



Dossier 1: EU regional Barometer broad prosperity from a cross-border perspective

Cross-Border Impact Assessment 2023



Dossier 1: Broad Prosperity from a cross-border perspective

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Abbreviations

BW	Broad Prosperity
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CES	Conference of European Statisticians
CPB	Central Planning Bureau
EMR	Meuse-Rhine Euroregion
NRW	North Rhine-Westphalia
PBL	Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
Rli	Environment and Infrastructure Council
ROB	Council for Public Administration
STAINLESS STEEL	Health and Society Council
SCP	Sociocultural Planning Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SER	Economic and Social Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

Globally, there is increasing attention to the idea of measuring and promoting prosperity at regional and national levels in the broad sense. In late 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹ The SDGs cover 17 goals with themes from poverty reduction to sustainable consumption and production, and from health to the environment. UN member states have committed to these goals, with voluntary periodic reporting on national implementation by member states. The Netherlands was also already moving towards the concept of 'Broad Prosperity' (*Brede Welvaart*).² Back in the 1990s, the discussion about a 'broad prosperity concept' emerged.³ Over the years, *Brede Welvaart* has become an important concept in the Netherlands at the national, provincial and local level. The 125-page Budget Memorandum 2023 is entitled "Budgeting for Broad Prosperity" and broad prosperity is mentioned more than 80 times in it.⁴ The SER also introduced a renewed objective in October 2023, this revision, the first since 1992, focuses on broad prosperity, aiming at a balanced interplay between society, economy and environment. This revision stems from pressing challenges such as climate, biodiversity, digitalisation and social inequality.⁵ In several provinces, party manifestos explicitly refer to steering towards broad prosperity, the ITEM reflection showed.⁶ Indeed, broad prosperity, and more specifically broad prosperity in and for the region, also has a central place in the provincial coalition agreements.⁷

Broad prosperity is about people's well-being, the extent to which this level of well-being can be maintained in the future, and it includes everything that people consider valuable for a good life. This is not limited to money and economic growth, but also includes quality of life.⁸ Broad welfare is not only measured nationally, but also obtains regional attention. Thus, regional data is also available through CBS's Regional Monitor Broad Prosperity.⁹ Policy and society repeatedly call for more and better management of broad welfare in the Netherlands. Regional broad prosperity is also central to the publication 'Every region counts', a joint advisory report by the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli), the Council for Public Health & Society (RVS) and the Council for Public Administration (ROB). The advisory councils emphasise a broad prosperity approach in the government's policy choices.¹⁰ In this publication, the advisory councils note significant regional differences and recommend investing in regional broad prosperity. This investment should be made by the national government, but especially in cooperation and consultation with the regions. In the report, border regions come off particularly badly. Nevertheless, "this border location offers opportunities for increasing the region's broad prosperity, but in practice in most regions numerous formal obstacles stand in the way of taking advantage of opportunities."¹¹ The advisory councils

¹ VN, 2015.

² PBL, SCP & CPB, 2017.

³ Maas & Lucas, 2023.

⁴ Central government, 2023

⁵ SER, 2023.

⁶ ITEM Reflection: Provincial Council Elections from a Cross-Border Perspective.

⁷ ITEM Reflection: Coalition agreements in the border provinces.

⁸ Maas & Lucas, 2017, p. 9.

⁹ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/regionale-monitor-brede-welvaart>

¹⁰ Rli, RVS & ROB, 2023.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 27.

conclude "that border regions suffer from the [...] signalled 'macro perspective' on efficiency in national policy. There is a lack of targeted investment in structural solutions to specific bottlenecks that put residents of border regions at a disadvantage."¹² It therefore calls for more attention to border-specific features and opportunities across the border. The Cabinet's response to the advisory report also agrees: "*For instance, in the case of regions on the border, it is important to take into account their location and the opportunities and challenges that this border location can bring. Looking at our border regions from the air, one sees a contiguous area full of villages and towns, offices and businesses and a finely-meshed infrastructure full of roads, railway lines and paths. People travel back and forth to work, study or have a day out. We don't see the border itself from the air. But it is there.*"¹³ Regional broad prosperity should be given more of a place in policy immer, according to the Cabinet response. This includes looking at how to give broad welfare a stronger role in social cost-benefit analyses and making broad welfare more a part of governments' working methods. On the progress of regional broad welfare, the government responds annually to the CBS's Regional Broad Prosperity Monitor.¹⁴

Thus, regional broad prosperity, its implications for policy and its steering is ever gaining strength. Many party programmes for the Lower House elections on 22 November 2023 in the Netherlands also emphasise the importance of the region. These mention specific regional opportunity agendas, investment agendas and policy tests, all to keep more eye on the different regions in the Netherlands in policy, legislation and investments. A whole number of parties also refer specifically to border regions and the border-specific situation.¹⁵ This implies steering for cross-border opportunities as well and seeing the border region not only from the national perspective but also from the cross-border perspective: i.e. instead of a border region, the *cross-border* region. This file focuses on the cross-border perspective of Broad Prosperity in border regions.

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2. Objectives & Methodology

¹² Ibid. p. 48.

¹³ Minister Bruins Slot (BZK), Parliament letter with cabinet response to advisory report Every region counts!, 12 July 2023, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/07/12/kabinetsreactie-op-het-adviesrapport-elke-regio-telt>, p. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 7 & 9.

¹⁵ ITEM Reflection: House of Representatives elections from a cross-border perspective.

2.1. Method and scope

The dossier aims to better identify the cross-border dimension of broad welfare/SDGs in the Dutch border regions with Germany and Belgium. In doing so, national practices and indicators are looked at more closely and scrutinised. In addition, the dossier focuses on the concept of broad prosperity and how this should be taken into account in border regions. This also means which border-specific elements exist in this regard and what insights are available or not. It explores the meaning of measuring broad prosperity and how impact can be generated, taking border-specific elements into account. Policy also involves making choices. The dossier study also focuses on how this should be taken into account for border regions in cross-border cooperation and whether this is currently sufficiently the case.

From previous studies and experiences, it is already known that cross-border data are complex and as yet limited.¹⁶ The dossier therefore does not attempt to create a Euroregional or cross-border index, but does explore the question to what extent and under what conditions a better Euroregional picture can be achieved. Which aspects should be taken into consideration? How should this be handled in terms of policy? In conclusion, it assesses what effects the current approach to broad prosperity in border regions may have on border regions and what recommendations can be made.

The results of this research are based on a literature review and interviews with 10 participants (researchers and policy officers) in an online (group) interview in October 2023 with the aim of exploring with the participants what meaning can be given to measuring broad prosperity and policies around broad prosperity in border regions. The results of this study are also based on qualitative data from 16 participants in a workshop "Steering for Impact: Broad Prosperity in Border Regions", where participants shared initial ideas on impact, challenges and opportunities around broad prosperity in border regions, which was held during the Two-Day Conference of the National Network Broad Prosperity, 27 and 28 September 2023 in Leeuwarden. See Annex I for an overview of the participants.

¹⁶ J. Van der Valk, 2019.

To this end, it is important to first further define the term 'border region'. In the national context, as in the advisory report 'Every region counts', the border region is considered within its own national borders. That is, the region stops at the border. In this dossier, however, the focus is on the cross-border dimension, or the cross-border region.¹⁷

The perspective of the cross-border region is not bound by national borders, like a Euroregion. The figure below from CBS uses the delineation of a NUTS-3 region at the national border. This also falls under Eurostat's definition of a 'border region'.¹⁸ The same definition also names: "or those regions where more than half of the population lives within 25 km of such a border." The cross-border region can then be taken to mean the two NUTS-3 areas on either side of the border together. In practical terms, the 25-kilometre limit on either side of the border can also be used.

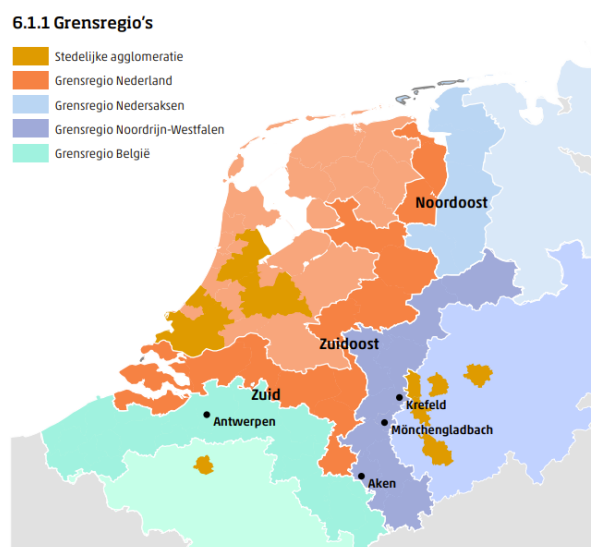


Figure 1: Border region and cross-border region at NUTS-3 level, source: CBS, 2018.

This makes this case study unique. There is no previous research known that focuses specifically on cross-border broad prosperity/SDGs in the context of border regions. As a start, the dossier focuses on the Dutch concept of broad prosperity and the cross-border dimension for the Dutch border regions. In doing so, the dossier aims to make a start on better understanding and studying the functioning and development of cross-border regions.

This also makes this dossier study somewhat distinctive in the context of the ITEM Cross-Border Impact Assessment. As the dossier - given the availability of data and the earliness of the discussion - is to some extent exploratory in nature, it is difficult to make comparisons or assessments. As a result, it was decided not to work with a table of principles, benchmarks and indicators, but to reflect on these afterwards from the central research themes (European Integration, Socio-Economic/Sustainable Development and Euregional Cohesion) and to formulate possible cross-border effects.

