GOVERNANCE AND RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLICS – PLANNING

Creation of an advisory body, the “Kwaliteitsteam des Beemsters” (made up of leading national experts in the field of heritage, landscape, urban planning and architecture) to advise the municipal authorities on new urban developments, large-scale spatial projects, the quality of designs, strategy and feasibility of projects in the Beemster Polder World Heritage Site.

**SIZE OF THE MUNICIPALITY:**
- 8,721 inhabitants
- 7,200 ha

**SIZE OF THE PROJECT:**
- 8,721 inhabitants
- 7,200 ha

**PRINCIPAL FUNCTION(S) OF THE MUNICIPALITY:**
Agriculture, farming housing

**PRINCIPAL FUNCTION(S) OF THE PROJECT AREA:**
Agriculture, farming housing

The Beemster Polder, dating from the early 17th century, is an exceptional example of reclaimed land in the Netherlands. It has preserved intact its well-ordered landscape of fields, roads, canals, dykes and settlements, laid out in accordance with classical and Renaissance planning principles.
Need for planned territorial developments control in the Beemster Polder: integrating new farming infrastructures, change of scale of farms, building of new houses and reconstruction of the CONO cheese factory. Meeting the needs of des Beemsters.

Set up an advisory body (the ‘Quality team’) for the Municipality which involves several leading specialists in urban and landscape development in order to approve development plans and make sure that they are compatible with the principles of the Beemster Polder as a World Heritage Site and improve the site.

- Guarantee the quality of the new development plans in line with the Unesco guidelines for World Heritage Sites
- Advise the city of Beemster about the best strategy to deal with development and achievement of urban development of a high quality, without losing the unique identity of the Beemster Polder
- Help the city of Beemster by being an international example for modernization and urban development in a World Heritage Site

THE INITIATIVE

THE PROJECT DRIVERS

THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

ACTION PROGRAM
SET UP OF A SPECIFIC ADVISORY BODY FOR THE PROJECT AGENCY ‘DES BEEMSTERS’: THE QUALITY TEAM

Advisory team composition:
7 leading specialists (urban development, public administration, landscape architecture, water management, town planning, area development, economy)
Attended by an alderman of the Municipality of Beemster
2 employees of the Project bureau ‘des Beemsters’

Organization of regular meetings to examine and discuss urban development projects of the Beemster Polder

The ‘Quality team’ assesses and approves specific development projects

Advise Municipal authorities

STAKEHOLDERS / ACTORS:

Public local
Private

Public regional
Mixed

Public national
Institutions / NGOs

Public international
Civil Society
SITE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- Urban development plans (bestemmingsplannen)
- Structure vision regulation (structuurvisie)
- Omgevingsnota (design review regulation)
- Management Plan (10th July 2012)

SPECIFIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- Set up of the Beemster project agency: Project bureau ‘Des Beemsters’
- Set up of the Beemster Quality Team

DETAILS ON PUBLIC FUNDING

Municipality of Beemster
100 % funded by Municipality

TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT

180 000 Euros per year (all included)

STATE OF PROGRESS

November 2007
Launch of the project and set up of Quality team

Scheduled for 5 years (2007-2012)
Four to six meetings a year

End of 2012
Project revision

RELATION BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY

The World Heritage Status requires to maintain the unique value of the early 17th century cultural landscape. The Beemster Polder is a 72 ha area with a population of 8,721 inhabitants living mostly in one of the four villages: Middenbeemster, Noordbeemster, Westbeemster, and Zuidoostbeemster located in the polder. The main village is Middenbeemster. As the Municipality is fairly small and felt it was lacking the capacity to assess the large spatial and urban developments within the World Heritage site that were submitted for approval.

In order to assess and implement projects the Municipality of Beemster set up as special implementation organisation in 2007: the ‘Beemster Bureau’ (Bureau des Beemsters). There is one responsible Alderman and a project coordinator. An independent ‘Quality Team’ that advises the municipal authorities on large-scale projects assists the ‘Bureau’.

The team considers, examines and assesses a wide range of spatial initiatives and examines the quality of designs, strategy, and feasibility. It is made up of leading national experts in the field of heritage, landscape, urban planning and architecture. The ‘Quality team’ is a specific management tool and was set up for a five year period (2007/2012). The ‘Quality team’ does not give advice on small-scale projects or individual projects, which are approved and assessed through the other regulatory mechanisms.
The ‘Quality Team’ advisory body mechanism proved to be very useful to the Municipality of Beemster regarding spatial and urban planning. It helped improve the quality of projects approved by the Municipality for the whole of the Beemster polder and insure that large scale plans are ‘des Beemsters’, and are compatible with the value of the site.

Advice provided by the ‘Quality Team’ helped to modernize and develop the Beemster Polder, without affecting its unique identity. The ‘Quality Team’ was involved in advising on the reconstruction plans of the Cone cheese factory. The challenge for the Municipality was to support a project important for the economy of the Beemster polder and find a design compatible with the site’s value.

Because the team is composed of professionals with different profiles, the advice provided is intersectorial. The ‘Quality Team’ has positively influenced municipal staff and has helped strengthen the capacity of the Municipality.

In turn the Municipality is better informing inhabitants and manages to raise the awareness of the inhabitants of Beemster to design and planning issues. The citizens are more conscious about their environment and more involved in spatial planning. More and more often, inhabitants come with development and reconstruction plans that fulfill the ‘des Beemsters’ expectations.

An interesting example of a capacity building initiative fostered by a “small” Municipality of less than 9,000 inhabitants to reinforce its capacity to approve quality spatial planning projects in a World Heritage Site. The challenge is fostering development and allowing modification of land use in a Polder. The four Beemster settlements are fairly small and most spatial planning projects are connected to agriculture and farming. This case study underlines the relationship between villages, and farming land, the relationship between a Municipality and the territory it has to manage.

The ‘Quality Team’ budget per year is fairly high for a small municipality and represents a serious investment. One issue is the sustainability of the mechanism. How long should the ‘Quality team’ mechanism be enforced? After a five years experience and the good results (project quality, training of municipal staff, better understanding of the link between conserving heritage values and development of a territory and landscape), the Municipality is considering maintaining the ‘Quality team’ advisory body mechanism.

**CONTACTS**

**MAYOR**  
H.N.G. (Harry) Brinkman  
Alderman: Han Hefting  

**RESPECTIBLE OFFICER**  
Harry Roenhorst & Janneke van Dijk  
World Heritage Offices

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<tr>
<th>Mandate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>address</td>
<td>Rijn Middelburgstraat 1, 1462 NV Middenbeemster, The Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone</td>
<td>0031 299 68 21 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:h.roenhorst@beemster.net">h.roenhorst@beemster.net</a>, <a href="mailto:j.vandijk@beemster.net">j.vandijk@beemster.net</a></td>
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