

"Working Landscapes of the Future"

(translation werklandschappen van de toekomst)



Introduction

The coalition behind the "Working Landscapes of the Future" (WvdT) welcomes the recognition by the assessment committee of the National Growth Fund¹ that the issues surrounding the future sustainability of our business parks is both large and topical and that the innovative impulse we outlined by us can lead to a 'new standard'.

Summary

Companies on Dutch business parks are the engine behind our prosperity. They are responsible for over 30% of jobs, almost 40% of GDP and about 60% of R&D spending. Analysis shows that these companies on average offer high value added per year of work and offer high growth potential. The Working Landscapes of the Future program aims to future-proof these key work locations and thus contribute to the success and added value of the companies located there. In doing so, there is a solid role for the broad green sector (from engineering firms and landscape architects to landscapers), which should grow in innovation power, added value and size. The challenge in business parks becomes clear if we consider the current situation. Originally the more than three thousand business parks were set up with the objective of providing companies with efficient and clustered provide a place for their activities. At the beginning this century, the chosen set-up appears to have run into limits:

- Business parks are a major energy user in the Netherlands: **50% of gas and 30% of electricity is used on business parks**. At the same time, a substantial but untapped solar generation potential lies on these same business parks.
- Only 1% of the area is 'green' or 'blue'. **The sites are not climate-proof and are thus vulnerable**. 87% of the surface of business parks are susceptible to floodings. In 2050, we expect an average PET (wind chill temperature on a summer's day) of 40.8 degrees Celsius on business parks.
- Over a third of long-term sick leave has a psychological cause and is related to work pressure. Regular exercise has important positive effects. But barren **business parks do not provide an attractive working environment and do not invite to go outside**.
- **Business parks currently offer hardly any opportunities for biodiversity**. Greening of business parks contributes to more robust nature.
- The average green percentage of neighbourhoods in which business parks are located is 37%; on the business parks themselves it is only 1% **This makes them unattractive for living and form barriers between the increasingly green city and the countryside**.

¹ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate & Ministry of Finance

Recent developments such as floods, heat waves and the nitrogen and energy crisis have increased the urgency for greening and sustainability has further increased. In our vision of the future, these areas are transforming into green, healthy, energy-efficient and climate-proof working landscapes of the future. This requires innovation in several areas. This program contributes to this by:

- Promoting **energy transition** by making innovative links between energy saving/generation and physical greening as well as by developing energy solutions with entrepreneurs developing energy solutions in cooperation with the Ministry of Domestic Affairs and Kingdom Relations. Sustainability of Business Parks Netherlands.
- Reducing risks of **heat and flooding** by deploying, among other things, green and natural solutions on roofs, facades, car parks, footpaths and in public spaces (climate adaptation).
- Creating an **attractive working environment** where employees like to work and which supportive of attracting and retaining of talented employees. A place where they like to come because they meet colleagues here and can relax in between. Greenery (inside and outdoors) contributes to work happiness, health **and productivity of employees**.
- Transforming business parks from obstacles between the city and the countryside into green connection zones creating create opportunities for **attractive housing development**.
- Contributing to **biodiversity restoration** through smart multifunctional solutions and thus also contribute to European nature objectives.
- **Promoting the innovation and implementation power of the broad green sector** in this important market segment of business parks.



A number of **frontrunners** are already making visible what working landscapes of the future can look like. Internationally, we find leading examples in Japan, the United States and in Scandinavia. In the Netherlands the High Tech Campus in Eindhoven and Schiphol Trade Park are good examples. Nevertheless the movement in the big pack is still only sparsely up.

