



**Working together  
to build a strong brand  
for the Maastricht Region**



MAASTRICHT REGION BRANDING FOUNDATION

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# Working together to build a strong brand



## Maastricht Region Branding Implementation Plan 2009-2012

### Introduction, prior history

The Maastricht Region has an excellent reputation in terms of tourism and recreation. Our strength lies in our *joie de vivre*. But that is also a limitation – it means we have a poor image when it comes to housing, work, innovation and investment.

As a result, the level of investment and population trends lag behind the Dutch average. The regional population is declining and the Maastricht Region is 38<sup>th</sup> out of 40 Dutch regions in the economic rankings.

In early 2007, the Province of Limburg grabbed the bull by the horns and asked former DSM CEO Peter Elverding, chairman of the Water Board and former mayor of Venlo Jan Schrijen, and top restaurant and hotel owner Camille Oostwegel to investigate the possibility of setting up a PPP (public-private partnership) between the public authorities and businesses in the Maastricht Region. The aim of the PPP would be to establish a regional reputation that would help turn the tide. The three gentlemen produced a business plan,\* a baseline measure, an initial campaign concept, an organisation, and a budget of approximately EUR 2 million a year for four years.

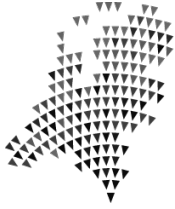
### The Maastricht Region's image

A baseline measure was conducted in 2008 into the image of the Maastricht Region. Carried out by Flycatcher,\* it showed that the Maastricht Region is regarded as a nice place to visit, but not as a suitable place to live or work. The measure compares the Maastricht Region with competing regions from the Berenschot business case\* on a number of aspects. Those regions are: the Breda-Tilburg region, the Basle region, the Liège region, the Eindhoven region, the Amsterdam/Rotterdam/Utrecht conurbation (the 'Randstad' region), the Eifel and Ardennes region, the Ruhr region, and the Aachen region.

### Research among Dutch people

In terms of image, the Maastricht region is no. 1 among the regions listed above on the aspects 'gastronomy and holiday accommodation'. It is no. 2 in terms of its European appeal (trailing the Randstad Region), and is also well placed in offering a healthy balance between work and private life (no. 2, after the Breda-Tilburg region). And yet, 0% of those surveyed said that they would like to live or work in the Maastricht Region. Only a very few associate the region with top technology, an innovative creative industry, or as a good location for businesses. That is why compared to the regions listed above, the Maastricht Region has a poor reputation when it comes to innovation and the production of high-tech products (6%, making it one of the bottom regions), a multifaceted labour market and good career prospects (5%, the lowest score except for the Ardennes/Eifel and Liège)

Conclusion: The Dutch see the Maastricht Region as a nice place to visit, but not as a suitable region in which to live and work.



### **Research among the regional population**

The Maastricht Region scores much better among its own inhabitants when it comes to technology, innovation and career prospects. Local people are evidently proud of their region, but they naturally also have a better understanding of what it has to offer. We can use this point in our communication strategy: we can turn around the region's image by making its strengths visible.

### **The Maastricht Region: work/life balance**

Economic research has shown for some time now that the principle of 'the people follow the work' has been replaced by 'the work follows the people'. Companies choose to locate where there are suitable employees available.

It is therefore important to understand what motivates people with secondary and higher educational qualifications. People in their twenties are often eager for adventure. They put everything they have into their careers, or they enjoy the excitement of the big city, or they want to travel and see something of the world. The rest is less important to them. Once they are in their thirties, they make other demands on space and affordable housing. They want good schools for their children, but they also want cultural facilities nearby, and a good job, of course. But work is not everything to them: they look at the overall quality of life.

### **Mercer index**

The renowned Mercer Institute has developed a worldwide standard, known as the quality of life index. The institute investigates the 'total quality of life' according to dozens of indicators, clustered into a number of different categories: Political and social environment, Economic environment, Socio-cultural environment, Health and sanitation, Schools and education, Public services and transportation, Recreation, Consumer goods, Housing and Natural environment

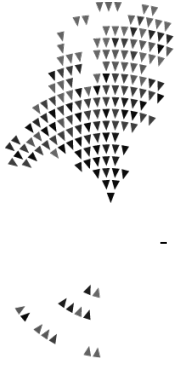
Here too, work is important, but it isn't everything. Adhering to this principle makes the global top ten locations a surprise, on the one hand– they do not include New York, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Shanghai or Barcelona, for example – but rather obvious on the other. Just try purchasing a house with ground-level access and a garden in one of these metropolises for EUR 275,000. That is something that most people in their thirties with secondary or higher education consider important to their quality of life. The Mercer top 10 consists of regions that score well in all the various categories without peaking in any one. Those regions, listed from bottom to top, are: Sydney, Bern, Frankfurt, Munich, Düsseldorf, Auckland, Vancouver, Geneva, Vienna, and, as number 1, Zurich.

