



The Real Estate Council of
the Netherlands
Ministry of Finance

The Real Estate Council of the Netherlands



Introduction

To carry out its tasks the government of any country needs land and buildings. In the Netherlands, over ten percent of the land is owned by the State: some 400,000 hectares (almost a million acres). In money terms, the State holds real estate property – land and buildings – worth over EUR 60 billion. Six ministries are involved in the buying, selling and managing of State property: the ministries of Finance; Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality; Transport, Public Works & Water Management; Defence; Housing, Spatial Planning & Environment and finally the ministry of Justice. Together, these ministries spend some EUR 800 million annually on land and buildings and sell property worth around EUR 300 million. In other words: the State is the Netherlands' largest property agency. To further strengthen the position of the State in the property market, the Real Estate Council of the Netherlands (RVR) was established in October 2001 as a unitary body in which five ministries collaborated. Since September 2008 there are six ministries collaborating in the RVR.

During the RVR's annual meeting on 10 September 2008, the nine directors of the Dutch government property agencies signed a declaration of intent to underline and improve the co-operation between the agencies. The declaration of intent is to result in a ministerial regulation.

Nine real estate agencies join forces

In the Real Estate Council of the Netherlands nine agencies of six different ministries work together in the buying, selling and managing of property by the State for public purposes. Each individual agency has to deal with many property transactions every year, so bringing them together in the RVR makes the implementation of government policy more effective and more efficient. At the same time, the policies of the individual agencies can be better coordinated, putting the government in a better position to anticipate shifts in the property market. The expertise of the individual agencies is further enhanced through the exchange of knowledge and information. In short, by having its ministries join forces within the RVR, the State is no longer simply the largest player in the Dutch real estate market, it is also a player that operates effectively, efficiently and with cost awareness.

The nine real estate agencies collaborating in the RVR are:

- **Domeinen Onroerende Zaken** (Immovable Property Agency, Ministry of Finance)
- **Dienst Landelijk Gebied** (DLG Service for Land & Water Management, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality)
- **Staatsbosbeheer** (Dutch Forestry Board, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality)
- **Rijkswaterstaat** (Directorate-General for Public Works & Water Management, Ministry of Transport, Public Works & Water Management)
- **ProRail** (Rail Network Operator)
- **Dienst Vastgoed Defensie** (Defence Infrastructure Agency, Ministry of Defence)
- **Rijksgebouwendienst** (Government Buildings Agency, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning & Environment)
- **Gemeenschappelijk Ontwikkelingsbedrijf** (Joint State Development Agency)
- **Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers** (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, Ministry of Justice)



The following is a brief overview of each agency's remit

Domeinen Onroerende Zaken (Immovable Property Agency)

Domeinen Onroerende Zaken is part of the Ministry of Finance and represents the State as the owner of buildings and lands. The Department's core tasks are: the sale of real estate; the management and leasing of real property which cannot or cannot yet be sold, and the payment of property taxes etc. due on property held by the State. The Domeinen Onroerende Zaken manages a total of 1.6 million hectares of land and water, comprising 92% water and 8% land. The water includes the Waddenzee, the territorial North Sea and the rivers with their flood plains and dikes. In 2007 the Domeinen realised proceeds of 253 million euros from the sale of immovable property, of which 110 million euros were obtained from the sale of agricultural land. The total revenue in 2007 amounted to 435 million euros.

The Immovable Property Agency and the Joint State Development Agency (see further below) will be merged by July 2009.

Dienst Landelijk Gebied

(DLG Service for Land & Water Management)

Dienst Landelijk Gebied is an agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). The Dienst Landelijk Gebied is committed to cooperation in finding solutions that satisfy the demands of local authorities and citizens, and which also take an area's specific features into account. When developing open spaces for recreation, nature, water management and agriculture, the Dienst Landelijk Gebied translates and implements abstract policy into tangible projects. To achieve this, the agency acquires land, redevelops it and then transfers it to administrative authorities and individual farmers. DLG also pools various financial resources and has a detailed knowledge of available subsidies. Within a project, DLG works on behalf of several government authorities. Its extensive network of government authorities and organisations facilitates the realisation of these projects. The Dienst Landelijk Gebied purchases approximately 4,500 hectares of land annually (and some buildings). The Dienst Landelijk Gebied aims to sell/transfer approximately 4,000 hectares to parties that will take

responsibility for the conservation of these hectares. 500-1000 hectares per year are used to promote exchange processes. In effect, these hectares are sold to farmers.

