The Process of Regional Marketing

Manual

DEFINING
THE REGION

ANALYSIS

STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT

IMPLEMENTATION

EVALUATION &
MONITORING

PHASE 1:

Defining the region

1. DEFINING THE REGION

Before a region can start to make up a strategy, it is crucial that the scope of the strategy is well defined. Therefore the first step in developing a regional marketing strategy is **defining the region**.

1.1. Theory

A region is an area considered as a unit for geographical, functional, social, or cultural reasons. A medium where social, particularly economic, processes occur.[1] A region is not statically, but social constructs created in political, economic, cultural and administrative practices and discourses.[2]

Regions are formed by 4 simultaneous processes. This institutionalisation of regions occurs through[2]:

1. Territorial shaping: boundaries, which determine the spatial area of the region and determine 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of the region.
2. Symbolic shaping: creation of rituals, uses, flags, symbols, songs and other.
3. Institutional shaping: forming of institutions (cultural, political) and formal organisations (administration).
=> 4. Established region: external recognition, to achieve a recognized position in the territorial structure and social consciousness

The space of a region can either be fixed (e.g. an administrative region), or rather vague (e.g. formed by culture or stereotypes of inhabitants).[3] In order to brand and promote a region in an efficient way, it is crucial that the spatial area of the region is well defined. After all, the fencing-off-process of the region determines the subject of the branding campaign.

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[1] Allen Scott (1998)
[2] Anssi Paasi (2000)
[3] Wolfgang Knapp (2003)

1.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Catalonia (Spain)

The Spanish region of Catalonia has developed its own symbols and rituals over the years: flag of Catalonia, Catalan language, Coblos that play music for the Catalan dance Sardana, specific clothes such as the barretina, and other. All these regional symbols and rituals create a well-defined region with a strong regional identity.

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders)

The region the "Westhoek" has been invented 40 years ago, nowadays it is a name that is commonly accepted and a very strong brand. Through the process of institutional shaping, Westhoek has formed several institutions such as RESOC Westhoek, responsible for economical issues within the region.

1.3. Examples of partners

Region Zeeland (The Netherlands)

Zeeland Delta covers the whole area of the province of Zeeland and 'de Kop van Goeree'.

Region Kortrijk, Leiedal, Leievallei and other (Belgium, Flanders)

Region Kortrijk, Leiedal, Leievallei, Leiestreek, Streek van Leie en Schelde, Region Zuid-West-Vlaanderen, Region Kortrijk-Waregem-Menen, Arrondissement Kortrijk are all names that are being used by different regional actors.

Province of West-Flanders (Belgium, Flanders)

The region of West-Flanders has fixed and well defined boundaries. The boundaries of the province of West-Flanders are determined by law.

Region Meetjesland (Belgium, Flanders)

The name Meetjesland appeared centuries ago. Today it is a well-known area, but the boundaries are still not 100% sure. Does it consist out of 12 municipalities? 13? 14? The southern part sometimes feels more connected to the region of Leie, the eastern part to the area of Gent. The fact that this is rather vague does not stop the region from moving forward with its activities, plans and branding.

PHASE 2:

Analysis

2. ANALYSIS

A region has to think forward, look to the future and determine the direction that has to be followed. Long term goals and targets have to be set to achieve the desired future position of the region. In order to do so, the region has to form a picture of the present situation, take a look in the mirror. What has the region to offer at this moment? What is the current image in the mind of the target groups? How can we compare this present offer and image with other regions?

This first chapter will guide your region through the process of inventory taking. This analysis of the situation 'as is' is three-folded:

1. Inventory of hard elements: present tangible elements (e.g. infrastructure)
2. Inventory of soft elements: overview of perception / image in mind of target groups
3. Relative position of the region

Despite the necessity of this first stage of regional marketing, its importance is often underestimated.

This Chapter is divided into 5 parts:

1. Zero measurement / market research / star diagram
2. SWOT analysis
3. Image analysis
4. Competitor analysis
5. Benchmarking

2.1. ZERO MEASUREMENT / MARKET RESEARCH / STAR DIAGRAM

2.1.1. Theory

2.1.1.1. Zero measurement

A **zero measurement** describes the situation before the process of regional branding has occurred (= zero point). Thanks to a zero measurement all relevant elements that are part of a region can be mapped out.

This zero measurement forms a crucial input for monitoring of the effect of the branding campaign. Once all actions are finished, an impact assessment can be made: all elements that were the object of the zero measurement, are measured once more and compared with the results of the zero measurement. Identified differences can be seen as the effect of the regional branding.
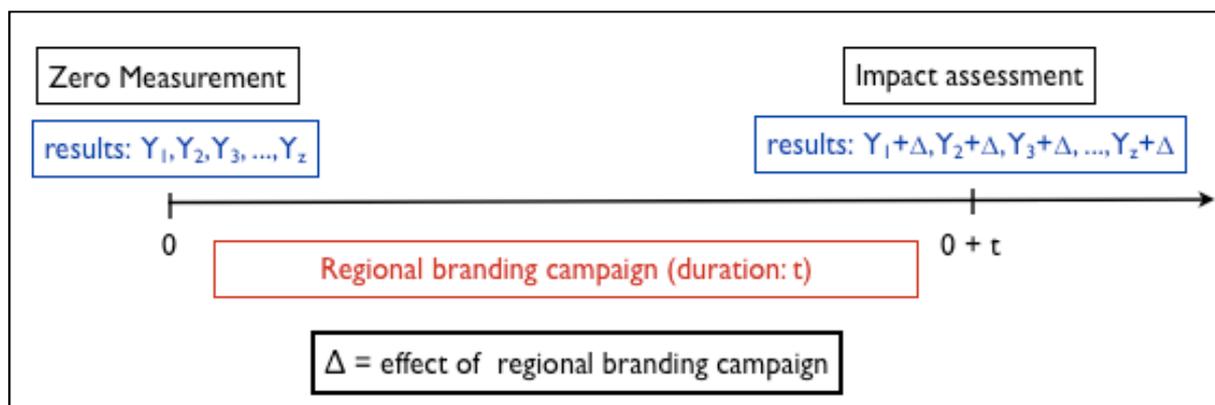
Figure 1: Zero measurement and impact measurement of regional marketing campaign

Elements of zero measurement

In what follows, a list of elements is given which could be taken into account as subject of the zero measurement. All elements are grouped thematically. Moreover, we would like to point out that the listing is non-exhaustive.

2.1.1.2. Facts & figures

LIVING

- Demographics
    - Number of inhabitants
    - Density of population
    - Age pyramid (distribution of inhabitants over age groups)
    - Composition of families (single, household without children, household without children, other)
    - Emigration and migration (rate of attractiveness)
    - Level of education of inhabitants
- Real estate
    - Supply of real estate (houses, apartments, residences)
    - Demand for real estate (houses, apartments, residences)
    - Price level of real estate (houses, apartments, residences)
    - Number of real estate transactions
    - Duration real estate is at sale

WORKING

- Demand side
    - Income level (average income per inhabitant)
    - Unemployment rate
    - Activity rate
    - Number of people working at company
- Supply side
    - (relative) Importance of present sectors
    - Presence of economic sectors
    - Number of companies
    - Type of companies
    - Number of head offices
    - Number of international companies
    - Number of start-ups (distribution by sector)
    - Number of vacancies

- Infrastructure
  - Business areas
  - Number of research institutions
  - Number of incubators

RECREATION

- Shopping
  - Number of shops (distribution per city / community)
  - Distribution of shops by branche
  - Number of visitors of commercial centres within region
  - Origin of visitors of commercial centres
  - Number of recent commercial events (< 1y, < 5y)
- Horeca
  - Number of bars
  - Number of restaurants
  - Number of recent bars and restaurants (< 1y, < 5y)
- Tourism
  - Number of visitors (tourist purpose)
  - Origin of tourists
  - Number of hotels (distribution per city / community)
  - Number of B&B
  - Number of overnight stays
  - Number of recent tourist events (< 1y, < 5y)

EDUCATION

- Number of educational institutes (universities, colleges)
- Number of students (distribution by institute)

CARE

- Number of hospitals
- Number of rest-homes

TO DO: Set up a checklist

The first step in conducting a zero measurement is setting up a checklist. This checklist has to contain all elements needed to form a picture of the present situation of the region. It can be used as a guideline throughout the inventory process to make sure no element will be forgotten in the analysis.

2.1.1.3. Market research

In order to collect all relevant data, **market research** should be executed. By conducting market research, additional information about the stakeholders of the region can be gathered, analysed and interpreted in a structured way. This market research can be done either quantitatively or qualitatively, preferably both. By doing quantitative market research all tangible assets can be mapped. Qualitative research can complete this information and making it more profound by adding insights in motives of the respondents.

TO DO: select market research method(s) + execution

Once the checklist has been created, the research method(s) to collect the information needed has (have) to be selected.

In what follows, a number of market research methods are enumerated.

• Head count of passer-by
  - Measurement of the number of people that passes by a certain point. E.g. main street of commercial centre, important sight / monument, train station, business centre.

• Interviewing of passer-by
  - Collecting qualitative data by interviewing a passer-by. E.g. origin, reason of visit, likes and dislikes.

• Face-to-face interview of selected group
  - Collecting qualitative data by interviewing a selection out of target group. E.g. interviewing all university students, hotel owners.

- Focus groups
  - Organising group discussions to collect relevant information. E.g. focus group with management members, with the cooperation of merchants.

- Survey
  - Collecting information by survey sent by post or email (direct mailing), by telephone (CATI[4]) or online survey (CAWI[5]).

- Image / brand recognition
  - Study to find out whether image and / or brand of region is recognised (spontaneous / aided).

2.1.1.4. Star diagram

The next step in inventorying and analysing the situation 'as is', is the presentation of the collected data into clear and comprehensive charts. A star diagram is an efficient tool to do so.

A **star diagram**, also called a spider diagram or radar diagram, is a two-dimensional diagram with three or more axes starting from a mutual zero point (centre of diagram). The use of a star diagram makes it possible to quantify and plot multiple variables on two dimensions.
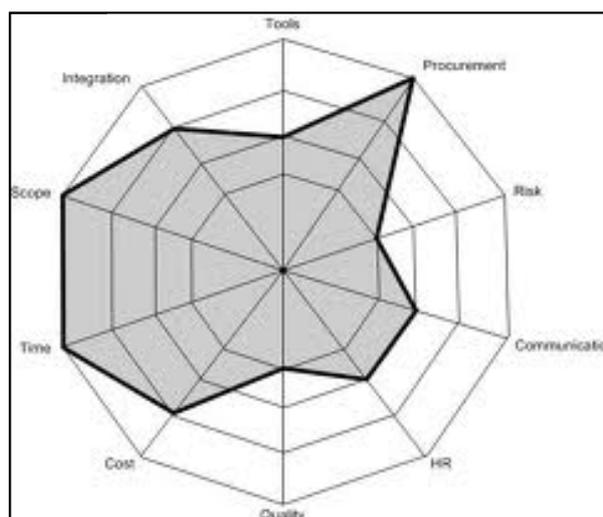

Figure 2: example of star diagram

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[4] Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews
[5] Computer Aided Web Interviewing

TO DO: Selection of elements of star diagram + analysis

Firstly, a selection has to be made of all elements that will be plotted on star diagrams.

