneurs that started from a purely economic view, with ‘social elements to it’ seem to have an intrinsic value of improving their local living environment or contribute to solving a global issue.

Concluding, there are two different kinds of initiative takers: 1) The ones with an intrinsic motivation of improving their local living environment or 2) others which have an intrinsic motivation of contributing to a more abstract issue. The ones that improve their local living environment are in fact local citizens. The social initiative takers that contribute to a more abstract issue (such as energy transition, global warming and sustainability) are in fact not current inhabitants that use the open space and open minded municipalities. The new comers and local citizens use the open physical space, active society in Shrinkage regions and the open space in the public domain (due to a withdrawing municipality).

Furthermore, a pattern is that the technical execution of their initiative is never mentioned as a problem. In the eyes of many of the initiative takers the crux lies in municipal governance. The need for structural improvements in the Shrinkage region is only mentioned in combination with their own initiative. The initiative takers contribute to an issue in the region by creating public value with their initiatives, a sort of shared ownership. Initiative takers do not mention other ‘needs’ (for example infrastructure or facilities). They take the area as it is.

### ***3) Project interests vs. interests direct surroundings (neighbors)***

All interviewees are questioned on whether they have incorporated their direct surroundings in their initiatives. Almost all of the interviewees answered “yes”. Incorporating the neighborhood is considered normal. Also, incorporating the neighborhood is one of their first actions and is one of their proudest moments. often no objections are made when the plans are officially presented. These zero objections are often the result of an intense collaboration between initiative takers and their neighborhoods in the planning phase. Initiative taker of Solarpark ‘de Kwekerij’ explains: *“We have had many evening meetings with the neighborhood (...) if something happened or changed then*

*we informed the neighborhood. Not in a late stage but in an early stage. (..) It seemed to work positively.*” Three things are done in these collaborations by social initiative takers.

Firstly, the neighborhood is incorporated in the planning stage of the initiative. The participation process of the local society is managed by the social initiative takers with (small) facilitation of the municipality.

Secondly, the initiative takers try to incorporate the needs and interests of the neighborhood in their plan.

Finally, the initiative takers communicate their cause. After the explanation the neighborhood has a better understanding of what the social value and the goal of the project is. If one neighbor or local does not understand the added value of the initiative the initiative taker intensifies his communication in order to succeed.

The general pattern is that the social initiative takers provide their own support and make sure no-one is significantly harmed. These principles are shown in this quote of the owner of Outbound: *“If one of my neighbors had said no, I wouldn’t have done it.”* In short, the attitude of social initiative takers makes that initiative takers can align the interests on a local scale, with a little municipal help. The social initiatives add social value, while they try to maintain the local interest.

Evidence of their good will is the amount of objections made. The initiative taker of the ‘Solarkwekerij’ explains: *“We have had small living room gatherings. All to reach understanding for the initiative and the aimed result. When something changed or happened we informed the neighborhood. (..) It seemed to work positively. No objections were made”.* Each initiative taker points out that no conflict has arisen and most of them also refer to the fact that no objections are made against their initiative as a sign that the direct surroundings are positive about the initiatives in their neighborhood.

#### **4.4.2 Institutional**

*What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?* This institutional sub-question is translated in several interview questions that discuss the two theoretical indicators (1 & 2) and two additional components (3&4):

1. Collaborative arrangements
2. Interaction government and social initiative taker
3. Continuous effect of a vision
4. Social initiative (takers)

##### **1) Collaborative arrangements**

In the theory section (2.2.5) the theory of Williamson is introduced. ‘Arrangements’ and ‘actors and games’ are the two least institutionalized layers. These two are researched and translated in questions: arrangements in forms of collaboration and actor and games in the interaction between initiative takers and civil servants.

Collaboration between municipalities or intermediaries is in general an informal collaboration. There are little contracts between governments or other actors and social initiative takers. None of the social initiative takers complains about the collaboration forms.

However, the composition of the collaboration or wanted collaboration is non-complying. Examples of non-complying collaboration are:

- Subsidy structures that are unfit for social initiatives
- Knowledge exchange could be developed further
- Points of contact are 'hard' to find

For example, the knowledge exchange could be developed further to help initiatives in the very beginning. The initiative taker of the Zorghuus found it hard that no information could be found. When an initiative starts little is known. He explains: *"When we started there was no place to ask: this is our initiative and what are we suppose to do? Is it feasible? Is it affordable? What do we have to do to get there? Should we talk to a bank? It would be pleasant if we as initiative could get those questions answered. (..) It doesn't matter whether it's a website or something else."*

Either subsidies are given to projects that would like a subsidy of 2 million rather than 200k or knowledge exchange is set in place on whimsical basis and does not facilitate in lessons learned. For an 'outsider' (such as social initiative taker) points of contact are hard to find. In short, the general pattern is that the collaboration is informal (no problem) and potential collaboration forms are unfit for social initiatives. The collaboration forms offered are not shaped from a social initiative as starting point.

## **2) Interaction government and social initiative taker**

The interaction between social initiative takers and civil servants is varying. Often the experiences with either the alderman or a civil servant differentiate. Resulting in, for example, an enthusiastic alderman with insufficient power on its civil servants. Overall, the experience with governmental stakeholders are good, but only if the governmental stakeholders see social initiative takers as equals.

However, a governmental organization is most of the times seen as two separate actors. Most of the interviewees have found either an alderman or civil servant as point of contact (mostly civil servants). The experiences with these points of contact are good. Initiative takers find it convenient to have one point of contact in the organization which helps them comply with regulations and help them find subsidies, legislation, documentation and people.

Furthermore, a general pattern is that municipalities, provinces and Ministries tend to forget that social initiative takers are non paid employees. Civil servants and alderman should keep in consideration that every minute spend on the initiative is unpaid.

## **3) Continuous effect of a vision**

The potential continuous effect of a vision is seen in the experiences with regulation (a result of policy implementation) on a local, regional or national scale or local policy.

Experiences with regulation: The experience with legislation works on different levels both regional (provincial regulation) and local (municipal regulation). Initiative takers experience strict and clear legislation as appropriate. Strict legislation could be the start of innovation. The initiative Outbound has an example of an innovation which was created due to strict legislation. Legislation on smell made it impossible to work in his newly build office. The legislation forbid to build within a preset parameter from the location of emission, because of inhalation of polluted air. His solution: create

overpressure in my office by sucking in air from outside the parameter. A simple technical solution was created due to clear and strict legislation.

Furthermore, a pattern is that initiative takers know that a large amount of reports is needed in order to receive the permits needed for construction. These reports are expensive for projects/initiatives started on a voluntary basis and are in their eyes often unnecessary. The initiative taker of Leutfabriek explains his example as following: *“and that we must conduct a research, because of potential noise pollution (...) but the property lies next to a marshalling of freight trains (...) “That does not make any sense”.”*

Legislation is one of the main obstacles, because legislation makes expensive reporting mandatory which, does not fit their initiative or delays their process. All initiative takers understand the logic behind legislation, but would like more flexibility for initiative takers. Initiative takers often work on a voluntary basis and do not possess legal knowledge. Clear and strict legislation in combination with customized approaches, legal help or acting in the spirit of the law is wanted.

A vision and the governmental policy in it: The effect of visions are in the view of initiative takers minimal. A general pattern is that initiative takers do refer to policy on local scale or policy that influences their process, both negative as positive. However, the initiative takers think that a vision (local, regional or national) can add one important value: stability. A vision in their eyes could help make a stable government and a stable policy. A stable government is needed, because switches in policy could have large impact on their ‘small’ and ‘fragile’ initiatives. one of the core values for social initiative takers is that (Informal) Agreements should be honored is Concluding, initiative takers would like to minimize the risks created by policy and government. Offering a prospect in a larger amount of time (a potential of a vision) is therefore desired by initiative takers.

#### **4) Social initiative (takers)**

All interviewees have a certain profile, Also their initiatives can be categorized. The initiative taker is a ‘do-er’. In the interviews is often referred to the fact that the interviewees are uncomfortable with the legislation, reports and lengthy decision-making. The interviewees understand its use, but rather just realize their initiatives. The combination of persevering and being a ‘do-er’ is therefore often seen in the initiative takers.

Some of the interviewees are ambitious, driven by a dream. The intrinsic motivation of creating public value (analyzed in section 5.4.1, 2<sup>nd</sup> subsection) is a result of this ambitious mentality.

Finally, the initiatives can be categorized in two categories. The first category consists of initiatives implemented inside or near the initiative taker’s municipality. The initiative taker sees an opportunity rising or is displeased with the current municipal policy. The initiative chooses to act and start an initiative in his own municipality. These initiative takers create solutions to local problems. These problems can be both local (pauperization of my neighborhood) and national (livability in Shrinkage region). The second category consists of initiative takers that move to the shrinkage region to find ‘affordable’ space for their initiative and willing municipalities. Municipalities in Shrinkage region are more willing to collaborate in the initiatives. The initiative takers that move to Shrinkage region are often motivated by a global or national issue. For example the solar park is developed to speed the Dutch energy transition and the Ecovillage Boekel is built to improve the knowledge on eco matters and to live more sustainable.

### 4.4.3 Process

The interview questions consist of the steering perspective of the role of the government and the engagement of governments (and third actors) in initiatives. These two aspects should facilitate insights on the sub-question: *“What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged with a process for an energetic society?”* The findings are discussed in the following two components:

1. Role of the government
2. Engagement of governments

The theoretical indicators trust, shared meaning, knowledge integration and leadership in the process are also analyzed in the process findings. The theoretical indicators are found in both components.

#### *1) Role of the government*

The role of the national government and many of the provinces and municipalities involved can be described as participating. In general, initiative takers like governments to be pro-active and flexible. They like them to be a serious partner in their initiative if needed. Governments should facilitate when and where needed and use their limited resources wisely.

More concrete, every level of government has its own role in the process. A general pattern is that municipalities have a facilitating role. Municipalities let initiatives lead their own processes and participate in and facilitate the initiatives if asked. The facilitating role is not always the ‘standard’. Sometimes a municipality is set in a participating role by the initiative taker. Initially a municipality had another role in mind, but the initiative taker ‘corrected’ the municipality. It seems that some municipalities are still learning and proceed with caution. In the words of the initiative taker of ‘Zorghuus’: *“I don’t think municipalities are systematically retaining initiatives. But initially they are cautious.”* The third option is less uniform municipalities. In these municipalities the civil servant act in line with the regulation, in a regulating role. Often an alderman is fairly positive about the initiative.

The role of the provinces is framed as stimulating and regulating by most of the respondents. The provinces are often called in connection with subsidies or permits. Their current role in Shrinkage issues is therefore seen as stimulating and regulating. The stimulating role is not an active role. Initiative takers are often made aware of potential subsidies by the municipality or an intermediary.

The national government is least referred to. If referred to the pattern is that the collaboration is called more intense than collaboration with provinces. The role of the national government is called a facilitating role. The national government facilitates in knowledge exchange between initiative takers and shares knowledge if possessed. Furthermore, the national government is named for subsidies. The subsidies however are often too large and unfit for social initiative takers.

Also, initiative takers often give the role as connector to national officials (from the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment for example) and civil servants or alderman. The pattern is that initiatives takers experience clustering of initiatives as pleasant. Knowledge exchange is important for them. ‘Learning from other initiatives’ or ‘a template of how it is done’ are examples of advantages of interaction between initiatives. Potential clusters can be intensive or loose. Each type of cluster has its own advantages and disadvantages. Bottom-line, initiatives like (intensive) knowledge sharing

due to clustering, but also point out the fact that there is no compensation given in return for their effort (other than knowledge). The national government is sometimes named as “the” connector.

Furthermore, some of the interviewees refer to an experimental status. Regulation is often seen as obstructive. The obstruction exists, not because of the inflexibility of regulation or (sometimes) because of an unwilling municipality to flexibly use regulation, but because of the nature of their initiative. Most of the initiatives do not fit in a certain domain and its regulation. The initiative is different from many other ‘mainstream’ projects. Main stream projects meaning less integral projects with a clear financial goal. The interviewees ask for an appropriate use of the regulation on their initiative, such as legal customization. The interviewees think an experimental status could help with this legal customization.

