



Commission brief:	Design assignment focussing on both idea generation (long term vision for the entire region) as well as a subsequent realization perspective (steppingstone projects). In all cases sustainable water management was a main part of the assignment
Designers:	1st prize location IJmeer: team West 8 Urban Design & Landscape Architecture bv., Boskalis bv., AT Osborne, Witteveen + Bos Raadgevende Ingenieurs bv.; 1st prize location Beerze Reusel: team Grontmij Nederland bv. cluster Zuid; 1st prize location Deltapoort: team DHV B.V., Enno Zuidema Stedebouw bv, Espresso Publishing, BGSV bureau voor stedebouw, Van Oort Culturele Zaken; 1st prize location Vechtstreek: no winner
Commissioned by:	Eo Wijers Foundation
Area:	ranging between 50 and 400 km ²
Design Period:	2005–2006 (7th edition); 2008 (8th edition)
Implementation Period:	—
Budget:	187.000 euro (prize money)

A landscape photograph showing a stone-lined stream or ditch in the foreground, surrounded by tall grasses and reeds. In the background, a church with a prominent tower is visible through a line of trees under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The text "7th and 8th edition of Eo Wijers design competition" is overlaid in white on the center of the image.

7th and 8th edition of
Eo Wijers design competition

1. Peter Breittling, 'The role of the competition in the genesis of urban planning. Germany and Austria in the nineteenth century', in: Anthony Sutcliffe (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800-1914*. London: Mansell, 1980, pp. 31-54.
2. Bruno De Meulder, 'Twaalf opmerkingen en suggesties', in: Els Vervloesem, et al., *Onzichtbaar aanwezig. Sociale huisvesting in Vlaanderen, vandaag*. Brussels: Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2008, pp. 197-215.

3. A striking example of how calls for designs (open or by invitation) can serve to place topics on the agenda are the events organized by the then Rotterdam Art Foundation/Architecture International Rotterdam (AIR) Foundation in the period 1982-2002.
4. Besides competitions in the strict sense of the word, such as the Bouwfonds Design Competition (since 1998) and the Eo Wijers Competition discussed in this chapter (since 1985), design events such as 'Nederland Nu Als

Ontwerp' (The Netherlands Now As Design, 1987) and the above-mentioned AIR Foundation can also be considered to belong to this vision-generating tradition.

5. The *Plan Ooievaar* (Stork Plan) is widely regarded as a trail-blazing design in Dutch regional planning. One of its key merits is the distinction made in the plan between high- and low-dynamic functions, a method that would later be termed the 'casco concept', a skeletal framework. Dick de Bruin, et al.,

A TRIPTYCH OF EXPERTISE

The Design Competition as an Instrument to Unite Assignment, Design and Commissioner

Bart de Zwart

Ever since the emergence of modern urbanism, the design competition has been an incubator for new ideas in spatial planning.¹ Competitions and open calls are often considered as the ideal moment for innovations to be realized and for new courses to be plotted.² The ability of plan competitions to encourage design practice to surpass itself is, however, only partly explained by the competitive element and the public attention accorded to a winning design. No less important is the fact that design competitions constitute exceptional moments for an exchange of knowledge between theory and practice, occasions when research and development within the discipline can occur. They serve as test-beds which always seem to some extent able to shake themselves free of everyday practice and thus establish their own experimental space where new problems can be placed on the agenda and existing assumptions reconsidered without restraint.³

A specific type of competition that has gradually gained ground is the 'ideas competition', a genre in which special attention is reserved for the capacity of competitions to drive innovation. Dutch spatial planning practice boasts a rich tradition in such conceptual or idea-generating design competitions.⁴ Since the 1980s these have also emphatically addressed the supralocal level. A perfect example of this is the Eo Wijers Foundation, which has been concentrating on regional design since the mid-1980s and over the last quarter of a century has established a strong reputation in this domain.

In reaction to form and visualization having receded into the background in the Dutch planning culture of the 1960s and '70s, the foundation endeavours to put design at the supralocal scale back on the agenda by staging periodic planning competitions. After a flying start, with the successful *Plan Ooievaar* (Stork Plan) as winner of the inaugural design competition, over

the years there have been several editions which have shed light on a diversity of themes and regions.⁵ Thanks in part to the ample publicity the competitions have enjoyed the interest in regional design has blossomed during this period, both in terms of public attention and in the development of competence within the discipline. In addition to urban planning, landscape architecture has emphatically demonstrated itself to be a prominent design discipline at the regional scale.

For all the achievements of the 'ideas competition', after the sixth edition the foundation ascertained that the actual realization of winning plans at the regional scale was still lagging behind. Despite all the élan, it proved difficult to mobilize the euphoria of the prize-giving as the instigator of actual implementation.⁶ As a consequence plans soon founder and are filed away, with everyone returning to the order of the day.

In response to this the Eo Wijers Foundation introduced a change of policy in 2005, shifting the emphasis to the 'link between supralocal planning and implementation'.⁷ In the new-style competition the commissioner is more central than ever before, serving as the pivotal link between design and execution. This 'model' client is expected to assume responsibility for the assignment and on the basis of that engagement to be the linchpin in a network of stakeholders. This means that the commissioner, designer and competition organizers are united in their mutual commitment to arrive, on the basis of a specially tailored competition brief, at a design with a real prospect of implementation.