- E.g. plot likes and dislikes mentioned by passer-by (scores on clean city, on atmosphere, on the amount of shops, on accessibility, on kindness of merchant)
- E.g. plot variables of labour market (activity rate, number of vacancies, number of inhabitants with age above 65 year)

It is preferred to use quantitative data to set up a star diagram. When qualitative questionnaires are used to generate data for a star diagram, it is recommended tot use multiple-choice answers.

Secondly the star diagrams have to be created and analysed.

2.1.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders): F&F, working

In the year 2010 a zero measurement was done to find out the number of start-ups in the Region Westhoek: 1.130 start-ups.

Province of Antwerp (Belgium, Flanders): F&F, living

A starting point (zero point) for the domain 'living' in the province of Antwerp can be the average price of a house. In the year 2010, a house in Antwerp was sold for the average price of 245.000 euro. In the same year an apartment had an average cost price of 196.750 euro, residences were sold for an average price of 410.000 euro.

City of Mechelen (Belgium, Flanders): Interviewing passer-by

Interviewing of passer-by in the main shopping street of the city of Mechelen resulted in several findings concerning visitors, its characteristics and motives: 58% of the 300 respondents were women, 42% men. 50% of the respondent lived in Mechelen, the other 50% had an origin outside Mechelen. 35% was above 40 years old and 60% of the respondents declared they often visit Antwerp to shop.

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders): Market research, F-2-F interviews

The Region Westhoek organised face-to-face interviews with entrepreneurs within the region to collect several findings, such as the most important economical strengths of the region, the image the region has within and outside the region and other.

2.1.3. Examples of partners

Province of West-Flanders (Belgium, Flanders): market research

By order of the Province of West-Flanders a zero measurement was done, consisting of a survey of 500 West-Flemings, evenly spread over the 4 subregions: a starting point and measurement of the current situation (how does the West-Fleming evaluate his region and what is the image he / she has of the region). The research is done in order to be able to monitor the evolution the region will go through. The zero measurement consisted of 2 parts:

1. The degree of applicability on West-Flanders of a large number of statements
2. The importance of regional development as a task for the provincial government

Sluis (The Netherlands): Market research, image

Sluis has a board that includes project developers and financial institutes, next to the 'regular' stakeholders. Besides, Sluis has been working with trendwatchers. How will society develop in the coming years and decades, and how can a municipality like Sluis benefit from these developments? On which target groups should the region focus and together with which stakeholders does the region need to set up projects and activities. Inhabitants have been involved in the research via an internet inquiry with pictures. Which pictures represent Zeeland Flanders? The results help to define the identity of the region and in fact the desired identity as well.

Meetjesland (Flanders, Belgium): zero measurement

In 2007 the brand 'Meetjesland, maak het mee' ('Meetjesland, experience it yourself') was developed and presented to our stakeholders. A zero measurement was executed. With the survey we wanted to examine in what extent the name 'Meetjesland' and the brand 'Meetjesland, maak het mee' are known by the inhabitants of the Meetjesland and by people from outside the region (Flanders). The inhabitants of the Meetjesland were interrogated with a written survey. People from outside the region (Flanders) responded to a telephonic survey.

Norfolk (UK): Market research

In 2005 the county of Norfolk undertook a market research among 450 senior UK business people. The research concluded that Norfolk was considered 'rural, remote' and not a good place to do business. However, these perceptions were based on little or no knowledge of Norfolk's true business environment. When those surveyed were given positive facts on Norfolk business, their perceptions on the region changed.

Leiedal (Flanders, Belgium):

Leiedal works with a steering committee of internal and external stakeholders to set up the guidelines for improved networking strategies for the municipalities and other governmental levels, as well as private partners (non-profit). Several ingredients for a better and more efficient governmental organisation have been discussed during debates and seminars. Therefore several 'public sounding board fora' were organised, often followed by workshops on specific subjects (e.g. the SWOT of the region, intermunicipality cooperations, Internal State Reform and other). The report 'Inventory of cooperation networks' and the document 'scenario's for a better and efficient governmental organisation' are results of this process. Afterwards, a colloquium was organised to present the results. Several groups and fora engaged themselves in the action program, to be started up in 2011.

2.2. IMAGE ANALYSIS

2.2.1. Theory

What is the present perception of the region of your target groups? How can the region be seen through the eyes of our target groups? What is the image they have on the region? What are the human characteristics people associate with the region? An answer to all these questions can be given by conducting an image analysis.

The image people have of the region and all its aspects is based on subjective assessments formed by own impressions, gathered information and expectations. To capture the individual perceptions of the stakeholders and inventorise them, **image analysis** has to be done.

TO DO: additional market research, F2F interviews and focus groups

Part of the information needed to understand the image your (future) target groups have of your region can be found in the results of the former market research (c.f. 2.1.1.3.). These results can form a first and brief indication of these images.

A number of image analysis methods can be used to complete and deepen these basic results. Below a list of possible image analysis methods is given. All methods try to capture the existing image your target groups have of the region by using techniques such as triggering associations (positive and negative), and asking for feelings that people have when hearing the name of the region or when visiting it. Target groups can be external (e.g. inhabitants, entrepreneurs), and internal (e.g. internal personnel members of region).

- Focus groups / brainstorm sessions: group discussion about the image the region
- Face-to-face interviews
- Survey by post or email (direct mailing), by telephone (CATI[6]) or online (CAWI[7])

Examples of typical research questions are:
- What are the first words that come up when you think about the region?
- What makes you proud being an inhabitant of the region?
- What distinguishes the region from others?

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[6] Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews
[7] Computer Aided Web Interviewing

- Can you compare the region with a well-known company?
- Give the region a score from 1 to 5 for the following characteristics: dynamic, static, innovative.
- What associations would you like visitors to make with the region?
- Imagine yourself the region as a person, how would you describe him / her?

It is possible to plot the results of the image analysis on a star diagram, which can be compared later on with the results of the impact assessment (plotted in a star diagram).

2.2.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders): Image analysis
Region Westhoek conducted an image analysis by doing face-to-face interviews in order to find out which associations people make when hearing the name Westhoek. Examples of positive associations: trustworthy, hard working people, the Last Post, open space, peace & serenity. Examples of negative associations: local thinking, people who dislike change, reserved.

2.2.3. Examples of partners

Province of West-Flanders (Belgium, Flanders): market research
Province of West-Flanders performed an image analysis inside and outside the region to find out what the strengths of the region are. The analysis consisted of dept interviews combined with target oriented desk research. The inquiry included questions on the associations made with the province of West-Flanders.

2.3. SWOT ANALYSIS

2.3.1. Theory

In the next step the results out of the conducted market research can be used to identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of the region. Besides, results of face-to-face meetings and focus groups (elements of market research) can lead to opportunities and threats for the regions. All those elements form the basis for a concluding table: SWOT table.

A **SWOT analysis** is a situational analysis in which the most important internal strengths and weaknesses of the region are listed, together with the major external threats and opportunities the region faces.
- Strengths: characteristics of the region that give it certain advantages compared to other regions.
- Weaknesses: characteristics of the region that result in a relative disadvantage.
- Opportunities: external chances that occur in the environment of the region which can create a benefit for the region.
- Threats: external condition that occurs in the external environment of the region which can jeopardize the region's goals.
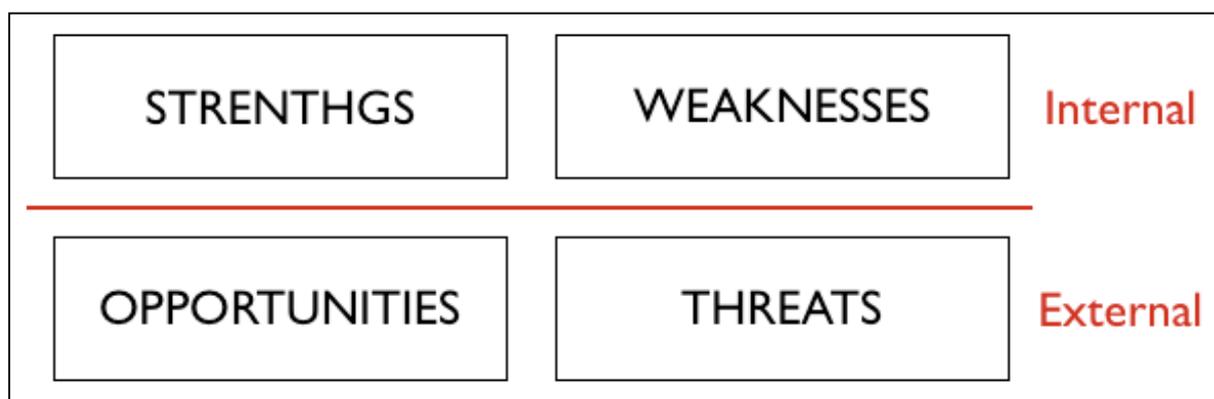
Figure 3: SWOT table

A SWOT analysis can help a region in strategy formulation and selection. Thanks to a thorough analysis of all SWOT elements the region can determine which strengths can be used to counter the identified threats and how to tare down the internal weaknesses with specific opportunities

TO DO: Translate results into SWOT + additional focus groups

Analysing the results of the market research can identify SWOT elements. Besides, focus groups can help to determine extra findings about the strengths and weaknesses of your region and the opportunities and threats it faces. Thanks to discussions and brainstorm sessions input of internal and external stakeholders can be used to come to a meaningful and valuable SWOT.

It can be useful to organise these focus groups thematically (e.g. themes living, working and care)

2.3.2. Examples of partners

Region Meetjesland (Belgium, Flanders): SWOT, star diagram, image analysis
Region Meetjesland has set up a SWOT table in 2006 to determine its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Meetjesland composed a 'Future Group' of 20 people who would be involved in the process 'Meetjesland 2020' for 2 years. This Future Group layed the foundations for the strategic plan in several sessions:

- A SWOT analysis: contains a lot of qualitative statements.
- A star diagram: the results of quantitative analysis and qualitative appreciations of 50 stakeholders.
- An exercise on 'current identity'. Method: each member puts forward one word that describes the identity of the region. The discussion reveals some important key elements.
- An exercise on 'desired identity': each member puts forward one picture that contains elements of the identity that we want the region to have in 2020. The discussion reveals certain elements (trends, values, …) that everybody finds extremely important for the future.
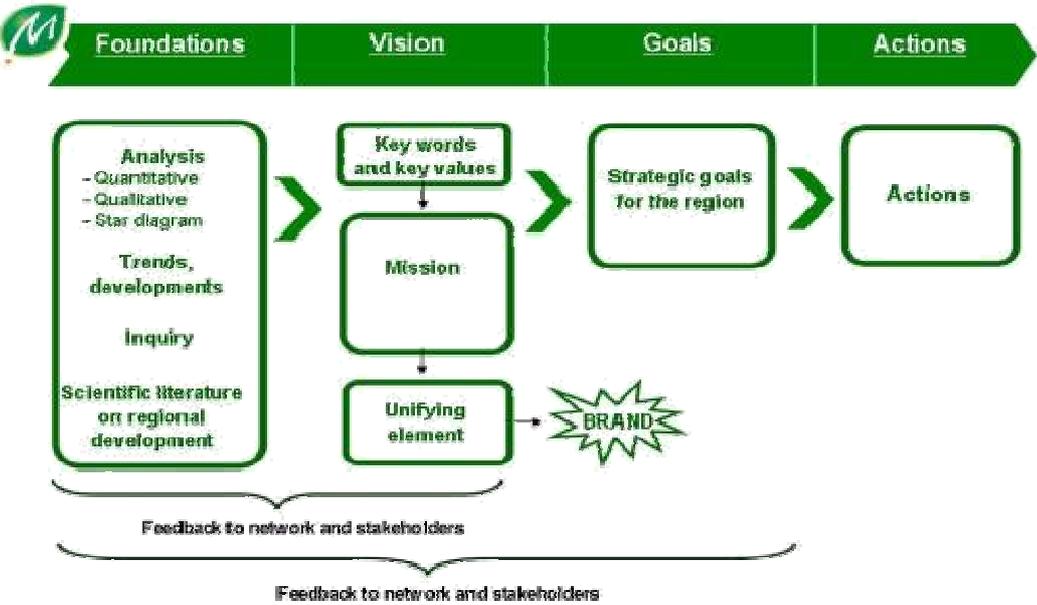
2.4. COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

2.4.1. Theory

The attractiveness of a region is not only determined by its own strengths and weaknesses, but also by the strengths and weaknesses of the regions that compete for the same target groups. A competitor analysis is necessary to identify these competing regions and their profile.

