

Advisory report

Fast forward with vision

Providing direction to climate policy
with a vision for the future



WKR.

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Foreword

'Develop a vision for the transitions to a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands in 2050 and beyond, based on new and existing visions of the future, with an eye for quality of life and justice, and with input from citizens, businesses and unheard voices. This vision provides direction and future prospects for businesses and citizens and encourages the necessary behavioural change.' This was the first recommendation in the first advice from the Netherlands Scientific Climate Council (WKR). It was partly the reason for the title of the advice: "All aboard for the transitions", which was presented to the cabinet at the end of 2023.

In 2025, there is a different political climate in The Hague. Climate policy is under enormous pressure, attention to climate change is waning and climate targets are becoming increasingly distant. Several climate measures designed to achieve the targets have recently been reversed, terminated or watered down. Due to the unpredictability of policy, people no longer know what they can or should do, and investing in a climate-neutral future has become risky. In addition, the climate itself is becoming increasingly unpredictable, and we are increasingly faced with extreme weather and all its consequences. Society is very concerned about this and believes that something must be done. A climate vision is more necessary than ever for a future perspective for everyone: citizens, businesses and governments.

The WKR describes how the government can achieve this in its advisory report entitled 'Fast forward with Vision'. We answer the question of how the government and parliament can make climate policy more consistent, predictable and future-oriented with the help of visions for the future. We examined existing climate visions for the future and formulated criteria that a strong vision for the future must meet. Based on this, the WKR has made five recommendations that will ensure that the government not only draws up a Climate Vision that offers perspective and guidance to society, but that can also be used to pursue consistent long-term climate policy. This will help to accelerate climate policy.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our colleagues who drafted the advice. They are councillors Wieke Pot (committee chair), Marjolijn Haasnoot and Linda Steg, and staff members Jasper Zuure (project leader), Maya Bogers and Lydia Baan Hofman.

In preparing this report, we spoke with a number of experts and policymakers. We are very grateful to them for their time, knowledge and suggestions.

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► **Jan Willem Erisman** ► **Ruud van den Brink**
Chairman *Secretary-director*

Fast forward with vision

Providing direction to climate policy with a vision for the future

Cause

- Climate targets are getting out of sight.
- Current climate policy is too focused on the short term.
- Society needs guidance and perspective.

Advice

The Council recommends drawing up a Climate Vision to guide the design, implementation and evaluation of climate policy. This vision will be drawn up prior to the Climate Plan. The drafting and reassessment of the Climate Vision will be included in the climate policy cycle.

Climate Vision

A vision for the future towards a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands.

Three criteria for a Climate Vision



Sketch an image of society at least 25 years ahead, based on a perspective extending at least 100 years into the future.



Utilise opportunities and resolve conflicts between mitigation and adaptation goals and between climate goals and other policy goals.



Provide clarity and make the benefits and challenges of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society relatable.

Recommendations



Let the climate minister coordinate the drawing up of the Climate Vision.



Establish a parliamentary committee for the future to evaluate the Climate Vision.



Make senior civil servants responsible for interdepartmental coordination of the Climate Vision.



Involve citizens in drawing up the Climate Vision.



Ensure the Climate Vision has impact on the design, implementation and evaluation of policy.

Summary

Fast forward with vision



The development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society calls for a long-term perspective, but existing climate policy is primarily focused on the short term. In order to achieve long-term climate goals and adjust to the long-term consequences of climate change, the government needs to make choices and pursue consistent policy now. But policy strategies only look 10 to 20 years ahead, and several planned measures intended to bring us closer to those climate goals have been reversed.

The short-term perspective and inconsistency in climate policy are causing unease in society and making climate goals more elusive. Many businesses and citizens want to contribute to the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society. However, they are unclear as to how they can do so, or they are reluctant to invest because of the uncertainty caused by constantly changing government policy. As a society, we are unsure which direction we want to head in.

Society calls for a vision that will provide direction to the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society – a vision for the future. The Netherlands Scientific Climate Council (WKR) defines a ‘vision for the future’ as a perspective that provides direction towards the desired situation in the future. A vision for the future would enable the government to provide direction for long-term climate policy and offer society guidance and a perspective for the future.

In recent years, various ministries have published visions for the future that discuss climate neutrality or climate resilience in the Netherlands. But the Council notes that these visions are not contributing sufficiently to long-term climate policy. Existing visions for the future of climate neutrality and climate resilience provide insufficient direction for climate policy, and insufficient guidance and perspective for society.

In this advisory report, the Council therefore considers the following question: How can government and parliament improve the contribution of vision for the future to climate policy?

In order to answer that question, this advisory report discusses three subsidiary questions:

1. What are the criteria for visions for the future that provide direction for climate policy?
2. How can visions for the future that provide direction for climate policy be established?
3. How can it be assured that visions for the future provide direction for climate policy?

Firstly, in the Council’s view, a vision must meet three criteria if it is to contribute to long-term climate policy:

1. Long-term time horizon: a vision for the future sketches an image of society at least 25 years ahead, based on a perspective extending at least

100 years into the future, and facilitates key strategic decisions in the here and now.

2. Coherence: a vision for the future utilises opportunities and resolves conflicts between mitigation and adaptation goals and between climate goals and other policy goals.
3. Relatable: a vision for the future provides clarity and makes the benefits and challenges of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society relatable.

Existing visions meet these three criteria to a limited extent. Government visions for the future are primarily focused on achieving the emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2050. Few visions look beyond 2050; in terms of the consequences of climate change and adaptation to climate change, that is a limited horizon. In many cases, government visions are also focused on a single policy domain, such as energy or industry, without resolving conflicts with visions of other policy domains. As a result, it is unclear how the different visions can be achieved in conjunction with one another and, where visions cannot be reconciled with one another, no choices are made. In addition, government visions for the future barely make use of imaginaries or narratives, making them insufficiently relatable to the wider public.

Secondly, in order to develop visions for the future, it is important to have an open conversation based on values, with broad involvement of society and the different ministries. A value-driven conversation is needed about what we want as a society. In this way, we can arrive at a broadly supported vision of what is desirable in the future. However, this conversation has so far failed to get off the ground. Visions are still mostly drawn up by a relatively small group of individuals, usually experts. There has been input from society in making some visions. However, it has been limited to reflecting on the government’s ideas, with little scope for participants to put forward their own ideas or talk about values. To date, parliament and citizens in particular have had limited involvement in vision development, whereas they are essential to conducting a value-driven conversation about the future. Additionally, in order to arrive at a coherent vision, it is important that the various ministries coordinate with one another during its development. This, too, is still taking place to a limited extent, partly due to a lack of involvement on the part of senior civil servants.

Thirdly, better guarantees are needed for the impact of visions for the future into policy. In order to contribute to long-term climate policy, a vision for the future needs to impact all phases of the policy cycle. Many existing visions are not part of a policy cycle but are drawn up on a one-off basis without a clear follow-up plan. As a result, their impact on long-term policy is not assured. This means that existing visions for the future still have insufficient impact on the design, implementation and evaluation of climate policy. A few visions do enjoy statutory assurance, which improves their impact on policy – an example

would be the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment.

Advice

A Climate Vision – a vision for the future towards a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands – can contribute to consistent long-term climate policy by providing direction for policy and implementation, and by offering guidance and perspective to society. For this reason, the Council recommends that the government and parliament draw up a Climate Vision to provide direction to the design, implementation and evaluation of climate policy. The Council recommends drawing up the vision ahead of the Climate Plan, and to make the drafting and re-evaluation of the vision part of the climate policy cycle.

The Council recommends involving parliament, policy departments and society in drawing up the Climate Vision, translating the vision into measures in the Climate Plan and re-evaluating it every five years. The Council does not recommend a vision to be a blueprint but rather a guiding perspective, so a vision must leave room to adapt to changing circumstances. When making a Climate Vision, it is important to base the vision on a value-driven conversation about the desired future. That conversation must be conducted inter-departmentally, but also with parliament and citizens. This will result in a Climate Vision that enjoys broad support amongst policymakers, political parties and society.

A Climate Vision must provide direction for choices in the here and now. The Climate Vision develops a long-term perspective on society and translates that future vision into key strategic decisions in the here and now. This can be achieved by explicitly linking the Climate Vision to climate policy in the Climate Plan and the National Climate Adaptation Strategy (Nationale Klimaatadaptatie Strategie; NAS). By incorporating the Climate Vision into the statutory cycle for the Climate Plan and linking it to the NAS, the organisations that are already involved in monitoring and evaluating the Climate Plan can also reflect on the Climate Vision and the connection between the Climate Vision and policy plans.

The Council makes the following five recommendations for a Climate Vision that contributes to long-term climate policy and is formally incorporated into the climate policy cycle:

1. Give the minister responsible for climate policy a coordinating role in drawing up and re-evaluating the Climate Vision
2. Set up a parliamentary committee for the future that will critically evaluate the Climate Vision and monitor it to ensure its coherence with future visions of other policy domains.

3. Set up an interdepartmental working group under the responsibility of senior civil servants to draw up the Climate Vision and coordinate with other departments and administrative levels.
4. Have the coordinating minister involve citizens in drawing up the Climate Vision, in order to reflect the concerns of society, do justice to diversity and contribute to a broad support base.
5. Ensure that the Climate Vision has impact on the design, implementation and evaluation phase of climate policy and other related policy.

1

Introduction



Administrative myopia

The development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society calls for a long-term perspective. In order to achieve climate goals that lie far in the future and reduce emissions, choices need to be made.¹ Moreover, we need to not only prepare for the existing consequences of climate change, but also for increasing climate risks – for example, drinking water shortages, salinisation, sea level rise, periods of heat and drought and flooding.² We must also take into account that climate policy choices made today can continue to have an impact decades or even centuries later; for instance, investments in energy and water infrastructure. In other words, climate policy must focus on the long-term.³

However, existing climate policy is overly focused on the short term. This is true for both mitigation policy and adaptation policy. Many policy strategies only look ahead ten to twenty years. The focus is on the European target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030. At the same time, the government is cutting the Climate Fund and reversing planned measures designed to achieve the climate goals. For instance, it has cancelled the planned standard for increased use of recycled plastic⁴ and scrapped the requirement to install hybrid heat pumps when replacing boilers.⁵ Whereas previously water and soil were 'key' to decisions related to climate-resilient spatial planning in the Netherlands, we now only need to take water and soil 'into account'.⁶

This administrative myopia is associated with risks and is causing unease in society. There is a risk that in the long term, more drastic measures will be needed to achieve the climate goals, which might be accompanied by higher costs.⁷ Companies that are leading the way in sustainable business are slowing their pace or even going under due to a lack of reliable and consistent government policy.⁸ Farmers are being left in uncertainty and are reluctant to invest in more sustainable practices due to a lack of a clear direction.⁹ Citizens want to contribute to sustainability efforts but do not know what is expected of them. They can also be faced with unpleasant surprises, for example if a sustainable investment in solar panels or an electric vehicle unexpectedly results in higher costs.¹⁰

Finally, the long-term climate goals are receding further and further from view.¹¹

The call for a vision for the future

There is a widely shared desire within society for a government that looks to the long term future. A desire for a government that gives direction to climate policy and that offers society a promising perspective. Various advisory councils and knowledge institutions have already called for a future vision of all kinds of policy domains in which climate neutrality and climate resilience are major challenges.¹² The Council itself has previously called for establishment of future visions that enjoy broad support.¹³ In addition, members of the House of Representatives,¹⁴ businesses,¹⁵ citizens¹⁶ and farmers¹⁷ emphasise the importance of visions for the future for the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society.

Although many visions for the future have already been developed in policy, the call for vision persists. This has already led to the development of all kinds of visions by different ministries, knowledge institutions, citizens' movements and companies, in which climate neutrality and/or climate resilience by 2050 are included as basic assumptions or targets.¹⁸ Nevertheless, loud calls for visions continue to be heard. Are the existing visions for the future contributing insufficiently to policy or is something else going on? In this advisory report, we seek answers to those questions.

In this advisory report, the Netherlands Scientific Climate Council defines a 'vision for the future' as a perspective that provides direction towards the desired situation in the future. This definition is based on academic literature.¹⁹ Various studies have shown that visions for the future can guide policy by giving policy-makers

¹¹ Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) (2024a).

¹² On the lack of coherent strategies, see for example, the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) and the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (AWTI) in, respectively, *Balans van de Leefomgeving* (Balance in the Living Environment) (2023b) and *In dienst van de toekomst* (In service of the future) (2023); the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (RLI) on the absence of a strategy for spatial planning in *Geef richting, Geef ruimte!* (Provide direction, provide space!) (2021); SCP on the lack of strategy for a resilient society (2023); Wageningen University & Research (WUR) on a strategy for agriculture in *WUR-perspectieven op landbouw, voedsel en natuur* (WUR perspectives on agriculture, food and nature) (2023); and WRR on a strategy for economic structure in *Goede zaken* (Good business) (2023).

¹³ Bruins and van den Heuvel (2024); NOS (2025a); LTO (2023)

¹⁴ WKR (2023)

¹⁵ See for example Ritmeester (2024) and Theunissen (2023)

¹⁶ See for example Straver (2023) and NOS (2025a)

¹⁷ Milieu Centraal (2022)

¹⁸ See appendix 1.

¹⁹ Shipley and Michela (2006); Strange and Mumford (2005)

Visions for the future should provide direction for consistent policy but also leave room for interim adjustments



Figure 1.

new ideas or alerting them to new policy directions.²⁰ Studies also reveal that visions can provide direction for innovation and investments in new technology.²¹ If the process of vision development generates a shared sense of urgency and support for measures, visions can also help give direction to policy and implementation.²²

In this advisory report, the Council focuses on visions for the future that are relevant for the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands. Exactly what that will look like in the Netherlands in the future, or exactly how that development will unfold, is still uncertain. For instance, there are uncertainties about the speed and impact of climate change itself, about the effectiveness of adaptation and mitigation measures, about changes in societal priorities and preferences, and about changing economic and geopolitical conditions.²³ But especially in uncertain times, visions for the future can act as a guide by setting course for a desired direction development.²⁴

The development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society calls for a vision for the future that represents the middle ground between a vague long-term outlook (direction is unsufficiently specified) and a restrictive blueprint (direction is too rigidly specified). While a long-term outlook does leave room to work out the details and make adjustments with regard to the perspective on the desired society and the development towards it, if it is too vague, it becomes entirely optional. A long-term outlook of this kind offers insufficient guidance to political parties, policymakers and society. By contrast, a blueprint lays down very precisely what a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society and the development

towards it should look like. It becomes too restrictive if there is little or no scope to make adjustments. A blueprint of this kind is difficult to make – and if it is achieved, it can be quickly overtaken by new insights and altered conditions and preferences.

A guiding perspective provides a broader direction while leaving room for details and adjustments to new conditions, evolving insights and changing values (see figure 1).²⁵ Visions for the future can do so by linking together several related, concrete goals with the help of narratives and images.²⁶ As such, visions for the future are more than just a set of long-term goals focused on a single indicator (such as CO₂-neutrality).²⁷ Finally, visions for the future can be periodically evaluated in order to continue to anticipate changing conditions and be adjusted while maintaining core values, if circumstances so require.

Goal of this advisory report

The goal of this advisory report is to improve the contribution of visions for the future to climate policy, by investigating that contribution and advising government and parliament accordingly. In doing so, the Council will consider both the quality of the visions themselves and the development and the impact of those visions. In this regard, development means the constantly repeating process of drafting and evaluation that is required in order to establish visions. Impact is the extent to which visions and processes of vision development are part of and influence the decision-making processes in politics and policy.²⁸ The Council does not itself draw up a vision for the future in this advisory report – that is up to politicians and society. The Council describes how to create future visions that contribute to the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society, and what role

²⁰ Da Costa et al. (2008). A review of several cases may be found in: Calof and Smith (2012)

²¹ Jørgensen (2013)

²² Da Costa et al. (2008)

²³ WKR (2023)

²⁴ Volkery and Ribeiro (2009); Kemp et al. (2007); SCP (2023)

²⁵ Haasnoot et al. (2013)

²⁶ Wiek and Iwaniec (2014)

²⁷ Hebinck et al. (2022); Wiek and Iwaniec (2014)

²⁸ Boston (2021); Neuhoff et al. (2023)

government and parliament could or perhaps should play in this. The central question addressed in this advisory report is therefore:

How can government and parliament improve the contribution of vision for the future to climate policy?