This has resulted in the emergence of a contest within the competition, with regions presenting themselves as candidate plan areas in advance. This pre-selection takes place during a series of four thematic conferences and serves to make a selection from the candidate competition areas as well as to support local parties in the careful formulation of a brief as the starting point for the design competition. This preparatory phase couples the area-specific know-how of local actors with expertise regarding the content of the plan, as contributed by the Eo Wijers Foundation. Special attention is once again being devoted to the role of individual actors as 'vessels of expertise' in the plan development process. The conferences are not, however, intended to limit the designers' room for manoeuvre in advance by imposing frameworks with which the plan must comply; the entrants are invited to reflect through their design on the formulated assignment from a pragmatic but critical standpoint. The foundation prescribes five roles that the design should fulfil:⁸

Doievaar. De toekomst van het rivierengebied. Arnhem: Stichting Gelderse Milieufederatie, 1987.
Jannemarie de Jonge and Nicoline van der Windt, *Doorbraken in het Rivierengebied. De levensloop van transformerende concepten en hun netwerken in het centrale rivierengebied 1970-2005.* Wageningen: Alterra, 2007.

6. The chairman of the Eo Wijers Foundation, Hans Leeftang, repeatedly uses the word 'feestjes' (little feasts) to denote the various public events during the competition. This characteriza-

tion refers in part to the awards ceremony itself but also clearly relates to the 'feast of ideas' that events should represent. Here the term 'feast' acquires an instrumental overtone and assumes the function of a point of crystallization in the process of the collective shaping of a vision by designers, commissioners and stakeholders.

7. Eo Wijers-stichting, *Businessplan 2005-2007*, p. 3.
8. Interview with Hans Leeftang, The Hague, 20 May 2008.

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The jury assessing the submissions for the seventh round of the Eo Wijers Competition, the IJmeer edition

1. Clarify the assignment by investigating the territory;
2. Orchestrate collaboration between actors;
3. Provide insight into revenue-generating possibilities by prospecting for new stakeholders, spotting investment opportunities and establishing consortia of spatial actors;
4. Elaborate a clear-cut long-term perspective for the region;
5. Propose specific key projects in the short term that will substantiate this long-term perspective.

These design roles also have implications for the structure of the design competition. In the new-style competition structure a distinction is made between an open ideas phase and the subsequent closed elaboration phase, meant only for those entries nominated in the previous phase. The aim is to achieve a shift towards rendering the plan concrete between the first and second phase. A central role is assigned to the 'regional jury', which serves alongside the professional jury and represents the specific knowledge and interests of local parties, such as municipal councils, district water boards and conservationists. The regional jury therefore functions

9. The survey was commissioned by the *Vereniging Deltametropool* (Delta Metropolis Association), an intergovernmental platform composed of various municipalities, provinces, district water boards, the business community and civic organizations from the west of the Netherlands.
10. The winning entry, 'XI Markeroog', was formulated by West 8 Urban Design & Landscape Architecture bv., Boskalis bv., AT Osborne and Witteveen + Bos Raadgevende Ingenieurs bv.

11. Eo Wijers-stichting, *Juryrapport IJmeer/Beerze Reusel: ...tegen de stroom in en met de stroom mee... De eerste fase van de zevende prijsvraag van de Eo Wijers Stichting*. Utrecht: Eo Wijers-stichting, 2006.

as a combination of sounding board and delegated commissioner, which is underscored by the fact that the primacy of the jury's decision shifts from the professional to the regional jury in the transition from the first to the second phase of the competition.

Another element given special consideration in the new-style competition structure is the multi-scale character of planning tasks at the regional level. Emblematic of this are issues involving water management, which have therefore been adopted as a leitmotif. Taking these issues as a starting point makes it necessary to take stock of cause and effect at various levels of scale and with differing timeframes and to unite them in a coherent spatial strategy. Besides the water theme being a starting point for vertical coordination between administrative tiers, it also represents an opening for intersectoral collaboration.

The multi-scale approach assumes a tangible form in a definition of the assignment at regional, subregional and local scales, which calls for coherent design statements on all three levels. In sequential order, this implies the elaboration of a long-term perspective for the whole area, the formulation of a spatial plan that addresses the issues from the competition brief, and the designation of one or several strategic key projects that can be tackled immediately and thus create a momentum which makes it possible to achieve the plan's implementation.

Though the exact relation between vision, plan and project is not made explicit, this set-up suggests a cohesion that goes further than a straightforward linear or hierarchic harmonization. There is, it seems, a search for a planning model that establishes a spatial strategy that can be transposed across different scales, timelines and degrees of abstraction, extending far beyond the smallest scale being merely the detailing of the largest scale. In a nested plan structure like this, a detail in the design makes a statement about the whole that is as powerful as the prescription of the regional vision in its entirety with regard to crucial details.

New round, new opportunities?