Staatsbosbeheer (Dutch Forestry Board)

Staatsbosbeheer manages 246,000 hectares of nature reserves in the Netherlands. 40 percent of this area is forest, 32 percent is grassland, 10 percent is open water and 4 percent is fields. 135,000 grazing animals (cows, horses, goats and sheep) assist with the day-to-day management of our nature reserves. Staatsbosbeheer manages nature reserves in 15 of the 20 National Parks in the Netherlands. There are 80 green areas where you can camp out in the middle of nature. Every year the employees of Staatsbosbeheer fell 165 hectares of forest throughout the Netherlands – an area the size of 330 football pitches – and replant an area the same size, unless the trees have been cleared to create space for other landscapes. Staatsbosbeheer manages 26 duck decoys, 31 forts, 59 bunkers and 1,685 archaeological monuments, which include burial mounds, megalithic tombs, settlements remains and historic country estates.

Rijkswaterstaat

(Directorate-General for Public Works & Water Management)

The Rijkswaterstaat is part of the Ministry of Transport, Public Works & Water Management. It has four main tasks: protecting the Netherlands against flooding; securing the supply of clean water for all users; the construction, management and maintenance of the nation's roads and waterways; and securing the swift and safe passage of rail and road traffic. As the authority responsible for custodianship of the nation's infrastructure (3260 km of main road network, 1686 km of main waterway network and 65.250 km² of main watersystem) the Directorate-General owns a great deal of real estate property. It is also an active partner in the acquisition and disposal of land for purposes relating to infrastructural development. In this context it has numerous contacts both with the private sector and with other government departments and authorities.

ProRail (Rail Network Operator)

ProRail is the operator of the Netherlands' railway lines, shunting yards etc. and the associated facilities and installations, station platforms and platform canopies, bridges, flyovers and station transfer areas. ProRail is charged by the Ministry of Transport, Public Works & Water Management with a number of closely interwoven tasks which include capacity management, traffic control, stewardship and maintenance, new construction and consultancy on the expansion and functionality of the rail network. The State is the sole shareholder in ProRail.

Dienst Vastgoed Defensie (Defence Infrastructure Agency)

The Dienst Vastgoed Defensie is an agency of the Ministry of Defence. It is both a property manager and an engineering office. The Agency's task is to ensure that at all times the armed forces have access to the property they need for the exercise of their operational and logistical tasks both in providing defence capability for the Netherlands and in their roles within NATO and other alliances and for the UN. For the Ministry the Agency is also involved in the preparation of policy, factoring, and advising in the area of spatial planning, the environment and real estate policy.

Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency)

The Rijksgebouwendienst is an agency of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning & Environment. Its chief task is to provide appropriate accommodation for government departments and agencies by acquiring and managing buildings, and through the provision of advisory and accommodation services. The agency's remit also includes urban construction, management of listed monuments, architectural design, architecture policy and art projects. The agency works for all ministries and in some circumstances also for third parties vested with the powers of government such as autonomous administrative authorities. The Rijksgebouwendienst is responsible for approximately 1,900 buildings with a combined floor space of 6 million square metres. Their estimated value (including land) is approximately 9 billion euro. The Rijksgebouwendienst owns 75% of these buildings and rents the other 25%. That makes the Rijksgebouwendienst the largest real-estate company in the Netherlands.

Gemeenschappelijk Ontwikkelingsbedrijf

(GOB, Joint State Development Agency)

The Gemeenschappelijk Ontwikkelingsbedrijf is an area development organization of the Dutch government. The GOB develops and acts on behalf of seven different ministries. The GOB-projects are large scale and complex spatial projects in which the government has multiple spatial and property objectives. The overall aim is to achieve effective objectives and



affordable solutions that improve spatial quality and help safeguard that quality on the long term.

Examples of GOB-projects are:

- The expansion of the city of Almere: the largest housing project in the Netherlands for the next two decades (60.000 houses, 10.000 jobs);
- Valkenburg: transformation of a naval air base into an attractive residential area largely meant to accommodate international businessmen who work for global companies;
- Klavertje 4: development and enforcement of agribusiness through the sustainable development of glasshouses and agri-logistics and investments in nature and landscape.

The seven ministries are: Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment; Defence; Economic Affairs; Finance; Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; Education, Culture and Science; Transport, Public Works and Water Management.

Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers

(Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers)

The Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers in the Netherlands since 1994. The Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers provides accommodation during the asylum procedure and coaches asylum seekers either for staying in the Netherlands, returning to their country of origin, or transmigration. The Centraal Orgaan Opvang



Asielzoekers has reception and accommodation expertise to be applied in accordance with housing and coaching developments in the Netherlands and Europe. This has made the Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers an organization with significant social involvement. The Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers is an independent entity instructed by the Ministry of Justice to ensure sufficient reception capacity for asylum seekers who are admitted to the asylum procedure. The Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers manages over 50 locations throughout the Netherlands spread across eight clusters. Two-thirds of the housing portfolio consists of a wide variety of permanent buildings, like: monasteries, recreational parks, boarding schools, retirement homes etc. these are sometimes supplemented by temporary buildings. One-third of the locations consist solely of temporary buildings, mainly unit-/system buildings, as well as caravans.

