

# VNG International



International Cooperation Agency of  
the Association of Netherlands Municipalities

*COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORLDWIDE*



### **Intro Jean Eigeman (1954)**

**Independent professional in Public Governance, Senior Expert VNG international, Strategy Consultant Municipalities for Sustainable Development (2006 – now)**

**Council member (1986 – 1999),**

**(vice) Mayor (1989 – 1999)**

**SG Region (1999 – 2001)**

**Management VNG (2001 – 2006)**

**Member of the Senate (2003 - 2011)**

**Value driven**

**Education and training is sharing**

# Bridges into the future: town twinning a challenge



- Context

- ⇒ to work out cooperation in Europe
- ⇒ to understand and inspire
- ⇒ to learn from both sides
- ⇒ standards of governance
- ⇒ to serve people





- Context

- ⇒ the interest

- Good governance without limits
  - Reproduction of trust
  - Subsidiarity





- Context

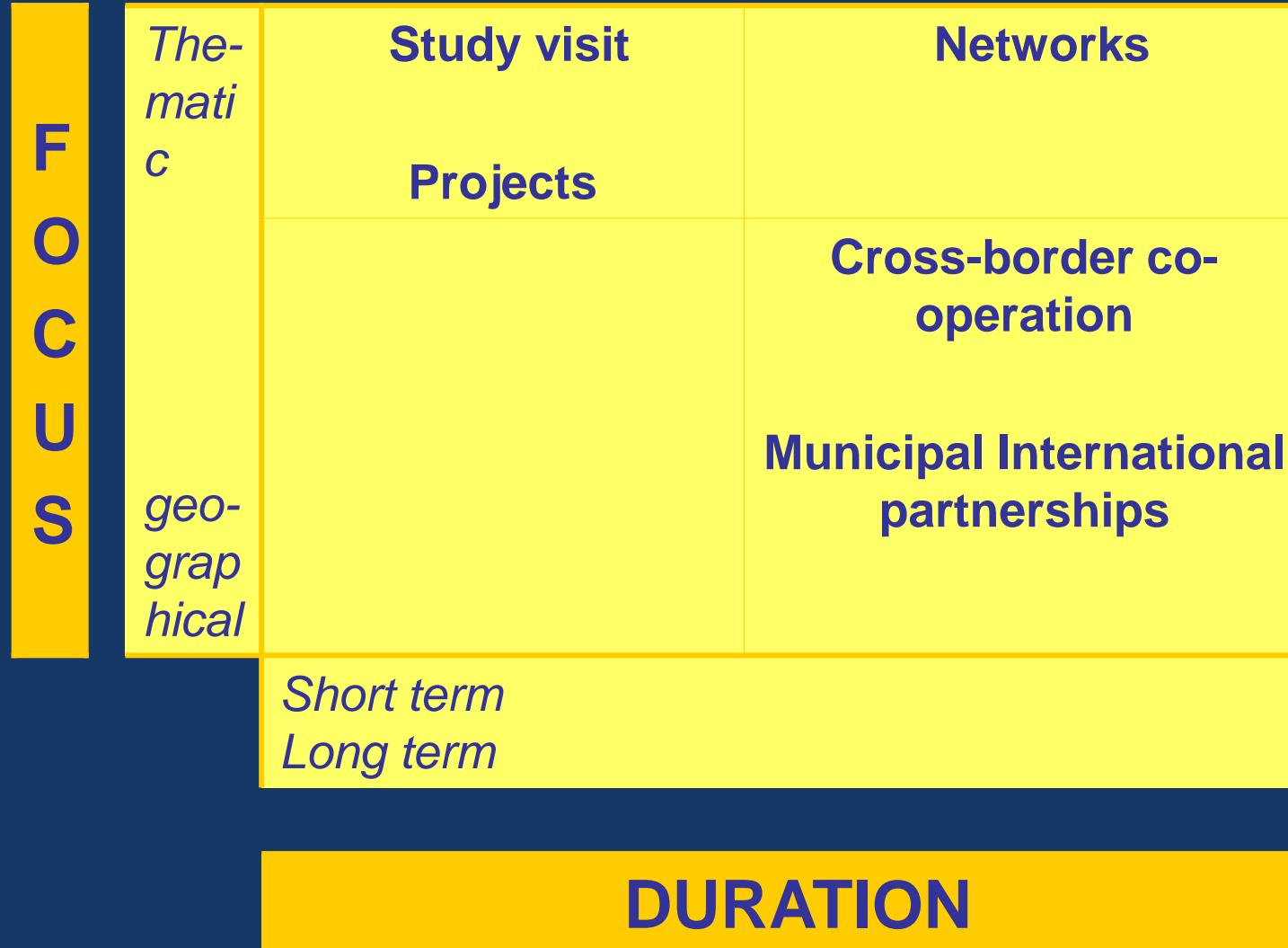
=>the associations in charge

- Knowledge
- Networks
- Guarantees
- Dissemination





- Twinning in headlines  
=> Munic. Int. Partnership
  - *formal agreement*
  - *(long) term period*
  - *two municipalities different countries*
  - *local authorities*
  - *a wide range of issues*





