



**kenniswerkplaats**  
*Noordoost Fryslân*

The Frisian **vitalruralarea**  approach  
towards regional learning and innovation

This brochure is one of the knowledge dissemination documents of the INTER-REG IVB – project *Vital Rural Area*. It is realised with the support of the European Regional Development Fund ERDF, especially the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme, NOFA, the Dutch ministry of Economy, Agriculture and Innovation, the Groene Kennis Coöperatie (Green Knowledge Cooperation), the Programme of Regional Transition, the institute of professional education AOC Friesland and the UAS Van Hall Larenstein.

### Vital Rural Area

*Vital Rural Area* is a European co-operation project of 13 project partners from six North Sea countries in the framework of the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme. Leadpartner is NOFA, the co-operation between the Dutch Municipalities of Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel and Kollumerland c.a. in the Province of Fryslân.

### Integrated set of work packages

The project partners co-operate towards transnational strategies fortifying regional areas. In three strongly inter-connected work packages, partners address three major themes connected to regional development:

- Empowerment of SMEs, towards new economical prospects and innovations;
- Branding of the region, towards a professional exposure of regions;
- Optimizing services, towards more and better accessible services and amenities.

### Co-operative agreement approach

As a common standard for public private partnership, *Vital Rural Area* develops, implements and tests - involving all stakeholders - the *co-operative agreement approach*: cross-sectoral, top-down and bottom-up. In this approach the stakeholders draw up agreements with targets and conditions how to achieve the joint formulated goals within an agreed-upon period of time, using the knowledge, experience and expertise of all stakeholders, including the citizens.

### Rural Power Pack

Based on the three-trail work package approach, and with the co-operative agreement approach as a common set of rules for (transnational) co-operation, *Vital Rural Area* develops, builds, implements and disseminates the *Rural Power Pack*, a transferable method for setting up successful social economical projects in rural areas. The *Rural Power Pack* is the main deliverable and key innovative transferable output of the project, demonstrating how to organise and implement sustainable projects on regional development:

Please find more details on [www.vitalruralarea.eu](http://www.vitalruralarea.eu) .



This booklet is about *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân. Literally, the Dutch word *Kenniswerkplaats* (plural *Kenniswerkplaatsen*) means 'knowledge factory', a building where knowledge is produced. And in fact, this is what *Kenniswerkplaats* does. It is a learning, research and work community of regional stakeholders who in a durable setting meet students, teachers and researchers from universities and vocational education institutes.

In this brochure you will find the details about *Kenniswerkplaats*, and in particular, how it is prepared and implemented in the Northeast Fryslân region.

- Part 1 describes what *Kenniswerkplaats* is, what new insights have been acquired in recent years and how far along the preparations for *Kenniswerkplaats* in Northeast Fryslân are.
- Part 2 presents a list of steps the region has taken so far towards a regional Knowledge Agenda. Aspects addressed are the SEMP area development programme, the Agenda Network Northeast, the initial inventory of the regional knowledge questions and a first attempt towards matchmaking among the knowledge institutions. These are the starting points for a fully-fledged regional knowledge agenda to be developed starting in 2012.
- Part 3 presents the implementation plan. It addresses substantive aspects of *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, such as objectives, intended results, knowledge creation and knowledge management, as well as organisational and financial aspects and a working plan for the upcoming period intended to ultimately result in a knowledge agenda and a signed Regional Contract.

## Colophon

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The Northeast Fryslân Approach (NOFA): [www.nofa.nl](http://www.nofa.nl)

Network Northeast: [www.netwerknnoordoost.nl/](http://www.netwerknnoordoost.nl/)

Vital Rural Area: [www.vitalruralarea.eu](http://www.vitalruralarea.eu)

Regional Marketing Northeast Fryslân: [www.dwaande.nl](http://www.dwaande.nl)

National Programme Regional Transition: [www.regionaletransitie.nl](http://www.regionaletransitie.nl)

Groene Kennis Coöperatie (Green Knowledge Cooperative): [www.gkc.nl](http://www.gkc.nl)

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## Background

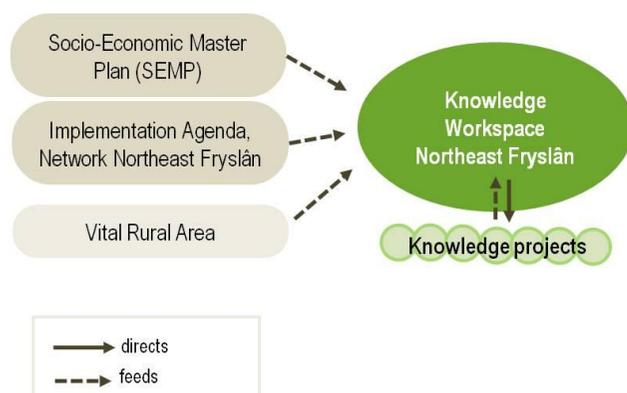
During the last few years, with European Union support and in the framework of Vital Rural Area, the NOFA municipalities Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel and Kollumerland prepared the foundation of *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân.

One of the results of this preliminary process is a three-space knowledge box on *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân:

- Part 1** A sustainable arrangement for the learning region
- Part 2** Towards a regional Knowledge Agenda
- Part 3** Dwaande, the implementation plan

### *Why a Kenniswerkplaats in Northeast Friesland?*

The cabinet policy on the Top Sectors devotes a great deal of attention to the link between knowledge, training & education and the labour market. Budgets have been provided to strengthen the cooperation between the green knowledge institutions and the region. The regional perspective is what makes the difference in the systemic connection of industry, government and knowledge (the 'Golden Triangle'). The most important tasks on economic revitalisation and augmenting innovative capacity are the ones that happen on the regional scale. Moreover, the region is also the playing field on which complex issues such as shrinkage, climate change and increased responsibility of citizens can and must be taken up. Cooperation with knowledge institutions, including at the local and regional levels, is urgently needed. Right now, too many separate initiatives and projects are being pursued, and the lack of cohesion means the returns are insufficient.



Knowledge Workplace Northeast Fryslân at the regional scale

In the Northeast Fryslân region, we have been working towards a structured cooperation for over ten years:

1. Recently, this resulted in the socio-economic master plan (SEMP), drafted in 2010 by the municipalities of Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel, Kollumerland c.a. and Tytsjerksteradiel, the provincial government of Fryslân and the organised corporate sector and detailing an area development plan.
2. This development plan was then further specified in the implementation agenda for the Network Northeast.
3. In addition, together the NOFA municipalities are lead partner on Vital Rural Area, a European partnership project with the goal of socio-economic revitalisation of rural regions by leveraging and bundling the strengths of various parties (residents, companies, the educational sector, government bodies and local actors).

These three lines of development proved to be a solid foundation for going one step further in Northeast Fryslân: the region began experimenting with the concept of *Kenniswerkplaats*, a structural con-

nection between knowledge institutions, the small and medium-sized enterprise sector, NGOs, government bodies and individuals. *Kenniswerkplaats* is a learning, research and work community with a focus on revitalising the regional living and working environment. *Kenniswerkplaats* is a place where area development projects and other forms of development projects are conducted. Students, teachers, researchers, lecturers and professors of the green (higher) education and research institutions partner with non-green knowledge institutions and stakeholders such as entrepreneurs, governmental authorities, experts, users and private individuals to come up with innovative solutions for rural, urban and suburban issues. The projects are knowledge-intensive: the focus is on connecting, developing, applying, evaluating and distributing knowledge.

In broad terms, this means:

- bringing about innovations in the area of regional development or setting such innovations into motion
- Effectively and efficiently increasing the competencies and innovative capacity of all stakeholders
- Creating innovations in working and learning, and transferring them to others.

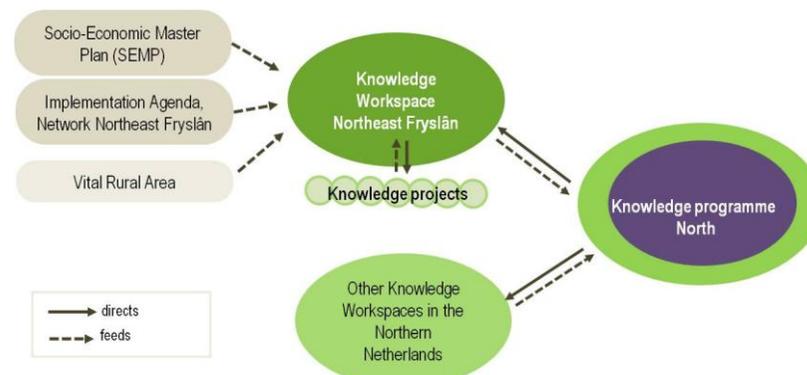
#### Best practice

We can already draw valuable lessons from the preparatory phase that has been pursued for a few years now. For example, we learned that here it was the region that took the initiative to establish *Kenniswerkplaats*. Developments from the inside out, as described above, here correspond with developments from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation and the Green Knowledge Cooperative, to bring the best of two worlds together.

To maximise the transferability of the critical best practices and success factors in and between the individual *Kenniswerkplaatsen*, and to enable parties on the northern regional scale and in sub-areas to cooperate even more effectively, a knowledge programme to span the entire Northern Netherlands is currently being discussed in consultations between knowledge institutions, provinces, the corporate sector, regions and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. A collective knowledge agenda for the Northern Netherlands is being prepared as part of this shared knowledge agenda, building on the knowledge agendas of the northern *Kenniswerkplaatsen* in Northeast Fryslân, the Veenkoloniën (peat districts) and the Westerkwartier (western part of the province of Groningen). To leave their marks on the Knowledge Agenda for the North, each *Kenniswerkplaats* has a clear urgency in getting its own knowledge agenda in order.

#### Why this knowledge box?

The Northeast Fryslân region is well on its way. With its socio-economic master plan, it has produced an area development plan specified in concrete terms in the Agenda Network Northeast. In addition, a master list has already been prepared for the regional knowledge questions. The next steps towards a fully-fledged *Kenniswerkplaats* are the submission



*Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân at supra-regional scale

of a regional knowledge agenda and the signing of the regional contract. The status is presented in the three parts of this knowledge box:

- Part 1** Describes what *Kenniskerkplaats* is, what new insights have been acquired in recent years and how far along the preparations for *Kenniskerkplaats* in Northeast Fryslân are.
- Part 2** Presents a list of steps the region has taken so far towards a regional Knowledge Agenda. Aspects addressed are the SEMP area development programme, the Agenda Network Northeast, the initial inventory of the regional knowledge questions and a first attempt towards matchmaking among the knowledge institutions. These are the starting points for a fully-fledged regional knowledge agenda to be developed starting in 2012.
- Part 3** Presents the *Dwaande* implementation plan. Addresses substantive aspects of *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, such as objectives, intended results, knowledge creation and knowledge management, as well as organisational and financial aspects and a working plan for the upcoming period intended to ultimately result in a knowledge agenda and a signed Regional Contract.

## Part 1: A sustainable knowledge arrangement for the learning region

### The foundation

In this chapter, Willem Foorhuis, Andree Hofer, Wim Oosterhuis and Pieter van der Werff introduce *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân. They describe what *Kenniskerkplaats* is, how this approach is distinguished from traditional internship and graduating assignments, and the methodology used in *Kenniskerkplaats*. The authors address the background: what is the reason for establishing *Kenniskerkplaats* in the first place? And finally, we look at the shareholders: who are they and what is expected of them?

### *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân

In Northeast Fryslân, an initial survey was conducted in 2008 to examine ways of organising the partnership between educational institutions and the municipal and other authorities in a workplace concept structure. The partners took up this method, and in 2009 *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân's building in Feanwâlden was opened.

*Kenniskerkplaats* is a place of innovation, a research centre for the small and medium-sized enterprise sector, and, at the same time, a workshop for students, instructors, researchers, officials and private individuals. Anyone in the region with the knowledge question can come here for answers. The questions may come from a wide variety of areas: sustainability, rural development, spatial issues or innovation. *Kenniskerkplaats* directs the various experts in looking for the answers - always in a broad-spectrum approach and in cooperation between the parties.

As such, *Kenniskerkplaats* is not an 'information desk' like so many others, where you come with a question and get an answer that you may or may not be able to work with. In *Kenniskerkplaats*, it is all about the question, not the available answers. In many cases the real value comes from the question behind the question, and together finding out what knowledge you really actually need.

The most important thing in *Kenniskerkplaats* is 'learning to innovate.' Not entirely coincidentally, this was also the name of one of the first projects conducted in Northeast Fryslân. The smaller businesses so common in the region of Northeast Fryslân usually do not have time to think about their innovation potential. Nonetheless, the project revealed that entrepreneurs should be doing just that. Offering knowledge institutions and businesses a shared platform to do so has a double effect, because there is a great interest on the part of the knowledge institutions in finding opportunities to test the knowledge of their experts and their students (the experts of tomorrow) in the real world.

*Kenniskerkplaats* offers the chance to bring out the potential of the region of Northeast Fryslân. This is equally important for entrepreneurs and young people. Both are discovering opportunities for exciting developments here. With *Kenniskerkplaats*, we are focusing attention on the future of Northeast Fryslân.

Learning to innovate together, also referred to as 'Regional Learning', is what happens in *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân. But how can you best describe the concept of *Kenniskerkplaats*?



The members of *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân steering committee;  
Clockwise from top: Andree Hofer and Wim Oosterhuis (regional managers of *Kenniskerkplaats* for the municipality of Dantumadiel), Willem Foorhuis (lecturer in Regional Transition at Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein and programme manager of the GKC Regional Transition programme), Pieter van der Werff (director, Course & Contract, AOC Friesland).

### What is *Kenniswerkplaats*? And what is it not?

*Kenniswerkplaats* is not a pet project factory for producing projects for students. In *Kenniswerkplaats*, it's about something different:

1. Firstly, all parties involved sign a contract for reciprocal learning.
2. Secondly, it is about sustainable cooperation, entering into an alliance.

In order to arrive at this type of multiyear, sustainable process between government bodies, education, research and the corporate sector, the partnership needs to be organised and structured. Then, lessons need to be learned from this partnership. *Kenniswerkplaats* is responsible for both aspects.

*Kenniswerkplaats* is a learning, research and work community with a focus on revitalising the regional living and working environment. *Kenniswerkplaats* is a place where area development projects and other forms of development projects are conducted. Students, teachers, researchers, lecturers and professors of the green higher education and research institutions partner with non-green knowledge institutions and stakeholders such as entrepreneurs, governmental authorities, experts, users and private individuals to come up with innovative solutions for rural, urban and suburban issues. The projects are knowledge-intensive: all are in some way concerned with developing, unlocking, applying, evaluating and distributing knowledge.

### Sustainable arrangements

Projects with connections to the educational sector are not in themselves anything new. But most existing ones are temporary cooperative relationships dealing with comparatively less complex issues. And perhaps most saliently, in them it is the students who are expected to do the learning.

In *Kenniswerkplaats*, the goal is different. Firstly, all parties involved sign a reciprocal learning contract, and secondly they enter into a sustainable partnership, an alliance, with each other. In order to arrive at this type of multi-year, sustainable process between government bodies, education, research and the corporate sector, the partnership needs to be organised and structured. All parties have to learn from each other, and physical and mental conditions have to be achieved for this process. Students and instructors have to take their knowledge and questions to meet the field, and vice versa. And this not for just an individual project, but in an on-going learning process.

It was this rationale from which the concept of *Kenniswerkplaats* emerged from the Van Hall and Larenstein lectorate in Regional Transition, in a process of thinking and acting. Initially, it was an experiment, but when it caught on throughout the country, in partnership with the Green Knowledge Cooperative (GKC)<sup>1</sup> the Regional Transition programme was drafted, within it the 'Regional Knowledge Arrangements' as a structural component of *Kenniswerkplaats*. This approach was compatible with the developments already underway in Northeast Fryslân. The socio-economic master plan and the Agenda Network Northeast provided a solid foundation for the establishment of *Kenniswerkplaats*.

### What makes it different from conventional assignments

*Kenniswerkplaats* is intended to achieve fundamentally different results from those that would be achieved in a traditional project placed by external clients or learning in a traditional institutional environment. The participants in *Kenniswerkplaats* focus not only on the assignment, but the nature and degree of personal and professional development (competencies and HRM) and the embedding and permanent effects of the results in the region and in knowledge structures. Specifically, this means:

<sup>1</sup> The Green Knowledge Cooperative (GKC) is an innovation platform where green educational and research institutions work with the business sector and society towards knowledge circulation and leveraging of green knowledge. The GKC falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (EL&I).

1. **Structured partnership** between many different types of shareholders (multi-actors) from a shared perspective on the region and an ambition to initiate a process of transition;
2. A **commitment on learning and working together** in order to benefit the innovation capacity of the region;
3. The achievement of **solutions with real-world application potential** (in their interconnection and with long-term effect);
4. **Multidisciplinary approach**; in consideration of the complexity of the problem (preferably multilevel and in a combination of knowledge and experience in agricultural, technical, economic and social spheres, including with the intention to expand current practice);
5. Focus on **embedding in the region**; no stand-alone projects, but an on-going learning process in the region; at irregular intervals, stopping to reflect: what have we learned and how did we learn it? This allows all new insights to flow back to the local and regional policy.

#### Action learning as method

The approach is based on 'learning in, with and from practice'. As part of the process new knowledge is created and circulated. We know this method from action learning and action research. The important thing is developing and learning from and with each other.

All stakeholders contribute their specific needs, qualities, knowledge and creativity. Schools and universities leave their buildings and go out into the 'real world' of the region to work on concrete, total projects together with the clients, stakeholders and sectors on location. These are students, instructors and researchers at all levels, from lower secondary vocational education through university, and from a range of professional disciplines. For example, rural innovators meet landscape architects, land and water managers, forestry officials and conservationists, environmental experts, traffic experts, ICT specialists and in some cases even artists and performers. These interactive processes do not become a 'struggle for space'; on the contrary, they engender cooperation for arriving at widely supported, creative solutions.

#### Why was Kennswerkplaats developed?

##### A time of drastic changes

The countryside is more vital than ever, but at the same time it is going through the most drastic transition ever. Not only is the socio-economic fabric of the landscape changing, but the pillars of the rural economy are no longer what they once were. The rural landscape is moving from being an agrarian work landscape to, increasingly, a living and recreation landscape, and this also holds true for the Northeast Fryslân region.

This shift is a result of complex change processes, both in society and in the physical space of the regions. The causes are often supra-regional in nature: shifting markets, internationalisation, demographic trends, climate change, new production and working technologies (ICT) and the like. The physical space, the landscape, follows these processes slowly but surely. In the end, the physical space reflects what is happening in the economic, cultural and ecological arenas.

Where rural regions were long the domain of the green knowledge institutions, today's changes demand new knowledge that can only be obtained by connecting green and non-green institutions with the region and its actors. And this is what



Students consulting with stakeholders in the area  
Photo: unknown source

has been done in *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân since its earliest days. It has brought together green and grey education within *Kenniswerkplaats* under the responsibility of the region.

### Connection between sectors

Processes such as shrinkage, changing age demographics, changing economic pillars (or the lack thereof), climate change, urbanisation and leisure have an enormous impact on our daily lives. This transition is so intensive and far-reaching that we have no ability to deal with it in today's administrative and economic context. The conventional tools that we generally reach for are not up to these tasks. These tools, as well as our approaches and our working methods, are rooted in sector-based thinking. But this thinking in terms of water, agriculture, economics, nature, recreation, traffic or culture, with all their structures and organisations, no longer appears to be effective. Generally speaking, the sectors are organised very effectively from the inside out, but also differ strongly from each other. Their quality and value are high; make no mistake. Within themselves, the sectors have generated an enormous amount of professional knowledge, and above all we must protect and use this knowledge.

But where the sectors intersect, the very places where the major knowledge questions facing us arise, the cooperation is difficult to get off the ground. All experts speak their own language, have their own tools and rely on their own financing channels. Room for one function often comes at the cost of another, not only physically and financially but in the minds of the public as well. At some point, there is no more give. In times of crisis or societal transitions such as shrinking or changing age demographics, rather than fighting for space a better approach is to look at how to complement your own sector and share the space in meaningful ways.

There is generally a perfectly good solution for a problem within a single sector. But the point is that the major questions of today arise where the sectors overlap. How do we make sure that global warming does not make our very existence impossible? How do we keep cities and towns vital as their people get older? And how do we pay for all this in times of financial-economic crisis? These are the major knowledge questions that no single sector has the answers for.

This is called a  
knowledge arrangement

**So we have to ask the knowledge questions together. All parties have to work from their individual problem definitions to arrive at new, shared questions. They have to become aware of the transition assignment, want to create new knowledge together and jointly learn how to get there.**

### Augmenting the innovative capacity of the region

From all corners, we hear the laments being sung of the vanishing countryside and its way of life; the dwindling of its tight social networks and the disappearance of services and farms. But is this really happening? This is a question of perspective. While it is true that many of the old structures and facilities are vanishing, at the same time new networks and economies are developing in the countryside and around the cities. Every day there are new farmers, although they are a new type of farmer in a new context. A 'true' farmer, but one seizing the opportunities of the new economic pillars that our

countryside offers: living, recreational use and care, New chains or partnerships, new connections with surrounding cities or other sectors, combining a global orientation with a local one - all movements that we can see if we look closely. What this can mean for the region of Northeast Fryslân is being looked at from a number of angles: in the socio-economic master plan, in the Agenda Network Northeast and in the European partnership project Vital Rural Area (read more about this in Part 2 of this document).

