

Vital Rural Area

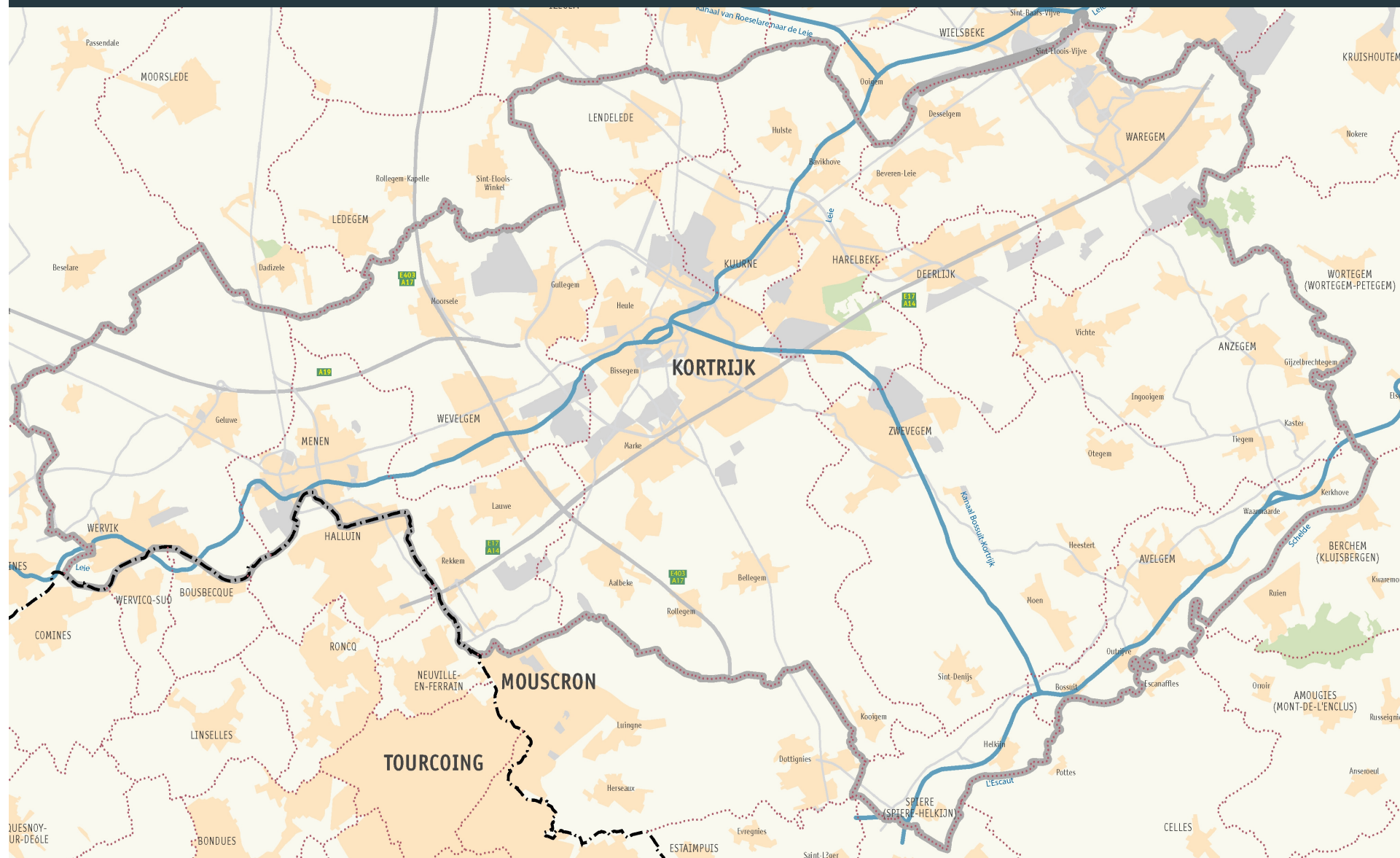
Progress in WP2

Bart Noels, Els Oyaert
Billund, 6 October 2010

"Sterk besturen in een sterke regio"

*is een initiatief van Intercommunale Leiedal en wordt mede gefinancierd in het kader van het
Interreg IVb North Sea Region-project "Vital Rural Area"*





'Sterk Besturen in een sterke regio'



1. Co-operative Agreement Approach:
towards a better and more efficient governmental organisation in the region

2. Ingredients for strategic projects and for building up regional identity
 - space
 - culture
 - entrepreneurship

What is the project about?



