

Performance evaluation of Sustainable Regional Development plans

*A comparison between the Utrecht region and the Västra
Götaland region*

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Foreword

This study is the final research project of the author for the master program Sustainable Development at the Utrecht University. The author did an internship at the Utrecht Province during this research project and wants to thank the Province for this opportunity. Special thanks go out to the supervisor at the Province, Harm van den Heiligenberg, for his diligent support and guidance. This final research project has partly been executed at the Västra Götaland Region in Sweden. The author wants to thank the Västra Götaland Region for their willingness to participate in the research. Special thanks go out to the contact person at the Västra Götaland Region, Mats Graner, for all his help during the research project and hospitality during the authors stay in Göteborg. Moreover, the author wants to thank all respondents in both regions for their time and valuable information. Furthermore, the author wants to thank his supervisor at the Utrecht University, prof. dr. Peter Driessen, for his insights and guidance along the process.

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Summary

The general picture that can be drawn from the empirical studies in the SRD literature is that the implementation of SRD plans is highly challenging and that there are more failures than successes. These studies conclude that SD principles are integrated into SRD plans, but are generally ignored during the implementation phase. These studies took a *conformance approach* to evaluate plan implementation and based their conclusions on the physical impacts of the SRD plan. There exists another approach to evaluate plan implementation, the *performance approach*, which focusses on the usefulness of the plan in decision-making processes. However, little research has been done evaluating the implementation of plans by means of the performance approach. Furthermore, little research has been done in the planning-evaluation literature on factors influencing plan implementation. Factors have been identified, but observers note the continued failure to achieve successful plan implementation and the need for more research.

Performance evaluation of two regions

This study aims to generate descriptive, evaluative, and explanatory knowledge. It seeks to identify and examine influencing factors that obstruct or contribute to the performance of a SRD plan. This will be done by examining the SRD plans of the Utrecht region in The Netherlands and the Västera Götaland region in Sweden and evaluating their performance through a *performance approach*. The main research objects in this study are the SRD plans and specifically several development foci within the plans. Performance is measured and determined by means of three gradual stages; acquaintance, consideration and consent. Furthermore, a distinction is made between the internal and external performance. Expert face-to-face interviews have been held to evaluate the SRD plans and to identify and examine the influencing factors.

Two main elements of this study

This study consists of two main elements. The first main element is to learn if the application of the *performance approach* to evaluate SRD plan implementation will lead to a different view on SRD plan implementation. The second main element is the identification and measurement of influencing factors to the performance of the SRD plans.

Main research question

Which influencing factors obstruct or contribute to the performance of the SRD plans for two regions in Western Europe?

Results of the study

Performance of the SRD plans

It proved that the SRD plans of both regions both perform internally and externally. The internal performance of the two development foci of Utrecht is determined in the second stage (*consideration*), while the internal performance of Götaland is determined in the highest stage (*consent*). With regards to the external performance, it proved not to be possible to determine an overall external stage of performance. In both regions, the external performance is determined in the lowest stage of performance (*acquaintance*) and in the highest stage of performance (*consent*). However, the external performance in Utrecht tends more towards the stage of *acquaintance*, while in Götaland, it tends more towards *consent*.

Influencing factors to the internal performance

It proved in both cases that especially the contextual factors that are of influence during the development phase are of utmost importance to the performance. The following contextual have been identified: *'internal*

support for the development of the SRD plan, *governing approach of the RGB*, *existence of policy domain specific steering documents*, *political situation during development*, *year establishment region*, *plan is revision of previous Regional Development Plan*, *division political responsibility for development of the SRD plan*, *executing responsibility for development of the SRD plan*, and *clarity about position of SRD plan in hierarchical planning*. Furthermore, it proved that several factors that are of influence during the implementation phase are of important influence to the performance as well. These are: *process of a collaboratively developed plan*, *sound parliamentary basis*, *quality of the plan*, *sound monitoring*, *supporting political leadership*, and *supporting administrative executives*. Two factors are identified as a bit important contributing factors: *clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities* and *training and awareness building for the plan*.

Influencing factors to the external performance

It proved in both cases that the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the RGB are important influencing factors to the performance. The following contextual factors relating to the RGB have been identified as important influencing factors; *governing approach*, *behaviour of the RGB in line with the SRD plan*, *connection with EU funding* and *relational history between RGB and organization*. The following pre-listed factors have been identified as important influencing factors: *process of collaboratively developed plan*, *supporting political leadership*, *supporting administrative leadership*. Three pre-listed factors are identified as very important obstructing factors in Utrecht but there is no consensus regarding their level of importance in Götaland, *clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities*, *adequate networking and consensus building during implementation*, and *adequate regulatory system*. Two pre-listed factors are identified as very important contributing factors in Götaland, while there is no consensus in Utrecht regarding their level of importance, *quality of the plan* and *committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to SD*. There is no consensus in both regions regarding the influence of the factor *adequate resource support*. Furthermore, the case of Götaland has proven that no matter how positive the aforementioned factors are, there will always be organisations that perform far below optimal because of their organisational characteristics. The organizations that perform far below optimal in Götaland are not able to use the SRD plan to a large extent due to the contextual factors relating to their organisational characteristics: *internal organization*, *governed by the national governmental level*, *type of organization*, and *strategic spatial outlook of the organization*. The case of Utrecht on the other hand, has shown that an organization is able to perform optimal due to their organizational characteristics, even though the majority of the pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the RGB are indicated as negative. For both organizations, the aforementioned pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the RGB are not of importance to them. The contextual factors relating to their organizational characteristics are the most important influencing factors for those organizations.

Scientific contribution

This study contributes to the scientific literature as follows. First, a framework for evaluating the performance of SRD plan has been developed. Second, the performance based evaluation has shown a different and more nuanced picture with regards to SRD plan implementation as compared to previous empirical studies that took a conformance approach. Third, the identification and examination of influencing factors to the performance that were derived from previous studies. Fourth, the identification of influencing factors that were not pre-listed. Fifth, the study has shown that the internal and external processes of SRD plan implementation are two different processes, that the stage of performance differs between the internal and external implementation, and that similar and different factors are of influence to the internal and external performance.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Implementation of Sustainable Development at the regional level

The concept of Sustainable Development (SD)¹ was introduced with the World Conservation Strategy in 1980 (Clement, 2005), and has since gained broad recognition by the international public as a result of the Brundtland report (1987) and the Rio summit of the United Nations (1992) (Lengauer, 2007). Since its introduction, the concept of SD has received a considerable amount of attention and projects widely varying in character have been promoted in its name (Hajer, 1995: in Clement, 2005). One of the most widely discussed points from the beginning, resulting in a multitude of viewpoints, is how SD best can be implemented and translated into concrete action (Lengauer, 2007). Despite these multitude of viewpoints, there is widespread agreement among academics, policy makers and practitioners of SD on two points regarding its implementation (Evans et al., 2006). First, interorganizational cooperation is regarded as a vital mechanism to implement SD (Sharma and Kearins, 2011), which was emphasized as well in the first action plan, called Agenda 21, devised at the Rio summit in 1992: “bringing together key social actors for joint co-operative efforts on vital issues of environment and development” (Lafferty 1997, p. 166). It is strongly recommended that organizations in the policy arena should cooperate with each other and engage with community stakeholders in a non-hierarchical and democratic manner to institutionalize SD (Sharma and Kearins, 2011). This approach for steering is commonly referred to as governance². Second, there is widespread agreement that successful implementation of SD requires strategies and solutions to be designed on the spatial scales where the problems have their roots (Polk, 2011A, Sedlacek and Gaube 2002). Academics, policy makers, and practitioners of SD recognize that many global problems have their roots in national, regional and local activities (Sedlacek and Gaube, 2002). Consequently, these are the levels at which the implementation of SD needs to take place (Ibid.). The local and regional level have always been regarded as the most suitable for translating and implementing SD into concrete actions, because they possess characteristics which are beneficial for cooperative strategies (Ibid.)³. Of these two scales, the regional is preferred above the local (Clement, 2005). The relative scale and responsibilities of the regions are seen as beneficial for the strategic implementation of SD, given their proximity to actual problems and the relevant governmental tasks typically assigned to regional administrative levels (Hirschi, 2010). Moreover, regions are regarded as the intermediary between national and local scales, and sufficient to make connections across wider areas (Ibid.). The role of regions for the implementation of SD has been recognized by the European Union as well. Since 1997, it is one of the core topics relevant for regional policy, which is stated in European Treaty (1997), followed by the Gothenburg strategy (2001) (Setlacek and Gaube, 2009).

Implementation of SD at the regional level

Now, more than three decades after the introduction of the concept of SD, empirical studies have identified that there is a growing consensus at the regional level that SD is becoming an essential criterion in future regional development, and that more regions are actually integrating SD principles into its regional development practices (Polk 2011A, Setlacek and Gaube 2009, Clement, 2005). These studies identified that SD principles are increasingly incorporated in the programs and plans, and have shown a gradual improvement in the form of strategic commitments and declarations of SD principles (Hirschi, 2008, Storbjork 2008, Flynn et al. 2003, Berger, 2003, Baxhtler et al. 2001, Valve 2000). This led scholars to the conclusion that SD is becoming the most popular approach for regional development and will replace the more unilateral economic and environmental approaches that were dominant during the last decades⁴ (Haughton 2004 and Sedlacek and Gaube 2009). The approach where SD principles are being integrated in the regional development practices is

¹ See Annex 1.1 for an elaborate description of the concept of SD

² See Annex 1.2 for an elaborate description of the concept of governance

³ See Annex 1.3 for a description of the characteristics of a region

⁴ See annex 1.4 for an elaborate description of regional development and the dominant approaches during the last century

referred to by academics, policy makers, and practitioners as Sustainable Regional Development (SRD). It is a horizontal perspective which is systematically integrated in programming, planning, and concrete development projects at the regional level (Storbjork, 2008). It includes the activities and instruments that promote SD within regional initiatives, from new forms of partnership and stakeholder involvement to innovative planning and integration methodologies (Clement, 2005). SRD aims to develop strategies that balance economic, social and environmental factors (Lengauer, 2007) to be, in the end, both environmentally, socially and economically sound as a region (Storbjork, 2008).

The integration of SD principles in regional development practices sounds promising in their pursuit of becoming environmentally, socially and economically sound as a region. However, several scholars examined empirically until which extent sustainable statements and declarations are transformed into practical actions, and generally come to the conclusion that this is widely lacking and that SD principles are often, at best, only partially incorporated (Storbjork 2008, Berger 2003, Gibbs et al. 2002, Gibbs 2000, Murphy and Gouldson 2000). Pockets of good practice and green initiatives have been found in regions but close to no evidence of systematic implementation (Ibid.). Lengauer (2007) and Isaksson (2003) found in their studies that competition between the three dimensions of SD and not their integration prevails. In concrete applications, there were clear conflicts between the three dimensions of sustainability often resulted in the prioritization of economic goals over social and environmental ones (Isaksson, 2003). The outcomes of these studies can best be summarized by how the scholar Storbjork (2008) expressed it in the concluding remarks “SD principles are partially incorporated but progressively watered down when moving towards implementation” (Storbjork, 2008:241). These outcomes are widely acknowledged in the SRD literature. Sharma and Kearins (2011) state that all empirical studies show that the actual implementation of SD has proven to be highly challenging, and Polk (2011A) even comes, in a recent study, to the conclusion that “there are more examples in the literature that testify to the limitations and failures that attend implementing SD in practice than that confirm its success” (Polk, 2011A:481).

The Sustainable Regional Development plan

The aforementioned studies took plans as research objects in order to examine until which extent sustainable statements and declarations are transformed into practical actions (Storbjork 2008, Berger 2003, Gibbs et al. 2002, Gibbs 2000, Murphy and Gouldson 2000). These plans envision how to be both environmentally, socially, and economically sound as a region and will be referred to as the Sustainable Regional Development plan (SRD plan) from here on. A plan is the main element in the process of regional planning. Regional planning is regarded as the effort to attain the best possible spatial pattern of development (Tosun and Jenkins, 1996), and revolves around the basic question “how are activities to be distributed in space so as to meet societal objectives” (Friedman, 1963:171). A plan is generally seen as an object that guides future decisions, measures, and actions. However, SRD plans vary per region in terms of ambition, time horizon and comprehensiveness, because it is based on the regional circumstances, and preferences of the stakeholders involved (Setlacek and Gaube, 2009). Despite the variety in the plans, characteristics of a SRD plan can be described by means of a guideline that has been formulated by the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD)⁵. This guideline elaborates on five roles of a SRD plan: first, it sets a guiding vision for SD within the region; second, it provides mechanisms to ensure the vision and principles for a sustainable region are embedded in all decision making processes and that effective connections are made between policy areas; third, it ensures that common principles of SD underpin action by the different institutions involved; fourth, it explains why action is needed and how it builds on the needs of the region; fifth, it provides a basis for measuring progress and appraising policies for their impact on SD (nrg4SD, 2012). What becomes clear from the guideline of the nrg4SD, is that a SRD plan provides a common framework for action with several development foci, objectives, and policy directions and statements. It serves as a platform or guideline for how the region should be developed now and in the future and is addressed to many regional parties. Since the SRD

⁵ Nrg4SD has been established in 2002 at the World Summit of Johannesburg and has the objective to promote SD at the level of subnational governments around the globe.

plan serves as a platform or guideline for the whole region, and involves many regional parties, it is a plan that does not have the direct power to enforce the specified policy directions and statements. It is believed that interorganizational cooperation is the vital mechanism to achieve the objectives in the SRD plan, which means that it depends on the joint effort of all regional parties involved.

1.2 Two approaches to evaluate plan implementation

The authors of the aforementioned studies evaluate the implementation of the plan by measuring whether the objectives contained in the plans have been achieved. This is an object-oriented approach, which is also known as the *conformance approach*, and is the most common used method to evaluate plan implementation (Falludi, 2003). Besides this commonly used method, there exist another approach to evaluate plan implementation, the *performance approach*. This approach has been introduced in the planning-evaluation literature in the mid 90's. This branch of literature takes the evaluation of planning as their object of research and define planning evaluation as "the systematic assessment of plans, planning processes, and outcomes compared with explicit standards or indicators" (Laurian et al., 2010:741). The main difference between the two approaches lies in the perception of a plan, which in turn influences how plans are being evaluated. Below explanations of both approaches clarify the differences between the two approaches.

Conformance approach

The conformance approach is an object oriented approach where a plan is regarded as a blueprint that needs to be followed to reach an intended end-state (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). The approach assumes that plan goals and objectives translate straightforwardly into policies and methods, which are implemented to address specific problems and yield expected outcomes (Laurian et. al, 2010). The evaluation is based on how closely development decisions conform to plan goals and policies and on whether plan goals are achieved (Oliveira and Pinho, 2010B). Hence, the success of implementation is measured by the *conformance* between goals and outcomes (Laurian et. al, 2010). Therefore, it is known as the *conformance approach*.

In the mid '90s, a number of theorists⁶ began developing and advocating an approach in response to this *conformance approach* (Laurian et. al, 2010). They argued that conformance based evaluations mostly lead to the conclusion that the objectives were not met (Aardema, 2002). Sometimes it appears that intended effects are not traceable, or clouded by side effects (Ibid.). This leads to the inevitable conclusion that the plan failed more or less (Ibid.). Such evaluation outcomes are rather predictable and at the same time quite unsatisfactory (Ibid.). According to the theorists, this conformance approach does not capture all the ways in which a plan can contribute to the decision-making process; it fails to provide insight into how the strategic plan has been weighted, taken into account, and whether it has helped clarify the various choices during the decision-making process (Ibid.). In the view of these theorists, the content of the plan can also play a tangible role in the choices of the actors it addresses and appeals to (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). Therefore, they developed an approach that is based on the notion that plans do not necessarily have to produce direct impacts on the physical development process, but it is the usefulness of plans that reveals their *performance* (Oliveira and Pinho, 2010B).

Performance approach

The performance approach is a process oriented approach where a plan is not regarded as a blueprint, but as a decision framework which serves as a signpost for those involved in subsequent decisions (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). Plans can also be structuring devices to help the relevant actors know where they are heading and to guide their present and future actions (Ibid.). Therefore, a plan does not have to make a direct impact on the physical development process, but it is rather the usefulness of a plan that determines its *performance* (Laurian, 2010). Performance predominantly resides itself in the process and not in the final outcome of the plan. Therefore, the focal point of evaluation lies on the influence of the plan on the decision making process

⁶ The performance approach was introduced by Mastop and Faludi in 1997 in the article "Evaluation of strategic plans: the performance principle". After the introduction of this approach, it has been taken up by scholars in the planning evaluation literature and is an often used approach for evaluation of plan implementation.

and the behaviour of the actors to which the strategic plan is addressed (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). Performance in this approach is defined as “if and only if the plan plays a tangible role in the choices of the actors to whom it is addressed and/or to whom the plan appeals, in either case irrespective of whether or not outcomes correspond with the plan” (Mastop and Faludi, 1997:827). The performance approach is based on the notion that the policies of a plan “working through” by diffusion into the deliberations which follow their adoption (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). The phrase “working through” is translated from the Dutch phrase “nageschakelde besluitvorming”. This is a downstream process in which the strategic plan plays a tangible role in the choices and actions of the actors to whom the plan is addressed. These actors are, in other words, using the strategic plan as a decision framework or point of reference for developing new plans, projects, and policies. This process will be called ‘the process of serially connected decision making’ from here on.

While both approaches are valid and describe various aspects of planning practice, the contrast between these two approaches fuels debates about the best way to evaluate plan implementation (Oliveira and Pinho, 2010B). In order to determine which of the two approaches is most suited for the evaluation of plan implementation, the type of plan and how one perceives a plan is of importance. When applying the descriptions of both approaches to the SRD plan, it can be stated that the way in which a plan is perceived in the performance approach, corresponds well with the description of SRD plans as described earlier in section 1.1. Therefore, this study will take a performance approach to evaluate SRD plan implementation of two regions in the European Union. By taking the performance approach, implementation is regarded similar as performance from here on. The performance of a SRD plan will be determined by distinguishing three gradual stages of performance, which are acquaintance, consideration, and consent. These stages of performance will be further elaborated on in section 2.2.3 and the choice for two regions in the European Union will be further elaborated on in section 1.5.

1.3 Knowledge gap

The general picture that can be drawn from the empirical studies in the SRD literature is that the implementation of SRD plans is highly challenging and that there are more failures than successes. Even though SD principles are integrated into SRD plans, they are generally ignored during the implementation phase. The success of implementation in the few studies conducted has been judged according to the *conformance approach*. In other words, they investigate the conformance between the goals in the plans and the outcomes in the real world. However, according to Aardema (2002), such evaluation outcomes are rather predictable and at the same time quite unsatisfactory. Little research has been done evaluating the implementation of plans by taking a *performance approach*, where the success of implementation of a plan is measured by the effect it has had on the choices of the actors to which it is addressed.

Moreover, successful implementation of plans in general, is regarded as one of the primary challenges by scholars in the planning-evaluation literature, those who take evaluation of planning as their object of research. These scholars acknowledge that plan implementation is a complex process influenced by many factors (Joseph et al., 2008, Laurian et al., 2010), but the understanding of these factors is still unjustifiably weak (Berke et. al, 2006). Albert et al. (2003) stated in 2003 already that, even though several factors for successful implementation have been identified over the last years, more research on factors leading to successful plan implementation is needed (Albert et al., 2003:). However, relative little study has been done since (Joseph et al., 2008). Berke et. al (2006) tested several factors that have an influence on the implementation of local resource management plans in New Zealand. The authors identified and tested 8 factors and categorized these in four categories; plan quality, agency characteristics, applicant capacity, and context (Berke et. al, 2006)⁷. Joseph et al. (2008) tested 19 factors that have an influence on the implementation of research management plans (strategic land use) in Canada. The authors identified the factors first by executing an extensive literature review and categorized the tested factors in three categories; plan characteristics, implementation characteristics, and stakeholders’ characteristics. Despite the identification of factors in these studies, Laurian et al. (2010) stated in 2010 that plan implementation

⁷ The complete list of the influencing factors can be found in Annex 2.2.

evaluation is still underdeveloped with respect to the factors leading to successful implementation and more research is needed.

1.4 Conceptual design of the research

Research objectives

This study aims to generate descriptive, evaluative, and explanatory knowledge. It seeks to identify and examine influencing factors that obstruct or contribute to the performance of a SRD plan. This will be done by examining the SRD plans of two regions in Western Europe and evaluating their performance through a *performance approach*. Performance is measured and determined by means of three gradual stages, namely the acquaintance, consideration and consent stages. The main research objects in this study are the SRD plans of the two regions and several development foci within the SRD plans. This will be further elaborated on in section 1.6.

Main research question

Which influencing factors obstruct or contribute to the performance of the SRD plans for two regions in Western Europe?

Sub research questions

Contextual characteristics

- I. What are the contextual characteristics of the two regions?
- II. What are the similarities and differences in contextual characteristics between the two regions?

Plan characteristics

- III. What are the plan characteristics of the two regions?
- IV. What are the similarities and differences in plan characteristics between the two regions?

Implementing characteristics

- V. What are the implementing characteristics of the two regions?
- VI. What are the similarities and differences in implementing characteristics between the two regions?

Stakeholder characteristics

- VII. What are the stakeholder characteristics of the two regions?
- VIII. What are the similarities and differences in stakeholder characteristics between the two regions?

Stage of performance and influencing factors

- IX. What is the stage of performance of the SRD plan of both SRD plans?
- X. Which influencing factors obstruct or contribute to the performance of the SRD plans?
- XI. What are the similarities and differences in influencing factors to the performance of the SRD plan?
- XII. How can the similarities and differences in influencing factors to the performance of the SRD plan be explained?

Scientific relevance of the research

This study consists of two main elements. The first is to learn if the application of the *performance approach* to evaluate SRD plan implementation will lead to a different view on SRD plan implementation. The aforementioned studies in section 1.1 have taken the most common approach to evaluate plan implementation, the *conformance approach* (Falludi, 2003). The general picture that can be drawn from these studies is that the implementation of SRD plan implementation is highly challenging and that there are more failures than successes. However, according to Aardema (2002), *conformance* evaluation outcomes are rather predictable and at the same time unsatisfactory. Little research has been done in the SRD literature using the *performance approach* to evaluate SRD plans. Therefore, the outcomes of this study might shed a new light on

the success of SRD plan implementation.

The second main element of this study is the identification and measurement of influencing factors to the overall performance of the SRD plans. Little research has been done in the planning-evaluation literature on factors influencing plan implementation. Factors have been identified, but observers note the continued failure to achieve successful plan implementation, and the need for more plan implementation research. The author aims to make a contribution by identifying factors that influences the performance of SRD plan implementation.

Societal relevance of the research

It is generally acknowledged in the plan-evaluation literature that by means of evaluation of plan implementation, planners can learn from the results of past interventions and improve planning practice (Laurian et al, 2010). It identifies and explains the impacts of plans to learn from experience and inform future decisions (Ibid). This study aims to contribute to this by providing insights into the stage of performance of the SRD plans and by identifying and testing the influencing factors. When planners responsible for the SRD plans in the examined regions take into account these identified factors, they may increase the overall performance of the SRD plan.

The author hopes that the examined regions can benefit from the results and that it helps them in their endeavour toward becoming an environmentally, socially and economically sound region. Moreover, the insights that stem from this study can serve as an example and inspiration for other regions that have the intention to develop a SRD plan. The author is fully aware that the results of this study are limited in their generalizability. Therefore, these results can merely be used as an example and/or for inspiration for other regions. This implies the societal relevance of this research is not limited to regions in the European Union. As mentioned in section 1.2, studies have identified that SD principles are increasingly being incorporated in the plans for regional development in regions within the European Union. However, regions all over the world have developed similar plans. The Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD) for instance, has 50 members from 30 countries (nrg4SD, 2012). Besides these regions, at his moment in time, there are a number of regions that are in the midst of the development of a plan where SD principles are being incorporated. Especially regions in the United States are in such a development process (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2012).

1.5 Characteristics of the performance evaluation and influencing factors

Three gradual stages of performance

The performance of two SRD plans will be evaluated by means of the performance approach in this study. The performance approach is a process oriented approach where performance predominantly resides itself in the process (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). Therefore, the focal point of evaluation in this study lies on the influence of the SRD plan on the decision making process and the behaviour of the actors to which the plan is addressed. Three gradual stages of performance are distinguished in this study. These are: acquaintance, consideration, and consent. Every stage reflects the degree in which important perspectives of the plan are taken up by the decision-makers. The stages of performance and the operationalization will be elaborated on in section 2.2.3.

Internal and external performance of the SRD plan

Plans for the development of a region are traditionally initiated and developed by a regional governmental body (RGB). Even though, the RGB is (mostly) still the organization that initiates the development of a SRD plan, multiple regional stakeholders are involved in the process of planning and implementation. This involvement is based on the widespread agreement among academics, policymakers, and practitioners regarding the implementation of SD, namely that cooperation and stakeholder engagement is vital for its implementation. This view on cooperation is also reflected in the various roles a SRD plan plays, as described in the guidelines by the nrg4SD elaborated on in section 1.1. Especially the third role makes this clear: "The third role is to ensure that common principles of SD underpin action by the different institutions involved" (nrg4SD, 2012). This means that the plan is not only addressed to the representatives of the RGB, but to regional

stakeholders/parties as well. For this reason, a distinction is made in this study between the internal and external performance of the SRD plan. The internal performance refers to the RGB, because they are the organization initiating the SRD plan. The external performance refers to all the other regional stakeholders/parties involved, because the plan is addressed to them as well, but they are not the initiators.

Influencing factors to SRD performance

The influencing factors to the performance will be identified by means of measuring the influence of 10 pre-defined influencing factors and by means of giving respondents the opportunity to mention influencing factors that are not pre-listed. The 10 pre-listed factors are derived from previous studies and categorized in three different categories; plan-, implementation- and stakeholder characteristics. This categorization is based on the study of Joseph et al. (2008), which has been described in section 1.3. Another category is used in this study as well, namely contextual characteristics. This category is derived from the study of Berke et al. (2006). The 10 pre-defined influencing factors are not categorized in the contextual category, while the non-pre-listed factors are. Furthermore, a distinction is made between influencing factors to the internal and external performance and different influencing factors have been pre-defined regarding the internal and external performance. This has been done, because the SRD plans are addressed to internal and external stakeholders, as described in the aforementioned section, and two different implementation processes are in place. Therefore, it is expected that different factors have an influence to the internal and external performance of the SRD plan. The influencing factors will be elaborated on in section 2.2.3.

1.6 Characteristics of the empirical research

Two regions within the European Union

This study evaluates the SRD plans of two regions in the European Union. The two regions are the Utrecht region in The Netherlands and the Västra Götaland region in Sweden. The regions will be compared with each other for the purpose of gaining a richer understanding of the performance of the SRD plans and their respective influencing factors. This study is limited to the examination of two regions due to limited resources available in terms of time and finances. The criteria for selecting the regions will be elaborated on in section 2.3. Regions in the European Union have specifically been selected because the implementation of SD is one of the core topics relevant for regional policy within the European Union, as stated in European Treaty (1997), followed by the Gothenburg strategy (2001) (Setlacek and Gaube, 2009). Moreover, there is a growing consensus at the regional level in the European Union that SD is becoming an essential criterion in future regional development, and empirical studies have shown that SD principles are increasingly being incorporated in the plans of European regions (Hirschi, 2008, Storbjork 2008, Flynn et al. 2003, Berger, 2003, Baxhtler et al. 2001, Valve 2000).

Focus on two development foci of the SRD plan

The SRD plans of two regions are the subject of research in this study. Within these SRD plans, two specific development foci have been selected to determine the stage of performance and enable the identification of relevant influencing factors. Two development foci have been chosen due to the limited availability of time. The criteria for selecting the development foci will be elaborated on in section 2.2.3. Evaluating the performance of certain parts of the plan is in line with recommendations of Mastop and Faludi (1997). They state that the performance approach has an implication for research, which is that the units of analysis are policy statements in a plan and not the plan as such (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). The authors state that "more often than not, the statements in a plan are addressed to various actors, therefore, plans are hybrid in nature. This means that the plan as such cannot form the object of evaluation. When assessing the performance of plans, we need to focus on those policy statements that lend themselves to such a test" (Mastop and Faludi, 1997:825).

Naeff and Kamphuis (1986 in Driessen, 1997) distinguish three types of policy statements in spatial

planning that can be expected to perform differently (Driessen, 1997). The differences lies in the wording and the consequences it has for the content of plans, projects, or policies of actors to which the policy statements are addressed. The three types of policy statements are mentioned below. Section 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 will elaborate on the type of policy statements that are present in the two SRD plans examined in this study.

1. Statements from which the content and measures can be derived almost directly. The intention is that these statements and measures can be – virtually unaltered - incorporated directly in other plans. This is the least difficult statement to determine the extent to which they have been effective.
2. Statements that provide a frame of reference. It provides an opportunity for further articulation during serial decision-making, although the margins for such articulation are clearly set. The expectation is that these statements will be incorporated in other plans although, when the plan is being made, further assessment may take place within specified limits.
3. Statements of intent without conveying any concrete measures that should be incorporated in other plans. These statements allow maximum room for further specification. It is very difficult to determine the extent to which these statements have been effective (Driessen, 1997).

Furthermore, due to limited time available, this research will mainly focus on the plans, programs, or projects that are directly derived from the respective development foci of the SRD plans. It does not examine its whole downstream process of serially connected decision making.

1.7 Reading guide

The next chapter describes the research methodology and strategy that is used in order to attain the research objectives of this study. The Utrecht and Västra Götaland region are introduced in chapter 3 and provides as well the analysis of the contextual characteristics. Chapter 4 provides the analysis with regards to the categories plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics. Chapter 5 provides the results of the performance evaluation of the SRD plans as well as the results of the identification and measurement of the influencing factors. Chapter 6 answers the main research question and describes which contribution the results make to the scientific literature and to society.

Chapter 2

Research methodology and strategy

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology and strategy that is used in order to attain the research objectives. Section 2.2 describes the methodology, section 2.3 elaborates on the two research strategies, a desk research and a comparative case study analysis, and section 2.4 describes the research materials.

2.2 Research methodology

The main research question and the corresponding sub questions in this study will be answered by means of using three analytical frameworks. The frameworks are connected to each other and every analytical framework relates to several sub questions. The three analytical frameworks are visually displayed in figure 2.1, where the arrows show the connection between the frameworks. The following three paragraphs elaborates on each of the analytical framework, as well as how they are connected.

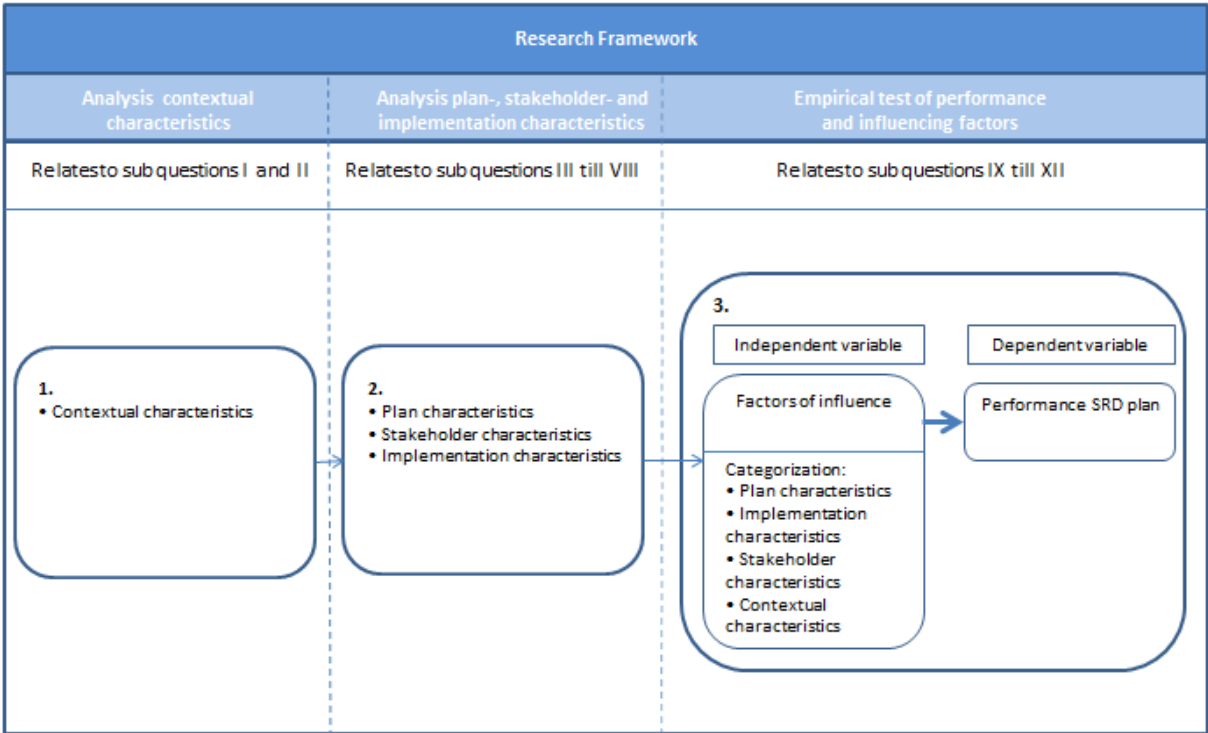


Figure 2.1: Visual overview of the research and analytical framework

2.2.1 Analysis contextual characteristics

The first step in the research is an analysis of the contextual characteristics of both regions. This analysis is executed in order to get a better understanding of the context in which the plans have been developed and implemented. This is relevant to know, because SRD plans may vary per region, because it is based on regional characteristics and preferences of stakeholders. The characteristics that are analysed relate mostly to the RGB of that region, because the RGB is the institution that initiated the development of the SRD plan and is in charge of the development and implementation process. The aspects that are analysed are; the organization of the RGB, the tasks and responsibilities of the RGB, and the political situation during the development and implementation process. It is expected that several of the contextual characteristics are of indirect influence to the performance. Therefore, an arrow runs from analytical framework 1 to analytical framework 2. It has to be noted that there are no contextual characteristics among the 10 pre-listed factors that are tested in the

empirical part of this study (analytical framework 3), which will be elaborated on in section 2.2.3. Therefore, assumptions are made at the end of the analysis regarding contextual characteristics that might have an indirect influence. These assumptions will be answered by means of the empirical part (analytical framework 3) in this study. The analysis is executed by means of comparing contextual characteristics of both regions in order to discover its similarities and differences and answers sub-question I and II.