After all a region cannot be seen as a stand-alone entity, but is continuously in interaction with its environment. Within this environment a number of similar and nearby regions are trying to develop and profile themselves as thé place to live, work, invest and visit.

Modern Europe has gone through a series of developments as a result of which competition between these regions has become more and more severe. Not only political evolutions such as European integration and the realisation that regions have to create their own welfare, but also social developments like globalisation, increasing mobility, informatisation and new communication technologies.

Regions compete for the same target groups (citizens, visitors, entrepreneurs, investors) and use marketing strategies and tools to attract them. But only those regions that are able to distinct themselves from other regions will succeed in achieving these goals.

The competitive position of a region does not only depend on its own attractiveness and performance, but also on the attractiveness and strengths of competing regions. In order to better understand the relative position of a region, similar and nearby regions have to be inventorised and analysed by conducting a **competitor analysis.**

TO DO: identify competitors and their features

- Inventorise
  - First step in the process of competitor analysis is the identification of your competitors. Which regions try to attract the same target groups as our region? Which regions act in the same environment as our region?

- Analyse
  - Analysis of all relevant features (hard and soft elements) of the shortlist of competitors. How do the competitors score on aspects within the domains:
    - Living, such as education level of inhabitants, rate of attractiveness, number of real estate transactions.
    - Working, such as unemployment rate, number of start-ups, number of head offices, business areas.
    - Recreation, such as number of visitors to commercial centres, number of bars and restaurants, number of tourists.
    - Education, such as number of educational institutes, number of students.
    - Care such as number of hospitals, number of rest-homes.
    - Image: how is the competing region perceived by its target groups.

- Interpret
  - Define the relevant position of the own region compared to the competitors: in which domains is the own region performing better than competitors? Which strengths transcend these of competitors? Do we have a better image in the minds of our target groups than competitors?

2.4.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders): Inventory of competitors

Region Westhoek has to compete with the region of Leiedal and the Region Kortrijk to attract interesting companies and investors.

Flemish Ardennes (Belgium, Flanders): Competitor analysis

Region Flemish Ardennes has conducted a competitor analysis as basis for its strategic plan for tourism & recreation. Within the domain tourism & recreation the Flemish Ardennes identified the following regions: Westhoek, Hageland, Haspengouw, Voeren and Pays des Collines. Basis for this shortlist is the fact that these regions have (1) a landscape similar to the one of Flemish Ardennes and (2) similar tourist strengths. The competitor analysis consisted out of different elements such as:

- Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of competitors.
- Analysis of most important tourist assets of competitors.
- Analysis of positioning of competitors.

2.5. BENCHMARK

2.5.1. Theory

The last element in the analysis of the current situation of the region and its environment is a study to identify successes of other (similar) regions as inspiration for regional marketing strategy and activities for your region.

The use of a benchmark or 'frame of reference' can be seen as a procedure of comparison. The subjects of a benchmark analysis are typically reference organisations, i.e. organisations with activities similar to the own organisation.

Hence, a **benchmark analysis** for a region can be seen as a comparison between a region and other similar regions (e.g. regions with a same number of inhabitants, similar rural character, similar size of surface).

By using a benchmark, policy makers within a region can
- Analyse practices of reference regions;
- Compare these practices with own practices;
- Use best practices as basis for improvement of existing practices or as starting point for new practices.

TO DO: Selection of reference organisations, analysis of practices, comparison and selection of best practices

- Selection of reference organisations
    - Set up of short list of similar regions for benchmark analysis.
    - Making use of several relevant parameters such as size of region, number of inhabitants, nearness to own region.

- Analysis
    - Analysis of practices of reference regions
    - Examples of research questions:
        - What is the brand identity of reference regions?
        - Which slogan do the reference regions use?
        - Do the reference regions have a logo?
        - What are the target groups of the reference regions?
        - What is the main message the reference regions send out to their target groups?
        - What are the reference regions' most recent successes?
        - What is the focus of the policy of the reference regions?
        - Which communication tools do the reference regions use?

- Comparison
    - Comparison of practices of reference regions with own practices

- Best practices
    - Listing of all effective and successful tools, actions and campaigns of reference regions.
    - Shortlist of practices relevant for own region.
    - Translation of practice to specific situation for own region.

2.5.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders): Inventory competitors

Region Westhoek has conducted a benchmark to identify good examples of regional economic development. Reference regions for the Westhoek were European regions with a similar rural environment: Friesland (The Netherlands), Stavanger Region (Norway) and Norfolk County (UK). All of the reference regions used a strategic plan for economic development where one or more sectors were given priority. A source of inspiration for the strategic action plan of the region Westhoek: emphasis on the sector of sustainable construction.

PHASE 3:

Strategy development

3. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Strategy development is the most important step in the process of regional marketing. Based on previous steps (c.f. chapter 2, Analysis) choices have to be made. The region has to determine its ambition and related long term objectives. The strategy will define how the region will reach the long-term goals.

Before you can set up an appropriate strategy for your region, it is important to fully understand the process of regional marketing. This process is a continuous interaction between two different, simultaneous processes:

1. **Brand positioning**
2. **Product development**

The process of regional marketing is a continuous interaction between

BRAND POSITIONING & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A region has two dimensions:

1. Region as a brand: the image of the region
2. Region as a product: the tangible assets that confirm the image and USP

It is crucial that these two dimensions of the region match. After all, the image that is created in the mind of the target groups has to correspond to reality. In other words, what the region promises to be, has to be proven with tangible assets. On the other hand, the hard elements that are present within the region determine the region as a product and contribute to the creation of a certain image in the mind of the target groups.

Chapter 1 (Analysis) described numerous techniques to analyse the region, as a product (hard elements such as infrastructure) and as a brand (such as associations made by visitors). Thanks to strategy development the two dimension of the region can be adjusted, by:

- Brand positioning: develop the regional brand, create brand awareness, brand attitude and a desired image in the mind of the target group.
- Product development: develop the region as a product; set up concrete projects to improve the existing offer of tangible assets.

Figure 4: Regional marketing process as continuous interaction between product development and brand positioning

3.1. VISION & OBJECTIVES

3.1.1. Theory

Where does your region want to go to in the long term? What is the region heading for? Answers to these questions form the ambition of the region, its **vision**. An answer to the core question: what does the region want to offer to which target groups? And, what image does the region want to create in the future? Within the vision the two dimension of a region can be found:

1. Region as a brand: Which image do we want to create?
2. Region as a product: What do we want to offer?

Once the vision of the region is defined, it can be translated into concrete strategic objectives, which can also be categorized along the two dimensions of a region (brand and product).

3.1.1.1. Positioning (USP)

Within the vision the desired future position of the region has to be defined. By **positioning** itself, the region is figuring out which characteristics it wants to emphasize. Which aspects that define the region can be used to distinguish the region from other competing regions? Which attributes does the region want to be associated with? What is essential for the identity (DNA) of the region? With other words, which unique selling point (USP) will be used to create the desired image?

The **USP** of the region are the main attributes of the region that differentiate the region from others. These unique and differentiating features can be compared to product features that convince you to buy a particular product and not a similar one. E.g. design, user friendly, good price-quality ratio. After all, a region can be seen as a product that has to be sold to its target groups.

3.1.1.2. Target groups

Another element of the region's vision is the selection of the target groups. Within regional marketing five major target groups can be defined:

1. Inhabitants
2. Companies
3. Visitors
4. Investors
5. Creatives

Within these five target groups, a distinction can be made between present target groups and potential target groups.
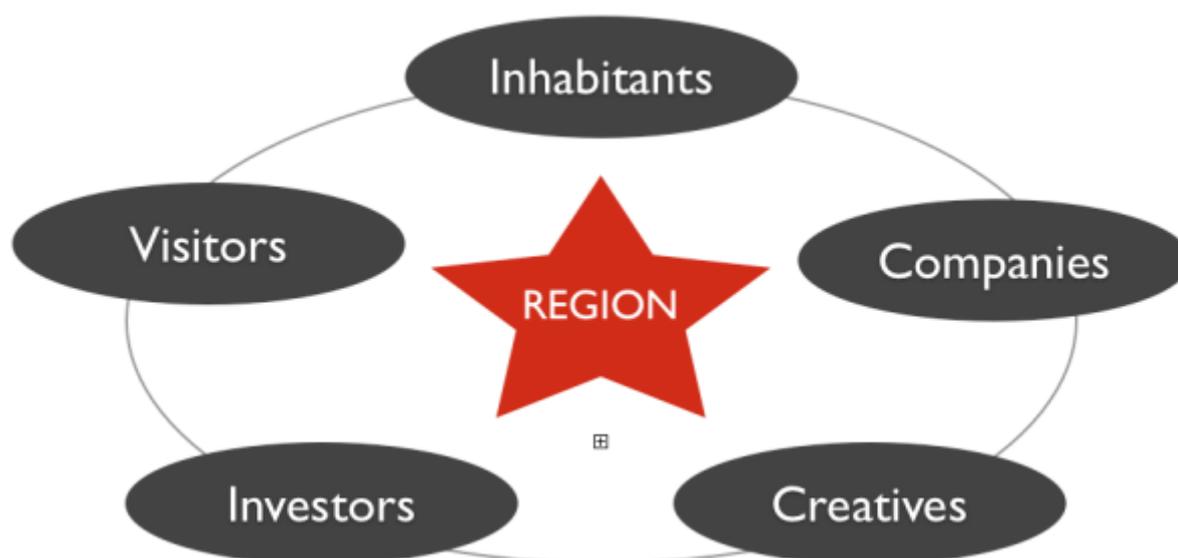
The way of positioning the region depends on the target groups the region wants to attract. Therefore the selection of the target groups is an important step in setting up the regional marketing strategy. This process is also called targeting and can be seen as a selection of a group of group types that will form the target of the regional marketing.