Not (only) about regional structures, (local) governments and organisations
(135 networks in the region)

It is about evolutions and trends in society in the past decades

(Leiedal = 50 years)

How to organise the region in order to deal with changes in society and governmental organisation for the coming 50 years?

- by means of stronger networks
- by means of stronger governments (administrative power)
- by means of governments participating in these networks

Identity and Strategy: what's in a name?



Findings after many discussions and debates:

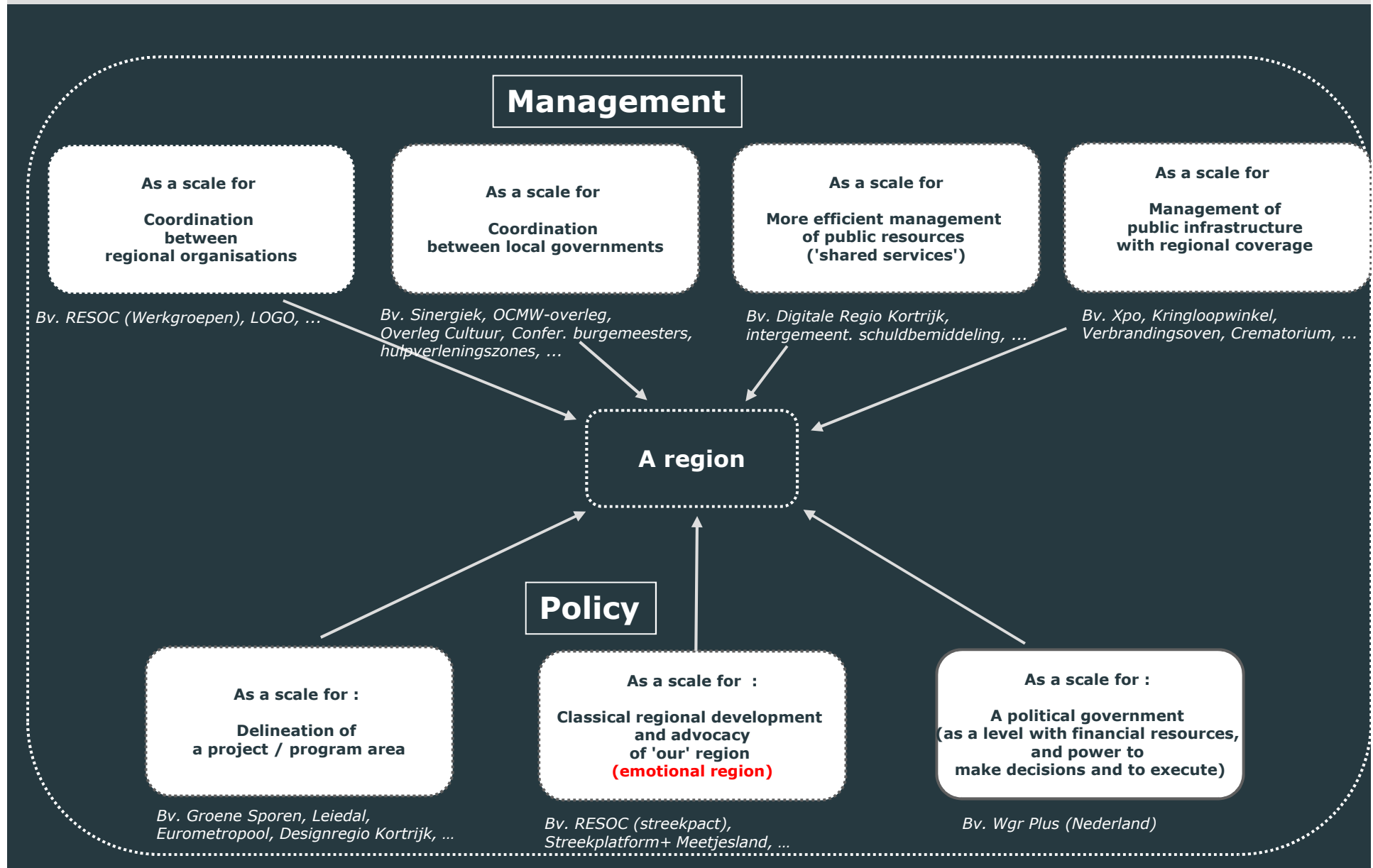
The emotional region

- The identity of this region is different for everyone, is not clear, is not strong, is divers, ...
- This region has no common identity, has a weak internal and external profile