¹⁷ For a further definition, see also Unfried, Mertens, Büttgen & Schneider, 2022.

¹⁸ Eurostat, *Glossary: Border region*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Border_region

3. Broad Prosperity & Sustainable Development Goals: theory, policy & practice

3.1. General frameworks and findings

Sustainable Development Goals

In late 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁹ The SDGs are made up of 17 goals, which articulate the global ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The figure below shows the 17 goals.



Figure 2: Overview of UN SDGs, source: Rijksoverheid.nl

The goals are operationalised into 169 targets to be met by 2030. To monitor these 169 goals, 231 unique indicators have been developed by the *Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators*.²⁰ This provides an international framework of indicators for the themes of the SDGs. Periodically, countries report on national progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda in the form of a *Voluntary National Review (VNR)*. The word 'voluntary' already gives an indication, as the SDGs are not legally binding. However, there is an obligation of effort, with UN countries to translate the SDGs into national targets and policies. So while there is an overarching framework of goals, targets and indicators, it is subject to national implementation and practices. Berger was commissioned by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) to publish a comparative study on national practices around SDGs and broad prosperity in 2022.²¹ This identified three main variants of implementation: 1) a dedicated national SDG strategy; 2) inclusion of SDG targets within national development strategies, often together with broad prosperity; and 3) targeted allocation of SDG responsibilities across ministries.²² A distinction of three variants is also observed in policy practice towards the SDGs: monitoring, evaluation (ex ante or ex post) and encouraging forms of cooperation within governments.

Table 1 briefly shows the implementation of the SDGs in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

Country	Latest VNR	Implementation	Responsibility	Policy practice
Netherlands	2022	No national strategy or implementation programme. Pragmatic	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Foreign Trade	Monitoring: CBS Monitoring Evaluation: SDG test in Policy Compass (ex ante) ²³

		implementation through annual reporting.	and Development Cooperation)	
Belgium	2023	Federal Plan for Sustainable Development (2021). With annual reporting.	Federal Institute for Sustainable Development, with Federal Planning Bureau	Cooperation: Inter-ministerial conference on SD and inter-departmental committee on SD Monitoring: Federal Planning Bureau
Germany	2021	Federal: Deutschen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie (2021). With biennial Indicator Report. Länder: e.g. NRW with Sustainability Strategy for North Rhine-Westphalia from 2020 ²⁴	Bundeskazleramt (coordination)	Cooperation: Standing Working Group for SD Monitoring: Indicator Report ²⁵ Evaluation: Sustainability Management System concept

At the level of regions and municipalities, several SDG monitors also exist, such as the SDG Monitor for Belgian municipalities²⁶, the SDG Portal for German municipalities²⁷ and Waar staat je gemeente²⁸. Monitoring of the SDGs also takes place at European level by Eurostat.²⁹ As such, the European Union also published a first Voluntary Review on the progress of the SDGs in 2023.³⁰

Broad Prosperity

Although broad welfare is a Dutch concept, it has an international body of thought.³¹ In other countries, similar concepts can be found in *well-being*, *well-being economy*, *inclusive growth* and, to a lesser extent, *beyond GDP*.³² All concepts cover the thinking that gross domestic product (GDP) is not

¹⁹ VN, 2015.

²⁰ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

²¹ Berger, 2022.

²² Maas & Lucas, 2023, p. 16.

²³ <https://www.kcbr.nl/beleid-en-regelgeving-ontwikkelen/beleidskompas/2-wat-het-beoogde-doel/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-en-brede-welvaart>

²⁴ https://nachhaltigkeit.nrw.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/NRW_Sustainability_Strategy_2020.pdf

²⁵ <https://dns-indikatoren.de/>
Table 1. Overview of implementation SDG neighbours, source: Berger, 2022.

²⁶ <https://www.sdgmonitor.be/sdg-monitor>

²⁷ <https://sdg-portal.de/de/>

²⁸ VNG,

<https://www.waarstaatjegemeente.nl/dashboard/sustainable-development-goals/sustainable-development-goals--global-goals->

²⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi>

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3801

³¹ There are several European Union projects aimed at promoting "well-being", such as SPES, ToBe, WISER, WISE Horizons, MERGE, MAPS and REAL.

³² Berger, 2022.

a good indicator of social progress and well-being. Broader concepts are needed to measure the quality of life, prosperity and well-being of people and the sustainability of the earth as such.³³ Several international (scientific) publications stress the importance of a shifting perspective from economic production to people's welfare. Raspe, Content & Thissen summarise four characteristics:

1. Focusing on people, rather than the whole economy;
2. Focusing on the multiple outcomes (indicators) of broad welfare (well-being);
3. Considering the distribution of broad welfare across the population;
4. Taking both objective and subjective aspects into account.³⁴

Internationally, in collaboration with UNECE, Eurostat and OECD, a statistical framework has been established: *CES Recommendations for measuring sustainable development*.³⁵ This framework differentiates dimensions of well-being: in time ('now' versus 'later') and in space ('here' versus 'elsewhere').³⁶ The framework translates three dimensions: (1) here and now; (2) later; (3) elsewhere. Besides the dimensions, the framework also provides a set of indicators based on themes, which can be country-specific and selected. The 'here and now' dimension is relatively self-explanatory, where the 'later' dimension reflects on the well-being of later generations and the impact that may exist on it. Here, the framework talks about capital: economic capital, natural capital, human capital and social capital. The 'elsewhere' dimension reflects on cross-border impacts, i.e. how countries affect well-being in other countries or the rest of the world. The CES measurement system thus constitutes, as CBS puts it, a scientifically based 'common language' to map broad welfare.³⁷

Themes	Dimensions		
	Human well-being ("Here and now")	Capital ("Later")	Transboundary impacts ("Elsewhere")
TH1. Subjective well-being	X		
TH2. Consumption and income	X		X
TH3. Nutrition	X		
TH4. Health	X	X	
TH5. Labour	X	X	X
TH6. Education	X	X	
TH7. Housing	X		
TH8. Leisure	X		
TH9. Physical safety	X		
TH10. Land and ecosystems	X	X	X
TH11. Water	X	X	X
TH12. Air quality	X	X	
TH13. Climate		X	X
TH14. Energy resources		X	X
TH15. Mineral resources (excluding coal and peat)		X	X
TH16. Trust	X	X	
TH17. Institutions	X	X	X
TH18. Physical capital		X	X
TH19. Knowledge capital		X	X
TH20. Financial capital		X	X
Context: population			
Economic capital — monetary		X-M	
Natural capital — monetary		X-M	
Human capital — monetary		X-M	
Social capital — monetary		X-M	

Table 2: Framework for measuring sustainable development: relationship between conceptual and thematic categories, Source: UNECE, 2014.

³³ OECD (2018) Policy use of well-being metrics: Describing countries' experiences, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/policy-use-of-well-being-metrics_d98eb8ed-en

³⁴ Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2019, p. 14.

³⁵ UNECE, 2014.

³⁶ Ibid, Horlings & Smits, 2019, p. 13.

³⁷ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/dossier/brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals/monitor-brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals-2023/toelichting/raamwerk>

Specifically with regard to **Germany**, the Ministry of Economy and Climate Action is responsible for the concept of 'Well-being', added to the *Jahreswirtschaftsbericht* in 2022.³⁸ It adds additional *Well-being indicators* to those of the existing *Deutschen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie*. These look at the five elements of (1) growth, income and employment; (2) protection of the environment and climate; (3) education, research and innovation; (4) social aspects, demography and integration; and (5) public finances and equal living conditions.

Additional indicators and policy practices have also been developed in **Belgium**, central to this is the law of 14 March 2014 supplementing the law of 21 December 1994 on social and miscellaneous provisions with a set of additional indicators to measure quality of life, human development, social progress and the sustainability of our economy³⁹. This law mandates the Federal Planning Bureau to develop and report on a set of indicators. These see across the four aspects of measuring quality of life, human development, social progress and the sustainability of our economy. In doing so, the indicators inform social, environmental and economic issues in addition to GDP.⁴⁰ The set of indicators is based on previous international and European work and provided 69 additional indicators in addition to GDP.⁴¹ Since the 2022 report, the additional indicators alongside GDP and the follow-up indicators to the SDGs have been merged into a single set of sustainable development indicators.⁴² Thereby, following the CES framework, a distinction is made between the dimensions 'here and now', 'later' and 'elsewhere'. In doing so, the Federal Planning Bureau with Institute for National Accounts have also developed composite indicators for each dimension: "These indicators summarise different components of well-being and development of society and simplify communication."⁴³

In **the Netherlands**, discussion around a broad welfare concept developed around the 1990s, referring to the combination of material progress, social progress and a good quality of living environment and environment.⁴⁴ In 2017, CBS started developing a Broad Prosperity Monitor. In addition, the planning agencies Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (PBL), Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau (SCP) and Centraal Planbureau (CPB) launched an exploration of Broad Prosperity.⁴⁵ Broad Prosperity is everything that people consider of value.⁴⁶ CBS has published the Broad Prosperity Monitor every year since 2018, based on various indicators and divided across different domains. These look at objective and subjective aspects, as well as different dimensions: in time ('now' versus 'later') and in space ('here' versus 'elsewhere').⁴⁷ This also conforms to the CES measurement system. To this end, a structured set of indicators has been developed by CBS, based on the above framework.⁴⁸ This provides a rich picture

³⁸ Berger, 2022, p. 46.