In order to answer that question, this advisory report discusses three subsidiary questions:

1. What are the criteria for visions for the future that provide direction for climate policy?
2. How can visions for the future that provide direction for climate policy be established?
3. How can it be assured that visions for the future provide direction for climate policy?

Approach

In order to answer the central question and the subsidiary questions, the Council has combined different research methods. The basis of this advisory report is a literature review of future-based thinking in general and vision development in particular. The literature in question consists of academic articles from the social sciences, futurology, science and technology studies, transition studies and public administration in particular. The authors also used publications by Dutch knowledge institutions and studied existing visions for the future (see table 1). Those visions for the future were all explicitly published as *visions*, although the titles do not always have the word vision in them. Interviews were held with

21 people who have made or used those visions for the future (see appendix 2), and two expert sessions were held involving over 30 policymakers, researchers and experts from knowledge institutes and advisory councils (see appendix 3).

The Council has analysed a selection of existing visions for the future that are relevant for the issue of climate change at national level. We have chosen a representative mix of older and more recent visions, so that the impact of older visions could be considered. We have also chosen a representative mix of visions from different policy domains that are relevant to the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society. In this advisory report, the Council includes the Climate Plan and visions and exploratory studies by other ministries and knowledge institutions that touch on the goals of climate neutrality and climate resilience. The Council has studied seven visions published by the national government and four visions published by other public institutions (see table 1 and appendix 1). In chapter 2, we consider the extent to which these visions comply with a number of important criteria. In order to analyse vision development and impact, the Council has drawn on a combination of information sources: visions and policy documents, interviews and expert sessions. This advisory report provides a general image of the development and impact of visions for the future in climate policy. Where possible, we cite specific examples to support the overarching conclusions.

Title	Dutch title	Author	Publication
Climate Plan 2025–2035	Klimaatplan 2025–2035	Ministry of Climate and Green Growth	2025
Climate Plan 2021–2030	Klimaatplan 2021–2030	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate	2021
National Plan Energy System	Nationaal Plan Energiesysteem	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate	2023
Letter to Parliament: Vision sustainable primary industry 2050	Kamerbrief: Visie verduurzaming basisindustrie 2050	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate	2020
Mobility Vision 2050: Outline notice	Mobiliteitsvisie 2050. Hoofdlijnennotitie.	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management	2023
National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment	Nationale Omgevingsvisie	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	2020
Agriculture, Nature and Food: Valuable and Connected	Visie Landbouw, Natuur en Voedsel: Waardevol en Verbonden	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	2018
Perspective on broad wellbeing in 2040	Perspectief op Brede Welvaart in 2040	Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER)	2024
A more natural future for The Netherlands in 2120	Een natuurlijker toekomst voor Nederland in 2120	Wageningen University & Research	2019
Netherlands 2040: an image of the future	Nederland 2040: Een toekomstbeeld	Denktank Nederland/Association of Netherlands Municipalities	2023
Spatial exploration 2023: Four scenario's for the spatial design of the Netherlands in 2050	Ruimtelijke verkenning 2023: Vier scenario's voor de inrichting van Nederland in 2050	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency	2023

Table 1: List of visions analysed. Appendix 1 provides a detailed analysis of these visions.

How this report is organised

The structure of this advisory report follows the three subsidiary questions in turn and then answers the central question. The criteria for visions for the future in climate policy are considered in chapter 2; the development of visions for the future in climate policy is discussed in chapter 3; and the impact of visions for the future in climate policy is considered in chapter 4. Chapter 5 answers the central question: *How can government and parliament improve the contribution of vision for the future to climate policy?* Finally, chapter 5 also contains concrete recommendations to the government and parliament.

2

Criteria for a vision for the future for climate policy

What are the criteria for visions for the future to provide direction for climate policy? We answer this subsidiary question in this chapter. We identify three criteria:

1. Long-term time horizon: a vision for the future sketches an image of society at least 25 years ahead, based on a perspective extending at least 100 years into the future, and facilitates key strategic decisions in the here and now.
2. Coherence: a vision for the future utilises opportunities and resolves conflicts between mitigation and adaptation goals and between climate goals and other policy goals.
3. Relatable: a vision for the future provides clarity and makes the benefits and challenges of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society relatable.

For each of the three criteria, we discuss why this criterion is important, and to what extent it is met by existing government visions. A vision that at least complies with these three criteria can provide direction for climate policy.

2.1 Criterion 1: Long-term time horizon

Many choices in climate policy have consequences that can continue to be felt for many years. This applies, for example, to decisions about infrastructure for energy generation, flood protection and the built environment. The lifespan of solar panels (approximately 25 years¹) is still relatively limited. But housing and heavier infrastructure such as high-voltage cables, gas pipelines and flood protection have a relatively longer lifespan. For example, the Eastern Scheldt storm surge barrier is designed to last 200 years.²

A strong vision for the future provides direction for climate policy by presenting a vision of society at least 25 years ahead, based on a perspective extending at least 100 years into the future. In order to make long-term climate policy, there must therefore be some idea of: (1) the expected consequences of climate change in the long term and (2) the desired situation in the long term, to which the choices made in the here and now do or do not contribute.³ The Council regards 25 years ahead as a minimum time horizon for a vision for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands. The Netherlands' goal is to be climate-neutral, climate-resilient and water resilient by 2050;⁴ at the time of writing, that is just under 25 years away. A visions for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands must therefore look ahead at least to 2050, but preferably beyond, because climate policy will continue to be needed after 2050, for example for the compensation of residual emissions that are hard

to abate and for negative emissions.⁵ Because some of the consequences of climate change we need to adapt to will occur only in several decades time', and physical infrastructure has a long lifespan, it is important that visions for the future incorporate knowledge about climate developments at least 100 years into the future, such as the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) climate scenarios.⁶

A strong vision for the future makes it possible to take key strategic decisions in the present. The Council understands 'key strategic decisions' as being those with long-term, often irreversible consequences. They also trigger developments that initiate a movement towards a climate-resilient and climate-neutral Netherlands (and stop other developments). A vision for the future should provide insight into probable and potential problems we will face in the future, for example, sea level rises and a more pronounced alternation between wet and dry periods.⁷ A strong vision addresses these problems and presents a vision of what we want the Netherlands to look like in these changing contexts. This involves answering questions such as what space is suitable for water storage and what technology is desirable for energy production. A vision of this kind makes it possible to make policy choices now that will contribute to the desired future. Visions that contribute to policy should be translatable to choices in the present.⁸

Without a long-term vision for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands, we run the risk that today's choices will take us further from the climate goals. Existing climate policy is mainly focused on achieving the targets for 2030 and less on achieving the targets for 2050. The risk is that while policy measures may bring us closer to the targets in the short term, they will take us further away from the targets for 2050 and beyond. An example is the use of insulation materials manufactured using crude oil to reduce energy consumption in buildings. Although this makes emissions reduction targets for the built environment more achievable in the short term, in the long term a commitment to climate-neutral insulation materials is important.⁹ A long-term perspective is therefore needed in order to zoom out and make the right choices now (see figure 2).

A way of getting from a vision to key strategic decisions is by working backwards from the desired future. Which options are there to achieve the desired future, which options are preferable and which policy and governance are required to facilitate those options?¹⁰ For example, if the desired situation in 2050 is a self-sufficient

¹ Sodhi et al. (2022)

² van Pelt et al. (2014)

³ Pot (2023)

⁴ Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (2024b); Climate Act (2019)

⁵ WKR (2024b)

⁶ WKR (2025); KNMI (2023b)

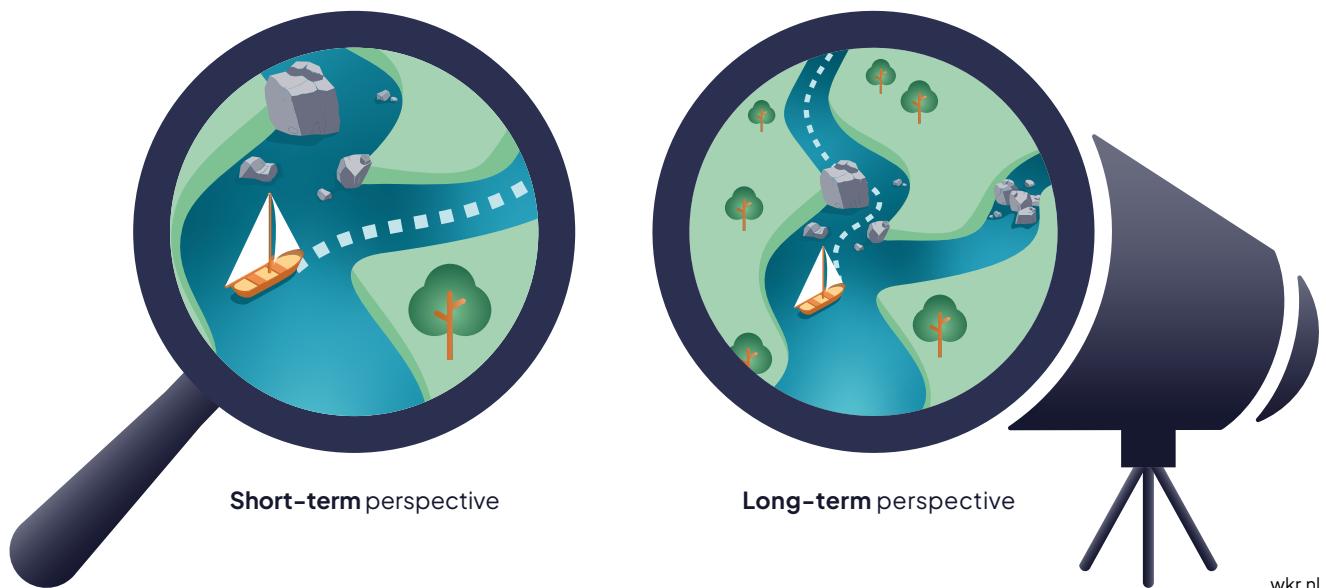
⁷ KNMI (2023b)

⁸ Riedy (2009)

⁹ PBL (2023a).

¹⁰ Geels and Schot (2007), Haasnoot et al. (2013), Pandey et al. (2021), Termeer et al. (2024)

Long-term visions help to make key strategic decisions in the present



Figuur 2.

Netherlands, in which food is produced locally with short distances from farm to fork, we can work out what needs to change in order to achieve that. The Netherlands currently imports and exports a lot of food and we eat a lot of animal products, which require a lot of land in order to produce the feed for the animals.¹¹ In order to be self-sufficient, we therefore need to start eating and/or producing differently. To this end, multiple policy options can be worked out that show that key strategic decisions are needed – for example, choices about which products are grown on Dutch farms and the extent to which we are prepared to allow agriculture to be dependent on import products such as animal feed.¹² In this way, we can work backwards from a vision to concrete policy choices that politicians need to make now.

Another way is to look at which existing activities do or do not fit with the desired future situation and must therefore be continued or instead phased out or modified.¹³

For example, the production of biofuels and sustainable carbon chains is being expanded in the Netherlands.¹⁴ An example of phasing out is the recent decision by the EU to prohibit the sale of new cars that emit CO₂ from 2035.¹⁵

What is the current situation in practice?

The existing government visions look ahead primarily to 2050. With the adoption of the Climate Law and hence the goal of climate neutrality by 2050, that year has become something of a benchmark for visions by the government and for foresight studies designed to support vision development by the government. This is true, for example, for the visions of industry, energy and mobility by the ministries and for Spatial exploration 2023: Four scenario's for the spatial design of the Netherlands in 2050 and Exploring pathways to climate neutrality (by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. Some visions also look beyond 2050, particularly in the area of climate resilience. This is the case, for example, for the Delta Programme (see text box 1) and in the WUR's vision for a natural Netherlands in 2120 (see text box 3). It has also been announced that the National Spatial Vision (yet to be published) will look ahead to 2100.¹⁶

Few visions specify that key strategic decisions need to be made in order to achieve the desired future situation. Many government visions focus on one possible way of moving towards the desired future – generally technological renewal and innovation, often the preferred path in the Netherlands.¹⁷ An example is the National Plan Energy System Plan, the primary emphasis of which is to maximise the supply of sustainable energy through the construction of infrastructure for offshore wind, solar energy, nuclear power plants and hydrogen. Although the NPE does state that, alongside technology and innovation, energy saving and sustainable behaviour have a role to play, the document, which “sets the direction for policy

¹¹ WKR (2024a); WKR (2023)

¹² Bos et al. (2023); Kamphuis et al. (2013)

¹³ Netherlands School of Public Administration (NSOB) (2020)

¹⁴ Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth (2025)

¹⁵ Regulation (EU) 2019/631 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 setting CO₂ emission performance standards for new passenger cars and for new light commercial vehicles (2019); European Parliament (2022)

¹⁶ Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2024)

¹⁷ NSOB (2020); Binnenlands Bestuur (2025)

for the coming years”,¹⁸ devotes no further attention to this – even though technological solutions will not necessarily be available (in time) or affordable, sometimes take up too much space or are not as effective as anticipated. In uncertain circumstances, it can therefore be useful to present multiple options, so that adaptive adjustments can be made as and when the chosen (technological) solutions prove to be insufficient or other policy options are more attractive.¹⁹

The Climate Plan is a policy plan and does not contain a vision for the future that complies with the Council’s first criterion. The Climate Plan does engage in long-term thinking, but it does not present a vision of the desired future situation (at least 25 years ahead). It also enables only limited key strategic decisions in the here and now. The focus of the Climate Plan is on the next 10 years. The plan is primarily concerned with achieving the established targets for 2030 through existing and proposed policy, while also looking ahead to 2035 and beyond. That is to be expected of the Climate Plan in its current form; after all, it is intended as a policy plan that looks ahead 10 years, not as a long-term vision. Nonetheless, the Climate Plan does provide a good starting point for a more long-term focus. For instance, it looks ahead to the emissions reduction path towards 2050 and the sections on the sectors include brief discussions of the future up to 2050.

The Climate Plan provides a first step in exploring multiple possible climate-neutral and climate-resilient futures. For instance, it presents four scenarios for carbon removal and discusses what the scenarios might mean for emissions reductions targets per sector in 2040 (which have yet to be defined). The Climate Plan also identifies whether and when ‘unconventional’ measures, such as geo-engineering, will be possible or necessary. It is anticipated that scenarios involving the potential deployment of unconventional measures will be published in 2026. With these scenarios, the current Climate Plan goes a step further than the previous version. However, it still lacks vision, because it does not present a perspective on the desired situation in the future. For example, it does not make clear what the sectoral emissions reduction targets (based on the carbon removal scenarios) for 2040 would mean for the different sectors (agriculture, land use, industry, mobility and the built environment). Moreover, there is no indication of to what extent those scenarios are desirable or undesirable. It also does not make clear what the carbon removal scenarios mean for policy choices in the present. Finally, the Climate Plan, too, has a technological focus. The need for sustainable behaviour is mentioned, but it remains unclear what that sustainable behaviour might look like in the future or which choices will be needed to that end. This may yet be elaborated in the Approach to Sustainable Living (Aanpak Duurzaam Leven).

¹⁸ Quoted from Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2023a)

¹⁹ NSOB (2020); Haasnoot et al. (2013)

In short: while the Climate Plan certainly does look to the future, it is not sufficiently visionary. It still falls short in presenting a vision of what the desired climate-neutral and climate-resilient society will look like in the long term, and how the choices in the Climate Plan will contribute to achieving that future.