The functional region

- Is very strongly developed. There's a long history of cooperation in the public and private sector. The region is seen as one of the strongest in Flanders.
- We should focus on the development and improvement of the functional region.

'A region': multiform usage and meanings



Looking at regional governance :

3 tracks (principles), 1 strategy

will lead us to strategic and dynamic projects



1

- Community First
- Cultuuroverleg ism private actoren (Buda, ...)
- ...

3

- My Machine
- Projecten Streekfonds
- Buda Libre

Vital coalitions :
cooperation
society - authorities

2

Flexible
powerful
efficient
government

2

- Design Regio Kortrijk
- RESOC
- ...

4

- Strategische groep publieke sector
- ...

3

1

4

Investing
in

'free havens'
(innovation)

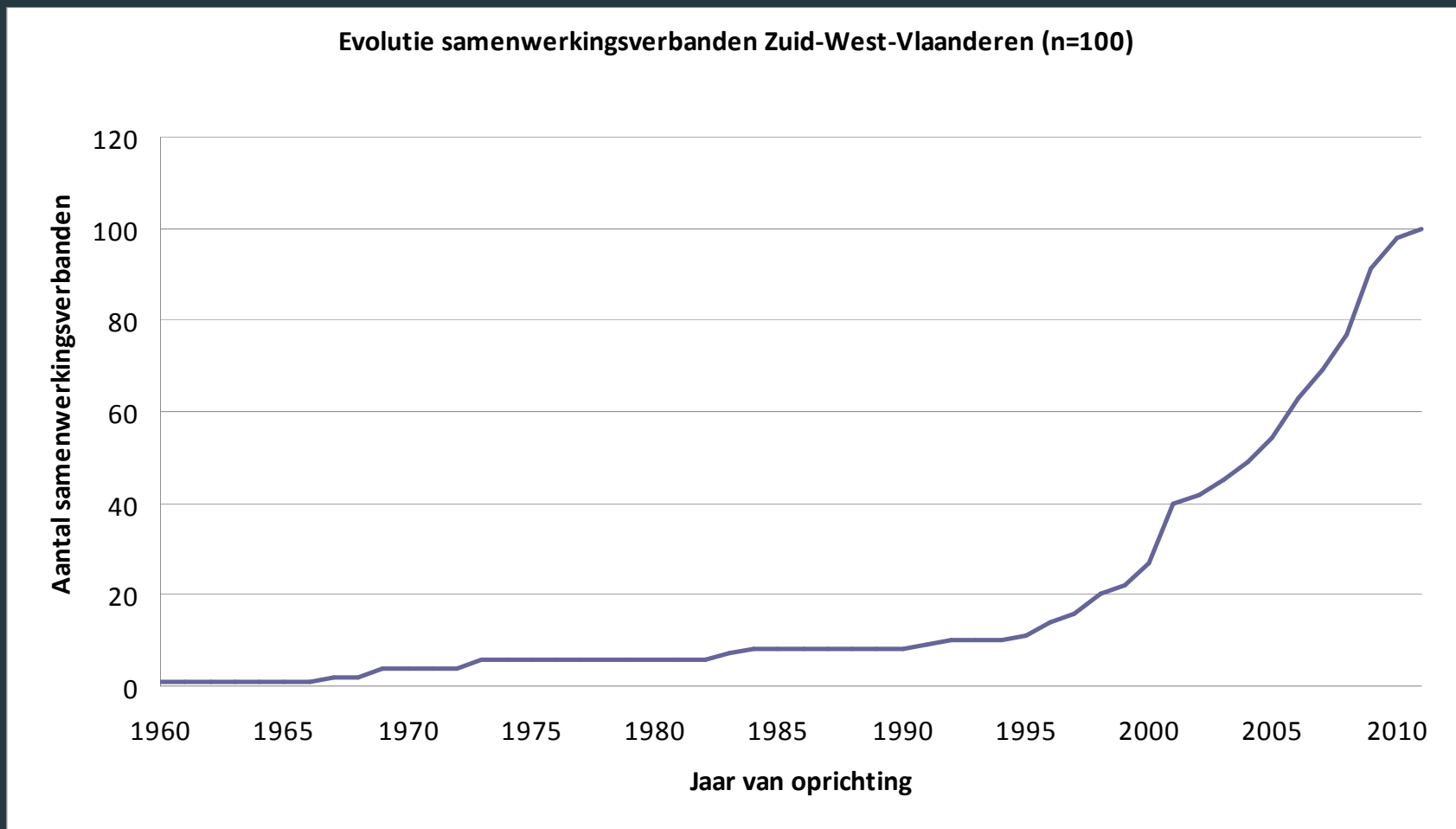
- Vrijplaatsen:
- deels georganiseerd (debatten, ...)
 - deels vrij, laten gebeuren