3.1.1.3. Functional domains

Once a clear vision has been set up and the target groups are selected, the region has to determine on which domains the marketing strategy will focus. A choice has to be made between the domains living, working, recreation, education and care.

Later on in the regional marketing strategy set-up, these selected topics will be detailed to spearheads. Spearheads are priorities that unambiguously support the desired image of the region and give shape to the brand positioning of the region. (cf. 3.3. Product development).

3.1.1.4. Objectives

The region's vision, including its positioning and target groups, is the starting point for the set-up of the regional marketing strategy and can be translated in long-term objectives. These long-term **strategic objectives** are the first step in achieving the region's ambition. The strategic goals can be categorised along the two dimension of the region: region as a brand and region as a product.

Region as a brand

Objectives that aim to develop the region as a brand: create the desired image in the mind of the target group (cf. 3.2. brand positioning).

    E.g. higher brand awareness, change in associations

Region as a product

Objectives that aim to develop the region as a product: develop tangible assets and events (cf. 3.3. product development)

      E.g. development of a new business area

Critical success factors (CSF) are an important element in achieving the region's objectives. A critical success factor can be defined as an element or condition that is necessary to achieve a certain goal, in this case the region's ambition. Without the presence of the critical success factors, the region will not be able to realise the regional marketing strategy.

The strategic objectives can be seen as the link between the vision of the region and the actual brand positioning and product development.
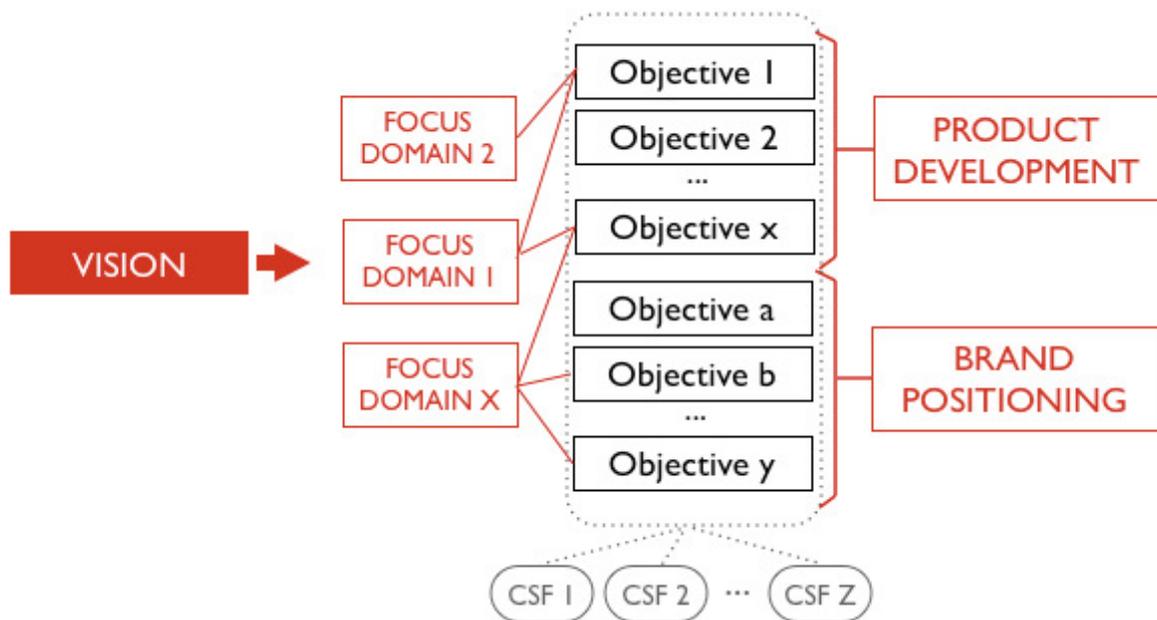
Figure 5: generation of objectives

TO DO: determine region's vision: ambition, position (USP), target groups and focus domains & defining strategic objectives

- Determine the region's vision

  - Based on the SWOT analysis of the region and its competitive position (c.f. competitor analysis) the ambition of the region has to be defined and translated into a comprehensive vision.

  - Policy makers are responsible to define the vision. The regional marketing manager can help the policy makers in defining the vision.

  - The vision has to clarify the position your region wants to have within the market: desired image, core values and target groups.

- Determine the region's position

  - Based on the SWOT analysis of the region and its competitive position (c.f. competitor analysis) the current (relative) position of the region can be determined. Make a selection of differentiating characteristics of the region (current USP).

  - Additional to the current position, the SWOT as well as the results out of the competitor analysis are also a source of inspiration to identify the desired position of the region.

- Define your target groups
  - In order to define your target groups, first make a comprehensive segmentation of all possible groups that can be targeted. By segmenting, the total 'market' gets divided into different segment groups. Within one segment group all members are homogeneous. People out of different segment groups differ from each other.
  - Once the process of segmentation is finished, target groups can be selected. In other words, determine which groups your region wants to attract. Which segment groups are interesting for your region? This selection leads to your target groups.

- Select your focus domains
  - Select the functional domains that deserve / need the most attention within the marketing of your region: living, working, recreation, education and/or care.

- Define the region's objectives
  - Define within each selected functional domain what the region wants to achieve
  - Make a summary of all objectives and select the most important to realise the overall goal of the region

3.1.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders):
The **vision** (ambition) of the region Westhoek is to become an economically attractive region where a company wants to be located. Within the economic strategic positioning of the region Westhoek, its ambition is to offer companies (target group) a business area on an excellent location (offer) and become an interesting place to invest (image).

The **USP** of the region Westhoek can be defined as:
1. Space to do business
2. Pure entrepreneurship
3. Doing business in unbounded environment
4. Smooth internal mobility

For the economical positioning of the Region Westhoek, five **target groups** were chosen:

1. Start-ups
2. Growth companies
3. Newcomers
4. Knowledge institutes
5. Influencers & project partners

City of Poperinge (Belgium, Flanders): Functional domains

Within the citymarketing strategy of the city of Poperinge, 3 functional domains were selected to put the focus on: working, living and recreation.

3.1.3. Examples of partners

Province of West-Flanders (Flanders, Belgium)

West-Flanders decided to focus on three spearheads, three challenges to make progress in the decades to come.

- *West-Flanders as a top region for recreation*
- *West-Flanders as an enterprising region*
- *West-Flanders as a quality region*

County of Norfolk (UK)

Business people in Norfolk were brought together to develop 7 positive messages about Norfolk as a place to do business, live and work.

The message areas were:

- *Cost effective place to do business*
- *Good travel links*
- *Graduate skills*
- *A place which has pride in architectural heritage and modern architecture*
- *Beautiful landscape*
- *Culture and arts*

Municipality of Finnoy (Norway)

Finnoy is focusing on health, food and quality of lives.

City of Langenhagen (Germany)

Langenhagen decided to focus on the green landscape, regional food and horses.

<u>*Zealand-Flanders (The Netherlands)*</u>

The taskforce 'Your new future' decided to focus on three topics: space & peaceful, hospitality and Bourgondic life.

3.2. BRAND POSITIONING

3.2.1. Theory

A great part of the defined objectives can be categorized as objectives to position the brand of the region. In other words, these objectives have the aim to develop the region as a strong brand. Within the process of brand positioning, the region has three main objectives:

1. Creating brand awareness

Brand awareness can be defined as the extent to which the region's brand is recognized by its target groups. Developing a distinctive brand name, logo and slogan (cf. 3.2.1.2. Brand & slogan) will help the region to improve the region's brand awareness.

2. Development of desired image

The second objective in the process of brand positioning is the creation of a desired image in the mind of the target groups. This can involve the adjustment of an existing image in their mind. Using an appropriate communication that sends out a clear and comprehensive message (cf. 3.2.1.1. Message) will help the region to end up with the desired image.
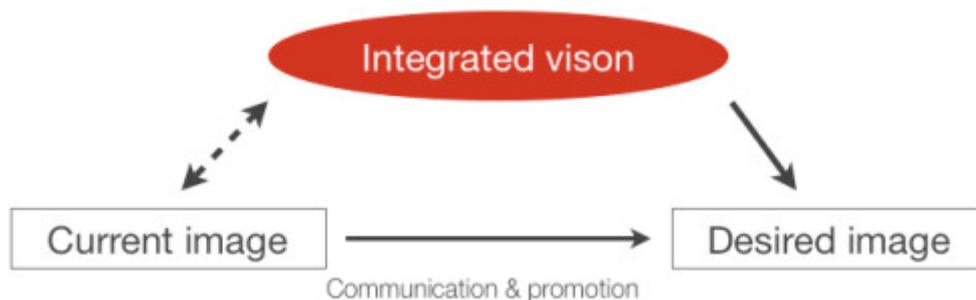
Figure 6: From current image to desired image

3. Creating brand attitude

Once the region's target groups are aware of the existence of the region and have developed an image in their mind, they will develop a certain attitude towards the region's brand. This brand attitude can be positive or negative. It has to be the aim of the region to create a positive brand attitude towards the region's brand.

By developing the region as a brand, the region creates a desired image in the mind of its target groups, which is translated into loyal 'customers'.

These three main objectives within the process of brand positioning fit perfectly in the **AIDA-model**. This theoretical model describes the different, sequential stages people go through before they will actually react on the 'call for action' a marketing campaign is sending out.

AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire and Action, which refer to the four phases:

1. <u>Attention</u>: First, the attention of the target group has to be drawn. In other words, brand awareness has to be created.
2. <u>Interest</u>: Secondly, the target group has to create a certain interest in the brand / product. It holds a promise, a certain image of the region.
3. <u>Desire</u>: Thirdly, the target group members have to be convinced that what the region offers is valuable for them.
4. <u>Action</u>: Finally, the target group has to be convinced to actually visit the region, to invest within the region, to locate its business in the region.
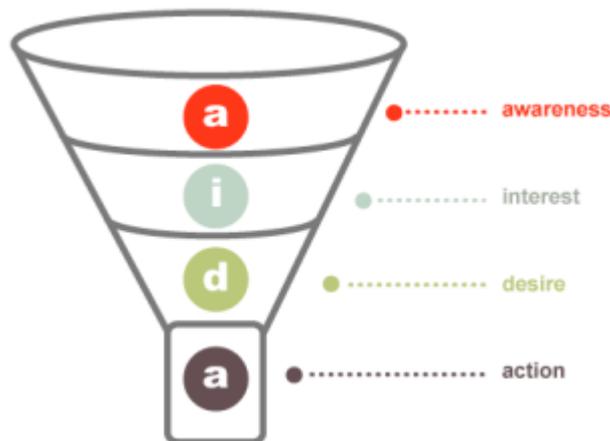
Figure 7: AIDA-model

To achieve the objectives within the brand positioning process, the region has to create a clear message and a distinctive brand concept and slogan.

3.2.1.1. Message

Translating the differentiating characteristics into a clear and comprehensive message can help the region to create the desired image in the mind of the target groups.

The **message** the region has to carry out is determined by the identification of the USP of the region. These features that differentiate the region from others have to draw the attention of the target groups and create a certain desire within their minds. The translation of the USP of the region into a well-considered and comprehensive message is an important step in developing the region as a brand.