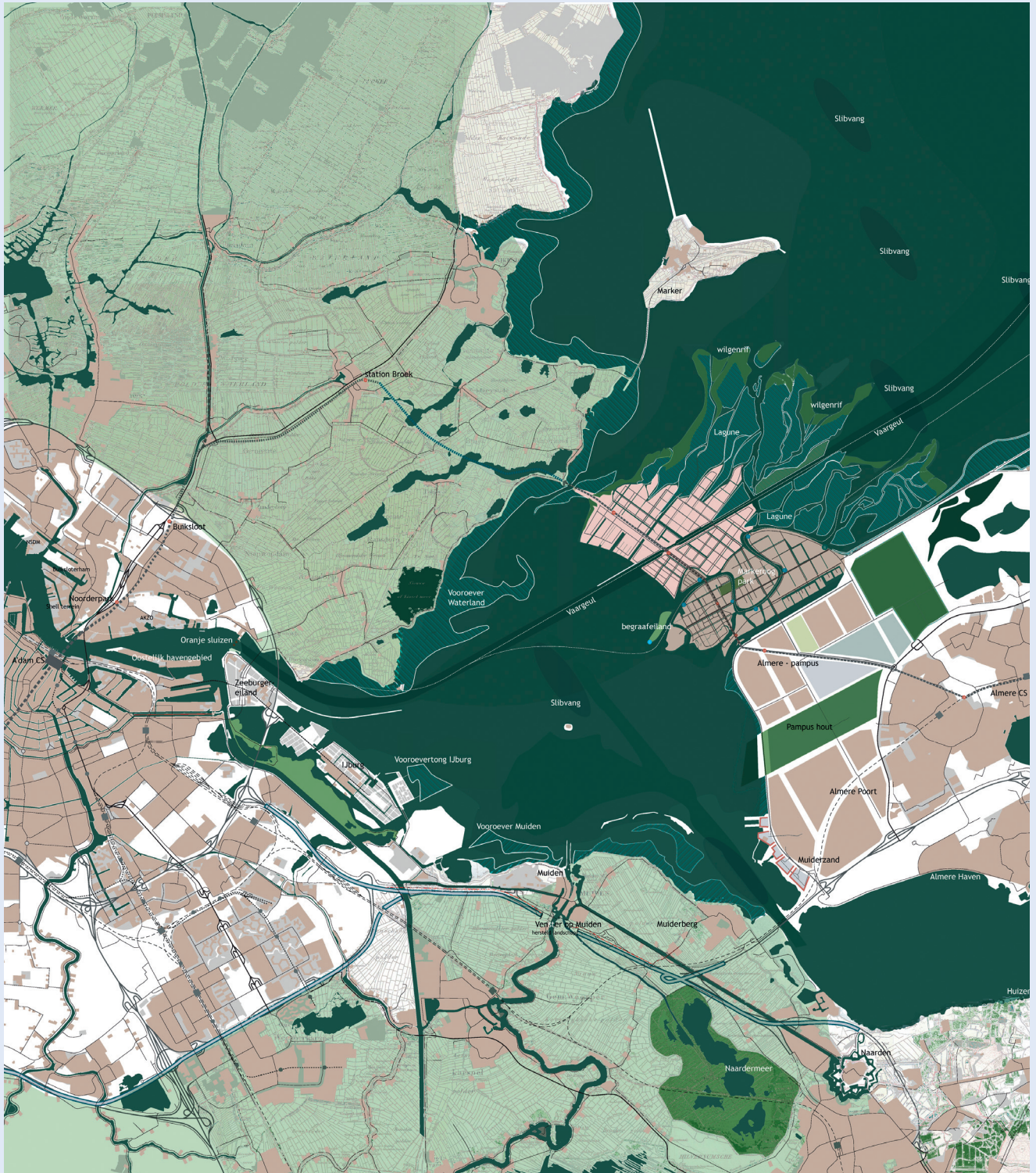
The new approach was introduced in the 2006 competition, under the motto *De zevende, geen zwevende* (which might be loosely translated as 'The seventh time around: feet firmly on the ground'). From the pre-selection of four potential locations, two candidates came to the fore as competition regions. These two regions are each other's antipodes in various respects:

on the one hand, IJmeer or IJ Lake, a body of water in the densely urbanized west of the Netherlands which has for decades been the subject of heated public and political debate about the spatial development of Amsterdam and the satellite city of Almere; on the other, Beerze Reusel, an agricultural landscape on more elevated sandy soils in the south of the country which has traditionally been characterized by a hierarchical administrative culture and prominent representation of the agricultural sector.

IJmeer

The substantive reason for the IJmeer competition was a study carried out in 2004 and the subsequent intergovernmental agreement with regard to the *Toekomstvisie IJmeer* (IJmeer Development Scenario).⁹ The focus of the competition is the lake's three shore zones, where one can already see issues manifesting themselves in nearly all policy areas, ranging from water management to nature and recreation, from urban development to mobility. An implementation phase was not included in the competition brief, but the entrants were asked to devise a vision for a possible follow-up. This translation into implementation ought to be spurred on by the tabling of model projects (for the time being fictitious). Conversely, a new interpretation of the existing development vision at the regional scale serves to establish a connection between the many apparently conflicting claims that have been projected onto the region.