2.2.2 Analysis plan-, implementation- and stakeholder characteristics

The second step in the research is an analysis of the categories plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics. The 10 pre-listed potential influencing factors that are tested in the empirical part of this study (analytical framework 3), listed in table 2.4, are organized in these three categories and form the point of departure for the analysis. The analysis provides in depth information regarding the pre-listed influencing factors. Therefore, an arrow runs from box 2 to 3 in figure 2.1. Furthermore, it has to be noted that the 10 pre-listed factors are tested for their influence during the implementation phase of the SRD plan. When respondents indicated that pre-listed influencing factors were present during the development phase as well, this will be pointed out explicitly. The analysis is executed by providing a description of the characteristics first and is complemented with the experience and perception of actors that were involved in the development and implementation phase of the SRD plan. The three categories are separately analysed per region and concludes with a comparison of the characteristics of the two regions to discover its similarities and differences. Sub-questions III till VIII will be answered by means of this analysis.

2.2.3 Evaluate plan implementation performance and influencing factors

The third step in the research in the empirical part. It evaluates the performance of the SRD plans and examines which influencing factors obstruct or contribute to the performance. Obstructive means that the factor has a negative influence to the performance, while contribute means that the factor has a positive influence to the performance. The performance of the SRD plan is identified as the dependent variable and the influencing factors as the independent variables. First the performance will be elaborated on followed by the influencing factors.

Performance of the SRD plan

The performance of the SRD plan has been evaluated by taking the performance approach. This is a process oriented approach where performance predominantly resides itself in the process. Therefore, the focal point of evaluation lies on the influence of the plan on the decision making process and the behaviour of the actors to which the strategic plan is addressed (Mastop and Faludi, 1997). Performance in this approach is defined as “if and only if the plan plays a tangible role in the choices of the actors to whom it is addressed and/or to whom the plan appeals, in either case irrespective of whether or not outcomes correspond with the plan” (Mastop and Faludi, 1997:825). Three gradual stages of performance are distinguished. These have been identified by Herweijer et. al (1990) and are the stages; acquaintance, consideration and consent. Every stage reflects the degree in which important perspectives (vision, mission, problem definitions, values, challenges, objectives, solutions) of the plan are taken up by the decision-makers. A description of the these stages is provided in table 2.1.

| Gradual stage of performance | Description |
|------------------------------|--|
| Acquaintance | Encapsulates the notion that the decision-makers become acquainted with the content of the plan by means of reading and/or consulting it. The minimal requirement is that the actor have more or less an accurate picture of the content of the plan. Detailed knowledge regarding the content and background of the plan is not required, but the actors must understand the content and visions of the plan (Herweijer et al. 1990). |
| Consideration | Implies that the information provided in the plan must serve as a frame of reference when actors make a decision / serve as a frame of reference during the decision-making process to develop, consider, and discuss alternatives. The content of the plan is taken into consideration. There exists multiple manners in which this |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| | can take place. The information/content in the plan is being used in making certain decisions. The actor refers explicitly to the plan in new policy documents, programs, projects. The actor takes the content of the plan as a point of departure for policy making or developing new projects, programs. Involving the message from the plan is enough to determine this level of performance (Herweijer et al. 1990). |
| Consent | Occurs when the actors involved in the decision-making process acknowledge the content of the strategic plan, are influenced by it, and change their knowledge and/or visions accordingly. When 'consent' is attained, the decision-makers use a problem definition, vision, or solution in line with the information provided by the plan. To determine consent, it is not necessary that the actors use the content and the words of the plan "one on one". It is of importance that the information/content of the plan is being acknowledged by the actors and that it influenced their policy and projects (Herweijer et al. 1990). |

Table 2.1 Gradual stages of performance

Operationalization of the stages of performance

Based on the three identified gradual stages by Herweijer et al (1990), a framework for evaluating the performance has been developed. The operationalization and the corresponding indicators are displayed in table 2.2. The stage of performance of the two respective development foci have been determined by means of linking the statements of the respondents with the indicators in table 2.2. The conclusions regarding the overall stage of performance of the SRD plan is based on the level of inter-subjectivity of the respondents. A determination in the stage of *acquaintance* means that the SRD plan performs far below optimal, a determination in the stage of *consideration* means that the SRD plan performs below optimal, and a determination in the stage of *consent* means that the SRD plan performs optimal. The questionnaires that are used for the expert-interviews can be found in Annex 2.3. A description of the type of interviews and the amount of respondents will be further elaborated on in section 2.4.

| Performance stage | Indicators | Operationalization | Source |
|----------------------|--|---|--------------------|
| Acquaintance | Decision-makers read and/or consult the plan during a decision-making process for the development of a plan, project or program | Did decision-makers read and/or consult (seek information from) the plan during a decision-making process for the development of a plan, project or program? | Expert- interviews |
| Consideration | The plan is used as a frame of reference during a decision-making process developing a new plan, project or program, either to structure the debate or as point of departure The plan is explicitly being referred to in a new plan, project or program | To what extent, and how, did the plan function as a frame of reference during a decision-making process developing a new plan, project or program? Do you refer explicitly to the plan in the new policy documents, programs or projects? | Expert- interviews |
| Consent | Actors involved in the decision-making process acknowledge the content of plan, are influenced by it, and change their knowledge and/or visions accordingly. Actors involved in the decision-making process use a problem definition, vision, or solution in line with the information provided by the plan | Did the plan educate actors involved in the decision-making process? Did the plan alter the actors' vision of the new plan, project or program? Do you use a problem definition, vision, or solution in line with the information provided by the plan? | Expert- interviews |

Table 2.2 Operationalization stage of performance

Focus on two development foci of the SRD plan

As it has been described in section 1.5 already, two development foci of the SRD plans are the subject of research for evaluating the performance. The two development foci have been selected in correspondence with the representative of the RGB responsible for the development or implementation of the SRD plan. These representatives gave the recommendation with regards to the development foci and the author followed their advice. The selected development foci are displayed in table 2.3. The representatives indicated that these two development foci would be the most suitable to evaluate, because these are regarded as relatively the most

important development foci in the SRD plans. An overview of all development foci will be provided in section 4.2

| Region | Development foci |
|-----------------|---|
| Utrecht | 1. Economy – A region with an innovative knowledge based economy |
| | 2. Spatial - A region which has room for excellent living, working and nature |
| Vastra Götaland | 1. Vigorous and sustainable trade industry |
| | 2. A leading cultural region |

Table 2.3: Selected development foci

Identification of the influencing factors

The influencing factors to the performance are the independent variables in this study and have been identified by means of expert-interviews. Two gradual steps were taken during the expert-interviews to identify the influencing factors: first, a list with pre-defined potential influencing factors was used; second, respondents were encouraged to mention influencing factors that were not pre-listed, the so-called non-pre-listed factors. The pre-listed factors were derived from previous studies. The studies described in section 1.3 served as point of departure and the list was further completed by factors identified in other studies in the SRD literature. 30 Factors were retrieved in total⁸ and reduced to 10, because of the time limitations of the interviews. The 10 selected factors for the list were indicated in the other studies as having the most influence to the implementation plans. The 10 potential influencing factors are displayed in table 2.4, including the definition, in which article(s) they were found, and if it is tested in this study for having an influence to the external or internal implementation of the SRD plan.

Categorisation of the influencing factors

The pre-listed factors are divided in three categories: the plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics. This categorization is based on the study of Joseph et, al (2008), as described in section 1.3 already. The factors in the category “plan characteristics” relate to the characteristics of the SRD plan and its development process. The factors in the category “implementation characteristics” relate to the characteristics of the implementation process designed by the RGBs. The factors in the category “stakeholder characteristics” relate to the behaviour of representatives of the respective stakeholders. The factors in these three categories are all process factors that have a direct influence to the performance. As it has been described in section 1.3 as well, the categorization of factors in this study is complemented with the category “contextual characteristics”. The factors in this category are internal organisational and political situation related, and have an indirect influence to the performance. None of the 10 pre-listed factors are categorized in this category, but non-pre-listed factors are categorized in this category.

Measurement of the influencing factors

The respondents were asked to indicate which of the 10 pre-listed factors are of influence during the implementation phase, what their level of influence is, and if it either obstructs or contributes to the performance. A four-level Likert scale has been used to measure the influence of the 10 pre-listed influencing factors. This scale is commonly used for survey research in favour of measuring respondents perception on a certain topic. The four level Likert-scale consist of four ordered categories. This means that the data in each category can be compared with data in the other categories being higher or lower than, more or less, than those in the other categories (Denscombe, 2003). The division of the categories in this research is as follows; the factor is 1. not important; 2. a bit important; 3. important; 4 very important. It has to be noted that only the 10 pre-listed influencing factors have been measured by means of the four-level Likert scale. The non-pre-listed factors have not been measured by means of the four-level Likert scale. Their level of influence has not

⁸ The complete list of the influencing factors can be found in Annex 2.1

been measured, because they were mentioned at the end of each of the interviews, which made that there was no time available to measure their level of influence.

Method for identification and measuring during interviews

In order to make the interviews dynamic, and to provide the respondents with a holistic overview of the influencing factors, all 10 pre-listed factors were described on separate cards. After reading all the factors carefully, the respondents were asked to indicate if the factors were of influence during the implementation phase. Then they were asked if they perceived this as obstructive or contributing. The cards have two sides, one is red and one is green. The red side indicates that a factor is perceived as obstructive and the green side that the factor is perceived as contributing. Then respondents were asked the level of importance, by placing the cards on a sheet with the four ordered categories of the Likert-scale. When a respondent did not have knowledge on a specific factor, he/she did not put that respective card on the sheet. The respondents were allowed to change the order of influence during the interview. Furthermore, as described in the previous paragraphs, the respondents were highly encouraged by the author to mention influencing factors that were not pre-listed. Respondents were not bound to mention only factors that are of influence during the implementation phase, but allowed to mention factors that were of influence during the development phase of the SRD plan as well.

| Factor | Definition | Found in | Internal / External |
|--|---|--|---------------------|
| <i>Plan characteristics</i> | | | |
| Process of a collaboratively developed plan | A shared decision-making process, where multiple stakeholders were involved, was used to develop the plan. | Joseph et al. (2007) Frame et al. (2004); Albert et al. (2004); Burby (2003); Calbick et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003); Knopman et al. (1999) | Both |
| Quality of the strategic plan | A qualitative plan fulfils the following points; a clear identification of issues important to the community; a strong fact base that incorporates and explains the use of evidence in issue identification and the development of policies, an internal consistency among issues, objectives and goals are achieved. | Joseph et al. (2007) Albert et al. (2004); Jackson and Curry (2002); Margerum (2002); Laurian et al. (2004) and Berke et. al, (2006) | Both |
| <i>Implementation characteristics</i> | | | |
| Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities | The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation process are clearly defined and specified. These are the policy makers In the internal process. In the external process these are the external parties and the RGB. | Joseph et. al (2007) Albert et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003) | Both |
| Sound monitoring | A monitoring mechanism is in place to track both progress in implementing plan recommendations as well as progress in achieving plan objectives. The monitoring mechanism uses appropriate indicators to gauge implementation progress. Monitoring is supported by strategies that ensure accountability and transparency, and effectively disseminates information to stakeholders | Joseph et. al (2007) Frame et al. (2004); Albert et al. (2004); Calbick et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003); Margerum (2002, 1999a); Knopman et al. (1999); Victor and Skolnikoff (1999); Lessard (1998); Owen (1998); Williams et al. (1998) | Both |
| Adequate regulatory system | The diversity of implementation instruments, including rules as well as written guidelines for compliance, enforcement, penalties to support implementation objectives | Joseph et. al (2007) Calbick et al. (2004); Victor and Skolnikoff (1999) | Both |
| Sound parliamentary basis | Implementation of the plan is based on an official adoption by the Regional Council so as to validate and | Joseph et. al (2007) Calbick et al. (2004); | Internal |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|----------|
| | empower the process | | |
| Training and awareness building for the plan | Training programmes or awareness courses specifically related to the plan, for the administrative officers | Evans et al 2004 | Internal |
| Adequate information support | There is appropriate information available for the implementation of the plan | Storbjork (2008), Joseph et al. (2007), Marsden and May (2006), Evans et al. 2006, Lehmann 2006, Frame and Taylor 2005, Keysar 2005, Laurian et al. 2004, Albert et al. (2004); Calbick et al. (2004); Rydin et al, 2003, Nilsson and Persson 2003) Margerum (1999); | Internal |
| Adequate networking and consensus building during implementation | Implementation is collaboratively reached through a network that links stakeholders and facilitates problem solving. There is a supportive external environment where all stakeholders are constantly supportive of implementation | Joseph et al. (2007) Butler and Koontz (2005); Albert et al. (2004); Margerum (2002); Booth et al. (2001) | External |
| Adequate resource support | There is appropriate funding in terms of money available for the implementation of the plan | Storbjork (2008), Joseph et al. (2007), Marsden and May (2006), Evans et al. 2006, Lehmann 2006, Frame and Taylor 2005, Keysar 2005, Laurian et al. 2004, Albert et al. (2004); Calbick et al. (2004); Rydin et al, 2003, Nilsson and Persson 2003) Margerum (1999); | External |
| <i>Stakeholder characteristics</i> | | | |
| Supporting political leadership | Support of the regional government or elected officials within the RGB for the implementation of the plan | Marsden and May 2006, Evans et al. 2006, Lehmann 2006, Frame and Taylor 2005, Keysar 2005, Laurian et al. 2004, Rydin et al, 2003, Nilsson and Persson 2003 | Both |
| Supporting administrative executives | Support of the current managing director and/or managers of the administrative organization for the implementation of the plan | Storbjork (2008), Evans et al. (2006), Lehman (2006) | Both |
| Committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to sustainable development | Key-actors in the organisation are committed and personally driven to sustainable development. | Storbjork (2008), Evans et al. (2006), Lehman (2006) | External |

Table 2.4: Identified influencing factors for internal and external performance

2.3 Research strategy

The research strategies chosen for this study are desk research and case study analysis.

Desk research

A desk research has been carried out for the analysis of the contextual characteristics (analytical framework 1), and the analysis for the plan-, implementation- and stakeholder- characteristics (analytical framework 1). In addition, an analysis of the SRD and planning literature has been conducted to identify potential factors of influence that have been identified by other scholars. Besides, the planning-evaluation literature has been studied to define and operationalize the performance of a SRD plan.

Case study analysis

A small-N comparative case study has been conducted in order to meet the objectives of this study. A case study can be regarded as an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding larger set of (similar) units (Gerring, 2004). Case study analysis has the potential to deal with the complexity of social situations, because one of the main strengths is the depth of the analysis of the research object (Laerhoven, 2010). It has the ability to “uncover the gray tones of time and place specific particularities” (Laerhoven, 2010:542). Therefore, it may lead to an in-depth knowledge and may inspire the formulation of innovative working hypothesis for future research (Ibid.). Since only a limited amount of studies have been conducted on this subject, and since plan implementation is regarded as a complex process influenced by many factors (Joseph et. al, 2007), a small-N comparative case study has been chosen.

Case study selection

The Utrecht region in The Netherlands and the Västra Götaland Region in Sweden have been selected. These two regions have been selected in two consecutive steps. The first step was a preliminary selection and based on the following criteria: a SRD plan has to be in place that is developed as a guiding vision for SD within the region; SD must be the overarching concept and the region must have chosen clear development foci; implementation processes must have been developed and up and running for at least 1 year; a RGB must have initiated the development of the SRD plan; and, the SRD plans must have been developed on a comparable governmental level. The internet was used to find regions that met the criteria. Based on these criteria, six regions were selected. Region Vasterbotten in Sweden, region Stuttgart in Germany, region Zealand in Denmark, region West-Midlands in the UK, region Västra Götaland in Sweden and region Utrecht in the Netherlands. The selection of regions was followed by the second step. An inventory of the stage of performance by means of phone interviews with representatives of the RGB responsible for the development or implementation of the SRD plan. A variation in the performance of the SRD plan between the regions was aimed for, because it is expected that this will lead to a better understanding which factors influences the performance in a positive or negative way. The interviews by phone made clear that three regions were not suitable for the following reasons. Region Stuttgart was not suitable, because it did not fulfill all the criteria. The SRD plan was initiated mostly by the private sector, but this was not mentioned at their website. The region West-Midlands in the UK was not suitable, because the region was abolished in December 2010. The region Zealand in Denmark was not suitable, because it turned out that the SRD plan was more a local governmental initiative. The Vasterbotten region in Sweden was suitable, but had a somehow equal stage of performance as the Utrecht region. Since it has been chosen that two regions from two different countries will be examined and compared with each other, the Utrecht region and the Västra Götaland region were selected. A remark has to be made regarding the selection of the regions. The inventory has shown that there is a variation in the performance. However, it has to made clear that the interviews by phone was a first exploration, and the performance is an assumption which will tested in the empirical part of this study.

2.4 Research material

The two respective development foci of the SRD plan of the Utrecht region and the SRD plan of the Västra Götaland region are the main research objects that have been studied in this research to realize the objectives. A research object is defined by Verschuuren and Doorewaard (2005) as the phenomenon that will be studied by the researcher and about which statements will be made as a result of a research project. The SRD plan of the Utrecht region is called “Utrecht2040” with the subtitle “Together towards a sustainable and attractive region”. The SRD plan of the Västra Götaland region is called “Vision Västra Götaland”, with the subtitle “A good life”. Besides these two plan documents, more documents and sources of information have been used to attain the objectives of this research. This section describes which sources of information were used. Starting with the internet, followed by the literature, than the documents and ends with a description of the interviews.

Internet

The internet has been frequently used in the explorative phase of this research. Especially during the selection process of regions. The first information of the regions and their SRD plans has been retrieved from the websites of the respective regions. Furthermore, the websites of the two selected regions have been used as one of the main exploration sources for the analysis of the contextual-, plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics.

Literature

Basically two branches of literature have been used. Scientific articles and empirical studies of the SRD and planning-evaluation literature to identify influencing factors which have been identified and tested by other scholars. Scientific articles from the planning-evaluation literature have been studied to define and operationalize the performance of a SRD plan.

Documents

Besides the main objects of research, other policy plans and documents have been studied as well. Policy plans and documents which were indicated by respondents in which the SRD plan plays a tangible role where studied.

Interviews

Two different types of interviews were held. The first type can be referred to as “informant interview” and the second as “expert interview”. In the former, respondents act as informants where they “provide data about other people, or about situations, objects, or processes he/she knows about” (Verschuuren and Doorewaard, 2010:209). In the latter, respondents act as experts where they “are the supplier of knowledge” (Verschuuren and Doorewaard, 2010:209).

Informant interviews were held with representatives of the six pre-selected RGBs of the regions to determine if the regions were suitable for this study. These interviews were held by phone and the criteria for selection, as described in section 2.3, were used as guideline for the interview. The respondents were representatives of the RGB and responsible for the development or implementation of the SRD plan. After the two regions were selected, informant interviews were held with 4 representatives from both the Utrecht and Västra Götaland region. 2 Interviews were held with representatives of the RGB involved in the development process and 2 with representatives responsible for the implementation process. These interviews were held to get a better understanding of the contextual-, plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics. The interviews also served as input for which of the development foci were most suitable to evaluate, and which persons to interview for the expert interviews. The interviews were either held face-to-face or by phone. In total, 5 informant interviews were held with representatives of both the Utrecht and Götaland region.

In both regions, expert interviews were held to determine the stage of performance and to identify and measure the influencing factors. Expert interviews with policy makers from the administrative organization of the RGBs were held for the internal implementation process, and expert interviews with executive decision-makers of external parties for the external implementation process. Besides, these interviews served as input to get a better understanding of the contextual-, plan-, implementation- and stakeholder characteristics. The interviews were semi-structured and face-to-face. Respondents of the administrative organization of the RGBs have been selected based on two criteria. One, they have to be policy makers in the domain of one of the two respective development foci. Two, half of the respondents have to be involvement in the development process. In total, 5 internal respondents have been interviewed in each region. 2 respondents were involved in the development process and 3 were not. The external parties have been selected based on four criteria. One, the organization have to be committed in one way or another to the SRD plan. Two, respondents have to be executive decisions-makers of the organization. Three, different types of organizations should be examined. Four, the organization have to focus on one of the two selected development foci. It turned out to be difficult to select respondents based on the last criterion. Therefore, this criterion could not be fulfilled. In total, 6 external respondents have been interviewed in the Utrecht region: 2 NGO's, 1 financial institution, 1

municipality, 1 Chamber of Commerce and 1 educational organization. In the Götaland region, 5 external respondents have been interviewed in total: 2 Educational organizations, 2 Regional Association of Local Authority (RALA), and 1 Federation of business owners. Table 2.5 provides an overview of all the respondents that have been interviewed for this study.

| Region | Type of interview | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Informant Interview | Expert Interview Internal | Expert Interview External |
| Utrecht (NL) | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Vastra Götaland (SWE) | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Stuttgart (GER) | 1 | | |
| Vasterbotten (SWE) | 1 | | |
| West-Midlands (UK) | 1 | | |
| Zealand (DK) | 1 | | |
| Total | 14 | 10 | 11 |

Table 2.5: Overview types of interviews and amount of representatives

Validity and generalizability

A known drawback of a small-N comparative case study is the limited empirical generalizability of the results (Laerhoven, 2010). Therefore, the author will be very careful with extrapolating the outcomes empirically. No statements will be made regarding the application of the outcomes to other regions. However, statements will be made with regards to the application of the outcomes for the examined regions, but only regarding the evaluated development foci. The evaluation of two development foci of the SRD plans means that the determined stage of performance applies to those respective development foci only. Those outcomes cannot automatically be generalized to the entire SRD plan.

Even though the results of this study are limited in its empirical generalizability, the outcomes can be theoretical generalizable (Hillebrand et al, 2001). Theoretical generalizability means that case studies can be used to test existing hypotheses or theories. These gain further legitimacy if a case study confirms them. According to Hillebrand et al. (2001), one case study would be sufficient to generalize the outcomes theoretically. This means that statements will be made with regards to the theoretical generalizability of the outcomes of this study. This will be done for the performance approach which has been introduced in the planning-evaluation literature in the mid 90's and for the identified and tested influencing factors to the performance.

Chapter 3

Contextual characteristics of the two regions

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the Utrecht and Västra Götaland region which is followed by the analysis of the contextual characteristics of both regions. Section 3.2 provides the introduction to the regions by means of geographical, living and working conditions. Section 3.3 provides an analysis of the contextual characteristics that might have an influence to the performance⁹. These characteristics relate mostly to the RGB of the regions. The characteristics that will be analysed are; the organization of the RGB, their tasks and responsibilities, and the political situation during the development and implementation phase. Section 3.4 provides a comparison of the contextual characteristics of the regions in order to discover its similarities and differences. Section 3.5 provides the conclusion and an overview of the assumptions that are made with regards to the contextual characteristics that might have an indirect influence to the performance of the SRD plan. The contextual characteristics that are identified as actually having an influence to the performance are presented in Chapter 5.

3.2 Introduction to the regions

Table 3.1 provides a quick overview of the geographical, living and working conditions of both regions. This overview clearly shows that the Götaland region is almost 17 times as big as the Utrecht region. However, the Götaland region has only 400.000 more inhabitants as the Utrecht region. This makes the Utrecht region far more densely populated. Both regions have growing regional economies and are doing well as compared to other EU regions, however, their leading economic sectors differ. The Götaland region has a large trade and industry sector with relating research and development activities, while the Utrecht region is not characterized by industry, but dominated by the service sector. Furthermore, both regions have diverse landscapes, many recreational facilities and regarded as attractive regions to live in. The geographical, living and working conditions of both regions are separately elaborated on in below paragraphs.

| Condition | Utrecht Region | Götaland region |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Land surface | 144,915 hectares | 2394,500 hectares |
| Population | 1.2 million | 1.6 million |
| Leading economic sectors | Financial services Commercial services | Trade and Industry Research and Development |
| EU top rankings | #1 ranking on regional competitiveness | Industrial R&D investments Among the 20 fastest economic growing regions |
| Living conditions | Attractive | Attractive |

Table 3.1: Geographical, living, and working conditions

The Utrecht Region

The Utrecht region spans 144,915 hectares and is one of the most densely regions in the Netherlands with a population of 1.2 million (Utrecht Province, 2012). The largest city in the region is Utrecht, with a population of 316.000 (ibid.). The Utrecht region is located in the centre of the Netherlands on the eastern end of the Randstad and the smallest region in the Netherlands (Ibid.). This close proximity makes it a prime transportation hub for the rest of the Netherlands (Rifkin, 2010). The region offers a lot of job opportunities, boasts the lowest unemployment rate in the country and inhabitants have the highest level of education in The Netherlands (Ibid.). Moreover, it has the fastest growing regional economy and the highest population growth in the Netherlands (Ibid.). With regards to regional competitiveness, the region scores the highest of 271 EU regions in an index of the Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen (IPSC) (European Commission, 2012). The leading economic sectors of the region are financial and commercial services (Utrecht Province, 2012). With regards to living, it offers a combination of urban living options and nature (Ibid.). The region

⁹ As it has been elaborated on in section 2.2.3 already, contextual factors are indicated as having an indirect influence to the performance. Therefore, influence of the contextual factors can be read as indirect influence to the performance in this chapter

Utrecht is a green region, characterized by diverse landscapes, rich in national parks, cultural historical sites and well equipped with recreational conditions and facilities (Ibid.). The Utrecht region will be called Utrecht from here on.

The Västra Götaland region

The Region Västra Götaland spans 2394,500 hectares and has a population of 1.6 million (VGregion, 2012). The largest city is Gothenburg which is the second largest of Sweden with a population of 515.000 (Ibid.). Västra Götaland is situated in the south western part of Sweden, has the largest port in Scandinavia, and is Sweden's leading region for industry and transportation (Ibid.). Trade and industry is very varied and internationally oriented with a focus on research and development, for which it received a top European ranking (Ibid.). Its industries is specialised in medium-high-technology manufacturing, which are automotive, trucking, and ship building (Ibid.). More than one in four people work in trade and industry, and the remaining in the service sector (Ibid.). The Goteborg region is among the 20 fastest economic growing regions in the 2000s (Business Region Goteborg, 2012). The region is regarded as an attractive place to live, because it has large cities, rural areas, small communities and medium-sized towns, and all different types of natural environment, like the sea, lakes, rolling hills and deep forests (Ibid.). It is referred to by the VGR as "a Sweden in miniature" (VGregion, 2012). Furthermore, Västra Götaland is one of Scandinavia's most popular tourist destinations (Ibid.). The Region Västra Götaland is called Götaland from here on.

3.3 Analysis of the contextual characteristics

This section provides an analysis of the contextual characteristics that relate to the RGB of the two regions. The RGB is the institution that initiated the development of the SRD plan and is in charge of the implementation process. The characteristics that will be analysed are; the organization of the RGB, their tasks and responsibilities, and the political situation during the development and implementation process.

3.3.1 The RGB of the Utrecht region

Utrecht is one of the twelve Provinces of The Netherlands and has its own regional government (Utrecht Province, 2012)¹⁰. It represents the middle level of government, because the Dutch political system is organized on three levels; the parliament at the national level, the provinces at the regional level, and the municipalities at the local level (Overheid, 2012). The current Utrecht Province has been established in 1814 and comprises 26 municipalities nowadays. The RGB of Utrecht will be called Province from here on.

The Province exists of a political organization and an administrative organization. The government consists of three major parts: The Provincial Council, the Provincial Executives and the Queen's Commissioner. The Provincial Council is the provincial parliament, which has 49 members, and elected every four years. It is the Province's general administrative body and makes decisions concerning provincial policies. Next to this, they supervises the execution of policies implemented by the Provincial Executives. These Provincial Executives are elected from the Provincial Council, have 4 members, and charged with most executive tasks. All 4 Provincial Executives hold their own portfolios, which are composed of disciplines and areas of attention for which they are accountable. The Provincial Executives are called "The Coalition" and is presided by the Queen's Commissioner.

The regional government is supported by the administrative organisation existing of administrative officers. The administrative organisation is presided by the Managing Director. The Managing Director connects the Provincial Executives and the administrative officers. The administrative organisation is subdivided in departments which correspond with the policy domains for which the Provincial Executives are responsible. All these departments are presided by a manager¹¹.

¹⁰ All the remaining information in this section is retrieved from the website of the Utrecht Province (Utrecht Province, 2012) and informant interviews, unless otherwise stated

¹¹ See Annex 3.1 for the organogram of both the political and the administrative organization of the Province

Tasks and responsibilities of the RGB

Provinces in the Netherlands have the responsibility for matters of subnational or regional importance and can be described as “performing tasks that are too big for the municipalities and too small for the State” (Overheid, 2012). Provinces have a considerable degree of autonomy concerning policy (Utrecht Province, 2012)¹². Generally, a Province can decide autonomously which tasks they want to execute and what their focus areas will be, as long as it is within the bounds prescribed by the national law. There is one important responsibility determined by national law, which is spatial planning. A Province is obliged to develop a so-called Provincial Spatial Structurevision (PSS). The ‘PSS’ is described as a vision that sketches the outlines of potential expansion for cities and towns and determines where industrial zones and office complexes may be developed. This is an important steering document for the Province. Accessibility and infrastructure is an important factor in the ‘PSS’, and at the same time a main responsibility of the Province. Other important responsibilities are; economic development, nature and landscapes, recreation, and culture.

The ‘PSS’ is a plan that is formulated by the administrative organization. The Province has another main steering document and is formulated by the political organization, which is called the ‘Coalition Agreement’. This agreement is formulated by the Provincial Executives after the elections and provides the focus areas and general actions for that respective coalition period. Besides the ‘PSS’ and the ‘Coalition Agreement’, several policy domains (departments) in the administrative organization, like economy and recreation, have their own steering documents in the form medium term strategic plans and visions. Some of these departments have a medium term strategic plan and vision for over a decade already. Just recently, since the Coalition of 2011-2015 is in charge, the Province introduced the “Strategic Agenda”. This plan document translates the content of the ‘Coalition Agreement’ into more practical actions.

Political situation and role of the RGB

The current political situation can be characterized by the changes that take place in both the political and administrative organization. Due to the rapidly changing external environment, like less funding from the state and the rise of complex intertwined issues, the Province is redefining its core tasks and their new role. It is stated in the Coalition Agreement 2012-2015 that: “*We focus on those tasks where the regional government can add the most value.... The core-tasks that we have chosen are; economic development, spatial development, nature and landscapes, accessibility, and cultural historical heritage*” (Coalitie akkoord, 2011:8). Furthermore, it is argued by the developers of the Coalition Agreement that the current situation demands a different role from the Provincial organization as well. They have explicitly chosen for the governance approach, where bottom up, cross domain cooperation, equality, and deliberation with partners are key elements. This means that the former role, also described by respondents as the traditional role, which is characterized by top-down, directive, authoritarian, and control, has to be replaced. Respondents of the Province indicate that the former Coalition, in charge during the development of the SRD plan in 2008, was already trying to adopt a more governance oriented role. Respondents indicate as well that the political situation was rather tense during the development of the SRD plan in 2008. There was a lot of political discrepancy in the coalition. The tension ran so high that two Provincial Executives of the same political party resigned in 2009. They were replaced by two representatives from a different political party.

3.3.2 The RGB of the Västra Götaland region

The Västra Götaland region is one of the two administrative regions that were formed in the late 1990’s in response to the State’s view of that time to have larger regional units in fewer places (Larsson and Sorensson, 2011). It was formed on January the 1st 1999 by merging three county councils and comprises 49 municipalities nowadays (Ibid.). The RGB represents the middle level of government, because the Swedish political system is organized on three levels; the parliament at the national level, the regional administrations and county councils at the regional level, and the municipalities at the local level (SALAR, 2012). The RGB is called Västra Götaland

¹² All the remaining information in this section is retrieved from the website of the Utrecht Province (Utrecht Province, 2012) and informant interviews, unless otherwise stated

Region (VGR) and is divided in a political and an administrative organization (Ibid.).

The political organization is represented by the Regional Executive Board and the Regional Council (VGregion, 2012)¹³. The latter is the highest decision-making body, has 149 members, and is elected every four years. Its main responsibility is to decide on overall objective and emphasize priorities. The Regional Executive Board coordinates and leads the political activities and consists of 15 members. Furthermore, the political organization possesses important consultation and decision making bodies by means of Regional Development Drafting Committees (RDDC). The purpose of these committees is to advance cooperation on strategic issues relating to development, environment, and culture. These committees reflect not only the opinion of the regional political parties, but those of the municipalities as well, because they consist of members of the Executive Board, Regional Council and representatives from 4 Regional Associations of Local Authorities (RALA's). A RALA represents a certain number of municipalities in Götaland. It was decided during the formation of Västra Götaland that the municipalities should have a formalized role in the decision-making process. Therefore, one representative of each of the RALA's have a seat in the committee.

The administrative organization executes the decisions made by the political organization. The secretarial departments of the administrative organization, the regional development-, the environmental-, and the cultural affairs secretariat, prepare issues before politicians take the decisions. Furthermore, these officials compile facts, analyze the consequences of different proposals, calculate costs etc. The highest official is the Chief Executive, who in turn appoints the managers of the various departments.¹⁴

Tasks and responsibilities of the RGB

All governmental levels in Sweden have their own self-governing responsibilities for different activities and for providing a major part of all public services (SALAR, 2012). However, the regions are by national law responsible for two main areas. The first is healthcare and medical treatment. Therefore, many activities of the regions are directed at providing healthcare services (Ibid.). The second responsibility is regional development and growth (Larsson and Sorensson, 2011). The national government designed a national strategy to support competitive regions and individuals in Sweden (Ibid.). The strategy states that all parts of Sweden shall contribute to economic growth and sustainable development and that any activity within the Swedish regional development policy is to follow the five priorities presented in the strategy (Ibid.). Therefore, regions are responsible for creating the best possible terms for the development of trade and industry, infrastructure, culture, tourism and environmental issues (VGregion, 2012). Furthermore, the regional development system that is coordinated from state level is adjusted to EU programming (Larsson and Sorensson, 2011). Already since Sweden became a member state of the EU, regional development was heavily influenced by EU regional policy (SALAR, 2012).