This list is good news for the Maastricht Region: we too score well when it comes to the overall quality of life, but we do not excel in any one category in particular.

### **Target group**

This perspective enables us to delineate the target group that will be the focus of the Maastricht Region's campaign in the next four years:

- people between 30 and 55, because they have a broad definition of the quality of life: work is important, but it isn't everything;
- people with a secondary or higher educational qualification, because it is easier for them to decide to embark on a new life;



- people who live in the Randstad Region, because of the acute housing shortage and poor quality of life there.

The target group (people living in the provinces of North and South Holland and Utrecht; secondary, higher professional or university graduates; age 30 to 55) numbers 2,426,000.

*The Dutch Government's Randstad Strategic Structure Agenda for 2040 [Structuurvisie Randstad 2040] sets out plans to build 500,000 new homes in the Randstad Region '...in order to combat the deterioration in the quality of life, the effects of climate change and the accessibility problems'. Most experts agree: those homes cannot be of the quality and category (generally with access at ground level) that will appeal to well-educated people looking to start a family. As we know, the population in the Maastricht Region is shrinking and it therefore has a wide array of affordable homes available, as well as schools and healthcare facilities. There is also much less traffic congestion in the Maastricht Region.*

### **Objective**

The main purpose of region branding is to extend the Maastricht's Region's reputation for *joie de vivre* to include 'the ideal work/life balance'. In that way, the region will be seen not only as an attractive holiday destination, but also a great place to live.

The image we want to achieve has been described in the Maastricht Region Urban Network\* policy document as an 'Innovative Community in perfect Work/Life Balance' (harmony). If we take the word 'perfect' literally, then our objective should be to have the Maastricht Region at no. 1 on the Mercer Index. That may be somewhat unrealistic, but it does offer us a guidepost.

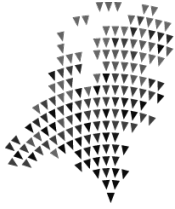
### **Message**

The message should emphasise those aspects of the region's current image that have been ignored, balancing them against the existing strengths in our reputation. For example, the Berenschot Business Plan\* identifies five 'priorities' that should be made tangible and provable:

1. Innovation and high-tech materials
2. Quality of the living environment
3. Quality of gastronomy and holiday accommodation
4. European location
5. Maastricht (symbolizing urban quality)

We have identified four basic principles for the Maastricht Region's message in the years ahead:

1. Work/life harmony will have to be achieved by emphasising innovation/career opportunities and living environment/housing. Culture plays an important role in this, because it is evidence of an urban lifestyle ('city experience'). That is something that sets the Maastricht Region apart from traditional 'slow living' regions.
2. The Maastricht Region should **always** convey the 'harmony' message because it cannot compete adequately with other regions on separate aspects. It can, however, compete in terms of the overall package that it offers.



3. Content-wise, the message should concentrate on priority 1 in the Acceleration Agenda 2008 – 2011,<sup>\*</sup> which identifies three growth engines for the Maastricht Region: top referral care, solar energy systems, and the research & business campus. It also identifies two growth potentials: toxicogenomics and high-field brain imaging.
4. The Maastricht Region story should not be watered down too much; the Maastricht region itself must provide the basic identity. Nevertheless, the idea is to work from an 'open house' concept: in certain sectors (e.g. jobs and tourism), regional boundaries are less relevant.

### Resources

'Campaigning' is important, but it is equally vital to support existing products. After all, if their communication clout can boost and promote the reputation of the Maastricht Region in the way we envisage, their impact may be more effective (and efficient) than advertising ourselves. TEFAF, Pinkpop, André Rieu, WMC or Cultura Nova can generate so much free publicity that their effect surpasses that of paid publicity. The same is true of sporting events and sports heroes.