### **The role of the individual**

A very important player in the rural and suburban space is the individual: the people who live there. They seek the right balance between working and living landscape, between production and consumption landscape. People want to live where they feel comfortable living. And the more peripheral in the area lies, the more important its unique cultural and spatial qualities are in getting people to come there and stay; the people who can then make the area economically, culturally, and socially lively and vibrant. That offers the opportunity to 'cash in' on the new position of the countryside through new employment, new products and new partnerships.

The individual gives the countryside (and by this we also refer to smaller towns) an unprecedented strength through all his manifestations. With its wide diversity of inhabitants today, the countryside is in fact a microcosm of urban society. Anyone who cares to look can see a broad palette of competencies, education, professions and interests. This colourful picture must be looked at with the idea of leveraging this strength for development.

In this present situation, we often unintentionally frustrate more than we utilise and promote. Because as soon as we present these individuals with rules and regulations pared down to the square inch, we turn potential allies into adversaries. The new rural citizen will then devote all his competencies to frustrating developments that do not suit him, instead of together looking for a win-win situation. The citizen wants a cooperative government, the political sector wants responsible citizens - these terms are frequently bandied about, but still without a clear operational framework,

### **Who does Kenniskerkplaats belong to?**

#### **The region as working sphere**

*Kenniskerkplaats* functions as a knowledge project agency, meeting place, workshop, working method and knowledge network for and by the region. Dialogue and meetings of the minds take place between very diverse parties. We see cross fertilisation between education, research, SME, citizens and government, which in its turn generates new knowledge, competencies, skills and a new attitude. Ultimately, this leads to sustainable area results and new regional policy.

Students play an important role in this process. They have a fresh eye and often explore issues from a unique perspective. So they don't just teach *themselves*, but they also teach *others*. This goes for their instructors as well as the professionals in the field, in politics and in research. Connecting education, research, SME, the public and governmental authorities makes it possible to further improve the depth and quality of complex innovation processes.

The playing field is the region, because work on any local project happens against the background of the region. The region connects, utilises the existing knowledge from the field and from institutions, and safeguards its need for innovation and knowledge.

The knowledge institutions can work sustainably on creating attractive learning environments, innovation in education programmes, further development of the knowledge domains and the training of professional and competent students. The cooperation between all stakeholders and the performance of 'learning by doing' innovation projects in *Kenniswerkplaats* contributes to the development of a vibrant living and working environment while retaining identity, social cohesion and an enterprising and competitive economy. The intensive cooperation also creates new participatory, flexible and sustainable networks, work alliances and communities of practice. The learning process of these communities is described in detail in Chapter 2 (see the section headed 'Learning in partnerships' beginning on p. 24).

### Who is in control?

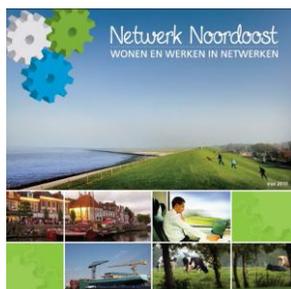
#### *The region and the major knowledge institutions*

*Kenniswerkplaats* can only be a success with shared responsibility on the part of the region and the knowledge institutions. But someone has to be in the driver's seat, and that is the region. The area programme and the knowledge questions from the region are the starting point.

In Northeast Fryslân, that starting point came in 2002 with the partnership NOFA (the Northeast Fryslân Approach). Under NOFA, four municipalities in this area, Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel and Kollumerland joined forces to make the region of Northeast Fryslân stronger. Additionally, in 2010 partnership between the province of Fryslân, the municipalities of Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel and Kollumerland and Tytsjerksteradiel and the organised corporate sector in the region drafted a socio-economic master plan (the SEMP and the implementation agenda for Network Northeast) in order to arrive at an economic development and investment programme<sup>2</sup>.

In the case of Northeast Fryslân, the approach towards *Kenniswerkplaats* was stepped. The first step was a pilot study for *Kenniswerkplaats* in the municipality of Dantumadiel. The municipality, AOC Friesland and the ministry created a number of initial basic structures, such as a steering group, the first connections with the educational institutions (including contacts with 'grey' educational institutions) and a number of learning by doing projects. These three parties also worked out the minimum conditions for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, i.e., financing, co-financing (which includes provincial involvement), accommodations, etc. In the meantime, as a second step, the SEMP in the region was developed and translated into the Agenda Network Northeast. The ambition projects are a component of the Agenda Network Northeast. These included knowledge questions for making the connection in *Kenniswerkplaats* between the region, the schools and the other 'big 5' players (please refer for more details on the 'big 5' on page 16). This made the involvement in *Kenniswerkplaats* broader than Dantumadiel, and laid a regional foundation for the knowledge agenda through the Agenda Network Northeast. Formulating the knowledge questions also created the momentum for making the third step from municipality to region.

These are important steps that establish a basis for a regional knowledge arrangement, because an administrative foundation is indispensable. This foundation can be built into a multi-year partnership programme between a region and the



<sup>2</sup> All information about this can be found on [www.netwerknnoordoost.nl](http://www.netwerknnoordoost.nl). For more, see part 2: *Kenniswerkplaats Northeast Fryslân - Towards a regional Knowledge Agenda*.

knowledge institutions, and then not as ad hoc partnership but as a permanent knowledge cooperative. The on-going policy practice is the backdrop, but this too can always be supplemented with innovative concepts.

This means that the region is the owner of *Kenniswerkplaats*. For the region of Northeast Fryslân, this means:

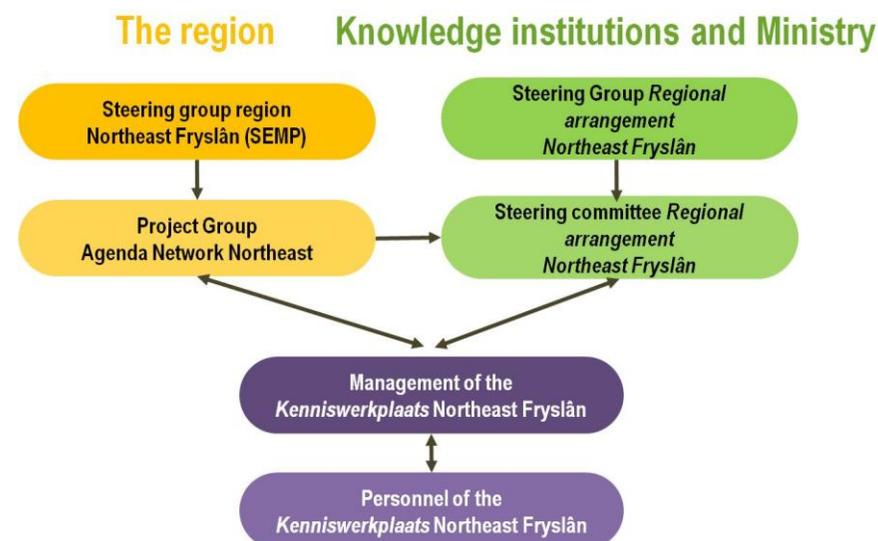
1. Control from the region
  - The guiding principle is the vision set out in the SEMP. The responsibility for this vision is placed with the political steering committee for the region of Northeast Fryslân.
  - The steering committee proposes projects, ideally through an official project group with responsibility for the Agenda Network Northeast. The leadership of *Kenniswerkplaats* works together with the chairman and the employees of the project group on a daily basis.
2. In addition, *Kenniswerkplaats* has a clear arm of control from the knowledge institutions and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation:
  - Once per year, the administrators meet in the Regional Arrangement Northeast Fryslân Steering Committee. This group monitors the 'regional contract' and sets out the line for the coming year.
  - Performance goes via the Regional Group, which meets once every six weeks, and consists of the directors of the schools and the regional executive members. The entrepreneurs also attend. This regional group defines the content-related and organisational embedding within the knowledge institutions.<sup>3</sup>

The structure as described here is a basic model that can be adapted for use in any region. The organisational structure selected for Northeast Fryslân is described in detail in part three of this knowledge box.

### And who are the actors?

#### The big 5

As already outlined above, *Kenniswerkplaats* is a learning, working and research environment (in the sense of a physical location, but also in the sense of a community) set up with the object of increasing the innovative capacity of the *region*. This happens through the interaction of actors in actual assignments and projects. These projects do not happen in isolation, but are selected, performed, monitored and evaluated in their interconnection. New projects always build on the results and insights of prior projects. The stakeholders in *Kenniswerkplaats* we focus on are what we refer to as the 'big 5':



The steering of *Kenniswerkplaats*

<sup>3</sup> The practice has at this point produced new insights on the organisational structure. See the business plan for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, which includes a new organisational chart for *Kenniswerkplaats*.

the entrepreneurs, the government, the educational sector, the research sector and the environment (meaning the public and the social organisations, in the context of the living environment).

### From stakeholder to shareholder

The parties invested in *Kenniswerkplaats* are not seen as stakeholders, but as shareholders. What's the difference? Stakeholders have an interest and want to make good on that interest. Shareholders do too, but they also take personal responsibility for making good not only on their own stake, but those of their fellow shareholders. Give something to get something is their motto. Co-responsibility is the keyword. This also means covering the financing together. Take the example of educational grants for innovation in education. These resources can be engaged on a multi-year basis with the regional innovation funding from various ministries, the European government and the regional and local authorities. This is the only way to make performance happen and get the less flexible parties (like the educational sector) on board. A major advantage of a multi-year partnership between these parties is that it allows complex area development processes to be deconstructed and appropriate measures to be sought in dialogue with the public and the corporate sector. But... this also calls for different attitudes, assumptions, methodologies and expectations on the part of all players: a new knowledge domain is emerging, and it is time for us to survey this new situation and get a grip on this new context as a basis for innovative action. This is the reason the VHL lectorate in Regional Transition launched *Kenniswerkplaats* experiment.

### Entrepreneuring

Success depends on more than the big 5 meeting in *Kenniswerkplaats* environment. The goals are Learning *with each other* and *from each other*, going through a development process together, changing together. And the result that you want to achieve together is the transition of the region, from a loose cooperative relationship to a *structured learning region*. Recent policy developments have placed a strong emphasis on enterprise. But entrepreneurship is more than having your own business and the knowledge and skill needed to make it a success. Entrepreneurship is also an attitude that lets you see opportunities and seize them to make things better. That enterprising attitude might be referred to as 'entrepreneuring'. *Kenniswerkplaats* wants to develop the entrepreneuring of all of the big 5. This is a learning process for each of them. They are more than qualitatively measurable target groups. If, however, they want to be truly shareholders, then they have to learn to see and capitalise on their shared interest. That is the new knowledge that has to move all of the big 5. The will and the expertise to move - this is, in essence, the entrepreneuring that has to be set into motion in *Kenniswerkplaats*. The learning process of one becomes a prerequisite for that of the others. And *Kenniswerkplaats* offers the environment in which that can happen, and which makes sure that every player does not have to wait until another moves.

But let's look at what entrepreneuring really means:

- For the government - Learn to see things from a different perspective. How can you, as a political and official organisation, become a cooperative partner? How do you discover the freedom that legislation and regulations offer you to act as a facilitator rather than an enforcer? And how can you delegate responsibilities to your social partners (the other 4 of the big 5)? (note: this is not the same thing as handing off tasks to others)

“Talk to that tomato, be that tomato, become one with it.”



If you succeed, then you will always be one step ahead of the tomato.”

Pierre Wind

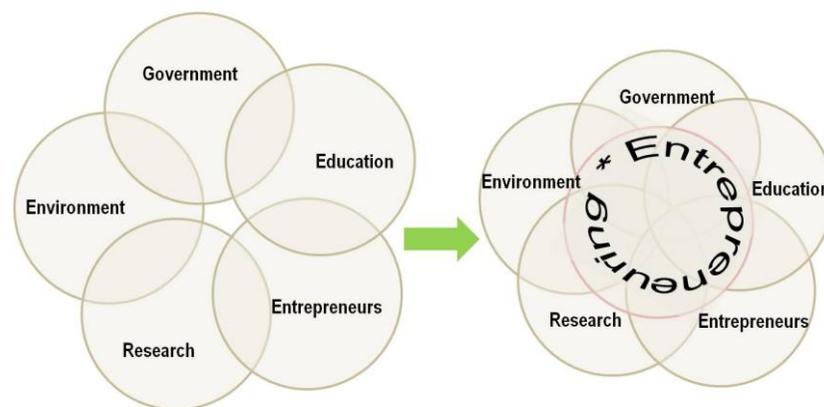
Chef Pierre Wind on 'entrepreneuring'

- For the environment (the public and social organisations) - Learn to understand your own role. Don't call for more responsibility, and then look to the government as soon as something needs to be done. In a representative democracy, the government is all the citizens together. So, learn to be a part of the government. Be responsible for the quality of your living environment, and do this together with others.
- For the entrepreneurs - Think further than your own shop-front. The fact that you're an *entrepreneur* doesn't in itself make you *entrepreneuring*. Shops and companies play an important role when it comes to a vibrant living environment. What image does your business have in the public space? And can you improve it? Can you also get profit for your business out of it in the process?
- For the educational sector - Remember, learning is not just for students, but for teachers as well. Training colleges, schools of applied sciences and universities are taking on an increasingly important role for all professionals in the government, industry and social organisations (Lifelong Learning being just one example). And the same holds true within *Kenniswerkplaats*. In *Kenniswerkplaats*, instructors not only pass on knowledge but get new knowledge themselves. Here, *entrepreneuring* means recognising opportunities for new knowledge. This is an important HRM tool.
- Research - Understand what the real questions in society are. Often, these are different questions than the ones initially asked. Remember that the public, government bodies and entrepreneurs cannot ask for things that they have no inkling of. Asking the right questions is more important than answering the wrong ones. For researchers, *entrepreneuring* means teaching others to ask for things they do not yet know about.

### Giving and getting

With this in mind, the 'classical' figure of the big 5 therefore changes into a constellation orbiting around a shared, enterprising *attitude*. All in all, 'entrepreneuring' essentially means that all parties give something and want to get something. The 'getting' is usually not much of a problem. In most cases, every one of the big 5 will have no trouble putting into words what they are asking from the others. Entrepreneurs and researchers tend to think in terms of an assignment, the educational sector seeks internship places for students, the government wants to delegate some of its duties and the public often respond with a knee-jerk account of what they *don't* want ('not in my backyard').

But what are they giving in return? You can't get something for nothing. Organising this so that in the bottom line, every one of the big 5 offers an advantage is one of the crucial learning steps in *Kenniswerkplaats*.



The big 5: the traditional interrelationship transformed into the shared pursuit of enterprise.

## Insights on working and learning partnerships

This chapter focuses on a few of the most significant insights concerning *Kenniswerkplaats*. All of these relate to the following question: how do we ensure that *Kenniswerkplaats* functions? In other words, how do we make it so that the partnerships can actually happen, and that in those partnerships, 'working together' also leads to 'learning together'?

This depends on a number of things. In the first place, the partners have to be willing and able to invest in the forms of structural cooperation on a regional scale. This, in turn, requires first and foremost that the region and the knowledge institutions collaborate on a shared knowledge agenda. How to do this is described in the section *The regional knowledge agenda*.

Secondly, a major realisation is that the learning itself is important. How can we get insight into the learning process? How do you select appropriate projects in practice, and how do you evaluate them? The 'transition model' described starting on page 22 has been developed for this purpose.

Finally, the actors themselves also have to develop in the way in which they pursue the partnership. Insights into this area have been acquired in the process of pursuing this approach. These are described in sections *Learning in partnerships* and *Regional Learning in Kenniswerkplaats*.

### The regional knowledge agenda

Working in *Kenniswerkplaats* is something new to all parties involved. It's about learning with each other and working towards the development of innovative solutions for area issues. In *Kenniswerkplaats* concept, the region is the owner of *Kenniswerkplaats*. The bottom line is that *Kenniswerkplaats* is about increasing the innovative capacity of the region. But to do this, the regional actors must first figure out what the relevant questions are, what tasks they have before them and what developments and innovations they want to achieve in the region within what time frame. The next step is to determine how the regional questions need to be answered and how the regional programme must be achieved. This is where the knowledge institutions come into play. What answers can they offer, and how can those answers be moulded into a shared programme?

This is the regional knowledge agenda. But how do you arrive at such an agenda? In the following, we will describe the five phases involved in getting there.<sup>4</sup>

#### Phase 1: What are the regional developments?

The desired regional developments and innovations are set down in an area development plan or regional agenda, which identifies at the policy level the priority themes and ambitions for the direction in which the various policy themes should be moving in the coming years. In Northeast Fryslân, that is the socio-economic master plan. These ambitions can be interpreted in policy projects expressing the desired achievements within a subject area and the desired time frame for achieving them. For the Northeast Fryslân region, this is set out in the Agenda Network Northeast. Policy consensus on this type of regional development plan/agenda is important. It is also important to have this document ratified at the administrative

The regional developments for the Northeast Fryslân region have been worked out and ratified at the administrative level in the SEMP and the Agenda Network Northeast.



<sup>4</sup> The description of the five phases is derived from Kwakernaak (2012).

level. Working in *Kenniskerkplaats* also requires the determination at the administrative level that in the implementation, the region must opt for partnership with teaching and research institutions in a regional *Kenniskerkplaats*.

As soon as there is an administrative consensus on this, there is no further discussion of what issues need to be addressed in the region, and the work in *Kenniskerkplaats* can focus on how the proposed developments and innovations can be achieved, as well as what knowledge and knowledge products are needed to make the right choices in them. In this phase, we must also establish the preconditions a properly functioning *Kenniskerkplaats* needs, such as financing commitments and appointment of *Kenniskerkplaats* manager.

### **Phase 2: What knowledge does the region need?**

The area development plan or regional agenda contains a list of policy tasks, broken down by theme. In every case, before they can be practically implemented in the form of implementation projects, there will still be a number of administrative hurdles to overcome. These may, for example, have to do with the exact location, nature and scope of spatial developments, the financing method or the way in which the public and the corporate sector can be brought on board with the intended developments. Making these decisions responsibly often requires a concrete substantiation at the content level. In other words, we need knowledge products that help administrators make the most informed possible decisions on the implementation of the area development plan or regional agenda.

Before this, in phase 2 the regional actors catalogue the knowledge and knowledge products they need to best implement the various different policy themes in the area development plan or regional agenda. Within each theme, the policy-based lead for the theme is responsible for this inventory of the knowledge requirements.

An initial, albeit incomplete, inventory for *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân has already been conducted. It is scheduled to be further developed starting February 2012. For this, as part of the Agenda Network a number of ambition projects have been identified, for which region-wide knowledge questions have been formulated to establish the connection between the region, the schools and the other members of the big 5 in *Kenniskerkplaats*. This establishes a regional foundation for the knowledge agenda through the Agenda Network Northeast.

### **Phase 3: What knowledge can education and research offer?**

A number of different educational institutions participate at various educational levels in *Kenniskerkplaats*. In ideal cases, these will range from lower or intermediate vocational education and universities of applied sciences to traditional universities. Research institutions are also partners in *Kenniskerkplaats*. To organise it such that the required knowledge products (as a result of phase 2) are vested as well as possible in the knowledge institutions involved, *Kenniskerkplaats* manager organises a 'knowledge market.' The schools and research institutions then indicate which knowledge products they could provide.

This type of knowledge market is not a one-time event; generally, multiple meetings are required to work out the best matches. Important criteria are whether the knowledge institution has the required subject expertise and the required educational level to produce the knowledge products requested. The knowledge institutions also catalogue who the expertise holders within their organisation are. It is important for each knowledge institution to indicate for each theme which expert will be the first contact point for the regional theme manager to make further arrangements on the substantive content of the research to be conducted. This is because it will always turn out to be necessary for the experts in the

An initial, albeit incomplete, inventory of the knowledge questions has already been produced for the Northeast Fryslân region.



This is a complex match-making involving a wide range of expertise holders, absolutely requiring the steering and coordinating hand of the workplace manager.



knowledge institutions to consult with the theme managers in the region in order to get a better picture of the specific knowledge product needs. This demands a very good view to the big picture and good direction by the manager of *Kenniswerkplaats*. He or she will maintain order and make sure that the left hand always knows what the right hand is doing. Ultimately, of course, arrangements will have to be made on the prioritisation and phasing knowledge questions, to allow a cohesive package of research projects to be formulated.

This creates the multi-year research programme in the form of a regional knowledge agenda. For the individual research projects, the knowledge institutions draft project plans in which they detail the way they will address the region's knowl-

edge questions. The regional team lead will respond to these project plans, and will then adopt them, modified where necessary in response to the commentary from the region.

This process of project-based work is often something new for educational institutions. Representatives from research institutions in which project-based work is standard practice can help in this process in the drafting of project plans, and can also indicate whether and in what form the research can make a substantive contribution to the performance of these *Kenniswerkplaats* projects. This does, however, mean that all parties must be on board as equals. Here again, the workplace manager has a very important coordinating task, of course always in close consultation with the knowledge institutions. The process must be monitored very closely, and all parties must be encouraged to actively participate and keep their commitments.

#### Phase 4: Budgeting the knowledge agenda

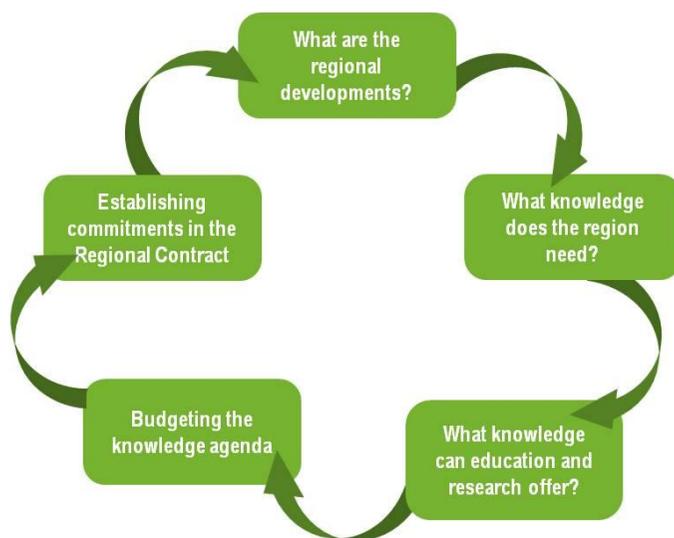
Following on from the substantive programming of the research by the educational and research institutions in *Kenniswerkplaats*, these institutions also produce a budget for the annual volume of efforts and costs per theme over the total implementation period of *Kenniswerkplaats* projects. This budget is an estimate of the number of hours students and their supervisors will spend as well as the number of hours of the experts of the research institutions. An hourly rate (cost price) will be agreed for each. Of course, student hours will have a much lower rate than the hours of supervisors and researchers.