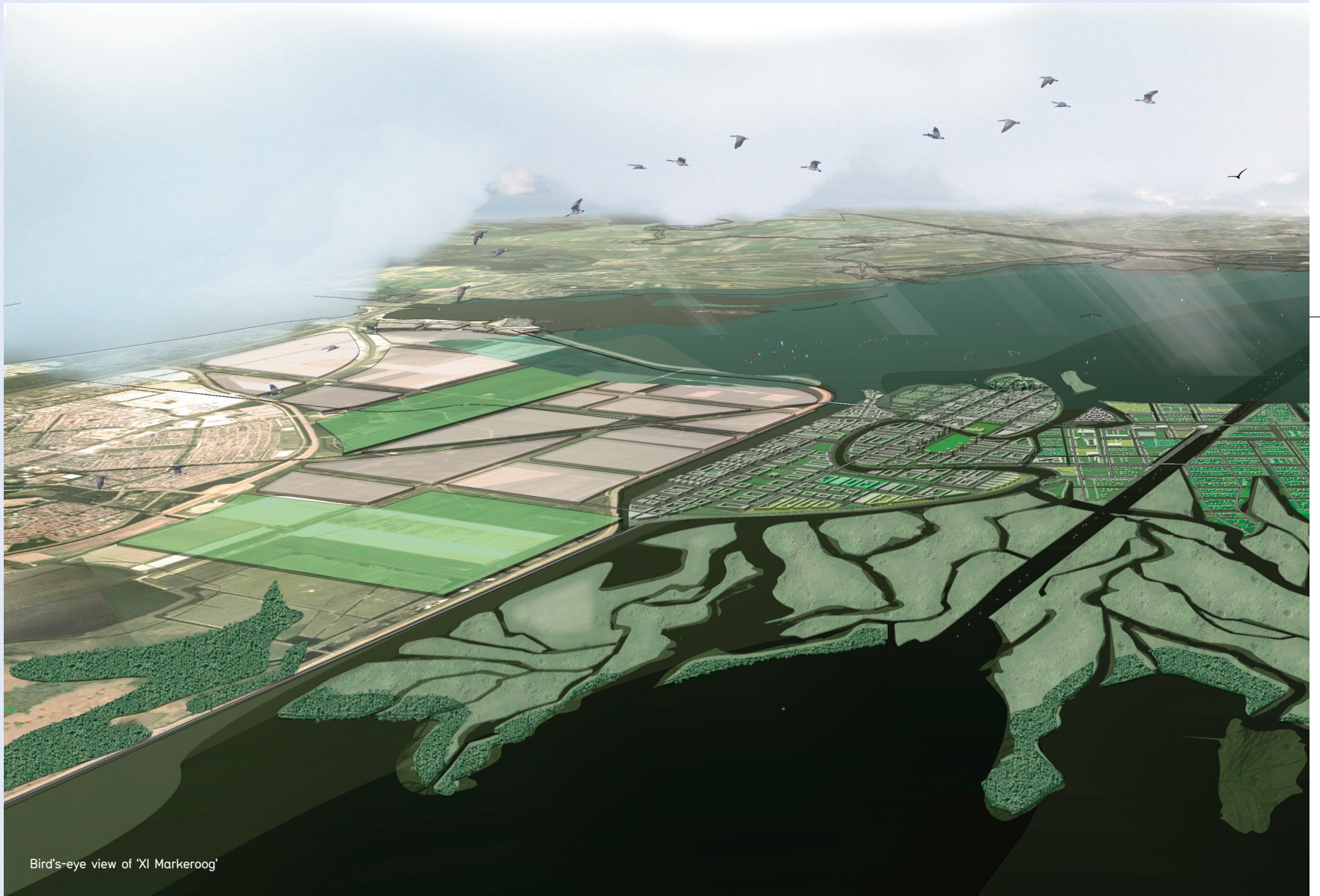
The award-winning plan from the IJmeer competition, 'XI Markeroog', was submitted by a consortium led by West 8.¹⁰ The plan exemplifies how intelligent combinations of the various sectoral planning tasks and an appealing visualization can serve to envisage the lines along which a solution that transcends the apparent tension between divergent sectoral tasks might be sought.¹¹ Raising the sandbank between Almere-Pampus and the coast of Waterland as proposed in the plan may well be an ambitious intervention but it is more than a purely formalistic gesture. The enclosure of this expanse of water would make it possible to alter the water level, presenting possibilities such as a permanent fast ferry service between Almere and Amsterdam. The newly created peninsula is developed into a suburban residential area to the south, while a natural lagoon and wetlands take shape to the north. The shoal itself and IJmeer's new foreshores would be created using sand and clay from the dredging of deep catchment gullies for sediment, which should improve the water quality in the lake.



Winning entry for the seventh edition of the Eo Wijers Competition, the IJmeer edition: 'XI Markeroog'

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Bird's-eye view of 'XI Markeroog'

12. Jannemarie de Jonge, *Een kwart eeuw Eo Wijers-stichting. Ontwerpprijsvraag als katalysator voor gebiedsontwikkeling*. Gouda/The Hague: Habiforum/Eo Wijers-stichting, 2008, p. 26.