All regions and counties are by national law obliged to develop a Regional Development Program (RDP), of which the guidelines are specified in the national strategy (Larsson and Sorensson, 2011). This development program aims at defining a holistic, long term regional development strategy, with the purpose to strengthen integration of policies at the regional level (Tsuchida, 2011). The RDP is the main steering document of the VGR and forms the first level of planning of the so-called "four level hierarchical planning" of the VGR. This hierarchical planning exists of four levels of planning with corresponding plan documents in which actions and activities become more concrete at every level. The second level of planning exists of steering documents which relate to the respective policy domains of the VGR. The Regional Tillvaxt Program (RTP) is the plan relating to regional development and serves to connect regional projects with EU grants and national plans (Tsuchida, 2011). The third level of planning exists of more concrete plans and programs, which are derived from the steering documents of the respective policy domains. The fourth and last level of planning exists of the yearly budget (VGregion, 2012).

¹³ All the remaining information in this section is retrieved from the website of the VGR (VGregion, 2012) and informant interviews, unless otherwise stated

¹⁴ See Annex 3.2 for the organogram of both the political and the administrative organization of the VGR

Political situation and role of the RGB

Respondents of the VGR indicate that the political situation has rather changed since the current Coalition took office by the end of 2010. They indicate that they were used to Coalitions that are characterized by political consensus and not by political differences. The majority of the respondents describe that there was a so-called “pioneering spirit” since the establishment of the region in 1999. This spirit is described as optimistic, enthusiastic, a believe in the future, and a common urge and understanding to make a success out of the newly established region. This made that politicians acted like-minded and their activities were not dominated by political differences. It was decided during the establishment of the region that a governance approach had to be adopted. It was the conviction by then, as the former chairman of the executive board, Mr. Kent Johansson, said; “representatives of a region create and define a region and not the regional government. Therefore, inclusiveness and cooperation is of utmost importance”. This governance approach is still dominant in the current coalition and leading in all activities executed by the VGR. The political consensus, however, is being replaced by more political discrepancy. The current director of the cultural secretariat, who joined the VGR two years ago, said that it looks like that the VGR is institutionalizing and that regular politics is taking over.

3.4 Similarities and differences

This section provides a comparison of the contextual characteristics in order to discover its similarities and differences. Furthermore, assumptions are made with regards to contextual characteristics that might have an influence to the performance of the SRD plan. Table 3.2 provides an overview and at the same time a comparison of the contextual characteristics of both regions as described in the previous sections and the text below Table 3.2 elaborates on these characteristics.

| Characteristic | Utrecht | Götaland |
|--|--|---|
| Organization of the RGB | | |
| Governmental level | Middle | Middle |
| Amount of municipalities | 26 | 49 |
| Amount of council members | 49 | 149 |
| Amount of executive members | 4 | 15 |
| Year of establishment | 1814 | 1999 |
| Tasks and responsibilities | | |
| Autonomy concerning tasks | Considerable, but within the bounds prescribed by national law | Considerable, but within the bounds prescribed by national law |
| Responsible policy domain by national law | Spatial planning | Healthcare and medical treatment Regional Development and growth |
| Obligated steering document by national law | Provincial Spatial Structurevision (PSS) | Regional Development Program (RDP) |
| Regional development aligned with EU policy | No | Yes |
| Policy domains have own steering documents | Yes | Yes |
| Political situation and the role of the RGB | | |
| Political situation during development SRD plan | Political discrepancy | Political consensus |
| Current political situation | Political consensus | Less political consensus, turning to regular politics |
| Formally adoption of governance approach | 2010 | 1999 |

Table 3.2: Similarities and differences contextual characteristics

Organization of the RGB

The political system of both countries are organized on the same three levels of government and both RGBs represent the middle governmental level. However, there is a difference with regards to the size of the RGBs. Götaland is comprised of almost twice as much municipalities and has three times as many council and executive members as Utrecht. Due to this larger number, it might be possible that it is harder for the VGR to get overall internal support and acceptance for the SRD plan as compared to the Province. It is assumed that the smaller size of the RGB has a positive influence to the performance of the SRD plan. Another difference between the RGB’s, is that the municipalities in Götaland have a formalized position in the political organization by means of the committees, while municipalities do not have this in Utrecht. It is likely that the external support and acceptance for the SRD plans, at least among the municipalities, is stronger in the Götaland region, because the purpose of the committees is to advance cooperation on strategic issues relating

to development, environment, and culture. It is assumed that the formalized position of the municipalities in the RGB has a positive influence to the external performance of the SRD plan. Furthermore, there is a vast difference between the year of establishment of the administrative regions. The Utrecht region has been established almost 2 centuries ago, while the Götaland region a little more than a decade ago. It is likely that there are, with regards to the internal organization and policy areas, less established interests in Götaland than there are in Utrecht. It is assumed that the recent establishment of an RGB has a positive influence to the performance of the SRD plan.

Tasks and responsibilities

Both RGBs are responsible for the development of the region, have self-governing responsibilities, and have a considerable degree of autonomy concerning their tasks. They can execute preferred tasks as long as they are within the bounds prescribed by national law. Despite this autonomy, there are several main policy areas for which both RGBs are responsible for by national law. However, there is a vast difference between the main areas, as well as how they are governed by the national government with regards to these areas. The VGR is by national law responsible for healthcare and regional development and growth. All regions in Sweden have to oblige to the national strategy, which states that all parts of Sweden shall contribute to economic growth and sustainable development. This strategy states as well that the regions should develop a Regional Development Plan (RDP) that has to be in line with the national strategy. Utrecht on the other hand, is by national law only responsible for spatial planning and has to develop a "PSS". This steering document has to fulfil certain criteria, but these are not directly and explicitly related to making a contribution to growth and sustainable development. Moreover, the obliged "PSS" is not the main steering document of the Province, whereas the obliged "RDP" is the main steering document of the VGR. It is assumed that the obligation to contribute to SD by national law has a positive influence to the performance of the SRD plan. Another difference between the regions is that the regional development policy of Sweden is much more influenced by EU regional development policy than it is in The Netherlands. As it has been described in section 1.1 already, regional policy of the European Union is directed at SD and they recognized the role of regions for the implementation of SD. Therefore, it is assumed that being influenced by EU regional development policy has a positive influence on the performance of the SRD plan. A similarity between the regions is that several policy domains in both regions (departments in Utrecht and secretariats in Götaland) have their own own steering documents in the form of long term strategic plans and visions. This means that there are (until a certain degree) established interests per policy domain. It might be possible that these policy domains regard the SRD plan, of which one of its roles is to make effective connections between policy areas, as an interference in their already established interests. Therefore, it is assumed that the existence of policy domain specific steering documents, in the form of long term strategic plans and visions, has a negative influence to the performance.

Political situation and the role of the RGB

There is a vast difference in the political situation during the development of the SRD plan. The SRD plan of Götaland has been developed in the first years after the establishment of the VGR when there was political consensus, cooperation and a so-called a pioneering spirit. The SRD plan of Utrecht on the other hand, has been developed in a period when there was political turmoil and discrepancy. As it has been described in section 1.1 already, cooperation is of utmost importance in case of a SRD plan. Therefore, it is assumed that political consensus during the development of the SRD plan has a positive influence on the performance of the SRD plan. Furthermore, both regions have experienced a shift in the political situation lately. In case of Utrecht, it is characterized by political consensus and a renewed focus on its core tasks. In Götaland, there was a shift from political consensus to regular politics, meaning that there is less political consensus as there was since the establishment of the region. It is assumed that shifts in political situation has an influence to the performance of the SRD plan. A similarity between the RGBs, is that they have chosen to adopt a governance approach. However, the difference is that the VGR decided this formally in 1999 and the Province in 2010. Not only the year of adoption differs, also the fact that the VGR has chosen governance since its establishment. This means that this is the only approach by which the VGR is governing since they were founded. The Province on the

other hand, used to govern by means of the so-called traditional approach, and replaced this by the governance approach. Since cooperation is both an important element of the SRD plan as well as the governance approach, it is assumed that the governance approach has a positive influence to the performance.

3.5 Conclusion

The previous section has shown that there are similarities and differences between the regions regarding the contextual characteristics. The similarities and differences between the organization of the RGBs, their tasks and responsibilities, and the political situation during the development and implementation process are displayed in table 3.2 of the previous section. The assumptions that are formulated regarding contextual characteristics that might have an influence to the performance of the SRD plan are listed in table 3.3. The contextual factors are displayed in the left column and the corresponding assumptions in the right column. The contextual characteristics that are identified during the empirical research as actually having an influence to the performance of the SRD plan are presented in Chapter 5.

| Contextual factor | Assumption |
|---|--|
| Size of the RGB | It is assumed that the smaller size of the RGB has a positive influence to the performance |
| Formalized position of municipalities | It is assumed that the formalized position of the municipalities in the RGB has a positive influence to the external performance |
| Year establishment RGB | It is assumed that the recent establishment of an RGB has a positive influence to the performance |
| Contribute to SD by national law | It is assumed that the obligation to contribute to SD by national law has a positive influence to the performance |
| Influenced by EU policy | It is assumed that being influenced by EU regional development policy has a positive influence to the performance |
| Existence of policy domain specific steering documents | it is assumed that the existence of policy domain specific steering documents, in the form of long term strategic plans and visions, has a negative influence to the performance |
| Political situation during development | It is assumed that political consensus during the development of the SRD plan has a positive influence to the performance |
| Shift in political situation | It is assumed that the shifts in political consensus have an influence to the performance |
| Governance approach of RGB | it is assumed that the governance approach has a positive influence to the performance |

Table 3.3: Assumptions regarding contextual characteristics

Chapter 4

Analysis plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis with regards to the categories plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics. The 10 pre-listed potential influencing factors that will be empirically tested in the next chapter are organized in these categories and point of departure in this analysis. The analysis is executed per category, where for both regions a description of the characteristics is provided and complemented with the experience and perception of respondents. Each category ends with a comparison of the characteristics of the two regions to discover its similarities and differences. Section 4.2 provides the analysis of the plan characteristics, section 4.3 the implementation characteristics, section 4.4. the stakeholder characteristics, and section 4.5 provides the conclusion.

4.2 Plan characteristics

The plan characteristics relate to the two pre-listed potential influencing factors *‘the process of a collaboratively SRD plan’* and to *‘the quality of the SRD plan’*. These two factors are pre-listed for both the internal and external implementation process. These two factors will be analysed separately from each other within this category, because the processes differ too much from each other. The research objects are the SRD plans of the Utrecht and Götaland region, which are called “Utrecht2040” and “Vision Västra Götaland”. Both SRD plans have the objective to serve as a platform or guideline for how the region should be developed now and in the future. Moreover, it is the intention that it is the plan for the development of the whole region and all parties involved, and not as the sole development plan of the respective RGB.

4.2.1 Process of a collaboratively SRD plan Utrecht

The Regional Council agreed in 2008 that an inclusive long term strategic plan for Utrecht had to be developed¹⁵. The development became the political responsibility of one Provincial Executive. This person assigned the task to the managing director, which in turn, decided that the staff department had to develop the plan. Two project leaders were appointed for the development-group, the project leader “strategy” and the project leader “Monitor State of Utrecht”¹⁶. The group decided to execute and formulate the vision themselves, but with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders were involved by means of six policy makers representing all policy domains by means of a working-group that was formed and chaired by the project leader strategy. The point of departure was cooperation. During the analysis phase, members provided input regarding their policy domain. After this phase, members had to define the development foci relating to their policy domain and give substance to it. Political internal stakeholders were involved by means of members of the Provincial Council in theme sessions and dialogue evenings, but these were not held on a regular base.

External stakeholders were involved during the first half of the process by means of a conference with workshops and inputs moments, where 400 representatives from regional organizations were present. There was more focus on the involvement of external stakeholders during the second half of the process. They were involved and consulted in (expert) meetings, theme sessions, and dialogue evenings. This focus led to the creation of the “Utrecht2040-partner-network”, which will be elaborated on in section 4.3.1. Another conference with 400 participants was organized at the end of the process and used to get commitment of the partners for the SRD plan.

¹⁵ The need for an integrated long term vision existed for a longer time. Two attempts had been undertaken before Utrecht2040. The first attempt was in 2005 en the second in 2007. Both of these plans were not accepted by the Provincial Council, because there was no political support for their development.

¹⁶ This monitor measures the sustainability and quality of the region every other year and provides a current picture of the region in socio-cultural, ecological and economic respect. This is an in-house tool developed by an external party

Experience and perception actors involved

Internal respondents indicate that the development process can be characterized by internal opposing views and interests and a lack of overall internal support for to the development of an inclusive long term plan. This only intensified during the process and there is widespread consensus among the internal respondents that the development process became negatively “political infected”. This means that there was a lot of opposition and resistance within the internal organization of the Province to the SRD plan, which is attributed to political actors and their behaviour.

This was noticeable in the working-group as well. Staff department respondents indicate that they experienced a lack of cooperation from several working group members. Some members on the other hand, indicate that they did not have the feeling that cooperation was the point of departure. They had the feeling that a structure and framework was designed upfront, which was directed at getting the result the staff department wanted. Respondents indicate that they had the feeling that their input was not fully appreciated nor used adequately. There is widespread consensus among the respondents that the process of developing the plan was insufficient.

Most external respondents indicate that they supported the need for the plan, were positive about the Province initiating this, and appreciated how they were involved at the beginning of the process. However, this changed for most of the respondents during the process and their support declined. Respondents indicate that the Province was mostly sending information and not enough input was asked for. Respondents felt that their influence was limited, because the Province did all the analysis and formulated the mission statement. To put it in the words of a respondent, “it felt that the Province had made up their mind already about the content of the plan”. Moreover, several respondents indicate that not the most influential organizations of the region were involved and representatives were coming from all organizational levels. According to one respondent, there was an overrepresentation of Provincial representatives, “it felt like a governmental party”.

4.2.2 Process of a collaboratively SRD plan Götaland

The Regional Council decided in 2003 that the Regional Development Strategy had to be revised¹⁷. The development became the political responsibility of the Regional Development Drafting Committee (RDDC)¹⁸. The RDDC appointed a working group consisting of two regional and two local politicians, who had to report to the RDDC. The developers chose for an open and cooperative development process where internal and external stakeholders were involved from the start. A group of scientists were hired to execute a SWOT analysis, formulate a draft, sent these to the stakeholders for feedback, process the input, and formulate this into an overall vision.

Political internal stakeholders were already involved before the draft was formulated. All political parties were given the opportunity to provide input how the vision should look like. Internal stakeholders of the administrative organisation were in contact with the working group by means a representative from the administrative organisation. This person served as a link between the working group and the secretariats. Both internal stakeholder groups received the drafts and were given the opportunity to provide feedback.

External stakeholders were involved by means of sending the draft version to the 100 most influential representatives of trade and industry, universities and colleges, labour market representatives, local and regional companies. They had several months to give their feedback. Moreover, there was a lot of informal contact with the external stakeholders before and during the feedback period.

Experience and perception actors involved

Internal respondents indicate that the process was characterized by a cooperative spirit and overall internal support of the politicians of the VGR, the local authorities and the administrative organization. The former

¹⁷ This Regional Development Strategy, officially accepted in 1999, consisted of a vision for the region including 10 objectives and corresponding strategic improvement measures with operationalized goals. It served as an all-embracing document and as a platform for efforts aimed at making Västergötland more powerful as an attractive region. According to the former President of the Executive Board Mr. Johansson, this strategy and vision was developed in a short period of time during the establishment of the region in 1999. It had to be revised, because it was not inclusive enough, especially the local authorities had to be included in the planning process.

¹⁸ See section 3.3.2 where RDDCs are elaborated on

President of the RDDC mentioned that they spent a lot of energy and time on getting and keeping the support off all stakeholders along the process.

Internal respondents mention that they appreciated it that they had the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft. They felt that their feedback was processed in such a way that it was taken into serious consideration and used in a proper way. The formal moments, by means of the contact person, was appreciated as well.

The experiences of the external stakeholders correspond to those of the internal respondents. Moreover, they appreciated it that they had enough time to provide their feedback, and that the most influential representatives of the regional organizations were involved in the process.

4.2.3 Quality of the plan Utrecht

The basis of Utrecht2040 forms the analysis executed by the project-leader strategy for which two main documents were used. The Monitor to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the region and a scientific scenario report to identify future trends¹⁹. This led to the identification of three strong points and the challenges of the region²⁰. The analysis resulted in the mission statement²¹ and the six development foci described in table 4.1. The corresponding objectives and policy statements are described in general terms without strict goals or measurable types of indicators²². This makes that they can be categorized in the third type of policy statements, which has been elaborated on in section 1.5. The third type of policy statements are statements of intent without conveying any concrete measures that should be incorporated in other plans and allow maximum room for further specification (Naeff and Kamphuis 1986, in Driessen 1997).

| Development foci | Objective |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1.Spatial | A region which has room for excellent living, working and nature |
| 2.Economy | A region with an innovative knowledge-based economy. With a focus on life sciences, creative economy and sustainability. With changes of participation for everyone. We intensify the transfer of that knowledge to companies and the society as a whole |
| 3.Mobility | A region that is accessible by car, bicycle or public transport in a better environment |
| 4.Climate | A region that is climate-neutral and climate-proof and which is only to a small extent dependent on fossil fuels |
| 5.Societal environment | A region in which all people matter and are able to participate in school in their neighbourhood and in their job. We make use of our cultural facilities for social participation, and create with those facilities breeding grounds for innovative and creative ideas |
| 6.Nature and landscape | A region that preserves its nature and landscapes; our landscapes maintain attractive due to preservation of its uniqueness, a high and dense biodiversity and a well visible cultural history |

Table 4.1: Overview of the six development foci and corresponding objectives of Utrecht2040

Experience and perception actors involved

All internal and external stakeholders indicate that they appreciate the analysis and praise the quality of the plan. There is widespread consensus among respondents that it provides proper insights in the strong points of the region, its weaknesses, and the future challenges. To use the words of one of the external respondents, “it is a solid and reliable analysis that provides insights in the state of the region and calls for action”.

two dominant perspectives were present among internal and external respondents with regards to the rather broadly formulated objectives. One group regard it as positive, because in this way, it is possible to decide for yourself how to give substance to it. They see the objectives merely as guidelines and don’t want to be restricted by strict formulations. The other group regard it as negative, because by formulating it that “vague”, to use the word of a respondent, almost everything fits. Therefore, it loses its value. This group believes that if you want to meet the objectives, they should be defined more clear and strict, and goals should be formulated. According to the staff department, it was the intention to formulate the objectives more strict and there were serious attempts to formulate measurable indicators. However, there was a lot of internal

¹⁹ This scientific scenario report has been executed by the Utrecht University and was ordered exclusively for this project. It is called “Een strategische analyse in het kader van het traject Samen op Weg naar 2040 van de Provincie Utrecht”.

²⁰ This is visually captured in a triangle that forms an important part in Utrecht2040 and can be found in Annex 4.1

²¹ The Mission Statement can be found in Annex 4.1

²² The full description of the six objectives can be found in Annex 4.1

resistance. Staff department respondents indicate that the Provincial Executives and managers of the policy departments did not want Utrecht2040 setting goals for the domains they are responsible for. If these goals were set, it would not get the internal support needed to be accepted by the Regional Council. Therefore, the staff department made a trade-off by formulating the objectives broadly and not formulating measurable indicators. In response, the “3 horizon-approach” for implementation was designed, which will be described in section 4.3.1.

4.2.4 Quality of the plan Götaland

The basis of the vision forms the previous Regional Development Strategy and a SWOT-analysis. The results were processed into a draft vision, feedback was given by internal and external stakeholders, and this was processed and formulated into a final version. The vision is subdivided in three segments; a framework for the entire development process; four general perspectives; and five development foci²³. The five development foci are described in table 4.2²⁴. The five objectives are subdivided in more concrete goals, but no measurable types of indicators have been formulated. This makes that they can be categorized in the third type of policy statements, which have been elaborated on in section 1.5. The third type of policy statements are statements of intent without conveying any concrete measures that should be incorporated in other plans and allow maximum room for further specification (Naeff and Kamphuis 1986, in Driessen 1997).

| Development foci | Objective |
|---|--|
| Vigorous and sustainable trade and industry | It is essential to strengthen the conditions of the existing trade and industry as well as for innovation and the creation of new business. Interaction between the research society, trade and industry and the public sector has to increase. |
| A leading position in competence and knowledge development | A high level of education and research is of paramount importance, to Västra Götaland’s long term development |
| Infrastructure and communications of a high standard | Investment in sustainable and safe infrastructure is of crucial significance to the development of trade and industry in the region and the country as a whole. Efficient and secure freight transportation and public transports are crucial for growth and development. A conflict with the environmental dimension still remains. |
| A leading cultural region | Natural and cultural heritage, cultural history and strong enterprises t give the region an identity and a distinctive character. Culture contributes to the citizens’ personal development, create links between various ethnic groups and individuals and ties the region together. |
| Good health | Health is a central value of “A good life”. Our health is affected by heritage, life style and the environment in which we live. Changes in ways of life, better housing and working conditions and developments in health care and medical treatment have in the long run resulted in better health and increased length of life. |

Table 4.2: Overview of the five development foci and corresponding objectives of the Vision

Experience and perception actors involved

There is widespread consensus among the internal and external respondents that the Vision is of good quality. They mention that there is a clear identification of issues important for the region, the framework is well thought through, the overall formulation is appealing and inspiring, and the objectives provide a clear direction for the development of the region.

The two dominant perspectives with regards to the broadly formulated objectives in the plan were present among the respondents of the Götaland region as well. However, it was only less present among the internal respondents. They indicate that it is obvious that objectives are formulated rather broad, because as they said, objectives in a vision are in general formulated broad, and will get more substance in the strategic plans and or projects derived from that vision. The developers indicate that the objectives are formulated not that strict, because it had to contain all the perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the process. This formulation makes that all of them support and endorse this vision. They have explicitly chosen not to formulate measurable indicators, as they did with the Regional Development Strategy, because they believe that they could not set these for external stakeholders. These parties have to decide for themselves how they can contribute to the vision. Therefore, a method for implementation for external parties is formulated which will be described in section 4.3.2.

²³ The vision, a visual overview of the three segments, and a description on the four general perspectives can be found in Annex 4.2.

²⁴ The objectives of these development foci are elaborated on in the plan document and can be found in Annex 4.2.

4.2.5 Similarities and differences: plan characteristics

The process of a collaboratively SRD plan

Both regions decided to involve internal and external stakeholders in ‘*the process of a collaboratively SRD plan*’. However, the internal and external respondents of Götaland indicate that they were satisfied with their involvement in the process and indicate that they appreciated the development process. The internal and external respondents in Utrecht on the other hand, were not satisfied with their involvement and indicate that they did not appreciate the development process. There was only one external respondent in Utrecht that indicated it was sufficient. There is a difference with regards to the internal support for the development of the SRD plan as well. This was absent in Utrecht, where internal stakeholders indicate that it was characterized by internal opposing views and interests. In the Götaland region on the other hand, there was overall internal support. Internal respondents indicate that the process was characterized by a cooperative spirit. Furthermore, it was the regional Council in both regions that assigned the development of the SRD plan and both development processes took two years. However, there is a difference with regards to the political and the executing responsibility of the development of the SRD plan. In Utrecht, there was one Provincial Executive political responsible and a project-group within the administrative organization responsible for the actual development. In Götaland on the other hand, a whole group was politically responsible, the RDDC, and a project group outside the administrative organization for the actual development.

| Pre-listed factor | Utrecht | | Götaland | |
|--|--|----------|---|----------|
| | Internal | External | Internal | External |
| The process of a collaboratively plan appreciated by respondents | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Aspects regarding the pre-listed factor | | | | |
| Internal support for the development of the plan | No | | Yes | |
| Assigned development of the plan | Regional Council | | Regional Council | |
| Duration development process | 2 years | | 2 years | |
| Political responsible development plan | 1 Provincial Executive | | RDDC – group | |
| Executing responsible development plan | Project group of administrative organization | | Project group outside administrative organization | |

Table 4.3: Similarities and differences The process of a collaboratively SRD plan

Quality of the plan

Table 4.4 provides an overview of the similarities and differences relating to the ‘*quality of the plan*’. Internal and external respondents of both regions indicate that the plans are of good quality. The plans are both based on a solid analysis, which is very much appreciated by both internal and external stakeholders. The plans have a slightly different framework, but the set-up is similar. The plan of Utrecht exists of six development foci and the plan of the Götaland region of five. Both plans formulate the development foci rather broad, some goals are formulated, but without any measurable types of indicators. The objectives and corresponding policy statements of both plans can be categorized in the third type of policy statements. The third type are statements of intent without conveying any concrete measures that should be incorporated in other plans and allow maximum room for further specification. Of the three types, as described in section 1.5, these are the most difficult to determine the extent to which they have been effective (Naeff and Kamphuis 1986, in Driessen 1997). Internal respondents of both regions indicate that it has been an explicit choice to formulate the development foci rather broad, because the plan has to contain all the perspectives of the stakeholders involved. By doing so, it receives support of all these stakeholders. Measurable types of indicators have not been formulated in both regions, because respondents indicate that it is not possible to set these for external parties.

| Pre-listed factor | Utrecht | | Götaland | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Internal | External | Internal | External |
| Quality of the plan appreciated by respondents | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Aspects regarding the pre-listed factor | | | | |
| Amount of development foci | 6 | | 5 | |
| Formulation development foci | Broad | | Broad | |
| Measurable types of indicators | No | | No | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| Type of policy statement | Third | Third |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|

Table 4.4: Similarities and differences quality of the plan

4.3 Implementation characteristics

The pre-listed influencing factors that are categorized in the category implementation characteristics relate to the overall implementation process. In this study, the implementation process refers to the process that ensures that the SRD plan plays a tangible role in the choices of the actors to whom it is addressed and/or to whom the plan appeals. The following four factors relate to the both the internal and external implementation process: *'clear delineation roles and responsibilities'*; *'adequate regulatory system'*; *'sound monitoring'*; and *'sound parliamentary basis'*. The following two factors relate to the internal implementation process: *'adequate information support'*; and *'training and awareness building'*. The following two factors relate to the external implementation process: *'adequate resource support'*; and *'adequate networking and consensus building during implementation'*.

4.3.1 Implementation process Utrecht

The Province states in the plan document that the realization of Utrecht2040 is not an easy task and full of challenges. It can only be achieved by means of the involvement of the regional partners and the commitment of the Province. Therefore, they distinguish between the internal and external process of implementation. These processes have a *'sound parliamentary basis'*, because they have been validated by the Regional Council when they approved Utrecht2040.

The "3 horizon-approach" has been developed for internal implementation and is based on the notion that the six objectives of Utrecht2040 express the desired Utrecht region²⁵. It is believed that these six objectives can be reached by means of medium-long term objectives. These are formulated in strategic policy plans and short term actions resulting from those plans. Since medium-long term objectives are formulated in strategic policy plans, Utrecht2040 should serve as developing framework when developing or revising these plans. Staff department respondents indicate that the 3 horizon-approach has been developed on a very short notice. Therefore, no *'clear delineation roles and responsibilities'* have been formulated. Respondents indicate that there was *'awareness building'* by means of inviting departments on a voluntary base for a *'training'* on Utrecht2040. No other formal actions were undertaken or *'supporting information'* was provided. Furthermore, respondents indicate that there is no *'regulatory system'* system in place. Instead, it was agreed upon that strategic plans send for approval to the Regional Council must refer to Utrecht2040.

The "Utrecht2040-partner-network" has been formed for the external implementation and exists of 30 regional organisations from different business sectors, municipalities, knowledge institutions, and NGOs²⁶. The Network is based on the notion that a sustainable and attractive region can only be achieved when the challenges will be explored and identified by different expertises, angles and interests (Utrecht2040, 2010). The governance approach is adopted for steering the Network and the Province regard itself as one of the partners. The Province states in the plan document that they are convinced of the added value of the Network. However, the specific role of the Network has to be defined (Utrecht2040, 2010:4). Staff department respondents indicate that *'clear delineation of roles and responsibilities'* of both the Network and its members still needs to be defined. Furthermore, the Province facilitates *'networking opportunities during the implementation'* phase and the Network gathers by means of meetings for knowledge sharing. Moreover, the Province and the Network partners have both the possibility to initiate partner-projects. It is expected from the partners that they will contribute substantially to their project by means of energy and money. The Province is not providing *'resource support'* by means of money. They use stimulating instruments such as; a yearly award for the best partner project, attention by means of the website, and attention in the local newspapers. They have chosen explicitly for an incentive instrument and not for a *'regulatory system'* with penalties. Respondents indicate that in case of an overall strategic plan, it is not possible as a RGB to regulate external parties.

Staff department respondents indicate that *'monitoring tools'* are not in place yet, because they did

²⁵ The 3 horizon-approach has been elaborated on in the plan document and can be found in Annex 4.3.

²⁶ Annex 4.4 provides an overview of the partners

not start working on them. However, the plan document describes that the progress of achieving Utrecht2040 will be monitored by means of the method that was used to develop Utrecht2040.

Experience and perception actors involved

The internal respondents indicate that they are aware of the 3 horizon-approach and that it relates to Utrecht2040. However, is not clear to them how it is brought into practice and what their *'roles and responsibilities'* are. All respondents mention that they did not receive any instructions and *'information support'*. One of the respondents recalled that the staff department gave a *'training'* at their department, but does not remember any follow ups. Furthermore, all respondents indicate that they are not aware of *'regulatory systems'*. Respondents do not see the Regional Council as a regulatory tool, because they are not sure whether the Regional Council would reject new strategic plans as soon Utrecht2040 is not referred to.

The majority of the external respondents perceive the Utrecht2040-Partner-Network as formal and static that is not activated yet. They indicate that there is no *'clear delineation of roles and responsibilities'*. The specific role of the Network has not been defined and the majority mention that it is unclear what their role is, what is expected from them, and what the role of the Province is in the Network. They sense that the Province have not thought it through carefully. Moreover, they mention that there are no *'adequate networking opportunities'*. There is no regular contact between the partners, the Province is not stimulating or facilitating this, and the meetings are organized sporadically. The main points mentioned concerning the meetings are; no clear goals, lack of expectation setting, and no follow ups. The majority of the respondents indicate that they are dissatisfied with how the network and the meetings are organized and do not see the added value for their organization. They have also noticed that there is no *'regulatory system'* and are aware of the fact that they do not receive *'resource support'* by means of money. However, the majority of the respondents see the potential of the network and would appreciate it if it is organized differently. There is one respondent who sees the network as an added value to his organization. This is also the only respondent of the partners that initiated projects.

It is needless to say that none of the respondents have noticed any *'monitoring tools'*, since they are not in use yet. However, internal and external respondents indicate that they would appreciate these tools.

4.3.2 Implementation process Götaland

The plan document describes that the VGR and the RALA's are jointly responsible for the process of implementation through the Regional Development Committee (RDC). However, all parties involved in the region are responsible for their own activities and contributing to the vision. Therefore, it is stated that "it is fundamental for each player to decide on objectives, strategy and initiatives for the activity for which they are responsible" (VGregion, 2005:16). The implementation is regarded as a learning development process and based on three concepts and responsibilities, which are as described in table 4.5. This processes has a *'sound parliamentary basis'*, because it has been validated by the Regional Council when they approved the Vision.

| | Concepts | Description |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Objectives, what is to be achieved | Tangible, time-specific and possible to follow-up (measurable). The objectives, set by each player responsible for the activity in question. |
| 2 | Strategy, ways to achieve the objectives | To be decided by the player in charge of the specific activity. |
| 3 | Initiatives - what must be done | To be determined by the player responsible for the specific area |

Table 4.5: learning development process based on three concepts and responsibilities

For internal implementation, the *'roles and responsibilities'* of each secretariat is that they have to decide how they can contribute to the vision. According to the process in table 4.5, secretariats have to use the vision as point of departure and framework for development when developing new strategic plans and projects. Information sessions were held regarding the vision and its implementation for *'awareness building'* short after the vision was approved. However, no other *'information support'* was provided. Furthermore, no *'regulatory system'* has been set up. The developers indicate that the Regional Council can be seen as a regulatory tool. It is

agreed upon that the Regional Council won't accept new strategic plans if the vision is not used as framework for development.

The external parties are self-responsible to contribute to the vision, and the VGR stimulates them by means of giving them the possibility to initiate projects that are in line with the vision. It has been communicated after the approval that external parties can apply for funding. The information is now widely available at the VGR and their website and describes the *'roles and responsibilities'* for external stakeholders and the VGR. *'Resource support'* is provided by means of funding, which is the main instrument that the VGR has at its disposal to stimulate external parties to develop projects. They have chosen explicitly for an incentive instrument and not for a *'regulatory system'* with penalties. Respondents indicate that in case of an overall SRD plan, it is not possible as a RGB to regulate external parties. Furthermore, no emphasis has been put on *'networking of external partners during the implementation'*.

Each player is responsible as well for evaluating and *'monitoring'* their own activities. With regards to the governmental organizations, the VGR and the RALA's are jointly responsible for the monitoring process through the RDC. The RDC is political responsible and assigned the Regional Development Secretariat (RDS) in the administrative organization for monitoring the vision. There are currently five monitoring tools in place²⁷.

Experience and perception actors involved

The internal respondents do not recall the content of table 4.5 by heart, but they do know what their *'roles and responsibilities'* are. Two of the respondents mention that they attended a session after the introduction for *'awareness building'*. None of the respondents recalled that they received *'information support'*. However, they indicate that it was not necessary, because it was clear from the acceptance of the Vision how it should be used. None of the respondents are aware of any *'regulatory system'*. They do know of experience that the Regional Council won't accept strategic plans or projects which are not in line with the vision. However, this is not seen as a regulatory tool by the respondents.