It is important to also apply this strategy to the 'priorities' that have been invisible until now, such as innovation. Promising initiatives, for example 'Chemistry Night' or the Industrion/Discovery Center, may lead to more name recognition and therefore enhance the reputation of the Maastricht Region for this priority. We should investigate this and, if feasible, support it from within the context of region branding.

### Internet

This is the *pièce de résistance*. The traffic generated by zuid limburg.nl or maastrichtregion.com will be channelled into three divisions (housing, living, working) based on the five priorities. In order to avoid overlaps and ensure that the content is always complete and up to date, we are seeking regional partners to participate in one of the divisions. They would include Banenrijk Limburg, the Tourist Information Offices, or Funda Wonen. Our aim is to present the most complete picture possible.

### South Limburg or Limburg?

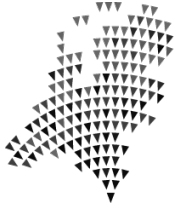
The Meuse belongs to everyone in Limburg, our local language and our unique culture unite us from Eijsden in the south to Mookerhei in the north, the hills do not end at Noorbeek, the Meuse Lakes are a key tourist attraction for the entire province, and every job in the Province of Limburg and the Euroregion counts toward the total.

In that sense, the references in our Dutch campaign to *Zuid-Limburg* [South Limburg] are clearly based on an 'open house' approach. The area known as South Limburg has a number of 'unique selling points' in the province, with distinctive features that have both a national but, most of all, an international appeal. Our early region branding efforts were based on this identity, without our losing sight of the broader context, the attractions of the rest of Limburg and its Euroregional surroundings.

It would now be a good idea to broaden that identity as much as possible, with efforts being made to achieve maximum synergies with Central Limburg and North Limburg and the Euroregion.

### South Limburg or the Maastricht Region?

Internationally, the name 'Maastricht' (14 million hits on Google) has a bigger brand impact than 'Zuid-Limburg' or 'South Limburg' (1.6 million hits).



That is why outside the Dutch borders, the region is positioned as the Maastricht Region.



There appears to be sufficient evidence to support this decision. The Flycatcher\* baseline measure showed that when South Limburgers are abroad and have to explain where they come from, they tend to refer to 'Maastricht' (46%) rather than to South Limburg (16%).

The name South Limburg is well known in the Netherlands, and so that name has been retained in the Dutch campaign.

### **Critical success factors**

Region branding can only succeed if all the parties in the Maastricht Region agree to cooperate in various areas in order to convey a common message. The reputation of the Maastricht Region depends on the companies, institutions and media within that region. Each one has its own responsibilities, but there are a number of underlying CSFs that apply to them all. They are:

#### *Unity*

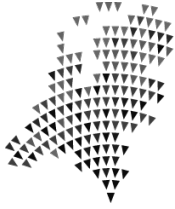
Whatever the case may be, the Maastricht Region has an excellent position when it comes to the 'quality of life' priority. To appeal to the target group (e.g. people living in the Randstad Region) in terms of career opportunities and 'city experience', all the strengths of the Maastricht Region must be presented as a single whole. What we are talking about is a region of only 600,000 inhabitants, a minimum size for achieving our ambitions (i.e. acquiring a position in the national and international landscape). Local people adopted this attitude to the Maastricht Region long ago. They live, work, enjoy their leisure time and spend their money on consumables and culture throughout the entire region, paying little attention to municipal boundaries.

Public authorities, however, do not always think in these terms. Business investment policy and public affairs are organised at municipal level, even though people hardly care which municipality they work in, as long as their jobs are reasonably close to home. It is important for businesses to settle in the location that offers them the most advantages. Every job in the Maastricht Region is a potential job for every local person. That is why the business investment officers in the larger municipalities will present themselves as a team on the website [zuidlimburg.nl/maastrichtregion.com](http://zuidlimburg.nl/maastrichtregion.com).

Municipalities within the Maastricht Region will also have to specialise if the region is to excel. That means that the municipal authorities must together coordinate the Maastricht Region's development agenda: the Urban Network. They should not all be doing the same things, because that only leads to mediocrity. They should select specific areas in which to excel. The *first critical success factor* for our marketing campaign is to communicate – and have the target group experience – the Maastricht Region as a single, horseshoe-shaped city with a large, splendid park in its centre.

#### *Self-confidence*

We have a treasure in our own backyard, but we do too little with it. The products conceived or made in the Maastricht Region have global appeal, and include the material that goes into making iPods, solar cell automobiles, and a sailing boat that won silver at the Olympics. But too few people know about them. It is crucial that we stop being so modest (falsely or not); if what we aim to do is transform our image from being 'only for fun' to 'living *and* working, life *and* sciences', then we must advertise our achievements.