## ***2) Engagement of governmental actors***

To get meaningfully engaged (as a government) three factors are important. Firstly, initiative takers need an intermediate, a point of contact, a person who knows the governments (for example a civil servant or intermediate). Furthermore initiative takers gave the advice to make a (physical) point of contact for social initiative takers and communicate that point (for example a website or office). A ‘physical’ point in combination with a personal point is the most preferred option.

Secondly, social initiative takers find it important to be taken seriously in collaboration. They want a meaningful engagement in which trust, equality, stability, knowledge integration and shared ambitions are the most important factors.

Finally, a role for the national government could be recognition of social initiatives. Recognition of a national government makes social initiative takers feel appreciated. Being acknowledged by a ‘powerful’ actor or partner makes dealing with lower governments and private actors easier. The recognition is both a personal boost for them (that they are realizing something great) and makes collaboration with lower governments and private actors easier.

### **4.4.4 Design**

The design does not facilitate in potential content on the physical living environment. For example the vision should mention Shrinkage as a national issue, but the question on design asks for the context of the content, for example, ambitions mentioned should be concrete and understandable. Both shape and content are reflected in the sub-question: *“What kind of content and shape are to be made in the Environment and Planning vision in order to connect it to the energetic society?”*

The interviewees have shared their view on content (context) and shape. First the content is discussed (1) followed by the shape (2). The theoretical indicators for design are ‘participation in governmental issues’ and ‘appeal to governmental documentation’. The participation in governmental issues is analyzed in content. The appeal to governmental documentation is analyzed in shape.

#### ***1) Content (participation in governmental issues)***

On content two movements can be observed: making a macro ambition as if it were a dream and sector policy does not fit some of the social initiatives.

The pattern is that social initiative takers are interested in two sides of the story (or one side in particular). On the one hand, to what dream or ambition (often national, but also regional or local)



can I contribute with my initiative? A potential dream is not automatically a dream that is based on the current distribution of domains for example water, nature, etc. That is where the other side of the story comes in. Social initiative takers tend to think 'integral'. The dream is therefore a dream from initiative taker's point of view. If a dream is comparable to theirs (initiative takers), the dream is told if it were their own. In the words of initiative taker of 'de Kwekerij': *"everyone is convinced that we must shift towards a sustainable energy supply. No one disagrees on this. In 2020 we are supposed to have 20% of sustainable energy"*. Concluding, social initiative takers tend to be motivated by dreams as if it were their own, a guiding dream with ambition from their (integral) point of view.

The other side of the story is the concrete side of the story. An abstract dream is not enough. What are the concrete actions for them and from a government? In the institutional findings is named that initiative takers are 'do-ers'. The combination of an abstract dream and concrete actions is a workable combination for initiative takers.

Furthermore, social initiative takers see that content could make a difference. The initiative takers notice that a shared ambition helps them in their initiative. If a social initiative shares his ambition with a governmental actor the process goes smoother and becomes a process in which 'more' seems possible.

## **2) Shape (appeal to governmental documentation)**

Initiative takers are not really interested in shape. The pattern is: vision-, program-, policy documentation should work for them. Current governmental documentation is unfit for social initiative takers. Improvements are suggested for writing style ("Jip en Janneke taal"), visualization ("see and experience") and communication. The writing style is insufficient and if 'the normal citizen' is the respondent the writing style should be simple and concrete. The visualization is should be more exemplary. Initiative takers want to know and see "what does it mean?". Not only use text to explain what is done, also use visualization.

Active communication is an important asset for most of the respondents. Regardless the shape, content or other practical documentation, a vision should be actively communicated to initiative takers. The Initiative taker of Outbound expresses this view: *"You have to tell people that you've got something for them (...) go outside and go tell everyone: Are there any wishes? We've got possibilities, is that something you're interested in?"*

## **4.5 Conclusion**

The last sections (4.4.1-4.4.4) described a large amount of conclusions on small aspects of the TIP-Design elements. However, what is the overall conclusion on the thematic case study on Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration?

Each of the TIP-Design elements has its own 'overall' conclusion. The interviews on the territorial element have shown that interviewees, in Shrinkage regions, possess an intrinsic value for creating public value, either by improving livability in their region or contributing to a 'global' issue. Also, when combined a general pattern of maintaining and incorporating the local interest is present. An overall conclusion could be: initiative takers automatically create public value. On a local scale the interest of the direct surroundings is maintained, and the initiative takers creates public value. The

amount of public value created however is hard to measure. The size of and contribution to national, regional or local ambitions social initiatives differs.

Institutional reason is the factor that summarizes the results. Governments and their policy should be reasonable. Be realistic in what is asked of social initiative takers and be a stable partner in collaboration (in word and in policy). The interviewees ask for a personal partner that is reasonable in his actions.

The process element has two important components. Firstly, a meaningful engagement is wanted. Many factors influence a meaningful engagement. The factors trust, shared ambition, knowledge exchange and equality could be improved according to the respondents. Secondly, the interviewees have difficulties with the many governmental levels, their role and their legislation. An intermediary is wanted. How the intermediary should be shaped differs between respondents.

The last element is design. The design should consist of a dream linked to concrete actions. The design should be made simple (writing style) and with sufficient visualization. Also, communicate the design to the public properly.

The overall conclusion is that although improvements could be made, the overall tone is positive. Municipalities (that respondents have faced) are (slowly) learning to collaborate and facilitate the social initiatives. The role of each of the government levels is clear and slowly improved. And Environment & Planning vision could help structuring the improvements needed and facilitate the social initiative takers in their societal contribution.

So how should a market/society-led Environment & Planning vision (or parts of it) support social initiative takers?<sup>28</sup> Social initiative takers seem willing and capable of the implementation of their initiative in harmony with the direct surroundings. It seems that without 'national help' initiatives could still contribute to (local or national) society. However, national policy could improve their chances and the changes of future initiative takers. Also, the amount of social initiative takers could rise faster with national help. Firstly, the Environment & Planning vision could be the first step to make the national government a stable partner in collaboration. The planning horizon of 2040 or 2050 could help offer a long term ambition. Secondly, the support forms could be improved. National policy could offer intermediaries, a centre for knowledge and small subsidy budgets. Thirdly, ensure that the Environment & Planning vision consists of dreams, based on (shared) ambitions linked to concrete national actions. Actively communicate the national dream. A dream that is appealing for them and clear and unambiguous on what the national actions (also support structures for example) are to realize that dream. If the initiative takers know what to expect from the national government, the chance of joining could increase. Also, show that the support of social initiative takers is wanted. Support the social initiative taker.

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<sup>28</sup> This question refers to the main research question: *How can the national government support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision?* The social initiative taker is the actor researched and one of the representations of the energetic society. The 'market/society-led' refers to the market/society led steering perspective explained in section 2.2.2. The policy exploration Shrinkage & Vacancy is a national market/society-led policy exploration.

## 5. Research results

The thematic case studies are analyzed separately in the previous two chapters. The case studies each have a different angle. The ‘Room for the River’ program is government-driven with a strong financial target and dual ambition (create spatial quality while reaching an increased river discharge of 1800 m3/sec). Initiative takers participate in one of the 34 projects and their initiatives are more often implemented in the slip stream of these projects. The Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration has a strong participative approach. In this approach the local and regional governments are in charge of policy- and decision making. The policy exploration is market/society-led. The initiative takers are in charge of their own initiative.

This chapter compares the analysis of both thematic case studies and theoretical expectations. The ‘Room for the River’ respondents are compared to the respondents in Shrinkage regions. Section 5.1 analyzes whether the interviews are comparable. Also, this section analyzes if the interviews are comparable to the theoretical assumptions made. Section 5.2 finalizes with the validation. The validation will show if the experience of initiative takers aligns with the experiences of experts (from a national level).

### 5.1 Thematic case study results

“How can a national government support social initiative takers with the new Environment & Planning vision?” is analyzed from four different angles (sub-questions on territorial, institutional, process and design) and with two different (opposite) thematic case studies (government-led ‘Room for the River’ and market/society-led Shrinkage & Vacancy). In this section the two different case studies are compared per angle (territorial, institutional, process and design).

Each subsection (5.1.1-5.1.4) addresses a different angle. The theory section (2.2.5) explored four theories and the expectations based on these theories. The overall view of the theories and angles is shown in table below.

Territorial	Spatial quality
Institutional	Williamson model
Process	Collaborative planning
Design	Storytelling theory

**Table 9: Theories per angle**

Each subsection compares the ‘Room for the River’, Shrinkage & Vacancy and theories in two large tables. The tables are analyzed. The analysis shows the similarities and differences between the cases and the theories.

#### 5.1.1 Technical

The first table shown below compares the findings of the ‘Room for the River’, and Shrinkage & Vacancy case and the indicators measured. The indicators are questioned in the interviews. The findings reflect the perception on the indicators of social initiative takers.

'Room for the River': Technical	Shrinkage & Vacancy: Territorial	Spatial quality theory: Territorial
<b>Findings</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Indicators measured</b>
<i>Motivation for developing a social initiative:</i>	<i>Motivation for developing a social initiative:</i>	<p>- <b>Public value creation</b>  &gt; Social initiative takers create public value to the physical living environment. Public value lies in value that is claimed to be desirable by the society as a whole.</p> <p>- <b>Initiative's interest vs. local society's interest</b>  &gt; The initiative takers and citizens in the direct surrounding may have a different view on spatial quality.</p>
Initiative takers are responsive to program.	Some of the initiative takers respond to a governmental policy which is incorrect or insufficient in their perception.	
Initiative takers have a personal background 'in the field'.	Initiative takers are entrepreneurs with a 'social' heart and try to solve a local or global issue.	
Initiative takers were already inhabitants of the program area.		
<i>Public value creation</i>	<i>Public value creation</i>	
Initiative takers feel connected to the program.	The initiative takers see the governance as the problem. The technical execution of their initiative is never mentioned as problem.	
Initiative takers are strongly connected to water issues and contributing to the quality of the area.	Two kinds of initiative takers: 1) The ones with an intrinsic motivation of improving their local living environment, 2) others which have an intrinsic motivation of contributing to a more abstract issue.	
<i>Project interests vs. direct surroundings interests (neighbors)</i>	<i>Project interests vs. direct surroundings interests (neighbors)</i>	
Initiative takers try to incorporate their direct neighbors, local society, with mixed success (often good).	Neighborhoods are incorporated in the planning stage of the initiative.	
Intention of initiative takers is mostly pure (listen to and incorporate needs), but conflicts can still arise.	Some of the initiative takers communicate their cause and goal to the neighborhood in order to help explain their initiative.	
Municipality has a role as facilitator in the process between local society and initiative taker.	Initiative takers try to incorporate the needs and interest of neighbors in their initiative.	
	Municipality facilitates in process of local public interest, but the initiative takers largely create their own support and make sure no-one is harmed significantly.	

Table 10: Technical findings

The territorial findings are separated in three components: 1) Motivation for developing a social initiative, 2) motivation for the creation of public value and 3) the involvement of the local society and their interests. The first two components (Motivation for developing a social initiative & motivation for the creation of public value) discuss the first indicator (public value creation). The motivation for the development and creation of public value show what the initiative takers do to increase the spatial quality with their initiative and why. The last component (involvement of the local society and their interest) shows how the initiative takers incorporate the interests of others living in the direct surrounding.

In 'Room for the River' the initiative takers are part of a complex field of stakeholders. Also, some initiative takers are not leading their own initiative. In Shrinkage & Vacancy the initiative takers are in charge of their own initiative. 'Who is in charge' differs between a government-led program and a market/society-led policy exploration. Does this difference in context reflect on the motivation of initiative takers and the inclusion of its surroundings?

The two thematic case studies are comparable on all three components. There are 3 similarities found:

1. In 'Room for the River' all initiative takers are inhabitants of the area and purely respond to the 'Room for the River' program and the projects executed in their local living environment. In Shrinkage & Vacancy some of the initiative takers share this attribute. Some initiatives are implemented in the municipality in which the initiative taker lives. These initiative takers are driven to improve their local living environment. Improving the local environment is often done as response to municipal policy. However, the difference is the Shrinkage initiative takers respond to different municipal policies, where 'Room for the River' initiative takers purely respond to the program.
2. Initiative takers in both cases have a comparable motivation for creating public value. All initiative takers are socially driven. The initiative takers contribute to a local or global issue with their initiative. The initiative takers in Shrinkage & Vacancy are however somewhat more socially driven than the initiative takers of 'Room for the River'.
3. The involvement of the local society is almost similar. The municipality facilitates in the process of local interest exchange. The intention of the initiative takers is mostly pure and initiative takers try to incorporate the needs and interests of the local society.