Text box 1. Practical example: the Delta Programme

The goal of the National Delta Programme is a water-resilient and climate-resilient Netherlands, now and in the future. By its nature, the National Delta Programme is a programme that looks far into the future.²⁰ An important basis for the approach taken in the Delta Programme is provided by the Delta Scenarios, foresight studies mapping out the anticipated changes in water management up to 2100. Another strength of the Delta Programme is that it works with various options for achieving the desired future (a climate-resilient and safe delta). For instance, different ways of coping with sea level rises are explored. An increased sea level may result in the Netherlands looking very different in 100 to 200 years’ time: with high dykes along the coast and/or rivers, with a new coastline in the North Sea, or with substantial space given to water.²¹ Different options are worked out for achieving the desired future of a safe delta, enabling key strategic decisions in the present. The programme also provides insight into opportunities for making interim adjustments if circumstances change. As such, the Delta Programme does work with a long-term time horizon, but no vision for the future of a climate-resilient Netherlands is elaborated because that depends on key strategic spatial decisions.

2.2 Criterion 2: Coherence

A second criterion is that a strong vision is coherent: the vision utilises opportunities between mitigation and adaptation goals and between climate goals and other policy goals, and resolves conflicts between the different policy goals. Climate policy extends to multiple policy domains, such as energy, industry, agriculture and land use, the built environment, the mobility sector and water security. Within those different policy domains, policy and sometimes visions are made for the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society.²² In order to make the transition to climate neutrality and climate resilience, it is necessary to compare different, domain-specific long-term visions, identify conflicts

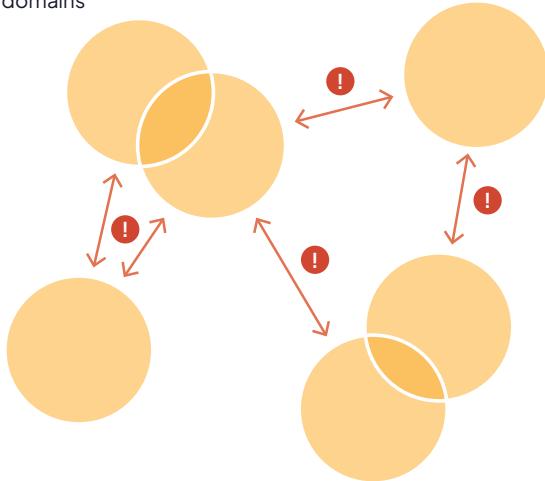
²⁰ Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (2024b)

²¹ Haasnoot and Diermanse (2022)

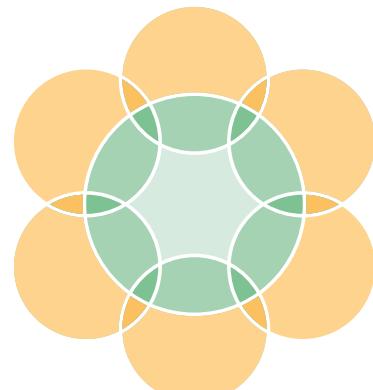
²² In the past, the government has published strategies of different policy domains; see appendix 1. However, this does not apply to all the domains addressed in the Climate Plan.

A coherent vision shows how a vision on climate-neutrale and climate-resilient Netherlands relates to visions in other policy domains

Insufficient coherence between visions in different policy domains



A **coherent vision** shows how visions in different policy domains relate to one another



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Figure 3.

between them and, where necessary, make choices or set priorities.²³

A strong vision must show how different policy domains reinforce one another or at least do not get in each other's way. A vision that contributes to long-term climate policy does not replace the visions of specific policy domains. After all, a vision for industry is not just about sustainability but also about training workers, international trade, etc.; a vision for housing can also consider demographics and the types of homes to be built. A vision for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands brings together and coordinates the developments from the different, domain-specific visions that are relevant to climate (see figure 3). If, for example, both industry and the energy system are expected to require more space for sustainability measures,²⁴ that may result in a conflict if the space is not available. With regard to conflicts, a vision should choose a direction.

What is the current situation in practice?

While the Climate Plan combines policy from different policy domains, it does not discuss or coordinate the different domain-specific visions. The Climate Plan is the place where climate policy from the different policy sectors comes together. That climate policy is coordinated between those sectors, in order to ensure that the overall policy package is adequate to achieving the climate goals. The Climate Plan looks ten years ahead, and as such does not contain essential long-term visions. Nonetheless, various existing visions from the different policy domains are cited in the Climate Plan in order to

indicate what the government's aims are in those policy domains.²⁵ This was already the case in the first Climate Plan (2021–2030),

How the visions that are relevant for climate policy relate to one another is not necessarily stated in the Climate Plan. This is to be expected given its current design. Nevertheless, such interrelations are discussed to some extent, for example when listing various conflicts between sector visions. However, those conflicts are not resolved in the Climate Plan, because it is only about climate policy for the coming ten years.

In other visions of different policy domains, there is also little mention of connections between policy domains. The visions of the various ministries are highly domain-specific in nature. The visions do sometimes refer to one another, but it remains unclear where they reinforce or conflict with one another.

Moreover, mitigation policy and adaptation policy are not considered jointly. It is important that the relationship between mitigation policy and adaptation policy is considered, because there can be conflicts between them.²⁶ As laid down by law²⁷, the Climate Plan focuses only on mitigation, not on adaptation. The National Climate Adaptation Strategy (*Nationale Klimaatadaptatie Strategie*; *NAS*) and the Delta Programme, by contrast, focus primarily on adaptation, without considering mitigation.²⁸ Also the visions that are studies in the different policy domains

²⁵ which described the government strategies with regard to public participation in the energy transition, the energy system (in the NPE), hydrogen carriers, increased sustainability of bunker fuels and sustainable carbon use.

²⁶ WKR (2023)

²⁷ Climate Act (2019)

²⁸ WKR (2025); Deltares (2025).

²³ PBL (2024b); Trutnevyyte et al. (2011)

²⁴ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2023a); Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2023b)

focus on mitigation. They discuss less adaptation policy and the connection between mitigation and adaptation policy in the domain is not mentioned.

Good examples of visions that take account of interconnections between policy domains include the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment and certain visions issued by public bodies. The National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment of 2020 presents a desired vision of the spatial configuration of the Netherlands in 2050. In doing so, it touches on many different policy domains, including climate mitigation and adaptation, economy, the development of cities and regions and rural areas, mobility, nature and health. There are also examples of spatial and spatial and environmental planning strategies that explicitly consider the connections between different tasks at provincial and municipal level.²⁹ This is also a requirement for spatial and environmental planning strategies under the new Environment and Planning Act (see text box 5, p 32). Another good example in which different policy domains are brought together is the spatial planning assessment published by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency in 2019 (see text box 2, p. X). It should be pointed out that this is not a vision, but an explorative study to support the development of (spatial) visions by the government.

Without coherence between visions, we run the risk that the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society will be delayed.³⁰ Action directed from individual policy domains often results in relatively one-dimensional solutions: in a single policy domain, attention is only required for specific problems, or only one.³¹ An example is the use of low-emission barns in livestock farming. These barns reduce emissions of ammonia and particulate matter, but they do not address emissions of greenhouse gases, or the many other challenges facing agriculture.³² Additionally, win-win solutions that apply to multiple policy domains often have difficulty getting off the ground if thinking is based on individual policy domains.³³ By way of illustration: climate buffers (areas in which space is given over to natural processes) can contribute to biodiversity, water security, spatial quality and CO₂ storage. But in order to achieve them, efforts must be coordinated across multiple policy domains.³⁴ Finally, a lack of coherence between different visions can also lead to visions being pursued that simply cannot coexist.

Text box 2. Practical example: the spatial planning assessment by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Spatial exploration 2023: Four scenario's for the spatial design of the Netherlands in 2050 by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency presents four scenarios for the spatial development of the Netherlands leading up to 2050. These scenarios are not visions but 'value-driven scenarios': the agency does specify the underlying values for each scenario, but makes no pronouncements regarding the desirability of each scenario for the Netherlands. The scenarios were drawn up to support vision development within government. A strength of this foresight study is that it considers the interconnections between different policy domains, so revealing where potential conflicts lie when it comes to the use of space. These interconnections were identified with the help of the agency's technical expertise. Another strength of this foresight study is that normative considerations are made explicit, and are linked to key strategic decisions. As a result, it reveals how assuming a particular set of values leads to different key strategic decisions, which in turn lead to different developmental trajectories for the Netherlands.

2.3 Criterion 3: Relatable

A third criterion is that a vision for the future must make the benefits of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society relatable, in order to achieve the greatest possible public acceptance and mobilisation. For the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands, it is important that other public authorities, companies, citizens and civil society organisations are activated to contribute to that development, or at least support it.³⁵

One way of making a vision for the future of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands relatable is by using narratives and imaginaries.³⁶ Many Dutch people are concerned about climate change, but that does not necessarily translate to changes in behaviour.³⁷ A powerful narrative can mobilise people: if people identify with a narrative, it can convince them of the need to change and show them how people like themselves can contribute to a better Netherlands in terms of climate.³⁸ Narratives can take the form of (video) images, maps, spoken or written words, or be communicated through other art forms. Narratives are about what ordinary people will do in the future in order to contribute to the development of

²⁹ See for example Arnhem municipality (2023); Friesland States-Provincial (2020).

³⁰ Tosun and Lang (2017)

³¹ Cejudo and Michel (2017); Wood Hansen and Van Den Bergh (2024)

³² WKR (2024a)

³³ Wamsler et al. (2020).

³⁴ Veraart et al. (2019).

³⁵ PBL (2023c); WKR (2023)

³⁶ Bouckaert (2020); Hartman et al. (2019); McPhearson et al. (2016); Muiderman et al. (2020); Oomen et al. (2022); Vervoort and Gupta (2018); Voß et al. (2009); Wiek and Iwaniec (2014)

³⁷ SCP (2024, 2025b)

³⁸ Hajer et al. (2010)

a climate-neutral and climate-resilient future, and why.³⁹ When people identify with a narrative, it allows them to visualise themselves in new situations and understand the world in a particular way.⁴⁰ Narratives can also stimulate people's imaginations, enabling them to picture futures that were previously unimaginable.⁴¹ In this way, a future that previously appeared impossible, for example a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands in 2050, is brought within reach. A strong vision for the future thus describes not only the actual benefits of change and the necessity of key strategic decisions in the here and now, it also makes them relatable.⁴²

A vision that speaks to the imagination is not necessarily attractive to everyone, but it does make the government's desired direction clear and relatable. A vision for the future is an aspiration, and its initial purpose is therefore to make clear what the benefits of the desired future are. But a vision for the future does not have to be a utopia: it can also illustrate the drawbacks of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient world. The goal of tangibility is not to make the vision for the future ideal for everyone; see also section 3.3. The goal is to clarify the climate-neutral and climate-resilient future envisaged by the government, and to make that future easier to imagine and more attractive to people.

What is the current situation in practice?

The Climate Plan recognises the need for a relatable future vision, but does not present it in images or stories. The Climate Plan clearly presents the long-term goals that are being worked towards, and what the emissions reduction path to climate neutrality will look like. But the Climate Plan does not paint a picture of what the Netherlands could like if those goals are achieved. It does devote several sentences to what the Netherlands could end up looking like, for instance in the summary and in the sections on the transitions in each sector; but these passages are very brief, with only a single sentence devoted to each sector in many cases. Moreover, those sentences do not speak to people's real lives. To date, other government visions have similarly made hardly any use of narratives and imaginaries. Until now, they have primarily consisted of policy goals and figures, such as targets for residual emissions or basic protection levels.

At the time of writing, the Ministry of Climate and Green Growth is working on a collection of visual stories about the climate transition with the Board of Government Advisers (College van Rijksbouwmeester en Rijksadviseurs). These stories explore what different climate-neutral and climate-resilient futures would look like for all kinds of Dutch people. The future visions in the collection show both the attractive and the less attractive

elements of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society. The collection is entirely based on stories and images, making it a good example of how the future can be made relatable. The collection is intended to start a conversation about the climate transition and appears to be an important step towards greater use of imaginaries by the government. However, it is still unclear how it links in with the Climate Plan and the government's climate policy, or what the goal is of the conversation that is supposed to ensue.

Imaginaries are more often used as a tool outside the government. Examples of imaginaries being part of a vision include A more natural future for The Netherlands in 2120, drawn up by Wageningen University, in which maps are presented and for which a video was made (see text box 3), and Netherlands 2040: an image of the future, which uses drawings and stories. Local authorities have also used visual materials, drawings, stories and videos to present their visions to a wider public.⁴³

³⁹ Dessart and Standaert (2023)

⁴⁰ Dessart and Standaert (2023); Veland et al. (2018)

⁴¹ Kemp et al. (2007); Mangnus et al. (2021); Termeer and Dewulf (2019)

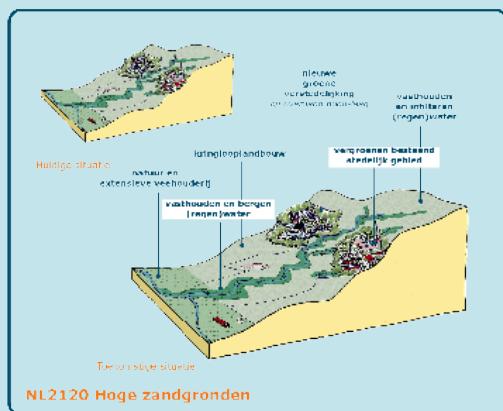
⁴² Muiderman et al. (2020); Oomen et al. (2022)

⁴³ See for example Arnhem municipality (2023); Friesland States-Provincial (2020).



Text box 3. Practical example: A more natural future for The Netherlands in 2010, WUR

The vision *A more natural future for The Netherlands in 2020* paints a picture of what the Netherlands could look like in 2120 if the challenges facing society today in climate, food production, circular economy, biodiversity, etc. were tackled with nature-based solutions. The goal was to share a new and inspiring approach to the development of the Netherlands with the wider public. One of the strengths of this vision, which was developed by a group of researchers from Wageningen University and Research, is that it looks ahead more than 100 years. This long time horizon makes it possible to think differently about the configuration of the Netherlands. A second strength is how relatable the vision is. Through the use of images, maps and animations, the vision for the future is brought to life (see images below). It has attracted much attention in Dutch and foreign media. There is now also a broad coalition of scientists, companies, nature organisations and educational institutions that are together developing nature-based solutions and putting them into practice. The vision has contributed to a societal movement that is working towards the desired future vision in small steps.



3

The development of visions for the future for climate policy



How can visions for the future be established that provide direction for climate policy?

In the previous chapter, we discussed criteria for visions for the future. This chapter focuses on the process of vision development. There are three main considerations in the process of vision development:

1. The need for a conversation about preferences, supported by knowledge;
2. The importance of looking at multiple policy domains simultaneously and making coordinated choices;
3. The inclusion of different perspectives through broad societal involvement.

For each of these considerations, we explain why it is important in vision development, and what the existing processes of vision development look like.

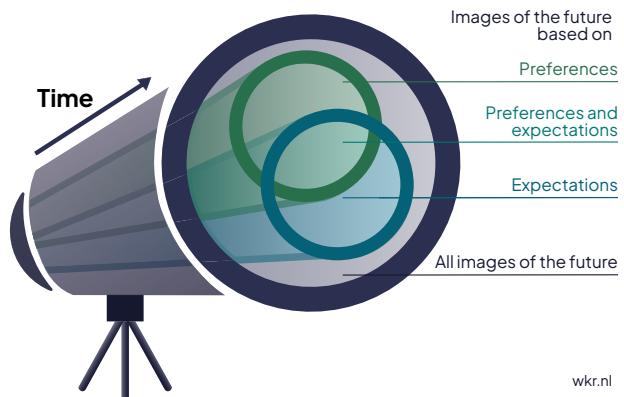
3.1 A discussion about preferences, supported by knowledge about expectations

In order to develop a vision for the future of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands that meets the criteria from chapter 2, preferences and expectations for the future must be discussed during vision development. In the academic literature, a rough distinction is made between two ways of speaking about the future: preferences and expectations. Both are needed when developing a vision for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands. See figure 4.