The budget of hours and costs may of course be determined in much more precise terms than the budget for later years. This means that concrete arrangements can be made on the work commitment and financing of research in the subsequent year, and that arrangements on later years may be more global and less definitive. They can be specified in more detail later in the drafting of the annual work plan as it is updated.

Based on the cost budget drafted, the definitive financing arrangements will be agreed with the region. This creates an annual budget overview with accompanying financial coverage summary for the research programme.

#### Phase 5: Establishing commitments in the Regional Contract

The details of the content and budget of the regional knowledge agenda for *Kenniswerkplaats* are worked out in proper consultation between education and research institutions in the regional actors in *Kenniswerkplaats*. This knowledge agenda must then be adopted at the administrative level to ratify the commitments on performance and financing. The



Development cycle of the regional knowledge agenda

knowledge agenda is adopted in the form of a regional contract to be signed by administrators of the stakeholder institutions. The regional contract can be supported by the underlying documents, such as the detailed knowledge agenda and the business plan setting out the professional commitments on the management of *Kenniswerkplaats*.

### Working and learning in *Kenniswerkplaats*

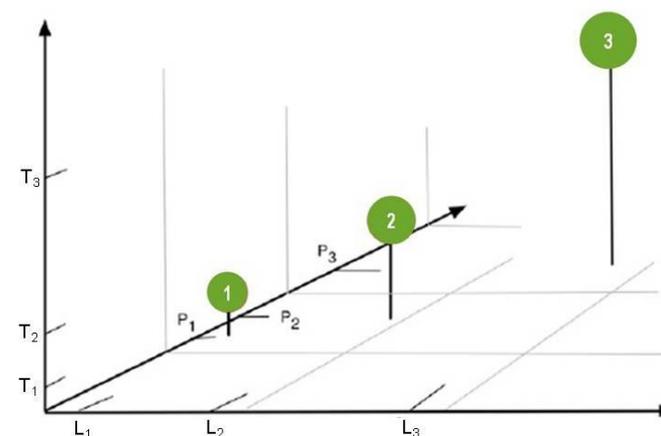
The characteristics of learning and working in *Kenniswerkplaats* are very different from those in a conventional programme, course or work placement as learning environment: *Kenniswerkplaats* is interdisciplinary, inter-sectoral and involves multiple organisations or systems. Because there is still no off-the-shelf concept for structuring this type of learning-work process, we create the 'support group' function in *Kenniswerkplaats*. This group has the task of developing concepts, tools and working methods for supporting, facilitating, organising and evaluating the learning and working processes, and improving them on an on-going basis. The initial insights pertain to the way in which projects are worked on (the transition model) and the system of working in cooperative partnerships (the learning communities). Both concepts have the goal of promoting the transition of the region. We describe them below.

#### The transition model

Partnerships in projects are about more than achieving a predetermined goal in the best possible way. They are also about understanding each other, seeing things from each other's perspectives, linking diverse goals and interests, and achieving synergy by optimising use of the available diversity.

When working on a project, the attentive participant will ascertain three dimensions.

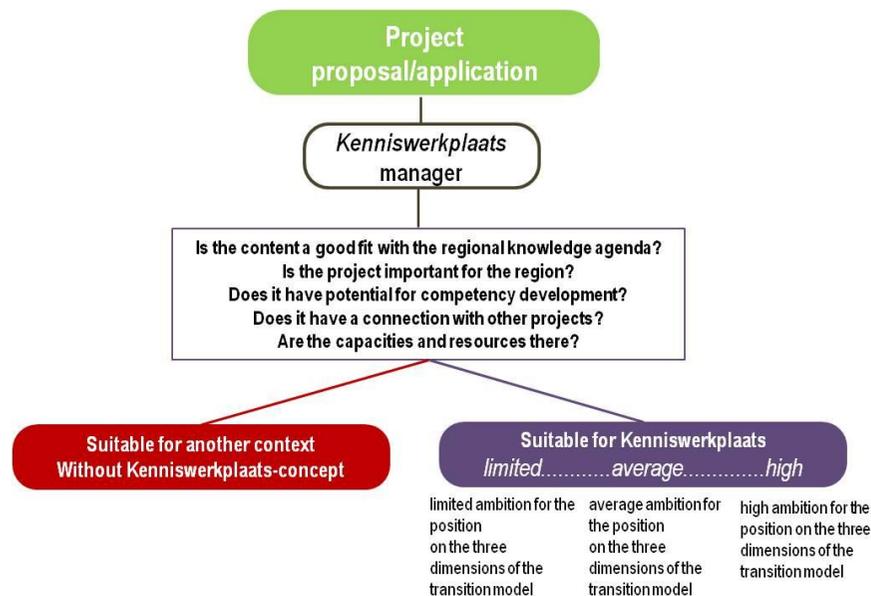
1. The first dimension (**P**) is the project itself. Every project has a goal, and its performance should be about achieving that goal in an effective way. This requires focus on the task, both for the purpose of the product and the project (the activities). Indicators for project results include meeting the clients expectations, originality, documentation and archiving, and 'looking beyond the project.'
2. The second dimension (**L**) is the learning process. How do the participants in the project develop, what do the other shareholders learn from it, and how does the working method and organisation develop in the process? This is about the developments at the individual, group and organisational level as a result of the partnership and joint learning. Indicators for the development include the way feedback is used (individually, as a team and as an organisation) and the level at which learning takes place. You can also look at how the internal diversity in the group or organisation is being utilised. Is work solitary or in isolation, or are people seeking each other out and learning from each other by seeing the differences in personal characteristics and background as opportunities for personal and professional growth? Have the stakeholders changed into shareholders?
3. The third dimension (**T**) is the actual regional transition: How can the project and learning results be sustainably embedded in the region, i.e., how can they help the project achieve a permanent effect? This refers to the effects of the



The transition model (with thanks to G. Bomhoff and E. Hekman)

partnership on a project or a series of projects (a time-limited activity) in the long term. Is there a high-potential and lasting effect on the development of the environment? An indicator for the permanent embedding may be, for example, the way in which the problem formulation and project approach deliberately addresses a promising permanent contribution to regional development in the planning stage. A second perspective consists of the evaluation of behavioural change among the shareholders. Do the experiences in the partnership lead to the shareholders internalising the working method, and do they gain an interest in drafting a development agenda?

Every project that can be implemented in the region can be positioned in the transition model. The ambition for every dimension can be specified. This way, the expectations of all shareholders (the big 5) can be properly coordinated.



Choice and evaluation of appropriate *Kenniswerkplaats* projects (image derived from Bomhoff/Hekman model)

And finally, there is a third function of the transition model: it serves as a foundation for the choice of projects. If a project cannot contribute to some form of learning or transition, whether

Further, for every dimension working methods and instruments are developed and engaged.

- In the project dimension, methods for project-based work, creativity techniques, techniques for presentation of the results, guidelines for communication with the client, etc., are defined.
- In the learning dimension, didactic working forms are used to facilitate learning by the shareholders. These can include workshops, methods of feedback and reflection, discussion techniques for multi-stakeholder processes, etc.
- In the transition dimension, there should be procedures and strategies for finding and involving all processes and parties relevant to the project, so that a project result 'lands' in the region optimally.

Another function of the model is the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the processes and results. Ambition levels and corresponding quality criteria can be formulated for every dimension.

*Example: an explanation of the three dimensions using a fictitious project on the revitalisation of old smuggling routes.*

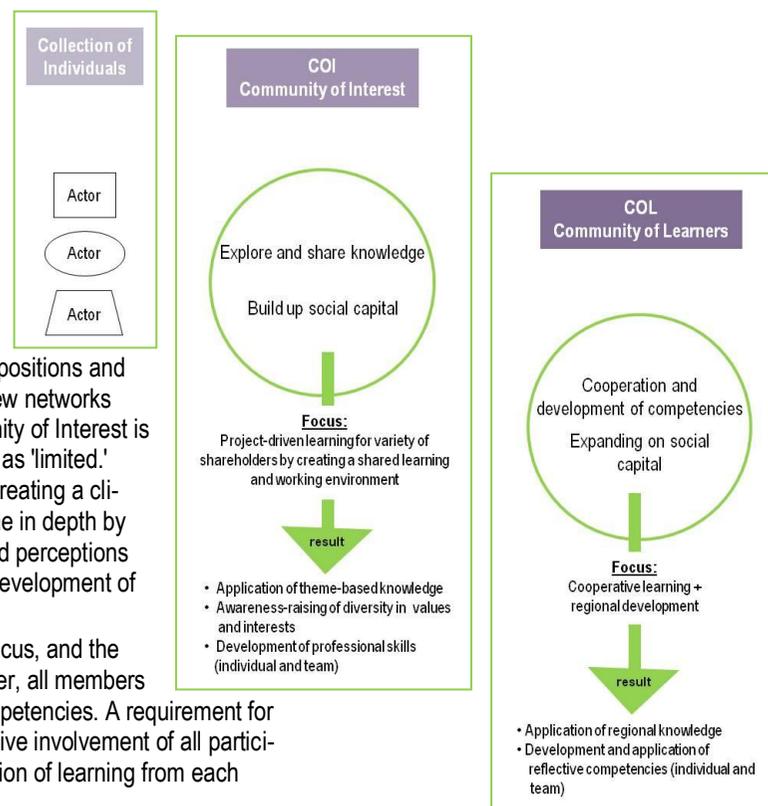
- In a simple version (P), the result of this type of project could be that the roots are designed and perhaps even completed, and that the students get their academic credits.
- At a higher level (L), the process would include focused attention on the personal and professional development of the participating partners at the individual and team level. Taking the example of the same smugglers' paths project further, the learning process of the students and supervisors can be added as an extra focus. The participants have reflected on the approach, group composition, working in teams, etc. Knowledge and insights have been enriched.
- At a third level (T), we look at the quality of the transition: the benefits contribute to sustainable development in the region; the shareholders have learned with and from each other and further developed at the individual, team and organisational levels. In this case, during the course of the process there has been attention to growth on all three dimensions. The smuggling paths project is handled on a much broader level. Individuals and a site management organisation have joined forces to maintain the paths and presented a nature education programme; businesses have become involved in the form of organising tourist theme weeks; the government has allowed for the necessary permits and integration with other themes. Additionally, the entire process has been described and can be used as an example case in a number of different programmes.

on the personal level, in the institution or in the region, and if cannot be adapted to do so, then it is not suitable for performance in *Kenniswerkplaats*.

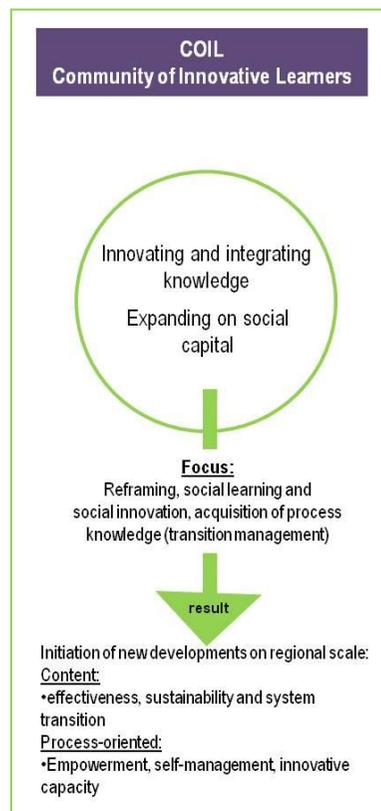
### Learning in partnerships

Many conventional partnership projects only rate on the predefined results, and even on those, some rate better than others. Many do not rate at all on aspects like area development or sustainable embedding. To allow for learning (both individually and in the team, the institution and the region) and to allow transition in the region, the nature, intention and extent of the partnership must be adjusted in fundamental ways. Based on this observation, in *Kenniswerkplaats* we have created a model for the development of a learning and partnership community on four levels<sup>5</sup>.

1. **Collection of Individuals** – Many partnership projects take the form of a collection of individual players grouped into a temporary partnership or alliance (the project group). Each partner in it has its own goal. In such cases, the partnership is based on pragmatic considerations, and it is focused on achieving the predefined project goal. There is no individual or joint learning need on the part of the participants. Many of these projects are performance-based projects driven by time and money. This type of project group is not suitable for a learning environment such as *Kenniswerkplaats*.
2. **Community of Interest (COI)** – Sharing knowledge is only possible if project members and external experts can unite around a connecting theme. The shared interest becomes the motivator to share information with each other and create new knowledge. The members of the project group bring the new knowledge and insight gained back into the project. They can share and expand their knowledge. The exchange of diverse positions and perceptions creates a greater opportunity for new insights and solutions to arise, and new networks may emerge that can continue after the conclusion of the specific project. This Community of Interest is theoretically suitable for *Kenniswerkplaats*, but on the ambition scale must be classified as 'limited.' During the project, only limited investments will be made in building social capital (i.e., creating a climate of trust and mutual commitment). The focus will be primarily on exploring the theme in depth by exchanging knowledge and positions. The contacts and the exchange of information and perceptions during the meetings of the COI will generate a contribution (albeit a limited one) to the development of the participants.
3. **Community of Learners (COL)** – In this partnership form, group learning is the central focus, and the processes of 'working together' and 'learning together' are deeply interconnected. Further, all members of the community are consciously working on developing competencies and/or sub-competencies. A requirement for the formation of a COL is that the group be a genuine and tight-knit community, with active involvement of all participants as a common denominator. From the beginning, all will have expressed the intention of learning from each other. In concrete terms, this means two things:



<sup>5</sup> The information on the learning model is derived from E. Hekman and G. Bomhoff. (see Bomhoff and Hekman 2012).



- Firstly, that there be deliberate investments in relationships, mutual trust and reciprocity;
- Secondly, that there be regular meetings (real life and virtual) with all participants from the various ranks in order to learn from each other, reflect with each other on the process and contribute to the learning culture of the community.

More than with a COI, this form of working together and learning together includes personal and professional growth at the individual and group levels. The group commitment to learn from and with each other also increases the chances of embedding of the results, learning and experiences. A COI is suitable for *Kenniswerkplaats*, and will generally be evaluated as 'average'.

4. Community of Innovative Learners (COIL) – If a partnership expresses the ambition to contribute to sustainable innovation in the region and also derives shared learning objectives as a community on that basis, we refer to this as a Community of Innovative Learners. In terms of content, the focus here will be on the broadening and application of regionally integrated knowledge. But there is more. The transition from COI to COIL is indicated primarily by three factors:

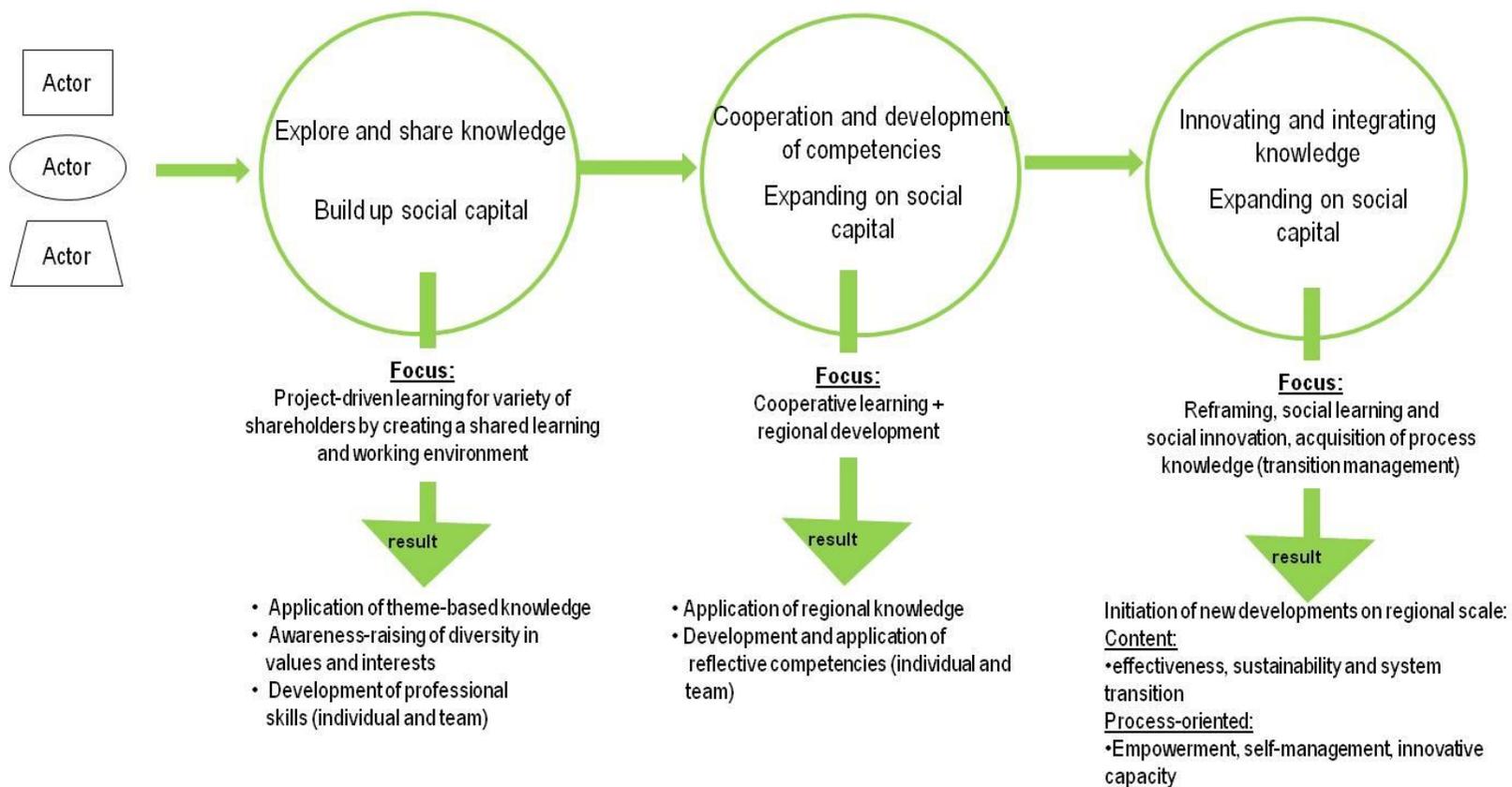
- The structural involvement in the learning and working community of as many of the big 5 as possible and very deliberate attention to the relationships and creating an open learning and working culture.
- Application of process knowledge on transition management, primarily in the choice of high-potential projects, success in generating a broad support base, the ambition for continuation and consolidation;
- An expansion to development at the system level, because it is principally here where change processes take on a sustainable character.

With a more heterogeneous participant group (in their backgrounds, experience, interests, priorities, etc.), growth into a COIL will explicitly demand time and attention to building social capital and jointly developing conditions that promote social learning. A COIL must include specific process knowledge and skills to initiate and facilitate transitions. More than in the COI as partnership form, the structure of the COIL will be beneficial to transition processes. In the terms of the transition model, this represents potential at all three dimensions (P, L and T). In a COIL, the working together and learning together are in themselves the goal ultimately sought in *Kenniswerkplaats*.

As this shows, partnerships can go from the level of a group of individual players into a community of innovative learners. The latter level is the target level of *Kenniswerkplaats*. An important part of this is to promote maximum diversity among the members of this learning community. This refers not only to their personal and professional competencies (junior and senior, this not necessarily being linked to age), but also that participants must represent the broadest possible spectrum of the big 5.

The junior participants may be students, who ideally will come from a wide variety of backgrounds: different programmes (multidisciplinary), as well as different levels: vocational education, universities of applied sciences, traditional universities (multi-level). Or they may also be employees of companies developing new competencies/sub-competencies as part of ongoing professional development (Life-Long Learning) in such a learning and work arrangement. In this situation, the COIL functions as a rich learning environment in which feedback can become a given, not only in terms of professional content but in relation to the learning process.

Ideally, the senior participants will also come from the broadest possible spectrum of the big 5: education and research, business, governmental, semi-governmental, and social organisations, including citizens special interest organisations. In their expert role, they can provide input based on their knowledge and practical experience, or also act as coach for structuring the learning process in a COIL. At the same time, they are also learning partners, because questions from the other participants keep them on their toes.



### Regional Learning in *Kenniskerkplaats*

A COIL makes the optimum contribution to Regional Learning, and at the same time to the learning capacity and knowledge institutions, governmental authorities and companies. When both aspects are in play, the actors are truly engaged in the regional transition process.

There is always some parallel between the learning ambitions of a region and those of an institution (an educational institution or knowledge institution, a governmental authority or company).<sup>6</sup> This is shown in the image on the next page. The process in the upper half (green) shows the development of the learning ambitions for the region as a whole, as these play out in *Kenniskerkplaats*. The decisive factor here is where the participants want to go in the longer-term. The further you go to the right on this line, the more intensive the partnership and the higher the return, not only from individual projects but also in the area of development and sustaining the result. The partnership develops here, depending on the ambition level, from COI to, at its most far-reaching form of learning partnership, the COIL.