Some of the differences between the two thematic cases are already discussed. There are two more differences between the two thematic cases:

1. The initiative takers of Shrinkage & Vacancy discuss the feasibility of the creation of their public value. Social initiative takers in 'Room for the River' do not discuss feasibility. The difference is that the initiative takers in Shrinkage areas are in charge of their initiatives and are responsible for the implementation.
2. The 'Room for the River' case consists of initiative takers which were already inhabitants of the area and respond to the program. Shrinkage & Vacancy case partly consists of comparable initiative takers. However Shrinkage & Vacancy also consists of initiative takers that moved to a Shrinkage region (and do not respond to policy) in order to implement their initiatives.

The findings clearly show that the two case studies have two different steering perspectives. The thematic cases show differences and similarities. So are social initiative takers comparable? Generally the initiative takers are comparable. The success differs, but the intention remains equal. The initiative takers try to incorporate their surroundings and (want to) create public value. Initiative takers in Shrinkage regions are more successful in reaching these goals. Initiative takers in 'Room for the River' projects find it more difficult to reach the spatial quality wanted in collaboration with their surroundings.

The findings are compared in the table 10. Table 11, shown below, compares the core findings (a summary of the results) to the expectations based on the spatial quality theory.

'Room for the River': Territorial	Shrinkage & Vacancy: Territorial	Spatial quality theory: Territorial
Core finding	Core finding	Expectations
<p>The public value creation and the local interest are questioned. Conclusion is that the intention of initiative takers is always to create added value and incorporate, local societal, interests. The successes of incorporating the interests are a indicator, but the outcome (in the end) is always good.</p>	<p>The interviews on the technical element have shown that the interviewees in Shrinkage regions, possess a intrinsic motivation for creating public value, either by improving livability in their region or offer (a small part of) a solution for a 'global' issue. Combine the intrinsic motivation with a general pattern of maintaining and incorporating the local interests, and an overall conclusion can be made: initiative takers try to reach an improvement in the physical living environment while incorporating its direct surroundings.</p>	<p>Social initiative takers are capable of aligning their view on spatial quality with that of the direct surroundings. Meaning that the spatial quality of the area rises due to their initiative (public value). And the interests of the direct surroundings (citizens) are used to make a shared perception on spatial quality (align local interest and initiative's interest for spatial quality).</p>

**Table 11: Technical core findings**

The response of the interviewees in both thematic case studies is shown above together with the theoretical expectation.

The core findings show similarities with the theoretical expectations. In 'Room for the River' the intention of initiative takers is similar to the expectations. However, in practice the initiative takers their experiences are varying. Some initiative takers found it difficult to incorporate the interests of others, but succeeded in the end. The rest of the initiative takers successfully incorporated the interests of others. Initiative takers create public value and incorporate and listen to the needs and interest of their surroundings, an explanation similar to the expectation. So, in 'Room for the River' the core findings and expectations line up.

In the thematic case of Shrinkage & Vacancy the expectations and core findings line up perfectly. The initiative takers make a strong effort on including their surroundings and all create significant public value, similar to the expectation on the spatial quality theory.

If a comparison between the core findings and expectations was to be made, the conclusion would be that the core findings and expectations are largely similar. Meaning: the initiative takers in both cases make a strong effort in reaching spatial quality with their initiative.

So what does it mean for the Environment & Planning vision? Can the vision support social initiative takers? And can social initiative takers participate in creating value in the physical living environment? The comparison shows that in both cases initiative takers are willing to reach a solid solution on a local scale. Although there is still a role for municipalities to facilitate where needed. Therefore, supporting the social initiative takers could be a good investment on a local scale. The social initiative takers are eligible for local initiatives that contribute to a larger local, regional or national issue.

**5.1.2 Institutional**

The table shown below compares the findings of the ‘Room for the River’, and the Shrinkage & Vacancy case and the indicators measured. The indicators are addressed in the interviews. The findings reflect the perception on the indicators of social initiative takers.

‘Room for the River’: Institutional	Shrinkage & Vacancy: Institutional	Williamson model: Institutional
Findings	Findings	Indicators measured
<i>Interaction government and social initiative taker:</i>	<i>Interaction government and social initiative taker:</i>	<p><b>-Collaboration arrangements</b></p> <p>&gt; What kind of gentlemen’s agreements, covenants, contracts, alliances, etc. are used?</p> <p><b>- Interaction government and initiative taker</b></p> <p>&gt; Initiative takers are faced with different governments (local, regional, national) with different roles. How is the interaction between the initiative taker and these governments?</p>
The initial interaction between initiative and other involved stakeholders (non-public stakeholders, for example the contracting party and public stakeholders) is formal, when a trustee is found the interaction becomes informal.	Differences are found between aldermen and civil servants.	
	If governmental stakeholders see initiative takers as equals the experiences are good.	
	Governments tend to forget that initiative takers are sometimes not paid employees.	
<i>Collaborative arrangements:</i>	<i>Collaborative arrangements:</i>	
Initiative takers are often not in charge of their initiatives, a sort of triangle collaboration is made in which initiative takers are advising.	Three causes are found for non-complying collaborations: 1) Subsidy structures are unfit for social initiatives, 2) Knowledge exchange could be developed further, 3) Point of contact for initiative takers in governmental organization is ‘hard’ to find.	
Most ‘Room for the River’ sub-projects have an advisory board which improves collaboration, both in planning/vision and implementation.		

<b>'Room for the River': Institutional</b>	<b>Shrinkage &amp; Vacancy: Institutional</b>
<b>Findings</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<i>Collaborative arrangements:</i>	<i>Collaborative arrangements:</i>
Most important factors in collaborative arrangements are transparency and openness.	
<i>Continuous effect of a vision:</i>	<i>Continuous effect of a vision:</i>
No real continuous effect. Often discussed on program basis.	Legislation could be the start of innovation, however most of the initiative takers struggle with the large amount of expensive mandatory reports due to legislation.
	Not all initiative fit current legislation, therefore flexible use of legislation is needed.
	A vision could help make a stable policy and a stable government (as party in collaboration).
<i>Social initiative (takers):</i>	<i>Social initiative (takers):</i>
Initiative takers possess tacit waiting to be used.	Initiative takers are ambitious, preserving and 'do-ers' and often conflict with long- decision making processes.
The initiative is combined with the current (additional) function of the initiative taker.	Some of the initiatives near the initiative takers living area (in order to improve the livability) or the initiative takers move to Shrinkage regions for its space for initiatives.
Important assets for an initiative taker are patience and stamina.	

**Table 12: Institutional findings**

The institutional element is separated in three components: organizational culture, continuous effect and social initiative takers. The institutional indicators measured are collaboration arrangements and the interaction between governments and social initiative takers. The indicators are measured throughout the three components.

The results of the two thematic cases studies are largely non-comparable. 'Who is in charge of the social initiatives?' makes that these two thematic cases are different. A complex field of stakeholders and governmental driven versus driven by the social initiative taker and a large number of stakeholders on all levels of the government. The difference in context reflects in the comparison.



However, three comparisons can still be made:

1. The initiative takers are both patient and preserving in order to succeed. The long breath is needed for the long- (governmental) processes;
2. Furthermore, the initiative takers in both cases see an improvement if a trustee ('Room for the River') or point of contact (Shrinkage & Vacancy) is found inside a governmental organization;
3. Also, in both thematic cases the organization culture is currently seen as unfit; the causes however lie far apart.

The differences between the two thematic cases are numerous. No continuous effect is found ('Room for the River') versus a large amount of vision advantages (Shrinkage & Vacancy), and social initiative takers with tact in order to succeed versus 'do-ers' that want to implement their initiatives as fast as possible.

In the government-led 'Room for the River' the initiative takers are struggling with the complex governance. The initiative takers ask for a solid collaboration in planning (often reached) and implementation (often not reached). Improvement of the collaboration arrangement and the interaction in the collaboration (more open) is needed.

In the market/society-led Shrinkage policy exploration, the initiative takers are mostly in charge of what is done. The initiative takers ask for facilitating help. The current help could be improved by making it fit for social initiative takers.

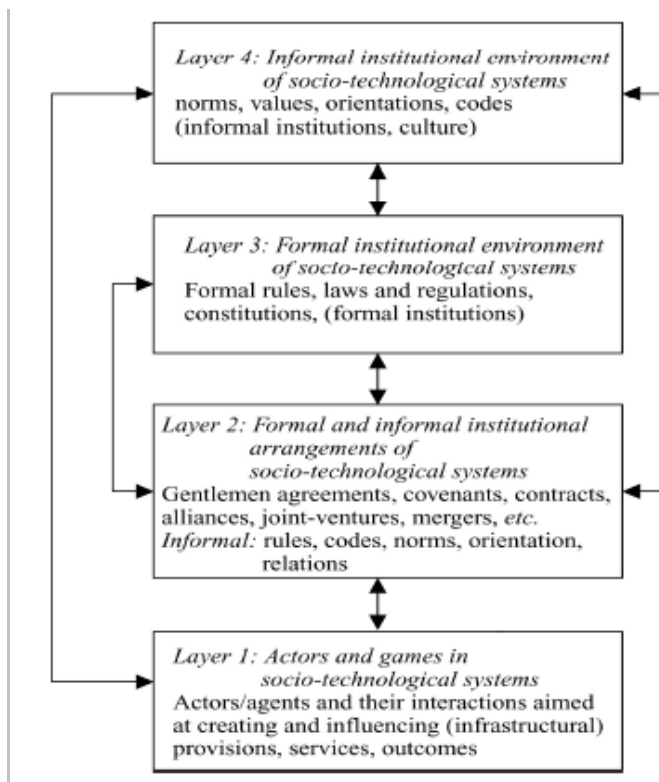
Concluding, are these two case studies comparable? The context of either a government-led or market/society-led case has clear consequences for the comparability of these two thematic cases. 'Room for the River' projects need changes in transparency and openness in the complex governance. Shrinkage initiative takers need changes in arrangements that are offered to them. Additional help is needed and arrangement should be adapted to their needs.

'Room for the River': Institutional	Shrinkage & Vacancy: Institutional	Williamson model: Institutional
Core finding	Core finding	Expectations
The initiative takers are a small stakeholder in a complex playing field. The relationships in this complex playing field could, in the eyes of the initiative taker, be improved.	Institutionally reasons is the factor that summarizes the results. The organization and its policy should be reasonable. Be realistic in what is asked of volunteers and social entrepreneurs and be a stable partner in collaboration (in word and in policy). The interviewees ask for a personal partner inside municipalities that is reasonable in his actions.	Expectations are that on each institutional layer suggestions can be done in order to improve the experiences with governmental organizations.

**Table 13: Institutional core findings**

The table 13 shown above compares the core findings (a summary of the results) to the expectations that are based on the Williamson model.

The difference in the steering perspectives between ‘Room for the River’ and Shrinkage & Vacancy is seen in the findings and core findings. The core findings are, just as the findings, of a different nature. However, do the initiative takers in both case studies ask for improvement on a certain level of the Williamson model (shown in figure 26)?



**Figure 26: Williamson model**

The core findings of ‘Room for the River’ suggest that the expectations are met. An initiative taker in a complex field of larger stakeholders is in a difficult situation. The core findings are however not ‘in-depth’ enough to give a sufficient comparison. So, in order to give sufficient feedback on the theoretical expectations, the institutional findings (table 12; section 5.1.2) have to be consulted. Table 12 shows that improvements are suggested on the first and second layer of the Williamson model and potentially on the fourth layer. Initiative takers want to improve the direct collaboration between the initiative taker and government. The communication is mostly formal, while informal communication fits their initiatives best. The shift to informal communication asks for improvement on the first layer, but could also be a problem in cultural differences between civil servants or governmental employees and initiative takers (fourth layer of Williamson). On the second layer two improvements are suggested: improvements for collaboration (no triangle collaboration forms) and an advisory board throughout the program.

The core findings on Shrinkage & Vacancy affects two layers. The finding ‘be realistic in what is asked of volunteers and social entrepreneurs’ asks for improvement in the first layer and the finding ‘be a stable partner in collaboration (in word and policy)’ asks for improvement in the second and third layer. The last finding ‘The interviewees ask for a personal partner that is reasonable in his handle and his actions’ endorses improvement needed in the second and third layer.