³⁹ https://etaamb.openjustice.be/nl/wet-van-14-maart-2014_n2014011195.html

⁴⁰ <https://www.indicators.be/nl/g/BGDP/>

⁴¹ Federal Planning Bureau (2021), Additional indicators beyond GDP, 2021. <https://www.plan.be/publications/publication-2081-nl-aanvullende+indicators+yond+the+bbp+2021>. NB. The exact number of indicators fluctuates over time due to continuous development.

⁴² Federal Planning Bureau (2023). Indicators of sustainable development, 2023.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Maas & Lucas 2023, p. 8.

⁴⁵ PBL/SCP/CPB, 2017.

⁴⁶ Maas & Lucas, 2017, p. 9.

⁴⁷ Ibid, Horlings & Smits, 2019, p. 13.

⁴⁸ CBS, 2021, 2022 & 2023.

with a wide range of themes and indicators, the planning agencies concluded.⁴⁹ Since 2019, the Broad Prosperity Monitor has been taken in conjunction with the SDGs: Monitor Broad Prosperity & Sustainable Development Goals.⁵⁰

For the CBS Monitor, an explicit choice was made not to develop composite indicators, but visualisations of the entire indicator set.⁵¹ The Monitor describes the state of broad prosperity 'here and now', 'later' and 'elsewhere' purely from a human perspective. In doing so it basically relates to people living in the Netherlands.

This data is also regionally translated and available through CBS' Regional Broad Prosperity Monitor.⁵² This data is also objective and subjective nature. Based on both the Broad Prosperity & SDGs Monitor and the Regional Broad Prosperity Monitor, an annual response is given by the government. Region Deals are also considered in conjunction with these.

Kernbegrippen van de brede welvaart

Brede welvaart betreft de kwaliteit van leven in het hier en nu en de mate waarin deze ten koste gaat van die van latere generaties of van die van mensen elders in de wereld. Vanuit deze definitie maakt de Monitor Brede Welvaart een onderscheid tussen brede welvaart "Hier en Nu", "Later" en "Elders".

Brede welvaart "Hier en Nu" betreft de persoonlijke kenmerken van mensen, de kwaliteit van de omgeving waarin zij leven en meer in het algemeen hun materiële welvaart en welzijn.

Brede welvaart "Later" betreft de hulpbronnen die volgende generaties nodig hebben om een zelfde niveau van welvaart te kunnen bereiken als de huidige generatie.

Brede welvaart "Elders" betreft de effecten van Nederlandse keuzes op banen, inkomens, (niet-hernieuwbare) hulpbronnen en het milieu in andere landen.

Eerste-orde-effecten zijn de effecten die direct – dat wil zeggen zonder tussenstappen – kunnen worden gerelateerd aan een ontwikkeling. Bijvoorbeeld, een stijging van de individuele consumptie is in de eerste orde goed voor de consument. Tweede-orde-effecten zijn het gevolg van eerste-orde-effecten. In de tweede orde kan hogere consumptie gepaard gaan met milieuvuiling, obesitas, waterverbruik en CO₂-uitstoot in andere landen, enzovoorts. In de MBW is de duiding van ontwikkelingen alleen gebaseerd op deze eerste-orde-effecten.

Afruilen hebben betrekking op de balans tussen aan elkaar gerelateerde positieve en negatieve veranderingen. Voorbeelden van afruilen zijn: meer consumeren in het heden maar minder sparen voor later; meer consumeren ten koste van meer vervuiling, voedselverspilling en overgewicht.

Figure 3: Core concepts of broad welfare, Source: Horlings & Smits, 2019.

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Closing

The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium are all familiar to some extent with the concepts of broad prosperity and SDGs. This does involve important differences in emphasis. For instance, the Netherlands does not have a national implementation strategy for the SDGs, while Germany and Belgium do, but more weight is given to the concept of broad prosperity (and thus thematically also to the SDGs). Broad prosperity and the SDGs have important similarities. The above shows that Belgium and the Netherlands have also made the link between the two frameworks more explicit by explicitly merging and combining 'indicators of sustainable development' and broad prosperity, respectively. No such linkage or coordination has been made in Germany.⁵³ There are also important similarities. PBL has done a comparative analysis between broad welfare and SDGs.⁵⁴ Both stem from sustainable development thinking. In doing so, both emphasise development with respect to well-being and its distribution across regions, groups and countries, as well as over time and location. The dimensions and themes are also closely intertwined. For instance, CBS indicates that the themes of the Broad

⁴⁹ PBL/SCP/CPB (2019). Letter from Plan Bureaus on Broad Prosperity.

⁵⁰ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/dossier/dossier-brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals>

⁵¹ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/dossier/brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals/monitor-brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals-2023/toelichting/methoden#7>

⁵² <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/regionale-monitor-brede-welvaart>

⁵³ Berger, 2022; Maas & Lucas, 2023.

⁵⁴ Maas & Lucas, 2023.

Prosperity Monitor are informed by the SDGs. Since 2019, this is explicitly reflected in the Broad Prosperity Monitor in combination with the SDGs.

However, there are also observed differences. The SDGs outline goals, all of which must be achieved - they are 'indivisible'. Broad prosperity focuses more on formulating a framework, on the basis of which choices must be made. Central to broad prosperity is the possibility of trade-offs and making choices and trade-offs in this: one can affect the other. This makes broad prosperity more of an intention, rather than an objective like the SDGs.⁵⁵ PBL also noted differences in usage practices. Research into Dutch policy practice previously found that the SDGs do not have a strong life.⁵⁶ By contrast, Broad Prosperity does, and since 2019 in the combination of Broad Prosperity with the SDGs.

In the PBL report, Maas & Lucas conclude, based on Dutch and international practices, that four possible roles can be distinguished for broad welfare and/or SDGs: monitoring, assessing, mapping desirability and explaining choices. The table below summarises this.

Table 3: Possible roles for broad welfare and/or the SDGs in policy, source: Maas & Lucas, 2023.

Rol	Verbetering beleid	Door ondersteuning van ...	Voorbeeld toepassingen
Monitoren	Beter zicht op 'hoe het ervoor staat'	... het signaleren en agenderen van maatschappelijke kwesties	Monitor Brede Welvaart & SDG's
Effectiviteit beoordelen	Beter zicht op (verwachte) effecten van beleidsvoorstellen	... het <i>ex ante/ex post</i> evalueren van de bijdrage van beleid aan brede welvaart en/of de SDG's	Verankeren van brede welvaart in de begrotingssystematiek; het Rijksbrede Beleidskompas
Wenselijkheid in kaart brengen	Beter zicht op mogelijk <i>gewenste</i> uitkomsten en/of prioriteringen	... informeren van mogelijke beleidskeuzes vanuit een expliciet normatieve visie	PBL-studie over brede welvaartperspectieven op mobiliteitsbeleid
Keuzes uitleggen	Betere uitleg van bestuurlijke keuze	... expliciete toelichting op beleidskeuze over wat vooral van belang is en ten koste waarvan dat mag gaan	<i>Nog geen expliciete voorbeelden</i>

In doing so, the authors note that the first two roles in particular are more frequently implemented in practice. Much discussion focuses on content and the indicators to be used. This concentrates on monitoring, but policy discussions are less about the desirability of certain policies and effects ('are we doing the right things') and explaining choices (making effects and choices in them explicit).

3.2. Deepening the Netherlands: regional broad prosperity

The previous section explained the general framework around SDGs and broad prosperity. It shows that there are differences and similarities between neighbouring countries. An interesting fact for this

⁵⁵ Maas & Lucas, 2023, p. 14.

⁵⁶ Transition International, 2021.

dossier is that in the Netherlands, broad welfare has also been translated to the regional level. This section therefore elaborates on that.

In the Dutch literature, broad welfare is defined as everything people consider of value.⁵⁷ Besides material prosperity (including gross domestic product), it also includes immaterial prosperity (well-being) such as the living environment, social cohesion, health and safety. To this end, a structured set of indicators has been developed by CBS, based on the CES framework.⁵⁸ With this, the Broad Prosperity Monitor is based on the three dimensions 'here and now', 'later' and 'elsewhere' and various themes. The themes are fed from the CES framework and the SDGs.

Table 4: Themes in the Broad Prosperity Monitor and themes in the CES measurement system, source: CBS.nl; CBS, 2017

Dimensie	Thema in de monitor	CES-thema's	
Brede welvaart "Hier en Nu"	Welzijn	subjectief welzijn (HWB1)	
	Materiële welvaart	consumptie en inkomen (HWB2)	
	Gezondheid	voeding (HWB3)	
		gezondheid (HWB4)	
	Arbeid en vrije tijd	arbeid (HWB5)	
		onderwijs (HWB6)	
		vrije tijd (HWB8)	
		mobiliteit (HWB15) ^{a)}	
	Wonen	wonen (HWB7)	
	Samenleving	vertrouwen (HWB13)	
		instituties (HWB14)	
	Veiligheid	fysieke veiligheid (HWB9)	
	Milieu	land en ecosystemen (HWB10)	
water (HWB11)			
luchtkwaliteit (HWB12)			
Brede welvaart "Later"	Economisch kapitaal	fysiek kapitaal (EC1)	
		kenniskapitaal (EC2)	
		financieel kapitaal (EC3)	
	Natuurlijk kapitaal	energievoorraden (NC1)	
		minerale voorraden (exclusief kolen en turf) (NC2)	
		land en ecosystemen (NC3)	
		water (NC4)	
		luchtkwaliteit (NC5)	
		klimaat (NC6)	
	Menselijk kapitaal	arbeid (HC1)	
		onderwijs (HC2)	
		gezondheid (HC3)	
	Sociaal kapitaal	vertrouwen (SC1)	
		instituties (SC2)	
	Brede welvaart "Elders" ^{b)}	Handel en hulp	consumptie en inkomen (TI1)
		Milieu en grondstoffen	energievoorraden (TI5)
minerale voorraden (exclusief kolen en turf) (TI6)			
klimaat (TI9)			

Toelichting: ^{a)} Het thema "mobiliteit" ontbreekt in het CES-meetsysteem. ^{b)} Voor de thema's fysiek kapitaal (TI2), kenniskapitaal (TI3), financieel kapitaal (TI4), land en ecosystemen (TI7), water (TI8), arbeid (TI10) en instituties (TI11) in de dimensie "Elders" zijn nog geen indicatoren ontwikkeld. Gemonetariseerde cijfers voor economisch, menselijk, natuurlijk en sociaal kapitaal zijn nog niet beschikbaar maar worden ontwikkeld.