The same applies to some people's tendency to label setbacks as 'predictable'. We must naturally get to the bottom of any corruption affair or hospital virus, but these are things that happen in every region, and should not be regarded by the press or politicians as 'typical of Limburg'. It's easy to acquire a poor reputation, and very difficult to change it.

#### *Travel links*

It has been true since Roman times that people will accept a maximum travel time of 72 minutes between economically linked centres. If the Maastricht Region wants to improve its interaction with the Randstad Region, and convince the last few hold-outs, then it will have to invest in its transport links. If the 72-minute maximum is still impossible by rail, then it must be made available by air. We need to perform a cost-benefit analysis for frequent (every 3 hours) and inexpensive (maximum EUR 50 for a single) airline service to see whether the investment will produce the necessary return in terms of extra inhabitants. This is something quite separate from the region branding assignment, but we mention it here because it is vital to our success with the target group.

## Activities and products

The Maastricht Region Branding Foundation develops activities and products according to a programme that is adopted annually by its Management Board. The activities and products are grouped into the following categories:

### **1. Campaign Policy and Corporate Identity**

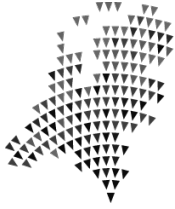
The signature image produced by Elverding, Schrijen and Oostwegel will be used in the national campaign 'Everything Points to Maastricht Region'. It should be noted that using the term 'logo' for the signature image has led to some confusion. The image of the hand pointing downward with the text 'Everything Points to Maastricht Region' is a signature image. A logo is part of a house style; a signature image is used in advertising campaigns. KLM, for example, uses the swan as its signature image, but KLM's familiar house style consists of the colour blue, the letters KLM and the crown (the logo). Closer to home, the signature image of the collective tourist offices in Limburg is '*Limburg, Liefde voor het Leven*' in flamboyant, colourful letters; the house style consists of the Tourist Office logo (the three Vs, VVV).

In the case of the Maastricht Region, the campaign strategy includes a signature image (the hand pointing downward and the text 'Everything Points to Maastricht Region) *and* a house style. The entire house style, consisting of typography, colour combinations and logo for various uses (for example this brochure) can easily be combined with the signature image.

### **Rules for using the logo**

#### *Who may use the logo?*

The *logo*, both the static version and the animation, may be used by any of the Maastricht Region Branding Foundation's contributors. In addition, businesses, institutions and other organisations may request to use the logo, even if they are not among the contributors. The Foundation will consider whether the organisation so requesting or the use made of the logo will enhance the Maastricht Region's image or in any event not harm it. The Foundation's Management Board may require an organisation to cease using the logo at any time. The copyright is owned by the Foundation.



The signature image may only be used by the Foundation in the 'Everything Points to Maastricht Region' campaign series.



#### *Costs*

Contributors (those who contribute EUR 5000 or more annually to the Foundation) may use the logo free of charge. Non-contributors must pay EUR 25 per employee per annum, with a minimum price of EUR 250.

#### *How should the logo be used?*

The logo may only be used in its entirety; it is prohibited to use separate elements or to add anything to the logo. The logo may be used as part of the contributor's house style. The colour and the image/text ratio are fixed; the positioning and dimensioning are discretionary, provided that the word Zuidlimburg.nl (Maastrichtregion.com) is legible.

#### *Language*

The Zuidlimburg.nl logo should be used in all Dutch-language publicity (including material used in Belgium). The Maastrichtregion.com logo should be used in publicity material in all other languages.

## **2. 'Everything Points to Maastricht Region' campaign**

The tone of the first campaign, 'Everything Points to ...', will be proud and self-assured. We will refer to problems in the Netherlands, especially in the Randstad Region (too expensive, too crowded, unsafe) and offer a solution: the Maastricht Region. We will deliberately go 'over the top' in listing the problems. It is essential that we show that we can not only solve the quality of life problem, but – unlike the traditional 'slow-living' regions – we can ALSO offer career opportunities and an exciting 'city experience'.