The expectations on the Williamson model are in general partially met. The first two layers of the model (actors and games & collaboration) need clear improvements. On the other two layers some suggestions are made. So what can be done by the Environment & Planning vision to improve the institutional context? In both thematic case studies it is clear that the current projects or regions are improving but still improvable. See initiative takers as equals in reaching the social ambitions set. Open the program of policy to potential social initiative takers and anticipate on the possibility of social initiative takers to contribute to national ambitions. Also, other governments could be urged to improve their policies, programs, arrangements and/or interaction for initiative takers. Finally, either government-led or market/society-led need specific improvements. The needs of initiative takers in each of these steering perspectives are best read in table 12.

### 5.1.3 Process

Table 14 compares the findings of 'Room for the River', Shrinkage & Vacancy and the indicators measured. The indicators are addressed in the interviews. The findings reflect the perception on the indicators of social initiative takers.

'Room for the River': Process	Shrinkage & Vacancy: Process	Collaborative planning: Process
Findings	Findings	Indicators measured
<i>Role of the government:</i>	<i>Role of the government:</i>	<p>According to collaborative planning literature the four following factors are important in a collaboration between a government and non-state stakeholder.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Shared meaning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Is there a shared meaning/shared ambition between initiative takers and governments (local, regional or national).</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Trust</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Trust between government and initiative taker.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Knowledge integration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Integration of knowledge making the initiative taker and government equal in collaboration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Leadership in the process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Leadership in the social initiative and its influence.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Municipality has a dual role: 1) Regulating on planning, 2) Facilitating initiatives. These two can conflict.	Every level of the government has its own role in initiatives. Improvements in these roles could be made, but no shifts in roles are desired.	
Province has a directing/leading role. Initiative takers see this role as desirable.	Municipalities are referred to as facilitating and regulating, provinces stimulating (with subsidies) and regulating, national government as facilitator.	
Water board is an important party, mostly, in implementation. The water board has problems with finding the new role in river basin management.	Initiative takers experience advantages if initiatives are clustered.	
	Some initiative takers would like an experimental status in order to make their integral approach fit legislation.	
<i>Engagement of governments:</i>	<i>Engagement of governments:</i>	
Initiative takers want to have the feeling of being heard in the process.	Initiative takers want an intermediate. A personal intermediate and a point of contact to help them with the governmental system.	

<b>'Room for the River': Process</b>	<b>Shrinkage &amp; Vacancy: Process</b>	
<b>Findings</b>	<b>Findings</b>	
<i>Engagement of governments:</i>	<i>Engagement of governments:</i>	
The absence of mutual trust results in a reflex in the gathering of documentation and information. If trust is present there is no reaction/reflex.	Secondly, initiative takers find it important to be taken seriously in collaboration. They want a meaningful engagement in which trust, equality, stability, knowledge integration and shared ambitions are the most important factors.	
A shared goal or shared ambition improves the process (positive energy, better dialogues, smoother process).	Recognition by 'powerful' partner helps smoothen the process for initiatives.	
The initiative takers are often volunteers. A fact that they feel is often forgotten.		
<i>Difference between the planning and implementation phase:</i>		
Initiative takers consider the planning authority as open and good. Planning is flexible and adjustable on the basis of reasoning.		
Initiative takers consider the authorities in charge of the implementation inflexible and non-transparent.		
The difference between planning and implementation: the 'real' budget.		

**Table 14: Process findings**

The indicators measured in the process interview questions are trust, shared meaning, knowledge integration and leadership in the process. The process analysis divides the results in two categories: (1) the role of the governments and (2) engagement of governments. The indicators are found in both categories. 'Room for the River' has an additional component: the difference between the planning and implementation phase. This additional component is a clear difference between the two thematic cases studies. On the other two components the processes are comparable.

Five similarities are found:

1. The initiative takers of both cases are ok with the division of roles over the governments, but improvements in these roles should be made.
2. Initiative takers are often volunteers. Other parties seem to forget this fact. The comparable conclusion in Shrinkage & Vacancy is found in the previous section (5.1.2, table 12).
3. A shared ambition or goal improves the process between initiative takers and government.
4. Initiative takers in both studies want to be heard on some basis, as equals (Shrinkage & Vacancy) or heard for tacit knowledge ('Room for the River').
5. Trust between the initiative taker and a relevant government improves when trust on personal level is present.

Beside the 4 similarities 2 differences are found:

1. The initiative takers in the Shrinkage & Vacancy are more uniform on improvements that should be made.
2. Shrinkage & Vacancy initiative takers need an intermediary. They seem to have more difficulties with finding the right partners and legislation.

Although the processes have two clearly different steering perspectives the core findings are largely comparable. In general a shared goal/ambition and trust could be used to improve the relation between initiative taker and relevant government. Also, initiative takers want to be heard. Being heard in 'Room for the River' means that the tacit knowledge should be used to improve their initiative and project. Shrinkage initiative takers want to be heard as equals. Equality helps them smoothen their initiative's process.

So are the two thematic case studies comparable? The differences in steering perspective do not necessarily reflect on the results. The initiative takers in both thematic case studies ask for meaningful engagement between government and initiative taker. A meaningful engagement should improve the initiative's process. Improve the meaningful engagement between initiative taker and government and the social initiatives will improve (according to the initiative takers). The important factors for improving the collaboration are comparable (trust, shared ambition, being heard), but also steering perspective dependent (use tacit knowledge, or the need for an intermediary).

'Room for the River': Process	Shrinkage & Vacancy: Process	Collaborative planning
Core finding	Core finding	Expectations
The role of the government differs per government and even within governments (difference civil servant and alderman or administrators). The only general pattern found in process is the engagement between these parties and the interviewees. The advice of the interviewees is to use their tacit knowledge in the trajectory. Also, initiative takers want to be significantly incorporated in the trajectories and in an 'adult way'.	The process element has two important components. Firstly, a meaningful engagement is wanted and should therefore be improved. Secondly, the interviewees have difficulties with the many governmental levels, their role and their legislation. An intermediary is wanted in order to deal with these difficulties. What an intermediary should do and what an intermediary is, is interpreted variably.	Collaborative planning shows that shared meaning, knowledge integration, trust, leadership in the process or mobilization are important factors.

**Table 15: Process core findings**

The findings are compared in table 14. Table 15 shown above compares the core findings (a summary of the results) of the expectations that are based on collaborative planning.

The core findings in table 15 both show some of the expectations on collaborative planning. However in order compare them the process findings (table 14; section 5.1.3) have to be consulted. Table 14 shows that being heard in the process, mutual trust and a shared goal or shared ambition are the important factors named by initiative takers in the 'Room for the River' program. In the thematic case of Shrinkage & Vacancy policy exploration the factors trust, equality, stability, knowledge integration and shared ambitions were the most important factors. The matching factors (between thematic cases) are: trust, equality and shared ambition. From these three factors, trust and shared ambition (shared meaning) are found in the theoretical expectations. Knowledge integration, also in the theoretical expectations, is only suggested in the Shrinkage & Vacancy case. Leadership in the process is never mentioned. Concluding, the theoretical expectations are partially met.

So what can a national government do with a new vision? Can important factors be improved in the Environment & Planning vision? Knowing what factors are important to social initiative takers can help with future collaborations. In government-led projects and programs it is good to know how social initiative takers would like to be engaged in the collaboration. For market/society-led policies or programs important factors are useful since social initiative takers are a growing and contributing phenomena. Important factors for meaningful engagement seem useful information in general. The information can be used in different ways. For example, a national statement on equality could help initiative takers in collaborating with municipalities and provinces. Or an ambition could be abstracted from social initiative takers, to create a shared ambition. Or an ambition could be made adaptive, as to be used and corrected when needed.

### 5.1.4 Design

Table 16 shown below compares the findings of ‘Room for the River’, Shrinkage & Vacancy and the indicators measured. The indicators are addressed in the interviews. The findings reflect the perception on the indicators of social initiative takers.

<b>‘Room for the River’: Design Findings</b>	<b>Shrinkage &amp; Vacancy: Design Findings</b>	<b>Storytelling theory: Design Indicators measured</b>
<i>Content (participation in governmental issues):</i>	<i>Content (Participation in governmental issues):</i>	<b>- Participation in governmental issues</b> > National governments (or local, regional) frame an ambition and/or goal for a national policy challenge. Do social initiative takers feel connected to this ambition and/or goal? <b>- Appeal to governmental documentation</b> > What are the initiative taker's thoughts on current documentation received made by a government (mostly local or national)? For example program, policies, vision, plans, etc.
The initiative takers feel part of the ‘Room for the River’ program, sometimes due to the clear ambitions.	Two factors are important for the content: 1) make a macro ambition as if it were a dream and 2) the current theme and sectors of policy do not fit some of the social initiatives.	
Be stable on the content of a program and keep stakeholders posted on the progress.	The story needs a concrete component. The initiative takers are ‘do-ers’, they want dreams but also want to know what happens tomorrow.	
	A shared ambition helps them in their initiative. A shared ambition helps initiative takers and (local) governments in their collaboration.	
<i>Shape (appeal to governmental documentation):</i>	<i>Shape (appeal to governmental documentation):</i>	
Advice initiative takers: Make the text shorter, to the point, and less complicated and add visuals where needed.	Any shape should ‘work for the initiative taker’. The shape should have the right writing style and exemplary visualizations. And should be actively communicated to the public.	

**Table 16: Design findings**

The theory of storytelling introduces planning policy as storytelling. A convincing story has more chance as planning policy. The story should make people want to participate and should appeal to others. In other words, the two indicators measured are the participation of social initiative takers in governmental issues and the appeal of documentation made by governments to initiative takers

To research the design initiative takers are questioned on content and shape. Table 16 shows that the findings on shape are comparable. Initiative takers find the shape of documentation and products seen (vision, flyers, etc.) not appealing. To improve the shape suggestions are: 1) to improve the writing style (more common, less scientific) and 2) add exemplary visualizations where needed.

Another comparison can be made on communication. Initiative takers find communication of the documentation important. However, the communication needed is different. In ‘Room for the River’ initiative takers like to be kept posted on the progress of a project. In Shrinkage region the policy of

governments is unknown. The suggestion is therefore to actively communicate policies and programs in which initiative takers can participate.

There is also clear difference. Initiative takers in ‘Room for the River’ think differently about governmental ambition than Shrinkage initiative takers. ‘Room for the River’ initiative takers were pleased with the clear ambitions or goals on water discharge. The Shrinkage initiative takers needed a different more overarching ambition. The ambition should be macro and stated as if it were a dream. Also, the ambition should be accompanied by concrete actions.

‘Room for the River’: Design	Shrinkage & Vacancy: Design	Storytelling theory
Core finding	Core finding	Expectations
If the design were to be developed for initiative takers, the content and shape should be clear, to the point and more ‘their language’. Also, keep the communication on that program or vision going.	The design should consist of a dream linked to concrete actions. The design should be made in simple writing style with sufficient visualizations of what is meant . When the design is done, the advice is to communicate it to the public.	Expectations are that planning should be made adaptive, make room for every one story inside your story and make a storyline in your planning story.

**Table 17: Design core findings**

The findings are compared in table 16. Table 17 shown above compares the core findings to the expectations that are based on the storytelling theory.

The previous shared ambition and shared goals (section 5.1.3) are already precursors for the storytelling theory. The core findings between the two thematic case studies align. The core findings suggest active communication and a style that fits the initiative takers needs (in text and visuals). If the term ‘story’ was interpreted broadly these core findings would fit. A story suggests a certain respondent. In order to reach this respondent the story has to align with the respondent’s preference. To fit the social initiative taker a certain writing style and visualization is needed. However, this is a large assumption on the term ‘story’ and the storytelling theory behind it.

So what do the design findings mean for a national scale design? If the Environment & Planning vision would be designed for social initiative takers the vision should: (1) adapt the content and shape for the respondents and (2) actively communicate the content (market/society-led) and keep everyone posted on the progress (government-led).