The external respondents are aware of the fact that they have to decide for themselves in which way they can contribute to the vision. However, a few respondents indicate that they are aware of their exact *'roles and responsibilities'*, while the majority indicate that they do not know. Respondents indicate that they know how to apply for *'resource support'* in terms of funding. The majority of the respondents indicate that they know where to find this and is satisfied with the funding, while one respondent indicate that it is not sufficient. Some respondents have experienced *'networking and consensus building during implementation'*. These networks are not specifically organized around the Vision, but the Vision or parts of it are being discussed. All respondents indicate that they are not aware of any *'regulatory system'*. Several respondents indicate this absence as positive. They argue that the RGB does not have the authority to penalize.

The *'monitoring'* tools of the VGR are known by the internal respondents and indicate that they appreciate those tools. Not all external respondents are aware of the monitoring tools. Only two indicate that they are aware of them, of which one indicate that they appreciate the tools, and the other that they are not sufficient. Moreover, external respondents indicate that they monitor their own organizational activities, but that these tools are not specifically pointed towards the objectives of the vision.

4.3.3 Similarities and differences: implementation characteristics

Both regions make a clear distinction between the internal and external implementation process and designed for both an approach. These processes have in both regions a *'sound parliamentary basis'*, because the Regional Councils validated them upon approval of the SRD plans.

The internal approaches are comparable with each other. They both require that the SRD plan should serve as a framework when revising or designing new strategic plans or projects. In both cases the departments/secretariats are self-responsible for the uptake. Internal respondents of Götaland indicate that it is clear to them what their *'roles and responsibilities'* are, while the internal respondents in Utrecht indicate that it is not. Respondents of both regions indicate that there was a lack of *'adequate information support'*

²⁷ See Annex 4.5 for a full overview of the five monitoring tools

concerning the internal implementation. Both regions provided information sessions and *'training'* for *'awareness building'*. A few respondents of both regions participated in these sessions. Furthermore, both regions do not have an *'adequate regulatory system'*. It has been agreed upon in both regions that strategic plans sent to the Regional Council should refer to the SRD plan. However, this is not seen as a regulatory tool in both regions. Respondents in Utrecht are not sure whether the Regional Council would reject new plans as soon the SRD plan is not referred to. While respondents in Götaland indicate that they always have to refer to it. *'Monitoring tools'* are described in both SRD plan documents. However, the VGR has five tools which are appreciated by internal respondents, as compared to the Province, which does not have any in place yet.

The process of external implementation differs. The Province has formed a Utrecht2040-network existing of 30 regional partners specifically for the implementation of the SRD plan. The VGR indicates that all external parties in the region are self-responsible to contribute to the Vision. The Province emphasizes self-responsibility of the external parties as well. The difference is that the VGR stimulates the external parties by means of initiating projects for which *'resource support'* is available in terms of funding. The Province provides the opportunity as well to initiate projects, but do not support the Network partners with funding. They believe that cooperation in the Network stimulates them to contribute to the Vision. However, the majority of the partners are dissatisfied with the Network. Respondents indicate that there is no *'clear delineation of roles and responsibilities'* and they mention that there is a lack of *'adequate networking and consensus building during implementation'*. In case of Götaland, only a few respondents indicate that they are aware of their exact *'roles and responsibilities'*, while the majority indicate that they do not know. With regards to *'networking and consensus building during implementation'*, some respondents have experienced sufficient networking by means of networks which are initiated by the VGR. These networks are not specifically organized around the Vision, but the Vision is being discussed. Furthermore, there is no *'regulatory system'* in both regions. Both RGBs believe that, in case of an overall SRD plan, it is not possible as a RGB to regulate external parties. Furthermore, only a few external respondents of Götaland are aware of the *'monitoring tools'* and appreciate them. The external respondents of Utrecht did not experience them, because monitoring tools are not in place yet. Table 4.6 provides an overview of the implementation characteristics of both regions.

| Pre-listed influencing factors | Utrecht | | Götaland | |
|---|---|----------|---|----------|
| | Internal | External | Internal | External |
| Sound parliamentary basis present | Yes | - | Yes | - |
| Appreciated by respondents | Yes | - | Yes | - |
| Clear delineation roles and responsibilities present | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Appreciated by respondents | N/A | N/A | Yes | No/Yes |
| Adequate information support present | No | - | No | - |
| Appreciated by respondents | N/A | - | N/A | - |
| Training and awareness building present | Yes | - | Yes | - |
| Appreciated by respondents | Yes | - | Yes | - |
| Adequate regulatory system present | No | No | No | No |
| Appreciated by respondents | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Sound monitoring present | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Appreciated by respondents | N/A | N/A | Yes | No/Yes |
| Adequate resource support present | - | No | - | Yes |
| Appreciated by respondents | - | No/Yes | - | No/Yes |
| Adequate networking and consensus building during implementation present | - | No | - | Yes |
| Appreciated by respondents | - | No | - | Yes |
| Aspects regarding the pre-listed factors | | | | |
| Internal implementation approach | Frame of reference for new plans and projects | | Frame of reference for new plans and projects | |
| External implementation approach | Specific Partner Network | | All external parties | |

Table 4.6: Similarities and differences implementation characteristics

* It is indicated behind the pre-listed factor whether it is 'present'. A (yes) means that the factor is present in the region as indicated by the RGB, a (no) that it is not present and a (-) means that the factor is not examined. The row below the pre-listed factors indicate whether the pre-listed factor is 'appreciated by the respondents'. A (yes) means that the factor is appreciated by respondents, a (no) that it is not appreciated, a (no/yes) that it is indicated differently by different respondents, a (-) that the factor is not examined, and a (N/A) that respondents did not make statements about that factor.

4.4 Stakeholder characteristics

The factors in the category stakeholder characteristics relate to the characteristics of the stakeholders and their internal organisation. The following factor relates to the both the internal and external process: *'supportive political leadership'* and *'supportive administrative leadership'*. The following factor relates to the external implementation process: *'committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to sustainable development'*.

4.4.1 Stakeholders Utrecht

The respondents made very clear that two phases can be distinguished regarding *'supportive political and administrative leadership'*. The first during the development phase and the second during the implementation phase. Elections were held just after the development phase ended and another Provincial Executive became responsible. The managing director was replaced during that same period as well.

The Provincial Executive responsible during the development phase is described by internal and external respondents as highly committed to Utrecht2040 and showed *'supportive political leadership'*. The other Provincial Executives and the Coalition as a whole, on the other hand, are described as not as committed. The managing director that was in charge during the development phase is described as someone that was highly committed as well and showed *'supportive administrative leadership'*. Respondents indicate that not all directors of the departments shared the view of the managing director and were not supportive. Respondents even indicate that several directors showed resistance.

The Provincial Executive responsible during the implementation phase is described by internal respondents as not as committed to Utrecht2040 as her predecessor and does not show *'supportive political leadership'*. The same is mentioned about the current coalition as a whole. Several respondents even indicate that a few Provincial Executives are resistant to Utrecht2040. The new managing director is also described as not committed and does not show *'supportive administrative leadership'*. External respondents indicate that they do not notice any *'political or administrative leadership'* anymore.

Unfortunately nothing can be said about the characteristics of the external stakeholders with regards to *'committed and personally driven key-actors within their organisation to SD'*. There are too many different external stakeholders to describe this separately.

Experience and perception actors involved

Internal respondents indicate that the responsible Provincial Executive was very passionate and ambitious regarding Utrecht2040 during the development phase. However, he was very much acting on his own and barely involved other Provincial Executives. There is widespread consensus among the internal respondents that the Provincial Executive made it his own project. This made that his *'supportive political leadership'* was internally not appreciated. However, external respondents indicate that they did appreciate it. Furthermore, respondents indicate that it was the belief of the managing director that the Province needed a more overall strategic outlook and indicate that the his *'supportive administrative leadership'* was internally not appreciated.

Both internal and external respondents indicate that Utrecht2040 is not on the agenda of the current coalition and managing director. All internal respondents indicate that they assume that the current coalition and managing director regard Utrecht2040 as a project of the previous coalition, or even as the personal project of the previous responsible Provincial Executive and managing director. Furthermore, they indicate that Utrecht2040 still has the label of "political infected" in the internal organization.

4.4.2 Stakeholders Götaland

Respondents indicated that two phases can be distinguished regarding *'supportive and administrative leadership'*. The first phase during the development phase and five years after its acceptance. The second phase after the elections of 2010.

The regional and local politicians that were in charge during the first phase are described by internal and external respondents as highly committed to the development of the Vision and showed *'supportive political leadership'*. The managing director is described as committed to the Vision as well and showed

'supportive administrative leadership'. Furthermore, the directors of the secretariats of the administrative organization shared the view of the managing director.

The regional and local politicians in the second phase are described by both internal and external respondents as not showing as much *'supportive political leadership'* as their predecessors. However, it is still described as supportive. The same is indicated for *'administrative leadership'*.

Unfortunately nothing can be said about the characteristics of the external stakeholders with regards to *'committed and personally driven key-actors within their organisation to SD'*. There are too many different external stakeholders to describe this separately.

Experience and perception actors involved

Internal and external respondents indicate that especially the president of the executive board and a local politician promoted and advocated the Vision both internally and externally. Respondents indicate that they believe that these persons were personally committed and were constantly involving all internal and external stakeholders in the development phase. They acted cooperative and inclusive. The managing director cooperated closely with them. Both the *'political and administrative leadership'* of these persons were highly appreciated by all stakeholders.

Both internal and external respondents mention that they experience less *'supportive and administrative political leadership'* in the second phase. However, they made it very clear that they do not regard it as insufficient.

4.4.3 Similarities and differences: stakeholder characteristics

Table 4.7 provides an overview of the similarities and differences relating to the stakeholders characteristics. Two rather comparable phases can be distinguished regarding supportive and administrative leadership. The first phase is characterized by strong supportive and administrative leadership and the second by a decline in leadership. Despite the comparable phases, there are vast differences between the regions. During the development phase, there was one only one politician in Utrecht that demonstrated *'supportive political leadership'*. The other politicians on the other hand, are described as not being as committed. External respondents indicate that they appreciated the *'supportive political leadership'* of the politician. However, internal respondents indicate that it was internally not appreciated. The managing director showed *'supportive administrative leadership'* and is described as very committed as well. External respondents indicate that they appreciated the *'supportive administrative leadership'*. However, internal respondents indicate that it was internally not appreciated. In Götaland on the other hand, both the internal and external respondents indicate that the *'supporting administrative and political leadership'* was present and appreciated during the development phase. It is indicated that all politicians were committed, and two politicians showed especially strong *'supportive political leadership'*.

The implementation phase of both regions are characterized by a decline in *'supporting political and administrative leadership'*. However, the difference is that respondents in Götaland indicate that it declined compared to their predecessors, while respondents in Utrecht indicate that it is not present at all anymore. Some internal respondent even indicate that some of the Provincial Executives are resistant to Utrecht2040. Both the internal and external stakeholders in Utrecht indicate that they do not appreciate the lack of *'supportive political and administrative leadership'*. The internal and external stakeholders in Götaland on the other hand, indicate that the current *'supporting political and administrative leadership'* is not perceived as insufficient.

As mentioned in the previous sections, nothing can be said about the characteristics of the external stakeholders with regards to *'strategic commitment to SD in their organisation'*, or *'committed and personally driven key-actors within their organisation to SD'*. There are too many different external stakeholders to describe this separately.

| Pre-listed influencing factors | Utrecht | | Göteborg | |
|---|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| | Internal | External | Internal | External |
| Development process – 1st phase | | | | |
| Political leadership present | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Appreciated by respondents | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Administrative leadership present | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Appreciated by respondents | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Implementation process – 2nd phase | | | | |
| Political leadership present | No | No | Yes – declined | Yes – declined |
| Appreciated by respondents | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Administrative leadership present | No | No | Yes – declined | Yes – declined |
| Appreciated by respondents | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Pre-listed influencing factors | | | | |
| Strategic commitment to SD | | N/A | | N/A |
| committed and personally driven key-actors within their organisation to SD | | N/A | | N/A |

Table 4.7: Similarities and differences stakeholder characteristics

4.5 Conclusion

The previous sections have shown that there are several similarities and differences between the regions with regards to plan-, implementation-, and stakeholder characteristics. The similarity in the category plan characteristics is that the pre-listed factor *'quality of the plan'* is appreciated in both regions by the internal and external respondents. The difference in this category is that the pre-listed factor *'the process of a collaboratively SRD plan'* is appreciated by the internal and external respondents of Göteborg, while the internal and external respondents in Utrecht did not appreciate the development process.

With regards to the implementation characteristics, both regions make a clear distinction between the internal and external implementation process and designed for both an approach. The internal approaches are comparable with each other. Both require that the SRD plan should serve as a framework when revising or designing new strategic plans or projects. Regarding the internal pre-listed factors: both regions do not have an *'adequate regulatory system'*; respondents in both regions indicate that there was a lack of *'adequate information support'* concerning the internal implementation; both regions provided information sessions and *'training'* for *'awareness building'*; internal respondents of Göteborg indicated that it is clear to them what their *'roles and responsibilities'* are, while the internal respondents in Utrecht indicated that it is not; and the VGR has five *'monitoring tools'* in place which are appreciated by internal respondents, while the Province have none in place. As where the internal processes of implementation are rather comparable, the process of external implementation differs. The Province has formed a Utrecht2040-network existing of 30 regional partners specifically for the implementation and the VGR indicated that all external parties in the region are self-responsible to contribute to the Vision. External respondents in Utrecht are dissatisfied with the Utrecht2040-network, while respondents in Göteborg indicated that the implementation process is sufficient. Regarding the external pre-listed factors: there is no *'regulatory system'* in both regions; *'resource support'* is available in terms of funding in Göteborg, while it is not in Utrecht; respondents in Utrecht and the majority of the respondents in Göteborg indicated that there is no *'clear delineation of roles and responsibilities'*, only a few respondents in Göteborg are aware of it; respondents in Utrecht indicated that there is a lack of *'adequate networking and consensus building during implementation'*, while several respondents in Göteborg experienced sufficient networking; only a few respondents of Göteborg are aware of the *'monitoring tools'* and appreciate them, while respondents in Utrecht did not experience them, because monitoring tools are not in place.

With regards to the category stakeholder characteristics, the pre-listed factors *'supportive political leadership'* and *'supportive administrative leadership'* differs between the regions. Both factors were present in the regions during the development process, but the difference is that it was appreciated by internal and external respondents in Göteborg and only by external respondents in Utrecht. Furthermore, the leadership declined in both regions during the development phase. However, it declined in Göteborg as compared to the predecessors, while there is no leadership in Utrecht at all anymore. Both internal and external respondents in

Utrecht indicated that they do not appreciate this absence, while respondents in Götaland indicated that the leadership is sufficient. Nothing can be said in both regions with regards to the pre-listed factor '*committed and personally driven key-actors within their organisation to SD*', because there are too many different external stakeholders to describe this separately.

The next chapter provides the results of the measurement of the level of influence of the 10 pre-listed factors, as well as other factors that are identified as having an influence to the performance. Moreover, the next chapter provides the results of the performance evaluation of the development foci of the SRD plans.

Chapter 5

Performance evaluation and measuring influencing factors

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the results of the performance evaluation of the development foci of the SRD plans and the results of the identification and measurement of the influencing factors to the performance. Section 5.2 describes the indicators that are used to determine the stages of performance: acquaintance, consideration, and consent. Furthermore, the section describes how the 10 pre-listed potential influencing factors are measured and other influencing factors have been identified. Section 5.3 provides the results of the *internal performance* and the influencing factors of both regions and ends with a comparison of the results to discover the similarities and differences. Section 5.4 provides the results of the *external performance* and the influencing factors and ends with a comparison of the results to discover the similarities and differences. Section 5.5 provides the conclusion of this chapter.

5.2 Indicators stages of performance and measurement influencing factors

This section describes the indicators that are used to determine the stage of performance, how the 10 pre-listed influencing factors have been measured, and how other influencing factors have been identified.

Indicator stages of performance

The indicators for the three gradual stages of performance are displayed in table 5.1. The stage of performance of the two respective development foci of the SRD plans have been determined by means of linking the statements of the respondents with the indicators in table 5.1. The conclusions regarding the overall stage of performance of the SRD plan is based on the level of inter-subjectivity of the respondents. A determination in the stage of *acquaintance* means that the SRD plan performs far below optimal, a determination in the stage of *consideration* means that the SRD plan performs below optimal, and a determination in the stage of *consent* means that the SRD plan performs optimal.

| Performance stage | Indicators | Source |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|
| Acquaintance | Decision-makers read and/or consult the plan during a decision-making process for the development of a plan, project or program | Expert- interviews |
| Consideration | The plan is used as a frame of reference during a decision-making process developing a new plan, project or program, either to structure the debate or as point of departure The plan is explicitly being referred to in a new plan, project or program | Expert- interviews |
| Consent | Actors involved in the decision-making process acknowledge the content of plan, are influenced by it, and change their knowledge and/or visions accordingly. Actors involved in the decision-making process use a problem definition, vision, or solution in line with the information provided by the plan | Expert- interviews |

Table 5.1 Indicators stages of performance

Identification and measurement of the influencing factors

A four-level Likert scale has been used to measure the influence of the 10 pre-listed factors during the implementation phase. The division of the scales is as follows: the factor is 1. not important; 2. a bit important; 3. important; 4. very important. Respondent were given the possibility to indicate whether that factor was present, what their level of influence is, and if it either obstructs or contributes to the performance. The 10 pre-listed factors are categorized in the categories plan-, implementation-, or stakeholder characteristics and have a direct influence to the performance. Furthermore, respondents were encouraged to mention influencing factors that were not pre-listed. They were not restricted to mention factors that are of influence during the implementation phase, but allowed to indicate factors as well that were of influence during the development phase of the SRD plan. All these so-called non-pre-listed factors have been categorized in the category contextual characteristics. These factors are of indirect influence to the performance. The level of

influence of the non-pre-listed influencing factors has not been measured by means of a four-level Likert scale due to time limitations during the interviews.

5.3 Internal performance and influencing factors

The internal performance refers to the performance of the SRD plan within the RGB, because the RGB is the organization that initiated the SRD plan.

5.3.1 Internal performance Utrecht

The evaluation has shown that Utrecht2040 is used when developing new plans or programs. Table 5.2 provides an overview of these plans and programs categorized per development foci. The category “general” refers to plans or programs that did not use specific development foci, but used the entire plan. Important steering documents of the Province, ‘the Coalition Agreement 2011-2015’ and the ‘Strategic Agenda 2011-2015’ used the entire plan, as well as the ‘new overall communication strategy’. The main steering documents of the policy domains economy and recreation, the ‘Economic Vision 2020’ and the ‘Recreation Vision 20120-2020²⁸’, mainly used the economic development foci during the development process. The ‘Provincial Spatial Structurevision’ 2013-2028’ (PSS) mainly used the spatial development foci. It has been determined that the overall internal performance of the two development foci is in the second stage, *consideration*. The text below table 5.2 clarifies this by elaborating on the usage of Utrecht2040 per plan and program.

| Development foci | Used in plans and programs | Respondent* | Explicit reference | Main frame of reference | Changed knowledge | Performance Stage |
|------------------|--|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Spatial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial Spatial Structurevision (PSS) 2013-2028 | R1, R4 | Yes | No | No | Consideration |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kader Nota Ruimte (KNR) | R1, R4 | Yes | No | No | Consideration |
| Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic vision 2012-2020 | R2 | Yes | No | No | Consideration |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Agenda | R2 | Yes | No | No | Consideration |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation vision 2012-2020 | R3 | Yes | Partly | Yes | Consent |
| General | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition Agreement 2011-2015 | RX | Yes | No | No | Consideration |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Agenda 2011-2015 | RX | Yes | No | No | Consideration |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New overall communication strategy Province | R5 | No | Yes | Yes | Consent |

Table 5.2 Utrecht2040 used in plans and programs

* This column shows the respondent(s) that made statements concerning the respective plans and programs. The numbers correspond to the numbers of the respondents in table 5.4 in the next section, where the results of the influencing factors are displayed. RX refers to the respondent that was interviewed, but not able to indicate influencing factors. Therefore, this respondent is not included in table 5.4 and is referred to by RX.

The respondent responsible for the ‘PSS’ and the ‘Kader Nota Ruimte²⁹’ (KNR) R1 indicated that they have used Utrecht2040 as one of the many input documents during its development. The content of the spatial components in Utrecht2040 have been discussed only a few times and did not serve as the main frame of reference. These spatial components have been considered, because as R1 said, “it is the most logical thing to do, because our department gave the input for the spatial components in Utrecht2040. These were derived from own domain vision ‘Streekplan 2030’. Moreover, the analysis in Utrecht2040 is of good quality and we do not want to invent the wheel again”. R1 indicated that Utrecht2040 is explicitly referred to in the ‘PSS’ and ‘KNR’. Another respondent responsible for the ‘PSS’ R4, who was the representative of the spatial department during the development process of Utrecht2040, indicated that they refer to Utrecht2040 only because of political reasons. R4 indicated that they were not influenced by Utrecht2040. However, they refer to it, because “it is a political wise thing to do when Utrecht2040 is accepted by the Regional council and you send

²⁸ Recreation falls under the economic domain as well.

²⁹ The KNR forms the explorative and input document for the PSS

such an important plan as the 'PSS' to the Regional Council for approval".

These remarks correspond to those of the respondent responsible for the development of the 'Economic Vision' and the 'Economic Agenda'³⁰, R2, who was the representative of the economic department during the development process of Utrecht2040. R2 indicated that the economic components in Utrecht2040 are based on their departmental input, used Utrecht2040 as one of the many input documents, continued their regular developing process, and refer explicitly to Utrecht2040, because it is a political wise thing to. Furthermore, R2 mentioned that they refer to Utrecht2040, "because the objectives in Utrecht2040 are formulated so broadly, it does not cause any harm to refer to these objectives".

The interview with the respondent responsible for the development of the 'Recreation Vision' R3 showed a somewhat different picture. R3 indicated that Utrecht2040 served, next to the 'Coalition Agreement' and the 'Strategic Agenda', as the main input document during the development process. R3 indicated that Utrecht2040 is taken as frame of reference and they have learnt from the content of the plan. This changed their knowledge, which had an influence on the objectives formulated in the 'Recreation Vision'. R3 mentioned that "Utrecht2040 steered us in a certain direction that we probably would not have followed without". Furthermore, the 'Recreation Vision' refers explicitly to Utrecht2040.

The way in which Utrecht2040 was used in the development process of the 'Coalition Agreement' and the 'Strategic Agenda' on the other hand, corresponds more to how it was used in the 'PSS' and the 'Economic Vision'. Utrecht2040 and the six objectives are explicitly referred to in these two documents. However, the respondent responsible for the development of the 'Strategic Agenda' RX mentioned that "Utrecht2040 was not used as a conscious tool during the development process, but more as an intuitive". This means that Utrecht2040 is not used as an explicit point of departure or as a main frame of reference. RX indicated that Utrecht2040 is a plan document that stands 'next' to all other steering documents and not 'above' to serve as frame of reference.

The usage of Utrecht2040 in the development process of the 'new overall communication strategy' corresponds more to how it was used in the 'Recreation Vision'. R5 indicated that the content of Utrecht2040 influenced the new communication strategy. The analysis of the strong and weak points that is in the SRD plan provided them with valuable insights. It is almost used one on one for the formulation of the focus areas that are communicated in the communication strategy. However, Utrecht2040 is not explicitly referred to. This has been decided, because the responsible for the communication strategy assumed that if they would do this, it would not get the support of the current Provincial Executives. R5 mentioned that their department noticed internal resistance from both representatives of the political and administrative organization to Utrecht2040 and a lack of internal (political) support. Therefore, they have chosen to reframe the focus areas in their communication strategy it in such a way that no reference is made to Utrecht2040.

The abovementioned results show that Utrecht2040 is used to different degrees in the development process of the plans and programs. The 'new overall communication strategy' and the 'Recreation Vision' are influenced by the content of Utrecht2040, it changed their knowledge, and it influenced the objectives of those plans and programs. However, Utrecht2040 is not explicitly referred to in the 'new overall communication strategy' because the developers assumed they would not get the political support that is needed for the acceptance of the communication strategy. Based on the indicators to determine the stage of performance, the usage of Utrecht2040 during the development process of these plans can be determined in the third stage of performance, *consent*. The results showed that Utrecht2040 has been used to a lesser extent in the development process of the other programs and plans. Respondents indicated that they were acquainted with the content of Utrecht2040, took it into consideration until a certain degree, but it did not change their knowledge nor did it influenced the objectives of those plans and programs. All plans do refer explicitly to Utrecht2040. However, respondents R1 and R2 mentioned that they do refer to Utrecht2040 in the plans and programs, because it is a political wise thing to do. Based on the indicators to determine the stage of performance, the usage of Utrecht2040 during the development process of these plans can be determined in the second stage of performance, *consideration*. It shows that plans have been determined in the third stage

³⁰ The Economic Agenda is the plan of execution of the Economic vision

and in the second stage of performance. However, the overall internal performance is determined in the second stage of performance, *consideration*. It has been determined in this stage, because the plans that are determined in the stage of *consideration* are either the main steering documents of the Province or the main steering documents of the policy domains economy and spatial, which relate directly to the studied development foci. This means that the two development foci in Utrecht2040 are not performing optimally. The factors that influenced the sub-optimal performance will be elaborated on in the next section.

5.3.2 Internal influencing factors Utrecht

The previous section has shown that the two development foci of Utrecht2040 are not performing optimally. Respondents have indicated that this is influenced by both contextual and several pre-listed factors. They indicated that the contextual factors had a vast obstructive influence during the development phase of Utrecht2040 and an obstructive influence to performance. The pre-listed factors were indicated as having either an obstructive or contributing influence to the performance during the implementation phase. The identified contextual factors are listed in table 5.3 and the pre-listed factors in table 5.4. The influence of the factors is elaborated on in the text below table 5.3 and 5.4.

| Contextual factors |
|--|
| Absence overall internal support for the development |
| Traditional role of the Province with sectoral and directive attitude |
| Existence of policy domain specific steering documents and established interests |
| Political situation: turmoil |
| Single political responsibility for the development |
| Internal staff department responsible for the development |
| Unclear position of the SRD plan in hierarchical planning |

Table 5.3 Identified contextual factors

| Pre-listed factors | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Plan characteristics | | | | | |
| Process of a collaboratively developed plan | -3 | -3 | -2 | -4 | X |
| Quality of the plan | +3 | +3 | +4 | +3 | +4 |
| Implementation characteristics | | | | | |
| Adequate information support | | | | | |
| Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities | | | | | |
| Sound monitoring | | | | | |
| Adequate regulatory system | | | | | |
| Training and awareness building for the plan | X | +3 | X | X | X |
| Sound parliamentary basis | +4 | +4 | +3 | +4 | +2 |
| Stakeholder characteristics | | | | | |
| Supporting political leadership | -1 | -1 | -2 | -1 | -3 |
| Supporting administrative executives | -3 | +3 | -2 | +3 | -2 |

Table 5.4 level of influence pre-listed internal factors Utrecht

* The factors are measured by means of a 4-point Likert-scale. The numbers indicate if a factor is perceived as 1. Not important, 2. A bit important, 3. Important, and 4. Very important. The + in front of a number means that the respondent perceived the factor as contributing, the - in front of a number means that it is perceived as obstructive, and the X means that a respondent was not able to score the factor at all. An empty cell means that the factor was not present.

All respondents indicated that contextual factors had an obstructing influence during the development phase of Utrecht2040 and contributed heavily to the sub-optimal performance of the two development foci of Utrecht2040. The influence of the contextual factors during the development phase is described as follows by the respondents.

They mentioned that there was an *'absence of overall internal support'* from the start of the development of Utrecht2040 and there were internal opposing views and interests. According to the respondents, the circumstances were not beneficial for the development of an SRD plan. The development of such a plan requires an environment of cooperation, inclusiveness, and an attitude of integral thinking. However, this was not present during the development phase, quite the opposite. Respondents indicated that this was not present due to the following contextual factors. There was *'political turmoil'* and politics was characterized by its differences and opposition, the Province was still used to its *'traditional role with a sectoral and directive attitude'*, and the *'existence of policy domain specific steering documents and established*

interests'. According to the respondents, managers of the departments did not understand why an inclusive long term strategic plan was needed and did not support the development of the plan. Some of these managers even showed resistance to the development. Furthermore, three other contextual factors have been mentioned as having an obstructive influence and led to a further decline of the internal support during the development phase. These are the following organizational decisions of the Province regarding the development of Utrecht2040. To make only one Provincial Executive political responsible, '*single political responsibility for the development*', to make the '*internal staff department responsible for the development*' of Utrecht2040, and the '*unclear position of the SRD plan in the hierarchical planning*' of the Province. Respondents indicated that several managers and Provincial Executives had the feeling that the internal staff department and the Provincial Executive, their responsibilities in the development process are described in section 4.2.1, were going to interfere in their specific policy domain by formulating integral objectives in Utrecht2040. The unclear position of the SRD plan in the hierarchical planning only increased this feeling, because it made it unclear what influence the plan would have on the strategic outlook of the different policy domains and departments.

Respondents indicated that the aforementioned contextual factors interacted with each other during the development phase, which increased the internal opposing interests and contributed to the negatively '*political infected*' development process, as described in section 4.2.1. They mentioned that this contributed to the absence of overall internal acceptance of Utrecht2040 and gave them the possibility to use Utrecht2040 differently. Therefore, the contextual factors that were of influence during the development phase are indicated by the respondents as very important obstructing influencing factors to the performance.

Furthermore, several pre-listed factors have been indicated as being of influence to the performance as well. Three factors have been indicated as very important influencing factors, of which the factor '*process of a collaboratively developed plan*', described as insufficient in section 4.2.1, is indicated as a very important obstructing factor to the performance. The other two factors are indicated as contributing to the performance. The first is the '*quality of the plan*', which is described as good and appreciated by all respondents in section 4.3.1. Respondents indicated that the good quality makes that they find it worthwhile to consult Utrecht2040 when developing new plans and programs. R3 and R5 even indicated that the good quality of the plan outweighed the other obstructing factors and it was for them the most important factor to use Utrecht2040. The other contributing factor is the acceptance of Utrecht2040 by the Regional Council, '*sound parliamentary basis*', as described in section 4.3.1. R1 and R3 indicated that this acceptance makes that they consulted Utrecht2040, because acceptance by the Regional Council means that it is the official direction of the Province. However, R2 and R4 indicated this an important contributing factor for other reasons. They indicated that they refer to Utrecht2040 in their new plans, because it is politically a wise thing to do. There is another factor indicated as an important contributing factor, '*training and awareness building for the plan*'. However, this factor is only indicated by one respondent as important and indicated as not being of influence by all the other respondents. R2 attended this training, as described in section 4.3.1, while the other respondents did not participate.

The influence of two pre-listed factors is indicated differently. These are the factors '*supporting political leadership*' and '*supporting administrative executives*'; both are described in section 4.3.1 as not being present during the implementation phase. With regards to the administrative leadership, R2 and R4 perceived this as one of the most important contributing factors, because their manager told them to make a reference to Utrecht2040 as a formality. R1 on the other hand, perceived this as an important obstructing factor, because their manager never told them to use Utrecht2040, nor did another administrative executive did this. R3 and R5 perceived this factor as obstructive as well, but indicated this as a bit important. With regards to the political leadership, R1, R2, and R4 perceived the absence as not being of influence to the performance, R3 perceived it as a obstructive factor that is a bit important, and R5 perceived it as an important obstructing factor. R5 indicated that the lack of political leadership made them reframe the content derived from Utrecht2040 in such a way that no reference is made to Utrecht2040 in the new communication strategy.

Furthermore, four pre-listed factors are indicated as not present. These are; '*adequate information support*', '*sound monitoring*', '*clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities*', and '*adequate*

regulatory system'. It has been described in section 4.3.1 that these factors were not present, and according to the respondents, these factors are not of influence to the performance.

5.3.3 Internal performance Götaland

The evaluation has shown that Vision Västra Götaland is used when developing new plans or programs. Table 5.5 provides an overview of these plans and programs categorized per development foci. The category "general" refers to plans or programs that used the Vision as a whole and did not focus on specific development foci. This applies to the 'overall communication strategy' of the VGR. The main steering document of the Regional Development Secretariat, the 'Regional Tillväxt Program 2014-2020' (RTP), used the development foci *vigorous and sustainable trade industry* during their development process. And the main steering document of the Cultural Secretariat, Cultural Strategy 2014-2020', used the development foci *a leading cultural region*. Furthermore, it has been identified that the Vision is the Regional Development Program (RDP) of the RGB. As it has been described in section 3.3.2, this program is obliged by national law and regarded as the main steering document of the RGB. It has been determined that the performance is in the third stage, *consent*. The text below table 5.5 clarifies this by elaborating on the usage of the Vision per plan and program.

| Development foci | Used in plans and programs | Respondent* | Explicit reference | Main frame of reference | Changed knowledge | Performance Stage |
|--|--|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Vigorous and sustainable trade industry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regionall Tillväxt Program 2014-2020 (RTP) | R 1,4,5 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Consent |
| A leading cultural region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Strategy 2014-2020 | R 2, 3 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Consent |
| General | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall communication strategy | RX | Yes | Yes | Yes | Consent |

Table 5.5 Vision Västra Götaland used in plans and programs

* This column shows the respondent(s) that made statements concerning the respective plans and programs. The numbers correspond to the numbers of the respondents in table 5.7 in the next section, where the results of the influencing factors are displayed. RX refers to the respondent that was interviewed, but not able to indicate influencing factors. Therefore, this respondent is not included in table 5.7 and is referred to by RX.

The respondent responsible for the development of the 'RTP' R5 indicated that the Vision is used as the main point of departure and the main frame of reference for the development of the 'RTP'. All objectives formulated in the 'RTP' are based on the development foci and objectives of the Vision. Consequently, objectives in the 'RTP' are heavily influenced by those in the Vision. Figure 5.2 shows visually how the Vision is taken as the point of departure in the development process of the 'RTP'. The circles and the arrows indicate which development foci of the Vision serve as input. Respondents refer to the 'RTP', with its more strategic outlook and formulation of projects and programs, as a more concrete execution of certain parts of the Vision. Furthermore, the director of the Regional Development Secretariat R4 indicated that the Vision is in "the back of the mind" of the administrative officers of the secretariat and always used as the frame of reference when discussing strategic issues. According to R4, the Vision directly influences the actions of the administrative officers of the VGR. This is confirmed by respondents working at the secretariat. R1 works there for two years and indicated that it is the normal way of working that all activities are in line with the RTP and consequently with the Vision.