That is the reason behind the fixed pattern of at least three offers, always presented in the same sequence:

1. A solution to the problem (nice house, good education, safety, no traffic congestion)
2. A current job vacancy
3. A current cultural activity (as a *pars pro toto* indication of the region's urban dynamism)

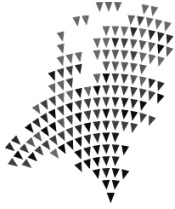
Depending on the context, the fourth offer can be in the category 'Quality gastronomy and holiday accommodation' or 'European location'. Offers must be restricted to the five priorities, of course.

In terms of the media placement plan for the campaign, we will attempt to make the most effective possible use of the budget; in other words, we will select media that reach the largest possible number of people within the right target group. We will be required to follow EU procurement procedures for this.

#### *Campaign placement strategy*

We will wage the campaign through a mixture of print (newspapers, weeklies) and online channels. If the EU funding application is successful, it will be possible to add radio in 2012.

We will naturally monitor continuously which media have the biggest impact so that we can adjust our efforts accordingly.



### 3. Website zuid limburg.nl / maastrichtregion.com

The website is the key. Advertising is very expensive, and its main purpose is therefore to generate traffic for the site. The site is where we will appeal to visitors in greater depth and persuade them to take action (conversion). That requires a top quality website, one that is much more than a portal that merely refers visitors to existing institutions such as Banenrijk Limburg or Tourist Information. If we do that, we lose those visitors and our unique selling point remains unconvincing. It is precisely because our USP is 'work/life harmony' that we must always show visitors both the business side of the Maastricht Region *and* its more poetic side. That is why our ambition is to build a site that presents specific offers *proving* what we *claim* about the Maastricht region.

Our **specific products** are grouped into ten divisions. Visitors will see the first three immediately upon entering the site. Instead of overblown texts, we will present real jobs, real homes and real culture, all at once:

1. Living in the Maastricht Region
2. Working in the Maastricht Region
3. Culture & Entertainment in the Maastricht Region
4. Investing and innovating in the Maastricht Region
5. Studying in the Maastricht Region
6. Leisure time in the Maastricht Region
7. Culinary enjoyment in the Maastricht Region (gastronomy and regional products)
8. Accessibility of the Maastricht Region (national, international)
9. The Maastricht Region in its Euroregional setting
10. Expats in the Maastricht Region

For the time being, all the divisions will be accessible via the portal. In other words: zuidlimburg.nl/maastrichtregion.com will collect, provide access and link visitors to external sites.

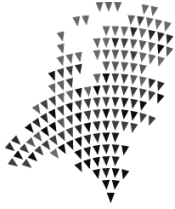
Ultimately, our **level of ambition** for all ten divisions is for each one to be:

- complete
- up to date
- interactive
- focused on conversion (action, business)
- bilingual

That is asking a lot. We are therefore tackling this challenge in phases. In 2009, we want to:

- provide access to all divisions via the portal
- develop division 1 and 2 to the point that they match our level of ambition
- participate in external initiatives in divisions 7 and 10.

The other divisions will be added one by one and taken to the required level of ambition in our plans for 2009 and beyond. Existing Internet activities – Uitburo, Banenrijk Limburg, Tourist Information Offices – will



naturally be involved and matched where possible, either entirely or at content level (RSS feeds). We will not produce any content that is available elsewhere.



#### ▲▲ *Growth model to interaction, Web 2.0*

The website will be an organic entity that continues to improve and grow from the time of its introduction (April 2009). The site will begin as informative but become increasingly interactive, for example. Region Branding staff will participate in forums and Internet panels and publish blogs and testimonials on the site to attract the attention of the target group. The technology will be Web 2.0-based, allowing users to tailor the site entirely to their own requirements. This capability will become available in the second half of 2009.

#### **4. Maastricht Region assets**

As we already said in the analysis, the Maastricht Region has a treasure in its own backyard, but does too little with it. The region produces highly appealing materials (for iPods, fast boats, solar cell cars, fibres, etc.) and socially relevant products (food, solar cells, biomedical materials). Few people know that, however. Part of our communication strategy simply consists of – literally – showcasing appealing regional products, for example in outdoor advertising.

#### **5. Product enhancement and sponsoring**

As reported in the analysis, we can exploit a major opportunity by showcasing and boosting the Maastricht Region's existing crown jewels. There are a number of quality magazines that focus on certain aspects of the region ('the good life' or 'innovation') but not on the work/life balance, even though it is *that* combination that is our strength. Region branding can help encourage this.