**5.2 Validation**

In section 2.2.7 the validation is introduced as method. The validation uses the preliminary conclusions, literature and empirical findings, described in chapter 4 and 5, and puts them open for discussion. In the process so far no experts on the ‘energetic society’ are heard (only in exploratory interviews). What is their thought on the energetic society and the role of the Environment & Planning vision? These experts are acquainted with abstract products (vision) and have (field) experience (energetic society). The input and discussion with experts is done in a few general interviews (5.2.1) and with a validation session (5.2.2). The validation is used to sharpen the results and should help translate the somewhat ‘local’ results to ‘national’ Environment & Planning vision conclusions and recommendations.



### 5.2.1 General interviews

In the interviews a few experts are heard. The experts are found during the thesis period. The experts possess knowledge on national policies and have (field) experience. The interview questions in the general interviews is comparable to the interviews done with social initiative takers. The findings of these general interviews are therefore comparable to the findings of the two thematic case studies. The comparison is used to improve the findings and preliminary conclusions by adding knowledge at the interface between social initiative takers and national policy. The interviews with the experts are red in appendix VIII.

The experts heard are:

- Expert respondent 1 – Project manager of project inside ‘Crisis en Herstelwet’ at Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment
- Expert respondent 2 – Project leader Green Metropolis at Staatsbosbeheer

### *Findings*

The general interviews revealed some new points and backed up various preliminary conclusions. Firstly the preliminary conclusions backed up are addressed. Finally two new points are discussed.

Ten preliminary conclusions were backed up in the general interviews. Two of the nine conclusion addressed territorial preliminary conclusions. Findings on the territorial sub-question show that initiative takers are on average well equipped to create public value on a local scale. In addition to this preliminary conclusion the general interviews show there are enough initiative takers. (1) According to both experts, initiative takers will respond if an opportunity is presented to them. Sometimes this is also shown in the thematic cases. In both cases the initiative taker responds to policies or the ‘Room for the River’ program. (2) Also, this is fair to expect sometimes from the initiative taker. An initiative taker should take the municipality seriously and vice versa.

Institutionally the problems are versatile. Government-led and market/society-led are hard to compare. But, it is clear that some problems are present between the institutionalized government and social initiative takers. The project leader of Green Metropolis explains: *“We (national scale governments) think institutionally, but that is not the right approach. It’s still a search.”*

Three of the nine conclusions addressed additions to preliminary conclusions are on process. Trust and shared ambition are found as important factors for meaningful engagement. The experts confirm these two factors. Firstly, the project manager of the “Crisis & Herstelwet” only uses initiatives with a goal that fits national ambitions in her trajectory. The shared ambitions helps both stakeholder and national government in finding the correct solution. Secondly, giving trust helps. Give initiative takers the feeling that the goals of the initiative can be reached and that obstacles (in the Crisis & Herstelwet its legislation) are nonexistent. The last preliminary conclusion that is backed is the effect of intermediaries. The project manager of Crisis & Herstelwet works as an intermediary on a national level. The project manager connects officials of relevant ministries to social initiative takers. The experiences are that if these two are at the same table the social initiative takers initial problem is solvable.

The last four of the ‘backup findings’ address design. Both experts gave recommendations for the design of the Environment & Planning vision. Firstly, to be clear about the ambitions and the content of the vision. It should be clear and unambiguous what is wanted by the national government. The

national ambition and vision should also be integral with the physical living environment. An Advantage is that initiative takers know if and how they can contribute to the ambitions. And the initiative takers contribute to only one vision document, not several sectorized ones. Secondly, gather a shared ambition by asking institutionalized and non-institutionalized citizens. Addressing the institutionalized and non-institutionalized citizens helps framing a shared vision. Thirdly, the vision should be like a dream. A dream that triggers others. If the dream is shared the conversation between stakeholders can be started. The dream is the higher goal and how to reach that dream is open for discussion. Finally, when the vision is done actively communicate that vision. The experience of the project manager of Crisis and Herstelwet is that active communication really helps with reaching social initiative takers.

Finally, two new points are found. The first is: being strict in regulation helps innovations. A point that was not found as pattern, but was seen in the Outbound project (one of the Shrinkage initiative takers). In the Outbound project a new office was developed. However, a problem appeared. The new office was built near a pork farm. Due to smell regulation no one was supposed to work in the new office. Smell regulation forbids people to live or work inside a certain parameter. To solve this problem the initiative taker found an innovative solution. The initiative taker retracted air from outside the parameter through a new pipe and created overpressure inside the office. An example of strict regulation that lead to an innovative solution.

The second point is: keep the dream adaptive. The project leader of Green Metropolis explains: *“At some point if your idea is stuck, your idea is less flexible. The less flexible your idea (red. dream) is, the smaller the chance is that with some iterations the idea will succeed.”* In other words, keep your dreams flexible so that others can adapt it with small iterations. The success lies in the fact that it is a shared dream.

### **5.2.2 Validation session**

The idea of the validation session is that additional rounds of discussion could help sharpen the preliminary conclusions and help translate local results to national conclusions and recommendations. The validation sessions was held inside the Ministry and included many of the employees from the section/department of Spatial Development with experience in the energetic society. The validation session is called RADAR and is an open board meeting for the department of Spatial Development.

#### ***Findings***

##### **Validation session: RADAR**

After a short presentation of the research done and empirical findings a discussion was started. The feedback consisted of overall reflections and tips for the study. However, the largest conclusion can be drawn based on the discussion that dominated the RADAR session.

A social debate on social initiative takers dominated the RADAR session. The presentation of the preliminary results and research started a social debate on the role of social initiative takers in spatial planning. The role of social initiative takers, the position of the social initiative taker in planning, the contribution of social initiative takers to national policy challenges were all themes in the social debate. The RADAR made clear that the experts were not uniform about the position, role, and contribution of social initiative takers. The experts present in the RADAR session differed in their

opinion. The difference in opinion shows the current debate among civil servants on social initiative takers. This social debate is also shown in the large amount of reports from governmental advisory organs (such as PBL, WRR and NSOB) on active citizens, energetic society and social initiative takers (Hajer, 2011; NSOB and PBL, 2014; WRR, 2012). Currently, the experts seem divided on what social initiative takers are, could be or should be in terms of their work (spatial planning) and spatial planning in general. Also, the social initiative takers were not yet considered as solid solution and partner in national policy challenges.

The social debate dominated the RADAR session. The discord among the experts resulted in a limited amount of concrete results. The experts found it difficult to reflect on the preliminary conclusions, before they had 'made up their minds' on social initiative takers.

However, some reflections and tips were formulated. The RADAR participants recognized the shortcomings in the current institutional context and the success factors for meaningful involvement. Reflections given reflect on two points: the research focus and the social initiatives practices.

Firstly, the research focus excluded the dilemma if social initiatives and projects are either desirable or undesirable. Municipalities, neighbors and other inhabitants of a projects municipality could label the initiatives/projects as undesirable. The question is whether these projects are in fact undesirable or that arisen conflicts should be solved. Additional research is needed in order to explore this dilemma and to find appropriate responses for municipalities, other governments and initiative takers.

Secondly, the practices in which social initiative takers are helped or facilitated by municipalities are numerous. The most relevant practice was the 'stadsloods' in Amsterdam. A physical hot spot (location) for initiative takers to go to. At this location the initiative takers were helped with the 'governmental system', for example, with which legislation, forms, reports should be read and filled out.

Furthermore three tips were given to improve the report or recommendations. The first tip was framed for the recommendation: Create a framework for assessment of social projects. Sharing this assessment tool could help municipalities in their search for relevant social projects and could give initiative takers a clear overview of what has to be done in order to connect to a municipality.

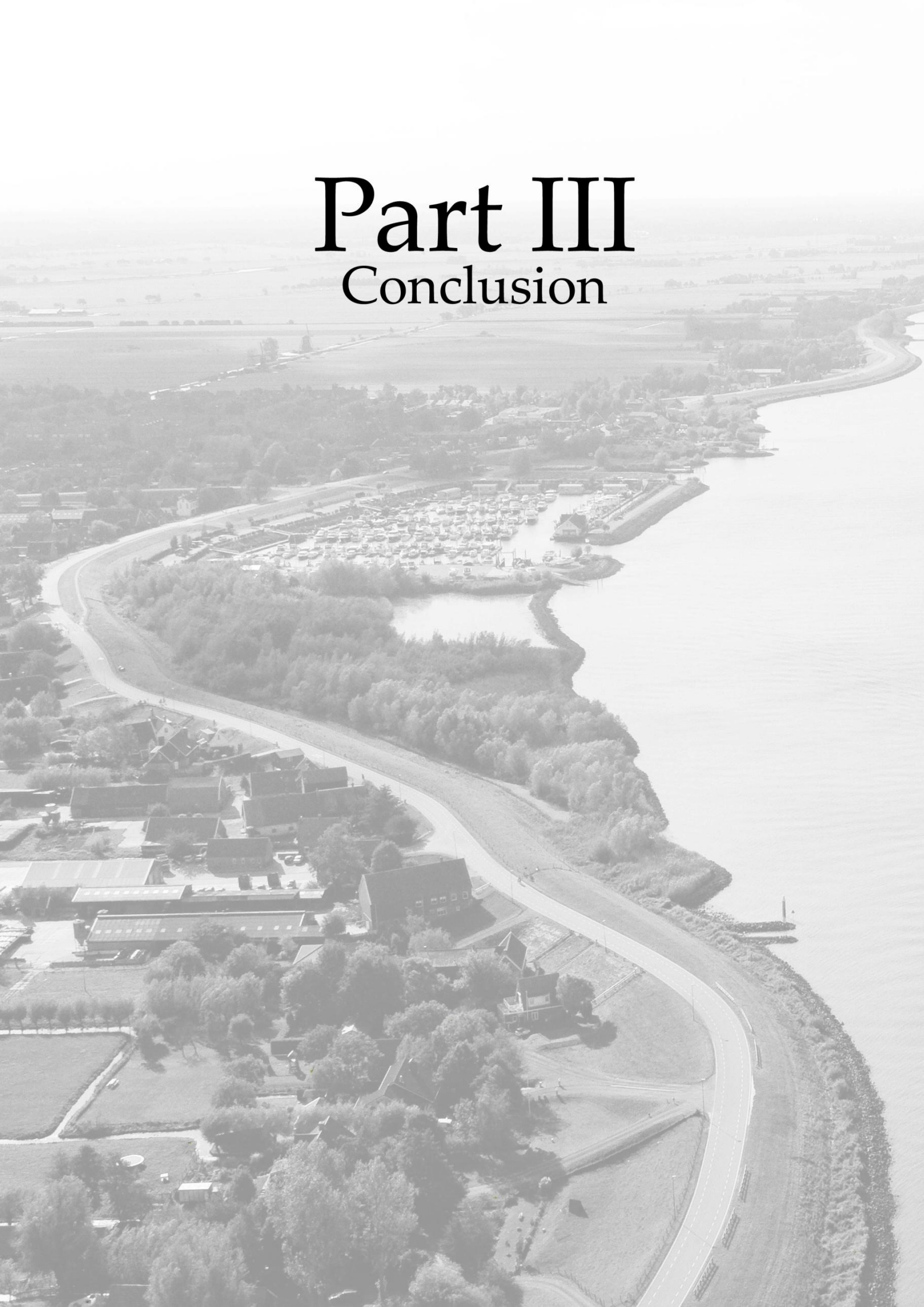
The second tip was to provide a national system in which initiative takers and their projects are incorporated. On a national level the system should be facilitating for initiatives to deploy easily. Were needed the policy or legislation should be made to fit.

The third tip was a tip for the eventual report. In the presentation the fact that initiative takers start projects in the physical living environment was not clear enough. In the report it should be expressed that the initiative takers start long term physical projects.



# Part III

## Conclusion





## 6. Conclusion

The past six chapters have introduced upcoming phenomena and problems, explained the research design and analyzed the two thematic case studies to search for an answer to:

*How can the national government support the energetic society<sup>29</sup> with an Environment & Planning vision?*

Four different angles (territorial, institutional, process and design) are researched with the help of four sub-questions. Together the four sub-questions help answer the main research question stated above. This concluding chapter gives answers to the four sub-questions before it answers the main research question. The next chapter will give the recommendations for the Environment & Planning vision. The conclusions and recommendations are made for the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. The conclusion and recommendations should help develop an Environment & Planning vision (implemented in 2018) which supports the energetic society.