TO DO: Translate the region's USP into communication message

The USP, identified in part 3.1.1.1, have to be listed and translated into a clear communication message. The region has to determine whether different messages should be used to address the different target groups.

The region has to consider the option of using the skills of a communication agency with experience in developing clear communication messages.

3.2.1.2. Brand & slogan

The **brand** of a region can be seen as the identity of that region, the region's face to the world. It helps the region to create the desired image in the mind of the target groups and consists out of different components:

1. **Brand name**: name of the region
2. **Symbol** / **logo**: object or picture that identifies the region, visualisation of the region
3. **Baseline**: completion of logo to counter (possible) missing elements in logo
4. **Slogan**: a pithy, attention-getting phrase that summarizes the core competence

The stronger the region's brand, the greater the impact your message will have. The brand of the region operates as it were a lever for the message it carries out.
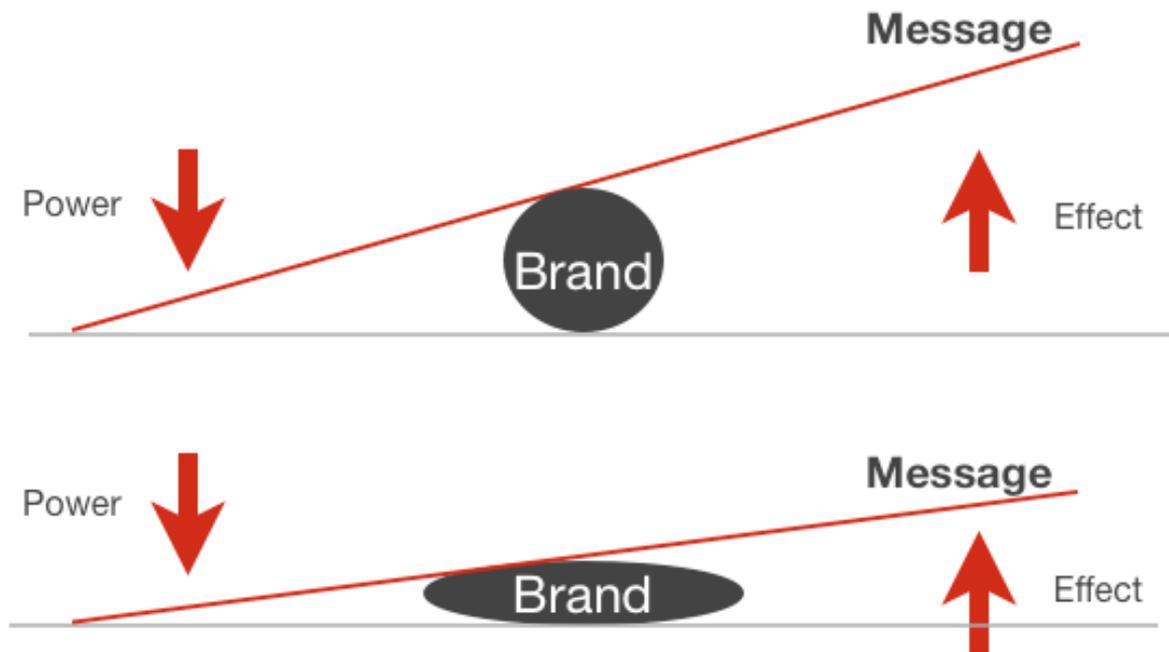
Figure 8: Lever effect of regional brand

TO DO: Develop brand name, logo, baseline and slogan

To develop a strong brand, the components of the brand have to be evaluated and if necessary reviewed or created. Keep in mind that a brand has to respect the following principles: (1) clarity, (2) eye-catcher, (3) distinctiveness / uniqueness, (4) integrated in overall strategy and (5) significantly (desirable to target groups).

- Brand name
    - The name of a region is usually fixed and can be used as a source of inspiration for the other components of the brand.

- Logo
    - The logo of the region should represent its identity and can be based on historical symbols.

- Baseline
    - The missing parts in the logo that represent the identity of the region can be translated into the baseline. This baseline states the region's ambition.

- Slogan
    - An umbrella concept, covering all differentiating features of the region. They can be used to come up with an original slogan that synthesises the core competence of the region.

As the development of brand names, logos, baselines and slogans is a complicated process, it is recommended to make use of use an experienced communication agency.

3.2.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Region Westhoek (Belgium, Flanders): Slogan

For its economic positioning, Region Westhoek used the slogan 'Area for pure entrepreneurship'

Venice

Venice used its historical symbol to develop a new one.

Province Groningen (The Netherlands): Slogan

The Province of Groningen uses the slogan 'Nothing beats Groningen'

3.2.3. Examples of partners

Province West-Flanders (Belgium, Flanders): Baseline, logo

The baseline of the Province of West-Flanders is 'Driven by people'. Its logo:

City Langenhagen (Germany): Logo, baseline

Langenhagen uses a horse as symbol (logo) to identify the region. 'Bewegt' ('in motion') is its baseline.

Meetjesland (Flanders, Belgium)

Meetjesland developed a brand 'Meetjesland, maak het mee' which stands for certain values. The brand can be easily explained.

Sluis (The Netherlands)

Sluis has not developed a brand. They use the flag of Zealand-Flanders to promote their region.

3.3. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1. Theory

Besides the aim of the region of developing a strong brand (brand positioning), it also strives to develop its tangible assets. By developing the region as a product, the positioning (USP) is founded with tangible facts: the set up of concrete projects to improve the existing offer of tangible assets. In other words, put the new image of your region into practice by the development and realisation of initiatives and projects.

These projects can be categorised as either soft (e.g. events) or hard (e.g. infrastructure).

But, before regional marketing projects can be initialised, the region has to select the spearheads of its regional marketing strategy. Spearheads are priorities that unambiguously support the desired image of the region and give shape to the brand positioning of the region. These spearheads are derived from the functional domains of which the region has decided to focus on, its USP's and the desired image (c.f. 3.1. Vision & objectives).

Based on the positioning (cf. 3.1.1.1. Positioning), the region has to define the aspects to focus on within the selected functional domains.

> E.g. A region can select the functional domain 'working' as one of her focus domains and try to position itself as a high-tech region. The spearhead could be: 'Region X, base for high-tech enterprises'.

By setting up the spearheads of the region, a combination is made between the core values of the region and its unique selling position within the focus domains.

TO DO: Determine spearheads

• What priorities are needed to create and support the desired image of the region?
  - What is the region's current image? (c.f. 2.2)
  - What is the region's desired image? (c.f. 3.2)
  - What are the functional domains of the regional marketing strategy? (c.f. 3.1.1.3.)
  - Define for each functional domain a list of priorities needed to achieve the desired image in the mind of your target groups. (remark: it is possible that some priorities relate to more than one functional domain)

- Select 3 to 5 priorities.
- Translate each priority of the selection into spearheads: comprehensive statements that state the ultimate goal of the region within the functional domain(s).

Next, the region's objectives and spearheads are translated into strategic projects that will help the region to realise the regional marketing strategy.
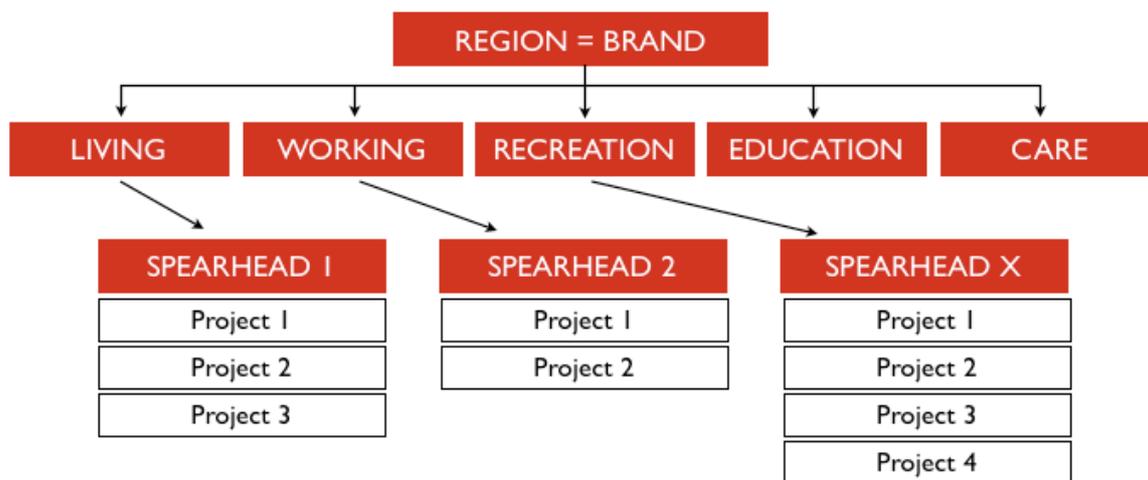
Figure 9: Process of definition of spearheads and projects

TO DO: Define projects

An easy and comprehensive way to select regional marketing projects, is to set up a table combining the core values of the region with the selection of spearheads.

	CORE VALUE A	CORE VALUE B	CORE VALUE C
SPEARHEAD 1	How to stimulate core value A in spearhead 1?	How to stimulate core value B in spearhead 1?	How to stimulate core value C in spearhead 1?
SPEARHEAD 2	How to stimulate core value A in spearhead 2?	How to stimulate core value B in spearhead 2?	How to stimulate core value C in spearhead 2?
SPEARHEAD 3	How to stimulate core value A in spearhead 3?	How to stimulate core value B in spearhead 3?	How to stimulate core value C in spearhead 3?

Figure 10: Tool for generation of projects

Place all core values in the heading columns and all spearheads in the heading rows. Next, try to find an answer to the questions that are written down in the table. These answers will generate project ideas that will support the region's vision, core values and positioning.

By developing the region as a product, the positioning is founded by tangible facts.

3.3.2. Examples of inspiring regions

City of Tienen (Belgium, Flanders): Spearheads
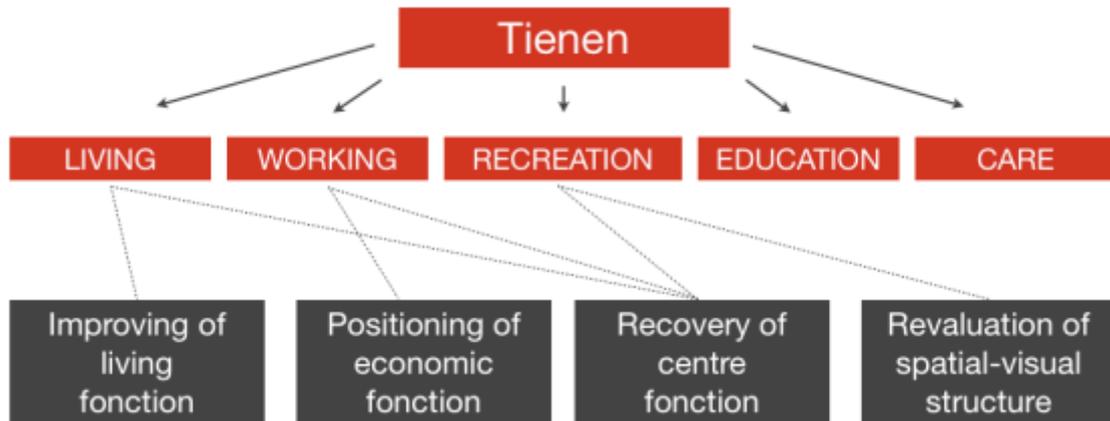
Remark for policy makers

Target groups should be involved from the very first step of the regional branding process. Policy makers and project coordinators that carry out the regional branding have to create support from the basis, their target groups. Therefore it is important to sound citizens, entrepreneurs and other target groups. Target group involvement has a positive impact on the implementation of the regional marketing strategy afterwards and will raise willingness to participate on actions by these target groups.