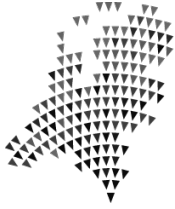
It can also benefit from products and processes that position themselves in the region. We have already mentioned innovation. One other category is local products: when properly positioned, they can acquire a powerful reputation. Region branding helps promising initiatives position themselves more securely.

Finally, everything remotely related to culture has the potential to link the Maastricht Region with dynamism, progress and urban lifestyle. These very important elements are still missing from the Maastricht's Region's image. It is precisely these elements that we need to convince the public that the region is more than merely a 'fun place to visit'; it also offers an 'ideal work/life balance'. That is why Region Branding is making it possible to invest in cultural events that offer excellent value in terms of communication. We will align ourselves with productions that strengthen the region's bid to stand as candidate for European Capital of Culture in 2018.

#### **6. Public opinion and planning**

There is still much work to be done in the Maastricht Region when it comes to coordinating policy, raising awareness that the region consists of a single, horseshoe-shaped city with no economic borders, and persuading one another that we are not competitors, but rather: each individual interest is everyone's concern (for example with respect to transport links abroad).

Public opinion is clearly moving in the direction of the 'one region' idea, but it will be a long time before all the cross-border policies at municipal level can be coordinated with one another at regional level. This is an important argument for sharing quarters with the Urban Network, thereby creating an open house for collaboration.



Where the Region Branding Foundation sees an opportunity to facilitate, coordinate and drive progress, it will not neglect to do so. Region branding involves far more than merely launching a campaign; part of its task is to create a climate in which positive free publicity is generated more automatically. It should be a climate in which the national evening news not only reports on population decline, the ageing population and corruption, but also has stories about technological advances, innovations in healthcare, educational reform and quality of housing. That climate cannot be created by means of region branding alone, and it is therefore crucial to involve businesses, institutions, and above all local residents in the process.

## 7. Me & the Maastricht Region

A region's image depends to a large extent on its businesses and local inhabitants. Together, they convey more messages than Region Branding can ever hope to equal. It is important that they emanate pride in their region, especially as it is crucial for the region to present itself more as a unit than as 19 islands. After the first local print campaign (36 half-page advertisements in the four Maastricht Region editions of *Dagblad De Limburger*, January-March 2009), Region Branding will film a portrait gallery of southerners who describe their ties to the region:

- local people who were born and have lived in the region all their lives
- 'immigrants' from the target group: testimonials by people who say that moving to the region was the best decision they ever made
- business owners who explain why locating in the region has brought them success
- 'famous' local sons and daughters who qualify as national/international ambassadors for the region

The portraits will be subtitled in English.

The idea is to make the filmed portraits available on the website, but also to link them to the outgoing e-mails of the subjects involved, creating a multiplier effect that will generate a huge amount of extra traffic on the website. Traditional media (local dailies and weeklies, radio and TV) will be used to promote the project.

## 8. Measuring the campaign effects

*What will we measure?*

The purpose of the campaign 'Everything Points to Maastricht Region' is to attract visitors to the website.

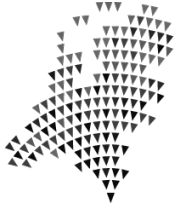
The purpose of the website [www.zuidlimburg.nl/maastrichtregion.com](http://www.zuidlimburg.nl/maastrichtregion.com) is to show that the Maastricht Region, far being only a 'fun place to visit', is in fact the ideal place to achieve a 'work/life balance'. In that way, the region will be seen not only as an attractive holiday destination, but also a great place to live.

The website will help achieve this aim by featuring specific offers in housing, work and investment.

*Website visits will be encouraged in two ways:*

1. Via the web campaign (Google, Google adverts, banners, blogs, panel discussions, forums, links from other sites, links in outgoing e-mails);
2. Via the print campaign 'Everything Points to Maastricht Region'

A bigger budget will deliberately be spent on the print campaign than on the web campaign. That is because print is more expensive, not because it is more important. In order to optimise and fine-tune the budget



expenditure, it is very important to know where the website visitors come from. Web analytics can be used to automatically quantify and analyse web-to-web visits. Print-to-web can only be analysed by a panel.



#### *Web analytics*

Web analytics help explain website visits. The analysis will detect any increase in the number of visitors to the website owing to region branding efforts and will also keep track of where visitors come from. The data will also indicate how well the site functions (how long people visit, where do they surf to, etc.) and make it possible to benchmark the site with other comparable sites.