The themes included in the set describe the *phenomenon of* broad welfare. The phenomenon is what we want to know about. To measure how these components are doing, *indicators* are used. An indicator is a statistic that is assumed to be representative of a theme and thus can be a basis for

⁵⁷ Maas & Lucas, 2017, p. 9.

⁵⁸ CBS, 2021 & 2022.

interpreting themes (and broad welfare).⁵⁹ In that interpretation and interpretation of the data, only first-order effects are taken into account. That is, on the effects that can be directly related to a development. Indirect effects are also possible, but are not included.

A national picture of broad welfare may mask underlying differences between regions. After all, it is about the average Dutchman. In practice, however, certain opportunities or problems may 'stack up' in certain regions.⁶⁰ This is also exactly what the advisory report 'Every region counts' criticised, among other things. Nevertheless, in the meantime, a development towards a more regional perspective has taken place. In 2017, PBL and CBS, among others, looked into how the concept of broad prosperity can be translated to a regional context.⁶¹ The insights were translated and implemented in CBS' Regional Broad Prosperity Monitor.⁶² This Monitor has been published since 2020, with the most recent publication in 2023 covering the year 2022. In doing so, CBS indicates continuous improvement of the regional data.⁶³ Several reports detail the conceptual framework.

People and the environment central

For higher welfare, it is less about whether certain outcomes can be measured and more about whether people have the freedom and opportunities to satisfy their needs and pursue goals.⁶⁴ As more is zoomed in on broad welfare, the human perspective becomes increasingly central. People's prosperity is shaped and influenced by individual and place-specific characteristics. The physical environment therefore becomes increasingly important: "The closer we get to the actual (local or regional) environment in which people shape their lives, the more important it becomes to include information about the characteristics of that environment."⁶⁵

Thereby, people operate in multiple, interconnected complex systems and shape their broad welfare in constant interaction with (others in) their environment. On the other hand, this in turn influences those of groups, regions, countries and societies.⁶⁶ In doing so, one should go beyond averages: this may mean something for national measurements, but regionally it is about people with specific characteristics in specific locations.⁶⁷ While broad prosperity has an identical meaning, the concrete elaboration should take into account what is relevant at the relevant scale. Particularly relevant to regional broad welfare is the measurement of '*capabilities*'. That is, to what extent people have the ability to achieve a certain level of prosperity, for instance with regard to access to healthcare, school, work and culture. With this, there is a shift from the outcome (such as a GDP) to the source.⁶⁸ Horlings & Smits deepen it further into resources and opportunities, use, outcomes and valuation:

⁵⁹ <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/dossier/brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals/monitor-brede-welvaart-en-de-sustainable-development-goals-2023/toelichting/raamwerk#4> See also the note there for the choice of indicators.

⁶⁰ Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2017.

⁶¹ Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2017; Thissen & Content, 2022; Horlings & Smits, 2017; Weterings et al, 2022.

⁶² <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/regionale-monitor-brede-welvaart>

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Horlings & Smits, 2017.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 27.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2017.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Table 5: four dimensions for themes within regional broad prosperity, own elaboration based on Horlings & Smits, 2017, p. 50.

<p>Resources and opportunities Capabilities refer to current rights and freedoms and capacity (physical, natural, financial, etc.) for people to shape broad welfare. This includes the extent of, access to and affordability of capacity. Resources refer to the new investments, current expenditure and costs for this capacity, current expenditure.</p>	<p>Outcomes "These are the positive and negative effects of using existing resources and opportunities. It is emphatically not about proven causal relationships between use and effects. It is about the effects that experts and policymakers think are most relevant."</p>
<p>Use of opportunities "Refers to the number of people, households and businesses and others using resources and opportunities. This includes aspects of behaviour such as exercising, smoking, eating or borrowing money."</p>	<p>Subjective perception "Perception shows people's subjective assessment of outcomes on a policy topic. It can include the appreciation they give to an aspect of their lives or their concerns about a particular problem, as well as their expectations for the future."</p>

Given these four dimensions, indicators have been developed to capture a particular policy theme. Again, indicators are the tool to describe a phenomenon, where the indicator should give a representative indication.⁶⁹ As an example with regard to education, Horlings and Smits give:

Table 6: Examples with regard to education, source: Horlings & Smits, 2017, p. 50.

<p>Resources and opportunities: By what means are children, youth and adults provided with good education? How much money and human resources are invested in education? Use: How many people participate in education? Aspects of behaviour concern the decision to leave school early or to pursue education later in life. Outcomes: What is the level of education of residents in the Netherlands and how well are specific skills learned in education? Perception: Are people satisfied with the quality of education and with their access to education?</p>

Thissen & Content thereby conclude in their research on the municipal level that there are also different valuations regarding different themes.⁷⁰ This ties in with the aforementioned aspect of perception.

Importance of 'elsewhere' dimension and coherence

"The role of 'Elsewhere' is increasing," says Horlings & Smits⁷¹, when it comes to regional broad welfare relative to national broad welfare. Regional broad welfare and 'elsewhere' are more about both interregional and international effects.⁷² Similarly, policy measures in one municipality can affect broad welfare in another, such as so-called waterbed effects (shifting from one region to another). On the other hand, Thissen & Content argue that 'elsewhere' should also be dealt with differently.⁷³ Here, they focused on the municipal level. In doing so, they noted that it is not only about the effects of

⁶⁹ Horlings & Smits, 2017.

⁷⁰ Thissen & Content, 2022.

⁷¹ Horlings & Smits, 2017, p. 26.

⁷² Ibid. p. 37; Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2017, Thissen & Content, 2022.

⁷³ Thissen & Content, 2022, p. 61.

broad welfare on other municipalities and regions, but also about the importance of other municipalities and regions for their 'own' broad welfare. For example, the presence of a certain facility, such as a theatre or hospital, in a nearby municipality can affect the broad welfare of residents of another municipality. The broad prosperity in a municipality is thus determined by its connection with the surrounding region," Thissen & Content said.⁷⁴ For regional broad prosperity and steering towards it, it is therefore important to look at the region in context. It could be argued that through these interactions of people and between regions, the importance of 'elsewhere' increases in a two-way reciprocal dynamic: there exist elements where people derive broad prosperity and both positive and negative influences and interactions can exist.

Effective policy therefore requires an adequate picture of the region and the interregional interactions that exist. This varies by topic and also by region. The living environment of the region is not a defined concept. The scale of 'the region' is different for someone when it comes to work (commuting) than to visiting a café or theatre. In fact, the distinction between 'here' and 'elsewhere' blurs if one zooms in on broad welfare more locally. In the context of broad prosperity, the accessibility, proximity and accessibility between neighbouring municipalities/regions is very influential in this regard.

Choices for policy

"Regional policies aimed at broad prosperity are essentially about the opportunities and possibilities (material and non-material) to create prosperity for people and the distributional issues involved."⁷⁵ This sentence summarises the essence. To this end, PBL has identified four policy challenges for regions⁷⁶ :

- Policy should give regions room to capitalise on their growth potential in terms of prosperity.
- Policies should improve the quality of life, or quality of environment, in regions.
- Policy should offer regions new perspectives.
- Policy should play a role in operationalising system changes for major societal tasks of national importance.

Indeed, the identified facets around broad prosperity in general, and more specifically for the region, set a number of conditions and challenges for policy.

The region in focus

People's broad prosperity therefore partly depends on the conditions in the region where they live. This includes the amenities to be reached and the quality of the living environment. Here, the demarcation of the 'region' is not set in stone and interregional interactions and effects need to be considered. The connection with nearby municipalities, both positive and negative, is important in this respect. A starting point for policy is therefore to have an adequate picture of region-specific characteristics and regional differences in appreciation of different aspects of broad welfare. In

⁷⁴ Thissen & Content, 2022, p. 14.

⁷⁵ Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2017, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Raspe, 2018.

addition, a picture should exist of interregional cohesion and effects, as PBL has previously attempted to do for a number of themes.⁷⁷ Based on the picture, opportunities and problems should be identified. To this end, policies can be formulated to cash in on opportunities and growth potentials and promote better quality or solve problems. On the other hand, the context of a region, and the context variables that exist with it, influence the success of the policy pursued.

Trade-off

An important aspect concerns trade-offs. Because more broad prosperity on one aspect or dimension usually also means less broad prosperity on another aspect or dimension - not everything can always and everywhere - choices are necessary. Trade-offs can exist in time, space and thematically. A simple example is the realisation of a wind farm that on the one hand promotes sustainability and energy transition, but on the other can negatively affect the appreciation of the living environment. This effect can also occur with respect to other municipalities (regions) and in time. In their recent publication, Weterings and Brakman address two recent developments from socio-economic policy and place them in a broad welfare perspective.⁷⁸ Specifically, these are the promotion of green hydrogen (in the northern Netherlands) and the policy on maintaining the level of facilities in the rural area by attracting users (recreation, tourism). The case studies serve to illustrate the various possible trade-offs that exist. The trade-offs at stake should be sharply identified. A choice should be made on that basis. Broad welfare policy thus requires prioritisation and an integral consideration. This also refers back to the aforementioned roles of broad welfare as 'mapping desirability' and 'explaining choices'.