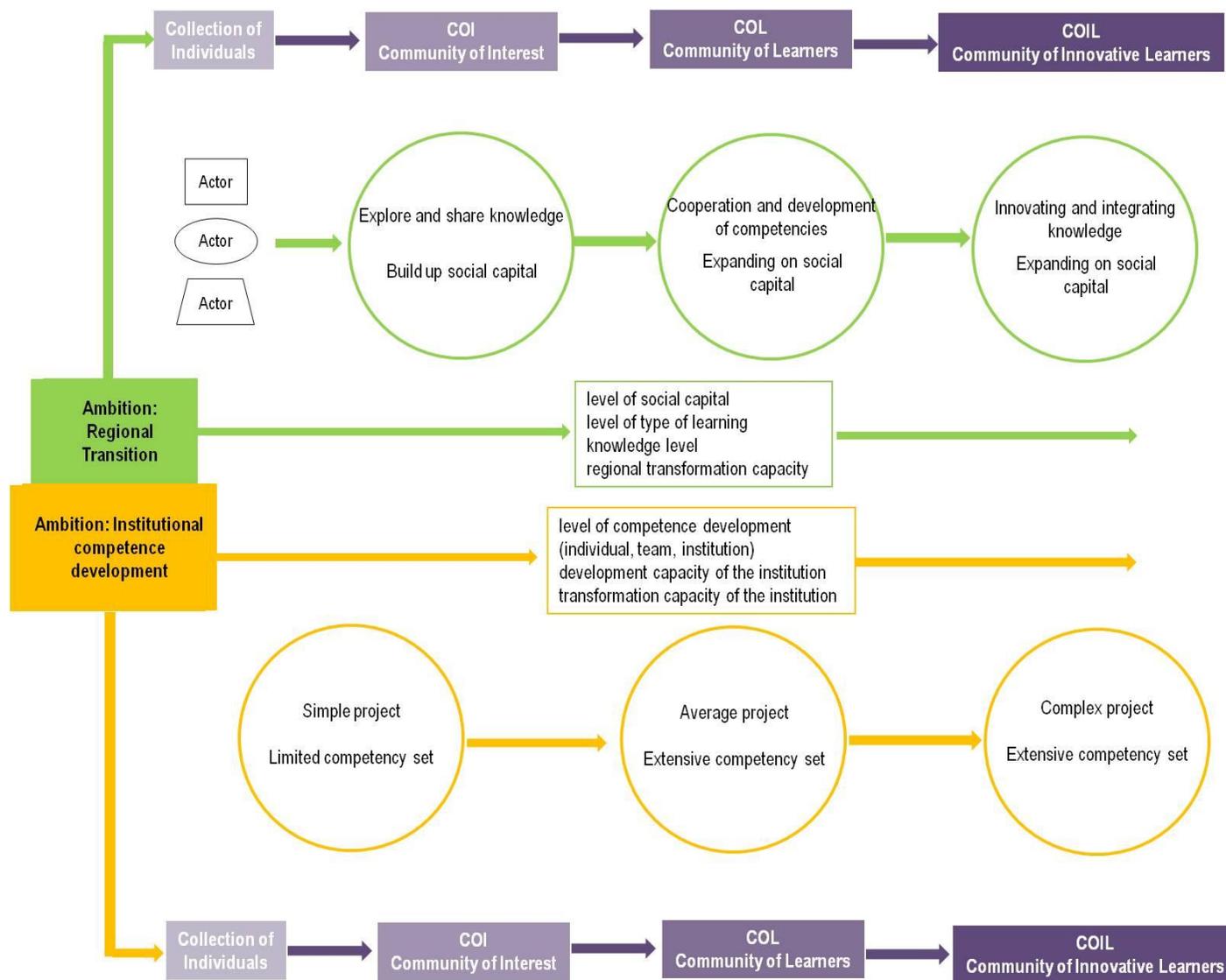
The lower half (yellow) shows the ambition of the knowledge institution, company or governmental authority. Here again, the development is more extensive and more sustainable the more you move right, from a simple project with a very limited set of competencies to a complex project with an extensive set of competencies.

The image on the next page makes four things clear:

1. As an institution, you cannot suffice with the form of cooperation that continues to get bogged down at the level of the Collection of Individuals. In effect, this is no more than a cobbled-together group of players, each with its own interest and its own objective, and with no form of shared ambitions. This method will not succeed in achieving growth and development.
2. All institutions together (the big 5) cannot contribute to the transition ambition of the entire region if in their partnership they continue to get stuck at the level of Collection of Individuals. The considerations of the previous point apply here.
3. But likewise, forming a COI is neither sufficient for an individual institution nor for the region as a whole. This gets you no further than the exchange and sharing of knowledge in simple projects with minor learning effects. A COI is suited as an entry-level community for players that do not yet know each other. A COI can play a role in *Kenniskerkplaats*, but this will then be characterised as 'limited' (see the image on page 23).
4. *Kenniskerkplaats* is built around communities with the stated desire of learning with and from each other. But this alone is not enough. They also have to want to innovate: for themselves (at the level of the individual, the team and the institution) and for the region. For this reason, a COIL is the goal towards which *Kenniskerkplaats* is ultimately working.

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<sup>6</sup> See Bomhoff 2011 and Drijfhout 2011. The graphic on the next page is a somewhat modified version of the model presented by Bomhoff/Drijfhout.



## Statements

In this chapter, representatives of the partner institutions in *Kenniswerkplaats* share their perspectives. What do they think about *Kenniswerkplaats*? What are their experiences so far and where do they want to be going? We will hear from municipal executive members Siepie Hylkema and Houkje Rijpstra, chairman of the board of AOC Friesland Ton Stierhout, regional managers Andree Hofer and Wim Oosterhuis, businessman Eddy Wymenga, and a student currently working for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân.

### Politics

*Siepie Hylkema is now in her second term as member of the municipal executive of Dantumadiel. In this second term, she is responsible for the programmes Life-Long Learning and Doing Business in Dantumadiel, which also puts Kenniswerkplaats Northeast Fryslân in her portfolio.*

'I believe *Kenniswerkplaats* can make a fundamental contribution to the most important task facing the region: retaining a vital Northeast Fryslân. The added value lies in the cooperation between various disciplines: the corporate sector, government, social organisations, education and research. This cooperation produces a picture of the issues within the region and where what knowledge is needed, both within the educational sector and within the region as a whole. *Kenniswerkplaats* bundles the various issues and directs and promotes the partnership in dealing with these issues.

I feel that *Kenniswerkplaats* offers a great deal of potential. We have already taken a number of steps, and we in the region agree that we need to take more to move forward. As I see it, for the immediate upcoming period the priority lies in the connection between the Agenda Network Northeast and *Kenniswerkplaats*, because this connection will allow us to identify and answer the questions from the socio-economic master plan and the implementation agenda. If you ask me where *Kenniswerkplaats* should ideally be a little bit further down the road, what I see is an innovative environment, a meeting place where entrepreneurs, experts, instructors and students can partner in a structured way, an environment where knowledge can be brought together and where we can work together on the issues facing our region. These issues have now become much broader than purely agrarian sector issues. We want to, and have to, take up the development of the region with a cross sector approach. That, for me, is also a major plus of *Kenniswerkplaats*. Because of the involvement of a wide scope of knowledge institutions, the cross sector knowledge can be gathered from the education and research side.

Beyond that, I hope that *Kenniswerkplaats* can help us succeed in keeping young people in the region. For many, though their hearts will always be in the region, they simply see insufficient opportunity for an interesting career here. It would be nice if, through *Kenniswerkplaats*, they could discover that in Northeast Fryslân there are many more possibilities than they initially thought. If we could surprise them along the way, and not only create exciting work for them in the region but at the same time attract new young entrepreneurs, then we will have scored a major victory. Keeping young people is simply a very essential part of a vital region.'



Siepie Hylkema, photo credit: municipality of Dantumadiel

*Houkje Rijpstra member of the municipal executive and second deputy mayor in the municipality of Tytsjerksteradiel. Her portfolio includes Work and Benefits, as well as Management and Maintenance of the public space. She is also administrative chairperson of the 'Livable and Social' theme group for the region of Northeast Fryslân. From these perspectives she sees clear opportunities and interfaces with Kenniswerkplaats Northeast Fryslân.*



Houkje Rijpstra; photo credit: Municipality of Tytsjerksteradiel

'The provincial government is working closely with the surrounding municipalities on a robust regional labour market policy. We want to address the task not so much from the job seeker's demand perspective, but more from the demand on the labour market side. This means that you have to take a close look at what knowledge is needed and desired from the labour market perspective, and what capacities and competencies future employees will have to have. Next, you look at the potential that is present in the region right now and how from that angle you can anticipate the demand from the market.

Here, I see an important role for the educational sector in the region. How can we better coordinate supply and demand? I think that we have to structure the educational programmes right for the Friesland labour market. Of course, we want to offer young people career opportunities in the region and show them that there are more possibilities here than one might think at first glance.

The programme focusing on the labour market is ready to be rolled out. With this programme, the municipalities are anticipating the new employment legislation, the Work and Income According to Labour Capacity Act. For the municipalities, the task of helping people find work will be even greater, and we have the need for a new approach, with the region and for the region. I see a great opportunity to get *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân involved here.'

### Education

*Ton Stierhout is chairman of the Executive Board of AOC Friesland. The institution has been affiliated with Kenniswerkplaats Northeast Friesland since its inception.*



Ton Stierhout; photo credit: www.mbo-voeding.nl

'In the Northeast Fryslân region, it is vocational school leavers who are important pillars of the economy. This is why as an educational institution, we must continue to train qualified people for the regional labour market. An attractive curriculum with interesting practical components is critical for drawing sufficient numbers of young people into our programmes.

This is part of the reason why we began participating in *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân from the very beginning. To this curriculum, *Kenniswerkplaats* in Northeast Fryslân allows us to implement projects with the intensive involvement of higher education, government bodies, the corporate sector and civil society organisations. This way, we complement each other in the development and performance of projects - ultimately with the goal of amassing new, practically-oriented knowledge on an on-going basis, a process in which our lower secondary professional education

students may, in due course, also have a role.

In this partnership, AOC Friesland sees good potential for structuring the Regional Learning. It is the regional perspective that makes the difference in the systemic connection of industry, government and knowledge. When it comes to economic revitalisation and augmenting innovative capacity, the most important tasks are the ones that happen on the regional scale. Moreover, the region is also the playing field on which complex issues in the areas of shrinkage, environment and citizen participation must be dealt with.

AOC Friesland is very interested in being a part of this network. From conceiving new stable concepts, to testing potentially promising crops, to running care farms, to redesigning landscape to developing recreational opportunities, with our broad expertise in regional development, we are ready to play our part.'

### Research

*Dirk Strijker is full professor of Cultural Geography and holder of the endowed chair in Rural Development at the Rijksuniversiteit*

'Certainly, *Kennswerkplaats* has added value. As an educational institution you don't always have a client to go to, and here you can still put your students to work on exciting knowledge questions. An additional factor is that in *Kennswerkplaats*, you have different levels of students working, frequently together, on very specific questions, and it brings together a number of parties, such as administrators and entrepreneurs.

But performing projects through *Kennswerkplaats* remains a challenge, because the programme is very strictly set up in terms of time, and that usually doesn't match up with the questions from the region. With our system, we have a hard time tying in to the knowledge agenda. Despite the fact that there are interesting questions in there, this means you can't always get the students involved. On the flip side, you could also ask whether the knowledge agenda is in fact flexible enough to deal with changes, whether that means questions on the demand side or in the student curriculum. And furthermore, you could ask whether education is a good match with the working field if the students are not being trained on real world assignments. That doesn't just apply to the Dutch regions and *Kennswerkplaats*. Groningen University, for example, also has partnerships with Oldenburg and Bremen. In those, the interesting thing is that the students are not at all interested in presentations of fellow students or researchers. They delve deeply into one subject, but they have too little perspective on the practical application. *Kennswerkplaats* is comparable to Groningen University's "Science Shops", where they address complex subjects, in some cases through sub-projects. The results are carried forward into follow-up projects. But unlike *Kennswerkplaats*, there they don't have a structure with the owner of the question keeping an eye on the progress of the research.'

### The region

*Andree Hofer and Wim Oosterhuis are members of Kennswerkplaats Northeast Fryslân. They have been the leads for the region on Kennswerkplaats Northeast Fryslân since its inception.*



Dirk Strijker; text and photo credit: The Workplace Veenkoloniën (peatlands), Stadskanaal 2010



Andree Hofer and Wim Oosterhuis; photo credit: Municipality of Dantumadiel

'As we see it, regional rural development is not only a responsibility of the knowledge institutions. All around us we see numerous changes and developments that demand new answers. Population demographics are changing, the landscape is changing, the traditional farming company with agriculture and livestock is changing, new economic pillars are emerging in the region, social issues raise their heads - in short, *the region is in transition*.

This demands a multi-sector, cross-border approach in which the entrepreneurs, the governmental authorities, the education and research institutions in the environment all share their knowledge in the collective response to the new developments in the region. We can and must learn a great deal: take on new roles, develop new competencies, create new knowledge and set up new forms of partnership.

As the region, we have a very clear responsibility here, and we feel that in Northeast Fryslân the region has carried this responsibility very well together with AOC Friesland. First, the basic structures for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân were set out and the preconditions were defined. That meant forming a regional group and establishing the contacts with schools. In Northeast Fryslân, we also very intentionally included the "grey" educational institutions in that network, because the region places so much value on cross-pollination across different programmes. We arrange for financing, including funding from the region, and we conducted the first learning by doing projects.

In parallel with this, the region developed the socio-economic master plan that was translated into the Agenda Network Northeast. In this, the regional ambition projects were formulated, and on that basis we asked the knowledge questions, in order to anchor the connection between region, schools, businesses and the rest of the big 5 in *Kenniswerkplaats*.

The region Northeast Fryslân is ready to take the next step and, together with all participating parties go forward in *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân at the strategic level and in concrete projects: learning by doing and doing by learning.'

### *The entrepreneur*



*Eddy Wymenga, founder and director (with Wibe Altenburg) of Altenburg & Wymenga, an ecological research & consulting firm in Feanwâlden, growing steadily since 1988.*

'For a number of reasons, we want to increase our partnerships with institutions and universities. The main reason is that for us we see this as an effective way of putting the content into innovation and knowledge development, attracting new talent and increasing the quality and the image of our work. Our access to new knowledge and expertise comes mainly from Dutch knowledge institutions (Alterra, IMARES, Deltares) and universities (Groningen, Limburg and Wageningen Universities).

We frequently find opportunities for partnership in our major international projects. Another method is offering dissertation research positions, but then the financing for it has to be there. Ideally, this would be done in a project. Where the opportunities arise, we look actively for the partnership, but we do want to see the prospect of worthwhile results. New forms with interesting potential are things like PPP constructions.

By and large, we want to expand our current partnerships to include tighter relationships on more fronts, with more groups and with more people. This means we are looking for strategic alliances, for example with Groningen and Wageningen Universities (including Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences) and water institutions. We believe that the tighter cooperation with *Kennswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân can be an important step towards that.'

### **The student**

*Leonie Dijkstra is a fourth-year student of Technical Business Administration at NHL, and is also doing a minor in Innovation Consultancy. How does she see Kennswerkplaats?*

'In the first year of my programme, I had a work placement with the Province of Fryslân that put me in contact with *Kennswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân. As part of my work placement I carried out a study of the positioning of *Kennswerkplaats*. For me, it seemed important for the functioning of *Kennswerkplaats* to set up a strong organisational structure and a good communication and registration system.

What I liked about my research was that I got to jump right in on real projects. For me as a student, that was a good opportunity to really get into the day-to-day work in the actual organisation. In projects, you also saw a good connection between the lower and higher vocational education students.

Generally speaking, I think that within the region *Kennswerkplaats* is still not seen enough as something the region owns. It would be a good idea to establish a body with multiple regional players making joint decisions. As I see it, the concept of *Kennswerkplaats* is very inspiring for the region, certainly in part because of the structural long-term partnership perspective. While it's true that bringing all parties together is difficult, it is the distinguishing feature of *Kennswerkplaats*. You can connect people who would normally never work together. Questions coming from the region on economic and social topics are best answered by a community of education, research and all players in the region.

Right now, my project group and I are doing an assignment for Kabel Noord looking at whether we can or have to create a place where sole tradesmen, students, businesses and other players can meet, work and generate innovative and unexpected partnerships. I don't think you need to do anything new to achieve this, just bring together all the forces that are already there with other innovation centres in the region. This is something where *Kennswerkplaats* can absolutely play a role.'

## Putting it into practice in Northeast Fryslân

This chapter looks at the development of *Kenniskerkplaats* in the Northeast Fryslân region. The first steps towards a fully-fledged, functioning *Kenniskerkplaats* were taken here during an orientation and survey phase. In the following, we describe what has happened in the past few years in the region and what actions are planned for 2012 and beyond.

### Northeast Fryslân as a partnership region

Up to now, *Kenniskerkplaats* in the Netherlands have been initiated primarily from the educational partners' side. This was not the case in Northeast Fryslân. This was the first Workplace that was initiated from the regional authority side. This is partly due to the fact that this region has had a strong degree of organisation since 2002.

#### NOFA

An example of this regional cooperation is the NOFA (Northeast Frisian Approach). NOFA is the cooperative alliance of the municipalities of Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel and Kollumerland c.a. The strategic partnership in the region bore fruit in the NOFA connections. A joint regional vision was developed in 2002, and this served as a basis for further cooperation with the province.

#### Vital Rural Area

The European project 'Vital Rural Area' ('Vital') is currently being implemented under the NOFA connection. This project is focused on the socio-economic revitalisation of the countryside. NOFA is the lead partner on this project, which is joint by 12 other partners.

'Vital' revolves around what is referred to as the 'cooperative agreement approach': utilising and collating strengths of various parties in the region (residents, companies, the educational sector, government bodies and the environment), and being open for European experiences and contacts. Maximum results are achieved by forming networks in which local and regional partners join forces, setting priorities for the most effective activities and making commitments on them. One example is the Northeast Fryslân regional marketing campaign 'Dwaande,' which was developed according to the methodology of 'branding the region' as applied in Vital.

The activities implemented, networks built, results achieved and effects generated are extrapolated into standard methodologies and tools. In collaboration with academics from the universities in the various partner regions, partners then document components, augmented with results from other international project experiences, in the 'Rural Power Pack.' This is one of the end results of Vital, and it produces transferable methodologies for the socio-economic revitalisation of rural regions.

*Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân and the EU project Vital have a complementary effect. The methodology for *Kenniskerkplaats* is a valuable component within the Rural Power Pack, while at the same time *Kenniskerkplaats* is elevated to a European platform via the Northeast Fryslân participants.



### SEMP and the Network Northeast

The regional partnership was then followed up in the Agenda Network Northeast, in which the municipality of Tytsjerksteradiel and the province of Fryslân also participated alongside the four NOFA municipalities. A socio-economic master plan was drafted as part of this partnership. This master plan is projected into an agenda for implementation projects on which the municipalities and the projects will join forces. This regional partnership and the implementation in an agenda for the coming decades offers a sound basis for *Kenniskerkplaats* methodology in Northeast Fryslân.



### The development of *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân

#### Orientation

An initial survey was conducted in 2008 to examine ways of organising the partnership between educational institutions and authorities at the municipal and other levels in a Workplace concept structure. Partners were Van Hall Larenstein, Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden and Stenden Hogeschool (all of them Frisian universities of applied sciences), which, together with the municipality of Dantumadiel, became familiar with the Workplace methodology over the course of the project while performing a variety of sub-projects. The conclusion upon the end of the project was that *Kenniskerkplaats* presents opportunities for the region, but that these are contingent on a good regional foundation.

#### Survey

Within the region, there has been some behind-the-scenes work done on continuation, with the municipality of Dantumadiel taking the lead role both in terms of financial and personnel commitment. The first component of these efforts consisted of a survey phase, which examined whether there was sufficient will, financial potential and impetus to actually arrive at a structural partnership between the relevant parties in Northeast Fryslân.

In the case of Northeast Fryslân, the approach was staggered. The region gave the municipality of Dantumadiel the mandate to act as pilot municipality for *Kenniskerkplaats*. The municipality, AOC Friesland (vocational education institute) and the ministry formed a steering group and established the first connections with the educational institutions in the region. This included contacts with the 'grey' educational institutions. These three parties also worked out the minimum conditions for *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, i.e., financing, co-financing (which includes provincial involvement), accommodations, etc. In the meantime, the socio-economic master plan (SEMP) in the region was developed and translated into the Agenda Network Northeast, a component of which are the so-called ambition projects. These included knowledge questions for making the connection in *Kenniskerkplaats* between the region, the schools and the other 'big 5' players. This made the involvement in *Kenniskerkplaats* broader than Dantumadiel, and laid a regional foundation for the knowledge agenda through the Agenda Network Northeast. Formulating the knowledge questions also created the momentum for making the step from municipality to region.



Signing of the declaration of intent:  
Top row, J. Van der Valk, A. Aalberts, F. Sikkens, W. Foorhuis.  
Bottom row: former minister G. Verburg and municipal executive member S. Hylkema.

### Declaration of intent

The official start of the survey phase came in March 2010, with the signing of a declaration of intent by the region, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality<sup>7</sup>, and the knowledge institutions Van Hall Larenstein and AOC Friesland. In May 2010, then-Minister Gerda Verburg (Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality) and municipal executive member Siepie Hylkema also signed the declaration of intent.