#### *Online survey*

An online survey will not only reveal where visitors come from, but also whether the print campaign led them to the site, or did they find it by some other means. The survey will also build a profile of the visitors (similarities with target group), the percentage triggered to visit the website by the campaign, whether they like the campaign, their willingness to take action, and whether it has changed their minds about anything. The survey will also reveal what visitors think of the website (does it have useful information, should it have more information, has it made you look at things differently) and image aspects also covered in the image research carried out in 2008 (Flycatcher).\* The survey will give us an impression of the campaign's effect and will therefore be a useful source of information for future campaign activities.

#### *Website objectives*

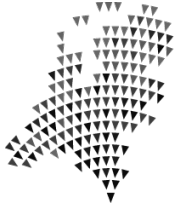
The field of city marketing / region branding is too young to offer useful benchmarks for setting a target for the Maastricht Region. There are no comparable sites that combine business, tourist and personal information. After the first campaign flight (December 2009), we will gauge the number of website visitors and take this as our starting point for defining future ambitions.

#### *Shift in the image*

It is naturally very important to measure changes in the Maastricht Region's image. The 2008 Flycatcher research will therefore be repeated in the Netherlands every other year.

The following aspects, at least, will be covered each time:

1. In the baseline measure, 15% agreed/agreed entirely with the statement 'The Maastricht Region has plenty of career opportunities';
2. In the baseline measure, 25% agreed/agreed entirely with the statement 'The Maastricht Region has many different types of housing to choose from';
3. In the baseline measure, 14% agreed/agreed entirely with the statement 'The Maastricht Region is a top high-tech region';
4. In the baseline measure, 35% agreed/agreed entirely with the statement 'The Maastricht Region has prestigious educational institutions';
5. In the baseline measure, 14% answered 'yes' to the question 'Have you ever considered moving to the Maastricht Region', while 0% was actually planning to do so;
6. In the baseline measure, 12% answered 'yes' to the question 'Have you ever considered working in the Maastricht Region', while 0% was actually planning to do so;



These aspects will also be covered by the Internet panel. This will allow us to detect any significant differences between Internet visitors in our target group and visitors from around the Netherlands.



#### Communication research is a complex affair

The success of an intensive promotional campaign for margarine cannot be measured by the number of packets of margarine sold. After all, the four Ps of the well-known marketing mix must combine to produce success. They are: product, price, place (where on the shelves do customers find the margarine) and promotion. Some people add a fifth P nowadays: personnel. Others have raised the number to ten or even fifteen Ps (process, parking space, etc.).

The result of the campaign (P for promotion) *can* be measured, however, by looking at how the target group perceives the packet of margarine. That perception is measured in terms of knowledge (do you know the brand?), attitude (what do you think of it?) and behaviour (will you buy the brand?). Here again, however, the point is to look not only at the promotional campaign, but also at other factors that contribute to the public's perception, the image of the brand. If the product has to be taken off the shelves because it is found to contain poison, its image will be destroyed at once. That is the lesson the banks learned in 2009: free publicity (press, public opinion) demolished their image, something that even millions of euros spent on paid publicity cannot make good.

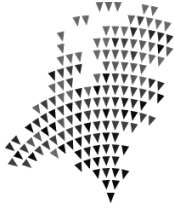
In other words: the Maastricht Region can be a successful business if...

- there are enough jobs and houses and the quality of life is satisfactory (product)
- the region is easy to access, both physically and virtually (place)
- people can live well affordably (price)
- local people and professional service providers cooperate in welcoming the newcomers ('personnel')
- the region has a positive image (promotion).

If it seems difficult to ascribe the image results for a packet of margarine to a marketing campaign, just imagine how complex this is for a region:

1. there are no clear-cut aims for the region as a whole, for example with respect to demographics;
2. the region is in fact not being 'branded', but 're-branded': the Maastricht Region brand has already existed for many hundreds of years. It is harder to influence an existing brand than to create a new one;
3. the influence of free publicity, the press, politics, and public opinion is enormous, both in the negative (reports on fraud, declining population, recession) and the positive sense;
4. there are many actors who make use of the region's image in their own publicity and campaigns.

That is precisely why region branding involves more than merely launching a campaign. Only a laboratory experiment in which the subjects were isolated from external reports for a long period of time would produce reliable figures about the true results. That is not possible, of course. Even website visitors who have made the virtual move to the Maastricht Region are not a pure control group, because they too read the newspapers and watch TV.