Multi-level engagement

The preceding two aspects, the region in focus & trade-offs, highlight the importance of multi-level engagement. Such is the case in the context of bringing the 'region' into view and the right level of scale within it. This implies that despite a task may play municipal, regional, provincial or even national policy can play an important coordinating role. Weterings and Brakman therefore emphasise coordination within the region as well as coordination between regions.⁷⁹ Such findings were also made in the study on Regio Deals.⁸⁰

Coordination in the region concerns cohesion in the region. On the one hand, this can create unintended (counteracting) effects. On the other hand, it can also ensure more effective solutions to coherent problems. Between regions refers to the difference and effects between 'here' and 'elsewhere'. To facilitate such coordination in and between regions, supra-regional coordination may be desirable. National or provincial policies can play an important coordinating role here. This multi-actor involvement is also essential to arrive at supported and integral trade-offs, as appointed under 'trade-offs':

⁷⁷ Thissen & Content, 2022.

⁷⁸ Weterings & Brakman, 2023.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Weterings et al, 2022.

The same applies vice versa. Some national or supra-regional tasks must be realised in conjunction with the region. For instance, PBL identified the region in the context of operationalising system changes for major social tasks of national importance. Here, municipal specialisation can play a role, such as strengthening municipalities in which they are relatively good at. On the other hand, the literature emphasises the role of the regional field in social acceptance and understanding of policy⁸¹ : "Promoting broad prosperity will often require alliances between neighbouring decentralised authorities. For the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of region-specific policy, it is important that the administrative unit is in line with the spatial scale level at which the circumstances requiring intervention come into play. In several aspects of broad prosperity, that scale level transcends the boundaries of individual municipalities."⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid; Raspe, Content & Thissen, 2017; Thissen & Content, 2022.

⁸² Weterings et al, 2022, p. 5.

4. Broad prosperity in cross-border regions: an exploration

The Regional Broad Prosperity Monitor and its measurement and assessment as well as the discussion around regional broad prosperity is currently limited to the administrative country borders (concentrated on the "resident in the Netherlands"). The previous discussion emphasises the importance of region-specific characteristics for regional broad prosperity. More specifically, the advisory councils previously called for more consideration of border-specific characteristics. In addition, certain objectives, such as with regard to sustainability, also require cross-border coordination and cooperation for border regions.⁸³ This chapter explores the border-specific dimension.

4.1. Analytical exploration

This section explores the cross-border dimension for regional broad prosperity based on existing data and literature. To this end, it will first start with a quick scan of the indicators of the Regional Broad Prosperity Monitor, the measurement and assessment of which are still limited to the administrative country borders. We will then zoom in on the question to what extent border data are available, which border-specific opportunities, growth potential and challenges need to be taken into account.

⁸³ See ITEM Border Impact Assessment 2022.

Quick Scan Regional Monitor Broad Prosperity

The Regional Broad Prosperity Monitor is currently still limited in measurement and assessment to administrative country borders. Incidentally, this is not necessarily the case for the subjective data. For instance, indicators on satisfaction with life or with the living environment can also include aspects beyond the national border. Objective indicators such as natural area per inhabitant, distance to pubs etc. and to sports grounds are currently not cross-border, so it is unclear what meaning can be given to the results of these objective indicators in border regions. In the tables below, the indicators defined for regional broad prosperity 'here and now' and 'later' are listed, their objective or subjective character is indicated and the cross-border dimension is briefly reflected upon by means of colours. It should be noted that no judgment is made on the indicators themselves. Nor is it intended to examine the indicator in a technical sense. In the quick scan, the short assessment is based on the given description, source and measurement unit.⁸⁴

The quick scan examines the possibilities of measuring broad welfare in border regions in general. This looks at potential indicators where it is estimated that the indicator is likely to be able to be provided with a cross-border dimension. With this, a Euroregional monitor could also be created. However, interactions between sub-regions in border regions should also be taken into account when interpreting the figures of these indicators. For example, cross-border workers or someone living in Belgium, working in the Netherlands and going to Germany for daily activities creates challenges for reliably measuring broad welfare in a border region. It is important to note that these complex dynamics, as described, are not shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Indicators regional monitor 'here and now' + cross-border dimension

	Indicator	Description (+ unit)	
Labour and leisure	Net employment rate	The share of the working age population 15-74 in the population of the same age group (working and non-working age population). (% of the population aged 15-74)	
	Gross employment rate	The share of the working age population (employed and unemployed) aged 15-74 in the population of the same age group (working and non-working age population). (% of the population aged 15-74)	
	Unemployment	Unemployed labour force as a percentage of the (employed and unemployed) labour force. Persons aged 15-74 without paid employment, who have recently looked for work and are readily available for it. (% of labour force)	
	Vacancy rate	The vacancy rate is the number of vacancies open per thousand jobs. It refers to the vacancy rate at the end of the fourth quarter. A vacancy means a job for which, within or outside a company or institution, staff are sought who can be placed immediately or as	

⁸⁴ The description of the indicators can be found here: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/regionale-monitor-brede-welvaart/beschrijving-indicatoren>

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		soon as possible. A job is an employee's employment, regardless of the number of hours worked. (Number of vacancies per 1 000 jobs)	
	Satisfaction with travel time to and from work	Proportion of people aged 18 to 75 with a paid job of at least 12 hours a week who give a score of 7 to 10 in response to the question 'On a scale of 1 to 10, can you indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with travel time to and from work. A 1 represents completely dissatisfied and 10 represents completely satisfied?' A score of 7 to 10 is classified as satisfied. (% of employed people aged 18 to 75 are satisfied with travel time to and from work)	
Health	Overweight	Percentage of people aged 18 years and over with a BMI of 25.0 kg/m ² and above. Body weight figures are based on self-reported values. Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of obesity, calculated as the quotient of weight in kilograms and the square of height in metres (kg/m ²). (% of population aged 18 years or older)	
	Perceived health	Percentage of people aged 18 and over with answer category 'good' or 'very good' to the question general health status. (% of population aged 18 and over consider own health (very) good)	
	Life expectancy population	Life expectancy in years for the population at birth. Average value over period 2017-2020. (Years a person is expected to live (at birth))	
	Persons with one or more long-term illnesses or conditions	Percentage of people aged 18 and over with one or more long-term illnesses or conditions. Long-term is (expected to be) 6 months or longer. (% of population aged 18 or over)	
Material prosperity	Median disposable income	The median standardised disposable income per household, in euros. The calculation corrects for differences in household size and composition. The median is the middle number when all incomes are sorted from low to high. (euros per household, adjusted for inflation, in constant 2015 prices)	
	Gross domestic product	Gross domestic product (GDP) in constant 2015 prices. GDP is a measure of the size of the economy. (euros per capita (2015 prices))	
Environment	Natural area per capita	Forest and open natural land in hectares per 1,000 inhabitants. Forest: land planted with trees intended for timber production and/or nature management, including unpaved and semi-paved roads. Natural land: land in dry and wet natural state. (ha per 1 000 inhabitants)	
	Emissions of particulate matter to air	Annual average particulate emissions to air. Finer fraction of particulate matter consists of particles whose diameter is smaller than 2.5 micrometres. (kg PM _{2,5} per km) ²	
	Distance to public green space	The average distance of all residents in an area to the nearest public green space, calculated by road. Public green space is land in use as a park or parkland, for day recreation, nature or forest. The land can be either privately or publicly accessible. The site has a size of at least one hectare (km).	

	Natural and forest areas	Forest and open natural land as a percentage of total land area. Forest: land planted with trees intended for timber production and/or nature management, including unpaved and semi-paved roads. Natural land: land in dry and wet natural state. (% of total land area)	
	Greenhouse gas emissions per capita	Total greenhouse gas emissions (CO ₂ , CH ₄ , N ₂ O, HFC, PFC and SF ₆) in CO ₂ equivalents per inhabitant. One kg of CO ₂ equivalent is equivalent to the effect the emission of 1 kg of carbon dioxide (CO ₂) has. To calculate CO ₂ equivalents, IPCC guidelines are followed. Data concern emissions on Dutch territory, regardless of whether they are caused by Dutch residents. This means that emissions by Dutch residents abroad are not included and emissions by non-residents in the Netherlands are. (tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent per inhabitant)	
	Quality of inland bathing waters	Average bathing health quality of lake and river sites, according to the standards of the EU Bathing Water Directive in force. A score of 4 represents excellent, a 3 represents good, a 2 represents adequate and a 1 represents poor. (Average quality (1=bad to 4=excellent))	
	Quality of coastal bathing waters	Average bathing health quality of coastal and transitional water sites, according to the standards of the EU Bathing Water Directive in force. A score of 4 represents excellent, a 3 represents good, a 2 represents adequate and a 1 represents poor. (Average quality (1=bad to 4=excellent))	
Society	Contact with family, friends or neighbours	Percentage of people aged 15 and over who have contact with family, friends or neighbours at least once a week on average. This includes all forms of contact. It is an average of the indicators "at least weekly contact with family", "at least weekly contact with friends" and "at least weekly contact with neighbours". (% of the population aged 15 and over have contact with family, friends or neighbours at least once a week)	
	Trust in institutions	Percentage of people aged 15 and over who trust three institutions (Lower House, police, and judges). The indicator refers to the average of the three scores. (% of the population aged 15 and over have confidence in Lower House, police or judges)	
	Confidence in others	Proportion of people aged 15 and over who agree with statement that most people are generally trustworthy. Also called generalised trust. (% of the population aged 15 and over who think people can be trusted i.a.)	
	Volunteer	Percentage of the population aged 15 and over who have volunteered for organisations or associations in the past 12 months. This may include administrative work or other activities. (% of the population aged 15 and over volunteered in the last 12 months)	
Safety	Often feel unsafe in the neighbourhood	% of the population aged 15 and over who often feel unsafe in their own neighbourhood. Figures by municipality are only available for municipalities with more than 70,000 inhabitants. (% of population aged 15 and over)	
	Number of offences encountered	Number of offences experienced, excluding cybercrime offences experienced, for persons aged 15 years and over. (Per 100 inhabitants.)	
	Crimes recorded	Recorded crime per 1 000 inhabitants. Refers to crimes recorded by the police in a police report or in an official report. (number per 1,000 inhabitants)	