PHASE 4:

Implementation

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Once the regional marketing strategy has been formulated, it is important that this strategy comes to live. The vision for the region cannot remain to be a piece of paper, but should be realised in the form of real projects and become the beating heart of the region.

The implementation phase of the regional marketing strategy includes all activities needed to effectuate the strategy in a structured way.

Within this chapter, two parts will be discussed:

1. **Organisation**: all activities to set up an organisational structure to facilitate the strategy implementation.
2. **Communication**: all communication related activities that will help the region to promote itself.

4.1. ORGANISATION

4.1.1. Theory

An effective implementation of the regional marketing strategy (product development & brand positioning) requires the set-up of an **organisational structure**. This structure has to facilitate the cooperation between the different actors within the project and helps the region to realize the regional marketing goals in a structured way.

An organisational structure can be defined as a set of explicit and implicit rules and policies that provides a certain structure where roles and responsibilities are assigned, controlled and coordinated. An organisational structure also determines how information flows are organised between the different components of the organization.

To achieve maximum success, it is important that responsibilities and tasks are clear and well defined. Each actor within the project is given certain priorities, timings (deadlines) and responsibilities

On the one hand the structure has to make sure that the regional marketing strategy is imbedded in existing strategies and goals within other domains in the region. On the other hand, a certain independency for execution of the regional marketing strategy has to be guaranteed. In this matter it is important to define the role, tasks and responsibilities of the (external) regional marketing manager.

TO DO: Set up organisational structure

To set up a proper organisational structure, one can ask himself the following questions:

- Who determines the policy of the regional marketing?
  - The policy makers of the region have to determine this policy (e.g. provincial governor and cabinet)

- Who effectuates the regional marketing policy?
  - The regional marketing manager and regional marketing organisation is in charge of the effectuation of the policy. The regional marketing manager operates as bridge between the policy makers of the region and the regional marketing organisation.
  - Making use of external consultant with expertise in regional marketing? Or organising regional marketing in-house?
  - Who will form part of the regional marketing organisation? Which skills, knowledge, competencies and attitude are needed?

- Where will the organisation of the regional marketing be located?
  - Within regional policy offices? (direct contact with regional policy makers)
  - Outside regional policy offices? (more independency)

- Central regional marketing organisation or decentralised organisation?
  - One central organisation for all domains? Several organisations for different domains?

- Legal form of organisation?
  - Non-profit association? Civil institution? Other?

- How will the organisation structure be financed?
  - Subventions? Capital from stakeholders (e.g. private enterprises)? Capital from commercial activities? Other?

In general the regional marketing manager and the regional marketing organisation is responsible for:
  - Creation of support at the base
  - Bridge between regional policy and stakeholder (public and private)
  - Ensure that the regional marketing strategy is effectuated
  - Initiation of regional marketing activities
  - Harmonising the activities of the regional marketing strategy
  - Monitoring of progress and evaluation

4.1.1.1. Database management

Several organisational tools can be used to help the region to effectuate the regional marketing strategy in a structured way. Database management is an example of this.

Database management helps an organisation to manage and control all its data in an efficient way. By implementing database management in the structure of the organisation, it is possible to create a profile of the different target groups of which relevant information has been collected.

> E.g. citizens of the nearby region X visit our region frequently during the summer and prefer to visit our art museum. They have an average age of 35 year and are attracted to our region because of the green environment and the offer of cosy bars and tasteful restaurants.

Database management allows the organisation to fine-tune its promotional activities, tailored to the characteristics and needs of the different target groups. (CRM, direct marketing)

TO DO: Set up database management system

Database management is a useful tool to manage data and raise the effectiveness of regional marketing campaigns and projects. The set-up of a database management system to collect and manage all data and to ensure its quality is a complex and difficult process. Therefore, regions should consider cooperating with experts in this matter.

4.1.1.2. Steering group

The steering group can be seen as a group of persons out of the regional marketing organisation responsible for al operational aspects of the regional marketing implementation. Steering group meetings will be organised at regular base where all operational matters will be discussed. The (external) regional marketing manager will have an advisory and supporting role in this steering group.

The steering group will carry out the region's mission to the stakeholders that are active within the region. It is the groups aim to inspire people around them and stimulate them to come up with own ideas and initiatives. By doing so, the region's vision can be spread like an oil slick over the region and its stakeholders.

TO DO: Composition of steering group and organisation of steering group meetings

- Make a selection of all potential steering group members:
    - Persons out of regional governmental bodies
    - (external) regional marketing manager
    - Other

- Select a small number of steering group members to compose the steering group.

- Organise periodic steering group meetings

4.1.1.3. Spearhead groups

All regional marketing projects are derived from a spearhead the region wants to focus on (c.f. Product development). It is recommended to set up a working group for each of the defined spearheads. The job of these assemblies will consist out of initiating and executing the selected projects. Because of the temporary character of projects, spearhead groups are temporary of nature.

TO DO: Composition of spearhead groups and organisation of spearhead group meetings

• Define the scope for a number of steering groups, i.e. the selected spearheads.

• Within every spearhead, make a selection of all potential spearhead group members:
  - Persons out of regional governmental bodies
  - (external) regional marketing manager
  - Stakehoders
  - Experts
  - Other

  Examples: researchers, sector federations, interest groups and trend watchers

• Select a small number of spearhead group members to compose the spearhead groups.

• Organise spearhead group meetings

4.1.2. Examples of partners

Province West-Flanders (Flanders, Belgium)

*West-Flanders has set up a **steering communication group and 'spearhead groups'** in order to prepare a communication campaign on the three central challenges (top region for recreation, enterprising region, quality region). This structure enables directors of different services to discuss about their communication strategy and plans for the future. They focus on plans they want to put on top in these communication campaigns.*

Meetjesland (Flanders, Belgium)

*Streekplatform+ Meetjesland has set up a **steering communication group** which is led by a professor emeritus specialised in marketing. The group is formed by experts, cival servants in charge of communication and coordinators of regional organisations in charge of tourism, regional products, landscape and culture.*

County Norfolk (UK)

*Shaping Norfolk's Future created **a Norfolk Profile and Investment Group.** This group of proximately 10 members includes business leaders with specific interest in Norfolk's profile and who have a range of expertise.   E.g. senior executives from HSBC, PricewaterhouseCoopers, a regional recruitment agency, a European law company and economic development specialists from Norfolk County Council. Their role is to advise the region and direct profile-raising activities.*

*In addition, **a strategic and working group** was formed between Norfolk County Council and Shaping Norfolk's Future to develop the World Class Norfolk campaign. Support for the campaign was found within a wide range of businesses, organisations and academic institutions, prior to the launch. (stakeholders)*

Sluis (The Netherlands)

*The organisation **"Your New Future"** is based on a gentlemen's agreement. In this organisation taskforces trade & industry, institutions and municipalities co-operate in the interest of Zealand-Flanders. The board has been formed by the three Zealand-Flanders mayors, three representatives out of the industrial sector (including Dow and RaboBank) and a representative of the housing associations. Furthermore, co-operation between representatives from real estate, development, the tourist industry, education, medical care, housing, banking and public services is stimulated. This concentration of knowledge,*

experience, and network provides "Your New Future" with a broad basis, including a lot of surveying capacity and an extensive work force. Besides, promotion of the region and profiling Zealand-Flanders, development of the Labour Market and the stimulation of immigration are also fields of co-operation.

<u>City Langenhagen (Germany)</u>

Langenhagen has **an Advisory Board for the branding** and has set up several working groups. Within these working groups several themes are discussed such as horses, children and food/horses (schoolprojects), green landscape & regional food.

4.2. COMMUNICATION

4.2.1. Theory

Marketing communication activities can be seen as a form of promotion for the region. By using different types of communication tools the region is attempting to promote the interest of the region's brand. The message that will be spread in the communication will help the region to create the desired image in the minds of its target groups (cf. 3.2.1.1. Message).

4.2.1.1. Above the line

Above the line communication is defined as the promotional activities that target the mass, the big crowd. The aim of using above the line communication tools is to heighten the region's brand awareness.

Above the line advertising campaigns tend to be medium or long term in nature and the effectiveness is rather difficult to measure.

The following communication tools are considered above the line (mass media):
- Television, such as commercial, infomercial, billboard, product placement
- Radio, such as commercial, infomercial
- Print media, such as advertisement, infomercial in newspaper, magazine, journal
- Internet, such as web space: advertisements, banners, pop-ups

4.2.1.2. Below the line

Below the line communication refer to non-media communication. In other words all communications activities that make use of other tools than the traditional media to promote the brand and improve brand awareness.

Below the line advertising campaigns tend to be short term in nature and aim to reach smaller target groups.

The following communication tools are considered below the line:
- <u>PR</u>: the use of topics of public interest and news items to spread the message
- <u>Direct mailing</u>: direct message to target group (mail, email)
- <u>E-newsletter</u>: regular news update to inscribed members by email
- <u>Website content</u>: promoting region's brand through the own website
- <u>Internet links</u>: links to region's website on related websites
- <u>Leaflets and brochures</u>
- <u>Merchandising</u>
- <u>Displays</u>

<u>Remark</u>: The division of communication tools between above the line and below the line is rather arbitrary. A universally accepted definition of both ways of communicating and promoting cannot be found. In general, below the line is classed as non-media advertising. Consequently, advertisements that are submitted to a publication wherefore a commission is paid to advertising agencies are said to be above the line.

4.2.1.3. Events

Events can be used to promote the region and increase the region's brand awareness. By organising events in the region, participators become familiar with the region, its characteristics and what it has to offer.

4.2.1.4. Social media

Social media can be defined as internet-based tools / online technologies for sharing opinions, experiences, insights and perspectives among users. Social media have user-generated content: it allows readers / viewers / listeners to participate in the creation and development of the content. In other words: an on-line conversation, dialogue, two-way communication.

Organisations can use social media as a communication tool to send their message into the world.

Well-known social media are Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, MySpace, and Flickr.

Regions can use social media to communicate with its target groups, to trigger conversations between users about the region and all of its aspects. In this matter it is not the aim to control the conversation, but rather to inspire and influence.

TO DO: Set up of a communication plan

A communication plan is the basis for a successful communication campaign. This plan can serve as guideline throughout the regional marketing project and helps the organisation to set up a proper communication mix that focuses on a maximum result using the available means. Within this communication plan several questions have to be answered:

- Why?
  - What is the aim of our communication campaign? Which results we want to reach?

- Who? (target audience)
  - Who do we want to address? The target groups (or parts of them) of the regional marketing (c.f. 3.1.1.2.)

- What? (message)
  - Which message do we want to get to our target groups? (c.f. 3.2.1.1.)