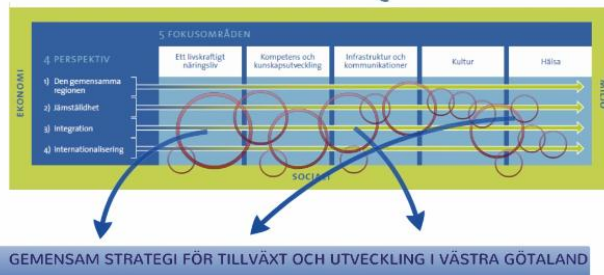


Figure 5.2 Development foci of the Vision serve as input for the 'RTP'

The development of the 'Cultural Strategy' corresponds with the development of the 'RTP'. The director of the Cultural Secretariat R2 indicated that the development foci and objectives in the Vision served as starting point and main frame of reference for the development of the 'Cultural Strategy'. R2 indicated that the objectives in their strategy can be seen as a concrete translation of the development foci and objectives in the Vision that relate to the cultural domain. They refer explicitly to the Vision. R2 mentioned that the VGR works with a so-called "four level hierarchical planning", as described in section 3.3.2, where actions and activities become more concrete in every level and where the Vision forms the red line throughout³¹. In this planning, the Vision is the first level, the second are the domain specific strategies, the third the programs and projects, and the fourth the yearly budget. Furthermore, R2 indicated that the Vision is known among all administrative officers at his secretariat and managers of other secretariats. According to R2, the Vision is regularly referred to in meetings and widely accepted within the VGR.

With regards to the overall communication strategy of the VGR, the entire Vision is taken as point of departure and is explicitly referred to in all communications. The respondent responsible for the communication (RX) indicated that the VGRs aim to communicate in all communications where they stand for and how the region should be developed now and in the future. They do this by means of communicating the Vision and its content.

The abovementioned results show that the Vision it is used similarly in the development process of the plans and programs. These plans and programs are heavily influenced by the Vision. It served as starting point and main frame of reference during the development process of the plans. The objectives in those plans and programs are in line with the content of the Vision and they make explicit references to the Vision. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the Vision is widely accepted by the administrative officers and the content of the plan influences the daily activities of the administrative officers. Based on the indicators to determine the stage of performance, the usage of the Vision during the development process of the aforementioned plans can be determined in the third stage of performance, *consent*. Therefore, it is determined that the overall performances of the two development foci are in the third stage, *consent*. The determination in the third stage of performance means that the two development foci in the Vision are performing optimally. This can be exemplified with a statement of the director of the Cultural Secretariat (R2), "I am working as a director at the secretariat for two years now and worked at other RGBs before, but I have never experienced that a Vision was so widely accepted and has such an influence on the strategic outlook and (daily) activities of a RGB". The factors that influenced the optimal performance of the Vision will be elaborated on in the next section.

5.3.4 Internal Influencing factors Götaland

The previous section has shown that the two development foci of the Vision are performing optimally. Respondents have indicated that this is influenced by both contextual and several pre-listed factors. They indicated that the contextual factors had a vast contributing influence during the development phase of

³¹ Annex 5.1 provides a visual overview of the hierarchical planning of the Regional Development Secretariat to exemplify the four level hierarchical planning.

Utrecht2040 and a contributing influence to performance. The pre-listed factors are indicated as having a contributing influence during the implementation phase. The identified contextual factors are listed in table 5.5 and the pre-listed factors and their level of influence in table 5.6. The influence of the factors is elaborated on in the text below table 5.5 and 5.6.

| Contextual factors |
|---|
| Overall internal support for the development |
| Governance approach with cooperative and inclusive attitude |
| Newly established RGB with little established interests |
| Political situation: consensus and pioneering spirit |
| Shared political responsibility for the development |
| External working group responsible for the development |
| Clear position of SRD plan in hierarchical planning |
| Revision of previous Regional Development Strategy |

Table 5.6 Identified contextual factors

| Pre-listed factors | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Plan characteristics | | | | | |
| Process of a collaboratively developed plan | +4 | +4 | +4 | +4 | +4 |
| Quality of the plan | +4 | +4 | +3 | +4 | +3 |
| Implementation characteristic | | | | | |
| Adequate information support | | | | | |
| Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities | +2 | +3 | +3 | +2 | +3 |
| Sound monitoring | +3 | +3 | +3 | +3 | +3 |
| Adequate regulatory system | | | | | |
| Training and awareness building for the plan | X | X | X | +2 | +2 |
| Sound parliamentary basis | +4 | +4 | +4 | +4 | +4 |
| Stakeholder characteristics | | | | | |
| Supporting political leadership | X | +3 | +4 | +4 | +3 |
| Supporting administrative executives | +4 | +3 | +3 | +4 | +4 |

Table 5.7: Level of influence pre-listed internal factors Götaland

* The factors are measured by means of a 4-point Likert-scale. The numbers indicate if a factor is perceived as 1. Not important, 2. A bit important, 3. Important, and 4. Very important. The + in front of a number means that the respondent perceived the factor as contributing, the – in front of a number means that it is perceived as obstructive, and the X means that a respondent was not able to score the factor at all. An empty cell means that the factor was not present.

All respondents indicated that contextual factors had a contributing influence during the development phase of the Vision and contributed heavily to the optimal performance of the two development foci of the Vision. The influence of the contextual factors during the development phase is described as follows by the respondents.

They indicated that there was an ‘overall internal support for the development of the plan’ from the start of the development of the Vision and there were similar views and interests. According to the respondents, the circumstances were beneficial for the development of a SRD plan. Some respondents even described that these circumstances made that the Vision was developed at “the right time at the right place”. The development of an inclusive long term plan requires an environment of cooperation, inclusiveness, and an attitude of integral thinking. Respondents indicated that this was present in Götaland due to several contextual factors. The region was relatively young and it is a ‘newly established RGB with little established interests’, which contributed to a ‘political situation of consensus and a pioneering spirit’. This spirit is characterized by an atmosphere of optimism, enthusiasm, cooperation, and the believe and consensus to make the region successful. The ‘governance approach with a cooperative and inclusive attitude’, that was chosen during the establishment of the RGB, is very appropriate for cooperation, which is needed for the development of a SRD plan. Besides, the Vision was a revision of an already existing Regional Development Strategy. Respondents indicated that the ‘Revision of this previous Regional Development Strategy’ had a contributing influence, because actors were used to an integral and inclusive plan already. Furthermore, three other contextual factors have been mentioned by respondents that increased the internal support during the development phase. These are the following organizational decisions of the VGR regarding the development of the Vision. The decision for ‘shared political responsibility of the development’ by making the RDDC political responsible for

development of the Vision, to make an *'external working group responsible for the development'* of the Vision, and the *'clear position of the SRD plan in the hierarchical planning'* of the VGR right from the start of the development. By making the RDDC responsible, as described in section 4.2.2., the VGR made sure that all political parties were represented and all interests were heard, the external working group ensured that there was no conflict of responsibilities within the VGR, and the clarity about the plan in the hierarchical planning made that all parties involved knew what influence the Vision would have on their existing activities and strategic outlook.

Respondents indicated that the aforementioned contextual factors interacted with each other during the development phase and increased the internal support for the Vision. This led to the overall internal acceptance of the Vision and its similar usage within the RGB when developing new plans and processes. Therefore, the aforementioned contextual factors that were of influence during the development phase are indicated by the respondents as very important contributing influencing factors to the performance.

Furthermore, eight pre-listed factors have been mentioned as having an influence as well. They were all indicated as contributing during the implementation phase, but their level of importance varies. The factors *'process of a collaboratively developed plan'*, described in section 4.2.2 as sufficient, and the factor *'sound parliamentary basis'*, the acceptance of the Vision by the Regional Council as described in section 4.3.2, are indicated as very important influencing factors. The factors *'quality of the plan'*, described in section 4.2.4 as good, *'supporting political leadership'* and *'supporting administrative executives'*, both described in section 4.4.2 as present and appreciated, are indicated as either important or very important influencing factors. The factor *'sound monitoring'*, described in section 4.3.2 as sufficient, is indicated as important, and the factor *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'* is indicated as important or a bit important influencing factor. The factor *'training and awareness building for the plan'* is only indicated as a bit important by R4 and R5. Respondents R1, R2 and R3 indicated that they did not attend training, as described in section 4.3.2, and indicated this factor as not having an influence.

Furthermore, two pre-listed factors are indicated as not being present. These are *'adequate information support'* and *'adequate regulatory system'*. Both are categorized in the category implementation characteristics. It has been described in section 4.3.2 that these factors were not present, and according to the respondents, these factors are not of influence to the performance.

5.3.5 Similarities and differences internal process

This section provides a comparison of the results of the evaluation of the internal performance and the identified influencing factors of both regions in order to discover the similarities and differences.

Internal performance of the SRD plans

The evaluations have shown that the development foci of both SRD plans are internally used in the development process of plans and programs, including the main steering documents of the policy domains relating to the development foci. A difference between the regions is that Utrecht2040 is used in the development processes of the main steering documents of the RGB, while the Vision is the main steering document of the RGB. Another difference is that the Vision is used similarly in all development processes of the plans and programs, namely as the main point of departure and as a main frame of reference. Therefore, the internal performance of the two development foci of the Vision is determined in the highest stage, *consent*. This means that the two development foci of Vision perform optimal. Utrecht2040 on the other hand, performs sub-optimal. Utrecht2040 is used differently in each development process of the plans and programs and not used as the main frame of reference and point of departure in the development processes. However, it is used to such an extent in the development processes of plans and programs that the internal performance of the two development foci of Utrecht2040 is determined in the second stage, *consideration*. Table 5.8 shows an overview of the stages of performance of the development foci of both SRD plans.

| Region | Development foci | Internal Performance Stage |
|----------|---|----------------------------|
| Utrecht | 1. Economy – A region with an innovative knowledge based economy | Consideration (2) |
| | 2. Spatial - A region which has room for excellent living, working and nature | Consideration (2) |
| Götaland | 1. Vigorous and sustainable trade industry | Consent (3) |
| | 2. A leading cultural region | Consent (3) |

Table 5.8 Internal stage of performance of both regions

Internal influencing factors

Respondents in both regions indicated that their performance is influenced by both contextual and pre-listed factors. Moreover, it is indicated in both regions that contextual factors were of influence during the development phase of the SRD plans and they are indicated as very important influencing factors to the performance of the two development foci. The difference is that all these contextual factors are indicated as contributing to the performance in Götaland and as obstructing in Utrecht. Furthermore, the pre-listed factors that are indicated as having an influence during the implementation phase are indicated as contributing in Götaland, while their influence is indicated differently in Utrecht. They are indicated as either contributing, obstructing, or a factor is indicated as contributing or obstructing by different respondents. The identified contextual factors of both regions are listed in table 5.9, and the pre-listed factors in table 5.10. The text below the tables elaborates on the similarities and differences between the identified influencing factors of the regions.

| Contextual factors | |
|--|---|
| Utrecht | Götaland |
| Factor | Factor |
| Absence overall internal support for the development | Overall internal support for the development |
| Traditional role of the Province with sectoral and directive attitude | Governance approach with cooperative and inclusive attitude |
| Existence of policy domain specific steering documents and established interests | Newly established RGB with little established interests |
| Political situation: turmoil | Political situation: consensus and pioneering spirit |
| Single political responsibility for the development | Shared political responsibility for the development |
| Internal staff department responsible for the development | External working group responsible for the development |
| Unclear position of the SRD plan in hierarchical planning | Clear position of SRD plan in hierarchical planning |
| | Revision of previous Regional Development Strategy |

Table 5.9 identified internal contextual factors of both regions

(+) means that the factor has a contributing influence, (-) that the factor has a obstructive influence

| Pre-listed influencing factors | | |
|--|---------|----------|
| Plan characteristics | Utrecht | Götaland |
| Process of collaboratively developed plan | - | + |
| Quality of the plan | + | + |
| Implementation characteristics | | |
| Adequate information support | | |
| Clear delineation of stakeholders roles and responsibilities | | + |
| Sound monitoring | | + |
| Adequate regulatory system | | |
| Training and awareness building | + | + |
| Sound parliamentary basis | + | + |
| Stakeholder characteristics | | |
| Supporting political leadership | +/- | + |
| Supporting administrative leadership | +/- | + |

Table 5.10 Identified internal pre-listed influencing factors of both regions

(+) means that the factor has a contributing influence, (-) that the factor has a obstructive influence, (+/-) that there is no consensus regarding contributing or obstructive among respondents. An empty cell means that the factor was not present.

Respondents in both regions mentioned that contextual factors were of influence during the development phase and indicated those factors as very important influencing factors to the performance of the two development foci. A comparison of the contextual factors shows the following similarities and differences.

The main difference is that all contextual factors are indicated as obstructive in Utrecht and as contributing in Götaland. All these factors were negatively interpreted in Utrecht and positively in Götaland. Respondents in Götaland indicated that there was 'overall internal support for the development' from the start

of the development of the SRD plan, while respondents in Utrecht indicated that there was an *'absence of overall internal support for the development'* from the start. Respondents in Götaland indicated that the circumstances were beneficial for the development of a SRD plan due to the following contextual factors: *'governance approach with cooperative and inclusive attitude'*, *'newly established RGB with little established interests'*, *'political situation: consensus and pioneering spirit'*, and *'revision of previous Regional Development Strategy'*. This as opposed to Utrecht, where the circumstances were described as not beneficial for the development of a SRD plan due to the contextual factors: *'traditional role of the Province with sectoral and directive attitude'*, *'existence of policy domain specific steering documents and established interests'*, and *'political situation: turmoil'*. Furthermore, three more factors were mentioned in both regions as being of influence during the development phase. These factors relate to decisions of the RGB regarding the responsibility for the development of the SRD plan and the position of the SRD plan in the hierarchical planning of the RGB. Respondents in Götaland indicated that the VGR decided for *'shared political responsibility for the development'* and an equal representation of political interests by making the RDDC political responsible for development of the Vision, avoided internal conflicts of interests and responsibilities by making a *'external working group responsible for the development'*, and was clear from the start of the development phase what type of plan the Vision would be, by giving *'clarity about the position of the SRD plan in the hierarchical planning'*. The Province on the other hand, decided for *'single political responsibility for the development'* and an unbalanced representation of political interests by deciding to make one Provincial Executive political responsible, did not avoid internal conflicts of interests and responsibilities by making an *'internal staff department responsible for the development'*, and was unclear from the start of the development phase what type of plan the Vision would be, by being *'unclear about the position of the SRD plan in the hierarchical planning'*. Respondents in both regions indicated that all the aforementioned contextual factors interacted with each other during the development phase. In Götaland it contributed to the appreciated development process, the overall internal acceptance of the Vision, and to a common understanding of how to use the Vision in the development processes of new plans and programs. In Utrecht on the other hand, the contextual factors during the development phase increased the internal opposing interests and views, contributed to a *'political infected'* development process, the lack of internal acceptance for Utrecht2040, and the possibility to use Utrecht2040 differently in the development processes of new plans and programs. Therefore, the contextual factors are indicated as very important influencing factors to the performance of the two development foci.

Furthermore, respondents in both regions indicated that several of the pre-listed factors had an influence to the performance as well. All factors are indicated as being of influence during the implementation phase. A comparison of the pre-listed influencing factors shows the following differences and similarities. The main difference is that the pre-listed factors are indicated as contributing in Götaland. In Utrecht on the other hand, their influence is indicated differently. They are indicated as either contributing, obstructing, or a factor is indicated as contributing or obstructing by different respondents. The factor *'process of a collaboratively developed plan'*, the process was appreciated in Götaland but not in Utrecht, is indicated in both regions as a very important influencing factor, but indicated as obstructing in Utrecht and as contributing in Götaland. Two factors are indicated in both regions as very important contributing factors, *'sound parliamentary basis'*, plan is accepted in both regions by the Regional Council, and *'quality of the plan'*, the quality is appreciated in both regions. The factors *'supporting administrative leadership'* and *'supporting political leadership'*, the support is present in Götaland and absent in Utrecht, are indicated as important contributing factors in Götaland. In Utrecht, there is no consensus regarding their level influence and whether they are obstructing or contributing. The factor *'training and awareness building'*, present in both regions, is indicated in both regions as a bit important contributing factor.

Furthermore, four pre-listed factors are indicated as not being present in Utrecht and indicated as not having an influence. These are; *'sound monitoring'*, *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'*, and *'adequate regulatory system'*, and *'adequate information support'*. The latter two factors are also not present in Götaland, while the first two factors are present in Götaland, but indicated as relatively less

important as compared to the other influencing factors in their own region. These are ‘clear delineation of stakeholders’ roles and responsibilities’ and ‘sound monitoring’.

Assumptions regarding contextual factors

The contextual characteristics of both regions have been described in chapter 3. Several assumptions have been made at the end of that chapter with regards to the influence of contextual factors to the performance. The evaluation has shown the following assumed contextual factors were indeed of influence to the performance; ‘the recent establishment of the VGR’ had a contributing influence to the performance; the ‘political consensus’ in Götaland during the development of the SRD plan region had a contributing influence to the performance, while the ‘political turmoil’ in Utrecht is indicated as obstructive; the adoption of the ‘governance approach’ had a contributing influence to the performance in Götaland, while the governance approach is not noticed in Utrecht and the ‘traditional role of the Province’ indicated as obstructive; the existence of ‘policy domain specific steering documents’, in the form of long term strategic plans and visions, had a negative influence to the performance in Utrecht, however, this factor is not mentioned in Götaland. The other assumed contextual influencing factors were not of influence to the performance, which are; ‘the difference in size of the RGBs’ and ‘the amount of municipalities’; ‘the obligation of Götaland to contribute by national law to SD’; ‘the vast influence of EU regional development policy in Götaland’; and ‘the shift in the political situation’. Furthermore, it proved that several other contextual factors, for which no assumptions have been drawn up, were of influence as well. Three factors have been identified in both regions and one factor in Götaland: The three comparable factors are ‘internal support for the development of the SRD plan’, ‘division political responsibility for development of the SRD plan’ and ‘executing responsibility for development of the SRD plan’. The identified factor in Götaland is ‘clarity about position of SRD plan in hierarchical planning’.

5.4 External performance and influencing factors

The external performance refers to the performance of the SRD plan of the external stakeholders, because the SRD plan is addressed to them, but they are not the initiators.

5.4.1 External performance Utrecht

The evaluation has shown that there is a variety in the usage of Utrecht2040 by the partners of the Utrecht2040-Partner-Network. Four respondents indicated that they have read Utrecht2040 when it was officially adopted in 2010, that they are aware of the content, but that they have never read or consulted it after. R5 indicated that they have used Utrecht2040 during the development process of a new plan as one of the many input documents, but it did not change their knowledge. R6 on the other hand, indicated that they are heavily influenced by Utrecht2040 and that it changed their knowledge. Due to the large variety in the usage between respondents, it is not possible to determine an overall stage of external performance. Therefore, the performance of R6 is determined in the third stage, *consent*, and the performance of R1-5 in the first stage, *acquaintance*. The point of departure of this study is to determine the performance of two development foci of Utrecht2040. However, during the interviews it became clear that no distinction could be made, because the respondents regard Utrecht2040 as one plan and do not differentiate between development foci. Therefore, the performance is determined for the whole plan. Table 5.11 provides an overview of the usage per respondents and the text below the table elaborates on the usage and clarifies the determination for the performance stage of *acquaintance* and *consent*.

| Respondent | Type organization | Used in plans and programs | Explicit reference | Main frame of reference | Changed knowledge | Performance stage |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| R1 | NGO | No, but aware of content | X | X | X | Acquaintance |
| R2 | NGO | No, but aware of content | X | X | X | Acquaintance |
| R3 | Bank | No, but aware of content | X | X | X | Acquaintance |
| R4 | Municipality | No, but aware of content | X | X | X | Acquaintance |
| R5 | Educational institution | Strategy 2014-2019 | Yes | No | No | Acquaintance |
| R6 | Chamber of Commerce | Two projects | No | Yes | Yes | Consent |

Table 5.11 usage of Utrecht2040 during the development of the programs, projects, and plans

The respondents R1-4 indicated that they have read Utrecht2040 when it was officially adopted in 2010, that it served as a source of inspiration by that time, that they have more or less an accurate picture of the content of the plan, but that they never relate the content of Utrecht2040 directly to their own activities. The four respondents indicated that they have not used Utrecht2040 in any way when developing new plans, programs, projects. The words of R2 are illustrative for these four respondents, "I know that Utrecht2040 exists, it is in the back of my mind, I know roughly what the development foci and objectives are, but it does not influence our activities, and I never reach to it when we are developing new plans, programs or projects".

R5 indicated that they are using Utrecht2040, but only to a limited extent. They have used the plan as one of the many input documents in the development process of their 'Strategy 2014-2019'. They refer to Utrecht2040 in their list with references. According to R5, it is common practice to take strategic documents of organizations in the surrounding area into account when developing a strategic plan, especially those of governmental organizations. However, the information in Utrecht2040 did not serve as a frame of reference, nor were they influenced by the plan in such a way that it changed their knowledge. Besides using it for their strategy, R5 consulted Utrecht2040 several other times. R5 used it as input document for the regular meetings with representatives of the Province in order to get a clear overview of the strategic outlook of the Province. R5 mentioned that he regards Utrecht2040 as an input document to identify common ground between the Province and their organization. To use the words of R5 "Utrecht2040 serves as a great conversation starter".

R6 is the only respondent who indicated that his organization is directly inspired by the content of Utrecht2040 and that it provides their organization with many new insights. These insights arose during the development process of Utrecht2040 and grew along the process. The respondent indicated that Utrecht2040 contributed to their renewed view on regional development and cooperation. They used to have a development view in which the economical component was dominant, but nowadays, their development view is based on the balance between the economic, social and environmental components. This renewed view also influenced their direction and activities as an organization. R6 indicated that their organization developed a project which is based on the principles and content of Utrecht2040. This is now one of their most prominent strategically projects. Just recently, they have developed a new project which is based on the principles of Utrecht2040 as well. R6 indicated that they do not explicitly refer to Utrecht2040, but do refer to the range of ideas and principles of the plan. They do this, because R6 experienced during several presentations that an outlook of 30 years is hard to grasp for people.

The results show that there is a large difference between the usage of Utrecht2040 by one respondent and the usage of the plan by five other respondents. The performance of R6 can be determined in the third stage, *consent*. R6 indicated that they acknowledge the content of Utrecht2040 that it changed their knowledge, and they are acting accordingly. The performance of the other five respondents can be determined in the first stage, *acquaintance*. Respondents R1-4 only read or consulted Utrecht2040, have a more or less accurate picture of the content, but have not used Utrecht2040 in any way when developing new plans, programs, and projects. R5 did use Utrecht2040 concretely, but indicated that the information in Utrecht2040 did not serve as a frame of reference, nor were they influenced by it in such a way that it changed their knowledge. The overall external performance tends towards the stage of *acquaintance* due to the determination of five respondents in this stage and only one in the stage of *consent*. However, the difference between the usage of R6 and the other five respondents is so large, that the determination of an overall performance stage of *acquaintance* would not reflect the outcomes of R6 properly. Therefore, the external performance is determined in both the first and third stage of performance. This means that the external performance of Utrecht2040 is both far below optimal and optimal. The factors that influenced the performance will be further elaborated on in the next section.

5.4.2 External influencing factors Utrecht

Respondents have indicated that their performance is influenced by both contextual and pre-listed factors. The majority of these factors are indicated as obstructing to the performance during the implementation phase and

only a few as contributing. The identified contextual factors are listed in table 5.12, of which the first three relate to the organisational characteristics of the external organisations and the latter three relate to the Province. The pre-listed factors are listed in table 5.13. The text below the tables elaborates on the influence of the factors to the performance.

| Contextual factor | Influence |
|--|--------------------------|
| Type of organization | Obstructing/Contributing |
| Spatial strategic outlook of organization | Obstructing/Contributing |
| Internal organization | Obstructing |
| Behaviour of the Province | Obstructing |
| Traditional role of Province | Obstructing |
| Relational history between Province and organization | Obstructing |

Table 5.12 Identified contextual factors

| Factor | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | R6 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Plan characteristics | | | | | | |
| Process of a collaboratively developed plan | -3 | X | -4 | -4 | X | +4 |
| Quality of the strategic plan | -4 | -2 | +1 | +1 | -3 | +3 |
| Implementation characteristic | | | | | | |
| Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities | -3 | -3 | -4 | X | X | +2 |
| Sound monitoring | | | | | | |
| Adequate networking and consensus building during implementation | -3 | -4 | -3 | X | -3 | +3 |
| Adequate resource support | -3 | -3 | -1 | X | -3 | -1 |
| Adequate regulatory system | -3 | -3 | -2 | X | -2 | +2 |
| Stakeholder characteristics | | | | | | |
| Supporting political leadership | -3 | -3 | -2 | X | -3 | -2 |
| Supporting administrative leadership | -3 | -3 | -2 | X | -3 | -2 |
| Committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to sustainable development | +1 | +1 | +1 | +1 | +3 | +4 |

Table 5.13 External pre-listed process factors Utrecht

* The factors are measured by means of a 4-point Likert-scale. The numbers indicate if a factor is perceived as 1. Not important, 2. A bit important, 3. Important, and 4. Very important. The + in front of a number means that the respondent perceived the factor as contributing, the - in front of a number means that it is perceived as obstructive, and the X means that a respondent was not able to score the factor at all. An empty cell means that the factor was not present.

The evaluations have shown that contextual factors relating to the organisational characteristics of the external organisations influence the extent external organisations are able to use Utrecht2040 now and in the future. These are the contextual factors 'type of organization', 'strategic spatial outlook of the organization', and 'internal organization'. Respondents R1 (NGO), R2 (NGO), and R6 (Chamber of Commerce) have indicated that they are potentially able to use Utrecht2040 to a large extent due to their 'type of organization' and 'strategic spatial outlook of the organization'. These three organisations operate mostly on a regional level and are actively looking for cooperation at that level. Therefore, they perceive these factors as contributing. Respondents R3 (financial organization), R4 (municipality), and R5 (educational institution) on the other hand, have indicated that they are only able to use Utrecht2040 to a limited extent due to the two aforementioned factors. R3 and R5 indicated that their strategic outlook is regional, national, and international. However, the national and international levels are the most important, which makes that they are not so much influenced by regional objectives and interests. Therefore, they perceive these contextual factors as obstructing to the performance. The argumentation of R4 is similar with regards to their main focus level, the difference is that their most important level is the local. Furthermore, R3 mentioned their 'internal organization' as an obstructing factor. Their organization is organized on the local and national level, which does not correspond with the regional focus of Utrecht2040. To put it in the words of R3 "Utrecht2040 falls in between our organization".

The aforementioned contextual factors proved to be the most important influencing factors to the performance of R6, for which the performance is determined as optimal. The respondent indicated that they

use Utrecht2040 to such a large extent, because their core activities as a regional network organisation for business correspondents perfectly with the aim and objectives of Utrecht2040. R6 indicated as well that this influenced their positive appreciation for the pre-listed factors. The majority of the pre-listed factors are indicated by R6 as contributing, which is shown in table 5.13. This as opposed to the other respondents, R1-5, who indicated almost all pre-listed factors as obstructing to the performance. The performance of the five respondents is determined as far below optimal. They indicated that not the contextual factors relating to their organizational characteristics were the most important influencing factors to their performance, but several of the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the Province. Respondents R1 and R2, who are potentially able to use Utrecht2040 to a large extent due to their organizational characteristics, indicated that several of the pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the Province obstructed their usage. The same holds for respondents R3, R4, and R5. They indicated that even though they are only able to use Utrecht2040 to a limited extent, they would have been able to use it to a larger extent as they use it now, because several of the pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the Province obstructed their usage.

Six of the pre-listed factors and three contextual factors relating to the Province are indicated as (very) important obstructing factors to the performance. The first pre-listed factor is *'process of a collaboratively developed plan'*, described in section 4.2.1 as insufficient. R4 even indicated that this was the most important obstructing factor for not being active in the implementation phase. This explains the X scores for the pre-listed factors of R4 in table 5.13. R4 indicated as well that the contextual factor, *'relational history between Province and organization'*, there is historically a power struggle between the municipality and the Province, had a vast obstructing influence. A combination of both factors led to the decision not to be active in the Utrecht2040-Partner-Network. The majority of the respondents that are active in the Utrecht2040-Partner-Network, R1-4, perceived the Network as unsatisfactory and insufficient, as described in section 4.3.1. These respondents indicated three factors relating to the Network as very important obstructing factors to the performance, which are: *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'*, *'adequate networking and consensus building during implementation'*, and *'adequate regulatory system'*. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the two factors *'supporting political leadership'* and *'supporting administrative leadership'* are (very) important obstructing factors as well. This support is indicated as not being present during the implementation phase, as described in section 4.4.1 and respondents indicated that they miss this support and commitment. To put it in the words of one respondent; "by not seeing any commitment from the highest representatives, both political and administrative, I feel that Utrecht2040 lost its holy fire within the Province, so why should I commit myself to Utrecht2040?". Two more contextual factors relating to the Province are indicated by respondents as important obstructing factors. Even though the Province adopted the governance approach, as described in section 3.3.1, respondents mentioned that the Province is still acting traditional and indicated the *'traditional role of the Province'* as obstructing. They do not appreciate this way of governing during the implementation of a plan that requires cooperation and equality. One respondent mentioned that the *'behaviour of the Province'* is not in line with Utrecht2040 and indicated this as one of the most important factors for them not using Utrecht2040. R2 argues that the social domain is one of the development foci in Utrecht2040. However, the Province is not taking responsibility for that domain anymore, because it was decided in the 'Coalition Agreement 2011-2015' that the social domain is not a focus area anymore.

Three pre-listed factors are indicated differently with regards to their level of importance and whether they are obstructive or contributing to the performance. The factor *'quality of the plan'* is appreciated as described in section 4.2.3. However, respondents R1, 2 and 5 indicated that they miss clear goals and an execution program. Therefore, they indicated the factor as obstructive. Respondents R3 and R4 praise the quality of the plan, but do not regard this as important. They argue that the quality of the plan is good, but this is outweighed by too many other obstructing factors. The factor *'adequate resource support'*, there are no funds available as described in section 4.3.1, is scored differently as well. Respondents R1, 2 and 5 indicated that the absence of funding is an important obstructive factor, while R3 and R6 indicated that this is not important. R3 for instance, indicated that resources is not a problem for them, while R1 and R2, indicated that their resources are limited and they want to see something in return when spending time, money, and energy. Furthermore, the factor *'committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to SD'* is

indicated as not important by the respondents that have only read Utrecht2040, R1, 2, 3, 4, while respondents that use Utrecht2040 to a larger extent, R5 and R6, indicated that this is an important contributing factor. R1, 2, 3, and 4 argue that this factor is present within their organization, but that its potential is not capitalized on due to too many other obstructive factors.

Furthermore, the factor 'sound monitoring' has not been scored, because it this factor is not present, as indicated in section 4.3.1.

5.4.3 External performance Götaland

The evaluation has shown that the Vision is used by external parties. However, there is a wide variety in its usage. R1 indicated that they are aware of the content, but do not use the Vision as input document when developing new plans, programs or projects. R2 indicated that they do use the Vision, but only as one of the many input documents. R3, 4 and 5 on the other hand, indicated that they use the Vision intensively and that the content changed their knowledge. Due to the wide variety in the usage of the Vision, it is not possible to determine an overall stage of the external performance. Therefore, the performance of R1 and R2 has been determined in the first stage, *acquaintance*, and the performance of R3, 4 and 5 in the third stage, *consent*. The point of departure of this study is to determine the performance of two development foci of the Vision. However, during the interviews it became clear that no distinction could be made, because the respondents regard the Vision as one plan and do not differentiate between development foci. Therefore, the performance is determined for the whole plan. Table 5.14 provides an overview of the usage per respondents and the text below the table elaborates on the usage and clarifies the determination for the performance stages of *acquaintance* and *consent*.

| Res pon dent | Type of organization | Used in plans and programs | Explicit reference | Frame of reference | Changed knowledge and influenced | Performance stage |
|--------------|--|--|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| R1 | Educational institution | No, but aware of content | X | X | X | Acquaintance |
| R2 | Educational institution | Yes, New Strategic Plan | No | No | No | Acquaintance |
| R3 | Regional Association of Local Authority (RALA) | Yes, Development Program 2013 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Consent |
| R4 | Regional Association of Local Authority (RALA) | Yes, Development Program 2008-2013 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Consent |
| R5 | Federation of business owners | Yes, Strategic plan and mostly all projects of their members | Yes | Yes | Yes | Consent |

Table5.14 Usage of the Vision during the development process of the programs, projects, and plans

R1 indicated that they are aware of the content of the Vision, have read it several times, but have never used it as input document when developing new plans, programs or projects. They have consulted it several times in order to find out what the parallels are with their own strategy and activities. They have identified an overlap, but according to R1, they are not influenced by the content of the Vision. R1 indicated that they regard the Vision as a document that gives clarity about what the VGR is aiming for, where they stand for as a RGB, and what their objectives are.

R2 shares a similar view with regards to the Vision. They have consulted the Vision several times in order to get a clear overview of the strategic outlook of the VGR, and to identify common ground between their organization and the VGR. Furthermore, they have used the Vision as one of the many input documents during the development process of their new strategic plan. According to R2, it is common practice to take strategic plans and visions of relevant stakeholders into account when developing a new strategy. However, they have not used it as main frame of reference, and according to R2, they are not influenced by the content of the Vision. They also do not refer explicitly to the Vision in their new strategic plan.

R3 indicated that the Vision plays an important role within their organization. They use the Vision regularly, are inspired by its content, changes their knowledge, and it influences many of their actions. R3 indicated that it is used as a tool that guides them in their development activities. Moreover, it is used as a starting point for discussions with external stakeholders. Recently, the Vision has been used as the main point

of departure and frame of reference during the development process of their Development Program 2013.