Discussing preferences for the future is the essence of vision development, and revolves around the question: “What climate-neutral and climate-resilient future do we want for the Netherlands?”¹ This is a question for politicians and society, that will be answered on the basis of personal and societal values and standards.² When it comes to vision development, it is for the government and parliament to take the lead in discussing values, standards and preferences for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient future for the Netherlands. However, participation and dialogue are also important, so that everyone – experts, policymakers, citizens, artists, entrepreneurs and so on – can discuss preferences for the future based on their own values and standards.³ We consider participation in section 3.3.

In order to discuss preferences, an open and creative process is required, in which people ‘co-create’ an image of the desired future together. This involves people discussing sometimes conflicting values and interests, in order to arrive at a shared desired future vision. This discussion need not initially focus on all-too realistic future visions. Precisely if great change is

Vision development requires two ways of looking at the future: based upon preferences and expectations



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Figure 4.

anticipated, as with the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands, some departure from current reality is helpful, because thinking outside the box can help us achieve new shared ideas about what is possible.⁴ By challenging and critically examining existing ideas about the future, people can start looking at the future in a completely new way. This can serve to enhance people's imaginative powers, so that they can start imagining futures they previously considered impossible.⁵ Take for example the desired futures expressed by Martin Luther King (1963) to create a more equal society or John F. Kennedy (1962) to put a man on the moon. At the time of their speeches, those futures were not likely, and some even considered them impossible.⁶

Discussing expectations about the future is about exploring what we will be faced with in the future. Based on scientific or practical knowledge, it is possible to explore what the future is likely to look like, or which futures are currently regarded as possible.⁷ An example are projections of expected sea level rises given particular projections of greenhouse gas emissions.⁸ Or explorations of the energy system of the Netherlands in the future, based on certain assumptions about energy consumption and technological development.⁹ The goal of discussing expectations and possibilities in the future is to paint the best possible picture of the large and small risks and

⁴ Vanden Ende et al. (2021).

⁵ Matos-Castaño and Baibarac-Duignan (2024); Oomen et al. (2022); Pelzer and Versteeg (2019)

⁶ Ramos et al. (2019)

⁷ Muiderman et al. (2020)

⁸ Oppenheimer (2019)

⁹ Netbeheer Nederland (2023)

¹ Shipley and Michela (2006); Strange and Mumford (2005), Wiek and Iwaniec (2014)

² Riedy (2009)

³ Muiderman et al. (2020).

opportunities the future may bring. This evidently involves uncertainty – sometimes a lot, sometimes a little.¹⁰

Defining expectations takes place in expertise-driven processes. Defining expectations and opportunities is often left to experts, because they have the required (scientific) knowledge to do so. They use different methods to help define expectations, such as extrapolating from past trends, environmental scenarios, what-if analyses, models and their own specialist knowledge. In doing so, they sometimes receive input from policymakers, stakeholders or other actors with relevant knowledge.¹¹ Defining expectations about the future yields a picture of different possible futures: foresight studies.¹²

When the government is developing a vision for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands, both preferences and expectations need to be discussed.¹³

As stated, the discussion of preferences is a primary requirement for the development of a vision. However, that discussion does need to be linked to scientific insights and knowledge about climate change, behavioural change, technological development, extreme weather and so on. These insights are needed in order to assess whether the desired future is feasible, and what is needed to bring the desired future closer.

What is the current situation in practice?

Vision development by the government is primarily based on expectations about the future. The Council notes that vision development by the government currently revolves mainly around the question of which challenges we will (probably) face in the future. To that end, the expected and possible futures are identified by knowledge institutions, often on behalf of the ministries. Examples include the delta scenarios, the climate scenarios and scenarios about the energy system.¹⁴ The knowledge institutions have strong expertise for outlining expectations. The ministries then use the resulting foresight studies for their own vision development.

The Climate Plan, too, leans relatively heavily on expectations about the future, drawn up by experts.

Four scenarios are presented, based on potential and demand, for different possible quantities of carbon removal leading up to 2040 and what that means for sector emissions reduction targets. The fact that carbon removal is necessary is undisputed, also for the achievement of net negative emissions after 2050.¹⁵ The authors do not explicitly reflect on how much carbon removal is desirable and how that is to be achieved. They also make use of

scenarios about the economy, the labour market and employment.

Vision development by the government is based only to a limited extent on a political conversation about preferences for the future. Vision development primarily takes place in the strategy departments of the ministries. Our respondents indicated that they mainly work on vision development internally. While participation processes are held (see section 3.3), the involvement of external parties, and of political parties, is limited. As a result, it is not possible to make hard choices within the existing processes of vision development because the involvement of political parties and society are required for such choices.

The political conversation about preferences for the future must primarily be conducted within the cabinet and parliament, but their involvement in processes of vision development is relatively limited. Many government visions are decided in cabinet, and sometimes they are also discussed in parliament (see appendix 1). However, this is more a case of informing or consulting with parliament than of cabinet and parliament actually making joint choices about where we want to move towards as a society. The interviewees from the public institutions also stated that the lack of a shared vision supported by political parties was one of the reasons for developing their own institutional visions. Although the Climate Plan is discussed in parliament, a vision that meets the criteria specified by the Council is still lacking.

3.2 Looking at different policy domains and making coordinated choices

In order to establish a vision for the future that meets the criteria from chapter 2, multiple policy domains need to be viewed in conjunction with one another during vision development. The ministries also need to make coordinated choices. A climate-neutral and climate-resilient society relates to multiple transitions, including the food transition, energy transition, water transition, raw materials transition and mobility transition.¹⁶ In developing a vision for the future, it is important that coordination takes place between policy domains and that politicians and responsible civil servants take decisions when conflicts arise. Coordination can lead to solutions that provide benefits in multiple domain-specific visions opportunities being utilised at the interfaces between different sector visions and prevent problems being shifted from one sector to another.¹⁷

What is the current situation in practice?

The Council notes that there are already good structures for interdepartmental coordination in place, which make it possible to identify and resolve conflicts between visions in different policy domains. The different

¹⁰ Dammers (2021)

¹¹ Haasnoot et al. (2013); Muiderman et al. (2020); Riedy (2009)

¹² Gall et al. (2022)

¹³ Wiek and Iwaniec (2014)

¹⁴ Deltares (2024); KNMI (2023a); Netbeheer Nederland (2023)

¹⁵ WKR (2024b)

¹⁶ WKR (2023)

¹⁷ Llancce et al. (2025); Trein et al. (2019); WKR (2023)

ministries are well aware of the need for interdepartmental cooperation and coherent policy for the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands. This is also stated in the Climate Plan.¹⁸ There is interdepartmental coordination on climate policy – for example, for the Climate Plan itself, in which the policy of multiple departments comes together under the coordination of the Ministry of Climate and Green Growth.

Visions are also discussed interdepartmentally, which results in conflicts being identified. This may be seen in the government visions of the various policy domains studied by the Council, in which conflicts with other visions are identified. An example is that both the energy sector and industry foresee the need for additional physical space to facilitate the sustainability measures required by the current visions in the two sectors.¹⁹ Also, in developing the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment and the draft National Spatial Strategy (Voorontwerp Nota Ruimte), integrated assessments of future developments were used when considering the demands for (the same) physical space made by different policy domains, such as agriculture, nature, climate and economy.²⁰ This resulted in important key strategic decisions being put on the agenda in the draft National Spatial Strategy, such as whether or not to facilitate the construction of housing and businesses at locations that are vulnerable to climate change, or whether to commit to local energy systems or central energy provision.²¹ Identifying these conflicts is an important step for making key strategic decisions and hence also for vision development.

However, the Council also notes that significant conflicts have not yet been resolved in existing visions.

These are often conflicts that require big, key strategic decisions, such as the above point about the use of space. Vision development primarily takes place in the strategy departments of the ministries. In developing these visions, interdepartmental meetings are held at civil servant level to coordinate the visions and search for joint solutions. However, these interdepartmental meetings have no mandate to make key strategic decisions; that needs to be done by senior civil servants, the government or even more broadly by political parties and society.

During the interviews and expert sessions, the lack of key strategic decisions in visions was generally blamed on a lack of involvement of senior civil servants and politicians in vision development. Nevertheless, they are involved in vision development in several policy domains. For example, ministers were involved in making the vision

¹⁸ Climate Plan 2026–2035, page 76.

¹⁹ This is stated in the National Energy System Plan and in Perspectief op de Nederlandse Economie (Perspective on the Dutch Economy); see appendix XX.

²⁰ The future visions in question are those from the Mooi Nederland (Beautiful Netherlands) programme.

²¹ Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2024)

published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in 2018 and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate's vision for industry from 2020. However, coordination with ministers from other ministries, or between the senior civil servants from the different ministries, appears to take place primarily after vision development, when documents are being approved by the government. Some vision are also discussed in the House of Representatives, but mostly when they are already largely complete. Yet difficult conversations about key strategic decisions need to be held during vision development. Such conversations do take place interdepartmentally amongst civil servants, but not at a high level. As a result, key strategic decisions are not taken.

Existing coordination structures are primarily focused on coordinating policy, not on coordinating visions (to the extent that visions are used in policy domains). The interviews and expert sessions revealed that meetings on coordinating visions quickly get bogged down due to the tendency of participants to think in terms of their own policy domains and achieving their 'own' domain's emissions reduction targets. There is no clear process or responsible person to develop a shared vision or resolve the conflicts between existing visions. Currently, the only common denominator is that the Minister for Climate and Green Growth is the coordinating minister for climate policy and the Climate Plan. The coordination of visions of different policy domains is not assured, because vision development itself is not assured in many cases (see also chapter 4). Important exceptions are the National Energy System Plan and the spatial and environmental planning visions, all of which do enjoy statutory assurance. The spatial and environmental planning visions are also a means of bringing together the challenges from different policy domains (see text box 5). However, not all (national) visions of specific policy domains need to be included in the spatial and environmental planning visions. This is because many do not have any legal status, in contrast to the climate targets and environmental standards, for example.

Civil servants outside the core departments have limited involvement in vision development, whereas they often have a good understanding of the connections between different challenges in practice. Civil servants outside the ministries, for example those working on the implementation of policy, are less involved in the government's vision development processes. Our respondents did express the desire to involve these groups more. Implementing bodies and local authorities also often have knowledge about the connections between different challenges.²²

3.3 Giving room to different societal perspectives

tives and involving citizens

In order to arrive at a good vision for the future of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands, it is necessary to reconcile the views of people with different perspectives and positions in society. There are many possible answers to the question of what do we want the future to look like. For example, the country could look different depending on whether or not the future energy supply is internationally oriented, is large in scale or makes use of nuclear power plants. In order to take account of different perspective and preferences, academics emphasise the importance of an open, value-driven conversation across society – involving citizens, companies and civil society organisations.²³

Broad involvement of society in vision development can create more support for the eventual vision for the future and direction of climate policy. A process of vision development that leaves room for a conversation based on different values enables people with different and even conflicting views on climate policy to exchange ideas. It will not always be possible to reconcile their views, but engaging in an open conversation based on different values and interests can generate understanding of each other's positions and of how choices are made between opposing positions to arrive at an eventual vision for the future. Not everyone can be involved in the development of a vision for the future. But if people feel represented, for example by representative groups who are involved in a process, that can also result in increased acceptance of measures.²⁴ In a public conversation, it is possible to explicitly discuss how different values are included in the process and weighed against each other in the eventual decision-making, making the government's ultimate choice of a particular direction and particular measures more transparent.²⁵

Broad involvement of society in vision development can also create momentum to implement the vision. During the process of vision development, new connections, ideas and insights can arise that influence those involved even after the vision development process. As a result, people who participate in vision development may become more aware of the need for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society and thus also become more motivated or prepared to take action themselves.²⁶ Research reveals that if citizens are heavily involved in creating a vision, they will also be highly committed to implementing that vision.²⁷

While it is true that a vision for the future will never be enthusiastically received by everyone, involving people can add to the (reluctant) acceptance of a vision for

the future and climate policy. When drawing up visions, the government will search for the most broadly shared insights possible. This will create support for moving towards that desired future amongst the greatest possible number of people.²⁸ However, it will be impossible to formulate a vision that appeals to everyone or that everyone wishes to contribute to. Greater involvement is not the solution to that either. However, it can produce a vision for the future that is as aligned as it can be with the perspectives of different people and creates the greatest possible momentum within society.²⁹

Involving society in vision development therefore offers benefits. But in order to secure those benefits, societal involvement does need to be organised in a particular way. The Council identifies three conditions for the organisation of broad societal involvement in vision development.³⁰

Firstly, those involved must be given the opportunity to exert actual influence over the eventual vision for the future. If a vision for the future is already largely defined before society is involved, and there is no room for those involved to contribute their own perspectives and ideas, this can lead to disappointment.³¹ A process of vision development must therefore provide room for cooperation between government and society, for example by giving those involved the opportunity to put forward their own ideas and values, and to discuss disagreements and conflicts.³²

Secondly, it is necessary to ensure diversity in the process. Participation processes tend to attract the 'usual suspects': citizens and other stakeholders, such as companies, who have a strong interest in the issue in question, are often university educated and have time to spare.³³ When organising public involvement in developing a vision for the future, it is important to make sure the voices of people with different value patterns and groups who are less commonly heard, such as young people, future generations and people who are less 'into' climate, are also involved in the vision development process in some way.³⁴ A few practical examples of how less commonly

²³ Barendregt et al. (2024); Muiderman et al. (2020); Oomen et al. (2022); Gaziulusoy and Ryan (2017); Van den Ende et al. (2021)

²⁴ Bernauer et al. (2016); Elkins et al. (2009); Tyler (2000)

²⁵ For more explanation about societal involvement in strategy development, see the existing handbooks on this subjects such as the Handleiding toekomstdenken (Guide to future-based thinking) (2022) by the Board of Government Advisers; the Toolbox Towards a climate-resilience future together (2021) by Utrecht University; Scenario's voor visievorming in het omgevingsbeleid – Een handreiking (Scenarios for strategy development in environmental planning policy – A guide) (2025) by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.

²⁶ PBL (2023c)

²⁷ Riedy (2009); Wiek and Iwaniec (2014)

²⁸ PBL (2023c)

²⁹ Barendregt et al. (2024); Perlaviciute and Squintani (2023); Nakagawa et al. (2017); PBL (2023c)

heard voices can be involved are the National Climate Citizens' Assembly (*Nationaal Burgerberaad Klimaat*), the National Climate Platform and the Energy System Residents' Council (*Inwonerraad Energiesysteem*) (see text box 4).

Text box 4. Practical example: Energy System Residents' Council.

The Energy System Residents' Council (*Inwonerraad Energie*) was a citizens' assembly established to gather the ideas, opinions and concerns of citizens about the desired energy system of the future. The Residents' Council was organised at the initiative of the scientific advisory group Energy System 2050 Expert Team (ETES2050), who had been asked by Minister of Climate Rob Jetten to make a set of recommendations as input for the National Energy System Plan.³⁵ The Energy System Residents' Council consisted of 75 participants and, having been selected by means of a weighted draw, was the best possible reflection of the Dutch population. After four meetings, the Residents' Council formulated 19 recommendations. The ETES2050 incorporated them into its own recommendations, and they were directly handed to the minister and summarised in a report. Both the participants themselves and the ETES2050 were positive about the process and the outcomes of the Residents' Council. The participants primarily discussed values and principles for a future energy system. They also discussed issues that did not affect them directly and are complex in nature.³⁶ When it comes to participation processes, it is often assumed that citizens only want to consider matters that directly concern them³⁷; that was not the case in this instance.