13. The public administration literature distinguishes between three types of uncertainty in policy formulation involving complex social problems: lack of expertise and ambiguity in a problem's formulation (intrinsic uncertainty), the interaction of actors (strategic uncertainty),

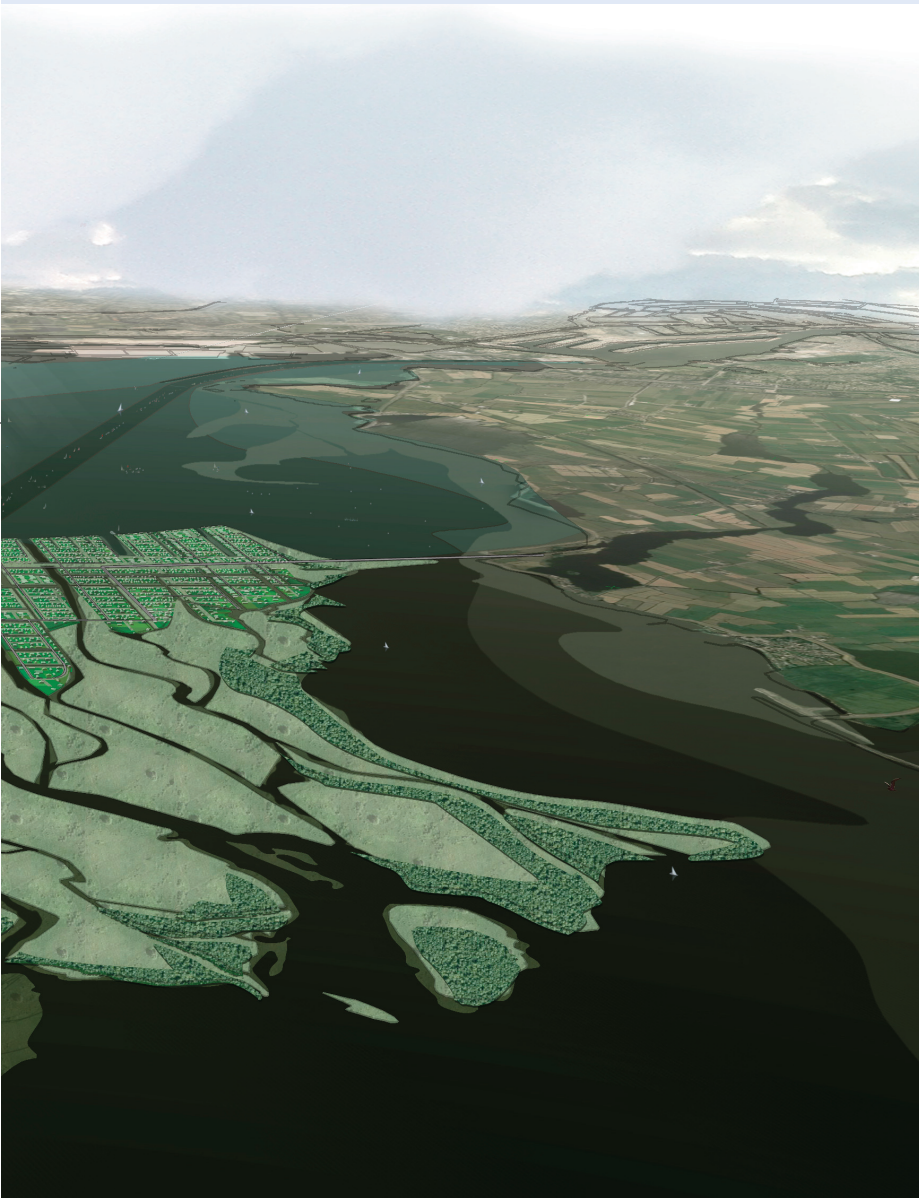
and the value systems on the basis of which each of the actors operates (institutional uncertainty). Confrontation with a 'definition of reality' introduced by a 'third' actor – in this case the design – can potentially arbitrate these uncertainties. See Jos Koffijberg, *Getijden van beleid: omslagpunten in de volkshuisvesting. Over de rol van hiërarchie en netwerken bij grote veranderingen*. Delft: DUP Science, 2005, pp. 19–64.

14. An attempt by the province of Noord-Brabant to make headway in negotiations between representatives of environmental organizations and the agricultural sector led to the laying down of several supplementary agreements concerning the reconstruction in the *Akkoord van Cork* ('Cork Agreement') in 2003.