R4 indicated as well that the Vision plays an important role within their organization. It has been used as the main point of departure and frame of reference during the development process of their Development Program 2018-2013. Furthermore, R4 indicated that the Vision played a very important role during the establishment of their organization in 2007. The organization, a RALA, based the five development departments that they have created on the five development foci of the Vision. Moreover, R4 indicated that the economic development view used to be the dominant view in their area. However, this changed since the introduction of the Vision. Nowadays, the sustainable development view is the dominant development view. According to R4, this change can to a large extent be attributed to the Vision.

R5 indicated that the Vision is used as a frame of reference when start-ups or business owners develop new projects. They use it to find out which development areas are important and how businesses could contribute. R5 indicated that the Vision is either used by start-ups or business to gain ideas for new projects or business development, or that they make a reference to the Vision after a project is almost at the end of the development process. Furthermore, R5 indicated that the Vision influenced the strategy of the Federation of business owners itself, and the content of the Vision changed their knowledge.

The results show that there is a large difference between the usage of the Vision by respondents R1 and R2 and the usage of the plan by respondents R3, 4, and 5. Respondents R3, 4 and 5 indicated that they are influenced by the content of the Vision, that it changed their knowledge, and that they are acting accordingly. Therefore, the performance of these three respondents is determined in the stage of *consent*. The respondents R1 and R2 on the other hand, only used the Vision to a limited extend. They have consulted the Vision several times, R2 used it as one of the many input documents during the development process of their strategic plan, but it did not serve as a frame of reference, nor were they influenced by it in such a way that it changed their knowledge. Therefore, the performance of these two respondents is determined in the stage of *acquaintance*. Due to the large differences in the usage of the Vision between the respondents, it is not possible to determine an overall external performance. An overall stage of performance would not reflect the outcomes properly. Therefore, the performance is determined in both the performance stage of *acquaintance* and *consent*. This means that the external performance of the Vision is far below optimal for one group of respondents and optimal for another group. The factors that influenced this will be further elaborated on in the next section.

5.4.4 External influencing factors Götaland

Responds have indicated that their performance is influenced by both contextual and pre-listed factors. The majority of these factors are indicated as contributing to the performance during the implementation phase and only a few as obstructing. The identified contextual factors are listed in table 5.15, of which the first three relate to the organisational characteristics of the external organisations and the latter three relate to the VGR. The pre-listed factors are listed in table 5.16. The text below the tables elaborates on the influence of the factors to the performance.

| Contextual factor | Influence |
|---|--------------------------|
| Type of organization | Obstructing/Contributing |
| Spatial strategic outlook of organization | Obstructing/Contributing |
| Governed by other governmental levels | Obstructing |
| Sustainable behaviour of VGR | Contributing |
| Regular cooperations with the VGR | Contributing |
| Governance approach | Contributing |
| Connection with EU funding | Contributing |

Table: 5.15 Identified contextual factors

| Factor | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Plan characteristics | | | | | |
| Process of a collaboratively developed plan | +3 | X | +3 | +4 | +4 |
| Quality of the strategic plan | X | +3 | +3 | +3 | +4 |
| Implementation characteristics | | | | | |
| Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities | X | X | X | +3 | X |
| Sound monitoring | +2 | -2 | X | X | X |
| Adequate networking and consensus building during implementation | +2 | X | +3 | X | X |
| Adequate resource support | +1 | +1 | +3 | +3 | +3 |
| Adequate regulatory system | | | | | |
| Stakeholder characteristics | | | | | |
| Supporting political leadership | +3 | +3 | +3 | +4 | +4 |
| Supporting administrative leadership | +3 | +3 | +4 | +3 | +3 |
| Committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to sustainable development | +3 | +3 | +3 | +3 | +3 |

Table 5.16: Results pre-listed influencing factors external performance

* The factors are measured by means of a 4-point Likert-scale. The numbers indicate if a factor is perceived as 1. Not important, 2. A bit important, 3. Important, and 4. Very important. The + in front of a number means that the respondent perceived the factor as contributing, the - in front of a number means that it is perceived as obstructive, and the X means that a respondent was not able to score the factor at all. An empty cell means that the factor was not present.

The evaluations have shown that contextual factors relating to the organisational characteristics of the external organisations influence the extent external organisations are able to use Utrecht2040 now and in the future. These are the factors ‘type of organization’, ‘strategic spatial outlook of the organization’, and ‘governed by the national governmental level’. The respondents R3 (RALA), R4 (RALA), and R5 (Federation of business owners) have indicated that they are potentially able to use the Vision to a large extent due to their ‘type of organization’ and ‘strategic spatial outlook of the organization’. These three organisations operate mostly on a regional level and are actively looking for cooperation at that level. Therefore, they perceive these factors as contributing to the performance. Respondents R1 (educational institution) and R2 (educational institution) on the other hand, have indicated that they are only able to use the Vision to a limited extent due to the two aforementioned factors. R1 and R2 indicated that their strategic outlook is regional, national, and international, of which the national and international are the most important. This makes that they are not so much influenced by regional objectives and interests. To use the words of R1, “the strategic requirements that are asked to be fulfilled in the SRD plan do not meet our national and international objectives and outlook”. Therefore, they perceive these contextual factors as obstructing to the performance. Furthermore, R1 and R2 mentioned another contextual factor relating to their organisational characteristics as obstructing. Both respondents indicated that they are located in the region, but they are not governed by that level of government. They are ‘governed by the national governmental level’, which makes that the educational institutions adhere more to national objectives.

The aforementioned contextual factors proved to be the most important obstructing factors to the performance of R1 and R2, for which the performance is determined as far below optimal. They have indicated that several of the pre-listed factors contribute to their performance as well, as displayed in table 5.16. However, they make it very clear that they are not able to use the Vision to a larger extent due to their organisational characteristics; therefore, the pre-listed factors are not as important as those contextual factors. The other respondents, R2, R3 and R5, for which the performance is determined as optimal, indicated that contextual factors relating to their organisational characteristics are important contributing factors as well. However, they indicated that several of the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the VGR are the most important contributing factors to their performance. All three respondents are organisations that are potentially able to use the Vision to a large extent due to their organisational characteristics.

Five pre-listed factors and three contextual factors relating to the VGR are indicated as (very) important contributing factors. These are the pre-listed factors ‘process of a collaboratively developed plan’, described as sufficient in section 4.2.2, ‘quality of the plan’, described as good in section 4.2.3, ‘supporting political leadership’, ‘supporting administrative leadership’, both described as present in section 4.4.2, and

'committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to SD'. Furthermore, the contextual factor *'governance approach'*, which the VGR adopted since its establishment as described in section 3.3.2, is mentioned by all respondents as contributing. Respondents mentioned that they appreciate this way of governing and that it is very constructive during the implementation of a plan that requires cooperation and equality. Another contributing contextual factor relating to the Province is *'sustainable behaviour of the VGR'*. R3, 4 and 5 mentioned that the VGR is committed to sustainability and leading by example since its establishment in 2001. To put it in the words of R4: "their sustainable behaviour gives a positive signal and motivates us to act sustainable as well". R4 is the only respondent who mentioned that the contextual factor *'connection with EU funding'* is an important influencing factor to their performance. R4 translates objectives of the Vision into their own local Regional Tilvaxt Program (RTP) in order to get funding from the EU. The connection between the Vision (which is the RDP) and the RTP has been elaborated on in section 3.3.2.

Four pre-listed factors are indicated differently with regards to their level of importance. The factor *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'* is only indicated by R4 as present and contributing to the performance, while the other respondents indicated that they are not aware of the factor. Respondents R3, 4 and 5 indicated that they are not aware of *'sound monitoring'*, even though the VGR indicated it as being present, as described in section 4.3.2. R1 and R2 are aware of monitoring and R2 indicated it as a bit important obstructing factor and R1 as a bit contributing factor. Only a few respondents have experienced *'networking and consensus building during implementation'*, as described in section 4.3.2. These networks are not specifically organized around the Vision, but the Vision or parts of it are being discussed. R1 and R3 experienced these networks and indicated it as contributing, while R2, 4 and 5 did not experience those networks. The factor *'adequate resource support'*, the VGR has funding available as described in section 4.3.2, is perceived differently as well. This proved to be an important contributing factor for R3, 4 and 5. R5 for instance, indicated that they rely on funding and argue that they would not have used the Vision until this extent if they would not receive any funding. R 1 and 2 on the other hand, indicated that resource support is not important.

Furthermore, the factor *'adequate regulatory system'* has not been scored, because the factor is not present, as described in section 4.3.2.

5.4.5 Similarities and differences external process

This section provides a comparison of the results of the evaluation of the external performance and the identified influencing factors of both regions in order to discover the similarities and differences.

External performance of the SRD plans

The evaluations have shown that there is a wide variety in the usage of the SRD plans by external organizations in both regions. Due to the wide variety in the usage of the SRD plans it proved not to be possible to determine an overall stage of performance in both regions. An overall stage of performance would not reflect the outcomes properly. Therefore, the stages of performance of the respondents are followed to determine the external performance of the SRD plans. In both regions, the external performance is determined in the performance stage of *acquaintance* and in the performance stage of *consent*. This means that the external performance is far below optimal for one group of respondents and optimal for another group in both regions. The equal determination of stages of performance makes that it looks like that the external performance of the SRD plans is rather similar. However, the external performance in Utrecht tends more towards the stage of *acquaintance* due to the determination of five respondents in this stage and only one respondent in the stage of *consent*. While in Götaland, three respondents are determined in the performance stage of *consent* and two respondents in the stage of *acquaintance*. Furthermore, it proved in both regions not possible to determine the performance of two development foci of the SRD plans. It was the point of departure of this study to evaluate two selected development foci. However, external respondents indicated that they regard the SRD plan as one plan and do not differentiate between development foci. Therefore, statements regarding the stage of performance relate to the entire SRD plans. Table 5.17 provides an overview of the stages of performance of

both regions and the text below the table elaborates on the similarities and differences between the influencing factors to the performance.

| Region | Development foci | External Performance Stage |
|----------|--|----------------------------------|
| Utrecht | Does not relate to a specific development foci, but to the entire SRD plan | Acquaintance (1) and Consent (3) |
| Götaland | Does not relate to a specific development foci, but to the entire SRD plan | Acquaintance (1) and Consent (3) |

Table 5.17: Stage of performance of both regions

External influencing factors

Respondents in both regions indicated that their performance is influenced by both contextual and pre-listed factors. What stands out in both regions is that contextual factors relating to the organisational characteristics of the external organisations influences the extent they are able to use the SRD plan now and in the future. It showed that not every organization is able to reach each stage of performance as defined in this study. Furthermore, the majority of the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the VGR proved to be important influencing factors as well to the performance. However, the difference between the regions is that the majority of the factors are indicated as contributing in Götaland, while the influence of the factors is indicated differently in Utrecht. They are indicated as either contributing, obstructing, or a factor is indicated as contributing or obstructing by different respondents. The identified contextual factors of both regions and their influence are listed in table 5.18, and the pre-listed factors in table 5.19. The text below the tables elaborates on the similarities and differences between the identified influencing factors.

| Contextual factors | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| Utrecht | | Götaland | |
| Type of organization | +/- | Type of organization | +/- |
| Spatial strategic outlook of organization | +/- | Strategic spatial outlook of organization | +/- |
| Internal organization | - | Governed by other governmental levels | - |
| Behaviour of the Province | - | Sustainable behaviour of VGR | + |
| Traditional role of Province | - | Governance approach | + |
| Relational history between Province and organization | - | Connection with EU funding | + |

Table 5.18 identified external contextual factors of both regions

(+) means that the factor has a contributing influence, (-) that the factor has a obstructive influence, (+/-) that there is no consensus regarding contributing or obstructive among respondents

| Pre-listed influencing factors | | |
|---|---------|----------|
| Plan characteristics | Utrecht | Götaland |
| Process of collaboratively developed plan | +/- | + |
| Quality of the plan | +/- | + |
| Implementation characteristics | | |
| Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities | +/- | + |
| Sound monitoring | | + |
| Adequate networking and consensus building during implementation | +/- | + |
| Adequate resource support | +/- | +/- |
| Adequate regulatory system | +/- | |
| Stakeholder characteristics | | |
| Political leadership | +/- | + |
| Administrative leadership | +/- | + |
| Committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to sustainable development | + | + |

Table 5.19 identified external pre-listed factors of both regions

(+) means that the factor has a contributing influence, (-) that the factor has a obstructive influence, (+/-) that there is no consensus regarding contributing or obstructive among respondents, and (X) that the factor is not present

The contextual factors 'type of organization' and 'spatial strategic outlook of the organization' are mentioned in both regions as the factors that are of influence to the extent external organizations are able to use the SRD plan now and in the future. The educational institutions in both regions and the municipality and the financial organization in Utrecht indicated that they are only able to use the SRD plan to a limited extent, while the other

respondents indicated they are potentially able to use it to a larger extent. The latter group indicated the factors as contributing, while the former group as obstructing. The respondents in Utrecht that are only able to use the SRD plan to a limited extent mentioned another obstructing contextual factor, *'internal organization'*. And the respondents in Götaland that are only able to use the SRD plan to a limited extent mentioned the obstructing factor *'governed by the national governmental level'*. It proved in both regions that the aforementioned contextual factors are the most important influencing factors to the performance of several respondents. This holds for the two educational institutions in Götaland and for the Chamber of Commerce in Utrecht. The two educational institutions are the two organizations that are only able to use the SRD plan to a limited extent and perform far below optimal. They indicated that several pre-listed factors were contributing as well, but those are not as important as the aforementioned contextual factors. The Chamber of Commerce in Utrecht is an organization that is potentially able to use the SRD plan to a large extent and performs optimal. This is the only organization in Utrecht that indicated most of the pre-listed factors as contributing, which explains all the +s in table 5.19. However, they indicated that those are not as important as the aforementioned contextual factors.

Five respondents in Utrecht did not indicate the aforementioned contextual factor as the most important influencing factors, but the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the Province. They indicated those factors as important obstructing factors to the performance. All five organizations perform far below optimal. Two of these organizations are potentially able to use the SRD plan to a large and three organizations are only able to use it to a limited extent. Three respondents in Götaland indicated the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the VGR as important influencing factors as well. However, the differences between Utrecht is that they indicated all factors as contributing, they all perform optimal, and all three respondents are organizations that are able to use the SRD plan to a large extent. A comparison of the pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the RGB shows the following differences and similarities.

Three contextual factors relating to the RGB have been mentioned in both regions as important influencing factors to the performance. These factors are indicated as important contributing factors to the performance in Götaland and as important obstructing factors to the performance in Utrecht. In Götaland, these are *'governance approach'*, *'sustainable behaviour of the VGR'* and *'connection with EU funding'*. In Utrecht these are *'relational history between Province and organization'*, *'traditional role of the Province'* and *'Behaviour of the Province'*.

Three pre-listed factors are indicated in both regions as very important influencing factors, but indicated as obstructing by the majority of the respondents in Utrecht and as contributing by all respondents in Götaland. These are the factors *'process of collaboratively developed plan'*, the process was appreciated in Götaland and not appreciated in Utrecht, *'supporting political leadership'* and *'supporting administrative leadership'*, the support is present in Götaland and not present in Utrecht. Three pre-listed factors are indicated as very important obstructing factors in Utrecht. These factors relate to the Utrecht2040-Partner-Network, which is not appreciated by the majority of the respondents. These are the factors *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'*, *'adequate networking and consensus building during implementation'*, and *'adequate regulatory system'*. In Götaland, the latter factor is not present and the other two factors are indicated as contributing, but there is no consensus regarding their level of importance. The same holds for the factor *'sound monitoring'*. This factor is not present in Utrecht. Two pre-listed factors are indicated as very important contributing factors in Götaland, while there is no consensus in Utrecht regarding their level of importance. The *'quality of the plan'* is indicated in both regions as good, but some respondents in Utrecht indicated that the influence of the quality is outweighed by the other obstructing factors. All respondents in Götaland indicated that the factor *'committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to SD'* contributed to the performance, while the majority of the respondents in Utrecht indicated that it is not activated because of the other obstructing factors. There is no consensus regarding the factor *'adequate resource support'*, funding is available in Götaland but not in Utrecht.

Assumptions regarding contextual factors

Chapter 3 provided an analysis of the contextual characteristics and assumptions have been made with regards

to the influence contextual characteristics might have on the performance. The evaluations have shown that the following assumed contextual influencing factor was not of influence to the performance; *'the shift in the political situation'*. The following assumed contextual factors were indeed of influence on the performance; a respondent in Götaland indicated that the *'connection with EU funding'* is an important contributing factor to the performance; the adoption of the *'governance approach'* has a contributing influence to the performance in Götaland, while the governance approach is not noticed in Utrecht and the traditional role of the Province mentioned as obstructive. Furthermore, it proved that several other contextual factors, for which no assumptions have been drawn up, were of influence as well. One contextual factor relating to the RGB has been identified in Götaland, *'behaviour of the RGB in line with the SRD plan'*, and one in Utrecht, *'relational history between RGB and organization'*. Furthermore, contextual factors relating to the organisational characteristics of external organisations have been identified: *'type of organization'*, *'strategic spatial outlook of the organization'*, *'governed by the national governmental level'*, and *'internal organization'*. The first two have been identified in both regions, the third in Götaland and the fourth in Utrecht.

5.5 Conclusion

This concluding section will first provide the determined stages of performance of the SRD plans and is followed by the identified internal and influencing factors to the performance. The section ends with answering the assumptions relating to the contextual factors, originally introduced in chapter 3.

Internal and external performance of the SRD plans

The internal performance of Utrecht is determined in the second stage, *consideration*, and the internal performance of Götaland is determined in the highest stage, *consent*. This means that the two development foci of Utrecht2040 are not performing optimally, while the two development foci of the Vision are performing optimal.

It proved not to be possible to determine an overall external stage of performance in both regions due to the wide variety in the usage of the SRD plans by external organizations. An overall stage of performance would not reflect the outcomes of the external organizations properly. Therefore, the stages of performance of the organizations are followed to determine the external performance. In both regions, the external performance is determined in the performance stage of *acquaintance* and in the performance stage of *consent*. This implies that the SRD plan performs both far below optimal and optimal, depending on the external organization. However, the external performance in Utrecht tends more towards the stage of *acquaintance* due to the determination of five organizations in this stage and only one in the stage of *consent*. While in Götaland, three organizations are determined in the performance stage of *consent* and two in the stage of *acquaintance*.

Furthermore, it proved in both regions not possible to determine the performance of two development foci of the SRD plans. It was the point of departure of this study to evaluate two selected development foci. However, external organizations do not regard the SRD plan as one plan and do not differentiate between development foci. Therefore, statements regarding the external stage of performance relate to the entire SRD plans.

Influencing factors to the internal performance

In the case of Utrecht, it proved that the contextual factors that were of influence during the development phase are very important influencing factors to the sub-optimal performance. All these contextual factors have been interpreted as negative by the respondents and indicated as obstructive. These contextual factors are; *'absence overall internal support for the development'*, *'traditional role of the Province with sectoral and directive attitude'*, *'departments with own vision documents and established interests'*, *'political situation: turmoil'*, *'single political responsibility for the development'*, *'internal staff department responsible for the development'*, *'unclear position of the SRD plan in hierarchical planning'*.

Furthermore, several of the pre-listed factors have been identified as having an influence during the implementation phase, either obstructive or contributing. The factor *'process of collaboratively developed plan'*

is identified as the most important obstructive factor, the factors *'quality of the plan'* and *'sound parliamentary basis'* are identified as important contributing factors, the factor *'training and awareness building'* is identified as a bit important contributing factor. The two factors *'supporting administrative leadership'* and *'supporting political leadership'* have been identified as influencing factors as well, but there is no consensus regarding their level of influence and whether they are obstructing or contributing.

In the case of Götaland, it proved as well that the contextual factors that were of influence during the development phase are very important influencing factors to the optimal performance. All these contextual factors have been interpreted as positive by the respondents and indicated as contributing. These contextual factors are; *'overall internal support for the development'*, *'governance approach with cooperative and inclusive attitude'*, *'newly established RGB with little established interests'*, *'political situation: consensus and pioneering spirit'*, *'revision of previous Regional Development Strategy'*, *'shared political responsibility for the development'*, *'external working group responsible for the development'*, and *'clear position of SRD plan in hierarchical planning'*.

Furthermore, several of the pre-listed factors have been identified as having a contributing influence during the implementation phase. The following factors are identified as important influencing factors: *'process of a collaboratively developed plan'*, *'sound parliamentary basis'*, *'quality of the plan'*, *'sound monitoring'*, *'supporting political leadership'*, and *'supporting administrative executives'*. Two factors are identified as a bit important influencing factors, which are *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'* and *'training and awareness building for the plan'*.

It proved in both cases that especially the contextual factors that are of influence during the development phase are of utmost importance to the performance of the SRD plan. They are interpreted as positive and contributing to the optimal performance in Götaland, while they are interpreted as negative and obstructing to the performance in Utrecht. Furthermore, it proved that several factors that are of influence during the implementation phase are of important influence to the performance as well. The factors are indicated as contributing to the performance in Götaland and as either obstructive or contributing in Utrecht.

Influencing factors to the external performance

In the case of Utrecht, it proved that the organisational characteristics of external organisations influence the extent they are able to use Utrecht2040. There is a group of organizations that are potentially able to use Utrecht2040 to a large extent and a group that are only able to use it to a limited extent due to the contextual factors *'internal organization'*, *'type of organization'*, and *'strategic spatial outlook of the organization'*. The latter two contextual factors proved to be the most important contributing factors for the organization that performs optimally, which is an organization that is potentially able to use Utrecht2040 to a large extent.

The aforementioned contextual factors were not of importance to the organizations that perform far below optimal. These organizations, a mixture of organizations that are able to use Utrecht2040 to a limited and potentially to a large extent, indicated that that several pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the Province are the most important obstructing factors to their performance.

The following contextual factors relating to the Province have been indicated as negative by respondents and identified as important obstructing factors; *'traditional role of the Province'*, *'behaviour of the Province'*, and *'relational history between Province and organization'*.

The following pre-listed factors have been indicated as negative by respondents and identified as important obstructing factors: *'process of a collaboratively developed plan'*, *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'*, *'adequate networking and consensus building during implementation'*, *'adequate regulatory system'*, *'supporting political leadership'*, and *'supporting administrative leadership'*. The three pre-listed factors *'quality of the plan'*, *'adequate resource support'*, and *'committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to SD'* have been identified as influencing factors as well. However, there is no consensus among the respondents regarding their level of influence and whether they are obstructing or contributing.

In the case of Götaland, it proved as well that the organisational characteristics of external organisations influence the extent they are able to use the Vision. There is a group of organizations that are potentially able to use the Vision to a large extent and a group that are only able to use it to a limited extent due to the contextual factors *'governed by the national governmental level'*, *'type of organization'*, and *'strategic spatial outlook of the organization'*. These contextual factors proved to be the most important obstructing factors for the organizations that perform far below optimal, which are all organizations that are only able to use the Vision to a limited extent.

The aforementioned contextual factors were not of importance to the organizations that perform optimal. These organizations, which are all organizations that are potentially able to use the Vision to a large extent, indicated that that several pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the VGR are the most important contributing factors to their performance.

The following contextual factors relating to the VGR have been indicated as positive by respondents and identified as important contributing factors; *'governance approach'*, *'sustainable behaviour of the VGR'*, and *'connection with EU funding'*.

The following pre-listed factors have been indicated as positive by respondents and identified as important contributing factors: *'process of a collaboratively developed plan'*, *'quality of the plan'*, *'supporting political leadership'*, *'supporting political leadership'*, and *'committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to SD'*. The four pre-listed factors *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'*, *'sound monitoring'*, *'networking and consensus building during implementation'*, and *'adequate resource support'* have been identified as influencing factors as well. However, there is no consensus among the respondents regarding their level of influence and whether they are obstructing or contributing.

In both the Utrecht and Gotaland case, it appears that the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the RGB are important influencing factors to the performance. In the case of Utrecht, the majority of the factors are indicated negatively by respondents and proved to be important obstructing factors for organizations that perform far below optimal. While in the case of Götaland, the majority of the factors are indicated positively and proved to be important contributing factors to the organizations that perform optimally. However, the case of Götaland has shown that no matter how positive the aforementioned factors are there will always be organisations that perform far below optimal because of their organisational characteristics. These organizations are just not able to use the SRD plan to a large extent due to their organisational characteristics. The case of Utrecht on the other hand, has shown that an organization is able to perform optimally due to their organizational characteristics, even though the majority of the pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the RGB are indicated as negative. For both organizations, the aforementioned pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the RGB are not of importance to them. The contextual factors relating to their organizational characteristics are the most important influencing factors for those organizations.

Assumptions regarding contextual factors

Chapter 3 provided an analysis of the contextual characteristics and assumptions have been made with regards to the influence of contextual characteristics to the performance. The results in this chapter have shown that certain contextual factors were indeed of influence to the internal and external performance. Table 5.20 provides an overview of the outcomes regarding all the assumptions that have been made in chapter 3. Furthermore, it proved that several other contextual factors, for which no assumptions were drawn up, were of influence as well. With regards to the internal performance, three comparable factors have been identified in both regions and one factor in Götaland: The three comparable factors are *'internal support for the development of the SRD plan'*, *'division political responsibility for development of the SRD plan'* and *'executing responsibility for development of the SRD plan'*. The identified factor in Götaland is *'clarity about position of SRD plan in hierarchical planning'*. With regards to the external performance, one contextual factor relating to the VGR has been identified in Götaland, *'behaviour of the RGB in line with the SRD plan'*, and one in Utrecht, *'relational history between RGB and organization'*. Furthermore, contextual factors relating to the

organisational characteristics of external organisations have been identified: ‘*type of organization*’, ‘*strategic spatial outlook of the organization*’, ‘*governed by the national governmental level*’, and ‘*internal organization*’. The first two have been identified in both regions, the third in Götaland and the fourth in Utrecht.

| Contextual factor | Assumption | Outcome |
|---|--|--|
| Size of the RGB | It is assumed that the smaller size of the RGB has a positive influence to the performance | No influence |
| Formalized position of municipalities | It is assumed that the formalized position of the municipalities in the RGB has a positive influence to the external performance | No influence |
| Contribute to SD by national law | It is assumed that the obligation to contribute to SD by national law has a positive influence to the performance | No influence |
| Shift in political situation | It is assumed that the shifts in political consensus have an influence to the performance | No influence |
| Year establishment RGB | It is assumed that the recent establishment of an RGB has a positive influence to the performance | Yes to the internal performance. The recent establishment of the VGR has a positive influence to the internal performance |
| Influenced by EU policy | It is assumed that being influenced by EU regional development policy has a positive influence to the performance | Yes to the external performance Respondent in Götaland indicated that the connection with EU funding is an important contributing factor to the external performance |
| Existence of policy domain specific steering documents | It is assumed that the existence of policy domain specific steering documents, in the form of long term strategic plans and visions, has a negative influence to the performance | Yes to the internal performance. The existence of policy domain specific steering documents has a negative influence to the internal performance in Utrecht |
| Political situation during development | It is assumed that political consensus during the development of the SRD plan has a positive influence to the performance | Yes to the internal performance. The political consensus in Götaland during the development of the SRD plan region has a contributing influence to the internal performance: while the political turmoil in Utrecht is indicated as obstructive |
| Governance approach of RGB | it is assumed that the governance approach has a positive influence to the performance | Yes to the internal and external performance. The governance approach has a contributing influence to the internal and external performance in Götaland, while it is not noticed in Utrecht and the traditional role of the Province mentioned as obstructive |

Table 5.20: Results assumption regarding contextual characteristics

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter answers the main research question of this study, describes which contribution the outcomes of this study make to the scientific literature and to society, and what the limitations of this study are. The main research question of this study will be answered in section 6.2. The contribution to the scientific literature will be described in section 6.3, the contribution to society in section 6.4, and the limitations of this study in section 6.5.

6.2 Performance SRD plans and influencing factors

The main research question of this study is, *'which influencing factors obstruct or contribute to the performance of the SRD plans for two regions in Western Europe?'*

Performance of the SRD plans

The performance evaluation has shown that the SRD plans of Utrecht and Götaland perform both internally and externally. However, there is a difference between the stages of performance. The internal performance of the two development foci of Utrecht2040 is determined in the second stage (*consideration*), while the internal performance of the Vision is determined in the highest stage (*consent*). This means that the two development foci of Utrecht2040 are not performing optimal, while the two development foci of the Vision are performing optimal.

It proved not to be possible to determine an overall external stage of performance in both regions due to the wide variety in the usage of the SRD plans by external organizations. An overall stage of performance would not reflect the outcomes of the external organizations properly. Therefore, the stages of performance of the external organizations are followed to determine the external performance. In both regions, the external performance is determined in the first stage of performance (*acquaintance*) and in the third stage of performance (*consent*). Meaning that the SRD plan performs both far below optimal and optimal, depending on the organization. However, the external performance in Utrecht tends more towards the first stage of performance (*acquaintance*), due to the determination of five organizations in this stage and only in the third stage of performance (*consent*). While in Götaland, three organizations are determined in the third stage of performance (*consent*) and two in the first stage of performance (*acquaintance*). Furthermore, it proved in both regions not to be possible to determine the performance of two development foci of the SRD plans. It was the point of departure of this study to evaluate two selected development foci. However, external organizations do not regard the SRD plan as one plan and do not differentiate between development foci. Therefore, statements regarding the external stage of performance relate to the entire SRD plans.

Influencing factors to the internal performance

It proved in both cases that especially the contextual factors that are of influence during the development phase are of utmost importance to the performance of the SRD plan. They are interpreted as positive and contributing to the optimal performance in Götaland, while they are interpreted as negative and obstructing to the performance in Utrecht. The following contextual factors that are of influence during the development phase have been identified as important influencing factors to the performance by comparing the two cases: *'internal support for the development of the SRD plan', 'governing approach of the RGB', 'existence of policy domain specific steering documents', 'political situation during development', 'year establishment region', 'plan is revision of previous Regional Development Plan', 'division political responsibility for development of the SRD plan', 'executing responsibility for development of the SRD plan, and 'clarity about position of SRD plan in hierarchical planning'.*

Furthermore, it proved that several factors that are of influence during the implementation phase are

of important influence to the performance as well. The factors are indicated as contributing to the performance in Götaland and as either obstructive or contributing in Utrecht. The following influencing factors have been identified as important to the performance by comparing the two cases: *'process of a collaboratively developed plan'* obstructive in Utrecht and contributing in Götaland, *'sound parliamentary basis'* and *'quality of the plan'* contributing in both regions, *'sound monitoring'*, *'supporting political leadership'*, and *'supporting administrative executives'* contributing in Götaland, but there is no consensus regarding their level of influence and whether they are obstructing or contributing in Utrecht. Two factors are identified as a bit important contributing factors, which are *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'* and *'training and awareness building for the plan'*.

Influencing factors to the external performance

It proved in both cases that the pre-listed factors and contextual factors relating to the RGB are important influencing factors to the performance. In the case of Utrecht, the majority of the factors are indicated negatively and proved to be important obstructing factors for organizations that perform far below optimal. While in the case of Götaland, the majority of the factors are indicated positively and proved to be important contributing factors to the organizations that perform optimally.

The following contextual factors relating to the RGB have been identified as important influencing factors to the performance by comparing the two cases; *'governing approach'*, *'behaviour of the RGB in line with the SRD plan'*, *'connection with EU funding'* and *'relational history between RGB and organization'*.

The following pre-listed factors have been identified as important influencing factors to the performance by comparing the two cases: *'process of collaboratively developed plan'*, *'supporting political leadership'*, *'supporting administrative leadership'*, indicated as contributing in Götaland and as obstructive in Utrecht. Three pre-listed factors are identified as very important obstructing factors in Utrecht but there is no consensus regarding their level of importance in Götaland, *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'*, *'adequate networking and consensus building during implementation'*, and *'adequate regulatory system'*. Two pre-listed factors are identified as very important contributing factors in Götaland, while there is no consensus in Utrecht regarding their level of importance, *'quality of the plan'* and *'committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to SD'*. There is no consensus in both regions regarding the influence of the factor *'adequate resource support'*.

Furthermore, the case of Götaland has proven that no matter how positive the aforementioned factors are, there will always be organisations that perform far below optimal because of their organisational characteristics. The organizations that perform far below optimal in Götaland are not able to use the SRD plan to a large extent due to the contextual factors relating to their organisational characteristics: *'internal organization'*, *'governed by the national governmental level'*, *'type of organization'*, and *'strategic spatial outlook of the organization'*. The case of Utrecht on the other hand, has shown that an organization is able to perform optimal due to their organizational characteristics, even though the majority of the pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the RBG are indicated as negative. For both organizations, the aforementioned pre-listed and contextual factors relating to the RBG are not of importance to them. The contextual factors relating to their organizational characteristics are the most important influencing factors for those organizations.

6.3 Scientific contribution

Based on its main findings, this study sets out to make five contributions to the scientific literature on SRD plans. These are described in the text below.

Development of a framework for evaluating the performance

The first contribution of this study to the scientific literature is the development of the framework for evaluating the performance of SRD plans. Chapter 1 has shown that little research has been done evaluating

the implementation of SRD plans by taking a performance approach. The framework that has been developed enables to systematically evaluate and determine the stage of performance of the SRD plans. It distinguishes between three gradual stages of performance; acquaintance, consideration and consent, which are derived from Herweijer et. al (1990). Every stage reflects the degree in which important perspectives of the plan are taken up by the decision-makers.

The framework that has been developed by this study can be used in future studies to evaluate the performance of SRD plans. However, it did become clear during the evaluation of the SRD plans that the distinction of three phases was rather limited. This will be further elaborated on in section 6.4. Future research with regards to performance evaluation of SRD plans can be directed at developing this framework for evaluation further. It is recommended to distinguish more stages of performance or to distinguish levels within the stages. Especially if the purpose of scholars is to compare SRD plans or development foci within the same SRD plan.