The arrangement between the parties comprised five points, including the intentions

- to investigate a multi-annual cooperation programme
- to have each of the signing partners represented in the steering group
- to start cooperating in pilot projects during the survey, thus achieving best practice.

### Financing:

The region took responsibility for the financing. For this funding, NOFA applied for and was awarded a grant for the period of July 2009 to the end of 2011 from the provincial multi-year Programme Rural Area Fryslân. The goals were to use *Kenniswerkplaats* to innovate in the corporate sector in the region Northeast Fryslân, to position the government in a new steering role, and to stimulate knowledge development in the region through partnership with education and research institutions. The project had a financial scope of €515,000, of which 50% was put forward by the region and 50% by the higher education institutions and the Ministry (then Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality).

### Content

The arrangements from the declaration of intent were specified in 2010 and 2011 along three lines:

- A. *building a structure*
- B. *preparing a knowledge agenda*, and
- C. *performing showcase projects*

These three lines are explained in more detail below.

#### A. Building a structure

The structure is distinguished between the *internal* structure of *Kenniswerkplaats* on the one hand, and the *external* structure with the stakeholder parties from education, business, government, environment and research institutions on the other.

- During the survey phase, the internal structure was not yet defined in detail, but a steering group was formed, consisting of:
  - ◆ Wim Oosterhuis, Andree Hofer (municipality of Dantumadiel) – as representatives of the region
  - ◆ Pieter van der Werff (AOC) – as representative of the green educational sector and as secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation's Green Knowledge Cooperation (GKC),

<sup>7</sup> The later ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation.

- ◆ Willem Foorhuis (national programme leader Regional Transition/GKC) - as advisor for the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation;
- ◆ Alice Posthuma (Municipality of Dantumadiel) as Workplace coordinator.

The internal structure from 2012 on must still be worked out in clear terms. This will be addressed in more detail in the Implementation Plan for *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân<sup>8</sup>.

- The external structure has two interconnected aspects:
  - ◆ Systematically connecting regional partners, including SME and the public: There is already a reasonable foundation for this in Northeast Fryslân with the Agenda Network Northeast, but the base for *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân is still limited. This will have to be addressed in more detail in the further specification of the issue definition for the knowledge questions. To streamline the management in the Workplace, the region will have to devote more capacity.
  - ◆ The structural interface with education: The partnership and its consequences in the knowledge institutions are still immature. Steps to address this will have to be taken by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation and the large knowledge institutions. The region applauds an expertise impulse from the ministry and green knowledge institutions. But the region also has a role to play here. Regional players must also express their commitment to *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân. This presents the Workplace manager with a tall order.

#### B. Preparation of the knowledge agenda

For the content and creation of the knowledge agenda, see p. 19. In Northeast Fryslân, steps 1 and 2 as discussed on that page and in the subsequent pages were already carried out in the survey phase:

- Phase 1 consists of an inventory and vision of the regional developments. In the Northeast Fryslân region, these are described in the socio-economic master plan SEMP. In this master plan, the municipalities in Northeast Fryslân, the province of Fryslân, the entrepreneurs and society in the region jointly set out the direction for Northeast Fryslân.
- In Northeast Fryslân, the next step was deriving the region's knowledge needs from the SEMP, and then translating these into projects that the region wanted to see worked on in the coming years. This is the regional Agenda for the Network Northeast, which then served as the basis for the regional knowledge questions. The agenda distinguishes between ambition projects, priority projects and other projects. For the knowledge questions, the ambition projects are important. These are theme-based projects in which the region wants to work with stakeholders on themes to further define its ambitions. This depth step connects individual running projects, reinforces cohesion and defines the direction of further choices. Within the region, theme groups have set to work on the setup and performance of all projects. Each theme group is headed by one of the directors of the participating municipalities. For all theme-oriented projects within a theme group, the relevant project leaders were asked to draft knowledge questions based on a preliminary

**The regional development plan, the resulting implementation plan, the knowledge questions in the region and the link from these questions to the knowledge institutions is covered in detail in the second part of this series (*Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân - Towards a regional knowledge agenda).**

<sup>8</sup> See *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, Part 3 - Dwaande, the implementation plan

idea of *Kenniswerkplaats*. The memorandum 'Knowledge questions, region Northeast Fryslân - a document in development' is the result. It formulates the knowledge questions.

- The next step is connecting the knowledge questions from the region with the knowledge institutions. There are two goals:
  - ◆ on the one hand, arriving at a long-term cooperation between region and knowledge institutions, in order to transform the region into a learning region that knows how to connect the knowledge networks with its own networks the smart way;
  - ◆ on the other, gaining direct knowledge and insight for on-going issues.

Taking this step requires a structural, external partnership with the knowledge institutions. As already outlined above, this structure has yet to emerge. The region does, however, have contacts with the schools and higher education institutions, and these served as a basis for the initial structure of a regional agenda.<sup>9</sup>

The consultations surrounding the regional agenda emphasised that in the continued discussions with the relevant knowledge institutions, the principal point to focus on in reference to the knowledge questions is the articulation of the questions. An additional observation is that the knowledge questions are generally of a higher vocational education level, and in some cases a university level. The development of the questions and description of the required knowledge products will, in many cases, also result in specific questions for intermediate vocational education institutions. The organisation of the structure with the knowledge institutions and the corresponding development of the learning environment urgently needs support from within the ministry and the green knowledge institutes.

- C. Performance of showcase projects;  
Showcase projects are learning-by-doing projects that give a good picture of the kind of projects that can be carried out in a structural phase in *Kenniswerkplaats*.

Projects that have been performed or initiated since the start of the survey phase have included (among others):

- Energy from wood, results of logging methodology
- Energy from wood, experience survey
- Energy from wood, structure of calculation model
- Stone powder
- Setting up activities with village halls
- Engagement of volunteers with village halls
- Setup of external structure, relationship with entrepreneurs
- Setup of internal structure, relationship with education
- Knowledge map
- Cycling routes



Poster for one of the learning-by-doing projects (photo: M. Rozendal).

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed description, see part 2: *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân - Towards a regional Knowledge Agenda

The quality of the showcase projects is not always satisfactory. This is particularly the case with some reports focusing on *Kenniskerkplaats* itself. Some of them show that the students have insufficient understanding of the concept of *Kenniskerkplaats*. This is not intended as a criticism of the students; rather, one could draw the conclusion that the knowledge management in *Kenniskerkplaats* has room for improvement. It appears that the internal process of action learning has yet to really get up to speed.

Largely, students appear to be reasonably satisfied with the supervision of the projects from within *Kenniskerkplaats*. In the coming period, however, more attention needs to be given to the substantive reporting on the projects and the administrative processing. Communication of the results still leaves something to be desired as well. The projects are summarily described on *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân's own website and *Kenniskerkplaats* portal site<sup>10</sup>, but no detailed information about the projects, the results and the participants is to be found here yet.

All this is a requirement for adequate evaluation, and only then knowledge development can take place. One thing that has now happened is that review instruments for the reporting and evaluation have been developed by *Kenniskerkplaats*'s support group.

For the coming period, a priority learning-by-doing process will be set up around the concept 'Place Keeping'. Preparations are already underway. This process also offers opportunities for a constructive connection with other Workplaces and European programmes, with and alongside Vital Rural Area. Also, at the end of January, preparations began for the KIGO project 'Natuurlijk Ondernemen' (Enterprising with Nature and Landscape), in which Northeast Fryslân is participating. As its name suggests, this project focuses on doing business with and in nature, the landscape and the countryside.

### Conclusion and prospects

All in all, we can conclude that good results have been achieved. From within the ministry, this is echoed by the Regional Transition Programme leader (one of the major national programmes of the ministry's Green Knowledge Cooperation GKC), who classified the region Northeast Fryslân as a cooperative partner that, with its approach to the socio-economic master plan and the Agenda Network Northeast has created a very meaningful foundation for further development of *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân. In the region, it is clear that the will to develop further is there. For one thing, *Kenniskerkplaats* has been included in the list of the Agenda Network Northeast's priority projects. In addition, the region is currently working with dedication and enthusiasm on formulating the knowledge questions.

Some steps remain to be taken, however, and the steering group shares this opinion. One promising success is that an experienced Workplace manager was hired to start at the beginning of 2012. This will help accelerate the performance of a number of actions. In the implementation plan, these steps will be further specified and ordered and described in terms of urgency and priority.

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<sup>10</sup> See <http://kenniskerkplaatsnoordoostfryslan.nl>, and [www.kenniskerkplaats.eu](http://www.kenniskerkplaats.eu)

**Kenniskerkplaats Northeast Fryslân - Fact Sheet 2011**

**Property of: Region of Northeast Fryslân:**

**Investment up to the end of 2011: €600,000**

**Shareholder knowledge institutions: 3**

**Number of student hours 2009-2011 7040**

**Number of projects: 12, of which two still in implementation phase**

**Symposia: 1**

**Publications 3**

## Part 2: Towards a regional Knowledge Agenda

### Developments in the region Northeast Fryslân

For all parties, working in *Kenniskerkplaats* is a new approach. It's about finding each other, learning from each other and working from each other, and in so doing, increasing the innovative capacity of the region. To do this, the regional actors must first figure out what the relevant questions are, what tasks they have before them and what developments and innovations they want to achieve in the region within what time frame. This requires that the intended regional developments and innovations be set out in an area development plan or regional agenda.

Northeast Fryslân already has a tradition of regional cooperation. This chapter focuses on the area development in Northeast Fryslân. The regional cooperation structures and area development plans are important because they are required for the fleshing out of the regional knowledge agenda, the underlying foundation for the regional partnership in *Kenniskerkplaats*. In the sections below, we will first look at NOFA, the 'Northeast Frisian Approach' being used by the municipalities of Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel and Kollumerland c.a. Next, we describe the socio-economic master plan (SEMP) for the region. Finally, we look at Network Northeast and the agenda that the partners in that network have produced.

### NOFA - The Northeast Frisian Approach

#### Supra-municipal partnership

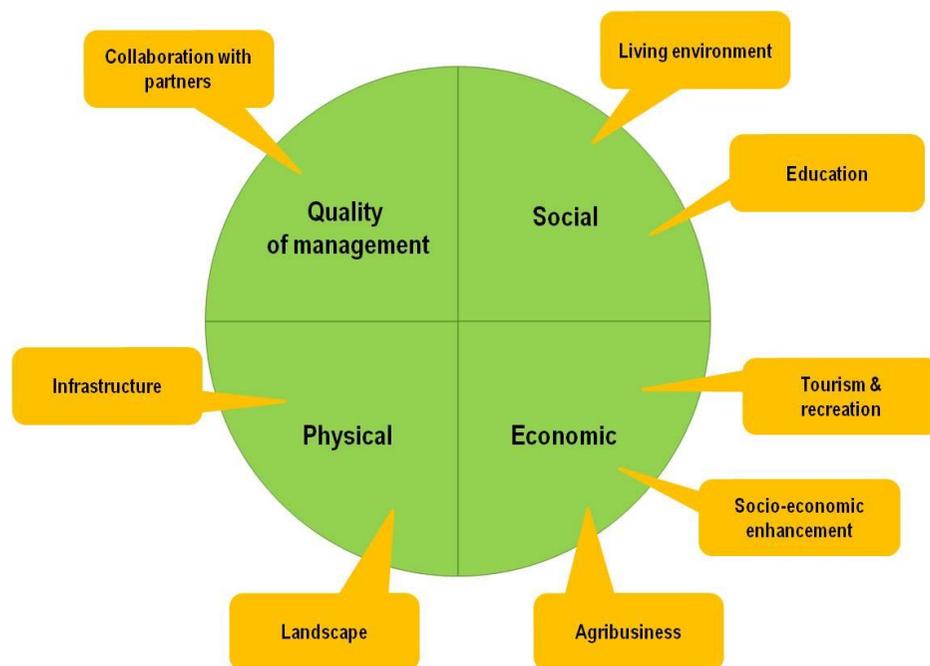
In 2002, the municipalities of Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel and Kollumerland c.a. set out on a process of cross-municipal partnership to reinforce their own individual positions and the position of the region as a whole. One result was the regional vision of the NOFA municipalities, which, on the one hand, formed the basis for annual work plans, and on the other, was the impetus for closer partnership with the province. The regional vision contains key focus points on two areas:

- physical-economic:
  - ◆ development as a residential region;
  - ◆ business and selective expansion of economic pillars;
  - ◆ development and expansion of the recreational sector;
  - ◆ directed development in agriculture;
  - ◆ knowledge and innovation offensive;
  - ◆ reinforcing the care structures;
  - ◆ utilising the qualities of the landscape and retention and augmentation of nature;
- social/societal:
  - ◆ improving the quality of the education through an educational offensive;
  - ◆ residential participation in the development and implementation of social policy;
  - ◆ increasing liveability and social infrastructure;
  - ◆ tailor-made facilities;

- ◆ increasing the feeling of security;
- ◆ young people in Northeast Fryslân.

### Four-pillar NOFA programme

At the programme level, the partnership in NOFA is described in four pillars, each broken down into a number of themes that are then pursued in projects. (See figure.)



The NOFA programme, broken down by pillars and themes. Model produced by A. Hofer and W. Oosterhuis

### Route Northeast

One result of the partnership was the 'Route Northeast,' a system of commitments with the province, which was administratively ratified in March 2007.

### European cooperation

In that same year, the decision was made to collectively act as lead partner on the European project Vital Rural Area, a project focused on the socio-economic revitalisation of the countryside. NOFA is the lead partner on this project, which is being implemented with 12 other partners.

'Vital' revolves around what is referred to as the 'cooperative agreement approach': utilising and collating strengths of various parties in the region (residents, companies, the educational sector, government bodies and the environment), and being open for European experiences and contacts. Maximum results are achieved by forming networks in which local and regional partners join forces, setting priorities for the most effective activities and making commitments on them. One example is the Northeast Fryslân regional marketing campaign 'Dwaande,' which was developed according to the methodology of 'branding the region' as applied in Vital.

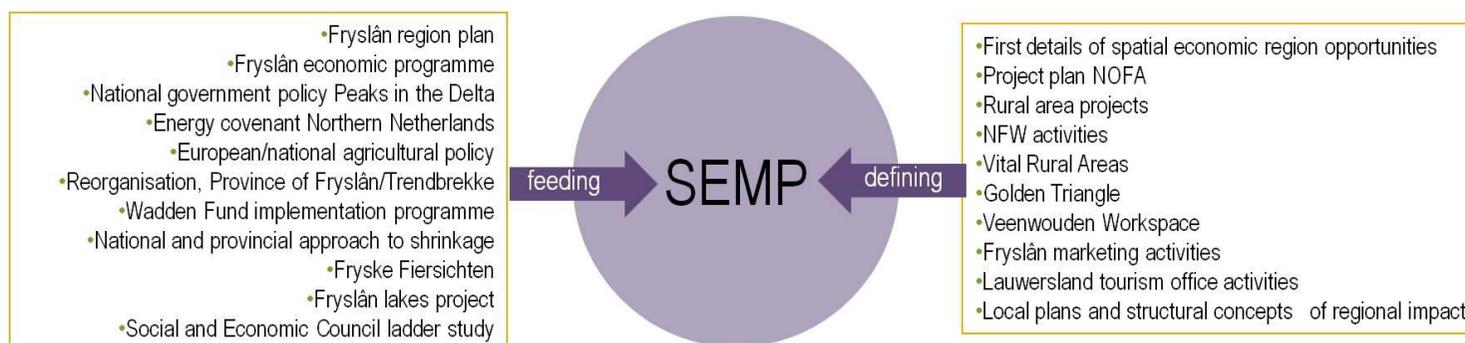
The activities implemented, networks built, results booked and effects achieved are extrapolated into standard methodologies and

tools. In collaboration with academics from the universities in the various partner regions, we then document components, augmented with results from other international project experiences, in the 'Rural Power Pack.' This is one of the final results of Vital, and it produces transferable methodologies for the socio-economic revitalisation of rural regions. This offers advantages for both *Kenniswerkplaats* and for Vital. On the one hand, the methodology of *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân is a valuable component within the Rural Power Pack. On the other, Northeast Fryslân elevates *Kenniswerkplaats* to a European platform.

## The socio-economic master plan

### A vision for the coming 20 years

In 2009, the NOFA municipalities plus the municipality of Tytsjerksteradiel and the province of Fryslân presented a socio-economic master plan (to be referred to hereinafter as the SEMP) entitled 'Living and Working in Networks'. The organised business sector partners also took part in the plan. Together, they presented a shared vision for the region Northeast Fryslân for the coming 20 years. Against the background of a number of investments (some major) and spatial programmes, the SEMP is an umbrella document integrating existing policy and framework documents:



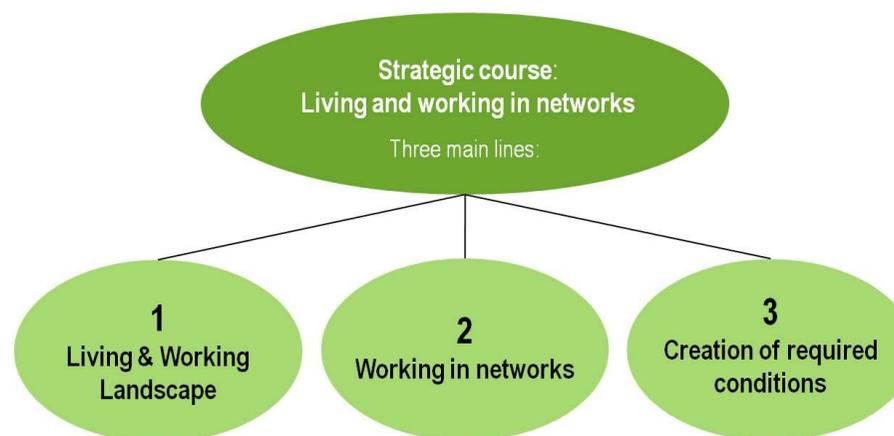
### Problem, challenges and key focus areas

The core problem, the challenges and the spearheads key focus areas were identified using a SWOT analysis:



## Strategy and goals

Under the title of **Living and Working in Networks**, a strategic course was formulated around three main lines:



Looking at the action points identified for the main line 'Living and working landscape,' there are many solid opportunities for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân in all three areas

### 1. Living and working landscape:

- Construction of new infrastructure and improving existing infrastructure, with attention to a cohesive infrastructural network of the individual components (road, water, rail and digital network).
- Investing in living environments and the landscape; with attention to specific living-working environments (starters, small businesses and cottage industries).
- Understanding city and environment and how they complement each other. This understanding has to grow among residents and entrepreneurs, but also among administrators → as a result, new opportunities for financing landscape management, construction infrastructure, offering living and work locations, and also the maintenance and funding of central facilities.

#### Objectives

- Infrastructure:  
In 2030, Northeast Fryslân will be excellently connected by road, rail, water and electronic communication for residents, businesses and visitors, and will also be interconnected with the urban networks in the north of the Netherlands and the rest of the world.
- Living-working environments:

In 2030, Northeast Fryslân will have a number of strong cluster cores with a complete range of facilities and business locations, with sufficient expansion potential for regional industry. The region will also be known for its attractive rural living environments and the excellent options for combining working and living.

- Landscape:  
Connecting landscape of Northeast Fryslân optimally for recreation and tourism, with the preservation of ecosystems in mind, to boost the quality of the living environment and give an impulse to the regional economy.

## 2. Working in networks:

- Development of the organisational infrastructure → expanding on strengths (finding each other, social cohesion and coherence) into a flexible and effective network
- Creating trans-sectoral connections and strategic coalitions, i.e. intensive cooperation between entrepreneurs, government, labour market and education, forms of network companies and sustainable chains; attention to starters, small businesses and 'cottage industries'

### Objectives

- Network companies:  
Strategic networks and combinations are formed to give companies in Northeast Fryslân a competitive edge and allow them to expand their market areas.
- Labour market and education:  
Business, education and government come together, so that in 2030 the educational sector and the labour market are in tune with each other and young people have a promising future in a region characterised by a high proportion of skilled workers and persons with higher education.
- Sustainable chains:  
Efforts to create sustainable chains between companies and institutions, based on a drive for a sustainable living environment and creation of economic added value.

## 3. Creation of required conditions:

- Ensuring a good implementation organisation and the administrative embedding of that organisation → organising financing in a timely and systematic way
- Better communicate the potential and the opportunities of the region through a shared marketing plan → Tell and sell

### Objectives

- Organisation  
In Northeast Fryslân, five municipalities proved willing to develop a future perspective in consultation with the province of Fryslân. After the master plan is adopted, a movement has to be initiated towards the achievement of a specific result.
- Financing

Here again, the action points show that in all areas of 'Working in networks', there are many opportunities for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân - both in terms of content and in terms of working method and approach

The same goes for the third thematic line. In all areas of 'Creation of required conditions', there are many opportunities for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân - both in terms of content and in terms of working method and approach

The implementation of the socio-economic master plan and the programmes, projects and action points resulting from it demand significant investments in the longer term. For these investments, a Northeast Fryslân development fund has been created.

- Marketing

Northeast Fryslân is promoted as a coherent region in all its diversity. Here, the goal is not merely promoting tourism, but also increasing the opportunities for the business sector as a whole.

### **The Network Northeast and the Agenda Network Northeast**

In 2010, the cooperation at the regional scale is further given form as Network Northeast. Network Northeast includes, in addition to the six governmental authorities (the NOFA municipalities, the municipality of Tytsjerksteradiel and the province of Fryslân), the entrepreneurs and society in the region.

All governmental bodies are represented in a steering group (provincial executive member Sietske Poepjes for the province, mayors Arie Aalberts and Marga Waanders for Dantumadiel and Dongeradeel, and the municipal executive members Geerling Schippers, Hilbrand Visser and Jan Lammers for Tytsjerksteradiel, Kollumerland c.a. and Achtkarspelen).