### 6.1 Territorial

The territorial sub-question used to research the territorial angle is:

*How does the energetic society create public value in the physical living environment?*

The answer to this question is dual. Two thematic case studies are conducted. The two thematic case studies have two different steering perspectives. The national government has chosen to approach Room for the River as leading partner. Room for the River was a government led program. While Shrinkage & Vacancy uses a policy exploration. The cabinet and politics choose to facilitate the lower government, market and society in Shrinkage & Vacancy. The two different contexts made that case specific results and general results are found.

In general, social initiative takers add public value in the physical living environment. The social initiative takers have an intrinsic motivation for creating and contributing in societal issues (local or global). Social initiative takers actively invest in solving societal issues with social initiatives (Oude Vrielink & Verhoeven, 2011; Verhoeven, 2010). They always make a strong effort to create public value<sup>30</sup> to the likings of their direct surroundings (in both government-led and market/society-led steering perspectives). The creation of public value with the implementation (or planned implementation) of the social initiative<sup>31</sup> is done largely on their own. A remarkable conclusion considering the doubtful attitude towards a self-sufficient society, that is often described in literature (WRR, 2012; Brouwer & Engbersen, 2013; Ham & van der Meer, 2015).

Also, the social initiative takers incorporate the needs and interest of their direct surroundings<sup>32</sup>. An observation that can also be found in other literature (Linders, 2010; Verhoeven, 2010). Difference is that in government-led the successes are more doubtful and less clear. Social initiative takers in

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<sup>29</sup> The energetic society consists of several different types of energetic citizens. The type researched in this thesis is the social initiative taker.

<sup>30</sup> Public value lies in value that is claimed to be desirable by the society as a whole

<sup>31</sup> Social initiatives are: Project implemented or planned with a 'long term' impact on the physical living environment. The initiative when implemented has a clear visual appearance, for example a building, a football field, a tower, solar panels, etc.

<sup>32</sup> Direct surrounding refers to the citizens living in the direct surrounding of an initiative. In other words the initiative's neighbor. A more detailed description is given in Appendix II: Terminology list.

government-led programs are dependent on different stakeholders. Depending on the municipality and province to incorporate their social initiative in the planning phase. And depending on the contracting party and project team to implement their social initiative (or partly). In government-led policies and programs the social initiative takers are depending on others and not fully in charge of their social initiatives. This fact makes it difficult to incorporate the needs of the surroundings. In market/society-led policies the social initiative takers are fully responsible. And when fully responsible, the social initiative takers are capable of incorporating the interests and needs of their direct surroundings.

Concluding, the social initiative takers can participate in the creation largely on their own. Currently, the municipality often facilitates were needed with facilities, but this is only a small part of the success. Thus, what does the participation of social initiative takers in the physical living environment means for the national Environment & Planning vision? The social initiative takers seem willing and competent to contribute to (or as) solutions for local and national issues. They seem to have an intrinsic motivation for creating public value and the incorporation of the needs and interest of others. The social initiative takers create public value on small scale in collaboration with their direct surroundings. Therefore, investing in the self-sufficient social initiative takers seems promising.

The Environment & Planning vision is self-binding for the relevant Ministries, but also tries to inspire and invite other stakeholders to solve national policy challenges. Steering on the energy present in the society is a logical step for future policy (NSOB and PBL, 2014). The social initiative takers are no uniform stakeholder, but do seem capable of creating public value. The NSOB and PBL (2014, p. 17) describes the civil society as: “sufficiently energetic and creative to address policy challenges”. Based on this study, it seems a promising idea to inspire and invite social initiative takers to help solve the national policy challenges addressed in the Environment & Planning vision. However, the social initiatives are all locally implemented. Also, the social initiative taker as actor is strongly fragmented (Jonker, 2015). Some kind of link is needed between the local social initiative and the national Environment & Planning vision. In government-led, the linkage is easier since the national civil servants directly influence the local projects and initiatives. In market/society-led, the link is more difficult. There is no direct link between Environment & Planning vision (or national government) and social initiative taker. And the social initiatives are influenced by local politics and municipal and/or provincial policy. Whether a social initiative succeeds is still largely depending on actions of alderman, local politicians politics and civil servants. Depending on municipal actions, because spatial development is locally arranged and public interest is influenced by local politics. Social initiative takers with successful social initiatives seem to incorporate the interests of the direct surroundings. However, if the social initiative is ‘wanted’ (or in line of the local interests) in a municipality, it is still decided by local politics.

So, the national Environment & Planning vision should invite and inspire the social initiative taker and should make a link between the national Environment & Planning vision and the locally implemented social initiatives. A first step could be national support for the social initiative taker as public value creating stakeholder.



## 6.2 Institutional

The second sub-question is the question with an institutional angle:

*What kind of changes in the institutional environment are needed to connect to the energetic society?*

This institutional sub-question has two answers: one government-led and one market/society-led. The two different steering perspectives clearly reflect on the present institutional environment. A government-led steering perspective leads to a complex governance model for social initiative takers. The social initiative takers are one of the many stakeholders present in a large (governmental) project. In Room for the River the social initiative takers were a small stakeholder among contracted companies, municipality, province, water board, project team and other citizens. In market/society-led steering perspective the social initiative takers can implement their social initiative more freely. The social initiative takers are less depending on other stakeholders. They are only depending on the permits and legislation from municipality, province or national government and (sometimes) financial support from municipality, province or intermediary.

The difference in institutional context leads to two case specific conclusions. Two changes have to be made in order to connect to social initiative takers in government-led steering perspectives. Firstly, the governments present (municipality, province, water boards, and/or national government) should be a stable and personal partner. A partner that is transparent and open in the progress, expectations and consequences of projects, programs or policies implemented. Transparency and openness are key factors in future collaborations and as governmental work expertise (NSOB, 2014). Secondly, the partnership should be kept during the planning and the implementation phase of a project, program or policy. The planning phase is an open phase. In the planning phase the social initiatives are incorporated and the tacit knowledge of social initiative takers is used. In the implementation phase the collaboration is difficult. In the eyes of policy makers and policy executioners, citizens (i.e. social initiative takers) are not yet potential experts. A conclusion found by the WRR report (2012) and this study. The lack of continuity leads to problems in the social initiatives and hostile relationships and interaction.

In market/society-led steering perspectives the changes needed are different. A (governmental) partner should also be stable and personal. Social initiative takers need a personal point of contact inside the municipality and a stable government (national, regional and local) in policy. Also, social initiative takers need changes in the collaboration arrangements that are offered to them. Additional help is needed and arrangements should be adapted to the social initiative taker's needs. Suggested improvements are: the subsidy structures should be made to fit the social initiative takers (small budgets (Brouwer & Engbersen, 2013)), findable points of contact should be made and knowledge integration should be made on national scale.

A change needed in both government-led and market/society-led, is the handling of social initiative takers. Governments on each level seem to forget that social initiative takers often work on voluntary basis. Overflowing social initiative takers is a potential risk (Verhoeven, 2010). So, every minute spend is non-paid. A factor that is often forgotten.

So what can be done by the Environment & Planning vision to improve the institutional context? In both thematic case studies it is clear that the situation is still improvable. Three points could improve

the institutional context. (1) See social initiative takers as equals in reaching the social ambitions set. (2) Open the program of policy to potential social initiative takers and anticipate on the possibility of social initiative takers contributing to national ambitions. Facilitate in a framework that allows the unexpected to happen (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009). (3) Also, other governments could be urged to improve the policies, programs, arrangements and/or interaction for initiative takers.

The Environment & Planning vision is planning to collaborate with the other layers of government. To implement the three points mentioned above, the Environment & Planning vision has to be consistent in all three layers of government. In order to change the institutional environment with an Environment & Planning vision, the vision should be complementary to the Environment & Planning visions of all relevant municipalities and provinces<sup>33</sup>. Create an adapted institutional and associative framework wherein the social initiative takers can prosper (Boelens, 2010). The approach the Environment & Planning vision uses so far could result in complementary Environment & Planning visions in all layers of government.

### 6.3 Process

The third sub-question is the question with an process angle:

*What factors can be identified and/or created by the national government to get meaningfully engaged in processes initiated by the energetic society?*

Four factors are identified fitting both steering perspectives. Trust, a shared ambition, knowledge integration and equality are important to social initiative takers for a meaningful engagement between government and social initiative taker. Four factors which were already important in literature for meaningful engagement and the collaboration between government and non-governmental actors (Smedby & Neij, 2013; Faehnle & Tyrväinen, 2013; Booher & Innes, 2000; Höppner, 2009; Innes & Booher, 2003). Trust is needed for social initiative takers to know if the effort made is well spend. Shared ambition helps the collaboration between social initiative taker and government (local and national). A shared ambition makes it easier to compromise where needed. Knowledge integration helps equalize the playing field, which in their eyes improves the collaboration. The last factor is equality. The social initiative takers are often not taken seriously by municipalities, provinces or national government (especially in government-led steering perspectives). Taken seriously is important for social initiative takers (WRR, 2012). No equality means that social initiative takers are not taken seriously for their potential contribution in policy challenges.

Furthermore, social initiative takers in government-led want to see their tacit knowledge used. Often unique information on a project area is not used. In market/society-led steering perspectives an intermediary is needed in order to find the right connection for legislation, procedures and subsidies. The intermediary in a government-led steering perspective is more a trustee. The social initiative takers want a personal approach and need a trustee of the project team (the implementing or planning authority).

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<sup>33</sup> The Environment & Planning vision is, under the Environment & Planning act, obligatory for national government and provinces. Currently, the Environment & Planning vision is optional for municipalities. However, the optional could still be changed in obligatory.

So what can a national government do with a new vision? Can important factors be improved in the Environment & Planning vision? Knowing what factors are important to social initiative takers can help with future collaborations. In government-led projects and programs it is useful to know how social initiative takers would like to be engaged in collaboration. Every program or project initiated by a national government will effect citizens living in or around the planned area. The four important factors could be the basis of communication and interaction with (potential) social initiative takers. For market/society-led policies or programs important factors are useful, because social initiative takers are a growing and contributing phenomena. The information can be used in different ways. For example a national statement on equality could help social initiative takers in collaboration with municipalities and provinces. Or an ambition could be abstracted from social initiative takers, to make a shared ambition with it. Or an ambition could be made adaptive, to be used and corrected when needed.

The Environment & Planning vision tries to address the important new phenomena, such as a growing number of social initiative takers. With the four factors identified the 'to be developed' Environment & Planning vision could address social initiative takers correctly. Also, in the programs and projects arising from the Environment & Planning vision (government-led), the governance methods could include a new approach for social initiative takers. Furthermore, the Environment & Planning vision could be developed in collaboration with social initiative takers to find shared ambitions. Even though the eventual ambitions are all political choices.

Finally, the social initiative takers need some point of contact. Sometimes intermediaries are used to be the point of contact or as partner for governance. And the Environment & Planning vision could use a partner to improve the institutional context. The intermediaries (or larger intermediary foundations or social businesses) could be the link between (national) government and social initiative takers. The intermediaries could be a neutral stakeholder that anticipates on social initiative takers. Quickly anticipating is difficult for governments (Verdoolaege & van Vliet, 2015) and the intermediary could help in that case. Also, the intermediaries could be the stakeholder that help spread the national ambition of the Environment & Planning vision. However, there are currently numerous examples of larger intermediaries, but the cohesion between them is lacking (Jonker, 2015). The Environment & Planning vision can use the intermediaries. Potential role for the national government can be to create coherence between them and between national government and intermediaries. Side note: the intermediary seem more important in a market/society-led steering perspective than in a government-led steering perspective.

## 6.4 Design

The final sub-question is the question that addresses design:

*What kind of content and shape are to be made in the Environment and Planning vision in order to connect it to the energetic society?*

Social initiative takers find the shape of current documentation and products not appealing. In order to connect to the social initiative takers, the documentation (such as the Environment & Planning vision) should fit them as respondent. The suggested shape is a simple writing style (more common, less scientific) and if possible with exemplary visualization.

Documentation (such as vision) should be filled with clear and unambiguous content. Be clear on the ambitions set, be clear on the national contribution to the ambition and frame the ambition in a dream like context. Social initiative takers are attracted to dream like ambitions, because those are comparable to their own ideas (WRR, 2012). Social initiative takers should want to participate in the national dream with a clear ambition. But they also want to know what happens in the near future (clear national contribution). When the Environment & Planning vision is made, the vision should be actively communicated in market/society-led. Government-led, social initiative takers prefer to be kept posted on the progress.