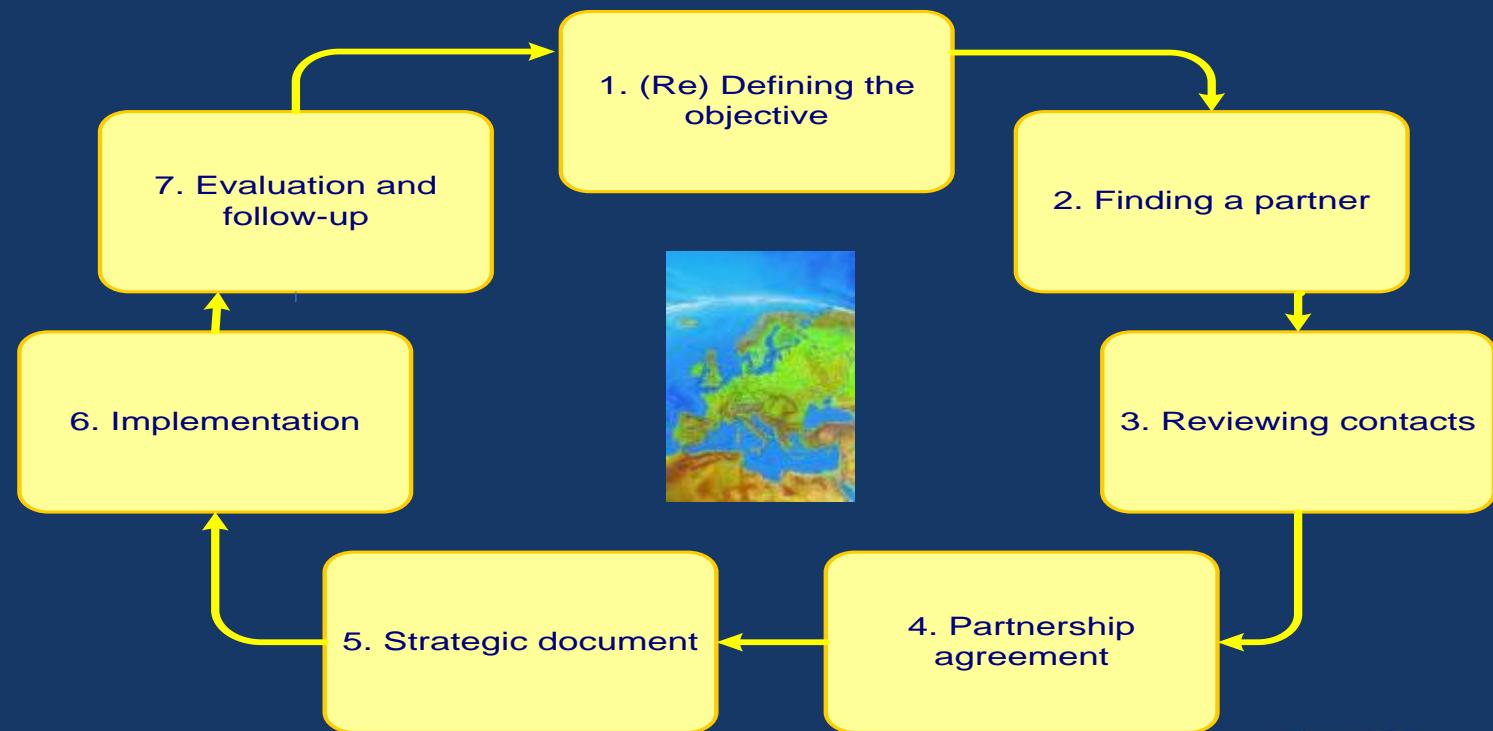
- Twinning in headlines

## Type of partnership

- Symbolic?
- Social – Cultural?
- Knowledge exchange and technical assistance?
- Active European Citizenship?