#### **Programme lines**

Together, they further elaborated the SEMP into concrete projects, which are presented in the Agenda Network Northeast. They contain further refinement of the strategic main lines from the SEMP in the form of subdivision into programme lines.

#### **Projects**

In a subsequent step, projects with a high priority will be identified. These will be specific projects to be implemented by one or more municipalities and the province plus other shareholders. All projects have a regional added value. For the performance of the Agenda, parties agree that

- all partners must have an interest in and must benefit from the implementation;
- the responsibilities and risks must be placed with the closest and most involved partner;
- the financial cooperation is considered to be a growth model.

The actual decision-making on the implementation and financing of the projects is in the hands of the municipal councils of Achtkarspelen, Dantumadiel, Dongeradeel, Kollumerland c.a. and Tytsjerksteradiel, as well as the provincial executive of Fryslân.

A list of the projects is given in the following table.

**Table of themes and projects in the Living & Working Landscape cluster**

| <b>Living &amp; Working Landscape</b>                            |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Programme line</b>  | <b>Regional theme</b>   | <b>Project lead</b>  | <b>Concrete projects</b>  | <b>Project lead</b>  |
| <b>A. Northeast Accessible</b>                                   | <b>A3.</b> Vision development, use of rail (including station locations)<br><b>A8.</b> New public transport arrangements Northeast                          | Fryslân, Achtkarspelen and Dantumadiel Province of Fryslân | <b>A1.</b> Optimisation of secondary road network Northeast<br><b>A4.</b> De Skieding upgrade and Lauwerskwartier connection<br><b>A9.</b> Mobility system junctions<br><b>A10.</b> Public transport system Quatrebras  | Fryslân<br>Fryslân, Achtkarspelen<br>Fryslân<br>Fryslân  |
| <b>B. Northeast Digital</b>                                      | <b>B2.</b> Vision development, digital services Northeast   | Achtkarspelen  | <b>B1.</b> Pilot, broadband fibre optic Northeast<br><b>B3.</b> Town Hall New Style (Smart Rural Network Society)   | Achtkarspelen<br>Fryslân   |
| <b>C. Home and living in Northeast</b>                           | <b>C1.</b> Total approach to demographic challenges Northeast   | Dongeradeel  | <b>C2.</b> Opportunities in Dantumadiel and Tytsjerksteradiel cores<br><b>C4.</b> Northeast Fryslân shrinkage experiments Dongeradeel village conservation areas experiment   | Dantumadiel, Tytsjerksteradiel<br>Dongeradeel  |
| <b>D. Strong cores</b>   | <b>D1.</b> Regional facilities coordination, Northeast facilities distribution  | Dantumadiel  | <b>D2.</b> Bundling area cluster cores Kollum - Buitenpost (D4 and D5 are components)<br><b>D3.</b> Burgum - Romtelik Fiersicht Development<br><b>D4.</b> Kollum Development : Centre plan, home service zone, connection and restructuring Southeast<br><b>D5.</b> Buitenpost Development: Station zone, Kruidhof, Centre plan, Voorstraat<br><b>D6.</b> Feanwâlden Development: Transferium (park + ride) Feanwâlden, living, care and commercial<br><b>D7.</b> Spatial development: Dokkum West Side and western ring road | Kollumerland c.a.,<br>Achtkarspelen<br>Tytsjerksteradiel<br>Kollumerland c.a.<br>Achtkarspelen<br>Dantumadiel<br><br>Dongeradeel |
| <b>E. Spatial infrastructure for companies</b>                   |   |  | <b>E1.</b> Industrial park site agreement   | Tytsjerksteradiel  |
| <b>F. Sustainable area development</b>                           | <b>F1.</b> Total approach, Lauwersmeer area   | Dongeradeel  | <b>F2.</b> Area vision, Halve Klaverblad Westereen<br><b>F3.</b> Development ECO Quadrant<br><b>F4.</b> Total project, Sud Ie - De Kolken<br><b>F5.</b> Area development, Skûlenboarch – Westkern<br><b>F6.</b> Area development, Central Axis  | Dantumadiel<br>Fryslân<br>Dongeradeel<br>Achtkarspelen, Tytsjerksteradiel<br>Fryslân   |
| <b>G. Recreation and tourism</b>                                 | <b>G1.</b> Regional approach, Recreation Northeast Fryslân - step 1 = water recreation  | Kollumerland c.a.  | <b>G4.</b> Development of Transferia (park + ride; information points at existing attractions) NFW<br><b>G5.</b> Water Sports City Dokkum<br><b>G6.</b> Water Sports Village Kollum<br><b>G7.</b> Earnewâld Master Plan<br><b>G9.</b> Dantumadiel Recreational Park   | NFW, Achtkarspelen<br><br>Dongeradeel<br>Kollumerland c.a.<br>Tytsjerksteradiel<br>Dantumadiel                                   |
| <b>H. Network Northeast, companies united towards innovation</b> | <b>H1.</b> Agricultural Structure Enhancement - innovation and focus on the future<br><b>H3.</b> Enhance business network Northeast, step 1 start-up policy | Fryslân<br>Achtkarspelen                                   | <b>H4.</b> The Knowledge Map  | Dantumadiel  |

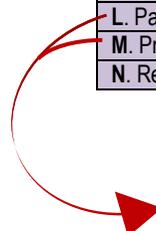
**Table of themes and projects in the Living & Working Landscape cluster**

| <b>Working in networks</b>                         |  |                            |  |                                       |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Programme line</b>                              | <b>Regional theme</b>  | <b>Project lead</b>        | <b>Concrete projects</b>   | <b>Project lead</b>                   |
| I. Opportunities for living, care and care tourism | I1. Development of strong care sector, Northeast (including development of care tourism/packages)  | Dongeradeel                | I2. Lauwershage, recreation and care                                   | Kollumerland c.a.                     |
| J. From education to job                           | J3. Living & Working Northeast ambitions approach (lower secondary vocational education, VMBO / upper secondary vocational education, MBO) | Dantumadiel                | J4. The Workspace Northeast  | Dantumadiel                           |
| K. Sustainable North-east                          | K1. Sustainable Northeast approach (sustainable residential construction, industrial estates, mobility and energy)                         | Tytsjerksteradiel, Fryslân | K3. Energy-neutral Kollumerland<br>K6. Energy from Wood in the NFW_ N2 | Kollumerland c.a.<br>NFW, Dantumadiel |

**Table of themes and projects in the Living & Working Landscape cluster**

| <b>Limiting conditions</b>      |   |                     |  |                     |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>Programme line</b>           | <b>Regional theme</b>                     | <b>Project lead</b> | <b>Concrete projects</b>                 | <b>Project lead</b> |
| L. Partnership and organisation |   |                     |  |                     |
| M. Programme financing          |   |                     |  |                     |
| N. Regional marketing           | N1. Regional Marketing Northeast expanded | Dongeradeel         | N2. Regional Marketing Northeast Fryslân | Dongeradeel         |

Two important themes not yet completed




## Towards the knowledge agenda: next steps

### The regional knowledge questions

With SEMP and the Agenda Network Northeast, the regional parties in Northeast Fryslân have completed the area development plan and the regional agenda. It includes a list of area tasks broken down by various themes. It even goes as far as to identify projects through which the area agenda will be given priority performance. The province has made funding of nearly 23 million euros available for the performance of the agenda. This means that phase 1 of the regional knowledge agenda, being the drafting of an area agenda, has been completed in the Northeast Fryslân region.

The second step for the regional knowledge agenda is the definition of the regional knowledge questions. Here again, the region has already made some progress on this step. It is primarily the ambition projects that are considered relevant to these knowledge questions. The ambition projects are theme-based projects in which the region wants to work with shareholders on themes to move forward on the regional ambitions. Within the region, theme groups have set to work on the set-up and performance of all projects. These groups are:

- Space and Infrastructure
- Economy, Recreation and Tourism
- Liveable/social

Each group is headed by one of the directors/secretaries of the participating municipalities. The knowledge questions provided in the list on the following pages have been formulated by project, under the leadership of the relevant project leaders.

Two points to keep in mind were made during the process of formulating the knowledge questions:

- The consultations surrounding the regional agenda emphasised that in the continued discussions with the relevant knowledge institutions, the principal point to focus on in reference to the knowledge questions is the articulation of the questions.
- An additional observation is that the knowledge questions are generally of a higher vocational education level, and in some cases at university level. The development of the questions and description of the required knowledge products must also result in specific questions for intermediate vocational education and preparatory vocational education institutions.

All parties acknowledge that the answering of the knowledge questions by the individual knowledge institutions will not result in a competitive situation. On the contrary, the expectation is a situation of closer cooperation, so long as good matches are made. Of course, many of the questions are cross sectoral, and so cooperation between knowledge institutions is not only beneficial, but necessary to properly complete the task. This is to say that sub questions are dealt with by different institutions, preferably in multidisciplinary teams consisting of students and teaching staff from different programmes and different institutions.

An initial, albeit incomplete, inventory of the knowledge questions has already been produced for the Northeast Fryslân region.

This will be updated in a subsequent phase, when the links to the knowledge institutions are established. Then, the region and the knowledge institutions can review the knowledge questions again to make sure that they are the best possible match for the regional needs.

List of regional knowledge questions

◆ Knowledge questions: Space and Infrastructure

| Project  | Knowledge questions:   |
|--|--|
| A3 Vision development, use of rail (including station locations) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Study of total process - must this be limited to Groningen/Leeuwarden or should perspective be broader - from Harlingen to the German border or even further?</li> <li>- What frequency of trains between Groningen and Leeuwarden is necessary, desirable?</li> <li>- What are the sustainability aspects?</li> <li>- What factors should the deployment of trains be coordinated for?</li> <li>- What role does the fast train connection play? Is there any other possible/desirable solution?</li> <li>- What data are available on the train traffic flows between Leeuwarden and Groningen (traffic flows from place to place, occupancy, etc.)?</li> <li>- What data are available on travel time in different scenarios?</li> </ul>   |
| A8 New public transport arrangements Northeast                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the situation with total mobility in Northeast Fryslân?</li> <li>- What alternative transport methods can we come up with? Which ones are the most appropriate to Northeast Fryslân?</li> <li>- How can we increase Northeast Fryslân's connections by using the potential offered of public transport?</li> <li>- How can public transport be utilised to reverse the demographic trends of area shrinkage?</li> <li>- What policy-based or other information is available on the future of public transport in NE Fryslân?</li> <li>- What information is available on public transport concepts in other parts of the Netherlands and Europe?</li> <li>- What information is available in the area of combinations of new works with public transport facilities (work locations at stations, etc.).</li> <li>- How can sustainable solutions make a significant contribution or result in a totally new public transport system?</li> </ul> |
| F1 Total approach, Lauwersmeer area                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Catalogue the potential for development of the Lauwersmeer area.</li> <li>- Are there also businesses willing to invest in the tourism sector?</li> <li>- How big is the market for the number of overnight stays in this area? In other words, what other overnight options are available in the area? Are there any new forms to be considered?</li> <li>- What innovative ideas can be developed for the Lauwersoog fishing port?</li> <li>- How can the significant natural assets contribute to further development of the tourism sector in the Lauwersmeer area?</li> <li>- To what extent does enhancement of the traffic infrastructure play a role in further improving the recreational and tourism product?</li> </ul>  |

**K1** Sustainable Northeast approach

- Catalogue sustainable initiatives in the region
- Catalogue sustainable initiatives in other regions

◆ **Knowledge questions: Economy, Recreation & Tourism**

**B2** Vision development, digital services Northeast

- Catalogue options for fibre optic connections in the Netherlands
- Catalogue options for other digital connections
- Catalogue options for connection of unprofitable areas
- What market parties are active in the digital services sector?
- What market parties are interested in this area?
- Catalogue options for use of fibre optics in the Netherlands (for companies, and in care, welfare and education)
- Catalogue digital services that could be developed in the region or are in development in the areas of the ambition projects of Agenda Network Northeast - this in consultation with the leads on the individual ambition projects
- What role can companies play in improving digital services?
- What subsidy options are there for developing the fibre optic infrastructure?
- What subsidy options are there for developing the commercial operation of fibre optics?
- Research costs of different applications of fibre optics: What digital or other services become possible with fibre optic infrastructure?
- How can digital services improve the quality of life in rural areas?
- Research funding options and earning models for digital services.

**G1** Regional approach, Recreation Northeast Fryslân – step 1 water recreation

- Catalogue municipal policy of all five municipalities.
- Catalogue all running initiatives and plans in the region.
- Opportunity Map for water recreation for the region.
- Search for innovative water recreation options, where possible linked to sustainability aspects.
- Could an "umbrella vision" be developed for water recreation?

**H1** Agricultural Structure Enhancement - innovation and focus on the future

- What sustainable agricultural initiatives have there been in the recent past on the regional, national and European level; can any trends be identified?
- Catalogue sustainable initiatives in relation to profitability.
- Catalogue local initiatives.
- What is the economic interest of agriculture in the regional economy at present in comparison to previous years; how is it developing and what is the expected trend?
- What is the change in the societal interest in regard to agriculture?
- How can this societal interest be measured?
- Can the societal interest on agriculture be utilised in marketing?

**H3** Enhance business network Northeast (including start-up policy and sole practitioners)

- Catalogue (a) number of small companies and (b) core businesses of these companies.
- What target group is the most relevant for the region?
- How can the region get the maximum benefit out of that group?
- What is the relationship between the scale of small business and themes like innovation and sustainability?
- How can we set up network structures for small businesses, and how can the entrepreneurs behind those businesses play a role?
- Is a start-up policy the potential solution for the unemployment question?
- How can the five municipalities formulate the best start-up policy with the best content?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>N1 / N2</b> Regional Marketing<br>Northeast Fryslân<br>(expanded) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct image research</li> <li>- Develop marketing plan</li> <li>- Develop campaign</li> <li>- Start ambassador network</li> <li>- Organise kick-off for launch of campaign</li> <li>- Carry out campaign</li> <li>- Develop digital connection of Northeast Fryslân</li> <li>- Set up long-term regional marketing organisation structure</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

◆ **Knowledge questions: Liveable/social**

**C1** Total approach to demographic challenges

- How can we keep villages vital and liveable in the face of shrinkage? What are the limiting conditions for vitality and liveability?
- What impact will the expected demographic developments have on the population of Northeast Fryslân?
- Specifically:
  - Which social groups will leave, and which will stay?
  - What impact do changing demographics have on the vitality of village areas?
  - How are other regions, like Northeast Germany, dealing with shrinkage?
  - Catalogue the most significant players in this area.
- In "homogeneous" villages (native population with activities primarily in their own village), liveability is more frequently evaluated based on the availability or disappearance of facilities in the village. In living villages (more people from elsewhere with activities outside the village), liveability is evaluated based on the quality of living (home/living environment); see Frans Thissen. This means that investing in the quality of "living" is important. At the same time, housing corporations are, in fact, less inclined to invest in villages where facilities have pulled out. What is the impact when investments in villages where there are no facilities dry up?
- How can we arrive at a vitality scan for village areas? What criteria must be investigated in order to do so? What criteria can be used to distinguish between living village and homogeneous village? How can this type of scan be used for the development of policy based on the Social Support Act?

D1 Regional facilities coordination, Northeast Fryslân

- What information is available nationally on facilities pertaining to accessibility, availability, care area, necessity in relation to vitality of regions, distribution, importance of quality versus quantity (higher quality, bigger care area, etc.)? And how can this information be used for further formulation of questions within our region?
- Importance of quality versus quantity (higher quality at distance versus close by, lower quality)?

D1 Regional facilities coordination, Northeast Fryslân

- How does the accessibility and availability of the facilities in the region rate, and what is the care area for these facilities?
- Catalogue future plans (both government and private parties)
- Catalogue level of occupancy of facilities - insights into understaffing and overstaffing offer opportunities to coordinate use of facilities
- What transportation solutions are available to keep facilities accessible for the relevant target group?
- What key figures are there in the various organisations and governmental authorities that may be relevant to defining liveability aspects? Are these the same facilities that can play a role in counteracting shrinkage in village or region?
- Are there key figures that can be identified as relevant to maintaining facilities? For example, travel times, visit times, distances, etc.
- What distance to a facility is "reasonable"? (This will differ for different facilities and target groups; for younger people, for example, driving a car is more of an obstacle.) When can the facility be qualified as "accessible"?
- What roles are set aside here for government bodies and market parties, and for the residents themselves?
- Potential role of volunteers in keeping facilities operationally viable (example: T-diel, swimming pool run by volunteers)
- Keeping facilities like town halls operationally viable.
- Catalogue the most significant players in this area.
- What options do new technologies offer?
- Specific to sports facilities: what facilities can be considered regional sports facilities (for example: covered swimming pool with recreational functions, in-line skating course)?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| I1 Development of strong care sector, Northeast (including development of care tourism/packages) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What initiatives are there at present?</li> <li>- What trends can be identified at the moment?</li> <li>- Catalogue the most significant players in this area.</li> <li>- What should the care sector look like - for example: centralized or decentralized? Large-scale versus small-scale? Etc.</li> <li>- What options do new technologies offer?</li> </ul>  |
| J3 From education to job   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How can the region improve the labour qualifications of young people who are somewhat removed from the labour market?</li> <li>- Catalogue all initiatives in our region, as well as in other regions in this area (following on from previous work by Akkie Visser).</li> <li>- Gain insight into the qualifications companies require from new personnel (following on from Golden Triangle database survey, augmented with original work where necessary).</li> <li>- Catalogue the most significant players in this area.</li> </ul> |

### Initial connection with the knowledge institutions

The next step is connecting the knowledge questions from the region with the knowledge institutions. There are three aspects to this objective:

1. arriving at a long-term partnership between region and knowledge institutions, in order to transform the region into a learning region that knows how to connect the knowledge networks with its own networks in intelligent ways;
2. zooming in from the big picture of the knowledge needs in the region to the details, supplementing these details where necessary
3. gaining direct knowledge and understanding to apply on on-going issues.

An initial move towards the match with the knowledge institutions has already been made. One of the first actions on the agenda for 2012 is a detailed specification of this first move. The details of the work plan for 2012 are described in the Business Plan for *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân<sup>11</sup>.

The table on the following page shows the preliminary matching of themes, projects and knowledge institutions.

<sup>11</sup> See *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, Part 3 - Dwaande: the implementation plan

Table, List of interest on the part of knowledge institutions for long-term association with regional themes

| Theme                         | Project                                  | NHL#                                     | Stenden University | VHL       | ROC Friese Poort | AOC Friesland |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| Space/infra structure         | Vision development, use of rail          | BE                                       |                    | M&R       |                  | -             |
|                               | New public transport packages            | BE                                       |                    | M&R       |                  | -             |
|                               | Total approach, Lauwersmeer area         | BE                                       |                    | K&Z       |                  | X             |
|                               | Sustainable Northeast approach           | BE                                       |                    | X         |                  | X             |
| Economy, Recreation & Tourism | Vision development, digital services     | E&M                                      |                    | X         | X                | X             |
|                               | Regional approach, recreation            | in partnership/consultation with Stenden |                    | X         | X                | X             |
|                               | Structure enhancement, agriculture       |  |                    | X         |                  | X             |
|                               | Enhancement of business network          | E&M                                      |                    |           | X                | -             |
|                               | Regional marketing                       | in partnership/consultation with Stenden |                    | X         | X                | -             |
| Social/Livable                | Total approach to demographic challenges | Thorb                                    |                    | Shrinkage | Domotica         | -             |
|                               | Regional coordination of facilities      | Thorb                                    |                    | Shrinkage | Domotica         | -             |
|                               | Development of strong care sector        | S/Z                                      |                    | X         | Domotica         | -             |
|                               | Living & Working ambitions approach      | S/Z                                      |                    | X         | database         | X             |

## Part 3: Implementation plan, from experiment to operationalisation

### Why an implementation plan?

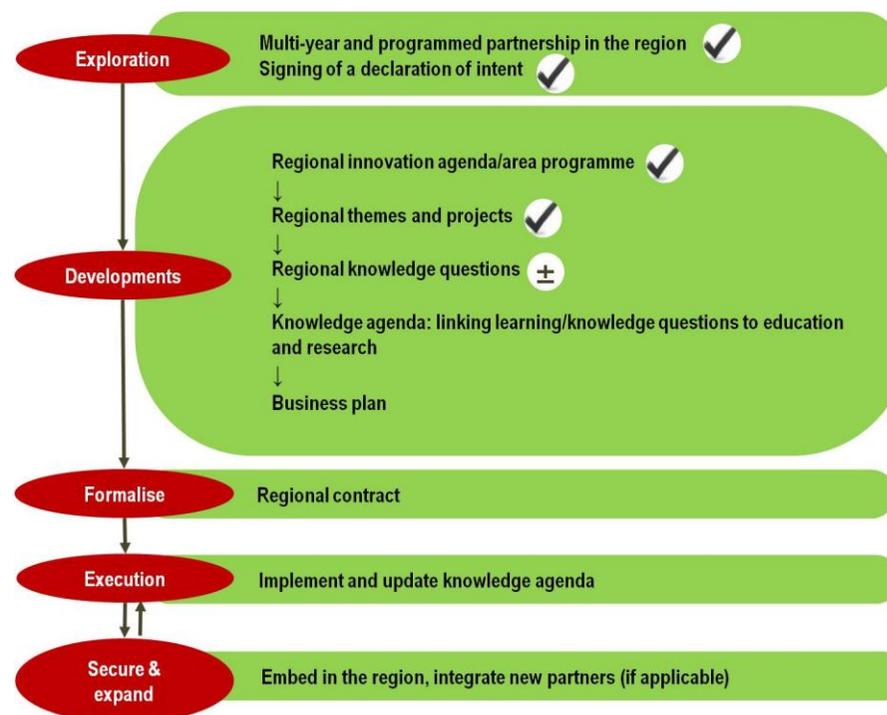
Northeast Fryslân has been laying the foundation for its *Kenniswerkplaats* for several years, and has taken a number of steps already:

- programmed a multi-year partnership in the SEMP, and obtained commitments on it from the participating parties
- drafted a regional area programme, identifying regional themes and projects, in the Agenda Network Northeast
- drafted a preliminary list of regional knowledge questions

Two publications describing the situation at the end of 2011 are available. The first describes what a *Kenniswerkplaats* is, what new insights have been acquired in recent years and how far along the preparations for a *Kenniswerkplaats* in Northeast Fryslân are. The second presents a list of steps the region has taken so far towards a regional Knowledge Agenda. Aspects addressed include the SEMP area development programme, the Agenda Network Northeast, the initial inventory of the regional knowledge questions and a first attempt towards matchmaking among the knowledge institutions. These are the starting points for a fully-fledged regional knowledge agenda to be taken up starting in 2012<sup>12</sup>.