15. The winning entry, 'De Beerze op waterbasis', is a design by Grontmij Nederland bv., cluster Zuid.

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The plan therefore seems to offer a fairly complete solution for a raft of issues in the region within a well-structured concept, but it soon became evident that the readiness of local actors to support a possible realization was lacking. The main stumbling block seems to be the collective disinclination to expose the fragile process of rallying consensus with regard to the future of the IJmeer to a plan proposal that calls the frameworks of previous agreements into question.¹² The fact that in this instance the design was unable to break through this inertia raises the question of whether a plan's power of persuasion on its own is an adequate provision to dispel strategic and institutional uncertainties as well as doubts about content.¹³

Beerze Reusel

In the second competition region of Beerze Reusel it was also a governmental document that delineated the context in which the design competition was organized, though this document was not a regional vision but the implementation of the 2002 Reconstruction Act on Concentration Areas, which was introduced in the wake of the large-scale outbreak of swine fever in 1997. The Reconstruction Act seizes upon a large-scale restructuring of the intensive livestock farming to effect a reorganization of the agricultural production landscape which has evolved in the environs of Brabant's lowland stream basins over the years. The introduction of regional water management into the negotiations proved to be a catalyst for the discussions – which were initially a struggle – between government, farmers' organizations and environmental lobbies about the clearing away and relocation of large-scale farming enterprises.¹⁴ The momentum this generated for the realization of projects in, for example, the Beerze lowland stream basin, presents an opening of which the design competition takes full advantage.

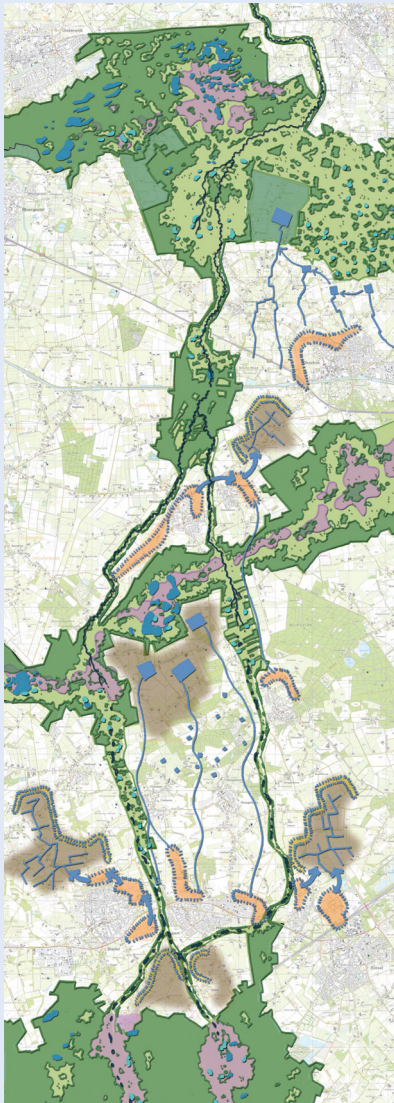
The winning entry in this competition round concentrated on a decoupling of the stream system from urban as well as agricultural water systems.¹⁵ This separation results in a new watercourse alongside the existing streams and a strict division of clean and impure water. The merit of this strategy is that it can be interpreted in various ways on the local scale, provided that the basic concept of the separate water systems is respected. This makes it possible to execute the plan in a series of projects which can be tackled independently. Various marketing scenarios for the projects are included in the plan. These scenarios zero in on commercial trends such

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Reconstruction area around the Beerze lowland stream basin



Winning entry for the seventh edition of the Eo Wijers Competition, the Beerze Reusel edition: 'The Beerze based on water' (De Beerze op waterbasis)

16. Some of the interventions proposed in the plan are at loggerheads with spatial policy decided previously and long-established views about the role of the stream system in the area.
17. André Loeckx, 'Project and design. Amending the project mode', in: André Loeckx (ed.), *Framing Urban Renewal in Flanders*. Amsterdam: SUN, 2009, pp. 18–29.

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as slow food and outdoor recreation and are dedicated to the economic underpinning of the plan.

Though the practice of landscape development in redevelopment areas is especially unpredictable, the winning plan from the Beerze Reusel edition demonstrates that it is possible to open doors that had previously seemed to be locked.¹⁶ The fact that stakeholders were involved in the plan's formulation from an early stage plays an important part in this, making it possible for a specific kind of local expertise to evolve in the design.

The results of the competition in this region of Brabant make it obvious that a good design is not only important for the intrinsic quality of a regional development process, but is also an important precondition for the substantiation of the dialogue between the various parties, the way participation functions and the fostering of cooperation between public- and private-sector parties in the course of the planning process.¹⁷

No shortage of plans

Enthused by the results of the seventh competition, the Eo Wijers Foundation persisted with its new approach in the 2008 edition – this time in the Vecht region and the so-called Drecht cities, the small riverside cities of Dordrecht, Papendrecht, Sliedrecht and Zwijndrecht on the southernmost edge of the Randstad conurbation. Striking about the results of the eighth competition is that the innovative thrust which was such a distinctive quality of the entries in the previous edition has been followed through only partially. This seems to have something to do with the nature of the tasks that were addressed in this most recent round, as well as with the quantity and quality of the submissions. Nevertheless, the eighth round shows that the lessons of the seventh edition are no less relevant. The capacity of designs to kick-start an implementation process proves to be closely aligned with the extent to which a plan is able to forge a link between spatial aspects on the one hand and the administrative, political and economic aspects of the regional planning task on the other.

Besides these last two editions of the Eo Wijers Competition producing inspiring examples, four points of particular relevance to a design-driven planning approach at the regional scale can be distilled from them, as outlined below.