- When? (time frame)
  - Timing of your communication activity / activities? Short term / medium term / long term? Starting point?

- How? (communication channel)
  - How do we get our message to our target group(s)? Which communication tools will we use? Below / above the line?

- By whom?
  - Who will set up the campaign? In-house? Outsourcing to communication agency?

It is recommended that to make use of an experienced communication agency to set up the communication plan for the region.

4.2.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Commune of Hamont-Achel (Belgium, Flanders): Merchandising

Province Limburg (Belgium, Flanders): Merchandising

In cooperation with the company BONGO, the Province of Limburg has developed a the 'Katarakt Bongo bon', a gift card which includes a coupon for a overnight stay in one of the hotels and B&B in the region of Haspengouw

Flanders (Belgium): Social media

Within Flanders the number of cities and communes that make use of social media is increasing every year. At this moment no less than 90% of the Flemish cities and communes has its own Facebook page, 58% is active on Netlog and 14% has a Twitter account.

4.2.3. Examples of partners

Province West-Flanders (Belgium, Flanders):

a) *Merchandising*

b) _The region of West-Flanders has promoted the region by setting up a billboard campaign._

Week 1: teaser   _Week 2: campaign_

c) _Campaign 'Genieten. Het zit in ons' ('Enjoying. Our second nature')_

In 2010 the province focused on another spearhead; 'West-Flanders as topregion for recreation'. To communicate this message, the province set up a national communication campaign in cooperation with its tourist department (Westtoer) and the provincial services for Sports and Culture. To identify the key qualities and to develop a brand story within the spearhead 'top region for recreation' these 3 services / departments were invited to join a spearhead group to discuss the central themes of the campaign and to find a balance between the regional and the subregional identity within the campaign. Westtoer (tourist deparment), untill now, focused in their tourist marketing on the subregional identity (Kust (Coast), Brugse Ommeland (Greater Bruges), Leiestreek and Westhoek) and in 2010 made an engagement to co-finance a communication campaign that focuses on regional identity (West Flanders). This means an important breakthrough in the regional branding project of the province. The campaign was launched in May 2010. All commercials of this campaign can be found on the website http://wp2.internalvital.eu

d) _Campaign 'Ondernemen. Het zit in ons' ('Entrepreuneurship, our second nature')_

The communication campaign '**Entrepreuneurship, our second nature**' was partly repeated by the end of 2009. Commercials were launched on national and regional radio stations (RADIO 1- RADIO 2). The project was completed with the labeling of 34 private enterprises from the region with the title of 'ambassador West-Flanders - Entrepreuneurship, our second nature'. The province and the provincial development co. (POM) made a list of 60 companies that distinguished themselves, a translation of

the region's image: 'a dynamic region'. A regional communication campaign (including a newsletter) was launched to support the ambassadors' project.

a) *Website www.uwnieuwekomst.nl*

The region of Zeeuws Flanders has developed the interactive website www.uwnieuwetoekomst.nl with integrated social media like twitter.
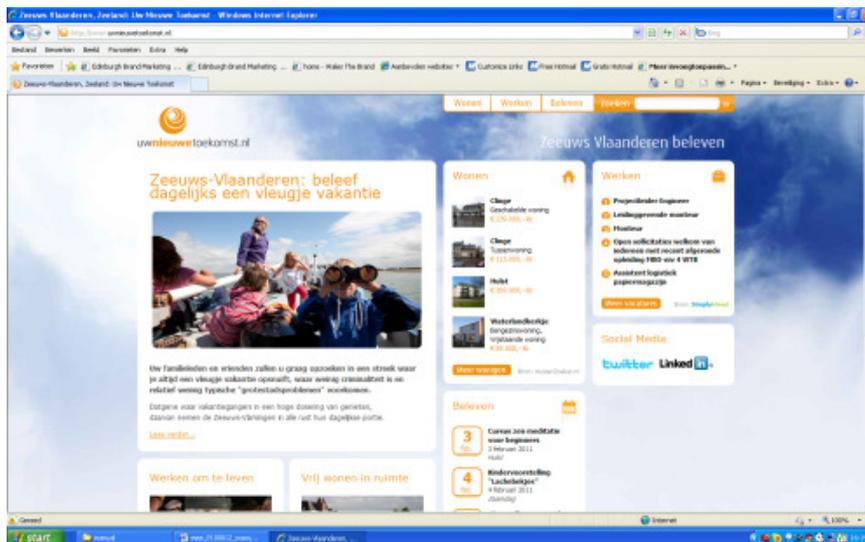
a) *Emigration Exhibition*

International exhibition (once a year) which attracts 10.000 visitors. Supported by an advertising campaign in national papers and radio stations to attend the Emigration exhibition.

b) *Other events:*

- - *Ambassadors evening.*
- - *Signing event: cooperation between University Ghent and schools and entrepreneurs from Zealand Flanders.*
- - *Celebration 200 years Zealand Flanders.*

County of Norfolk (UK)

a) Website www.investinnorfolk.com

Norfolk worked together with a experienced marketing bureau to promote its website to its target groups including national and European business leaders, investors and intermediary companies.
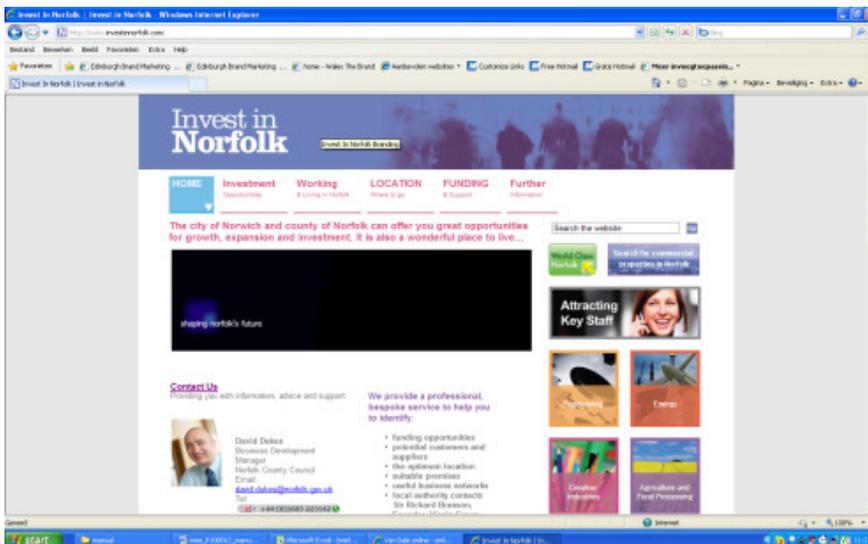

b) *Major marketing campaign: www.worldclassnorfolk.com*
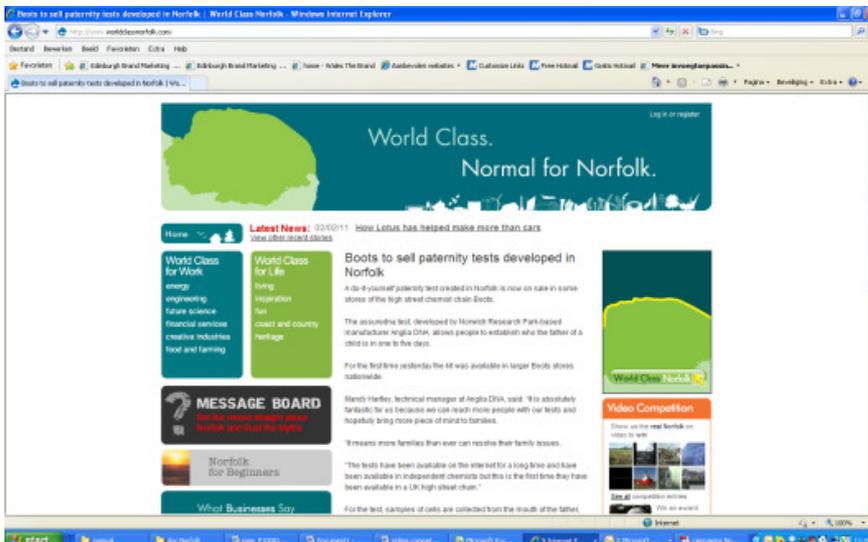
c) *Online competition*

The online 'pass-the-parcel' competition was developed to guide people from the Facebook site to the regional website (www.shapingsnorfolksfuture.co.uk). A competition with a focus on business leaders.
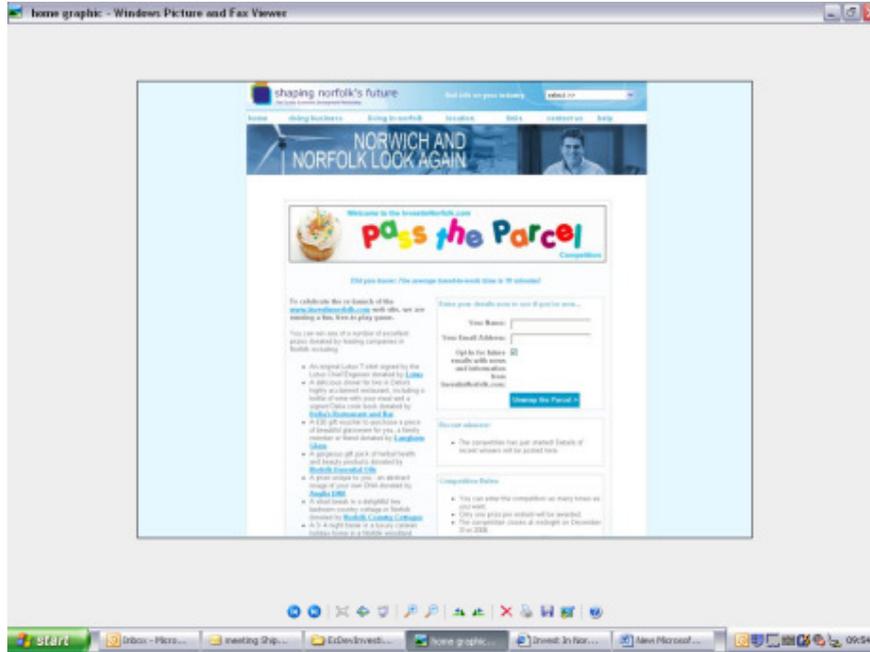
## d) *National media Coverage (PR)*