We address the reasons for this in the 5 solution directions of our proposal (the **theory of change**):

1. **The business case** for making sustainable and future-proofing business parks is scientifically substantiated and widely disseminated to stakeholders.
2. Financing and then realization will only come about achieved if we know the interests of companies, municipalities, water boards and provinces know how to connect. Therefore, we develop approaches to identify **common interests** (public and private) and cash in together. Together with banks, (real estate) investors and insurers, we develop innovative financing instruments that allow entrepreneurs to get in easily. Also the creation of '**flanking policy**' by central and local policy by central and local governments (a stimulating mix of communication, financial incentives and obligations).
3. In the future, the value of green with a special Area Label Working Landscape made transparent. Green providers work with long-term contracts and **report annually on the 'returns' of green space**: for climate adaptation, amenity/health, biodiversity and - in the longer term - on business climate and property value.
4. To actually realize these achievements of green, **innovative physical solutions** are needed. Solutions that contribute to multifunctional use of space using new technology. Solutions that are also affordable and scalable. In a sector-wide approach will, in close coordination with knowledge institutions and users, these innovations be developed, tested and applied. In this way, we contribute to the growth and competitiveness of the green sector, and through 'electro-green' innovations, we contribute to the **energy transition**.
5. To achieve the envisaged rapid revenue growth and market development, sufficient suitable employees are needed. Therefore, as part of this program, an innovative labor market approach whereby, together with educational institutions and social development companies, new (green) professions with higher added value and making the sector more attractive for young people and lateral entrants. **Unused labour potential** is tapped into, for example jointly with social employment partners.



Linked to this theory of change, we adopt for a **phased and learning approach** that will ultimately lead to at least a thousand business parks take steps towards future-proof sustainable working landscapes. In the sharpened approach cooperation with **provinces, water boards and municipalities** has been strengthened. They become partners in the program through a Green Deal approach with which we will work on innovation and upscaling, as well as on the development and stimulating flanking policy.

We select 6 provinces to enter into an intensive cooperation for the entire project period. Together with these provinces and at least 14 municipalities, we are driving these developments ultimately making 'Working landscapes' the new standard for Dutch business parks. With this approach, we expect to realize the ambitions from the entire original proposal with funding from the National Growth Fund for phase 1 only.

The contribution from the National Growth Fund **acts as a catalyst** to initiate the transition to future-proof working landscapes. In this way, it contributes to **higher productivity and broad prosperity** on and around the business parks. Moreover, it also creates a unique opportunity for broad green industry to increase their added value with, in time, export opportunities around urban climate adaptation and future-proof working environments.

The intended benefits are numerous. For instance, we foresee a **positive SCBA balance of €39 million in 30 years**, in which still lacks large unquantified benefits. In addition, a positive GDP effect is plausible because of productivity growth in business parks (€82 million) and in the green sector (€15 million). The long-term potential, however, is much higher due to the innovation impetus of this program in combination with existing and new flanking policies scaling up to all business parks comes into view. In that case, €5 to 12 billion growth in the annual GDP contribution of the companies in business parks is conceivable mainly through productivity growth of employees.

There is **a lot of interest in this program**. More than eighty coalitions of business parks and municipalities have already signed up to participate. For this application, we have developed ten of them. Provinces support the application with letters of intent. Our coalition consists of sector organisations (VNO-NCW and affiliated industry associations), landscapers (top 4 from the sector), construction companies (Heijmans), engineering, consultancy and process firms (including TAUW, Arcadis, Stec Groep), civil society organisations, three universities and four applied universities and a major VET institution (Yuverta). In addition, with Programma Verduurzaming Bedrijventerreinen Nederland (supported by the Ministry of Ministry of Domestic Affairs and Kingdom Relations and provinces) agreed to cooperate intensively in order to jointly implement the energy transition on business parks.



The **partners** have put their hearts and heart and soul on this program over the past two years. The first results are already visible in practice but with the support of the National Growth Fund, in the coming years we can contribute even more powerfully to a greener, healthier and more future-proof business community.

Partners Working Landscapes of the Future



More information?

<https://www.ivn.nl/aanbod/werklandschappen-van-de-toekomst/>

https://www.vhg.org/Tools/groeifonds_aanvraag_samenvatting_1.pdf