18. Eo Wijers-stichting, *Buiten in de Randstad. Prijsvraagronde 2008. Rapport van de vakjury. Deltapoort en Vechtstreek: Vormgeven aan rust en dynamiek tussen steden*. The Hague: Eo Wijers-stichting, 2009, p. 50.

19. Along the Vecht River there are a great many seventeenth-century pleasure gardens and country estates. The region is also highly popular as a place of residence for the well-heeled.

20. Latent transformation processes can provide fruitful leads for design explorations. One example of this is the reconnaissance carried out by the landscape architects Van Paridon & De Groot in the region of Twente. This resulted in a new organizational entity, the *knooperf* or 'junction yard', in response to spatial, social and economic changes in rural areas. Ruut van Paridon and Karin de Groot, 'The Courty Realm', *Oase*, 63 (2004), pp. 99–109.

21. The runner-up, 'Uwerken', was designed by Dijk&co Landschapsarchitectuur, Annemieke Diekman Landschapsarchitecten, MUST stedenbouw, Karin Laglas, Merijn Groenhart, Sybrant van der Werf, and Tobias Woldendorp.

Designing 'across the scales'

The multi-scale setup of the design competition invites designers to reflect on the effects of the plans at different levels. To begin with one's attention might turn to spatial dimensions, but no less important are the leaps in scale in terms of timelines and abstraction. This calls for a different relationship between levels of scale in the design.

In several competition entries one can still discern a reflex that gives precedence to the production of a comprehensive map at the highest scale, but the general tenor of the submissions is that little recourse is to be found in traditional blueprints when designing at the regional scale. Despite the fact that 'grand design' could be a positive impulse to counteract the so-called cluttering in the fragmented zone around the Drecht cities,¹⁸ the strength of regional design seems to a large extent to reside in its consolidation of several types of expertise at different scales. Here the competition's thematic focus on the water management task demonstrates how it is possible to engineer a direct relationship between micro-level causes and macro-level effects, and vice versa. Moreover, operating in parallel at several scales benefits the simultaneously addressing of the different regional actors and their specific operational frameworks.

Investigation of the territory

Although each edition of the competition is preceded by a clearly defined formulation of the assignment, the competition brief – especially in the so-called ideas phase – could also be read as an invitation to the designer to go in search of an idiosyncratic reading of the region and the assignment. In this respect the complexity of the regional scale constitutes an obstacle as well as an opportunity, given that it allows leeway for new interpretations which can in turn lead to novel solutions and insights. In its report on the eighth competition the professional jury states that, although the formulation of the task in the Vecht region was rigidly marshalled by existing governmental policies, the submissions missed opportunities in their analysis of the region. The latent economic forces in the region, namely heritage tourism and private investments,¹⁹ could have provided enough leads for the formulation of an innovative development strategy.

The jury's commentary underscores the importance of probing exploration, both in the spatial domain and beyond. Design-driven explorations

have proven their ability to make a valuable contribution in similar situations, such as testing solutions at the micro-level or providing insight into the collective impact of apparently inconsequential phenomena.²⁰

Balance between form and substance

The ability to produce appealing visualizations plays an important part in the design's power to communicate and persuade. The fact that in the eighth competition a picturesque rendering of regional identity by one of the submissions – an idea culminating in an island shaped like a fig leaf as a reference to earthly paradise – held a strong appeal for the local jury from the Vecht region is therefore hardly surprising. However, because such formal symbolism soon overreaches itself when expanded to a horizon-filling scale it seems advisable to strike a balance between form and content in the design process.

The designs that took first and second place in the IJmeer competition demonstrate that it is possible to devise a design that combines ambitious ideas and well-considered solutions.²¹ Here the design's illustrative potential – both visually and visionary – is exploited as a force of attraction, even though the entries also make it obvious that its effectiveness is co-determined by the constellation of actors in the region where the design is deployed.

In the competition round for the Drecht cities the design was also frequently seized upon as a visual instrument to reinterpret the area cognitively, by rotating maps and selecting specific cut-outs and legends, for example. The main objective here was to envisage a spatial entity in the midst of the diffuse transitional landscape between the densely populated and heavily industrialized Rijnmond region and the tidal wetlands and meadows of the Biesbosch National Park, which as a hypothetical regional identity ought to provide a point of departure for regional cooperation. Though the graphical toolbox remains limited and its application is not always elaborated with equal care, the examples certainly show that this effect of the design is potentially present.

The key project as stepping-stone

The fourth point is that the guiding concepts deployed in the design to establish links between the realization of various plan components are of critical importance. In this regard the elaborative phase of the design com-

22. Provincie Noord-Brabant, *Beerze Reusel: In Stroomversnelling! Juryrapport van de tweede fase van de zevende prijsvraag van de Eo Wijers Stichting*, 's-Hertogenbosch: Provincie Noord-Brabant, 2007, p. 60.

23. The term 'capacity building' is taken from the context of urban renewal in Flanders, where in recent years experiments have been conducted with a 'concept grant', an instrument to support cities (in relation to content, process and design) in the formulation of project designs. See André Loeckx (ed.), *Framing Urban Renewal in Flanders*. Amsterdam: SUN, 2009.