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Welfare	Satisfaction with life	Proportion of people aged 18 years or older giving a score of 7 to 10 in response to the question 'On a scale of 1 to 10, can you indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with the life you currently lead. A 1 represents completely dissatisfied and 10 represents completely satisfied?' A score of 7 to 10 is classified as satisfied. (% of the population aged 18 or over is satisfied with life)	
	Satisfaction with leisure time	Proportion of people aged 18 or over giving a score of 7 to 10 in response to the question 'On a scale of 1 to 10, can you indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with the amount of free time you have. A 1 represents completely dissatisfied and 10 represents completely satisfied?' A score of 7 to 10 is classified as satisfied. (% of the population aged 18 or over is satisfied with the amount of leisure time)	
Living	Satisfaction with living environment	The percentage of private households that are very satisfied or satisfied with their current living environment. Residential environment is the area and neighbourhood in which a household lives. Private household: one or more persons who occupy a living space together and provide themselves, i.e. non-business, with the daily necessities of life. The living space is not shared with other households. Figures by municipality are only available for municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (in 2018). (% of private households are (very) satisfied)	
	Satisfaction with home	The percentage of private households that are very satisfied or satisfied with their current housing. Private household: one or more persons occupying a living space together and providing for themselves, i.e. non-business, the daily necessities of life. The living space is not shared with other households. Figures by municipality are only available for municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (in 2018). (% of private households are (very) satisfied)	85
	Distance to sports ground	The average distance of all residents in an area to the nearest public green space, calculated by road. Public green space is land in use as a park or parkland, for day recreation, nature or forest. The land can be either privately or publicly accessible. The site has a size of at least one hectare (km).	
	Distance from primary school	The average distance of all residents in an area to the nearest primary school, calculated by road. Primary education includes only primary schools as known to the Department for Education (DUO).	
	Distance to pub etc.	The average distance of all residents in an area to the nearest pub, coffee house, coffee shop, coffee shop, discotheque, sex/nightclub and party centre, calculated by road. (km)	

⁸⁵ This concerns a subjective indicator, but is very locally - namely the home - delimited. This makes it unlikely that cross-border interactions or influences are included in perceptions.

Table 8: Indicators regional monitor 'later' + cross-border dimension

	Indicator	Description	
Economic capital	Average debt per household	The average of private household debt. The debts include the mortgage debt of the own home, study debts and other debts such as for consumption purposes, the financing of shares, bonds or rights to periodic benefits, debts to finance the second home or other real estate. (euros per household)	
	Median household wealth	The balance of assets and liabilities. Assets consist of bank balances and savings, securities, the owner-occupied home, other real estate, business assets, substantial interest and other assets. Liabilities include debts for a private home and consumer credit. Balance as at 1 January. (euro)	
Human capital	Working hours per week	The total number of hours actually worked by employees and the self-employed. Thus, hours not worked due to leave or illness do not count. Employees' hours worked have been calculated by adding unpaid overtime to paid hours (agreed hours plus paid overtime) and subtracting actual hours not worked that are paid, such as sick leave, maternity leave, strikes, weather leave, parental leave, short-term absence. The hours worked of self-employed workers were determined directly. (Number of actual hours worked per worker per week)	86
	Highly educated population	Percentage of the population aged 15-74 who have completed higher education (at the level of HBO or WO). (% of the population aged 15-74 who have completed higher education (at the level of HBO or WO))	
	Perceived health	Percentage of people aged 18 and over with answer category 'good' or 'very good' to the question general health status. (% of population aged 18 and over consider own health (very) good)	
Natura	Private solar energy	The summed capacity of solar panel installations in watts per dwelling at the end of the reference year. This is the capacity of solar panel installations at homes divided by the total number of homes, i.e. homes with or without solar panels. (Average installed capacity in watts per dwelling)	

⁸⁶ Given the number of factors, this indicator seems difficult to obtain across borders as well. Nevertheless, studies already exist on differences across borders between, for example, the share of full-time and part-time work.

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	Natural and forest areas	Forest and open natural land as a percentage of total land area. Forest: land planted with trees intended for timber production and/or nature management, including unpaved and semi-paved roads. Natural land: land in dry and wet natural state. (% of total land area)	
	Built-up area	Land used for living, working, shopping, entertainment, culture and public facilities as a percentage of total land area. (% of total land area)	
	Emissions of particulate matter to air	Annual average particulate emissions to air. Finer fraction of particulate matter consists of particles whose diameter is smaller than 2.5 micrometres. (kg PM _{2,5} per km) ²	
	Phosphate excretion agriculture	The excreted amount of phosphate in livestock manure per hectare expressed as P2O5. Unlike nitrogen, no gaseous losses occur with phosphate (kg per ha of fertilised farmland).	
	Green-blue space, excluding regular agriculture	This area per capita includes green and/or natural areas in both urban and rural areas, excluding mainstream agriculture and excluding the North Sea. It includes urban green spaces, small and large water bodies, rural green spaces such as verges, hedges and rows of trees, forests and natural areas and areas under agricultural nature management. Regular agriculture: agriculture without nature management. Regular agriculture and the North Sea are not included in this indicator because their size would completely overshadow developments in smaller landscape units. Also excluded are private gardens and green roofs: insufficient data are available on these. This indicator was developed within the Natural Capital Accounts project and is still under development. (m ² per inhabitant)	
	Nitrogen excretion agriculture	The total nitrogen excretion in livestock manure per hectare minus the nitrogen volatilised during manure storage in the barn and during storage outside the barn in the form of ammonia (NH ₃) including the run-off via purge water from air scrubbers, nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), nitrous oxide (NO) and nitrogen gas (N ₂). (kg per ha of fertilised agricultural land)	
Social capital	Social cohesion	Social cohesion gives a scale score from 0 to 10. The higher the score on this scale, the more satisfied residents are with the social aspects of their neighbourhood. Figures per municipality are only available for municipalities with more than 70,000 inhabitants. (scale score (0-10))	

<i>Colour legend</i>	
Green indicator = subjective indicator	Blue indicator = objective indicator
	Subjective indicators, in which respondents give an assessment. In principle, this assessment is not tightly bound to a certain geographical demarcation. With regard to border regions, the assessment may include cross-border aspects. For example, residential satisfaction or trust in others: in border regions, the assessment may be coloured by interactions across the border. N.B. The indicator does consider the Dutch border area. As such, it does not give a picture of the cross-border region: for example, how the resident on the other side of the border assesses subjective indicators.
	Objective indicators, delimited to the administrative country border. This does not include cross-border aspects, interactions or dimensions. In estimation, it is easier to add a cross-border dimension to the indicator. For example, proximity indicators, such as distance to pubs, to sports grounds or primary schools. These data are also available across the border.
	Objective indicators, delimited to the administrative country border. This does not include cross-border aspects, interactions or dimensions. By estimation, adding a cross-border dimension is more complex.
	Objective indicators, based on European data. Unclear to what extent this includes the cross-border dimension.

Boundary data

The previous section made a quick scan of the regional monitor broad prosperity. In doing so, it could be argued that it should, to some extent, be possible to create a Euroregional picture consisting of figures on the same indicators on the other side of the border. Some relevant exercises in this context have already been undertaken. Specifically with regard to prosperity, CBS released a publication in 2019.⁸⁷ Here, the analysis covered the economic factors: material prosperity (gross value added per capita), labour productivity, labour participation, annual working time and population share that is of working age. The analysis distinguished between the border area Northeast (Northern Netherlands - Lower Saxony), Southeast (Central Netherlands - North Rhine-Westphalia) and South (Southern Netherlands - Belgium). In each case, data was collected for both sides of the border per region and compared both across borders and in relation to the non-border area. This is an example of how more or less incidental supplementing and comparing regional data across the border has been given shape and can thus serve as an example for the indicators highlighted in yellow earlier. In the publication, it allowed the authors to make comparisons between Dutch border regions and thus identify region-specific characteristics and underlying explanations for observed differences.