Performance of the SRD plans shows a different and more nuanced picture

The second contribution of this study to the scientific literature is that the performance based evaluation has shown a different and more nuanced picture as compared to previous empirical studies that examined SRD plan implementation. Chapter 1 showed that scholars that examined empirically to what extent sustainable statements and declarations are transformed into practical actions, generally come to the conclusion that SD principles are integrated into SRD plans but generally ignored during the implementation phase. The scholars conclude that the transformation of sustainable statements and declarations into practical actions is widely lacking and the implementation failed (Storbjork 2008, Berger 2003, Gibbs et al. 2002, Gibbs 2000, Murphy and Gouldson 2000).

The aforementioned empirical studies judged the success of implementation according to the conformance approach. This study took the performance approach to evaluate SRD plan implementation instead. The evaluation has shown that the SRD plans of both regions are used internally and externally in the decision making process of new plans, programs, and projects, which means that they perform in a certain way. It proved that the internal performance of the SRD plan is optimal in Götaland and that the external performance is optimal for certain external organizations in both regions. This means from a performance approach perspective that the SRD plan is highly implemented in those cases. This shows a different picture as compared to the results of the previous empirical studies that took a conformance approach and concluded that implementation failed. The evaluation showed as well that the performance of the SRD plans is not optimal in all cases. It proved that the internal performance is below optimal in Utrecht and that it is far below optimal for certain external organizations in both regions. This means from a performance approach perspective that the implementation is not that high in those cases. However, this does not automatically mean that the implementation failed in those cases. It shows that decision makers have not optimally taken the SRD plan into account, but that it did contribute to the decision-making process to a certain extent. This shows a more nuanced picture of SRD plan evaluation as compared to the previous studies that took a conformance approach and concluded that implementation failed.

It should be made clear that the results of this study merely show the usage of the SRD plans by decision makers in the decision-making process and do not show the actual physical impacts of the SRD plan. This is how the outcomes of this study should be interpreted as well. The previous studies based their conclusions on the physical impacts of the SRD plan and this study based it on the usefulness of the plan in decision-making processes. Therefore, these outcomes provide a different view on the implementation of the SRD plans.

Furthermore, the results of this study contribute to the further legitimacy of the performance approach. According to Hillebrand et al. (2001), existing theories can gain further legitimacy if a case study confirms them, which are referred to as theoretical generalizability. Hillebrand et al, (2001) argues as well that one case study would be sufficient to generalize the outcomes theoretically. The results of this study confirm the notions of the theorists who developed the performance approach in the mid '90s in response to their dissatisfaction with the conformance approach (Laurian et. al, 2010). Plans do not necessarily have to produce

direct impacts on the physical development process, but the plan can also play a tangible role in the choices of the actors it addresses and appeals to and it is the usefulness of plans that reveals their performance. This study has shown this. Therefore, this study contributes to the further legitimacy of the performance approach.

Little research has been conducted on evaluating the implementation of SRD plans by taking the performance approach. The results of this study have shown that the performance approach is suitable for SRD plan implementation evaluation and it shows a different and more nuanced picture as compared to previous empirical studies that focused on the physical impacts of the SRD plan. Therefore, it is advisable for future research to evaluate SRD plan implementation by means of the performance approach. Especially because this study has shown that the policy statements in both examined SRD plans are rather broadly formulated and determined as the so-called “type three” statements. These are statements of intent without conveying any concrete measures that should be incorporated in other plans (Naeff and Kamphuis, 1986 in Driessen, 1997). It is very difficult to determine the extent to which these statements have been effective (Ibid.) and indicators to determine the physical impacts are hard to define. The conformance approach proves not to be the most appropriate approach to evaluate these statements, because the conformance approach focusses on the physical impacts only. It is expected based on the previous studies, and as Aardema (2002) argues as well, that using the conformance approach to evaluate the so-called “type three” statements in SRD plans will probably lead to the conclusion that the statements were not effective and to the inevitable conclusion that the SRD plan failed more or less. However, by taking the performance approach for evaluating SRD plan implementation, the focus of evaluation is only on one aspect of plan implementation, namely the contribution of the plan to the decision making-process. The other aspect of plan implementation, the physical impact of the plan, is not being evaluated. A combination of both approaches will provide a more complete picture of SRD plan implementation. Therefore, it is recommended for future research to make an attempt to combine the performance and conformance approach in order to get a more complete picture of SRD plan implementation. As it has been mentioned before, it will be very challenging to define indicators to determine the physical impacts. However, the author came across several monitoring tools that were developed by the RGB in Götaland. The developers of those tools defined several indicators to determine the physical effect of the SRD plan. Scholars can make use of the knowledge that is already available at the RGBs regarding those indicators.

Identified influencing factors to the performance

The third and fourth contribution of this study to the scientific literature relates to the identification of influencing factors to the performance. Several studies have identified influencing factors over the last years (Albert et al., 2003; Berke et al., 2006; Joseph et al.). However, despite the identification of those factors, scholars of the planning-evaluation literature stated in 2010 that plan implementation evaluation is still underdeveloped with regards to influencing factors and more research is needed (Laurian et al., 2010). This study derived 10 influencing factors from those and several other studies and examined its influence for both the internal and external performance. The results have shown that several of those influencing factors were of influence to the performance, which are described in section 6.2. These factors gain further legitimacy and can be generalized theoretically, because as Hillebrand et al. (2001) states, one case study would be sufficient to generalize the outcomes theoretically. This is the third contribution to the scientific literature.

The fourth contribution relates to the identification of factors that were not pre-listed. These factors have been identified during the expert interviews where respondents were encouraged to mention influencing factors other than the pre-listed factors. These are described in section 6.2. All these identified factors are contextual factors and as far as the author is aware of, these factors have not been identified in previous studies.

Based on the results regarding the influencing factors, three recommendations for future research can be provided. First, it proved in both regions that there is no consensus regarding the level of influence of several pre-listed influencing factors. In this study, the level of influence of a pre-listed factor has been determined in one on one expert-interviews and the overall level of influence of a factor has been determined by adding all the levels of influence. Future research can make use of a method where all respondents are interviewed in a group. This can be used in order to find out if there is still no consensus regarding the level of

influence after respondents have discussed the factor with each other. Second, the level of influence of the identified contextual factors have not been measured by means of a four-level Likert scale in this study. The respondents indicate these factors as being of influence, but the level of importance is not quantified. Future research can examine what the level of influence is of the identified contextual factors. This would be especially interesting for the contextual factors that are identified as being of influence to the internal performance. These factors are of influence during the development phase and proved to be of utmost importance to the internal performance of the SRD plan. Given that nine contextual factors are identified, it would be interesting to examine what the level of influence is of those factors. Third, the identified contextual factors that are of influence to the external performance have shown that several of those factors are of influence to the cooperation between the RGB and the external organisations. The contextual factors relating to the organisational characteristics of external organisations show that not every organization can be approached or treated the same, because there is a group of organizations that are potentially able to use the SRD plan to a large extent and a group that are only able to use it to a limited extent. The contextual factors relating to the RGB shows that certain behaviour of the RGB obstructs and certain behaviour contribute to the performance. This study has identified these factors, but did not thoroughly examine the cooperation between the VGR and the external organizations. Since there is widespread agreement among academics, policy makers, and practitioners of SD that interorganizational cooperation is a vital mechanism to achieve the objectives in a SRD plan, more research can be directed at how the actual cooperation between the VGR and the external organizations can be organized. The identified contextual factors, which are of influence to the external performance in this study, can serve as input.

Clear distinction between internal and external implementation and corresponding influencing factors

The fifth contribution of this study to the scientific literature relates to the clear distinction that has been made between the internal and external implementation of the SRD plans and the corresponding influencing factors. This study has shown that the internal and external processes of SRD plan implementation are two different processes and that the stage of performance differs between the internal and external implementation. Furthermore, this study has shown as well that similar and different factors are of influence to the internal and external performance of a SRD plan. As far as the author is aware of, this clear distinction between internal and external implementation and corresponding influencing factors has not been made in previous studies.

Future research should take into account that there is a difference between the internal and external performance and that there is a difference in influencing factors as well.

6.4 Societal contribution

The subjects of research in this study were the SRD plans of two regions. By examining those SRD plans, this study was able to make the contributions to the scientific literature as described in previous paragraph. These contributions are the core qualities of this study. However, by having examined the SRD plans of two regions, this study is able to contribute to those two regions as well. A vast contribution to the regions is that the results show them insights into the internal and external performance of their SRD plans and the factors that influenced the performance. Besides these insights, several recommendations can be provided to the two examined regions. These are based on the comparisons between the regions that have been made in order to gain a richer understanding of the performance of SRD plan implementation and the corresponding influencing factors. The recommendations can be used by the planners of the SRD plan in the two examined region to improve their planning practice, because as it has been mentioned in chapter 1 already, it is generally acknowledged in the plan-evaluation literature that by means of evaluation of plan implementation, planners can learn from the results of past interventions and improve planning practice (Laurian et al, 2010). Furthermore, the recommendations may be used as well as an inspiration for other regions that have the intention to develop a SRD plan or want to revise their existing SRD plan. The results can merely be used as an example or inspiration for other regions than the two examined regions, because the results of a small-N comparative case study are limited in their generalizability (Laerhoven, 2010). A distinction is made between

the recommendations relating to the internal performance and the external performance of the SRD plan.

Internal performance SRD plan

The results have shown that especially the contextual factors that are of influence during the development phase are of utmost importance to the internal performance. It proved in the case of Götaland that the positive indicated factors led to the overall acceptance of the SRD plan and to a common understanding of how to use the SRD plan internally within the RGB. The contextual factors will first be described and followed by the factors that are of influence during the implementation phase. The planners can influence several of these identified contextual factors, while others cannot be influenced. However, the planners can take the factors that cannot be influenced into account during the planning process.

The following contextual factors are important during the development phase. It proved to be of utmost importance that there is *'overall internal support for the development'* right from the start of the development phase. It was present in Götaland, while it was not present in Utrecht. This is a factor that can be influenced by the planners. Planners should make sure that this support is present right from the start and they have to make sure that this remains high. It is of utmost importance that all relevant representatives from all departments and layers of the RGB support the development and that they are involved in the development process. Three other contextual factors can be influenced by the planners and relate to decisions of the RGB. These are *'shared political responsibility for the development'*, *'external working group responsible for the development'*, and *'clarity about the position of the SRD plan in the hierarchical planning'*. The case of Götaland proved that internal conflicts of interests and responsibilities have been avoided by making several politicians shared political responsible for the development of the SRD plan and by making a working group outside the RGB responsible for the execution. The Province on the other hand, decided to make one political representative political responsible and to make one department within the RGB responsible for the execution, which led to internal conflicts of interest. Therefore, it is recommended to make several politicians political responsible for the development and to assign a group outside the RGB for the execution of the development of the SRD plan. Furthermore, it is recommended to be clear from the start of the development phase about what type of plan the SRD plan is and what its position will be in the hierarchical planning of the RGB. This to make sure that everyone in the RGB knows what to expect from the plan and what influence it will have on the strategic outlook of the policy domains. This proved to be clear in Götaland, while this was not clear in Utrecht.

Five contextual factors should be taken into account that cannot be influenced by the planners. All these factors relate to the circumstances of the region, which are; *'governing approach of the RGB'*, the governance approach in Götaland proved to be contributing and the traditional way of governing in Utrecht obstructing; *'departments within the RGB with own vision documents'*, it proved that several departments of the RGB in Utrecht regard the SRD plan as a threat to their own vision documents and is indicated as obstructing; *'year of establishment region'*, it proved that the relatively young age of the RGB of Götaland makes that there are not many established interests and regarded as contributing, while the RGB of Utrecht is an old institution with vast established interests and regarded as obstructing; *'political situation'*, it proved that there was political consensus in Götaland during the development phase and indicated as contributing, while there was political turmoil in Utrecht and indicated as obstructing; *'plan is revision of previous Regional Development Plan'*, it proved that the SRD plan of Götaland is a revision and is indicated as contributing because administrative officers and politicians are already used to a SRD plan which makes the acceptance easier for a revised SRD plan.

Furthermore, it proved that several factors are of importance to the performance during the implementation phase. These are: *'sound parliamentary bases'*, *'quality of the plan'*, *'supporting administrative leadership'*, *'supporting political leadership'*, and *'process of collaboratively developed plan'*. These five factors were all positive in Götaland and indicated as contributing to their optimal performance, while in Utrecht only the first two were indicated as positive and contributing, while the latter three factors were indicated as negative and as obstructing to their performance. This means that it is of utmost importance and necessary that the plan is accepted by the regional council, that the quality of the plan is high, that there is support from both political and administrative officials during the implementation of the plan and that all relevant

stakeholders appreciated the development process. Furthermore, there are two factors that are identified as a bit important contributing factors during the implementation phase, which are *'clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities'* and *'training and awareness building for the plan'*. This means that it is beneficial to have those two factors in place, but not necessary.

External performance SRD plan

The SRD plan is a plan that is addressed to many regional parties and is believed that the achievement of the objectives in the SRD plan is a joint effort of all regional parties involved. However, planners should take into account that not all organizations are able to put as much effort in the achievement of the objectives as other organisations. An important result of this study is that there is a group of organizations that are potentially able to use the SRD plan to a large extent and a group of organizations that are only able to use it to a limited extent. This is influenced by the organisational characteristics of the external organisations. Planners should take into account that the contribution from the organizations that are only able to use the SRD plan to a limited extent will be very low, and that they are not influenced by actions from the RGB that are directed at the implementation of the SRD plan. These actions proved to be of importance for the organizations that are potentially able to use the SRD plan to a large extent. Four factors have been identified that are of importance to this group of organizations. These are factors that can be influenced by the planners. Furthermore, three contextual factors that cannot be influenced by the planners have been identified as well.

A very important influencing factor that can be influenced by planners is the *'development process'*. It proved to be important for external organizations that they were involved in the process, that they substantially contribute to the SRD plan, and that they see their input reflected in the plan. The case of Götaland showed that the external organizations were satisfied with their involvement and indicated this as a very important contributing factor, while it was not appreciated in Utrecht and it was indicated as a very important obstructive factor. Therefore, it is recommended to heavily involve the external organisations in the development process and to make sure that their input is reflected in the SRD plan. Furthermore, during the implementation phase, it proved that the *'quality of the plan'* is an important influencing factor. Therefore, the aim should be to develop a plan that is of high quality. The factors *'supporting political leadership'* and *'supporting administrative leadership'* proved to be of importance as well and can be influenced by planners. The case of Götaland showed that external organisations regard the support from both politicians and high administrative officers from the RGB as important to use the SRD plan, while in the case of Götaland, the external organisations indicated that the lack of support is obstructing to the usage. Therefore, it is recommended to planners to make sure that politicians and high administrative officers actively support and promote the SRD plan externally.

Two contextual factors proved to be of importance that relates to the behaviour of the RGB. These factors cannot be influenced directly by the planners, but can be taken into account. One contextual factor is *'behaviour of the RGB in line with the SRD plan'*. It proved in the case of Götaland that external organizations regard it as contributing that the behaviour is in line with the content of the SRD plan, while in the case of Utrecht, external organizations indicated that the Province is not acting in line with the SRD plan and indicated it as obstructive. The second contextual factor is *'governing approach of the RGB'*. The governance approach in Götaland proved to be contributing and the traditional way of governing in Utrecht proved to be obstructing. Another contextual factor that proved to be of importance, and which cannot be directly influenced by the planners, is *'connection with EU funding'*. This is indicated as contributing in Götaland.

Furthermore, four factors have been identified that are of influence to the performance and which can be influenced by planners. However, a recommendation with regards to these factors for increasing the performance cannot be provided, because they are either indicated as obstructing or there is no consensus among organizations in both regions. The first factor is *'adequate resource support'*. There is no consensus regarding the influence of this factor among external organizations in both regions. Several organizations in Utrecht indicated that the absence of funding is an important obstructing factor, while others indicated it as not important at all. Funding is available in Götaland some organizations indicated that it is an important contributing factor, while others indicated it as not important. Due to the vast differences within and between

the cases, it is not possible to provide a recommendation regarding funding. It is also not possible to provide a recommendation with regards to the three factors '*clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities*', '*adequate networking and consensus building during implementation*', and '*adequate regulatory system*'. These factors proved to be important obstructing factors in Utrecht. They relate to the Utrecht2040-Partner-Network, which is developed for external implementation and indicated as insufficient. It proved that there is no consensus regarding their level of importance in Götaland. Therefore, it can merely be stated that as soon as these factors are indicated negatively they are not beneficial to the performance.

6.5 Reflections on the research methodology

It has been demonstrated in this study that the framework for evaluation enables to systematically evaluate and determine the stage of performance of SRD plans. However, it proved during the evaluation that certain descriptions of the gradual stages were sometimes too broadly defined, which made it difficult in some cases to determine the stage of performance. Moreover, the distinction of three gradual stages of performance proved to be too limited. Several respondents were assigned the same stage of performance, even though there were differences in their usage of the SRD plan. These differences in usage could not be captured due to the limitation of three stages. This makes that the assigned stage of performance reflects more a general indication of the performance of the SRD plans.

Furthermore, one more aspect of this study makes that the assigned stages of performance are more or less a general indication of the performance. This study focused merely on the plans, programs, and projects that are directly influenced by the SRD plan. It did not evaluate the entire downstream process of serially connected decision making, because of the limited time available. Meaning that the plans, programs, and projects that are indirectly influenced by the SRD plan have not been focused upon and evaluated. Evaluating the whole downstream process would probably have yielded more detailed outcomes regarding the performance of the SRD plans.

A 4-level Likert scale has been used to measure the influence of the pre-listed factors. The level of influence of a factor has been determined in one on one expert-interviews and the overall level of influence of a factor has been determined by adding all the levels of influence of the respondents. The scale from 1 to 4 leaves room for interpretation and respondents can interpret scales differently. A method where all respondents are interviewed in a group after the one on one interviews would have yielded most probably a more nuanced outcome with regards to the level of influence. Such a method would also have been conducive to determine if there is really no consensus regarding the level of influence of an influencing factor. In this study, there is no consensus regarding the level of influence of several factors.

Another limitation of this study with regards to the influencing factors is that the level of influence of the identified contextual factors has not been measured by means of the 4-level likert-scale. Respondents indicated that they were of influence, but not enabled by the author to indicate what the level of influence of the factor was. This made that statements could only be made with regards to the level of influence of the pre-listed and not with regards to the contextual factors. Furthermore, after the contextual factors were identified in this study, no literature research has been conducted in order to find out if they have been identified in other studies as well. Therefore, no statements can be made regarding the theoretical generalizability of the contextual factors.

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Annex 1

Annex 1.1 Sustainable Development

The concept of Sustainable Development has been launched with the World Conservation Strategy in 1980 (Setlcek and Gaube, 2009) and became widely used after 1987 when the Brundtland Commission used the concept and developed a definition. Since then, a range of definitions has emerged and projects of very different characters have been promoted as directly addressing sustainable development (Hajer, 1995: in Clement, 2005). Despite the range of definitions, the most widely used and cited definition is still the one of the Brundtland Commission: “...development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987, p. 43). It would be extensive to mention all the definitions that have been developed. It suffices to mention that there are some components that can be found in almost all definitions of Sustainable Development: “inter-generational and intra-generational justice, careful treatment of resources and preservation of the production basis, preservation of biodiversity, perpetuation of economic existence and stability, quality of living and carrying capacity” (Quendler and Schuh 2002:195 in Setlcek and Gaube, 2009). The last two components have been added to definitions lately, because many authors feel that improving the quality of human living is a more demanding postulate than the mere satisfaction of needs covered in the Brundtland definition (Setlcek and Gaube, 2009).

Sustainable Development, however, is not a clear-cut concept. It has become quite ambiguous (Lengauer, 2007). This is shown by the various components in all the definitions of the concept of Sustainable Development. Nonetheless, one of the progresses it made, is that it was introduced as a theoretical concept, but continued to progress into practical guidelines (Setlcek and Gaube, 2009). These guidelines are based on the paradigm of Sustainable Development. The paradigm of Sustainable Development has three key components. The economic, the social, and the environmental component (Sharma and Kearins, 2011). It takes a holistic approach and calls for simultaneously addressing the three components and taking a long-term view (Ibid.). Economic sustainability is a state where the economy is strong and vibrant; social sustainability is a state where there is social equity and peace and justice for all; and environmental sustainability is a state where the natural environment, including wildlife and ecosystems, is well preserved and flourishes (Sharma and Kearins, 2011, Hediger, 1997; Meadowcroft, 2000; Pearce, 1993). Sustainable development is by several authors indicated as a process of social change that can hopefully help societies achieve sustainability (Setlcek and Gaube, 2009) and Sharma and Kearins (2011) call it a vision of an ideal future state that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable (Sharma and Kearins, 2011).

Annex 1.2 Governance

Like Sustainable Development, governance is a concept that was first widely explored and embraced in the late 1980's (Kemp and Parto, 2005). It encompasses a broad set of factors that are important and were insufficiently recognised in conventional thinking of that time (Ibid.). Moreover, it encourages a more integrated understanding of how these factors should be linked (Ibid.). Governance scholars view the political system as a complex of formal and informal arrangements that are ill-defined and unstable (Ibid.). This is in direct contrast to the conventional view of governments as formal, clearly identifiable, and static entities (Ibid.). Whereas government is regarded as formal structures ruling over people, the notion of governance highlights the increasingly important role of formal and informal arrangements in the political economy (Ibid.). Therefore, governance generally implies that societal and economic actors have become influential over policy and that the political decisions are being negotiated between state actors (the government) and private actors in new modes of governance that depart from conventional, hierarchical top-down legislation using regulations and directives (Eberlein and Kerwer, 2002). However, governance has been used and defined in many ways in different contexts (Kemp and Parto, 2005), and for this reason, there is no universally agreed upon definition. Even though there is no universally agreed definition of governance, it can be described by means of its main characteristics. Here, the description of Kemp and Parto (2005) will be followed: “Governance is how one gets to act, through what types of interactions (deliberation, negotiation, self-regulation or authoritative choice) and the extent to which actors adhere to collective decisions. It involves the level and scope of political allocation, the dominant orientation of state, and other institutions and their interactions. Governance structures organise negotiation processes, determine objectives, influence motivations, set standards, perform allocation functions, monitor compliance, impose penalties, initiate and/or reduce conflict, and resolve disputes among actors. The effective exercise of power is through a network of interconnected actors, in which all actors hold power, through knowledge resources, money and rights granted to them” (Kemp and Parto,

2005:17). Moreover, it has to be made clear that governance, understood as a mode of social coordination, is different from *governing*. Governing is an act, a purposeful effort to steer, guide, control and manage (sectors or facets of) society (Kooiman 1997).

Annex 1.3 Characteristics of region beneficial for cooperative strategies

The spatial scales that are regarded as the most appropriate scale for cooperation are the local and regional (Ibid). These scales possess characteristics which are beneficial for a cooperative climate which supports the implementation of sustainable strategies. (Setlcek and Gaube, 2009). The characteristics for such a cooperative climate are described as follows in the literature; strengths and weaknesses are well known, the stakeholders have inside knowledge about strengths and weaknesses which is one of the most important requirements for successful strategies within the region; less complexity, local and regional political decision makers are self-responsible and the communication and information flows are relatively open and therefore less exclusive; directly involved stakeholders, open information and communication structure supports bilateral and multilateral participation; stakeholders know each other, cooperation normally depends on trust and stakeholders that know each other are less sceptical against each others ideas and suggestions in terms of regional activities (Setlcek and Gaube, 2002).

Annex 1.4 Regional Development

There cannot be found an agreed upon definition of regional development in the literature. According to Pike et. al (2006), this can partly be attributed to the fact that no singularly agreed, homogeneous understanding of development for regions exists. Particular notions of 'development' are socially determined by particular groups and/or interests in specific places and time periods (Pike et. al, 2006). What constitutes regional development varies both within and between countries and its definitions change over time (Ibid.). What regional development defines is shaped by critique, debate, experience and evaluation (Ibid.). Since there is no agreed upon definition of regional development, it will be described by means of how it has been approached in western countries since the beginning of the 20th century. If we take a look at the history of regional development, it is apparent that regional development has changed considerably over time.

The traditional regional development, since the beginning of the 20th century, followed an economic strategy of maximising economic yield (Storbjork, 2008). According to Beer et. al (2003) regional development could even be wholly equated with this focus upon economic development. This development strategy primarily seeks to promote economic growth and is mainly concerned with disparities in regional growth, which determines regional income and economic and social welfare (Ibid.). This economic focus changed in the 1960s and 1970s, when alternative approaches began to question the dominant economic focus of regional development (Ibid.). It was rooted in dissatisfaction with mainstream approaches and critiques of orthodox neo-classical economics (Ibid.). More community level and socially oriented approaches emerged as part of alternative economic strategies, often challenging national frameworks through new institutions at the regional level, such as enterprise boards, sectoral development agencies and community associations (Ibid.). At the beginning of the 1990s, the increased concerns about the environment were expressed and included in the development plans. Regional development debates shifted from a focus on the quantity of development to a concern with its quality (Haughton, 2004). Improving the total well-being of people in communities and the environment in which they live became central notions (Ibid.). Initially, this involved a focus on the impact of economic development on the natural environment and the constraints this placed on development (Pike et al. 2006). New concepts and tools for planners were introduced, such as identifying different types of environmental capital, environmental thresholds and limits and environmental capacity studies (Haughton, 2004). However, these new approaches proved to be problematic in practice (Ibid.). They were being subject to challenge mainly by those who felt that environmental concerns were being used to impede development (Ibid.). At the beginning of the 21st century, the sustainable regional development approach became popular at the regional level. This approach wants to move away from both the environmental techniques and a strict economic focus, and aims to offer a better means of addressing economic, environmental and social issues in more integrated ways (Ibid).

Annex 2

Annex 2.1 identified factors stemming from the SRD and planning implementation literature

| Factor | Description | Found in |
|---|--|---|
| Problem is adequately understood | Implementation is based upon an adequate understanding of the policy problem and how implementation activities will lead to plan objectives | Joseph et al. (2007) Albert et al. (2004); |
| Collaboratively developed plan | A successful, shared decision-making process was used to develop a plan | Joseph et al. (2007) Frame et al. (2004); Albert et al. (2004); Burby (2003); Calbick et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003); Knopman et al. (1999) |
| Clear and consistent plan | Plan objectives and recommended actions are clear and consistent and provide clear policy guidance | Joseph et al. (2007) Albert et al. (2004); Jackson and Curry (2002); Margerum (2002) |
| Content of the plan | Is well underpinned, formulated and serves to communicate and educate | Laurian et al. (2004) and Berke et al. (2006) |
| Political continuity and stability within regional government | Political continuity is important for the follow up of a plan | Evans et al. 2006 |
| Supporting political leadership | In the form of a political party, an individual politician and/or a major | Marsden and May 2006, Evans et al. 2006, Lehmann 2006, Frame and Taylor 2005, Keysar 2005, Laurian et al. 2004, Rydin et al, 2003, Nilsson and Persson 2003 |
| Political consensus for Sustainable Development agenda | Political parties agree that they have to adopt to the concept of SD | Evans et al. 2006 |
| Training and awareness building for the plan | Training programmes or courses specifically related to plan, for both the politicians as the officers | Evans et al 2004 |
| Strong leadership of appointed responsible people for implementation | Implementation is led by committed people with adequate facilitation and management skills | Joseph et al. (2007), Evans et al. (2006) Butler and Koontz (2005); Albert et al. (2004); Margerum (2002) |
| Commitment, responsibility and capacity of key actors | Committed and personally driven key actors | Storbjork (2008), Evans et al. (2006), Lehman (2006) |
| Supportive external environment | All stakeholders are consistently supportive of implementation | Joseph et al. (2007); Albert et al. (2004); Margerum (2002); Booth et al. (2001) |
| Consistent policy environment | Existing policy does not conflict with plan implementation and plan objectives. | Joseph et al. (2007) Albert et al. (2004); Vedung (1997); Goggin et al. (1990); |
| Favourable stakeholder characteristics | Limited numbers of stakeholders are affected; minimal behaviour change is required of target groups; and limited diversity in values among stakeholders. | Joseph et al. (2007) Albert et al. (2004) |
| Comprehensive stakeholder support | All stakeholders are consistently supportive of implementation. | Joseph et al. (2007) Butler and Koontz (2005); Albert et al. (2004); Margerum (2002); Booth et al. (2001) |
| Adequate resource support | Stakeholders have access to resources including money, staff, information, and any other tools required for implementation. | Storbjork (2008), Joseph et al. (2007), Marsden and May (2006), Evans et al. 2006, Lehmann 2006, Frame and Taylor 2005, Keysar 2005, Laurian |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | et al. 2004, Albert et al. (2004); Calbick et al. (2004); Rydin et al, 2003, Nilsson and Persson 2003) Margerum (1999); |
| Dominance of sectoral perspective | Actors stay close to a sectoral approach where environmental, social and economic well-being is treated as separate goals | Storbjork 2008 |
| Drive to achieve positive outcomes | The process of integrating the SD dimensions takes time. Actors have the drive to focus on one dimension, because that produces positive outcomes in the short term | Macleod 2005 |
| Enforcement style | There are a range of enforcement styles that institutions can choose from to improve the implementation: discouragement, facilitati | Berke et. al, 2006 |
| Strategic implementation policy | The implementation process is guided by policy that specifies clear priorities and milestones. | Joseph et. al (2007) Albert et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003); Margerum (1999) |
| Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities | The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the Implementation process are clearly defined and specified. | Joseph et. al (2007) Albert et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003) |
| Supportive decision making authority | Decision makers possess adequate authority and discretion to achieve implementation objectives. | Joseph et. al (2007) Calbick et al. (2004); Margerum (2002, 1999a); Knopman et al. (1999) |
| Adequate regulatory system | A diversity of implementation instruments, including rules as well as written guidelines for compliance, enforcement, penalties, and incentives exist to support implementation objectives. | Joseph et. al (2007) Calbick et al. (2004); Victor and Skolnikoff (1999) |
| Effective mitigation strategies | There are mechanisms to help mitigate the effects to parties that are negatively affected by implementation. | Joseph et. al (2007) Frame et al. (2004); McCallister (1998) |
| Sound monitoring | A monitoring mechanism is in place to track both progress in implementing plan recommendations as well as progress in achieving plan objectives. The monitoring mechanism uses appropriate indicators to gauge implementation progress. Monitoring is supported by strategies that ensure accountability and transparency, and effectively disseminates information to stakeholders | Joseph et. al (2007) Frame et al. (2004); Albert et al. (2004); Calbick et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003); Margerum (2002, 1999a); Knopman et al. (1999); Victor and Skolnikoff (1999); Lessard (1998); Owen (1998); Williams et al. (1998) |
| Sufficient flexibility | Implementers possess the capacity to alter the course of implementation in accordance with new information or changing conditions. This criterion contributes to adaptive management. | Joseph et. al (2007) Calbick et al. (2004); Margerum (2002, 1999a, b); Berman (1980) |
| Sound legislative basis | Implementation is based in legislation so as to validate and empower the process. | Joseph et. al (2007) Calbick et al. (2004); |
| Comprehensive involvement | All stakeholders are comprehensively involved throughout all phases of implementation and all have a genuine opportunity to influence implementation. Stakeholders who were involved in plan development remain involved in implementation, and stakeholders who are involved now were involved in plan development. | Joseph et. al (2007) Albert et al. (2004); Calbick et al. (2004); Gunton and Day (2003); Margerum (1999a); Lessard (1998); Penrose et al. (1998) |
| Adequate networking and | Implementation decisions are reached collaboratively through a | Joseph et. al (2007) |

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| consensus building during implementation | network that links stakeholders and facilitates problem solving. | |
| Ability to make practical sense of SD | | Sharma and Kearins 2011, Storbjork 2008, Macleod 2005, |
| Strategic commitment to sustainable development in own organisation | | Storbjork, 2008 |

Table A2.2 identified factors stemming from the SRD and planning implementation literature

Annex 2.2 questionnaires

Questionnaire External

Section 1. Performance of SRD plan

1A. Did decision-makers read and/or consult (seek information from) the strategic plan during a decision-making process for the development of a plan, project or program?

Which plans, projects or programs?

1B. To what extent, and how, did the strategic plan function as a frame of reference during a decision-making process developing a new plan, project or program?

-Content of the strategic plan has been used to structure the debate and used for argumentation during a decision-making process developing a new plan, project or program, or its alternatives.

- Content of the plan has been used as appoint of departure for developing a new plan, project or program

1C. Do you refer explicitly to the strategic plan in the new policy documents, programs or projects?

1D. Did the strategic plan educate actors involved in the decision-making process?

Which parts of the strategic plan did educate the actors?

1E Did the strategic plan alter the actors' vision of the new plan, project or program?

How is this reflected in the new plan, project or program?

1F. Did the strategic plan influence succeeding decision-making?

If yes, how?

1G. Do you use a problem definition, vision, or solution in line with the information provided by the strategic plan?

1H. What was the most important contribution of the strategic plan to the decision-making process during a planning process, developing a plan, project or program?

Section 2. Factors of influence on implementation of the plan

Plan characteristics

1. Process of a collaboratively developed plan

1A. Were all the relevant stakeholders involved in the planning process that led to the plan?

1B. Till what extent was the input of the stakeholders used in the planning process that led to the plan

2. Quality of the strategic plan

2A. Is there a clear identification of issues important to the community with a strong fact base and is there an internal consistency among issues, objectives and goals ?

Implementation characteristics.

3. Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities

3A. Are your responsibilities as a stakeholder for implementing the plan clearly defined and specified?

3B. Is there a clear role and/or enforcement style of the regional government?

4. Adequate networking and consensus building during implementation

4A. Is there regular contact with other stakeholders of the partner-network and are the other stakeholders supportive of implementation of the plan?

4B. Is there contact between the stakeholders being facilitated?

5. Adequate resource support

5B. Are there sufficient resources (e.g. money, staff, effort etc.) provided for the implementation of the plan?

6. Adequate regulatory system

6A. Are there adequate rules, penalties, enforcement for the implementation of the plan?

6B. Are there adequate incentives to encourage decision makers for the implementation of the plan?

7. Sound monitoring

7A. Is there a monitoring mechanism in place that tracks progress in achieving plan objectives?