## The partnership cycle





- Associations in charge

⇒ **Knowledge**

⇒ **Networks**

⇒ **Dissemination**



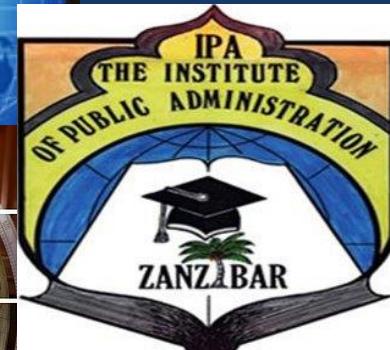


- **Future opportunities**

- ⇒ triangle
- ⇒ trainees
- ⇒ professional communities

# Government system in the Netherlands

Jean Eigeman





# Government system in the Netherlands

Jean Eigeman

Local government 1986 – 2006 (member of City-council, alderman, (dep.) mayor, secr.general regional cooperation, management VNG)

Member of the Senate 2003 - 2011

(EU spokesman, foreign affairs, agriculture and sustainable development)

Independent consultant (Associate and Senior-expert VNG International: good governance, service delivery, democratic values)



Political Science (Amsterdam 1984)

[www.eigeman-id.nl](http://www.eigeman-id.nl)





# Government system in the Netherlands

## Content

- Kingdom of the Netherlands
- History in short
- Government system
- Central government
- Decentral government (provinces and Municipalities)



## Kingdom of the Netherlands

**Constitutional monarchy**

- King head of state
- Constitution
- Dependencies of the Kingdom
- Netherlands Antilles and Aruba
- (Curacao, St Maarten, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, Saba)



# Government system in the Netherlands



## Kingdom of the Netherlands

- Democracy
- Representative democracy
- Elections:
  - Suffrage from 18 years
  - Every four years new elections (or when required; only at national level)
- Forming the government:
  - The major party forms the leading coalition
  - The leading party delivers the prime minister, appointed by the crown



# Government system in the Netherlands

## History

- Big differences in religion and view of life
- Way out through permanent negotiations
- Poldermodel
- Old democracy (constitution 1848)
- 1200 municipalities to 350





# Government system in the Netherlands

## Legal system

- Constitution 1848 => 1983
- Chapter 7

## Checks and balances

Autonomy and co-governance =>  
balance between executive tasks and  
room to move local and regional





# Government system in the Netherlands

## Government system: Overview

The Netherlands is a decentralised unitary state

- 3 tiers+1
- Central government
- Provincial Government
- Waterboards
- Municipalities
- Europe





## Central government

### Three branches of government

1. **Legislative: Second and First chamber (house of representatives and senate)**
2. **Executive: Cabinet of ministers and prime minister (12 ministeries)**
3. **Judicial: Supreme court appointed by the crown, divisionary courts**



- State institutions
- Council of State
- National Court of Audit
- National Ombudsman



# Government system in the Netherlands

## 12 provinces

### Legislative

**Elected representatives at the - provincial state**

- Every four years elections**

- Provincial states elect the senate**

### Executive

- Queens commissionar (appointed by the crown)**

- Deputies (selected by the coalition)**



### Main Tasks

- Environment, spatial planning, recreation, regional economy**
- Overseeing the policy and finances of municipalities and waterboards**



# Government system in the Netherlands



**Waterboards**  
**25**  
**Dijkgraaf**  
**Elections**  
**Functional democracy**



# Government system in the Netherlands

## Municipalities

350 Municipalities

Legislative

Elected representatives - at the town council

- Every four years elections

Executive

- Mayor (appointed by the crown)

- Alderman (selected by the coalition)

Main Tasks

- Social care, Youth policy, Spatial planning, Environment, public safety, health prevention, sports and culture and social security





# Government system in the Netherlands

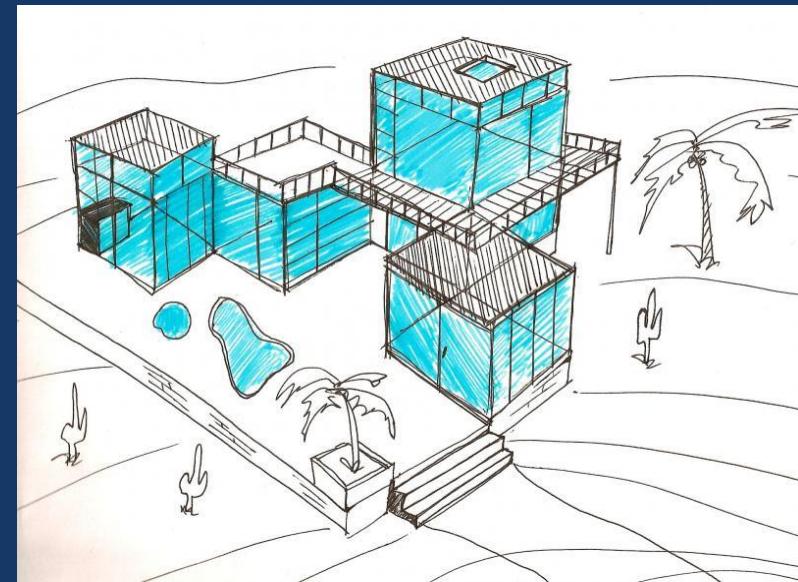
- **Intermunicipal cooperation**
  - ⇒ **Specific law since 1948**
  - ⇒ **Strong relationship with municipalities**
  - ⇒ **Policy oriented and practically oriented**
  - ⇒ **Great variety of forms**
  - **(from simply one task to integral)**
  - ⇒ **No autonomy**
- **WGR +**
  - Specific application in urban regions**
  - PPP (waste management, energy supply)**