In the same year, a report on the "Economy and labour market in the border regions of the Benelux countries and neighbouring areas." was published, with a broader set of data. Nevertheless, it again concerns border data in terms of economy and labour market.⁸⁸ Within the framework of the Interreg projects "labour market in border regions DE-NL" (Interreg Deutschland - Netherlands) and *Werkinzicht* (Interreg Flanders-Netherlands), a Border Data Portal has been developed by the CBS.⁸⁹ This provides insights into cross-border statistics (i.e. from both sides of the border) on the themes of labour, business demographics, population and economy. A final theme concerns cross-border commuting, currently limited to cross-border commuting by employees. Specifically with regard to border commuting, the data is currently available until 2019. This is an indicator that can also reflect the interaction of border regions across borders. Eurostat also has a dataset on 'cross-border commuting for work', which is reflected, among others, in the publication 'People on the move - statistics on mobility in Europe'.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, border data is still limited for the time being⁹¹, regional data are difficult to compare and reconcile across borders so far. In addition, no structural measurement of border commuting takes place. At the European level, 2018 saw the completion of the 'Cross-border data collection' project, partly as part of the 2018 Task Force on European set of LMAs.⁹² The European Commission's 2021 Communication 'EU Border Regions: Living labs of EU integration' again highlighted the importance of cross-border statistics, but without mentioning concrete initiatives.⁹³ This call was supported, among others, by the European Court of Auditors, which, in a *special issue on the effectiveness of the Interreg*

⁸⁷ CBS, 2019. Figures for 2018.

⁸⁸ In this context, see also, among others, CBS (2017). The labour market in border region of the Netherlands and Flanders; CBS (2016). The labour market in the border region of the Netherlands-Netherlands; CBS (2015) The labour market in the border regions of the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia.

⁸⁹ <https://opendata.grensdata.eu/#/InterReg/nl/>

⁹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/digipub/eumove/index.html?lang=en>

⁹¹ Falcon, 2019.

⁹² Falcon, 2018.

⁹³ COM(2021) 393 final.

programme, also had to conclude that there are insufficient cross-border statistics to neither measure nor assess the impact.⁹⁴

Other relevant initiatives that should be mentioned are, for example, the Euregional Health Atlas and Wohnmonitor EMR. The Euregional Health Atlas presents some demographic and health data, as well as some well-being data (such as loneliness, satisfaction, social support) and some specific indicators regarding youth and social norms regarding alcohol, cannabis, gaming and medication. These data cover the Belgian, Dutch and German part of the EMR, but must acknowledge that due to differences in measurement methods, comparisons in the data remain complex.⁹⁵ Based partly on this data, Curvers and Willems in 2018 investigated the 'Euregio factor', in which the health situation of the EMR is worse compared to the average in the Netherlands.⁹⁶ The Euroregional data indicates similarities, but also differences. In the context of health promotion, they note in particular that the Euroregional dimension creates a complex interplay of factors.

The Wohnmonitor EMR on the other hand is an initiative that maps the population and housing situation in the EMR.⁹⁷ The data reflects, among other things, population density, development and forecasts, identical also for households. The Wohnmonitor also collects and reports data on international migration (incoming and outgoing), home ownership, housing types and the housing market in terms of transactions and purchase prices. In doing so, all data for the Dutch, Belgian and German part of the EMR are available. This provides special insight into e.g. euregional demographics and the housing market and to what extent cross-border opportunities or bottlenecks exist.⁹⁸

An adequate and complete picture is a first step for policies towards broad prosperity and/or SDGs. Nevertheless, national monitors, indicators, datasets, etc. are not available or compatible across borders at the regional level. Better availability and comparability of regional data on SDGs in particular is the focus of the recent European REGIONS2030 project.⁹⁹ Objective: "Define and test a European set of regional indicators to monitor the SDGs." While there is a European dataset for SDGs at that level, this is not yet the case at the regional level. This project will end in 2023 and includes a number of pilots in European regions, with ultimate desire to bring about a European dataset of regional indicators. The previous chapters have outlined how SDGs and broad prosperity align in content and thematic terms, but are used differently in policy practice. With that, broad prosperity and monitoring it requires additional indicators.¹⁰⁰

A particularly relevant indicator in this respect has proved to be border commuting. For instance, it provides insight into the balance between outbound and inbound commuting, but also into the expectation of the level of interaction of someone with the neighbouring country. For instance, Grensdata shows that more Belgian and German workers commute to the Netherlands than vice versa.

⁹⁴ ECA, 2021.

⁹⁵ <https://euregionalhealthatlas.eu/index.html>

⁹⁶ Curvers, N. & Willems, L. (2018). *In search of the Euregio factor*. GGD South Limburg.

⁹⁷ <https://nl.crossborder-housing.eu/>

⁹⁸ See here also the cooperation opportunities for Parkstad Limburg and Aachen: Rocak, M., Hooijen, I., Schrijven, I. & Stoffers, J. (2021). *Zero measurement Region Deal Parkstad Limburg*. NEIMED.

⁹⁹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/regions2030-project-monitoring-sdgs-eu-regions-%E2%80%93-filling-data-gaps_en

¹⁰⁰ As is the case in the Netherlands and Belgium.

The data also shows that most commuters who moved across the border kept their jobs in the country of origin.¹⁰¹ Almost 60 per cent of those who live in Belgium and work in the Netherlands have Dutch nationality.¹⁰² These are relevant factors in assessing where the living environment is mainly concentrated and set. Indeed, border data should not only be a similar and comparable mode of data collection and reporting on both sides of the border, but also provide insights into interactions and dynamics across the border.

Importance of the cross-border dimension: opportunities and growth potential

The importance of the cross-border dimension is strong in border regions. As a result, the interconnectedness between 'here' and 'elsewhere' is also blurred across national borders. In the advisory report 'Every region counts', the advisory councils also stress the importance of cashing in on opportunities and growth potential for border regions on the other side of the border. Some case examples are given in this regard. Parkstad Limburg, for instance, can be part of a cross-border agglomeration and opportunities exist for exploiting infrastructure capacities in Germany. Indeed, in the ITEM Border Impact Assessment 2022, Unfried examined the opportunities and obstacles with regard to cross-border energy transition.¹⁰³ In this, sufficient opportunities exist, but to date there are hardly any cross-border energy projects. Specifically with regard to Parkstad Limburg, a large solar field exists just across the border, from which the Dutch border region could benefit. ITEM research on the NOVI (National Environmental Vision) and the NOVI strategy for South Limburg has shown that better cross-border coordination and cooperation in the field of energy transition and spatial planning can create significant economies of scale and synergy effects for the benefit of broad prosperity in the border region.¹⁰⁴ This also applies to topics such as housing.¹⁰⁵

In all cases, opportunities for the economy and labour market are specifically mentioned. Although studies are limited in their totality, some publications specifically indicate the growth potential and opportunities of a cross-border region relative to a border region in terms of the labour market and economy. For instance, hypothetically, if the effects of border location on the Euroregional labour market were completely absent, the likelihood of employment within acceptable travel distance could increase significantly due to agglomeration advantages. Illustrative is the work of Atlas for Municipalities in 2019.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Hooijen, Mertens, Unfried & Corvers, 2020.

¹⁰² Weterings & Van Gessel-Dabekaussen, 2015.

¹⁰³ Unfried, 2022.

¹⁰⁴ Mertens, P., Unfried, M., Pijnenburg, V., & Aerts, W. (2021). *Preliminary exploration Borderland strategy NOVI-area South Limburg*. ITEM. Unfried et al, 2020.

¹⁰⁵ Rocak, M., Hooijen, I., Schrijven, I. & Stoffers, J. (2021). *Zero measurement Region Deal Parkstad Limburg*. NEIMED.

¹⁰⁶ Marlet et al, 2019.