Facts and Figures

- Over 50 locations spread across the Netherlands;
- Combination ownership/lease around 60%-40%;
- Total approx. 550.000-m2 gross floor space, parcel space approx. 300 hectares.

Real Estate Council Directorate

The Real Estate Council Directorate was established within the Ministry of Finance to support the Real Estate Council. The Directorate implements decisions of the RVR and can place items on the RVR's agenda. Apart from the director – who is also the Secretary of the RVR – the Directorate consists of representatives seconded from the agencies collaborating in the RVR. The people of the Directorate thus form as it were a bridge between their agencies and the RVR. Consultative structures at several levels ensure good communication between the ministries concerned and the nine agencies' regional directorates. The remit of the Real Estate Council Directorate – put simply – is that it deals with all matters relating to real estate held by the State in so far as they concern more than two ministries. A high proportion of the work of the Directorate consists of coordinating and supporting the activities of the nine government agencies collaborating in the RVR. At the same time the Directorate is charged with managing

the budget for anticipatory purchasing of land. Externally the Directorate represents the collective interests of 'the property sector' of central government. It also conducts consultations with other government authorities and institutions which are largely financed out of public funds. The Directorate supports and oversees projects initiated by the RVR according to a schedule of work which is subject to annual ministerial approval.

Work Schedule

The RVR announces its activities in its Work Schedule. The Schedule distinguishes several areas of attention as outlined below.

A Area development

The RVR (Real Estate Council) wants to contribute substantially towards making a success of area development. To that end, it will identify possibilities for cooperation at regional level and coordinate the cooperation process. The RVR invests in the professionalization of project consulting at the study stage of project planning. In order to ensure an expeditious start of area management at their implementation stage, the RVR will coordinate specific implementation and management issues such as project management, risk management and the set of instruments to be used. The RVR pays special attention to the implementation of new legislation and provides advice to the government on adapting existing legislation to remove acknowledged bottlenecks.

B Creating and maintaining consultative structures

The RVR sees to good collaboration and coordination between the various property departments and agencies at the central and regional levels. It engages in efforts based on mutual agreement to arrive at close collaboration with other bodies active in the property market on a national or regional basis, in respect of e.g. the purchase and disposal of property. No alliances are sought with other tiers of government such as the Provinces or municipalities: rather, the emphasis is on good information exchange.

The RVR is interested in contacts with a number of EU member states to evaluate whether knowledge and experience gained there can be useful to its own policy.

C Making available, developing, transferring and using knowledge

Knowledge is an important factor for success in conducting good property transactions. Making the best possible use of the knowledge available is one of the RVR's priorities. The RVR investigates the activities of the nine property agencies and charts ways in which they can benefit from each other's expertise, market knowledge and effectiveness. A supradepartmental 'bank of specialists' is being set up to collect and disseminate knowledge in the field of the environment in relation to property. A similar activity is under consideration for knowledge in the field of compulsory purchase and land acquisition by amicable settlement. The RVR organises study days, develops training courses and publishes a guide to property courses.

D Making accessible and exchanging real property information

The nine property agencies need information on the policy plans and property holdings of the ministries concerned with property. One of the objects of the RVR is to improve the property agencies' information provision so as to provide a full and accurate picture, in a geographically based information (GIS) system, of State property holdings, policy plans and plans for acquisitions and disposals.

E The Policy Framework for Anticipatory Action and the management of the loan facility

The annual budget made available for the Anticipatory Action loan facility is administered by the Real Estate Council Directorate. Applications for projects can be made by the property agencies. By making greater use of property strategies it is possible to employ the instrument of Anticipatory Action in a more planned and strategic way. Purchasing and disposal strategies are developed in national and regional projects.

F Making strategy and policy

The RVR drafts recommendations in a number of areas. These include the integrated planning of acquisitions and disposals, venture capital investments in land management projects, project development with other authorities and in public-private partnership schemes, broadening the Anticipatory Action Policy Framework, and disposal policy.

If you would like more information about the real estate departments participating in the Real Estate Council of the Netherlands you may contact them at the following addresses

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Ministry of Finance Domeinen Onroerende Zaken

www.domeinenz.nl

Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality Dienst Landelijk Gebied

www.minlnv.nl/pls/portal/url/page/dlg

Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality Staatsbosbeheer

www.staatsbosbeheer.nl

Ministry of Transport, Public Works & Water Management Directorate-General for Public Works & Water Management

www.rijkswaterstaat.nl

ProRail

www.prorail.nl

Ministry of Defence Dienst Vastgoed Defensie

www.mindef.nl

Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning & Environment Rijksgebouwendienst (Government Buildings Agency)

www.minvrom.nl

www.rijksgebouwendienst.nl

Gemeenschappelijk Ontwikkelingsbedrijf

www.minvrom.nl/gob

Ministry of Justice Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers

www.coa.nl