

---

## Presentation WSI Westerkwartier NL

- The region Westerkwartier
- The beginning: universities work in the region
- A new regional network: WSI Westerkwartier
- Acceleration: Countryside Exchange
- Facilitation: Plattelandshuis Westerkwartier
- Operational: Knowledge Workplace Westerkwartier
- Coming soon: Regional Cooperative Westerkwartier
- Conclusions

## The region Westerkwartier

- **Location:**  
**Top of Holland:**  
**Province of Groningen**
- **4 municipalities**  
**population roughly 60.000**
- **One of the oldest man-made  
landscapes of Europe**



## “Bridge to the Future”

Wageningen University

Van Hall Institute & Larenstein

- Involvement of students in broad rural development issues and questions started a dialogue between farmers and foresters and resulted in a local group of active and engaged people of a range of organizations (WSI Westerkwartier).
- Presentation of results became bigger every year, including presentations of local initiatives and project ideas.



## WSI Westerkwartier



### ‘Working group Regional Initiatives Westerkwartier’

#### Core themes:

- Landscape maintenance and nature development
- Farming and farm strategies
- Watermanagement
- Culture and history
- Recreation and Tourism
- Liveableness / Quality of Life



Left: Nico Boele, the informal leader of the WSI

## Countryside Exchange as an accelerator

The ingredients: CE-method, EU-network ENLDT, regional network WSI

The question of the region:

“Which conditions, opportunities and threats for integral development of the region are present? How can conditions be created and opportunities be seized?”



The results:

- reflection, valuable advice, confirmed and unexpected ideas, appraisal
- encouragement, inspiration, empowerment
- more cooperation, new links, European feeling, regional awareness

## Plattelandshuis Westerkwartier as a facilitator (‘rural development house’)

Facilitating bottom–up initiatives for the provincial Program Rural Area

Support and advice from idea to project to product

Supplying funds up to € 10.000 / project

### Multi-disciplinary team

- recruited from province, municipalities and other organizations
- villages and community facilities
- tourism and recreation
- business and entrepreneurship
- agriculture and regional products
- educational institutes
- financial support programs



## Plattelandscafé ('Rural Café')

*Ideas, projects, contacts, drinks, new links, inspiration, .....*

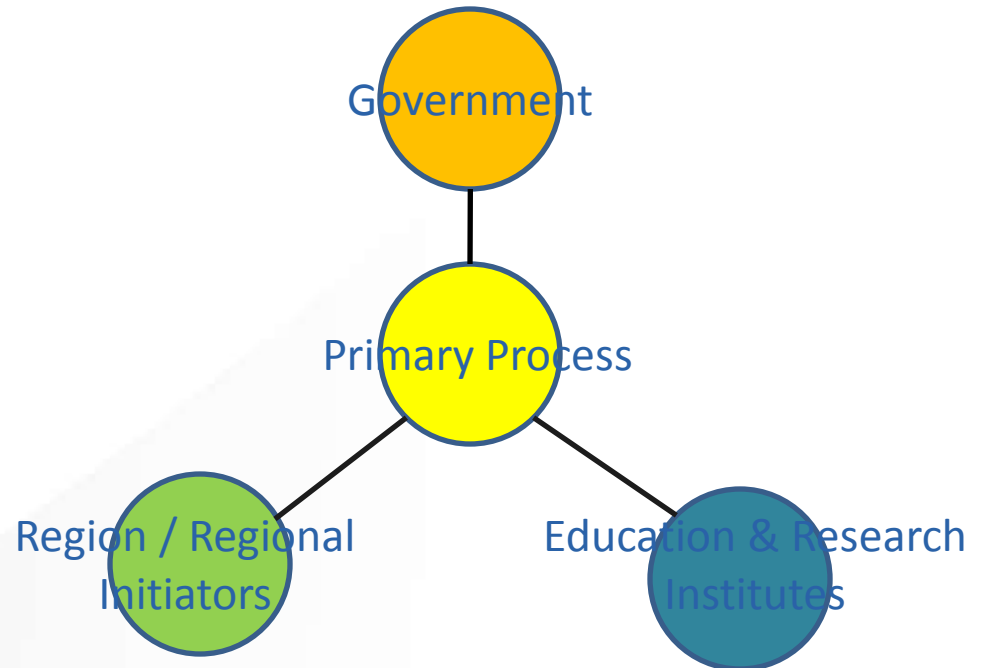


# Regional Learning Arrangements Westerkwartier

## Werkplaats Westerkwartier

## Regional Transition

### The motor of regional cooperation ...



... is the primary process



## Creating a learning and knowledge framework per region



## Regional Cooperative Westerkwartier



A new way of cooperating

A new way of organising

Develop new perspectives

New relationships

Integral approach

Regional challenges leading

## Regional Learning Evaluated

- 50 students in a five-year period
- active regional network WSI
- Leader Westerkwartier  
(the local group (LAG) consisting for 65% of WSI-members)
- Plattelandshuis Westerkwartier ('rural development house')  
facilitating regional development



**The co-operation of Westerkwartier with Wageningen University, Van Hall Larenstein e.a. is of great mutual interest.**

## Factors of success

- Leadership and vision
- Initiative and self-efficacy
- Involvement and commitment
- Mutual confidence
- Learning region
- Smart combinations of themes and partners
- Long-lasting alliances
- New roles and structures



---

**Thank You ....**

**and see you in Westerkwartier, some day**