Thirdly, power relations need to be taken into account during vision development. Power relations may reflect differences between stakeholders in terms of resources, knowledge or social norms. Power relations can influence who does and does not contribute to a vision, but also whose ideas have the greatest influence on the eventual vision.³⁸ This was the case, for example, with the undertakings made at the climate tables in the Climate Agreement.³⁹ Ideally, therefore, the conversation on a vision for the future should be conducted broadly, by involving many different parties, or parties who make up a representative cross-section of society. And during the conversation, efforts must be made to ensure that

different perspectives can be put forward and are actually listened to.⁴⁰

What is the current situation in practice?

The Council notes that there is some societal involvement in government vision development. The degree of societal involvement in vision development differed significantly depending on the vision studied, but in virtually every one, some form of societal participation was part of the development; see appendix 1. In a general sense, the ministries therefore see the importance of involving society in vision development and act accordingly. For the vision Agriculture, Nature and Food, the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment and the National Plan Energy System, for example, a relatively large amount of time and money was set aside to gather external input from companies, scientists, local authorities, citizens and others (see appendix 2). According to the interviewees, the Physical Environment Consultative Council (*Overlegorgaan Fysieke Leefomgeving*) also plays an important role in organising societal involvement in visions.

Societal involvement is primarily focused on experts. The visions are mainly developed by the policy staff of the strategy departments within the ministries, sometimes advised by experts such as the Board of Government Advisers (College van Rijksadviseurs), the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving) and the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (Centraal Planbureau).⁴¹

For citizens especially, there is limited scope for participation. Our interlocutors acknowledge the importance of citizen participation, and in the majority of the visions studied there was scope for citizens to submit a statement of views, for example, or talk to the creators of the visions (see appendix 1). But citizen participation takes place at a relatively low rung of the participation ladder: citizens reflect on draft visions and those reflections are processed, but there is little scope within vision development for a conversation with citizens about the desired future based on different values, or for citizens to put forward their own ideas. The conversations did reveal that there is interest in giving citizens a bigger role in vision development amongst the ministries. However, the resources are often lacking and policymakers are also not entirely clear on the best approach to take.

³⁵ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2023a); Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) (2023)

³⁶ RVO (2023); Perlaviciute (2023)

³⁷ Soeterbroek (2022)

³⁸ Kanarp et al. (2025); Oomen et al. (2022)

³⁹ Truijens et al. (2021)

⁴⁰ PBL (2023c)

⁴¹ See for example the foresight studies *Via Parijs* (*Via Paris*) (2019) and *De economie van de toekomst begint bij de delta* (The economy of the future begins with the delta) (2024) by the Board of Government Advisers; *Kiezen voor Later* (Choosing for Later) (2024) by the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis; and the *Spatial Planning Assessment 2023* (2023d) by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.

The lack of citizen involvement in vision development is a missed opportunity. Precisely when it comes to vision development, it is important to incorporate the different values and perspectives that exist within society. Citizens can contribute ideas constructively and sometimes come up with innovative ideas or solutions. But if there is no room for those ideas, they disengage.⁴² Involving citizens can generate increased support for the eventual vision. In some cases, citizens' ideas or solutions may even be more ambitious than those of the government itself,⁴³ because many Dutch people are concerned about climate change and want the government to take action.⁴⁴

⁴² Soeterbroek (2022); RLI (2025); PBL (2023c)

⁴³ Cattino and Reckien (2021)

⁴⁴ Ipsos I&O (2024); Motivaction (2024); SCP (2024, 2025b)

4

Impact of visions for the future in climate policy



How can the ability of visions for the future to provide direction for climate policy be assured? In this chapter, the Council first notes that visions for the future currently have limited impact in the climate policy cycle. After that, the Council explains that this is because impact is insufficiently assured.

4.1 Existing visions for the future have limited impact on policy

A vision for the future provides direction for climate policy if it plays a role in every phase of the climate policy cycle. Five phases are usually differentiated in the policy cycle: agenda-setting, design, decision-making, implementation and evaluation. Visions for the future can perform a different role in each phase, but currently do not always do so. See figure 5.

During the agenda-setting phase, a vision for the future can help to put (or keep) the desired future situation and associated policy on the agenda.¹ For example, a vision for the future of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands may be translated into policy that reserves space for rivers. In this phase, that policy would be put on the political agenda.

In the current practice of politics and policy, short-term subjects dominate the agenda.² The concern is with the issue of the day, rather than long-term policy. The urgency of making difficult choices now is not directly felt by politicians and policymakers because the negative consequences of climate change often lie far in the future.³ Moreover, having been made, visions for the future frequently lose support when there is a change of government or unexpected developments. For instance, support for the vision on agriculture, nature and food was lost when the nitrogen crisis escalated and a new government took office (see appendix 1).

During the design phase, the vision for the future helps map out the opportunities, conflicts and associated key strategic decisions between policy domains in order to achieve the desired future situation. For example, space for rivers means less space for food production but opportunities for nature recovery and recreation. By comparing these kinds of conflicts and opportunities and resolving them, it is possible to avoid different key strategic decisions being at odds with one another.⁴

There is currently insufficient insight amongst politicians and policymakers into the opportunities and conflicts between different sectoral and departmental visions and the key strategic decisions that follow from them, let alone any attempt to resolve them. As a result, it is unclear how climate or other policy in one domain can enhance or at least not impede policy in another.

During the decision-making phase, a vision for the future can give direction to choices in order to achieve the desired future situation. Visions for the future can help politicians and policymakers explain potentially painful policy choices.⁵ Painful measures in the short term are easier to accept or even embrace if there is a shared vision for the desired final outcome.

In the current practice of politics and policymaking, insufficient use is made of visions for the future for arriving at and explaining decisions that affect the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society. Again, the vision for the future of agriculture, nature and food (see appendix 1) provides an illustrative example, in that it completely faded from view when a new government took office. Despite the fact that the vision was coordinated in cabinet, debated and confirmed in parliament, it was not used to explain political choices.

During the implementation phase, a vision for the future can offer perspective and guidance and help with the coordination and implementation of measures.⁶ When it comes to transitions that affect the whole of society, such as the one to a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society, action is required of everyone. Visions can provide guidance and inspiration for citizens, companies and other organisations that want to invest, innovate and collaborate.⁷

However, it is clear that visions for the future currently provide insufficient direction for implementation in politics and policy-making. Our research revealed that visions are sometimes simply not yet achievable, in view of the fact that implementation is not (yet) feasible. Due in particular to the sectoral and techno-economic nature of many government visions for the future, policy implementation runs up against the limits of what is feasible – for example, because the required expertise or technology are not yet available, such as well trained (technical) personnel, or if there is resistance within society.

Finally, a vision for the future can serve as a touchstone for evaluating climate policy. A vision for the future can be used to verify whether the climate policy is still on course to achieve the desired future situation, or the (interim) goals derived from it. In this way, we can determine whether current policy is bringing us closer to fulfilling our expectations and preferences for the future.⁸ The evaluation can also go the other way: if it transpires from practice or new (scientific) insights that the future expectations based on the existing vision are no longer correct, the vision can be re-evaluated for a new policy cycle.

In the current practice of politics and policy-making, it is not possible to measure the effects of climate

¹ Riedy (2009)

² Angenent (2024); Meadowcroft (2009); Smith (2021)

³ Boston and Lempp (2011)

⁴ Haasnoot et al. (2013); Muiderman et al. (2020)

⁵ Loorbach (2010); The importance of a strategy for making and explaining policy choices also emerged during the interviews.

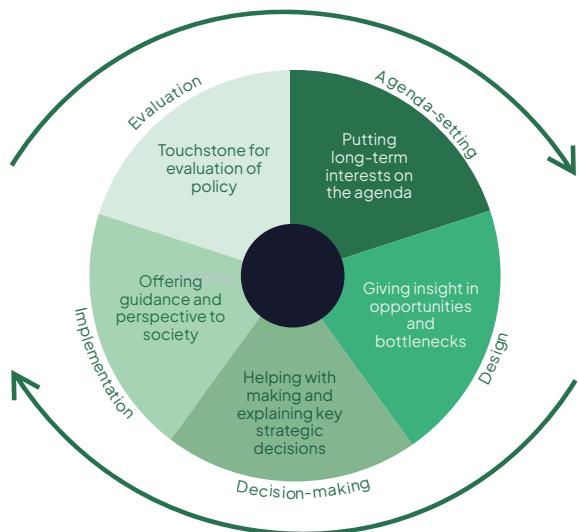
⁶ Voß et al. (2009); Muiderman et al. (2020); Oomen et al. (2022)

⁷ Aykut et al. (2019); Dixon et al. (2018); SCP (2023)

⁸ Mangnus et al. (2021)

The potential of visions for the future is not fully realized

The potential of visions for the future in climate policy



The practice of visions for the future in climate policy

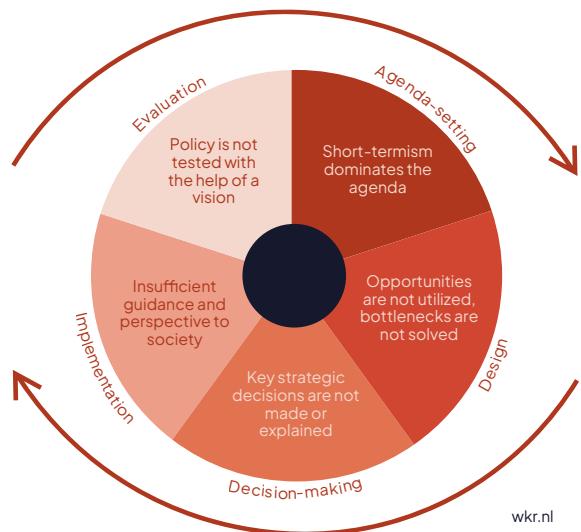


Figure 5.

policy against a government vision for the future of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands because that vision for the future does not yet exist. It is, however, possible to consider whether policy contributes to achieving emissions reduction targets. Every year, the Climate and Energy Outlook evaluates progress on achieving the climate targets for 2030 and 2035. It does so by predicting future emissions based on current and expected policy. However, this evaluation does not consider the ultimate goal of a climate-neutral society and whether that is in sight. Approaches such as reflexive evaluation can facilitate a broader perspective,⁹ but for that purpose, a vision for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands would first be required.¹⁰

In short: existing visions for the future still have insufficient impact on the different phases of the policy cycle. There are various ways to better assure the use of visions in the climate policy cycle.

4.2 Ensuring the effective use of visions in climate policymaking

The Council notes that visions provide insufficient direction for climate policy, due to the fact that the use of visions for the future is not properly assured in the climate policy cycle. There are various possible routes towards improving the assurance of the impact of visions.

Firstly, vision development often takes place on an ad hoc basis, without a clear plan for its subsequent use in the policy cycle. The majority of the visions for the future

studied had no predefined role in the policy cycle. Most of the government visions for the future were made on an ad hoc basis; in some cases at the initiative of the minister or the department, in response to an internal search for a particular direction. An example is the National Energy System Plan (Nationaal Plan Energiesysteem; NPE), albeit that a cycle for drawing up subsequent NPEs has since been established (see appendix 1). Another example is the vision for agriculture, nature and food (see appendix 1). Other visions for the future were made in response to questions from politicians, for example the Letter to Parliament on a vision for increasing the sustainability of basic industry (see appendix 1). There is thus usually a reason for developing a vision, but no clear plan for how long the vision should last, how it might be re-evaluated in the future, or how the vision ought to influence policy.

Secondly, visions for the future do have impact on policy plans published alongside the vision, but not in policy plans or policy further in the future. Existing visions lead to policy plans. For example, the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment, which resulted in an implementation programme being set up with the provincial authorities. For the vision on agriculture, nature and food, a knowledge and innovation agenda and delivery plan were drawn up in line with the vision. And the vision for a sustainable basic industry in 2050 provided important input for the National Sustainable Industry Programme (see appendix 1). However, our interlocutors emphasise that in the long term, visions are no longer used in making policy. We also find that visions are not cited in policy documents published subsequently (see appendix 1).

⁹ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2022)

¹⁰ PBL (2024b).

Text box 5. Practical example: the Environment and Planning Act and spatial and environmental planning visions

The new Environment and Planning Act came into force on 1 January 2024. It stipulates that national and local government must have spatial and environmental planning visions that provide a vision of the desired physical organisation of the living environment in the long term. The spatial and environmental planning vision must also describe the policy by means of which the public authority in question aims to deliver the vision. Because tasks from multiple policy domains come together in the living environment, a coherent perspective is, as it were, built into the Environment and Planning Act. In 2020, ahead of the Environment and Planning Act coming into force, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations published the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment (*Nationale Omgevingsvisie - NOVI*). The NOVI presents a desired vision of the spatial configuration and living environment of the Netherlands in 2050. In doing so, it takes many themes into consideration, such as climate mitigation and adaptation, the economy, the development of cities and regions and rural areas, mobility, nature and health. A strength of this vision is that it brings together multiple policy domains. Although the connections between those policy domains were not yet fully catalogued in the NOVI, it was followed by the *Mooi Nederland* programme. This programme used integrated foresight studies to assess the coherence between different policy domains in the physical living environment. The result of those foresight studies is insight into conflicts and key strategic decisions in the physical living environment. The intention is that this insight should also lead to key strategic decisions in the successor to the NOVI, the National Spatial Strategy (*Nota Ruimte*).¹¹ Although the National Spatial Strategy has not yet been published, the NOVI and local government spatial and environmental planning visions demonstrate that the Environment and Planning Act is starting to prompt more coherent visions for the future.

Thirdly, visions for the future that are not legally anchored have less impact on policy than visions for the future that are. A first example of a legally anchored vision is the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment. Drawing up an spatial and environmental planning vision and its impact, including amongst local authorities, is anchored in the Environment and Planning Act. The Environment and Planning Act draws a distinction between the spatial and environmental planning vision (*omgevingsvisie*), which is only binding on the public authority itself, the spatial and environmental plan (*omgevingsplan*), which has legal status and is also binding on citizens and

¹¹ Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2022); Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2024)

companies) and the spatial and environmental programme (*omgevingsprogramma*), which is aimed at implementing the environmental planning vision and the spatial plan (see text box 5). A second example of a legally anchored vision is the National Energy System Programme. The Energy Act provides that the NPE should contain both a vision and the outline of energy policy to move towards that vision, and that the NPE should be re-evaluated every five years. In the case of both the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment and the NPE, statutory assurance does not mean that the vision is fixed. On the contrary, space for adjustment is built in by specifying a term for re-evaluation. However, assurance does guarantee that long-term vision development takes place, that the visions are periodically re-evaluated and that they are included in consideration when making policy.

Although long-term vision development for climate policy is not assured, the Netherlands does have strong institutions and policy frameworks that encourage long-term thinking in climate policy. These institutions and policy frameworks support long-term thinking in climate mitigation and climate adaptation. That is not the same thing as long-term vision development, but it does offer jumping off points.

With regard to climate mitigation, the Climate Act requires that independent institutions periodically reflect on the achievement of emissions reduction targets. For example, the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency publishes the Climate and Energy Outlook every year. This document outlines an expected future: what is the anticipated extent of emissions reduction by 2030, based on policy that has been adopted or put on the agenda? And what might emissions look like in 2035 and 2040? The Council of State also reflects on the achievement of climate targets. In addition, the Netherlands Scientific Climate Council has the formal task of advising on the Climate Plan every five years. Alongside Dutch statutory requirements, at EU level there is a requirement to produce an integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) every five years, which looks ten years ahead in climate and energy policy. There is also a European obligation to devise a long-term mitigation strategy every ten years that looks at least thirty years ahead.¹² The NECP and long-term strategy are both focused on long-term emissions reductions, but neither includes a vision for a desired future in which those emissions reductions have been achieved.¹³ In the shape of the Dutch Climate Act and the EU requirements, there is therefore a framework that encourages long-term thinking about mitigation policy. This does not in itself lead to long-term vision development, but it can be used to that end.