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petition for the region of Beerze Reusel proves to be an especially intriguing exercise. By combining administrative momentum, flows of funding and public support at the local level through the design, it lays the groundwork for a project that makes an effective contribution to the regional vision.

An important role has been set aside for the 'key projects', which have been given a prominent place in the new-style competition. Besides a key project being the test of the vision formulated in the plan – take, for instance, the realization of a separate water system as in one of the winning entries – it also plays an essential role in the plan's execution, representing a pivotal moment in the shift from vision and action when judgements are reached that go beyond those the project addresses directly.

This means that the designation of the key project is by no means non-committal. The key project is neither the locus of least resistance nor where success can be achieved most swiftly, but rather the hinge where the greatest leverage can be achieved. In the case of Beerze this means taking a step 'from stream development to regional development' and 'establishing contact with the topography of the landscape and with views that prevail in the region'.²²

The competitions also reveal that the formulation of such key projects is a strenuous enterprise that requires an abundance of strategic insight. This drives some designers to rely on what jury chairman Dirk Sijmons aptly describes as the *deus ex machina*, a well-nigh divine interposition to straighten out the supposed chaos in one fell swoop. In one particular submission for the eighth competition the quest for a guiding concept resulted in the proposal advocating nothing less than a bid to host the Olympic Games, which is a line of reasoning that comes across as ironic rather than realistic in its application to the problems specific to the Drecht cities.

Designerly liaisons

The results of the Eo Wijers Competitions provide insight into a design practice that in many respects is still in the throes of development, but one that nevertheless offers auspicious prospects for the formulation of plans that are visionary without their grip on reality being at issue. Here regional design seems to be equipped to play a part in connecting diverse substantive and process-driven dimensions of plan development and implementation. Central to this is the use of visual representations in the design to detect opportunities that interconnect the spatial, administrative, political

and economic aspects of the regional task without simply reproducing them. For this the multi-scalar approach and synthesis of (spatial) phenomena are crucial processes, as is the design's capacity to communicate and charm. The design then constantly alternates between prospecting and projecting, between reading and inscribing.

In the two most recent editions of the competition, the Eo Wijers Foundation asked for attention to be paid to the design's prospects of realization, focusing especially on the position of commissioners and the role of these key figures, often single individuals, in establishing links between the various actors in the regional arena. In the new-style planning competition it is not only the measure of design practice that is taken; the foundation is also prospecting for institutional capacity in the administrative domain.

The competition brings together three different repositories of expertise: the area-specific know-how of local stakeholders and commissioners, the plan- and process-based expertise within the competition organization, and the expertise of design practitioners. The design is brought to bear within this triptych in order to forge a viable solution that is grounded in its power both to mould a vision and to guide a process.

The continuity of this synergy of expertise is still a point of concern. The Eo Wijers Foundation enjoys a solid footing in design practice as well as in the administrative and governmental field, yet the competition's wherewithal to make a structural contribution to the development of regional design practice is limited. First of all it is limited practically, given that in its current form the design competition demands considerable effort and resources and can therefore be staged with only a minimal frequency and for a limited number of locations. There is also a more structural constraint that has a bearing on the competition: it is not always easy to combine an analysis of complex regional issues with the aesthetic and conceptual aspirations that go hand in hand with a design competition.

In this regard the key question is whether the competition model developed by the Eo Wijers Foundation can contribute to a broader raising of awareness with respect to regional planning practice. In the context of such 'capacity building', the design competition is just one of the instruments and a party like the Eo Wijers Foundation is only one of the many organizations that can play an intermediary role in the reinforcement of the knowledge network of commissioners, designers and stakeholders.²³

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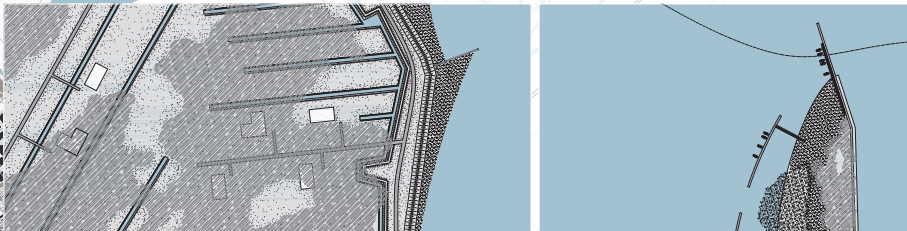
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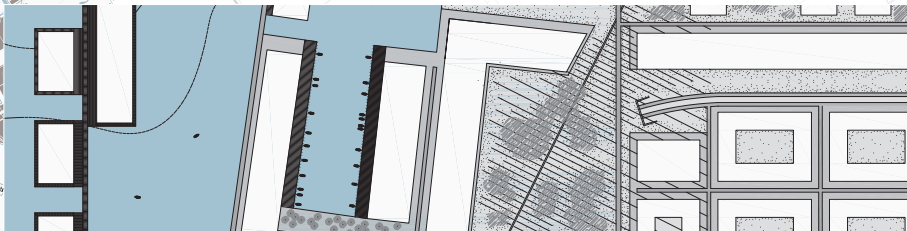
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Marina Pampus



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