The image shows the phases involved in working in a *Kenniswerkplaats*. It also shows which phases Northeast Fryslân has already completed. The next steps are working out the knowledge agenda, producing a business plan as underlying partner and signing the regional contract.

The implementation plan describes the actions to be taken to complete these steps. It also provides an early indication of aspects such as parties involved, organisation, planning and costs.



<sup>12</sup> See *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, Parts 1 and 2.

## Kenniswerkplaats Northeast Fryslân - Preconditions

### What do we need?

- Commitment from knowledge institutions, government bodies, NGOs and business sector. Who are we talking about here?
  - ◆ the Knowledge Institutions:
    - AOC Friesland
    - the ROCs in the region
    - universities of applied sciences: VHL, NHL and Hanze Hogeschool
    - Wageningen University and University of Groningen
  - ◆ government bodies:
    - province of Fryslân
    - five municipalities in the region
    - Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovation
  - ◆ business sector:
    - SME North
    - Chamber of Commerce
    - individual entrepreneurs
  - ◆ civil society organisations
    - LTO
    - Doarpswurk
    - local village and resident associations

Not all of the organisations listed here need necessarily participate directly from the beginning, but as time goes on there must be a movement towards a partnership in which all these parties, and potentially others not mentioned here, will take up their own responsibility.
- Connection at top sectors and regional questions in the areas of agriculture, energy and water;
- Drafting of a knowledge agenda for Northeast Fryslân with specification of the required themes.

### How do the organisations contribute?

- Through the deployment of resources (not only manpower, but financial resources, for example through applying for research and educational subsidies<sup>13</sup>);
- By setting up an internal structure (internal organisation, involving personnel, communication);

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the familiar Dutch programmes such as KIGO and RAAK, there are also a large number of EU programmes. Even in the educational sector alone, the EU offers an array of potential subsidies,

- By contributing with funding and manpower towards the establishment of a 'leader group for the Northern Netherlands national region';

### What are the success factors and failure factors?

#### Success factors

- Sharp focus in the knowledge agenda
- All parties benefit
- All parties contribute to utilising and distributing knowledge

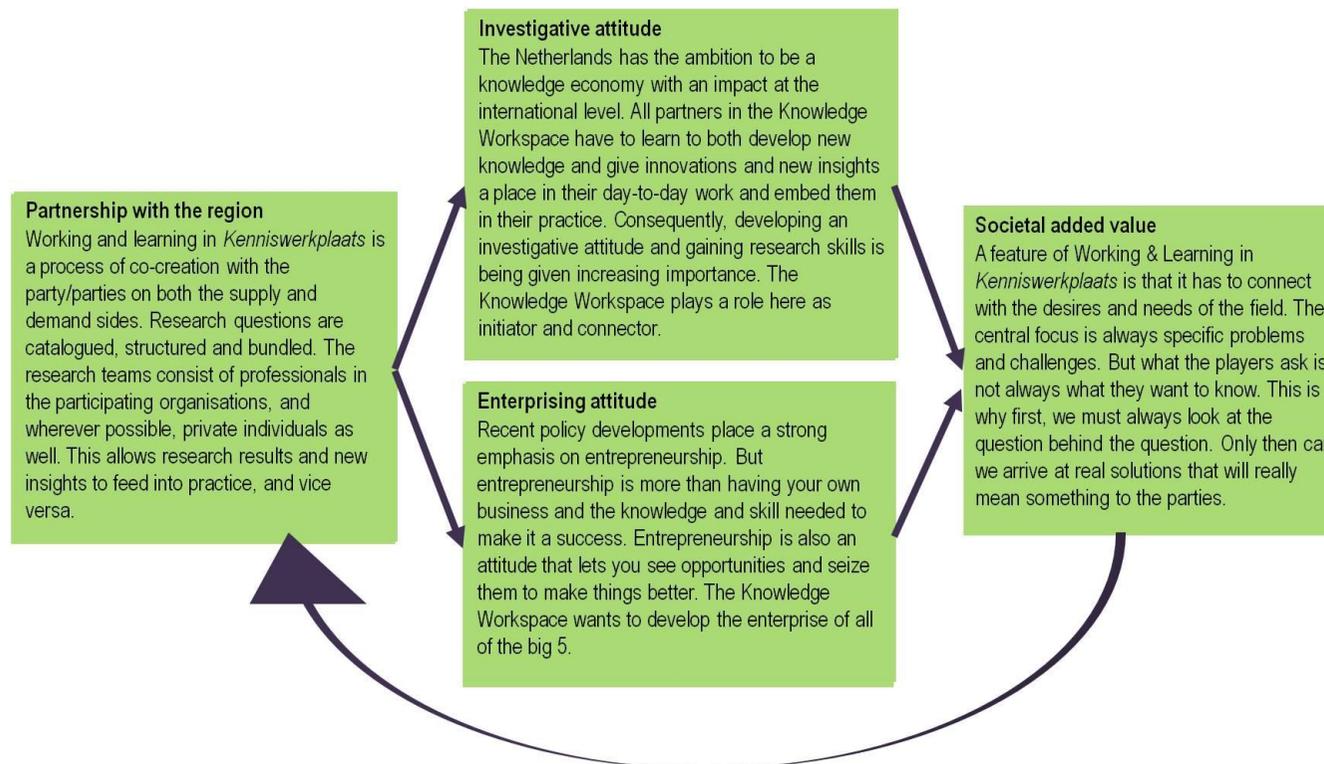
#### Failure factors

- Dependency on temporary funding
- Expectations of parties too high
- No one acting in the interest of the whole, everyone looking out for own part
- Not enough manpower and not the right people to really get it off the ground within a number of years

### The goals

1. Education and research institutions pursue strategic, innovative and interdisciplinary area projects in cooperation with regional parties. The projects are knowledge-intensive: the focus is on connecting, developing, applying, evaluating and distributing knowledge. This way, *Kenniskerkplaats* contributes to sustainable development in Northeast Fryslân.
2. *Kenniskerkplaats* sees itself as a place where new knowledge and a new attitude on the part of government, research and education, regional businesses, institutions and the public crystallise: inquiring and enterprising.
3. Throughout, *Kenniskerkplaats* looks from the outside in:
  - What is going on in the region, with governmental bodies, the business sector and civil society?
  - What questions does the field face and how can we best respond to them?
  - Can research and education help answer those questions, and what does this mean for the knowledge creation on the part of all parties?This is the way to achieve added value for society in Northeast Fryslân.
4. Through a process of action learning and action research, the results feed back into the quality, intensity and effectiveness of the regional partnership.

All this will contribute to the creation of a sustainable living environment that will retain, develop and enhance identity, social cohesion and an enterprising and vital economy in Northeast Fryslân.  
(For more on the goals, see also the figure on the next page.)



*Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân - The goals

### The shareholders

In *Kenniswerkplaats*, the partners, i.e., the parties working in it, are referred to as shareholders rather than stakeholders. What exactly is the difference? Stakeholders have an interest and want to see that interest borne out. Shareholders do too, but they also take personal responsibility for making good not only on their own stake, but those of their fellow shareholders.

**Give something to get something is their motto.  
Co-responsibility is the keyword.  
A desire to change yourself - and in the process, the whole region - is the creed.**

### *Giving is getting, getting is giving*

*Kenniskerkplaats* is a place to work together and to learn together. Developing together, changing together - this is the goal. And the result that you want to achieve together is the transition of the region, from a loose cooperative relationship to a *structured learning region*.

This means there is no room for competition in the workspace method. All parties are equals. Representatives of the big 5 work together on innovative regional issues, generating new knowledge in the process. From the perspective of what the region needs, all participants can (and must) develop new knowledge outside of their own frame of reference; this process is supported by the knowledge on the part of the other parties: students, teaching staff, public officials, politicians, experts, entrepreneurs and private individuals.

As this suggests, the dynamic is one of "give and take" in the conventional sense (you don't get something for nothing). But it takes more than that. What's more important is that by contributing something you also get something. Every obligation is also a boon to your professional functioning. This works in two ways:

1. In regard to yourself, put your own attitude, knowledge and working method under the microscope to see what can be done differently and what can be done better;
2. In regard to the others, supervising students, engagement through sharing ideas and contributing and performing work.

Organising this so that in the bottom line, every one of the big 5 offers an advantage is one of the crucial learning steps in *Kenniskerkplaats*.

### *So who's doing what?*

- Together with regional parties, **educational and research institutions** pursue strategic, innovative and interdisciplinary area projects, and in the process promote and complete education and research from which the knowledge questions are formulated.
- **The public, government bodies and market parties** take responsibility for the development and implementation of innovative ideas and projects for their living environment.
- **Entrepreneurs and the public** achieve self-administration for their area: residents, businesses and organisations themselves determine the future of the region, within the limiting conditions and quality criteria set out by governmental bodies. In the future, these parties may also function in the client role.

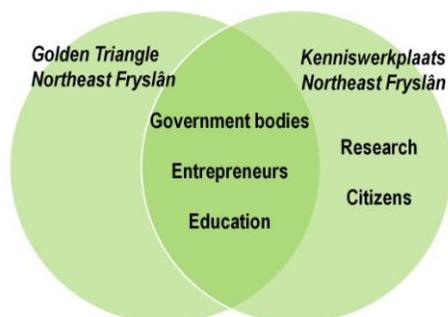
### **Important to keep in mind at all times:**

*Kenniskerkplaats* is **not an ordinary work placement** that students turn up to for a few months to carry out an assignment and see a member of the teaching staff at the beginning and the end.

*Kenniskerkplaats* is about something different entirely, namely working together and learning together. That means that it is an **integral component** (or has to become one) **of the educational programme**. It is the teaching staff who are responsible for the supervision.

Work placements and final assignments are interesting, but in *Kenniskerkplaats* the **emphasis is on modules in which students work with real world cases**. This means you get groups of students getting involved in one or more modules, and who assimilate what they learn in the modules to use in practice immediately. That influences their professional outlook, and they in turn influence the professional practice. In this structure the module consists in part of teaching hours and in part of working in *Kenniskerkplaats*. This is the only feasible method of getting large groups of students, and as importantly, the teaching staff as well, involved.

There is also an added bonus, namely the feedback and feed-forward to the region and between the shareholders.



- **Research** supports the client and the hands-on parties in coming together to achieve knowledge creation and knowledge sharing between the big 5 in the green, grey and blue sectors.
- **Teaching staff, professionals and interested parties** are systematically and intensively involved in projects so as to generate the knowledge acquisition, knowledge application and knowledge distribution.
- **Students** are taught from a practical perspective with interactive projects, but also bring their own knowledge, perspectives and, most importantly, critical questions that the experts are no longer willing or able to ask each other. This enables them to identify and help traverse the gaps between the other shareholders.

*With these premises in mind, looking at Northeast Fryslân who are the shareholders?*

**Local:**

- The municipalities in the region Northeast Fryslân, at the administrative and official levels
- The village and resident associations

**Regional**

- *Province of Fryslân*: in as many areas as possible, seeking partnership with on-going provincial policy, including rural area policy (through Plattelâns projects);
- *The Golden Triangle Northeast Fryslân Platform*: utilising the overlap in this partnership between education, the business sector and the public sector in the region and *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân to achieve added value;
- *De Noardlike Fryske Wâlden (NFW)*: as representative of a group of some 850 farmers with 40,000 hectares of land, as well as a growing number of citizen members, and indispensable invaluable partner;
- *Doarpswurk*: as umbrella network and lobbying group for village interests and town halls in the region;
- *SME North, Chamber of Commerce and trade associations*: indispensable as the biggest lobbying group for the small and medium-sized business sector in the north of the country
- *Organisations such as Wetterskip Fryslân, Fryslân Environmental Federation, It Fryske Gea*
- *Educational and research institutions* (AOC Friesland, Van Hall Larenstein, Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden, Stenden University, ROCs, Hanze Hogeschool, Wageningen University, University of Groningen)

**Inter-regional**

Against the background of the overriding Knowledge Programme for the Region North, a connection at the inter-regional scale is essential. Primarily, this pertains to the two other northern *Kenniswerkplaats*s:

- ***Kenniswerkplaats Westerkwartier***  
There is already some partnership with the Westerkwartier (Groningen) in connection with NOFA. Due to a number of similarities, both in terms of landscape and nature of the population, inter-regional partnership can offer added value. This concept is reinforced by the fact that another *Kenniswerkplaats* is being set up in the Westerkwartier. In addition, recently a number of early adapters in the Westerkwartier have decided to establish an area cooperation - a partnership model that can present interesting learning aspects for Northeast Fryslân.
- ***Kenniswerkplaats - Lauwersmeer branch location***

A broad spectrum approach to the Lauwersmeer area is one of the priority projects in the Agenda Network Northeast. The Northeast Fryslân area serves as an administrative need for a strong movement towards establishing a branch location of *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân in the Lauwersmeer area. A working group of ten lecturers from VHL, Stenden University, NHL and Hanze Hogeschool<sup>14</sup> are preparing a specific knowledge agenda for the Wadden Region, in cooperation with the Wadden Academy, in involving not only the higher vocational education programmes in the north, but indirectly also multiple universities and other knowledge institutions such as Wetsus, the Netherlands Institute for Ecology, the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, and the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute. Together, they're working on a large-scale research plan for which engaging with the relevant projects in the Agenda Network Northeast would appear to be an obvious choice.

■ **KIGO project "Doing business naturally"**

Each year, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation provides funding through the KIGO ('Expertise Dissemination and Innovation in Green Education' Scheme) to support green educational institutions in creating and implementing a joint innovation agenda. In January, AOC Friesland (as secretary) produced a KIGO project request built on innovation in enterprise in the regions of Northeast Fryslân, Southwest Fryslân, the western part of the province of Groningen (Westerkwartier) and the peat districts (Veenkoloniën). In it, an alliance of knowledge institutions, entrepreneurs, government bodies and the public will address the question of what it means to earn money responsibly in a manner that does justice to nature, landscape and the countryside. The decision on the request will be made in late spring.

**International**

As lead partner on the EU's Vital Rural Area project, NOFA built up a significant network in the North Sea area. The Vital Rural Area project collaborates with the EU project MP4 ('Making Places Profitable'). Emmen is a participant in this project. Within both projects, Emmen and Northeast Fryslân have expressed the intention to work together in a pilot project. The goal behind this cooperation is making the knowledge leap from 'Place Making' to 'Place Keeping.' Other efforts in this area include the preparations for a cross-border cooperation project between Dutch and German partners intended to result in a joint programme for Place Keeping. If these efforts should fail to lead to the implementation of a project, then a similar project will be launched in Feanwâlden, potentially in a different cooperative form.

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<sup>14</sup> Martin Baptist (Marine Ecosystems-Van Hall); Martin Pastoors (Marine Policy-Van Hall); Elena Cavagnaro (Service Studies-Stenden); Willem Foorhuis (Regional Transition-van Hall); Siemen Veenstra (Water management-NHL); Wierd Koops (Disaster prevention-NHL); Piet van Elswijk (Economy in the human dimension-Stenden); Hans Revier (Marine Wetlands Studies-Stenden/Hanzehogeschool); Ton van der Maarel (Spatial Transformation-Hanzehogeschool); Albert Postma (Scenario development Tourism-Stenden); Jos Bosman (Spatial Transformation-Hanzehogeschool); Ineke Delies (Sustainable Innovation in the Regional Knowledge Economy-Stenden); Jan Waalkens (Entrepreneurship-Stenden); Frank van Genne (Property-Hanzehogeschool)

## Regional agenda, knowledge questions and knowledge agenda



The foundation for *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân consists of the socio-economic master plan (SEMP) and the Agenda Network Northeast. The SEMP sets out the development strategy for Northeast Fryslân, which is then further refined in the Agenda Network Northeast into individual programme lines and the project selection<sup>15</sup>.

Experience shows that the order is important: first, a regional agenda, and the regional knowledge questions based thereon, and then a knowledge agenda, which can only be produced in any detail on that basis. (see also the figure on page 9).

### The regional knowledge agenda

#### What questions do the partners have?

##### Supra-regional questions

As in essentially all *Kenniswerkplaats*s, in Northeast Fryslân there are a number of questions to be answered concerning the partnership in the regional context. These are questions like:

- How do we optimise the area-wide partnership?
- How do we ensure that this partnership is independent of temporary subsidies?
- How do the parties organise their internal processes to allow for genuine cooperation?
- How do we coach this process?
- How do we provide for adequate project management?
- How do we communicate and make optimum use of the available communications channels?
- How do we engage with the supra-regional, national and international agendas?
- How do we build a system around lifelong learning?

These questions are more or less area-independent, and can therefore best be answered on the level of the Northern Netherlands.

##### Regional knowledge questions

There are, however, also area-specific questions that arise from the specific area assignments. In the SEMP and the Agenda Network Northeast, the parties in Northeast Fryslân have identified these area tasks and subdivided them into three themes:

- Space and Infrastructure
- Economy, Recreation and Tourism
- Liveable/social

<sup>15</sup> Please refer for the SEMP and Agenda Network Northeast to part 2 'Towards a regional knowledge agenda).

The preliminary list of knowledge questions is provided in appendix 5. Updating this list against the background of the national top sector policy (see next section) and completing this list are among the first actions to take. The work plan includes these (see page 73 ) as a first move towards a shared perspective on the regional partners and knowledge institutions.

The knowledge agenda is the most important, leading foundation for the partnership between the stakeholders. This agenda is drafted annually by the steering group for *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân. At present, there is still no knowledge agenda for the Northeast Fryslân region in hand, so the preparation, elaboration and adoption of this agenda are therefore of the highest priority. But this is only possible if the partnership within the region and the link with education and research are organised effectively. This means that this presents two action lines to be taken up in parallel as from the beginning of 2012.

## **Key focus areas from national government policy and the link with regional themes**

### **Top sectors and HCA**

In the knowledge agenda, the ministry's key focus areas must be highlighted. This refers to the combined efforts on top sector policy and the Human Capital Agenda (HCA). According to national government policy, wherever possible and useful, the partnership between education and research, regional and supra-regional business and governmental bodies always be correlated to the top sectors. The regions expect an HCA to be drafted against the background of the top sectors. This type of HCA serves two purposes:

1. improving the connection (qualitative and quantitative) between education and enterprise in the top sectors, and
2. increasing the region's appeal to employees by improving the professional prospects

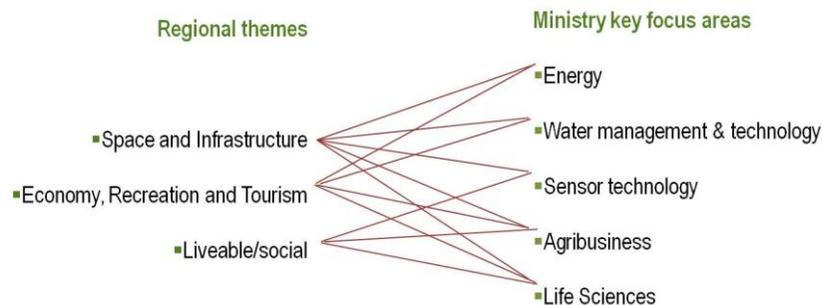
The regions play an important role in the implementation of the top sector policy, in part by drafting innovation contracts and the corresponding HCA. The following knowledge clusters are relevant to the North:

- Energy
- Water management & technology
- Sensor technology
- Agribusiness
- Life Sciences (Healthy Ageing)

### **Connection with regional themes**

The five northern top sectors each contribute, both individually and in their interconnection, to the achievement of the social agenda in terms of sustainable spatial-economic development of the Northern Netherlands. The place where innovation happens is at the interfaces of the sectors. It is, of course, at the level of the region where so much cross-pollination takes place between businesses or between government bodies, educational and research institutions. A player that must not be forgotten in this process is the public. The public takes an increasingly critical view about issues such as the pro-

duction of energy and food, animal welfare and the use of pesticides; likewise, the interest in issues of health and welfare is on the rise. The public have a great deal of knowledge, but can also frustrate developments considered necessary. A shared regional innovation agenda therefore has to involve all players, by building local and regional COILs. This is specifically identified as the ultimate goal of *Kenniswerkplaats*.



The Agenda Network Northeast identifies three theme lines:

- Space and Infrastructure
- Economy, Recreation and Tourism
- Liveable/social

While the top sectors are not yet clearly identifiable in these, there are connections to be drawn. The figure shows that each regional theme is linked to at least two of the northern key focus area clusters.