¹² Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (2018)

¹³ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2019)

The Delta Act creates a framework for long-term thinking around climate adaptation. The Delta Act, which came into force in 2012, provides for policy to keep the Netherlands safe as a low-lying delta and maintain our water supply. The drafting and implementation of the Delta Programme is overseen by a Delta Programme Commissioner, independently appointed for a five-year term that may be extended.¹⁴ Various possible and expected imagined futures are devised for the government, such as the Climate Scenarios (KNMI) and the Delta Scenarios (Deltares). The frameworks and long-term goals for policy are laid down in Delta Decisions, which are re-evaluated every six years. The policy itself is set out in a Delta Plan, one such being the Delta Plan for Spatial Adaptation (since 2018). This is a joint plan by municipalities, water boards, provincial authorities and the national government setting out policy strategies and ambitions for a climate-resilient and water-resilient Netherlands in 2050.¹⁵ The Delta Act, the Delta Programme and the Delta Programme Commissioner are institutions with a long-term focus.¹⁶ These institutions therefore assure long-term thinking about adaptation policy, at least in the area of water security and availability. Alongside the Delta Programme, the National Climate Adaptation Strategy (*Nationale Klimaatadaptatie Strategie*; NAS) is the most important policy strategy for climate adaptation. The NAS is currently under review.¹⁷ The NAS looks ahead 100 years, but currently also lacks an overarching vision.¹⁸

¹⁴ Blankestijn and Pot (2024)

¹⁵ Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (2024b)

¹⁶ Bloemen et al. (2019); Blankestijn (2024)

¹⁷ See also WKR (2025)

¹⁸ Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (2022).

5

Advice and recommendations

A Climate Vision in the climate policy cycle

Consistent long-term climate policy is essential for the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands. A Climate Vision – a vision for the future of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands – can contribute to consistent long-term climate policy by providing direction for policy and implementation, and by offering guidance and perspective to society. This Climate Vision would: (1) have a long time horizon (at least 25 years, extending to up to 100 years), (2) offer a coherent perspective on different policy domains, and (3) be relatable. The Council recommends translating the Climate Vision to specific measures in the Climate Plan, the National Climate Adaptation Strategy (*Nationale Klimaatadaptatie Strategie; NAS*) and other relevant policy strategies.

The Council recommends anchoring the Climate Vision in the climate policy cycle. This could be achieved by drawing up and re-evaluating a Climate Vision, to be enshrined in the Climate Act. The Climate Act could specify that the government must establish the Climate Vision in partnership with parliament, departments and society, in order to increase legitimacy and support for the Climate Vision. Impact could be assured by requiring that the government draws up the Climate Vision ahead of the Climate Plan and makes clear in the Climate Plan and the NAS how the Climate Vision links in with concrete measures. Incorporating a Climate Vision into the Climate Act could also assure the impact of the Climate Vision into the design, implementation and evaluation phase of climate policy.

By re-evaluating the Climate Vision every five years, the vision would be both consistent and adaptable to changing circumstances and societal preferences.

On the one hand, the Climate Vision would offer public authorities, citizens, companies and other organisations the clarity and certainty they need in order to make plans, choices and investments. On the other hand, the Climate Vision could be adjusted to changing circumstances if necessary, such as societal developments and preferences, technological innovations and new scientific insights.

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the government and parliament draw up a Climate Vision to give direction to the design, implementation and evaluation of climate policy. The Council recommends drawing up the vision ahead of the Climate Plan and making the drafting and re-evaluation of the vision part of the climate policy cycle.

The Council makes the following five recommendations for a Climate Vision that contributes to long-term climate policy and is formally incorporated into the climate policy cycle:

1. Give the minister responsible for climate policy a coordinating role in drawing up and re-evaluating the Climate Vision
2. Set up a parliamentary committee for the future that will critically evaluate the Climate Vision and monitor it to ensure its coherence with future visions of other policy domains.
3. Set up an interdepartmental working group under the responsibility of senior civil servants to draw up the Climate Vision and coordinate with other departments and administrative levels.
4. Have the coordinating minister involve citizens in drawing up the Climate Vision, in order to reflect the concerns of society, do justice to diversity and contribute to a broad support base.
5. Ensure that the Climate Vision has impact on the design, implementation and evaluation phase of climate policy and other related policy.

Ministerial coordination

The Council recommends establishing a coordinating role in drawing up the Climate Vision at a senior level of government. In order to get from visions for the future to key strategic decisions – decisions that, moreover, enjoy broad support from political parties, policymakers and society – coordination is required: on the one hand, coordination between the different existing visions for the future of various policy domains, on the other between political parties, policy and society. In concrete terms, this coordinating role means that someone initiates the vision development, coordinates the different visions from parliament, departments and society and integrates them, and monitors impact on climate policy.

A natural choice would be to assign this coordinating role to the minister with responsibility for climate policy. This minister is already responsible for the five-yearly Climate Plan and the annual Climate Memorandum. In coordinating the Climate Vision, they could therefore build on the existing cooperation around the drafting of the Climate Plan and the Climate Memorandum. This minister is not responsible for climate adaptation, but would certainly need to actively involve the minister who is (at the time of writing, the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management) in drawing up the Climate Vision. The responsible minister must also ensure that, alongside climate mitigation and climate adaptation, the domains of water and infrastructure, spatial planning, agriculture, energy, public health and economy were included in consideration, for example via a ministerial sub-council.¹ Giving this minister a coordinating role in the Climate Vision would also reinforce their role in coordinating the Climate Plan and long-term climate policy, as was recently recommended by the Council of State.²

¹ WRR (2025)

² Council of State (2025)

Recommendation 1

The Council recommends giving the minister with responsibility for climate policy a coordinating role in drawing up and re-evaluating the Climate Vision.

Parliamentary involvement

The Council's analysis reveals that there is insufficient political dialogue about the desired long-term future. What do we want a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society to look like in 25 and 100 years' time? A lack of broad political support has proved to be a stumbling block to the impact of previous visions. Involving political parties – and strengthening long-term thinking in the House of Representatives in general – is therefore an important precondition when developing the Climate Vision.

For this reason, the Council recommends that the government and parliament engage in discussions about the Climate Vision at least three times per cycle. They could do so, for example, when the Climate Vision is drawn up (so that parliament can provide input on the Climate Vision), when the vision is adopted by the government (with parliamentary consent) and when the vision is translated to the (draft) Climate Plan (see figure 4). In this way, the vision would be able to count on broad political support, and it would also have impact on the Climate Plan, the NAS and the climate policy based on them.

Setting up a parliamentary committee for the future would help stimulate political dialogue about visions for the future and long-term thinking in general. Other countries already have positive experiences with similar committees (see text box 6). The committee would not have to put forward legislation itself, but would be able to facilitate the dialogue about the future between the government and parliament. It could provide input for the Climate Vision, visions for the future in other policy domains and long-term strategies, such as the National Spatial Strategy, the NAS, the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment and the NPE. It could compare the different visions in order to bring political key strategic decisions and conflicts to the attention of the government and parliament.

In addition, the standing parliamentary committee with responsibility for climate would retain an important role in climate legislation. If a Climate Vision were in place, this committee could, for example, use it to evaluate new or existing legislation.

Recommendation 2

The Council recommends setting up a parliamentary committee for the future that would critically evaluate the Climate Vision and monitor its coherence with visions for the future in other policy areas.

Text box 6. Practical example: parliamentary committees for the future in other countries.

The parliaments of Chile, Iceland, Lithuania and Finland have experience with parliamentary committees for the future.³ The Finnish parliament set up a 'committee for the future' in 1993.⁴ This committee is made up of seventeen parliamentarians who do not themselves prepare legislation and do not have a direct influence on the legislative process. They facilitate a 'future dialogue' between government and parliament and consider the impacts of government policy on future generations.⁵ Every Finnish government is obliged to write a 'future report'. In it, the government reflects on a theme related to the future, such as climate, environment, technology, employment and demographics.⁶ The Finnish Committee for the Future responds to the report, can add to it or make recommendations, and can respond to legislative proposals from other parliamentary committees that pertain to the future.⁷ Future committees can contribute to more future-oriented thinking amongst policymakers and politicians and ultimately make policy more future-oriented.⁸ For example, future committees can ensure that policymakers and politicians consider the interests of future generations when taking decisions, as well as the interests of current generations.⁹

Interdepartmental coordination

The Council recommends strengthening interdepartmental coordination on visions for the future between different policy departments and administrative levels. There is already a lot of coordination of policy in the different departments and administrative levels, but coordination on the different sector visions and amongst the most senior civil servants is absent or insufficient. As a result, there is insufficient insight into the opportunities and conflicts within those visions and they are not sufficiently utilised or resolved. Partly as a result, key strategic decisions that would adequately contribute to the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands are not made. The Council recommends strengthening the existing interdepartmental working group and collaboration for the Climate Plan and the Climate Memorandum in three ways: (1) by enhancing supervision, (2) by expanding the working group, and (3) by strengthening interdepartmental coordination.

First of all, supervision could be enhanced by bringing interdepartmental coordination under the responsibility

³ Vermassen (2024)

⁴ Koskima (2023)

⁵ Vermassen (2024); Krznaric (2021)

⁶ Vermassen (2024)

⁷ Vermassen (2024)

⁸ Koskimaa and Raunio (2023)

⁹ Rose (2024)

of senior civil servants. In order to ensure that long-term issues in general, and the climate issue in particular, remain high up on the political/civil service agenda, the involvement of senior civil servants in interdepartmental coordination is important. An opportunity for organising that involvement is the proposed interdepartmental working group under the responsibility of the secretary-generals. The secretary generals themselves recently called for more systematic consideration of long-term consequences and coherence between tasks in political decision-making.¹⁰ The Council recommends adding climate as a long-term theme. Senior civil servants could assure the long-term focus by bringing together the visions for the future of different policy departments. In doing so, they could make an analysis of the conflicts and gaps in departmental visions with respect to the Climate Vision and resolve them. This would help in translating the Climate Vision to key strategic decisions and packages of measures in order to achieve climate neutrality and climate resilience.

Secondly, the working group could be strengthened by adding policy staff focused on climate adaptation. For example, policy staff working on visions for climate adaptation (e.g. for the NAS and the Delta Programme), visions for the National Spatial Strategy and the visions of the strategic teams in the different ministries. After all, visions of climate can affect different key strategic decisions and policy plans, and must therefore be consistently reflected in those visions and plans.¹¹ Additionally, it is important for the impact of the Climate Vision that the vision is drawn up with input from policy staff involved in implementation and local authorities. The working group can also evaluate whether new policy is consistent with the Climate Vision, for example in the spring memorandum and the Budget.

Thirdly, interdepartmental coordination could be enhanced by focusing it on cross-sectoral transitions that are relevant for the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society. In its advisory report for the Climate Plan 2025–2035, the Council considered three cross-sectoral transitions that are important in this regard: The (1) the transition of the energy system, (2) the transition of the food system, and (3) the transition to a circular economy. The proposed Climate Vision, and the interdepartmental coordination advocated to that end, could link together visions from the different sectors in order to prevent compartmentalisation and problems being shifted from one sector to another. It is precisely where visions are in opposition that it is important to conduct an open conversation that attempts to achieve joint solutions and key strategic decisions that transcend the existing sectors.¹² This can only be achieved by reducing the tendency of the different departments to negotiate based on their own subsidiary interests and policy

domains.¹³ Interdepartmental coordination of visions can take time but ultimately also save time, because a lack of coherence amongst visions can lead to delays in policy implementation.¹⁴

Recommendation 3

The Council recommends setting up an interdepartmental working group under the responsibility of senior civil servants that would be responsible for drawing up the Climate Vision and coordinating other departments and administrative levels.

Public participation

The Council's analysis reveals that there is room for improvement in terms of citizen participation at the level of visions for the future. There is already a lot of participation from society in climate policy, such as opportunities for citizens, companies and other organisations to contribute their ideas about the Climate Plan, the Climate Tables, the National Climate Platform and the National Climate Citizens' Assembly. There is also societal involvement around visions, but the involvement of citizens could be improved. Citizen involvement is crucial if the Climate Vision is to enjoy sufficient support.

There are different options for involving citizens in the Climate Vision. For example, the government could build on existing initiatives to involve society on climate issues. Whilst the National Climate Citizens' Assembly has not been asked to give a vision for a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands, the advisory report could be used in the government's vision development. In addition, the Physical Environment Consultative Council (Overlegorgaan Fysieke Leefomgeving), which organises this citizens' assembly, and the National Climate Platform, which also falls under the Physical Environment Consultative Council, could gather input from society for the development of the Climate Vision. The government could also utilise (academic) research into public preferences and visions that provides insight into support for certain visions. An example is the research by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) into policy visions, citizens' visions and behaviours.¹⁵ This could also help to identify opportunities, conflicts and the potential support base.

Include less-heard and unheard voices, such as those of young people and future generations, in vision development, not just established interests. For example, the youth climate movement (Jonge Klimaatbeweging) and political youth organisations could be involved in drawing up the Climate Vision. Other possibilities include future dialogues, such as those organised by the Finnish parliamentary Commission for the Future, or generational

¹⁰ Prime Minister (2024)

¹¹ WKR (2025)

¹² WKR (2023)

¹³ PBL (2024b); Rotmans (2023)

¹⁴ RLI (2023)

¹⁵ SCP (2021)

dialogue, as is the case with the Delta Programme.¹⁶ An interesting way of giving future generations a voice is 'future design', in which participants act as proxies for future citizens.¹⁷

The Council recommends developing procedures to ensure that society has sufficient opportunity to contribute in drawing up the Climate Vision. For example, the Climate Act could stipulate a number of moments at which citizens would be able to provide critical input when drawing up the Climate Vision. The Council also recommends that the government coordinate with the House of Representatives on this. That would allow the input gathered to be effectively included in the parliamentary debate and give participating citizens a clear task and mandate. As a result, participatory and representative democracy would be in alignment. Other preconditions to be considered are ensuring the right composition, diversity and representativeness of participating citizens, good, independent support in the participation process and the relationship between the participating citizens and the wider public.¹⁸

Recommendation 4

The Council recommends that the coordinating minister involves citizens in drawing up the Climate Vision, in order to reflect the concerns of society, do justice to diversity and contribute to a broad support base.

Impact on policy

Finally, the Council's analysis reveals that there is scope for enhancing the impact of climate-related visions for the future on climate policy and other related policy.

Climate policy should be more focused on the long-term, keep other societal tasks in mind, and offer society a perspective for the future. In order to ensure that the proposed Climate Vision provides direction for climate policy and other related policy, not only must the quality of visions and the process of vision development improve, so must the use of vision in the design, implementation and evaluation phase of policy.¹⁹

The government could promote the translation of the Climate Vision to a policy design by making the use of the Climate Vision part of the policy compass and the generation test. In the policy compass (see text box 7), the government could stipulate that the Climate Vision be consulted and translated into policy in the policy domains that influence the achievement of the Climate Vision. The generation test allows the impact of policy measures to be evaluated for different generations, thus showing

whether planned policy will also bring the achievement of the Climate Vision closer for future generations.

The government could promote the translation of the Climate Vision into policy by requiring the use of the Climate Vision for the Environment and Planning Act and spatial and environmental planning visions. The Environment and Planning Act and spatial and environmental planning visions can assure the impact of the Climate Vision to the local level. They can also assure coherence with other policy domains, such as water, nitrogen and nature objectives.