The Sunday Telegraph has approximately 510.000 readers, including stakeholders out of the business sector. This article highlighted the importance of Norfolk's oil and gas industry with a feature on a successful new Norfolk-based business – Aquaterra Energy.
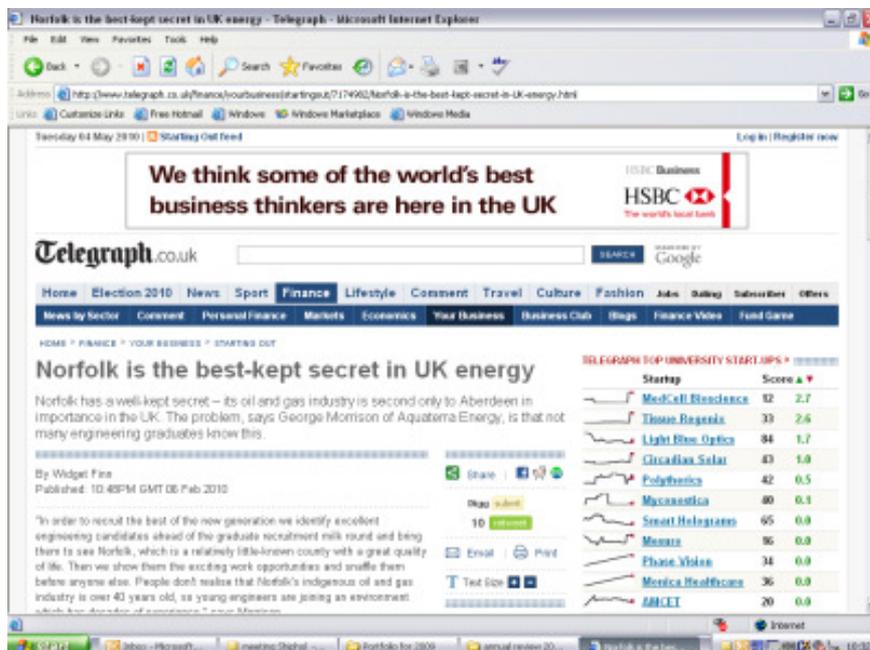
e) *Annual*

Review

The annual review raises the profile of the work of our partners and promotes Norfolk as a great place to do business.
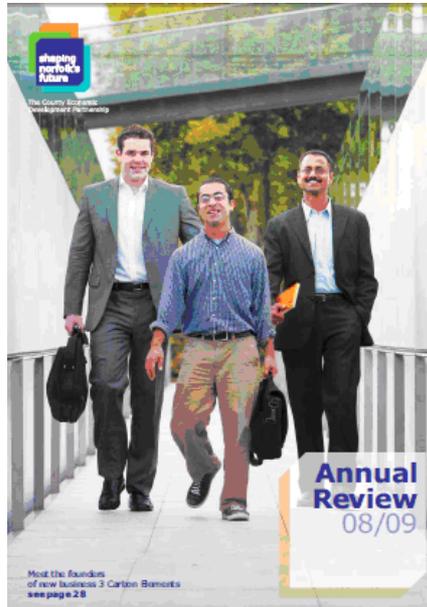
f) *Articles in magazines (PR)*

City Langenhagen (Germany)

a) *Langenhagen Magazin*

b) *Website www.pferdestaerken-langenhagen.de*

c) *Several events:* *international competitions, concerts, markets.*

Municipality Finnoy (Germany)

a) *Website http://livstill.finnoy.no*

Meetjesland (Flanders, Belgium)

a) *Welcomsigns*

Almost all municipalities of the Meetjesland have decided to place uniform welcomsigns. With the welcomsigns all the municipalities indicate that they belong to the region 'Meetjesland'. The green color stands for the open green area still available in our region.

b) *Tour of the Meetjeslandtent: Event*

Together with Tourism Meetjesland and 20 event organizers Streekplatform+ developed the Meetjesland Tour. Clustering of events is the philosophy of this project. With the clustering Meetjesland wants to achieve a better and more precise image of the region. Secondly, inhabitants and tourists will have the possibility to learn more about the events in the Meetjesland.

c) *Meetjeslander of the Year: Competition*

Six years ago Meetjesland started with a yearly competition 'Meetjeslander of the year'. The winner is selected and chosen by the public on the annual new years reception. The nominees are people who have contributed to one or more of the 9 strategic goals in 'Meetjesland 2020' .

d) *Other actions: More information of these actions on http://wp2.internalvital.eu*
   - *Development of regional publicity in cooperation with stakeholders*
   - *Renewal of the website www.meetjesland.be*
   - *Presence on Ronde Van België (event with international exposure)*
   - *Balloon competition*
   - *Promotion on regional television (AVS)*

- *Exhibition 'Entrepreneurs and organizations as source of inspiration for the region'.*
- *Sticker action*
- *Educational material for pupils*

PHASE 5:

Evaluation & monitoring

5. EVALUATION & MONITORING

5.3. EVALUATION & MONITORING

5.3.1. Theory

Once the region has started to implement its regional marketing strategy, it will be interested in the results of the efforts that have been made. By effectuating the process of monitoring and evaluating, the region will be able to get some insights in the effectiveness of its marketing strategy.

Monitoring can be defined as the routine tracking of certain key elements of (project) performance through record-keeping and regular reporting.

Evaluating is the assessment of the monitored results, a comparison between the objectives and results of the regional marketing.

To evaluate the effect of the regional marketing, an impact assessment has to be done and compared with a zero measurement (c.f. 2.1.1.1. Zero measurement).
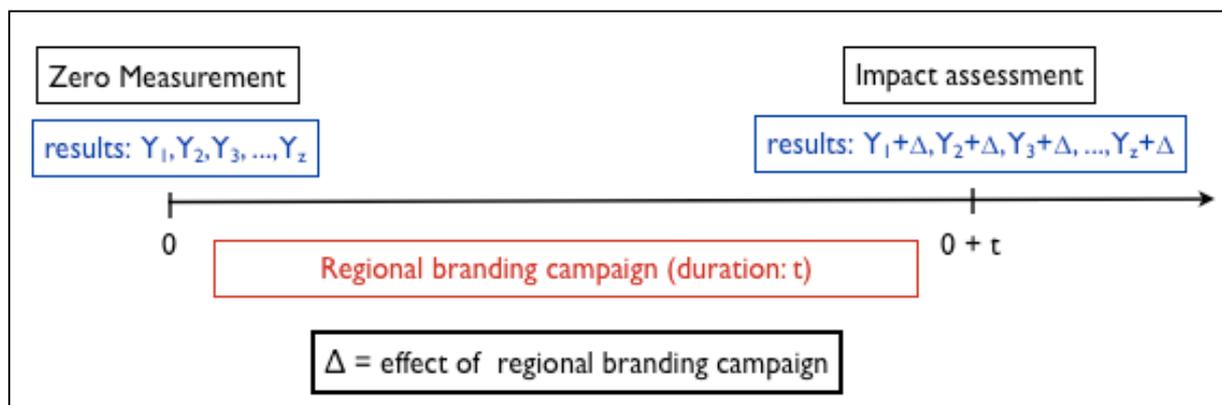

Figure 11: Zero measurement and impact measurement of regional marketing campaign

All elements of the zero measurement have to be measured a second time. The results of this second measurement form the basis of the impact assessment where the results of the two measurements are compared. Without taking into account possible side effects, the differences in results indicate the effect of the regional marketing.

The information collected by monitoring can be categorised as data concerning the region as a product (tangible assets, hard elements, facts & figures) or concerning the region as a brand (image of the region, brand awareness).

Like measurements at zero point, collecting data at (0+t) can be done through **market research**. In what follows, a number of possible market research methods are enumerated.

- Head count of passer-by
  - Measurement of the number of people that passes by a certain point. E.g. main street of commercial centre, important sight / monument, train station, business centre

- Interviewing of passer-by
  - Collecting qualitative data by interviewing a passer-by. E.g. origin, reason of visit, likes and dislikes

- Face-to-face interview of selected group
  - Collecting qualitative data by interviewing a selection of target group. E.g. interviewing all university students, hotel owners

- Focus groups
  - Organising group discussions to collect relevant information. E.g. focus group with management members, cooperation of merchants

- Survey
  - Collecting information by survey: send by post or email (direct mailing), by telephone (CATI[8]) or online survey (CAWI[9])

- Image / brand recognition
  - Study to find out whether image and / or brand of region is recognised (spontaneous/aided)

Once all data and opinions are collected and compared to each other, the regional marketing strategy can be evaluated.

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[8] Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews
[9] Computer Aided Web Interviewing

TO DO: Set up of monitoring and evaluation system

- Define moment of evaluation. After all regional marketing activities are finished? Continuous evaluation? Other?

- Select all relevant elements that should be measured. Define the indicators and make sure they are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

- Effectuate impact assessment measurement: collect all data through market research.

- Compare zero measurement with impact assessment measurement.

- Evaluate effect of regional marketing: Are all objectives achieved? Where did we succeed? Where did we fail?

5.3.2. Examples of inspiring regions

Province Drenthe (The Netherlands): Monitoring & evaluation
In 2010 the Vuelta went through the province of Drenthe. Results: 250.000 visitors that spent around 20 million euro of which 6,9 million euros spent at local bars, restaurants and hotels. Effect on employment in the region: an additional 201 fte as a consequence of the expenses of those visitors, of which 75 fte directly at local bars, restaurants and hotels. The total effect on the local economy was 21,1 million euros.

5.3.3. Examples of partners

County Norfolk (UK)
_The 'World Class Norfolk campaign' was evaluated. That 'Norfolk' has a good reputation in the country has shifted significantly from before to after the campaign from 48% to 62% and 20% of opinion formers recall the campaign. The website www.investinnorfolk.com has been indepentenly audited and all recommendations undertaken._

Province West-Flanders (Flanders, Belgium)

a) *Monitoring campaign 'Enjoyment, our second nature'*

   Results:

   1) *Recall of the campaign*

   2) *Appraisal of the 4 TV-commercials*

   3) *Knowledge of West-Flanders*

   4) *Attitude*
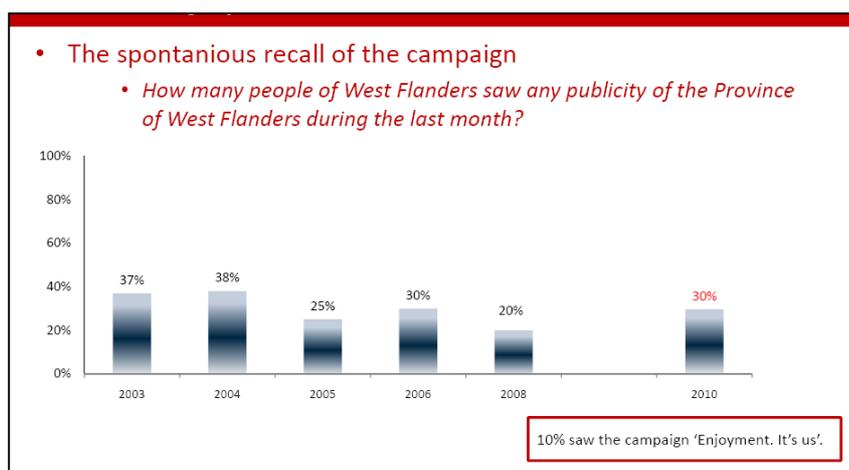
Meetjesland (Flanders, Belgium)

In 2007 the brand 'Meetjesland, maak het mee' was developed and presented to our stakeholders. A zero measurement was executed. In 2010 an effect measurement was done. With the survey the region wanted to examine in what extent the name 'Meetjesland' and the brand 'Meetjesland, maak het mee' are known by the inhabitants of Meetjesland and by people from outside the region (Flanders). By conducting the impact assessment Streekplatform+ can see how the results evaluated from 2007 to 2010. The inhabitants of the Meetjesland were interrogated by means of a written survey and people from outside the region (Flanders) responded to a telephonic survey.

The brand awareness among the inhabitants increased enormously the last 3 years. In 2007 41% of the inhabitants knew the brand, in 2010 already 77% recognized the brand. This means an increase of 36%, which is by interpreted by marketing professionals as a significant result.