The process of region branding fuels the Maastricht Region's image, which moves toward a designated goal with the slow, inexorable pace of a tanker.



- ▲▲ These goals can then be quantified, once again based on the Flycatcher\* baseline measure. In ideal circumstances – calm winds, no engine trouble – the tanker will reach its destination after a year. But there is always the risk that a storm will develop. It may come from behind, but it will often brew alongside the vessel, pushing it off course, or in front of it, slowing down progress. It is therefore very important to monitor our current position at all times, by means of communication research, so that we can change course in order to reach our final goal.

In the first period of the Foundation's operation (2008-2012), the goal is to improve six important image positions:

1. Association with better career opportunities: from 15 to 25% (+ 66%)
2. Association with a varied stock of housing: from 25 to 40% (+ 60%)
3. Association with a top high-tech region: from 14 to 20% (+ 42%)
4. Association with leading educational institutions: from 35 to 45% (+ 28%)
5. Considering moving to the Maastricht Region: from 14 to 25% (+78%)
6. Considering working in the Maastricht Region: from 12 to 25% (+ 100%)

It should be noted with respect to 5 and 6 that 0% are actually *planning* to move to or work in the Maastricht Region. The group of those 'considering' include people who had once lived or worked in the Maastricht Region.

The region already has good scores on the *joie de vivre* (landscape, recreation) and cultural aspects. Our aim is to maintain the status quo on these aspects.

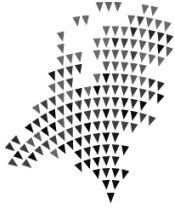
*Given the complexity of the communication research, we have sought the advice of an external expert in this particular area. This has resulted in a research proposal, summarised in this section.*

## 9. Operations and accommodation

The Maastricht Region Branding Foundation was founded on 1 September 2008 and has a management board, an executive committee and a chairperson. The Foundation offices have a full-time director, a part-time senior communication officer, a part-time operations officer, and a secretary (shared with the Maastricht Region Urban Network).

In addition to the eight products listed above, the Foundation is responsible for:

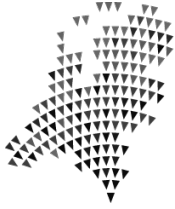
- acquiring sufficient funding to achieve its designated level of ambition;
- setting up a bookkeeping and accountancy system;
- setting up and installing the ICT;
- recruiting and hiring sufficient staff;
- designing and implementing a set of rules and regulations;
- scheduling and reporting on the meetings of the EC, MB and Board of Contributors;
- conducting European procurement procedures for media and other purchases.



The Foundation has been housed in the Maastricht Region Workshop since 1 April 2009. This is an open, interactive ‘community’ where activities can be shaped and developed to Maastricht Region level. It is an ‘incubator’ that functions as a workshop for long-term and changing coalitions, a place where policy-makers and programme developers meet, where project managers and temporary staff can share their knowledge and coordinate their activities. What they have in common is the Maastricht Region. The main occupants of the Workshop are the Maastricht Region Branding Foundation and the Maastricht Region Urban Network.

The Workshop is located in the AINSI Building in Maastricht. This building, designed by a world-famous Heerlen architect (Peutz), offers a splendid view of the countryside all around, with the economic and innovation driver Chemelot in the distance.

**Everything Points to Maastricht Region!**



## Is a strong regional identity important to you too?



Then help us build a strong brand for the Maastricht Region.

You can become a **partner** in Maastricht Region Branding by contributing a minimum of EUR 50,000 a year. In return, you will have a seat on the **Management Board**, giving you a say in the region's marketing strategy. You will also have two votes at Board of Contributors meetings, where overall policy is decided. The Management Board selects the **Executive Committee**.

You can become a **participant** in Maastricht Region Branding by contributing a minimum of EUR 25,000 a year. You will then have a vote at Board of Contributors meetings.

You can become an **auditor** for Maastricht Region Branding by contributing a minimum of EUR 10,000 a year. You will then have the right to speak at Board of Contributors meetings.

You can become a **sponsor** of Maastricht Region Branding by contributing a minimum of EUR 5,000 a year. You will then be invited to meetings of the Board of Contributors as a visitor (no right to speak or vote).

Do you only want to **use the logo**? Contact the Foundation. The costs depend on the size of your company: EUR 25 per employee, with a minimum price of EUR 250.

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