In the policy evaluation phase, the government could assess whether policy is helping to achieve the Climate Vision by making the vision part of the monitoring and evaluation processes. This would allow policymakers and researchers to evaluate the extent to which climate policy is contributing to the Climate Vision and therefore to the goal of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient Netherlands. It may be that policy adjustments or a re-evaluation of the vision are required. This could be achieved by making the Climate Vision part of the Climate and Energy Outlook with regard to climate mitigation. With regard to climate adaptation, the Climate Vision could be part of the progress reports for the Delta Programme or of a new adaptation monitor²⁰.

Recommendation 5

The Council recommends ensuring that the Climate Vision has impact on the design, implementation and evaluation phase of climate policy and other related policy.

¹⁶ Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (2024a)

¹⁷ Nakagawa et al. (2017); Swinkels et al. (2025)

¹⁸ Brenninkmeijer (2021)

¹⁹ Utrecht Advies (2025)

²⁰ As the Council recommended in the advisory report *Meeveranderen met het Klimaat* (Adapting in step with a changing climate).

Text box 7. Practical example: The policy compass and the generation test

With the policy compass, the national government provides a guideline for policy-making.²¹ The policy compass is an instrument or tool for policymakers to use when addressing a societal task, revising existing policy or starting a new policy dossier. The goal is to establish a diligent policy development process, involve all relevant stakeholders, include all quality requirements and consider the different policy options.

The policy compass is a relatively new instrument that has yet to prove its worth.²² An initial evaluation of the policy compass revealed that approximately half of civil servants are aware of the instrument and that only 18% have ever used it. Of those 18%, some do so because it is compulsory, for example in legislative and regulatory dossiers submitted for online consultation.²³

The generation test helps take account of future generations when drawing up the Climate Vision and translating it into policy. The test was devised by the Youth Platform of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) and its goal is to consider the impacts of policy on different generations when developing policy.²⁴ This could be achieved by more accurately identifying the (financial) impacts of coalition agreements and important political and social agreements for different generations – potentially preventing young people from bearing the cost of government measures. The generation test is also advocated by the National Youth Council (Nationale Jeugdraad; NJR).²⁵

The generation test, like the policy compass, is a relatively new instrument that has yet to secure its place in policy. Work is currently underway on adding the generation test to the policy compass. In order to encourage the use of the policy compass and the generation test within ministries, Future Ambassadors could be appointed, as was recently the case for water and climate adaptation.²⁶

Finally: fast forward with the development of a vision on a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society!

The following steps summarise the Council's proposal for the five-yearly cycle of the Climate Vision (see also figure 4):

1. The government gives the minister with responsibility for climate policy a coordinating role in drawing up the Climate Vision. This minister gathers input for the Climate Vision from parliament, other departments and society in order to strengthen the support base.
2. The government approves the Climate Vision after consulting parliament.
3. The government consults parliament, other departments and society when translating the Climate Vision to the Climate Plan and other policy strategies.
4. Adoption of Climate Plan and other policy strategies.
5. During the five years of the cycle, the Climate Vision is used as a benchmark to help choose policy that is aligned with the vision. In an annual cycle, progress towards achieving the Climate Vision is monitored with the help of the Climate and Energy Outlook, the progress reports of the Delta Programme and the Climate Memorandum.
6. This is followed every five years by a recommendation on the Climate Vision, which is then revised accordingly.

It is therefore important that the new government addresses this soon, in order to ensure that the Climate Vision is drawn up ahead of the next Climate Plan. In short: in order to speed up the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society, it is important to go fast forward with vision.

²¹ Knowledge Centre for Policy and Regulation (Kenniscentrum voor beleid en regelgeving) (undated)

²² Damstra (2025)

²³ Damstra (2025)

²⁴ SER (2022)

²⁵ Jeugdraad

²⁶ Waterforum (2025)

Recommendation for a five-year cycle of the Climate Vision

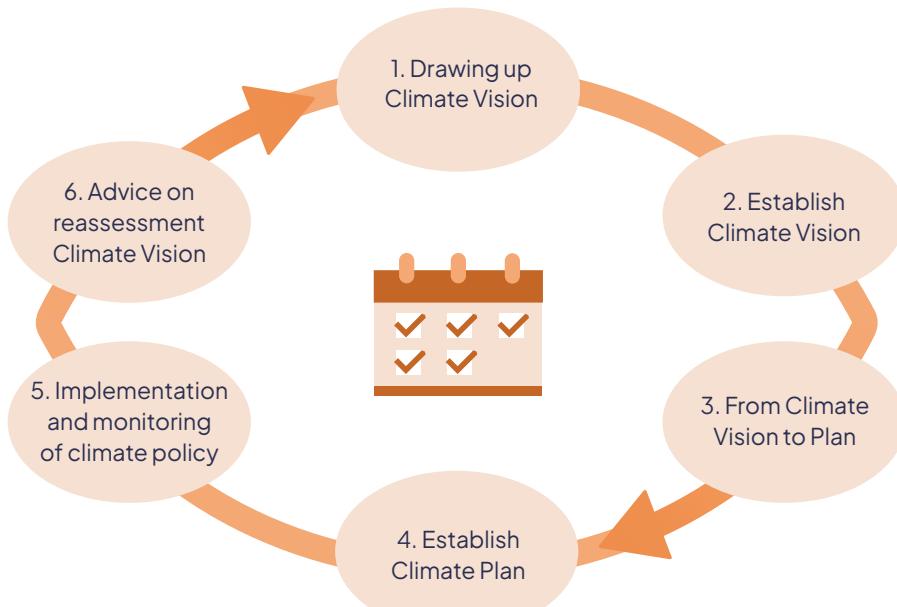


Figure 6.

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Appendix 1: List of visions for the future analysed

Various visions for the future were studied for the findings in this advisory report. The first and second Climate Plans were also included. Below is a description of those visions, how they came about and, if applicable, what their impact has been. The visions for the future are published by the government or by public knowledge institutions. All the visions are aimed at climate neutrality and/or climate resilience in the Netherlands, although that is not always their primary focus.

We have selected seven documents published by the national government. This selection does not reflect the full range of government visions, but it has been chosen as a representation of vision development in the different policy domains and by the different ministries that are relevant for climate policy.

We have selected four visions for the future and foresight studies by public knowledge institutions. These visions and forecasts were not drawn up by the government but were made to support vision development by the government – some at the behest of government, some at the institutions' own initiative.

1. Climate Plan 2025–2035, Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth (2025)

The Climate Plan 2025–2035 (hereafter: Climate Plan) was published by the Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth in 2025. Drawing up a Climate Plan setting out the main points of climate policy for the next ten years is a requirement under the Dutch Climate Act, which came into force on 1 September 2019. The Climate Act is still relatively new and the first full cycle is now almost complete. The first Climate Plan was published in 2020 and covered the period 2021–2030; the current Climate Plan is the second.

The Climate Plan is primarily a place where climate policy from the different policy domains comes together. The Climate Plan specifies emissions and policy for each policy domain, based on the policy domains stipulated by the UN Climate Treaty. In practice, the policy domains for which agreements were made in the Climate Agreement (2019) are (also) covered, i.e. electricity, industry, the built environment, mobility, agriculture and land use. In line with the Climate Act, the Climate Plan focuses only on emissions reduction.

No.	Title	Author	Publication
1	Climate Plan 2025–2035	Ministry of Climate and Green Growth	2025
2	Climate Plan 2021–2030	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate	2021
3	National Plan Energy System	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate	2023
4	Letter to Parliament: Vision sustainable primary industry 2050	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate	2020
5	Mobility Vision 2050: Outline notice	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management	2023
6	National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	2020
7	Agriculture, Nature and Food: Valuable and Connected	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	2018
8	Perspective on broad wellbeing in 2040	Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER)	2024
9	A more natural future for The Netherlands in 2120	Wageningen University & Research	2019
10	Netherlands 2040: an image of the future	Denktank Nederland/Association of Netherlands Municipalities	2023
11	Spatial exploration 2023: Four scenario's for the spatial design of the Netherlands in 2050	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency	2023

When drawing up the Climate Plan, the content of the climate policy is determined in collaboration between the coordinating Minister of Climate Policy and Green Growth and the line ministers responsible for sustainability measures in different policy domains. The details of mitigation policy for the policy domains are primarily determined by those line ministers, based on agreed goals. The policy in each domain provides the basis for the Climate Plan. The minister with responsibility for climate policy oversees the total policy package and looks at where additional policy is needed in order to achieve the legally binding targets. Any additional measures for individual policy domains are coordinated between the relevant ministers and within the cabinet. In accordance with the Climate Act, additional policy must be included in the Climate Memorandum, but an alternative is to follow the regular budget cycle, in which case additional policy is formulated in the Spring Memorandum following the Climate Memorandum. When drawing up the Climate Plan, there is a lot of scope for input from a broad group of stakeholders, including other public authorities, citizens, with a specific focus on young people, civil society organisations, trade unions and knowledge institutions. Their input is gathered by means of round tables, discussions, stakeholder meetings and focus groups.

The Climate Plan is primarily intended as a policy plan, and therefore does not necessarily contain a long-term vision for a climate-neutral Netherlands. Nevertheless, it does tend in this direction. Thanks to the legally enshrined goal of climate neutrality by 2050, the Climate Plan looks more than ten years ahead, and it also draws on several long-term visions from other policy domains, such as the National Energy System Plan. The visions from the different policy domains, if they exist, are not compared with one another in order to assess the coherence between the visions. The need for a positive future vision and perspective on the future are stated in the Climate Plan, but the future image itself still appears to be lacking. Several sentences are devoted to what a climate-neutral future might look like, such as "Living in a healthy and safe living environment; in an affordable, comfortable home; working and doing business in a world-class green economy" (p. 4) and "draught-proof, healthy buildings with low energy consumption" (p. 38). However, these descriptions are fairly summary; no visual material is used. A path to 2050 is described, but it is primarily an emissions reduction path, with no further detail on how the target is to be achieved. The Climate Plan does not set out a shared vision for climate neutrality by the ministries involving a clear understanding of the connections between policy domains. In this regard it refers to further interdepartmental coordination and the strengthening of long-term vision "amongst public authorities" (p. 76).

2. Climate Plan 2021–2030, Ministry of Eco-

onomic Affairs and Climate Policy (2020)

The Climate Plan 2021–2030 was the first Climate Plan. Like the Climate Plan 2025–2030, it was drawn up by the ministry with responsibility for climate (at that time the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy), in collaboration with other relevant ministries. The Climate Plan 2021–2030 also gathered broad input from society.

Again, no vision is to be expected in the Climate Plan 2021–2030, given that it is a policy plan. Nevertheless, the Climate Plan 2021–2030 contained elements of visions. For example, a 'path to 2050' was described, based on the shared ('robust') elements of the visions of each policy domain drawn up for the Climate Agreement. Those policy domain visions included in Climate Agreement were drawn up by experts based on expectations about the future. In addition, several visions from different policy domains were included in the Climate Plan 2021–2030, including the strategic document *Agriculture, nature and food: valuable and connected* published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in 2018 and the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment from 2020. The Climate Plan 2021–2030 also states that an encouraging, integrated perspective is crucial for the transition to a climate-neutral society. However, it does not actually provide that perspective.

3. National Plan Energy System, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2023)

In 2023, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy published the National Plan Energy System setting out the "government's vision for the energy system" (NPE, p. 7). The creation of the NPE was prompted by the desire for a long-term integrated perspective on the energy transition. This emerged in part from the developments in 'offshore wind', which added a new dynamic to the energy system and thus called for a more systemic perspective.

The NPE sketches out a desired developmental trajectory for the energy system in the Netherlands leading up to 2050. It is a vision, specifically of one policy domain. The vision is primarily concerned with expected and possible developments in the energy system. It identifies these, along with the associated risks and opportunities, based on technical and economic surveys of the energy system. The aim is to deal with those risks so that the energy system remains, to a large extent, the same as it is now, in terms of reliability, affordability, and so on. Very little attention is paid to the fact that this developmental trajectory also has drawbacks, and whether they outweigh the benefits. The vision does state that a cyclical process is needed in order to re-evaluate the desirability of the initial approach. What that cyclical process should look like is not clear from the NPE itself. Transition paths and key strategic decisions are explored for different energy modalities, which are very much

based on technology and innovation. For instance, there is a commitment to maximising the energy supply, without exploring which alternative options exist if that maximum supply cannot be achieved through technology and innovation.

The NPE was drawn up with a relatively large amount of input from external parties, including a scientific advisory group (Energy System 2050 Expert Team), stakeholders in the energy system, civil society organisations, knowledge institutions and citizens via discussions held regionally. The Energy System 2050 Expert Team also organised a citizens' assembly. However, only a limited amount of input from the advisory report was incorporated by the scientific expert group. Stakeholders provided input, but did not co-create.

The NPE was discussed in the House of Representatives and there was a relatively strong focus on participation, representing a real attempt to secure political and public support. Nevertheless, certain important societal choices were sidestepped. For instance, while the plan does mention the fact that the desired developmental trajectory has drawbacks, one example being the fact that the future energy system will take up more space, and that society needs to weigh up the costs and benefits to decide whether this is desirable, there is no mention of where or by whom that conversation should be conducted.

The NPE is assured in the Energy Act, which stipulates that it must be drawn up once every five years. It also specifies that the NPE should contain a vision for the intended results of the energy policy and the main points of the policy to achieve those results. In this way, the drafting and re-evaluation of visions of the energy system is legally assured. This assurance of a vision that is re-evaluated on a cyclical basis is fairly unique (of the visions for the future, only the NPE and the spatial and environmental planning visions are legally assured).

The NPE and the Energy Act are almost exclusively concerned with reducing greenhouse gases and barely touch on climate adaptation. The NPE contains one paragraph on climate adaptation, which is mainly about the use of space.

4. Letter to Parliament: Vision sustainable primary industry 2050, Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (2020)

In 2020, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy put forward a vision for sustainable basic industry in a *Letter to Parliament: Vision sustainable primary industry 2050*. The vision was prompted by a question from the House of Representatives as to what the mitigation task defined in the Climate Agreement (2019) would mean for industry. The then minister (Eric Wiebes) and the department prepared a long-term outlook

to answer that question. The vision is focused only on basic industry, without taking other policy domains into account. It sets out how industry can avoid risks and take opportunities that follow from a set of expected developments, based on models and scientific expertise. The vision therefore leans heavily on expectations about the future, and to a lesser extent on preferences. In terms of developmental trajectory, the primary commitment is to innovation and investment in existing and new industry. The vision was made internally, with limited involvement from external stakeholders. Climate adaptation and other policy domains are mentioned, but coherence with those domains is not considered here. The Letter to Parliament was sent to the Dutch House of Representatives via the Council of Ministers.

The vision for a sustainable basic industry provided important input for the implementation programme National Sustainable Industry Programme (NPVI), which was launched in 2023. The NPVI focuses on achieving the climate targets for industry by 2030, taking as its starting point the vision for the energy system presented in the National Energy System Plan. Here we therefore see vision in one domain carrying through into another domain. The concrete actions to achieve the goals are set out in *Routekaart NPVI: Van Grijs naar Groen* (NPVI Roadmap: From Grey to Green; edition 2, 2024), which focuses primarily on actions up to 2030. These include making tailored agreements with industry, initiating CCS projects and creating a hydrogen network.

In 2023, the government published a broader vision for the Dutch economy: *Perspectief op de Nederlandse economie: Innovatief, duurzaam, sterk en welvarend* (Perspective for the Economy of the Netherlands: Innovative, sustainable, strong and prosperous). This incorporates the earlier industrial vision set out in the Letter to Parliament. The new vision again centres on addressing risks and opportunities, based on figures and models, and the vision is primarily focused on 2030. An important point noted in the vision was that sustainability measures would result in industry occupying more space leading up to 2050. In this connection, an economic and spatial planning assessment was carried out, published in 2024. The latter document outlines current trends and developments in economic land use and the expected development up to 2030. It serves as input for the National Spatial Strategy, that will list trade-offs in land use between different policy tasks. For *Perspectief op de Nederlandse economie*, other public authorities, sector bodies, companies, civil society organisations and knowledge institutions were consulted, according to the decision memorandum on *Perspectief op de Nederlandse economie* (Letter to Parliament with reference DGED-AEP/33440608, 30 June 2023). We see the impact on policy of the former vision in the Letter to Parliament in the NPVI and in the subsequent road map and the policy measures it contains. However, vision

development or long-term thinking itself does not seem to be assured for industry. The Letter to Parliament and *Perspectief op de Nederlandse economie* appear to have been drawn up on an ad hoc basis; they were drawn up for a specific reason but there is no clear follow-up.