Stakeholder characteristics

8. Political leadership

8A. Is the regional government, or elected officials, committed and do they carry out the message of the strategic plan continuously?

8B. Is the regional government a source of inspiration by how they act?

9. Strategic commitment to sustainable development in organisation

9A. Is your organisation strategically committed to sustainable development?

10. Committed and personally driven key-actors within own organisation to sustainable development

10A. Are there key-actors in the organisation that are committed and personally driven to sustainable development?

11. Open question

11A. Which factors, which have not been listed, obstruct or contribute to the implementation of plan implementation?

Questionnaire internal

Section 1. Performance of SRD plan

1A. Did decision-makers read and/or consult (seek information from) the strategic plan during a decision-making process for the development of a plan, project or program?
Which plans, projects or programs?

1B. To what extent, and how, did the strategic plan function as a frame of reference during a decision-making process developing a new plan, project or program?

-Content of the strategic plan has been used to structure the debate and used for argumentation during a decision-making process developing a new plan, project or program, or its alternatives.

- Content of the plan has been used as a point of departure for developing a new plan, project or program

1C. Do you refer explicitly to the strategic plan in the new policy documents, programs or projects?

1D. Did the strategic plan educate actors involved in the decision-making process?

Which parts of the strategic plan did educate the actors?

1E Did the strategic plan alter the actors' vision of the new plan, project or program?

How is this reflected in the new plan, project or program?

1F. Did the strategic plan influence succeeding decision-making?

If yes, how?

1G. Do you use a problem definition, vision, or solution in line with the information provided by the strategic plan?

1H. What was the most important contribution of the strategic plan to the decision-making process during a planning process, developing a plan, project or program?

Section 2. Factors of influence on implementation of the plan

Plan characteristics

1. Process of a collaboratively developed plan

1A. Were all the relevant internal stakeholders involved in the planning process that led to the plan?

1B. Was the planning process that led to the plan a shared decision-making process?

2. Quality of the strategic plan

2A. Is there a clear identification of issues important to the community with a strong fact base and is there an internal consistency among issues, objectives and goals ?

2B. Did the planning process established a clear strategy for plan implementation?

Implementation characteristics

3. Adequate resource and information support

3A. Is there sufficient information available to make appropriate decisions for the implementation of the plan?

3B. Are there sufficient resources (e.g. money, staff, effort etc.) provided for the implementation of the plan?

4. Clear delineation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities

4A. Are your responsibilities as a stakeholder for implementing the plan clearly defined and specified?

4B. Is there a clear role and/or enforcement style of the department that is responsible for the implementation of the plan?

5. Adequate regulatory system

6A. Are there adequate rules, penalties, enforcement for the implementation of the plan?

6B. Are there adequate incentives to encourage you as a stakeholder for the implementation of the plan?

6. Training and awareness building for the plan

7A. Are there training programmes or awareness courses for politicians and/or administrative officers the related to the strategic plan?

7. Sound monitoring

7A. Is there a monitoring mechanism in place that tracks progress in achieving plan objectives?

8. Sound parliamentary basis

8A. What influence does the official adoption by the provincial council has on the implementation of the plan?

Stakeholder characteristics

9. Supporting political leadership

9A. Is the current regional government committed and supportive to the implementation of the plan?

10. Supporting administrative executives

10A. Is the current chief executive and/or directors of the administrative organization committed and supportive to implementation of the plan?

10B. Is there a highly influential administrative officer committed and supportive to the implementation of the plan?

Annex 3

Annex 3.1 organogram political and administrative organisation of the Province

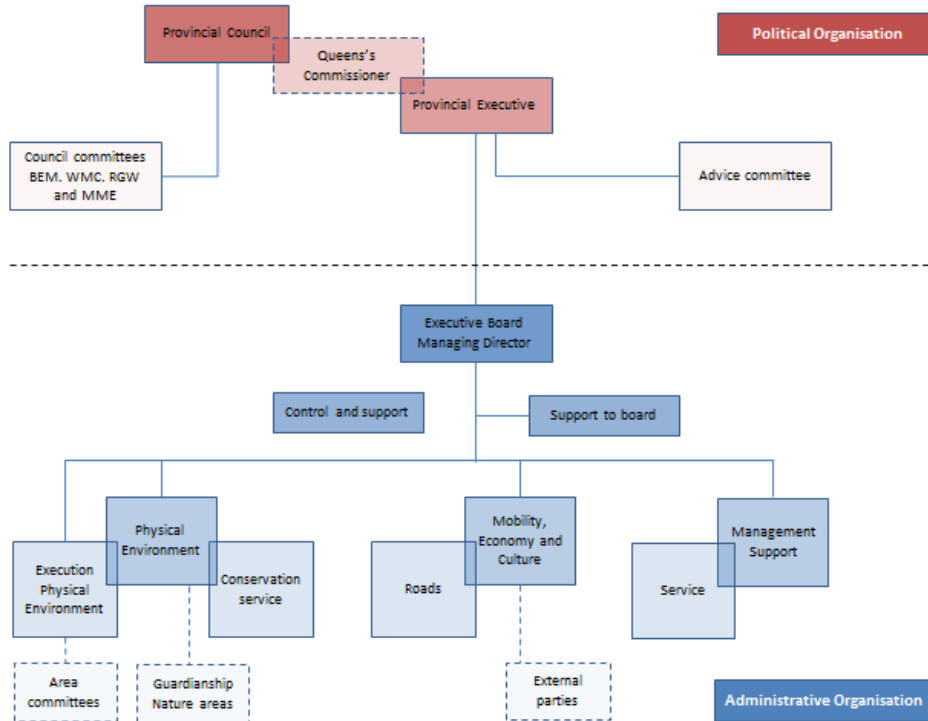
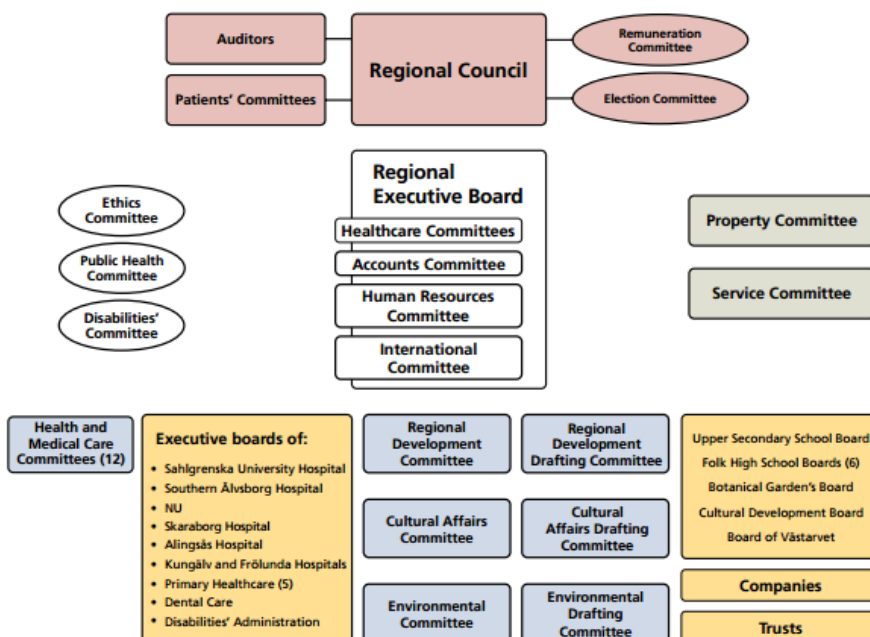


Figure A3.1: organogram political and administrative organisation of the Province

Annex 3.2 organogram political and administrative organisation of the VGR

Political organisation



Administration

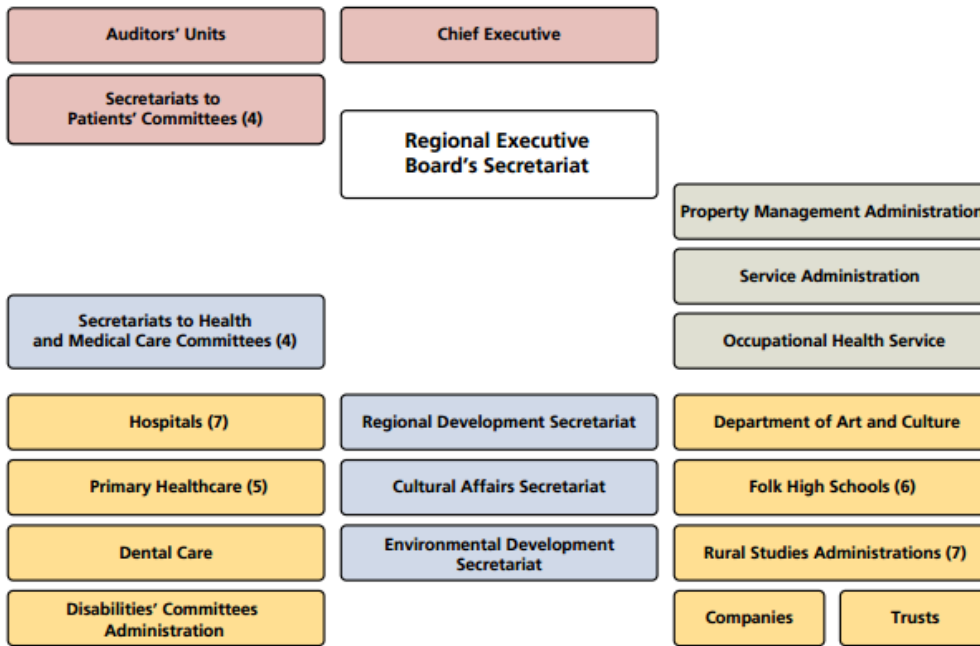


Figure A3.2: Organogram of the political and administrative organization of the VGR

Annex 4

Annex 4.1 Extensive overview development foci Utrecht region

Two main studies were used for the strategic analysis. The monitor State of Utrecht and the study exploring future trends. Based on these studies, future trends and three strong points of the region have been identified. The three strong points are; 1. Location, meeting point; 2. Knowledge/Culture, human capital; 3. City/Landscape, variation. This is visually captured in a visual triangle (figure4.2), where location correspond with the SD principle people, city/landscape the SD principle planet, and knowledge/culture the SD principle profit.

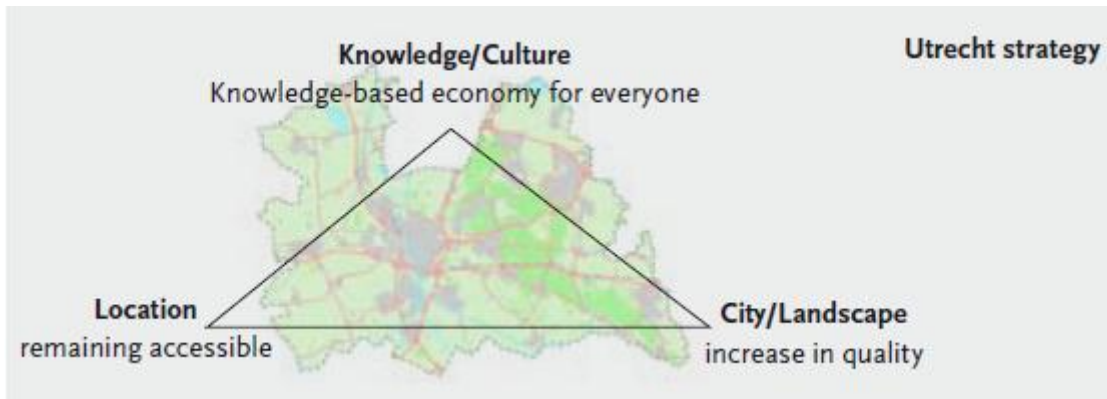


Figure A4.2: Utrecht Strategy captured in triangle (Utrecht2040, 2009:15)

Mission statement

“We want a good quality of life for all residents of our province. We strive for a sustainable Utrecht and for the preservation of the appeal of the region. We reinforce what we are good at: being a meeting point of knowledge and creativity, with a rich culture and an attractive landscape. Utrecht is unique in this combination of qualities. That is why we want to coherently develop the economy, social relations as well as the quality of the environment. We agree that as of this moment, when making important decisions for this region, we will maintain the balance between people, planet and profit. We are working on decreasing and compensating and ultimately preventing the negative impacts of our choices on other stocks, for the next generations and for other areas on earth” (Utrecht 2040, 2011:6).

Annex 4.2 Extensive overview development foci and perspectives Vastra Götaland region

The central element of the strategy “Västra Götaland – A good life” is the vision. The vision is defined by means of the following main points: good health; work and education; safety, fellowship and participation in community; a good environment protecting the renewable systems – in nature, housing and working life; meeting the needs of children and young people; and sustainable growth, generate resources for everyone, and a rich cultural life (Vision VGR, 2005:4). The vision is in turn subdivided in three segments. The first segment is the framework for the entire development process, where Sustainable Development and its three dimensions is the overarching concept for development. The second segment consists of four general perspectives that permeates everything; cohesive region; equality; integration; and internationalisation. The third and last segment consists of the five focus areas; 1. vigorous trade and industry; 2. a leading position in competence and knowledge development; 3. infrastructure and communications; 4. a leading cultural region; and 5. good health. The vision is illustrated by figure A4.1 and the four perspectives and the five development foci are described in tables A4.1 till A4.9.

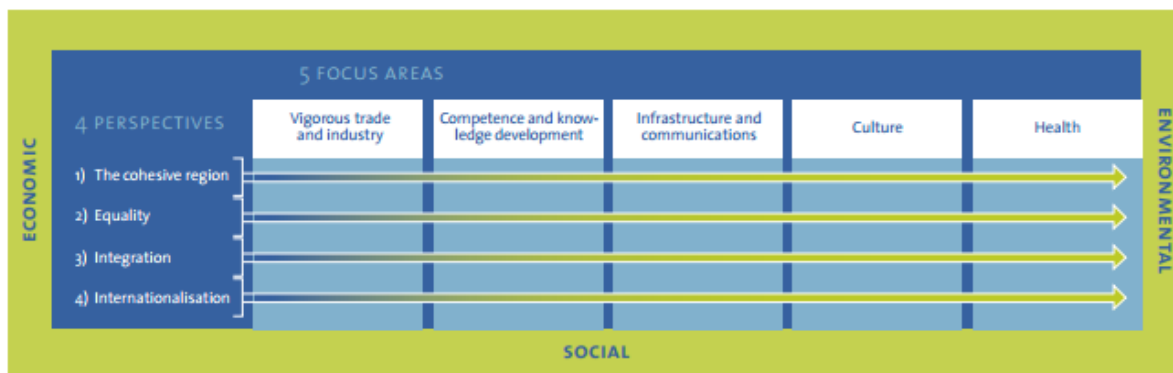


Figure A4.2: visual overview Vision Västra Götaland “A good life” (Vision VGR, 2005:4).

1. A cohesive Västra Götaland

Västra Götaland must be developed into a closely connected region. This requires the individual components to interact and strengthen each other contributing to a competitive whole characterised by sustainable growth, welfare and a good environment. A cohesive region provides more scope for jobs, education, healthcare and caring services, culture and leisure. There are larger labour markets in a cohesive region providing greater accessibility, more opportunities for people to take advantage of what is offered by the cultural sector and other facilities and make the most of everyone’s resources

Essential elements

- a region with shorter distances – attractive local labour markets with increased access to work, education and social contacts etc.
- A region where the individual components interact and strengthen each other for greater growth, well-being and a rich cultural life.
- Growing power and a positive long-term population trend in the four parts of the region – the Göteborg area, Sjuhärad, Skaraborg and Fyrbodal.
- The resources of all individuals being used to the full regardless of gender, origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Table A4.1: Perspective 1 (Vision VGR, 2005:8)

2. Equality

Making the best use of the resources of both women and men involves a broader perspective and greater opportunities for new ideas and development. Every contribution to the development process must be analysed and described from a male/female perspective.

Essential elements

- There is no longer a gender-divided labour market, or gender-traditional career and educational choices.
- An equal power structure in trade and industry and the public sector, and in politics.
- An equally good state of health among both men and women.
- A region without male violence against women and where women do not feel exposed.
- Men and women receiving equal pay for identical and comparable work

Table A4.2: Perspective 2 (Vision VGR, 2005:10)

3. Integration

Integration is about creating an open society making it possible for all citizens, regardless of ethnic origin and cultural backgrounds, to earn a living and take part in community life on equal terms without having to give up their cultural identity. No one should be excluded from the labour market, the business sector, cultural life or associations because of their ethnic origin. Integration is a reciprocal process, a responsibility for both society and the individual in issues of human rights and obligations.

Essential elements

- Diversity is a general asset contributing to growth and development in the region.
- All women and men of foreign extraction are in employment or education.
- Foreign/international training and professional qualifications are valid.
- Differences in degree of employment among people of Swedish or foreign extractions have been evened out.
- Employers, authorities and organisations agree on the integration process for newly-arrived refugees and

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| immigrants, which is an international model. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting turnout is high and more citizens of a foreign extraction take part in decision-making assemblies. • Intercultural and international competence in the region is excellent |

Table A4.3: Perspective 3 (Vision VGR, 2005:11)

| |
|---|
| 4. Internationalism |
| Western Sweden has been highly internationally dependent for long and open to the surrounding world. Foreign trade, international communication and other contacts with foreign countries have been important factors for development and prosperity. As internationalisation and economic integration increase, dependence on the surrounding world also grows. This is true of trade and industry as well as of other sectors and activities. |
| Essential elements |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Västra Götaland's international position and competitiveness are strong • Västra Götaland has developed alliances and partnerships to gain a hearing for its interests in European affairs. There is active participation (in teamwork) on the global arena • Västra Götaland is attractive to companies, capital, skilled labour, research, students and visitors • The citizens are well prepared for international activities |

Table A4.4: Perspective 4 (Vision VGR, 2005:12)

| |
|---|
| 1. Vigorous and sustainable trade and industry |
| The development of Västra Götaland is largely dependent on the capacity of growth in the commercial sector operating in tough competition and in interaction with national and international markets. Characteristics of trade and industry in Västra Götaland are strong international dependence, a high degree of specialisation and active networks with nationally important industries. There are also substantial contributions from companies active on a competitive global market. It is essential to strengthen the conditions of the existing trade and industry as well as for innovation and the creation of new business. Interaction between the research society, trade and industry and the public sector has to increase. |
| Essential elements of the vision are |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade and industry are characterised by strong development and innovation creating new products and services of global competitiveness. They are attractive to investment on the national and international levels • Highly developed interaction between research, trade and industry and the local authorities supporting innovation and clusters • A positive climate for entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses • Functional, sustainable labour markets with a high level of employment contributing to sustained growth and welfare • Resource management, environmentally-sound technology and environmental adaptation of products and services are at the forefront in the business sector • Västra Götaland is Scandinavia's most visited, appreciated and profitable tourism region on a long-term basis • The commercial sector makes use of the potential for development in an equal and multicultural labour market |

Table A4.5: Development focus 1 (Vision VGR, 2005:13)

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|---|
| 2. A leading position in competence and knowledge development |
| Regions with well-educated populations are attractive, to investment and develop faster. Well-educated people contribute to sustainable welfare. Rapid development in working life and technology requires a fast pace in competence and knowledge development. A high level of education and research is of paramount importance, to Västra Götaland's long term development |
| Essential elements of the vision are |
| High-quality comprehensive schools, upper-secondary schools and adult education |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate the teaching environment for knowledge development doing away with geographical, social or cultural restrictions. The three dimensions of sustainable development are kept in mind. • Schools respond to stimuli from working life, and produce pupils who are well-equipped for a future professional life and lifelong learning. • The needs of the pupils are the centre of interest – quality, freedom of choice, participation and influence being significant. • Schools satisfy the needs of individual knowledge seekers. • Compulsory schools, universities/colleges and adult education are organised to encourage students to go on to further studies. • There is regional cooperation in education to achieve higher quality at lower costs |
| Higher education and research of a high international standard. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An attractive and dynamic university education of high international standard. International exchange is a major element. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every second adult has some form of higher education. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a »Western Sweden university« – an expanded, close cooperation between independent universities/colleges doing internationally advanced research. Peak competence and resources are used efficiently. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences in education levels have been evened out between the different parts of the region. |
| <p>Lifelong learning – for continuous skills development</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development is open to everyone and possible to combine with other activities in easily- accessible learning environments in a way that promotes equality and integration. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction between education organisers and the community has been fully accomplished. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning climate has been created that stimulates learning in the education system as well as skills development in working life. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education/training, professional competence and experience are put to maximum use |
| <p>General</p> |
| <p>Everyone should be equipped with skills contributing to development to meet the current requirements without jeopardising the needs of future generations. Gender traditional education and career choices have come to an end and there are no differences in education due to gender or origin</p> |

Table A4.6: Development focus 2 (Vision VGR, 2005:14)

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| <p>3. Infrastructure and communications of a high standard</p> |
| <p>Västra Götaland is Scandinavia’s leading transport region and a propelling force for the Swedish economy. The transport system is essential for individuals’ access to work, education and leisure. Investment in sustainable and safe infrastructure is of crucial significance to the development of trade and industry in the region and the country as a whole. Efficient and secure freight transportation and public transports are crucial for growth and development. The transport system is of great importance in a policy for sustainable development, primarily economically and socially. A conflict with the environmental dimension still remains.</p> |
| <p>Essential elements of the vision are</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International links for all kinds of transport are strong and logistics are characterised by consideration for security. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Göteborg area is the logistics centre of northern Europe, with high standard connecting roads and rail routes. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct flights to Europe’s important destinations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nordic countries’ hub for sea transport and sea-bound goods. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong trade and industry and environment-related research and development in logistics and transport. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid, secure and energy-efficient flows – efficient terminals and flexible rules and regulations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transport system adjusts to requirements of sustainability through a reduced dependence on oil and increased use of alternative fuels. |
| <p>Sustainable and competitive infrastructure</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in infrastructure promotes sustainable growth, easy access to Västra Götaland and inside the area and provides a high level of safety and positive development in the various parts of the region. International connections are first rate. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure expansion shows consideration for natural and cultural environments, contributes to better housing environments and respects both male and female values |
| <p>Public transport for a cohesive region</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport offers a competitive choice as part of a long-term sustainable transport system with a high level of accessibility. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter travelling times increase access to labour markets and education, in Västra Götaland and its surroundings, making the region more circular (the cohesive Västra Götaland). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport develops in a way that corresponds to male and female transport requirements; it must promote integration and be accessible to the disabled |
| <p>IT region in international pole position</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An infrastructure for broadband with maximum speed and capacity for all companies and households. IT is to be used for people’s personal development, participation and service as well as to strengthen the region’s competitive ability. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leading position in the application of IT to promote competitiveness, use of resources and democracy |

Table A4.7: Development focus 3 (Vision VGR, 2005:15)

4. A leading cultural region

Västra Götaland is a region with a distinct cultural image. Natural and cultural heritage, cultural history and strong enterprises such as the Göteborg Opera, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Film i Väst give the region an identity and a distinctive character. Culture contributes to the citizens' personal development, create links between various ethnic groups and individuals and ties the region together. By preserving our cultural heritage we get confident and creative individuals. Culture also contributes to the region's development, as more and more people work in this sector, new companies are established and the cultural assets become increasingly well-known nationally and internationally. Culture is a vital element of the leisure industry

Essential elements of the vision are

- Everyone in the region has culture as a source of energy and stimulation and takes active part in cultural life.
- High quality culture flourishes all over the region.
- Museums, archives, libraries and adult education provide support for lifelong learning.
- Culture is an open door to the world.
- Culture is an asset for growth and development in Västra Götaland, nationally and internationally.
- The cultural environment and cultural history are looked after and developed.
- Gender and diversity perspectives are of great importance in cultural life

Good health

Health is a central value of "A good life". Our health is affected by heritage, life style and the environment in which we live. Changes in ways of life, better housing and working conditions and developments in health care and medical treatment have in the long run resulted in better health and increased length of life. However, health problems still exist. It is obvious that social development in general and working life conditions is important. A good physical environment is vital, and so are solid social and economic conditions with sustained growth generating resources for all and providing jobs

Essential elements of the vision are

- The public health perspective is prominent and health aspects are considered in all social planning. Västra Götaland is at the forefront internationally in public health issues. Work-related unhealth is no longer a social problem. Housing and living environments are of high quality and people take part in community affairs. Health gaps related to gender and ethnic background have been evened out, along with regional differences.
- Children are able to develop their physical, mental and social skills without limitations and grow up in a safe and secure environment.
- High level health and medical care with an advanced degree of availability and quality offered on equal terms respecting everyone's equal value. This in combination with a high level of education and strong research elements – all is of great importance as a growth factor for Västra Götaland.
- Well-developed interaction between parties with an influence on health conditions, e.g. working life, local authorities, organisations, primary healthcare, and with scope for various players in the healthcare system. The responsibility of each individual for his own health is the basis

Table A4.8: Development focus 4 (Vision VGR, 2005:15)

6. Good health

Health is a central value of "A good life". Our health is affected by heritage, life style and the environment in which we live. Changes in ways of life, better housing and working conditions and developments in health care and medical treatment have in the long run resulted in better health and increased length of life. However, health problems still exist. It is obvious that social development in general and working life conditions is important. A good physical environment is vital, and so are solid social and economic conditions with sustained growth generating resources for all and providing jobs

Essential elements of the vision are

- The public health perspective is prominent and health aspects are considered in all social planning. Västra Götaland is at the forefront internationally in public health issues. Work-related unhealth is no longer a social problem. Housing and living environments are of high quality and people take part in community affairs. Health gaps related to gender and ethnic background have been evened out, along with regional differences.
- Children are able to develop their physical, mental and social skills without limitations and grow up in a safe and secure environment.
- High level health and medical care with an advanced degree of availability and quality offered on equal terms respecting everyone's equal value. This in combination with a high level of education and strong research elements – all is of great importance as a growth factor for Västra Götaland.
- Well-developed interaction between parties with an influence on health conditions, e.g. working life, local authorities, organisations, primary healthcare, and with scope for various players in the healthcare system. The responsibility of each individual for his own health is the basis

Table A4.9: Development focus 5 (Vision VGR, 2005:16)

Annex 4.3 The 3-horizon approach

It is believed that the six objectives, which are regarded as long term views, will be realized by means of the medium-long term objectives of the policy plans and the short term actions resulting from those plans. This approach has been called the “3-horizon approach”, and is based on the notion of reaching a desired Utrecht Region in 2040, as expressed in the six thematic objectives. Furthermore, it is believed by the developers that a system change is needed in order to reach the desired state in 2040. All three horizons have their specific influence in the process of system change and reaching the desired state.

The three horizons are described as follows:

1. The long term horizon: These are the six thematic objectives in order to become a sustainable and attractive region in 2040. This is the new balance or new system.
2. The medium-long term horizon: These are the policy plans in which the six objectives are the point of departure. These serve as accelerator and leads to volume growth.
3. The short term horizon: These are the concrete actions stemming from policy plans per policy area, (and the start of small partner projects). These serve as “the sprout” of the desired change. Examples are pilots, “test areas”, and other initiatives alike.

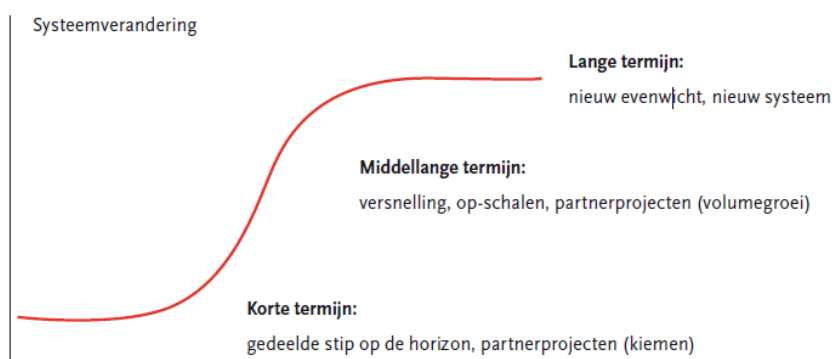


Figure A4.2: the 3-horizon approach (Utrecht2040, 2011:52)

The 3-horizon approach has been worked out in the strategic plan document of 2010. Table A4.10 shows which concrete projects, actions and policy plans (existing or new) contribute to the realisation of the six objectives. The six objectives represent the long term horizon with a time horizon until 2040, the existing or new policy plans represent the medium-long term horizon with a time horizon from 2015-2025, and the projects and actions represent the short term horizon with a time horizon from 2011-2015.

| | Spatial | Economy | Mobility | Climate | Societal Environment | Nature and Landscape |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Long term* Time horizon 2040 Represents 6 Objectives | A region which has room for excellent living, working and nature | A region with an innovative knowledge-based economy | A region that is accessible by car, bicycle or public transport in a better environment | A region that is climate-neutral and climate-proof | A region in which all people matter and are able to participate in school in their neighbourhood and in their job | A region that preserves its nature and landscapes |
| Medium-long term Time horizon 2015-2025 Represents To be revised policy plans New policy plans | To be revised PP** NV Utrecht and spatial agenda New PP Spatial structure vision | To be revised PP** Economic vision New PP Requirement: room for economic development in structure vision Requirement: accessibility | To be revised PP** Area agenda, SMPU, and package studies New PP MIRT-study public transport | To be revised Climate manual and water plan Province environmental policy plan Adaptation in water plan | To be revised PP** Social agenda and culture PP Policy exploration aging population Program “wel thuis” | To be revised PP** PP nature and landscape, agenda nature, territory plan and CHS Decline |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Short term</p> <p>Time horizon 2011-2015</p> <p>Represents Actions and projects by or in cooperation by the Province</p> | <p>Opportunities development A12 zone</p> <p>Preliminary study urbanisation possibilities 2015-2030</p> | <p>(execution SMPU)</p> <p>Culture as factor for settlement (culture policy plan)</p> <p>Sustainability economy in U. Entrepreneurship with renewable energy</p> | | <p>KWO in soil vision/ soil agenda</p> <p>Climate goals in Delta program</p> <p>PP**</p> <p>New PP</p> <p>Sustainability economy in U. Entrepreneurship with renewable energy</p> <p>Adaptation in Structure vision</p> <p>Agriculture vision</p> | <p>New PP</p> <p>Policy exploration culture and heritage</p> <p>Revision culture PP (2013)</p> <p>Development of giving direction of social interests in spatial economic and other policies</p> <p>Quality of life (rural and urban)</p> <p>“Vrede van Utrecht” in 2013</p> <p>Utrecht cultural capital in 2018</p> <p>Transition of youth care to municipalities by maintain the quality</p> <p>Study Sustainable watermanagement</p> <p>Drought proof West-NL</p> <p>Climate effects on the swamp corridor</p> <p>1st fase execution KRW</p> | <p>grassland in soil vision</p> <p>New PP</p> <p>Landscape vision</p> <p>Revision CHS in PHS</p> <p>Revision GLB en EU</p> <p>Finish Dutch water stripe</p> <p>Recovery of “Grebbeinie”</p> <p>Year of the historical outdoor place</p> |
| | <p>Approach inner city building and financing</p> <p>Spatial adaptation infrastructure</p> | <p>Lane of sustainability</p> <p>Innovation agenda 2012-2015</p> <p>Acquisition agenda 2012-2015</p> <p>Continuation Utrecht Science Park</p> <p>International School</p> <p>By co-financing fund for knowledge and innovation, better utilization of European and national funds for innovation</p> | <p>Spatial adaptation infrastructure</p> <p>Pilot electric driving</p> | <p>Encouraging team renewable energy</p> <p>Enlarge guarantee fund for renewable energy</p> <p>Potential studies, geo-thermic, bio-mass and roof technics</p> <p>Study Sustainable watermanagement</p> <p>Drought proof West-NL</p> <p>Climate effects on the swamp corridor</p> <p>1st fase execution KRW</p> | <p>“Vrede van Utrecht” in 2013</p> <p>Utrecht cultural capital in 2018</p> <p>Transition of youth care to municipalities by maintain the quality</p> <p>Study Sustainable watermanagement</p> <p>Drought proof West-NL</p> <p>Climate effects on the swamp corridor</p> <p>1st fase execution KRW</p> | <p>Finish Dutch water stripe</p> <p>Recovery of “Grebbeinie”</p> <p>Year of the historical outdoor place</p> |

Figure A4.10: the 3-horizon approach (Utrecht2040, 2010:52)

Annex 4.4 Overview of Utrecht2040-Network-partners

Alleato
BMC
Ballast Nedam
Berenschot
Bestuur Regio Utrecht (BRU)
CMS Derks Star Busmann
DHV
Gemeente Amersfoort
Gemeente Bunschoten
Gemeente Leusden
Gemeente Stichtse Vecht
Gemeente Utrecht
Grontmij
Hogeschool Utrecht
Hoogheemraadschap De Stichtse Rijnlanden
Kamer van Koophandel Midden Nederland
LTO Noord
Landschap Erfgoed Utrecht
MVO Rabobank
Movares
Natuur- en Milieufederatie Utrecht
PWC
Portaal
RIVM
ROC Midden Nederland
TNO
Task Force Innovatie
Twynstra Gudde
Universiteit Utrecht
Utrechts Landschap

Source: <http://www.utrecht2040.nl/organisatie/overzicht/>

Visited: 21st of June 2012

Annex 4.5 Monitoring tools Vstra Götaland region

A general SD-monitor of the region, which includes the objective of the vision, and executed every 5 years. The second monitor was released in 2012 and receives part of its input from three other monitoring tools. These are; the yearly qualitative survey among citizens executed by the university, of which a section is dedicated to objectives of the vision; the every other year competitive benchmarking research with other regions in Sweden which started in 2011; the yearly quantitative good life index, with indicators based on the 5 development foci and 4 perspectives of the vision which was introduced in 2011. The last tools are seminars and conferences to discuss the most important development issues are discussed. These issues are formulated based on the aforementioned tools. All leading politicians from the region and municipalities are present, as well as external representatives. These events were organized in 2009, 2011 and 2012.

Annex 5

Annex 5.1 Hierarchical planning Götaland region

STRATEGI FÖR TILLVÄXT OCH UTVECKLING I VÄSTRA GÖTALAND 2014-2020