So what do the design findings mean for a national scale design? If the Environment & Planning vision would be designed for social initiative takers the vision should: (1) adapt the content and shape for the respondents and (2) actively communicate the content (market/society-led) or keep everyone posted on the progress (government-led).

However, design is more than just shape and content. The Environment & Planning vision also has a status as design. The content (national ambition) and shape is the basis of governmental actions and actions of its employees. Legislation works in the service of the policy written in the Environment & Planning vision. Content and shape is the basis of the to be develop programs and projects. So, the Environment & Planning vision is a legal basis and the first step in future programs and projects.

If the Environment & Planning vision would be developed for social initiative takers, it could be wisely to separate the official Environment & Planning vision (legal basis) and unofficial and more appealing Environment & Planning vision. However, do not make false promises and be consistent with the unofficial and official vision. False promises could reduce the trust (*Process factor*). And be consistent to be a stable partner for social initiative takers (*Institutional factor*).

## 6.5 Main research question

The previous four sub-question have each addressed a certain angle of the main research question:

*How can the national government support the energetic society with an Environment & Planning vision?*

So far a variety of options have passed the revue. On each of the sub-questions a certain intervention can be done in order to improve the position of the social initiative taker.

Firstly, territorial social initiative takers create public value on a small scale in collaboration with its direct surroundings. Therefore, investing in the self-sufficient social initiative takers seems promising. The Environment & Planning vision should have confidence in social initiative takers as public value creators. The social initiative takers are growing in size and in importance (Verhoeven, 2010; Rotmans, 2012). However, the success of social initiatives is still highly dependent on local politics. The local politics decide if social initiatives are in the 'local interest'. So the Environment & Planning vision should collaborate with local politics to make complementary visions and to show that social initiatives are in the local interest and national interest. The Environment & Planning vision should not only be binding to the national government, but should also try to link the Environment & Planning vision with local and regional Environment & Planning visions. The collaboration will help strengthen the position of social initiative takers as partners in addressing national policy challenges.

Secondly, the Environment & Planning could change the institutional environment. If the Environment & Planning vision leads to a governmentally driven program, policy or projects, the Environment & Planning vision should describe boundary conditions for a 'social initiative taker' governance. The governance (1) should be based on equality between governments (local, regional and national) and social initiative taker, (2) should offer collaborative arrangements in which the social initiative takers have more influence<sup>34</sup>, (3) should be stable in both the planning and the implementation phase and (4) should describe that the (national) government is a personal partner who is open and transparent on the progress and consequences. In market and society led policies, programs or projects the Environment & Planning vision should be complementary to regional and local Environment & Planning visions. Complementary with other visions to offer social initiative takers uniform subsidy or collaborative arrangements and to address one shared national and local ambition. Also, intermediaries can be introduced or strengthened to be the missing link between national government, municipalities and social initiative takers.

Thirdly, the Environment & Planning vision is developed in a spatial planning landscape with a growing amount of social initiative takers. The Environment & Planning wants to and should anticipate on this 'new' spatial planning landscape. Social initiative takers want collaborations based on equality, trust, knowledge integration and shared ambition. These four criteria could be used to address the social initiative taker correctly. Knowledge integration could be arranged nationally by the Environment & Planning vision. A shared ambition could be gathered by collaboratively creating national and shared ambitions. Equality and trust could be written down as boundary conditions or considerations for collaborations between social initiative takers and the national government (or any other government).

Fourthly, the design should be made to fit the social initiative taker as respondent. The content and shape should be clear, unambiguous and visual. However, the design is more than shape and content alone. The Environment & Planning vision as product is the legal basis for future governmental handling and legislation. Also, the Environment & Planning vision is the basis for the program and projects implemented in the future. To implement the design suggestions the Environment & Planning visions could separate the official Environment & Planning vision and the unofficial more appealing Environment & Planning vision. However, do not make false promises and be consistent with the unofficial and official vision. False promises could reduce the trust. And be consistent to be a stable partner for social initiative takers.

So what is the integrative solution? How can the national government support social initiative takers (as part of the energetic society) with the Environment & Planning vision? The Environment & Planning vision, implemented in 2018, should use the territorial, institutional, process and design suggestions, boundary conditions and considerations. The 'to be developed' Environment & Planning vision should support social initiative takers. To support social initiative takers, the Environment & Planning vision and its developers have to collaborate in all level of government. The social initiative takers are locally active, bringing all kind of 'local' problems (when implementing or planning the social initiatives). Complementary Environment & Planning visions (regional, local and national) could make the link between national subsidy structures, national ambitions, or even national legislation

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<sup>34</sup> Even marginal increase of influence, such as being listened to or as consultative body, improves the social initiatives and the relation between (national) government and social initiative takers

and into local context. Also, intermediaries could play a large role in making sure that nationally offered help and/or finances find the social initiative takers.

Furthermore, the Environment & Planning vision should possess suggestions, considerations, arrangements or even boundary conditions on trust, equality, knowledge integration and shared ambitions for collaborations between social initiative takers and the (national) government. The suggestions, considerations, arrangements and boundary conditions of the 'to be developed' Environment & Planning vision could shape a framework wherein social initiative takers and governments (local, regional and national) can interact and collaboratively reach ambitions set (Sehested, 2009; Boelens, 2010).

Finally, the suggestions, arrangements, boundary conditions, policies, programs, etc. have to be bundled in an Environment & Planning vision that uses visualization, clear language and is unambiguous. Make the Environment & Planning vision appealing: Dreamy on the long term and clear on the near future. And communicate the end result actively. However, the vision also has a certain status. Try separate the official Environment & Planning vision which is the legal basis for future decisions and a 'to be developed' unofficial Environment & Planning vision. The unofficial Environment & Planning vision can be the more appealing visions which can be communicated easily, but is also consistent with the official Environment & Planning vision.

Side note: the success of a Environment & Planning vision supporting social initiative takers is dependent on the collaboration between local and national. If a social initiative is in the interest of the municipality is decided by local or regional politics. Not only the national institutional environment should be changed, but also the regional and local institutional environment is important. The process and engagement is often led or done by executive national departments (such as Rijkswaterstaat) or municipal civil servants or aldermen. Knowing how to support social initiative takers with the Environment & Planning vision, is only the first step in actually developing a Environment & Planning vision which supports the social initiative taker. The eventual Environment & Planning vision has to fit the current decentralized spatial planning 'system'.

Concluding, accepting the social initiative taker in its totality is important. The social initiative taker needs to be recognized as contributor to the society. Make initiative takers part of the solution, not 'the' solution. Contribution of social initiative takers are heard to measure (Jonker, 2015), but multiple small contributions could also be a large contribution. Social initiatives have potential, but improvements have to be made in order to fit their practice to the systematic world of governments. The Environment & Planning vision is a product with enough status to make a large contribution to the changes needed and could make a gesture to bridge the gap between the systematic institutionalized governmental world and social initiative takers.

## 7. Recommendations

The conclusion stated that the Environment & Planning vision could be the instrument to bridge the gap. So what are the recommendations for the Environment & Planning vision to support the energetic society (or in more detail the social initiative takers)? The possible design suggestion, boundary conditions or considerations are explained with the use of the four angles (territorial, institutional, process and design). Each design suggestion is framed in a statement and provided with an explanation of the statement. The recommendations are directed at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment as leading actor in the Environment & Planning vision's development. The Environment & Planning vision could use the recommendation for its implementation in 2018 and the current process of development.

### 7.1 Territorial

#### **Have confidence in the social initiative taker!**

Social initiative takers are well aware of the technical content needed in order to succeed. They are socially driven and their intentions are better than many other stakeholders out there. The national governments should have confidence that every euro or hours spend in a social initiative is a well spend hours or euro. The Environment & Planning vision should address that it trusts on social initiative takers and provides them space in the public domain (Oude Vrielink & Verhoeven, 2011). On a local scale the social initiative takers are a promising investments. The social initiatives successfully increase the public value. And locally the social initiative takers take care of their direct surroundings when they implement their social initiatives. The Environment & Planning vision could convey a statement to show its confidence in social initiative takers. It should invite and inspire the social initiative taker. A statement, that social initiative takers are supported and that the national ambitions can be reached together. The Environment & Planning vision is a good instrument to make such a statement since the Environment & Planning vision covers the whole physical living environment. The Environment & Planning vision is planning to introduce integral policies on the physical living environment. This broad scope in combination with the integral approach differs from the predecessors of the Environment & Planning vision. Also, the integral policies on the physical living environment fit social initiatives. The social initiatives are often integral and are often more board then spatial planning alone. Therefore, the social initiative takers could identify themselves better in the Environment & Planning vision.

However, the political support for such a statement is doubtful. The image of supporting social initiative takers over others on national scale could be sensitive. Although the image of social initiative takers is positive (according to this research): contributing to society and caring for its direct surroundings. Also, the support cannot be forced upon municipalities and provinces. A statement for social initiative takers as partner in national policy challenges is to be carried out nationally, but also the support is needed on local scale.

## 7.2 Institutional

### **Make the Environment & Planning vision complementary to all Environment & Planning visions (local, regional and national)!**

To support the social initiative takers a link is needed between the national Environment & Planning vision and the local social initiatives. The social initiatives are mostly influenced by local politics and municipal or provincial policy. Many institutional improvements can be implemented on national scale, but the direct influence on social initiative takers is doubtful (because of the decentralized spatial planning). If the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment uses its ambitions to collaboratively design the Environment & Planning vision, the Environment & Planning visions can be complementary. A suggestion would be to collaboratively design the support for social initiative takers. Municipalities, provinces and Ministries should collaborate to implement the support needed. Support as in the recommendations suggested below: subsidy structures, stability in policy and open and transparent collaborations. Collaboratively create an adapted institutional and associative framework wherein the social initiative takers can prosper (Boelens, 2010). A national scale is needed to empower<sup>35</sup> and a local scale is needed to implement institutional improvements in practice. A strong consideration is to use the different levels of government to strengthen the support for the social initiative taker.

#### **Be careful in what you ask!**

Social initiative takers are volunteers or social entrepreneurs. The social contribution is sometimes hard-won and time spend is often not paid for the social initiative takers. There are sufficient social initiative takers wanting and waiting to contribute. However, know that social initiative takers are non-paid or 'less-paid' entrepreneurs when a Environment & Planning vision is designed. Do not over ask the social initiative takers (Verhoeven, 2010). A suggestion would be to bet on the social initiative taker in the full width. Try to avoid the upscaling of successful social initiatives and try to increase the amount of successful social initiatives.

#### **Be stable through policy and as government!**

Make sure that its clear what is to be expected of you (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment) and them (social initiative taker) and make sure you fulfill your promises and deals. An unstable party is highly unwanted. It takes a long time to set up an initiative. So, stay as stable as possible during their initiatives.

A consideration for the Environment & Planning vision is therefore stability in policy. The Environment & Planning vision could be the long term vision needed by the social initiative takers. A long term perspective on the physical living environment that facilitates somewhat long term support structures. Stability in policy is a feeding ground for successful social initiatives.

However, stability in policy, especially on different governmental levels, is very difficult. Ambitions, goals and policy is fluid and vulnerable to political changes. So, try to design the policy as robust as possible to increase the odds for successful social initiatives.

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<sup>35</sup> Empower on national scale could be used to show the confidence in the social initiative takers (territorial recommendation) or to support all initiative takers at once (process recommendation)



### **Make social initiative takers arrangements!**

*(Market/society-led steering perspective)*

Current arrangements such as subsidy structures, helping intermediaries (or points of contact) and knowledge exchange are absent or insufficient. Make sure, that when a policy is developed and social initiative takers are 'invited' to achieve your ambition, the arrangement fit social initiative takers. For example no large funds for large project, but a simple fund with small hands-on budgets. Or an office or place to meet as point of contact for social initiative takers (for region specific policies).

The Environment & Planning vision should consider to use the improvements mentioned above. Future policy which (partly) uses a market and/or society-led steering perspective should introduce small hands-on budgets. The budgets could be carried out by the ministry itself or by a more local partner (such as intermediaries or municipalities). Secondly, the knowledge integration could be introduced centrally. Currently, the knowledge is often spread over regions. Thirdly, some sort of point of contact could be used, offered or facilitated. A point of contact that social initiative takers could use to meet other social initiative takers. Clustering the social initiative takers increases the chance of success.