5. Mobility Vision 2050: Outline notice Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (2023)

In 2023, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management published the *Mobility Vision 2050 Outline notice*. This was an initial elaboration by the ministry of its vision for the integrated mobility policy. The Mobility Vision was prompted by a desire within the ministry for greater control over developments in mobility, in the context of new challenges in the field of environment and climate. This is a vision for a single policy domain, based largely on expected developments and risks leading up to 2050. The vision outlines which actions are needed in order to navigate those risks and utilise opportunities, based primarily on existing and expected developments in individual transport modalities, and on reports by experts. In terms of the developmental trajectory, the main commitment is to maintain the existing situation in terms of accessibility, mobility and modality. The vision was mostly drawn up internally by civil servants with specific relevant expertise within the department. Some input was obtained from the Physical Environment Consultative Council, and at the time of writing, a public consultation is still underway. The identified challenges in the area of mobility are not linked to other policy domains.

It was not clear beforehand how the vision would be used. There was support from the minister at the start of the process but, with a change of government, it is unclear how the vision will be used.

6. National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2020

In 2020, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations published the National Vision on Spatial Planning and the Environment (*Nationale Omgevingsvisie - NOVI*). The NOVI was prompted by the new Environment and Planning Act, which requires that national government and provincial and municipal authorities draw up spatial and environmental planning visions. In accordance with the Environment and Planning Act, the spatial and environmental planning vision must describe the quality of the physical living environment and the main points of the policy that will be pursued in order to achieve that quality. The Environment and Planning Act followed a period of relative absence of national government direction in spatial planning since 2010. The NOVI was essentially a first step, and brought together many

of the existing tasks and the choices that needed to be made.

The NOVI presents a vision of the desired physical organisation of the Netherlands in 2050. It is focused on spatial planning and considers many different themes, such as climate mitigation and adaptation, the economy, the development of cities and regions and rural areas, mobility, nature and health. As such, it covers a relatively large number of policy domains, certainly in comparison with other national government visions. Although the interconnections between different policy domains are not emphasised in the NOVI, they are in the later *Mooi Nederland* programme. The vision was drawn up on the basis of current challenges, expected developments, the associated risks and how those risks can be avoided. It also outlines the role of national government, and which assessment frameworks can be used to navigate the challenges and risks. As such, it is primarily based on expectations about the future, and to a lesser extent on future opportunities and preferences. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations took the lead in drawing up the NOVI and in doing so gathered input from stakeholders and citizens, for example via the Physical Environment Consultative Council. Local authorities also played an important role in drawing up the NOVI. At least to an extent, the extensive collaboration in drawing up the NOVI represents an open conversation based on different perspectives and co-creation.

The NOVI was presented to the Senate and the House of Representatives in 2020. The follow-up included launching the National Spatial Strategy as the successor to the NOVI, an implementation programme involving collaboration with provincial authorities (*the NOVEX Programme*) and continued work on integrated future visions in the *Mooi Nederland* programme. The *Mooi Nederland* programme sought to establish integrated future images of the Netherlands, while also analysing the connections between different policy domains. The future visions from the *Mooi Nederland* programme are to a large extent based on scientific models and scenarios. These future images in turn provide important input for the National Spatial Strategy. The National Spatial Strategy has not yet been published, but an outline National Spatial Strategy (2023) and a draft National Spatial Strategy (2024) have been published. The final National Spatial Strategy is expected in 2026 and will look ahead to 2100; it is anticipated that it will also take decisions on several of the planning choices put on the agenda in the draft National Spatial Strategy.

Given that it is strongly anchored in the Environment and Planning Act, the NOVI is used to take spatial decisions at national level (still to follow in the National Spatial Strategy). The NOVI is also a starting point for developing provincial and municipal spatial and environmental

planning visions. The periodic re-evaluation of (national and subnational) spatial and environmental planning visions is also laid down in the Environment and Planning Act.

7. Agriculture, Nature and Food: Valuable and Connected, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, 2018

In 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality published its vision *Agriculture, nature and food: valuable and connected*, which is basically a vision for circular agriculture. The vision was created at the initiative of the then Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (Carola Schouten). There having been no dedicated ministry for agriculture under the Rutte I and II governments, the ministry was 're-established' in 2017 under the Rutte III government. This also marked the start of an internal search at the ministry for a shared vision on how to tackle the challenges in agriculture, nature and food in the years leading up to 2030.

The vision sets out the current problems and how to navigate them in the future, and identifies associated opportunities for the Netherlands. The vision therefore primarily takes expectations about the future as its starting point. Circular agriculture is identified as a desirable potential solution, with different action perspectives for different stakeholders. The vision was primarily made by the ministry itself, but there was relatively broad coordination with other departments and external stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society organisations and knowledge institutions. The future of agriculture was also discussed at the table on agriculture and land use during the negotiations for the Climate Agreement (2019). Circular agriculture was an important theme in this discussion. By choosing a developmental trajectory that is clearly about a desired future, which was made in consultation with all kinds of stakeholders, this vision also makes use of co-creation with different stakeholders.

The vision was included as an appendix to the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality for 2019 and as such was debated by both houses of parliament. In 2019, the vision was followed by the *Ken-nis- en Innovatieagenda LNV 2019–2030* (Knowledge and Innovation Agenda for Agriculture, Nature and Food 2019–2030) focused on circular agriculture, and the *Realisatieplan Visie LNV: Op weg met nieuw perspectief* (Implementation Plan for the Vision for Agriculture, Nature and Food: Towards a new perspective), with concrete policy options for putting the vision into practice. The vision also provided the basis for the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in agriculture, work on which is still underway, and several practical experiments were set up. The re-evaluation of the vision itself was not assured at that time.

The vision was pushed into the background by the nitrogen crisis. The nitrogen crisis demanded a lot of attention from politicians and the ministry, at the expense of the long-term vision. Some also found the vision too abstract, making practical implementation difficult. The vision did not itself identify any concrete means by which the transition to circular agriculture might take place. This was to be addressed in the subsequent phase. The commitment to circular agriculture was continued by the Rutte IV government, but with a reduced emphasis. See, for example, the Letters to Parliament *Startnotitie Nationaal Programma Landelijk Gebied* (Preliminary Memorandum on the National Rural Area Programme; reference DGS / 22229344, 10 June 2022) and *Perspectieven voor Agrarische Ondernemers* (Perspectives for Agrarian Businesses; reference DGA / 22247429, 10 June 2022). The vision for circular agriculture itself is now rarely mentioned, and circular agriculture was not a central theme in the negotiations for the Agricultural Agreement in 2023. Instead, an area-based approach was chosen, *inter alia* for agriculture. The National Rural Area Programme (NPLG) required that area-based visions be developed, of which agriculture would be a part. However, when the Schoof government took office, the NPLG approach was scrapped and the circular agriculture concept no longer appears to be a priority. Thus in recent Letters to Parliament, e.g. *Ruimte voor Landbouw en Natuur* (Space for Agriculture and Nature; reference DGLGS / 89620684, 29 November 2024), circular agriculture is no longer mentioned.

8. Perspective on broad wellbeing in 2040, Social and Economic Council, 2024

In 2024, the Social and Economic Council (SER) published a vision for the economy of the Netherlands in 2040: *Perspective on broad wellbeing in 2040*. The vision takes as its starting point the fact that the wellbeing economy is under pressure due to various challenges, including climate change and loss of biodiversity. These challenges are identified by the SER with input from professional and academic experts. The vision identifies ways of dealing with these challenges and explores transition paths to this end. The vision is largely derived from an open conversation based on values; in a series of conversations, the different members of the SER tried to bridge the differences between them and arrive at a shared vision, although in some cases they have opposing interests and ideas about the future. The vision is therefore very much a co-creation between a diverse group of stakeholders, established through discussions based on different values. Although only the SER itself was involved, the SER in itself represents a broad cross-section of society.

The SER produced the vision at its own initiative, prompted primarily by the wish to have its own guiding vision

for the SER's advisory work. Ultimately, the vision was also offered to the government and presented to knowledge and policy partners.

9. A more natural future for The Netherlands in 2120, Wageningen University & Research, 2019

In 2019, Wageningen University & Research published the vision *A more natural future for The Netherlands in 2120*. This vision presents a vision of what the Netherlands could look like in 2120 if the current challenges facing society are addressed by utilising nature (nature-based solutions). The vision is about climate, water management, energy, agriculture, circular economy, urbanisation and biodiversity. It therefore covers a relatively large number of policy domains and also discusses the (spatial) connections between those policy domains. The vision is based on the expertise of a relatively small group of academics who made it with little outside input. It does draw heavily on imagination and a co-creative process between those involved: if nature is taken as the guide (a value), what could the Netherlands look like? The answers are not directly based on the present situation.

The vision was made at WUR's own initiative. The goal was to inspire people with a hopeful narrative and offer a nature-based solutions approach to a broad public audience. Following publication, there was a lot of media interest in the vision, and presentations were given to central and local government and the European Commission. The National Growth Fund has also financed a major knowledge and innovation pathway building on the vision. And some local authorities have started work developing a regional version of the future vision, for example the Arnhem-Nijmegen region.

10. Netherlands 2040: an image of the future, Denktank Nederland, 2023

In 2023, Denktank Nederland published a vision for a desired future for the Netherlands in 2040: *Netherlands 2040: an image of the future*. This vision focuses on multiple themes, including the economy, sustainability and health. As such, it is a relatively broad future vision, but it does not discuss the connections between the themes in depth. Denktank Nederland consists of thirty experts from knowledge institutions, business and government. The think tank was brought together at the initiative of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. The members of the think tank convened to discuss the Netherlands they would like to see in 2040 over the course of more than 25 sessions. During the sessions, the members discussed a shared vision based on their own backgrounds and values, a process in which interests were reconciled and the members' standpoints moved closer together. There was an open discussion

about values and interests in the here and now, and a desired future vision was formed in co-creation.

A goal of making the vision was to initiate a public conversation about the direction we all want to move in. Involving and activating people outside the think tank (bringing the issues to public attention) was therefore also an important part of the process. To this end, the members of the think tank drew on their networks to gather input and reflection and activate members of the network.

The vision was explicitly not presented as fixed but rather as being open to modification. After publication, the think tank therefore initiated a public conversation based on their vision, in order to cast the net even more widely and obtain input from more people. For instance, they discussed the vision with a number of municipalities and with young people via the National Youth Council and Fontys University of Applied Sciences. The think tank is also still working to elaborate transition paths to the desired future. There is no clear follow-up to the future vision, either nationally or in the municipalities.

11. Spatial exploration 2023: Four scenario's for the spatial design of the Netherlands in 2050, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2023

Spatial exploration 2023: Four scenario's for the spatial design of the Netherlands in 2050 by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency is not a vision but instead presents four normative scenarios for the spatial development of the Netherlands leading up to 2050. The normative scenarios consider what the Netherlands could look like if (policy) decisions were based on a set of normative principles. This results in possible visions, but authors take no position on what would be a desirable future based on the four scenarios. The decision on what counts as a desirable future is left to political parties or society. The spatial planning assessment by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency is intended to support vision development by the government.

The scenarios discuss spatial planning and the themes of climate adaptation, energy transition, the economy, cities and regions and rural areas. The future vision therefore covers a relatively large number of policy domains and also considers the connections between those policy domains. It also includes calculations for each scenario to determine whether the existing policy goals will be met. The agency took the lead in making the assessment based on its expertise. Input and reflection were gathered from stakeholders and other interested parties during various working sessions.

The agency made the publication at its own initiative and as such, the use of the scenarios is not a requirement. The publication was prompted by the Environment and Planning Act, which stipulates that the national government and provincial and municipal authorities must draw up spatial and environmental planning visions. By means of the spatial planning assessment, the agency wanted to provide assistance and an interlocutor in drawing up these visions. To this end, it held various workshops with local authorities following the publication of the assessment.

Appendix 2: Table with interviewed makers and users of future documents

Name	Organisation
Karin Austmann	Association of Netherlands Municipalities
Annelies Bobeldijk-Warning	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Gijsbert Borgman	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
Rutger van der Brugge	Deltares
Ruud Cino	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Ed Dammers	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Bram van Dijk	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Tim van Hattum	Wageningen University & Research
Hans Ten Hoeve	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
Margreet Hofstede	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Sarah van Hugte	Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands
Jannemarie de Jonge	Board of Government Advisers
Sander Kes	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Rienk Kuiper	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Dion van Steensel	Denktank Nederland
Mark Stuurman	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Tim Verhoef	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
Bjorn Volkerink	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
Johan Weggeman	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Elien Wierenga	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
Jip van Zoonen	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

Appendix 3: Table of participants in expert meetings

Name	Organisation
Niels Achterberg	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Karin Austmann	Association of Netherlands Municipalities
Rosa van den Berg	Dutch Climate Research Initiative (Klimaatonderzoek Initiatief Nederland)
Luc Boot	Council for the Environment and Infrastructure
Marijke Bos	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Monique Brobbel	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
Ed Dammers	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Faruk Dervis	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Marloes Dignum	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Bram van Dijk	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Martijn Douwes	Gasunie
Rinie van Est	Rathenau Instituut
Ben Geurts	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Annelieke van der Giessen	Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (Adviesraad voor Wetenschap, Technologie en Innovatie)
Ayolt de Groot	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Rienke Groot	Board of Government Advisers
Marten Hamelink	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Michiel Hekkenberg	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Ward Hermans	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
Margeet Hofstede	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Sarah van Hugte	Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands
Sander Kes	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Joost Koch	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
Charlotte Koot	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Femke Merkx	Rathenau Instituut
Heleen Mollema	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
Saskia Naafs	Board of Government Advisers
Kersten Nabielek	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Peter Oei	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature

Chantal Oudkerk Pool	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Wouter de Rijk	Utrecht University
Camiel Schuijren	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Paul Sinnige	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
Mark Stuurman	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Marvin Tiemessen	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Anne van Valkengoed	University of Groningen
Job Verest	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
Tim Verhoef	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
Timon Vervoorn	Ministry of Economic Affairs/Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth
Bjorn Volkerink	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
Johan Weggeman	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Petroschka Werther	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Rob Weterings	National Climate Platform
Elien Wierenga	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

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The Scientific Climate Council was established in November 2022. The WKR advises the government and parliament on the development of a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society, based on broad scientific insights and with an eye for other social challenges.

The Council is composed as follows: Prof. Dr. Ing. J.W. Erisman (chair), Prof. Dr. H.C. de Coninck (deputy chair), Dr. S. Akerboom, Prof. Dr. K. Blok, Prof. Dr. M. Haasnoot, Prof. H.L.F. de Groot, Prof. W. Peters, Dr W.D. Pot, Prof. E.M. Steg, Prof. B. Taebi. Dr R.W. van den Brink is secretary-director of the WKR.

The following council members are responsible for the preparation of this advisory report: Dr W.D. Pot (chair of the committee), Prof. M. Haasnoot and Prof. E.M. Steg. Staff members: Dr J. Zuure, Dr M.J. Bogers and Dr L. Baan Hofman

In preparing this advisory report, the committee consulted experts in various ways: in expert meetings, in individual interviews and through reviews. The names of these experts are listed in the appendix. This advisory report does not necessarily reflect the views of the experts consulted.

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