## Relations between the three tiers 1

- No hierarchy between the three levels of government
- Hierarchy in laws (central laws precede over provincial and local edicts)
- Principle of decentralisation of tasks to local level unless not possible
- Limited taxes at local level, most of funds received by general funding by central government

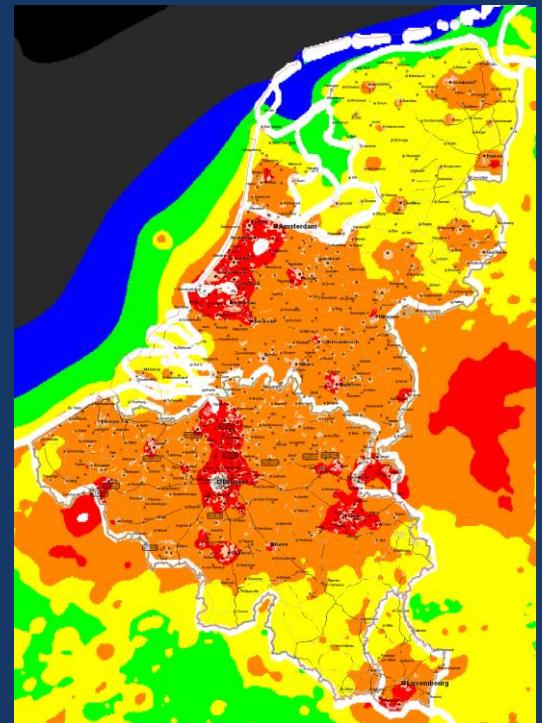




# Government system in the Netherlands

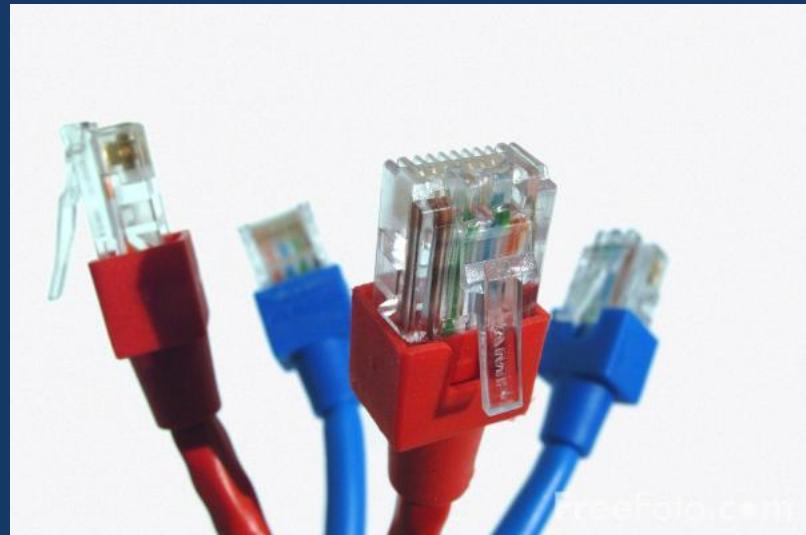
## Relations between the three tiers 2

- Practice:
- Distrust at central level in execution of decentralised tasks by municipalities.
- Decentralisation of tasks, yes
- but with extensive accounting and checks from central government
- General funding accounts for over 80% of budget for municipalities
- Code for interadministrative relations





- **Code in headlines**
- **Inter-administrative relations**
  - Vision & Direction
  - Accountability and supervision
  - Relation to the European Union
  - Relations between territorial and functional administration
- **Financial relations**
- **Guarantee and the role of the Minister of the Interior**
- **Agreements on interadministrative relations**



# Government system in the Netherlands



- **State of the Art 2013**

- ⇒ **Economy of scale (350 to 200?)**
- ⇒ **EU under pressure, EU pressure**
- ⇒ **Decentralization Care and Environment**
- ⇒ **Citizens on the move: sustainable development**
- ⇒ **Less government, more community**





- **Questions and answers**