### **Make sure your collaboration is open, transparent and personal!**

*(Government-led steering perspective)*

Collaborative arrangements should be open, transparent and personal. Firstly, an open process is sometimes hard, but will facilitate the best option. If a process is open, social initiative takers are willing to share their tacit knowledge. The tacit knowledge is useful to realize locally embedded project, programs or policies. There is more experience in every neighborhood than people might think.

Secondly, being transparent in a collaboration decreases the amount of fuzz around the large projects and enlarges the chance of contributing social initiatives. Transparency increases the trust in the project or program (NSOB, 2014). Potential social initiative takers become more willing to participate.

Thirdly, a personal touch improves the information exchange between social initiative taker and governments (for example a municipality, Rijkswaterstaat or water board). Trustees can be used to improve the personal contact between social initiative takers and governments.

Openness, transparency and personal approaches could all be important boundary conditions for programs, projects and policies deriving from the Environment & Planning vision. The Environment & Planning vision is the basis for the project and programs done implemented in the (near) future. The boundary conditions can be written down as boundary conditions for the governance approach in programs and projects.

## 7.3 Process

### **Personalize your collaboration with the social initiative takers!**

Meaningful engagement of social initiative takers in either national program or process (government in charge) or involvement of a government in a social initiative (social initiative taker in charge), starts with finding a basis of trust and finding a shared ambition or goal. Furthermore, an equal treatment and knowledge integration is needed for a meaningful engagement. All four criteria mentioned are boundary conditions for future policies, programs and projects that derive from the Environment & Planning vision. Also the Environment & Planning vision itself could use the four criteria for policy.

Firstly, trust and equality are soft variables. Reaching trust and equality is highly dependent on the responsible civil servant (national, regional or local). However, the Environment & Planning vision could make a gesture by writing down trust and equality as core values for collaboration or governance in policies, programs or projects. Secondly, the Environment & Planning vision could facilitate knowledge integration nationwide. For example, by creating a platform on the internet for example or with support of a trustful 'third party' to facilitate it. Thirdly, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment could develop ambitions for the Environment & Planning vision in collaboration with stakeholders such as the social initiative takers. Even though the eventual ambitions are all political choices.

### **Support all initiative takers at once!**

Two suggestions can be made to support all social initiative takers in the engagement between social initiative takers and (national) governments. Firstly, give the relevant layer of government the possibility to serve current social initiative taker and future social initiative takers with an 'experimental status'. The experimental status should make it possible to flexibly use legislation were needed.

Secondly, speak out the confidence mentioned earlier and make social initiative takers a part of the solution. Make a national statement on collaboration between government and social initiative taker and let other governmental layers know that social initiative takers can be part of the solution. The social initiative takers can use this national support in order to start negotiation, collaboration, etc. as equals. The ministry and the social initiative takers strive for the same goal and they can help one another. The Environment & Planning vision is a vision addressing the changing spatial planning landscape. The vision can be used as a instrument to support the 'new' actor (social initiative takers). The strength of support from the Environment & Planning vision lies in the broad spectrum of social initiatives active in the physical living environment.

### **Use intermediaries to improve the collaboration between (national) government and social initiative takers!**

*(Market/society-led steering perspective)*

The social initiative takers need some point of contact. A point of contact which helps them with the 'difficult' systematic and institutionalized governmental world. Also, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (or other ministries) could use a partner to find social initiative takers and engage in a collaboration with social initiative takers. The intermediaries (or larger intermediary

foundations or social businesses) could be the link between (national) government and social initiative takers. The intermediaries could be a neutral stakeholder that anticipates on social initiative takers. Also, the intermediaries could be the stakeholder that helps spread national ambitions of the Environment & Planning vision. A suggestion is, to use intermediaries to link the national Environment & Planning ambitions, policies, programs and other instruments designed for the social initiative takers to the local (and hard to find) social initiatives. The estimation is the intermediaries are better in helping the social initiative takers. Since helping the social initiative takers could be one of their core businesses.

### **Make the engagement of social initiative takers continuous!**

*(Government-led steering perspective)*

Social initiative takers might arise when a project or program is in the planning phase. The social initiative takers react on the programs or projects planned. Expectation are made when the social initiative takers and responsible government engage in collaboration. The collaboration could result in a improved result for both social initiative taker and responsible government. However, a boundary condition for a successful collaboration is continuity. Collaboration between the responsible government and social initiative taker(s) has to continue in the planning phase and implementation phase. Even if the responsible government changes. So, the Environment & Planning vision should describe a governance method for programs and projects derived from the vision. A governance method that describes the continuity in the collaboration. The description can be seen as a boundary condition for program and project derived from the Environment & Planning vision. How the collaboration is shaped can differ. Personal contact between a trustee and the social initiative taker is possible. But also an advisory board or something similar could work.

## **7.4 Design**

### **Dare to frame your dream on the Netherlands!**

Social initiative takers want to be part of your story. Storytelling could help make the Environment & Planning vision, but make sure the vision is written for them. To address the social initiative taker, the Environment & Planning vision should consist of an overarching dream with a clear ambition (for example 20% of the energy supply should be renewable in 2020). An Environment & Planning vision that steers on energy in society, has ambition and stimulates social initiative takers (NSOB and PBL, 2014). Also, the vision should be clear on what to expect from the national government in terms of actions (not ambiguous and not 'free for your own interpretation'). Suggested is: explain the rules, the national contribution and what can be expected from the national government. If your dream is inspiring and inviting, the chance of social initiative takers participating is higher.

Also, the Environment & Planning vision might have a higher chance of inspiring social initiative takers than its predecessors. The Environment & Planning vision has a chance to address national policy challenges integrally. Social initiative takers plan and implement social initiatives integrally. Therefore, the currently sectoral governmental policy does not fit the integral social initiatives. The Environment & Planning vision has the possibility to inspire social initiatives with ambitions that are comparable to their own.

### **Make your dream as a story, painting or movie!**

Current documentation is too wordy, difficult and non-visual. Make a story, painting or movie in which they are part of the solution. Social initiative takers should want to participate. A specific story should fit the social initiative taker as target audience. An Environment & Planning vision for social initiative takers should be less wordy, simple in text and visual (exemplary where needed). Make use of the large amount of possibilities present in the current digital era.

However, always be reminded of the fact that the Environment & Planning vision is a legal document. Always be reminded of that fact when designing the vision or make an additional more 'popular' version of the vision with another legal status.

### **Actively communicate your vision!**

*(Market/ society-led)* Active communication increases the amount of social initiative takers contributing and helps the social initiative takers in finding the 'right address' if help is needed. Also, the well framed social initiative taker story (potentially) is known by social initiative takers and society. All effort of designing a social initiative taker supporting Environment & Planning vision could be useless when the target audience is not familiar with the instrument.

*(Government-led)* Social initiative takers in government-led projects, programs, etc. want to be kept informed on the progress. The best approach is to be open, transparent and to keep the information flow going. A well-informed social initiative taker is a satisfied social initiative taker.

## 8. Discussion

The research is conducted and the conclusions are given. During the study several choices were made, interpretation of findings were done and the thematic case study as method was introduced. So what are the consequences of these choices, interpretations, and method? The discussion describes three discussion points. The discussion points address questions that could be raised after reading this thesis.

(1) The thesis conducted a thematic case study. The thematic case study is a one-time method used to reach as much social initiative takers as possible for interviews. Social initiative takers who have a comparable background. Problem is that only one side of the story is heard with the thematic case study. Normally case studies analyze the field of stakeholders to analyze the interdependencies and the differences in opinions, views, etc. between stakeholders. The fact that only one side is heard can be problematic with regard to the reliability of this research. The research done in order to find an answer to the territorial sub-question is the most problematic. Especially: Can it be verified if a social initiative taker says that no problems raised between him and his neighbor? The study emphasizes the good causes of social initiative takers and shows that social initiatives are well embedded in the living environment (according to the social initiative takers).

Also, only successful or at least implemented initiatives are interviewed on what could be improved in order to improve their already successful project. Summarized: only social initiative takers with successful social initiatives are heard on what could be improved in their social initiatives.

To solve the reliability issue a large amount interviews (14 in total) and validations (2 interviews and a validation session) is done. The amount of interviews and validation should empower the findings. Hypothetically speaking one social initiative taker could exaggerate about his initiative, but isn't that effect 'gone' when 6 initiative takers state the same? Question is, is that enough? The study shows patterns from a social initiative taker point of view and remains exploratory. Additional research is needed to find 'more than' the social initiative taker's view.

(2) The study emphasizes the good causes of social initiative takers and analyzes how social initiatives are embedded in the living environment. In the conclusion and recommendations is claimed that the good causes and well embedded social initiatives are a legitimate reason to support social initiative takers. Because social initiative takers creates public value and the social initiatives are well embedded in the living environment.

However is it fair to other citizens (Netherlands, regional or local) to support social initiative takers? Supporting the energetic society is always subjective (Verdoolaege & van Vliet, 2015). Local politics decide on whether the social initiative is 'in the interest of the municipality', because spatial planning is decentralized. Also, measuring the contribution of one or several initiatives is difficult and not done yet (Jonker, 2015).

Concluding, the support of the social initiative taker remains difficult, since the amount of public value created is hard to measure (and not measured in this study) and local politics has strong influence on whether the social initiative is 'in the interest of others'. The discussion point is: Is it legitimate to support social initiative takers, because they can be a partner in solving national policy challenges? And that social initiative takers take into account the needs and interest of others, could be an asset of the social initiative taker (Linders, 2010). However, it could also be a critical factor for

succeeding as bottom-up initiative/project (WRR, 2012). Either one of these assumptions could be true.

(3) The conclusion and recommendation state that the social initiative taker should be supported in future policy. But will support from the Environment & Planning vision lead to an increased amount of successful social initiatives. The success of a supporting Environment & Planning vision is highly dependent on local politics, aldermen and municipal civil servants. The municipalities are often called sectorised. Also, one of the findings is: there is a difference between alderman and civil servants in handling and support for social initiatives. A supporting Environment & Planning vision needs municipalities who are open for integral social initiatives and the alderman and municipal civil servants should be on the same terms about social initiative takers in a municipality. A supporting Environment & Planning vision is one thing, but the success of a supporting Environment & Planning vision depends on municipalities (especially for the market/society-led steering perspective). Municipalities are currently the first post for most of the initiative takers.

## 9. Future research

The exploratory research has revealed some practical and interesting results. Future research could deepen and further explore the connection between the upcoming phenomena energetic society and national policy and visions. Four suggestions are done for future research.

(1) One of the most interesting findings is that social initiative takers can act self-sufficient. Especially the willingness of initiative takers to adapt their initiative to incorporate the interest of others is interesting. The research done shows a pattern of social initiative takers which create public value (increase public value and stable local 'public' interest) largely on their own. However, additional research is needed to conclude if the initiative taker is really self-sufficient in creating public value. It could be that willingness to incorporate the needs of others is a very important factor for success or that initiative takers are really social thinkers.

(2) The study chose to reduce the complexity and research one axis of the PBL and NSOB model. The result is a study on a market/society-led policy exploration and government-led program. The results of two opposite thematic case studies is that some findings are comparable and some are not. However, the model has two axes: Market/society-led vs. government-led and political choice vs. public performance. The model also has four steering perspectives. It would be interesting to study the difference in impact, consequences, relations, etc. for social initiative takers between the four steering perspectives. Such a study could improve the incorporation of social initiative takers in governmental policy.

(3) Room for the River showed that in water management projects/programs social initiative takers are new and often 'unwanted'. River basin management, such as with Room for the River, is called 'the future' and better integrate solution for water management and project management will follow. An additional study on the inclusion of social initiative takers in river basin projects and/or large Rijkswaterstaat projects could be relevant. The social initiative takers have shown to improve or have potential to improve the river basin projects. A future research in this direction could also be made more abstract by researching how (social) initiative takers were to be incorporated in large projects (project management).

(4) This study is an exploratory study on the potential of the Environment & Planning vision for the energetic society. The outcome: recommendations for the new to develop vision due for 2018. An interesting study could be a reflection study on such a large vision. The study analyzed two smaller 'policies' (program and potential policy). Question is: are the conclusions as relevant as suggested for the eventual large vision?

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