### Urgency

The Agenda Network Northeast should be reviewed against the top sectors and relabelled as soon as possible. This is one of the most urgent steps that needs to be taken for definitively compiling a regional knowledge agenda. If desired, a consideration may be made on a case-by-case basis of which key focus area should prevail and which, if any, should not be considered a point of attention in the regional knowledge agenda. This creates relevance within *Kenniswerkplaats* North-east Fryslân for the purposes of the implementation of the national government policy, while leaving sufficient freedom to deal with the regional themes appropriately and, at the same time, satisfying national government policy.



## Explanation

### Regional Steering Group

Strategic alliance; informs and advises the Regional Management and the Consortium of Knowledge Institutions, and bears end responsibility. Composed of one representative (each) from:

- Provincial authority (chairman, preferably a member of provincial executive)
- Municipal authority (rotates among shareholder municipalities)
- Educational authority (rotates among shareholder educational institutions)
- Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation
- Ideally, a representative from the business sector

### Regional steering group

Direct control of *Kenniswaerplaats* Northeast Fryslân, informs and advises the Regional Management and the Consortium of Knowledge Institutions. Composed of

- Regional coordinator (→ regional expert, connector, accepted by the region, position may rotate among shareholder government bodies in the region)
- Educational administration (one representative for all knowledge institutions, rotating among stakeholder knowledge institutions)
- Representative of the Regional Transition Programme
- Manager of *Kenniswaerplaats* Northeast Fryslân

### *Kenniswaerplaats* Northeast Fryslân

The heart of *Kenniswaerplaats*; directs the project teams and provides knowledge management and communication.

Composed of:

- *Kenniswaerplaats* Manager
- Transition manager
- One or more *Kenniswaerplaats* employees
- May be supported by regional/national development and support group.

### Transition manager

This is a new position within *Kenniswaerplaats*. So far, this role has been filled on an ad hoc basis by the Van Hall Larenstein lecturer in Regional Transition - as a 'side job' without any provision for doing so. But this position must be structurally budgeted and filled, because the knowledge and change management is not something that can be done 'on the side.' At its core, this work is the true essence of what *Kenniswaerplaats* is about.

This is being tested for the first time in *Kenniswaerplaats* Northeast Fryslân. Whoever fills this position must be a free player who can move between all other players. The primary task is knowledge and transition management. He/she observes the processes, both between the players within the organisational chart and within the projects, draws conclusions, and promotes and addresses changes, new attitudes, new competences and new knowledge - a function vital to the success of the innovative power of *Kenniswaerplaats*.

There are a number of strict requirements for this position:

- Takes the positions and interests of other parties into account;
- Identifies trends and options
- Acts based on a keen insight into complex social, economic and political developments
- Properly assesses the dynamics and uses the results for the on-going process
- Is open to and plays off frictions, questions and needs of others (internal and external), and offers room for unconventional options and proposals; approaches the right people and parties
- Identifies differences in perspective, and resolves substantive differences in the interests of the real goal; provides impulses (external, internal) to change processes by entering into strategic discussions and clarifying underlying conceptions.
- Responds proactively to opportunities
- Develops an implementation strategy to effect changes (both bottom-up and top-down)
- Is capable of motivating people, based on an inspiring vision, to achieve innovations and/or fundamental changes.

### Project teams

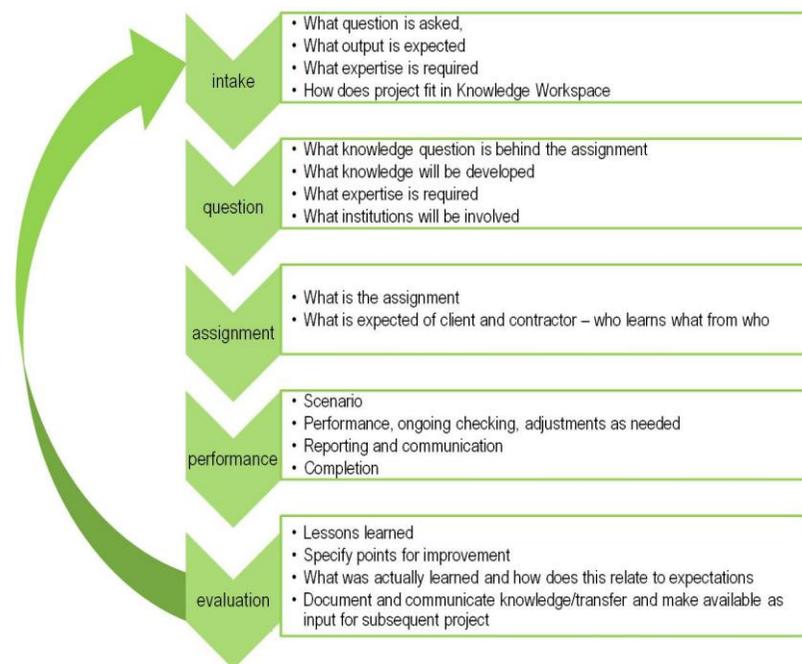
A team per project; team leaders/project leaders inform *Kenniswerkplaats* manager. At the sub-project level, this can be a student, but every project also definitely needs a project leader from the region or educational sector.

On each project, a process of intake, definition of the question(s), description of assignment, drafting contract, supervision of performance, supervision of handover, communication of results, evaluation and feedback into new projects must be followed, under the direction and with the cooperation of *Kenniswerkplaats* manager (see image at right).

### Regional management annex Regional Implementation Programme

Advises and informs the Regional Steering Group and the Regional Steering Committee. Composed of

- Administrative regional representatives of the big 5
- Managing director/secretary from one of the participating municipalities (rotating)
- Regional coordinator → designated by the region as representative of the region, and as such is the main contact point for and by the region; consequently, this position is the link between *Kenniswerkplaats* and the region. Responsible on the one hand for the implementation of *Kenniswerkplaats* concept in the region, and on the other for the region's input into *Kenniswerkplaats*. This position may rotate between the regional parties.



### *Consortium of Knowledge Institutions*

Serves as counterpart for the Regional Management, and advises and informs the Regional Steering Group and the Regional Steering Committee. Composed of:

- Representatives (generally administrative) of the shareholder educational and research institutions
- Educational and research coordinators from the knowledge institutions The coordinators serve as the main contact point for the institutions they represent, making them the link between *Kenniskerkplaats* and knowledge institutions. For every knowledge institution, a representative is delegated responsibility for the implementation of the workspace concept within his/her organisation. This requires not only a mandate, but the requisite amount of discretionary authorisation from the relevant management, because this is a demanding and difficult task. In many cases, the first person to be put forward is a member of the teaching staff who still has some space available. But this cannot be the argument, because the position actually requires the most enthusiastic teachers or team leaders; and in practice, these will generally be the ones who have already taken on all they can and then some. This means that when a knowledge institution expresses the intention to participate, they have to free up the right people internally, so they actually have the time to devote themselves to this in full.

NB: The job descriptions for *Kenniskerkplaats* manager, the region manager, the Education and Research Coordinators and the transition manager can be found on the table in *Appendix 1: Kenniskerkplaats Northeast Fryslân*.

## Quality assurance

Once the regional and educational parties have agreed, and *Kenniskerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân has been launched, how do we ensure that the partnership is fruitful and sustainable? How do we ensure on-going excellence in the processes and projects? This is something difficult to set out in a few easy sentences or a check-list. Going into this discussion, we will have to agree to restrict ourselves to formulating preconditions and, along the way, investigating whether these are the right ones and if others can or should be added.

### *Preconditions*

The first condition is thinking in terms of processes rather than in projects. An assignment will often consist of multiple sub-questions, which translate into multiple sub-projects, each requiring a project team consisting of teaching staff from the various knowledge institutions involved over the term of the project, and committing to further efforts. The result is a project plan composed of sub-projects. These sub-projects are evaluated on a rolling basis, and the project plan is adjusted accordingly as needed. This approach prevents a situation in which an assignment is formulated, a group of students is then put on it, they deliver their product and then the educational sector pulls out.

In this process, *Kenniskerkplaats* Manager plays an important role. The drafting of the project plan (who, in which programmes, will do what?) must become a co-production between the project leader for the region, the project leader for the educational stakeholders and *Kenniskerkplaats* manager. Of course, this type of contiguous process structure must be established not only *within*, but *between* projects.

With this in mind, the following preconditions also apply:

- A question originates from the region (region initiative)
- *Kenniskerkplaats* Manager provide support in the definition of the question
- *Kenniskerkplaats* does not itself implement the project, but helps organise and facilitate
- The transition manager provides the knowledge and transition management (with backup by *Kenniskerkplaats* Manager)
- Reporting is solid, i.e., both projects and knowledge management are appropriately documented
- The region always designates a project leader on any project. For that project, the designated person will be the contact person for *Kenniskerkplaats* Manager so that the manager can define and monitor all lines for the question that the region has presented.
- *Kenniskerkplaats* Manager keeps sight of the big picture and is kept abreast of the developments at all times.
- The project starts, the project leader and *Kenniskerkplaats* Manager ensure that a number of meetings are convened, depending on the duration of the project, with a minimum of three: a kick-off meeting, an interim evaluation and a final meeting/presentation. *Kenniskerkplaats* Manager attends all meetings.
- The parties working in the project will produce brief weekly reports and a larger report monthly. The project participants are asked to produce a longer report of their activities on a monthly basis (a written report, ideally with graphic material).
- The parties are obliged to transfer the results to the subsequent party as needed.

## Work Plan 2012

After the appointment of *Kenniswerkplaats* Manager (February), work towards the full operationalisation of *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân can proceed. All activities described below fall under the direct responsibility of *Kenniswerkplaats* Manager. Because *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân has yet to produce its knowledge agenda and the parties have not yet signed the regional contract, this list is limited to the activities for the first half year. As soon as both documents are available, a business plan for the longer term will be written based on the knowledge agenda, and in it the work plan for the coming year will be detailed.

| Description   | Involved  | Result   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><i>Knowledge agenda:</i><br/>Further elaboration of the knowledge questions in the theme groups and definition of questions with project responsibilities</p> <p><u>URGENT: establish a clear link between the theme lines in Northeast Fryslân and the key focus areas from the top sector policy.</u></p> <p>In detail, this means:<br/>Contacting C. Kwakernaak</p> <p>Other educational institutions:<br/>Contacting participants in the first exploration of the knowledge agenda from within the educational institutions:<br/>Are these the right people? Are they in the right place within their institutions? Do they have a perspective on the various different programmes? Are they mandated?</p> <p>In parallel:<br/>Is there administrative embedding within the knowledge institutions? If not: take appropriate steps</p> | <p>C. Kwakernaak</p> <p>Participants in the first survey</p> <p>Concerning supervisors and administrators in educational institutions</p> | <p>Task delegation and commitment list</p> <p>Educational field mapped out</p> <p>Position of Knowledge Institutions in <i>Kenniswerkplaats</i> Northeast Fryslân is clear. Contact persons/education coordinators are identified; <i>Kenniswerkplaats</i> firmly embedded in the knowledge institution.</p> |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>In parallel:<br/>Communication on start of <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> Northeast Fryslân.</p>  |  | <p>Press release, update website, other deliverables</p>   |
| <p>In parallel: Identify and contact relevant players in the region</p>   | <p>Concerning supervisors and administrators in educational institutions</p> | <p>Identify regional forces (government bodies and social parties, political and administrative, in terms of positions, in terms of persons)</p> |
| <p>In parallel: contact project leaders in the region and make appointments</p>   | <p>Project leaders in municipalities and province</p>                        | <p>Shape of regional working plan → Support base in the region</p>   |
| <p>For a quick start, catalogue the projects for which there is the biggest impetus and which can be taken up by the knowledge institutions immediately, preferably under the umbrella of the major project "Place Keeping."</p>  | <p>Programme coordinators, teaching staff</p>                                | <p>Knowledge institutions and their position in <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> Northeast Fryslân operationalised</p>                                    |
| <p>Establish connection with <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> branch location Lauwersmeer; oversee research plan from Northeast Fryslân to embed in Knowledge Agenda for <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> Northeast Fryslân.</p>  | <p>Shareholder lecturers/ Entry via S. Verroen</p>                           | <p>The Lauwersmeer research plan connected with the Northeast Fryslân knowledge agenda.</p>  |
| <p>Capitalise on project budgets and input from educational sector</p>  | <p>Programme coordinators, teaching staff</p>                                | <p>Knowledge agenda is complete, specific for the short term, less detailed for the long term</p>  |
| <p><i>Place Keeping</i><br/>Set-up of action plan for a priority follow-up process; this is also a component of the total follow-up financing package from <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> Northeast Fryslân.<br/>This also includes setting up the structures for the scheduled KIGO project ('Doing business the natural way').</p> | <p>Region, WUR and educational institutions</p>                              | <p>Place Keeping project action plan complete</p>  |
| <p>Draft research plan</p>  | <p>Region, WUR and educational institutions</p>                              |  |
| <p>Engaging with process in Emmen</p>   | <p>Shareholders in Northeast Fryslân and Emmen.</p>                          |  |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Engaging with cross-border INTERREG process</p> <p>As quickly as possible, start implementation of one or more projects, depending on the outcome of the results above</p> <p>Map out financing sources (KIGO/RAAK) and label projects; here, assign a task to the regional partners as well</p> | <p>Shareholders in North-east Fryslân and EDR area.</p> <p>All shareholders</p> <p>Region, WUR and educational institutions</p> | <p>Follow-up process 'Place Keeping' in the picture</p> <p><i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> Northeast Fryslân is <i>DWAANDE</i> → visibility</p> <p>Budgets from education, region and supplemental sources in the picture</p> |
| <p>1st <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> Northeast Fryslân conference:<br/>Presentation of knowledge agenda and signing regional contract</p>   | <p>All shareholders</p>   | <p>Connection between region and knowledge institutions of Northeast Fryslân in multi-year, pre-programmed partnership.</p>   |

## Knowledge management and communication

From *Kennswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, in addition to the projects, attention and time will have to be set aside for knowledge management and communications. This is required to highlight the concept of *Kennswerkplaats* for both educational institutions and government bodies and the business sector. Exchanges with other knowledge workstations in the country are also covered here. But this is not all. Just as important as the external communications is the communication between the regional players and parties. This task is shared between *Kennswerkplaats* Manager, the transition manager, the region manager and the education & research coordinators. *Kennswerkplaats* manager has end responsibility.

In *Kennswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, there are two knowledge transfer tracks that each feed and enrich each other:

- Communication on the knowledge developed within *Kennswerkplaats* projects
- Communication relating to the concept and methodology of *Kennswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, both within the shareholders and bodies as well as externally.

For both tracks, the knowledge transfer runs both internally (with and between the shareholders and bodies) and externally (parties outside the region).

From the projects, action learning will produce various results and innovative knowledge and methods. But the results will also lead to insights into change management, new competencies and new attitudes. Within the action plans for the sub-projects, the communication component will always be included. But likewise, looking across the projects, *Kennswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân has the object of actively and practically communicating the new and existing knowledge, circulating it and further evolving in education, science, policy and society.

To this end, a variety of activities have been pursued, including

- workshops, seminars, presentations, publications, and
- extensive information connection through the specific site [kennswerkplaatsnoordoostfryslan.nl](http://kennswerkplaatsnoordoostfryslan.nl) and the general *Kennswerkplaats* portal [www.kennswerkplaats.eu](http://www.kennswerkplaats.eu), on which the regional *Kennswerkplaats*s will also each have their own showcase. For *Kennswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân, this is <http://kennswerkplaats.eu/noordoost-friesland>.

## The budget

Speaking broadly, the costs can be broken down into:

1. Project costs following from the Knowledge Agenda
2. The projects have an independent project budget setting out the costs and contributions of the knowledge institutions and the region. During the monetisation of a project, specific arrangements on this are made by the client and the contractor(s). Contribution of teaching staff and clients are also seen as costs and revenues.
3. Organisational costs for *Kenniswerkplaats* on an annual basis  
*Kenniswerkplaats* has three different financing lines, namely:
  - the region
  - education
  - national (Ministry) and EU programmes

| Costs per annum                              |                | Funding per annum            |                |
|--|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Kenniswerkplaats</i> management           | 75,000         |                              |                |
| Transition management                        | 20,000         |                              |                |
| Regional coordination                        | 20,000         | Region                       | 125,000        |
| Educational coordinates                      | 25,000         |                              |                |
| Support (secretary, administration)          | 20,000         |                              |                |
| Location costs                               | 20,000         | RT programme                 | 50,000         |
| Communications, publications, PR and website | 35,000         |                              |                |
| Representation costs                         | 10,000         |                              |                |
| Subtotal, excluding VAT                      | 225,000        | Green knowledge institutions | 50,000         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>225,000</b> | <b>Total</b>                 | <b>225,000</b> |

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- [www.dwaande.nl](http://www.dwaande.nl)
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- [www.vitalruralarea.eu](http://www.vitalruralarea.eu)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: *Kenniswerkplaats* Northeast Fryslân --Task description

This list is intended to define the tasks of the four players in the team to a certain extent, but it is not a blueprint. In practice, many aspects will have to be dealt with in consultation with the team.

| Tasks  | For whom                      |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <b><i>Kenniswerkplaats</i> manager</b>   |                               |
| Provide steering group with information and reporting                          | Steering Group                |
| National contact point   | National                      |
| Programme contact point  | National                      |
| Reporting to clients   | National, educational         |
| Support educational programme coordinators and maintain contacts (green, grey) | Educational                   |
| Matchmaking between the big 5 so an issue gets taken up                        | Educational, region           |
| Directing workspace management team  | Team                          |
| Incorporate research into progress of <i>Kenniswerkplaats</i>                  | National, educational         |
| Incorporate research in progress and project efforts                           | National, educational         |
| Engage external experts  | Educational, region           |
| Support teaching staff with new concept (Regional Learning)                    | Educational                   |
| Support teaching staff on projects   | Educational                   |
| Utilise media (incl. social media)   | National, region, educational |
| Write business plan and revise annually  | National, region, educa-      |

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
|   | tional                        |
| Complete knowledge agenda   | Region, educational           |
| Update knowledge agenda (hours, effort and financing)   | Region, educational           |
| General contact person, <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i>   | National, region, educational |
| Organise conferences, study days, regional days   | National, educational, region |
| Prepare presentations and workshops   | National, educational, region |
| Regional contract annually, educational and region - with region manager and educational programme coordinators | National, educational, region |
| <b>Region manager</b>   |                               |
| Regional contract annually, regional side, with <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> manager                                 | Region                        |
| Create and maintain support among government administrators and officials                                       | Region                        |
| Create and maintain support among business sector and social organisations                                      | Region                        |
| Set up projects with regional actors (officials, entrepreneurs, social organisations)                           | Region                        |
| Initial question definition   | Region                        |
| Appoint a project leader for each approved project  | Region                        |
| Complete regional agenda  | Region                        |
| Organise and manage demand-side financing   | Region                        |
| Stay on top of regional and national developments, and adapt wherever possible and necessary                    | Region                        |
| <b>Educational programme coordinators</b>   |                               |
| Organise and manage education-side financing  | Educational                   |
| Regional contract annually, education side, with <i>Kenniskerkplaats</i> manager                                | Educational                   |
| Create and maintain support among educational administrators, teaching staff, students, etc.                    | Educational                   |

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Initial question interpretation and dialogue with knowledge institutions                                  | Educational                         |
| Appoint responsible teacher(s) for each approved project  | Educational                         |
| Complete educational agenda   | Educational                         |
| Stay on top of regional and national developments in education, and adapt wherever possible and necessary | Educational                         |
| <b>Transition manager</b>   |                                     |
| Observe projects  | National, educational, region       |
| Collect knowledge from projects, secure and disseminate   | Team, region, national, educational |
| Initiate and stimulate Regional Learning  | National, educational, region       |
| Knowledge management  | National, educational, region       |
| Transition management   | National, educational, region       |
| Produce knowledge documents   | National, educational, region       |

## Appendix 2: Classification of educational assignments

Participation of students in answering knowledge questions is a foundational element in *Kenniskerkplaats*. So far, the list of knowledge questions has limited itself to the questions coming from the regional government bodies based on the socio-economic master plan. But the business sector and civil society can also come to *Kenniskerkplaats* with questions.

These will be questions of all types and requests for support of varying depth and scope. We can break them down roughly as the following types:

1. Short-term question/assignment, for one or two students.  
Support for a relatively brief period in order to carry out a relatively simple assignment. This is an assignment of limited scope for one or, at the most, two students, to be carried out in a relatively short time frame.
2. Short-term question/assignment, for multiple students simultaneously.  
These are requests to do something very specific requiring multiple persons. An example would be taking a survey among a large number of respondents.
3. Medium-term question/assignment, for one or two students.  
A relatively discrete assignment that can be carried out in the specified period. An example would be developing and/or setting up something simple.
4. Medium-term question/assignment, for multiple students.  
A relatively discrete assignment that would benefit from the engagement of multiple people simultaneously. In specific cases, that would also include an assignment to be carried out by a year group.
5. Long-term question/assignment (year)  
This would often be a graduating assignment with one of the big five. But this level might also involve successive groups of students.
6. Question/assignment running over multiple years.  
The results of one student or group of student serve as the potential starting point for the next student or group of students. This pertains primarily to theme-based assignments that are in the pursuit of a specific development or have such a development inherent in them. It refers to both knowledge and effort. This would be projects on issues such as sustainability or demographic and/or administrative issues.

But any project, whether short, simple assignment or complex, multi-year programme, is always about more than a group of students doing research. It must be kept in mind that the goal of *Kenniskerkplaats* is to increase the innovative capacity of the region, i.e., to promote the process of Regional Learning and to keep it progressing. The structural involvement in the learning and working community of as many of the big 5 as possible, deliberate attention to the relationships and creating an open learning and working culture are important aspects of all types of research.