1. More efficient governmental organisation

Setting up the guidelines for improved networking strategies with:

- Steering comité (25 people)
- Conference of Mayors (13 municipalities)
- Heads of administration Consult (13 municipalities)
- Boards of Leiedal and other regional organisations
- Seminars with the sectors of welfare, culture and economy & education
- Experts on spatial planning
- Employers organisations and entrepreneurs
- Politicians and political parties
- Public Sound board fora (1.000 invitees, 100 present)

Evolution of the number of regional organisations



135 networks

(organisations, structures, governmental partnerships)



- Quantitative: 135 networks / partnerships / organisations (see inventory)
- Qualitative: Weaknesses-Strengths analysis of welfare, health care, social economy, économie, (higher) education, culture

Evaluation : discussions with key persons and organisations:

- Findings, critical points (inventory and interviews) about effectiveness, partners involved, results
- The role of the (local) government
- Evolutions and trends (everything that has ever been created, is never abolished)

Preliminary propositions:

- Mandatory biennial audits (public)
- 'Moratorium' for new networks
- No extension, temporality as standard

2. Ingredients for strategic projects and for building up regional identity



Potential 'carriers' :

- space
- culture
- entrepreneurship

A. Culture



Public organisation: 'Cultuuroverleg Regio Kortrijk': 13 cultural administrators and 13 elderman

Private organisations: initiatives and organisations of art, theater, music, fares, ...

Constatations and critical points:

- Separation between public and private initiatives
- Private organisations centralized in the city of Kortrijk, other municipalities are hardly involved
- The public cooperation is evaluated as positive by its members, but is limited to coordination and exchange of experiences
- General lack of ambition, of big projects with regional and supraregional irradiations

B. Entrepreneurship

1. Role of companies in, with and for the region

- Involvement of companies has almost disappeared, as well as the strong coalitions between CEO's and key politicians ('lobbying in Brussels')
- Evolution from 'a few decision makers' towards 'networks and structures'
- Companies (especially SME's) now have a functional relationship with the region
- Relevant scale : divers (municipality, region, province, Flanders, Europe, ...)

2. Networks/organisations for economic innovation

- Is more and more a public initiative (resources, management)
- More and more oriented towards Flanders and Europe (funds) than towards the needs of companies

3. Organisation / involvement of government

- Companies expect 'services' from government, not only laws and control
- Government should invest pro-actively in quality of living (housing, mobility, ...)

C. Space

- 'The' region does not exist
- A region is the result of projects, programs, dynamic initiatives
- Administrative boundaries are practical and usefull
- Landscape / space could be a carrier for multisectoral projects (the green structure to be coupled to housing projects, industrial zones, mobility, ...)
- This region has (now dispersed) capacity to make strategic spatial plans → will be organised !!

To be continued



- Colloquium on 7 December 2010
- Presentation of conclusions, propositions, scenario's, actions
- Call for commitment in 2011
- Start up of a temporarily change process, driven by a strategic comité ??

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