

Summary of the strategic agendas of the Metropolitan Region Rotterdam The Hague (MRDH)

In the Southern Randstad (the urban agglomeration of Western Netherlands) 23 local authorities bundle their forces in the Metropolitan Region Rotterdam The Hague (MRDH). The local authorities work together to improve accessibility and strengthen the economic business climate.

MRDH has two strategic agendas (available in Dutch only):

- [Strategic Accessibility Agenda of the Transport Authority](#)
- [Economic Business Climate Agenda](#) + [Economic Business Climate Work Program](#)

The goals of the two MRDH strategic agendas on accessibility and economic business climate complement each other and come together in the operational and practical implementation.

The opportunities in the region are legion: the strong international orientation, a diverse economic structure that encompasses the epicentres of all of the top sectors, the presence of four top universities and various colleges of higher education and the proximity of nature areas to the largest city centres ensure that this region has an extremely good position in the international competitive struggle between metropolitan areas.

In spite of this good initial position, economic performance lags behind comparable regions in the Netherlands. The MRDH economy is growing less than in the metropolitan regions of Amsterdam and Eindhoven. The large cities in the MRDH are faced with persistent unemployment, far higher than the national average. In addition, various important and dominant economic sectors are on the threshold of a major period of renewal.

As with all large metropolitan areas in the world, the MRDH is under the influence of a number of determining global trends. These trends offer opportunities, and make it necessary to take joint action. Five trends have direct influence on the economic future of the MRDH:

1. Metropolis formation: the increasing importance of municipal regions means that the international competitive position of a country is no longer determined at the national, but at the municipal/regional level. Now, the municipal regions compete, not the countries.
2. Knowledge economy: the production and exchange of knowledge is playing an increasingly important role in economic systems. Effectively operating metropolitan areas are pre-eminently the places where knowledge is produced and exchanged.
3. The arrival of intelligent manufacturing industries: new manufacturing methods are once more making it profitable to manufacture in 'high wage countries', close to the sales markets. The emergence of robotics, 3D printing and industrial internet applications reinforce this trend.

4. Ecologising of the economy: managing raw materials and other resources economically is increasingly becoming an economic necessity. The transition to more sustainable manufacturing methods offers the existing industrial complexes excellent opportunities and major challenges.
5. The city as an attractive area of consumption: the city and the surrounding area, with a rich offering of facilities and culture, is increasingly the place where people want to live and to spend both their free time and their money.

These five trends are fundamentally changing the playing field in which the local authorities in the MRDH must operate. The local authorities are using the Strategic Accessibility Agenda and the Economic Business Climate Agenda to address the challenges and opportunities for this region related to these trends in the area of economic development, with the ambition to ensure that:

"In 2025, the metropolitan region of Rotterdam and The Hague will be the international market leader in the design, development, manufacture and marketing of solutions in the area of sustainable living in a heavily urbanised delta region. In the region, coherent solutions will be devised, tested and produced for global logistic, energy, food and safety issues."

The local authorities in the MRDH are very ambitious. The ambition they have can only be realised if they work together in a different way where all of the parties involved contribute from their own roles. Only the bundled strengths of the metropolitan local authorities provide enough mass to effectively anticipate and respond to the leading global economic trends and to shape the further integration of the region. The Metropolitan region begins by creating the conditions and with them a healthy climate for public business development. Working together in the Metropolitan region – voluntarily and without a hierarchical structure – demands a mind-set from the administrators and government officials that is based on the conviction that the value contributed by everyone in the process will be recognised and acknowledged, and that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Concerning the Traffic and Transport Agenda, MRDH sets up the following goals:

1. Competitive economy: the MRDH contributes to the competitive economy from within the transport and traffic goals, by improving the internal and external accessibility of the core areas of the region.
2. Quality of places: MRDH is working on the quality of internationally competitive places and of other relevant locations for living and working by improving the attractiveness and accessibility of those locations regarding Traffic and Transport.
3. Chances for people: MRDH is busy with increasing chances for people by ensuring that they get access to work and facilities within acceptable time and for reasonable price.
4. Sustainable region: MRDH is busy with developing a future-proof, cleaner, less noisy and more economical transport system.

5. Efficient and cost-effective: MRDH is busy developing a cost-efficient and cost-effective transport system by optimal use of the available transport system and the surrounding space.

Concerning the Economic Business Climate Agenda, it covers the following areas:

1. Work locations – an effectively operating spatial structure (retail establishments, offices and industrial estates), where the demand is in balance with the supply, where there is space for companies to grow, where cluster formation is supported and where there are also sufficient facilities in the smaller centres.
2. Energy infrastructure – a sustainable, metropolis-wide energy infrastructure 'grid' to exploit scale and efficiency advantages and to make the development of new technologies possible in practice.
3. Branding – a clear branding strategy for the entire region: a common flag under which all of the brands can unite, while promoting their own identity, with the goal of attracting more (international) visitors, (international) companies and congresses.
4. Cluster formation – establishing a strong economic network comprising companies and knowledge institutes within the metropolitan region, leading to successful crossovers between companies from the various clusters, sectors and regions within the metropolitan region. The goal is to promote economic diversification and the retention and growth of employment opportunities and incomes in the longer term.
5. Financing – investment propositions to link Dutch and foreign financiers – public and private – to initiatives in the metropolitan region.
6. Education and the labour market – a long-term strategy intended to create a flexible and well-educated working population with the knowledge and skills that effectively match the demand from the regional clusters, and a labour market that functions in such a way that there is sufficient mobility of employees between companies and sectors.
7. New economic carriers for the rural area – higher quality, more diverse and more specialised facilities in the region. Tourism and recreation will become, alongside the agricultural sector, a new economic carrier for the rural area.
8. Connectivity – linking mobility challenges to development of urban areas and economic sectors