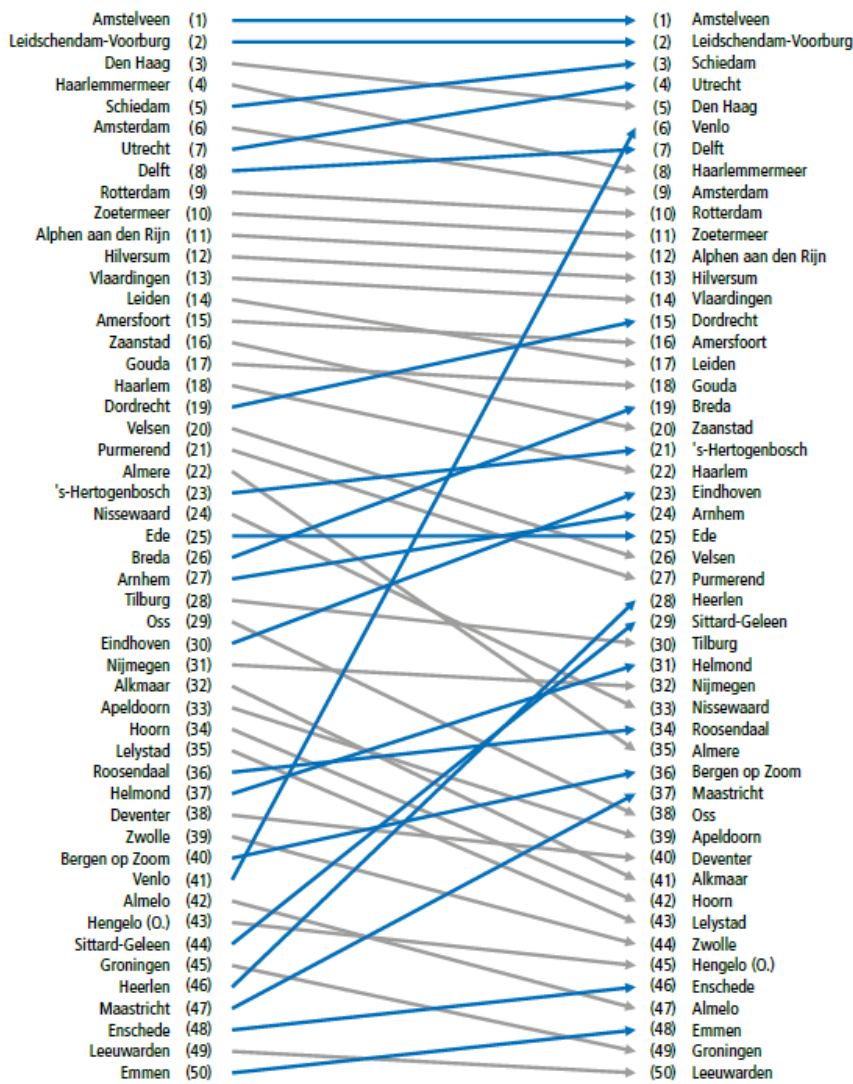
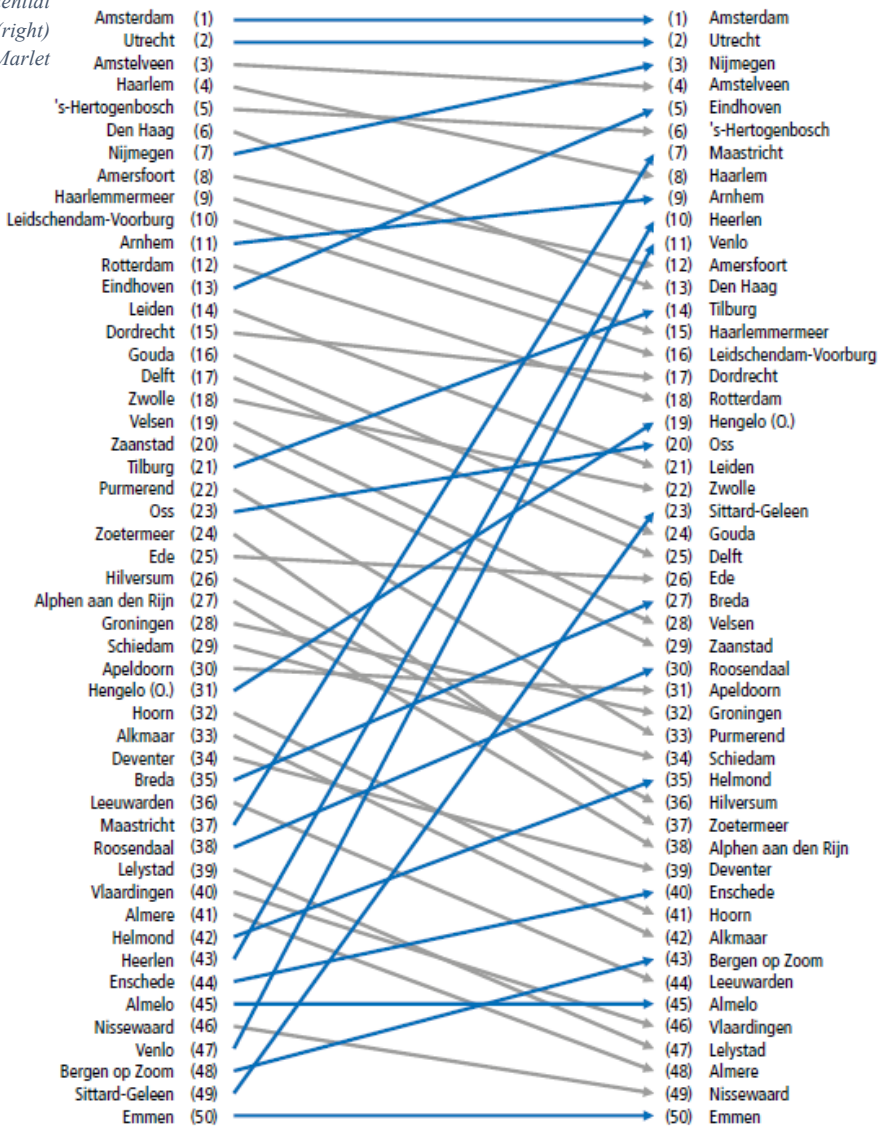


Figure 4: The accessibility of jobs without (left) and with (right) jobs abroad, source: Marlet et al., 2019, p. 22.

Figure 5: Ranking position for residential attractiveness without (left) and with (right) jobs and amenities abroad, source: Marlet et al., 2019, p. 23.



These two figures theoretically illustrate how strong the positive effect of removing border barriers ('the border') has on the reach and availability of jobs and residential attractiveness at the level of (border) municipalities. A similar exercise was also done by CPB and CBS regarding the reach and availability of jobs, where a large agglomeration effect was found.¹⁰⁷ The agglomeration effects on the labour market for border regions was also the focus of the 2016 CPB note.¹⁰⁸ This involved a 'what if' analysis (what if the borders fell away?) based on the so-called 'adjusted differences method' and the 'market potential method' and with respect to wages, gross labour force participation, unemployment, employment and gross regional product. Agglomeration effects are positive and relatively strong in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and South Limburg. This is partly due to the presence of large cities in neighbouring countries

Agglomeration benefits are indeed highly context-specific and dependent, as the literature review by Hooijen et al. also shows, specifically with regard to cross-border agglomeration opportunities for the

¹⁰⁷ Weterings & Van Gessel-Dabekaussen, 2015. See also next section.

¹⁰⁸ CPB, 2016.

Meuse-Rhine Euroregion. In doing so, the literature review discusses labour market structures, sector composition, opportunities and barriers. A relevant aspect is, for instance, to what extent in a regional context labour markets on both sides of the border 'match', e.g. with regard to complementarity.¹⁰⁹

However, broad welfare is about more than the mainly economic studies that have been done on agglomeration opportunities. Furthermore, the studies are mainly from a Dutch perspective. Broad prosperity from a Euroregional perspective also requires understanding trade-offs: an advantage for one border area could mean a disadvantage for another border area. From a Dutch perspective, too, an open border without barriers may have not only advantages but also disadvantages. For instance, the advisory councils identify some risks of the border with regard to healthcare and education facilities. In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, these increasingly take place in Belgium, resulting in a decrease of these facilities on the Dutch side. Again, the question arises how this should be assessed from the lens of a cross-border region and broad prosperity.

Casuistically, *best practices* do exist that can enhance broad welfare in a Euroregional perspective. The table below shows a non-exhaustive and merely illustrative list of examples, focusing on the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion.

Care cooperation (Euroregional Pediatric Centre)

Healthcare facilities and specialised care in particular are often under tension in the (Dutch) border region. Child surgery, for instance, was in danger of disappearing from Maastricht and thus from the southern Netherlands. To this end, child surgery specialists from Maastricht, Liège and Aachen have teamed up in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, thus preserving the availability and accessibility of the specialism in the border region. Cooperation can also be of help in Intensive Care capacities, for example. ITEM research on the COVID-19 crisis showed the opportunities and need for IC cooperation across the border.¹¹⁰ Collaborations have already been set up along the national border, such as between Maastricht and Aachen.

Sivonen's case study in the ITEM Border Impact Reports 2021, 2022 and 2023 specifically addresses the opportunities and challenges in terms of cross-border healthcare cooperation.¹¹¹

Security cooperation (EMRIC, ERMWIC, N4)

Nor does security stop at the border. This includes, for example, crisis management during a pandemic or a flood, but also crime. In the Euregio Meuse-Rhine and Euregio Rhine-Meuse North, structural networks and collaborations have been set up between the bodies responsible for crisis management and disaster relief (such as fire brigades, emergency assistance). Cooperation has been institutionalised in the form of EMRIC, for example. A network (N⁴) is also being developed along the border of the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia in this area.

Culture and education cooperation (Euregional Museum Pass, Neighbourhood language projects)

Cooperation across borders also takes place in the fields of culture and education. In the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, for example, the *aufinsmuseum/to-the-museum* project ran until 2022. This created one museum card for 26 museums in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. Such an initiative shows that cultural facilities also do not (have to) be bound by administrative borders. Various initiatives also exist in the field of neighbourhood languages and educational cooperation. Schools on both sides of the border can play a significant role in terms of proximity

¹⁰⁹ For example, the sector composition of Parkstad Limburg and Aachen is not complementary: Rocak, M., Hooijen, I., Schrijven, I. & Stoffers, J. (2021). *Zero measurement Region Deal Parkstad Limburg*. NEIMED.

¹¹⁰ Buiskool et al, 2021.

¹¹¹ Available at <https://crossborderitem.eu/publicaties/>

and quality of education. For instance, the recent EMRLingua project aimed at cooperation between schools and the exchange of students and teachers. Similar initiatives exist elsewhere along the national border. These are activities that can improve both Euroregional cohesion and the proximity, accessibility and quality of education.

The 'Border Effect'

"Taking full advantage of opportunities 'across the border' is in practice quite often hampered by differences in laws, regulations and decision-making processes," the advisory councils said.¹¹² Indeed, the border itself also plays an important role in whether or not these opportunities can actually be realised. For instance, the fact that a facility or opportunity is present across the border does not automatically mean it also results in use or realisation. This depends on several factors. This has also been referred to in literature as the 'border effect', which in this context can be considered synonymous with border obstacles.

Weterings & Van Gessel-Dabekaussen tried to calculate the 'border effect' on the labour market.¹¹³ For this, they compared existing commuting flows (2012) with potential commuting flows under fully open borders. From this comparison, the "very large impact of the border on commuting flows between the three countries" becomes clear. For instance, they find that towards the Netherlands over 90 per cent of potential commuting does not take place, and from the Netherlands over 98 per cent does not take place. Nevertheless, this 'border effect' varies by region. Removing such a border effect also has different effects per region. Regarding the labour market, for instance, labour markets should be complementary across borders. An exploratory study has also been done at the European level. Removing all legal-administrative obstacles in border regions would lead to a 3% European GDP growth.¹¹⁴ This varies by border region, with up to 20% growth in some border municipalities. Especially in the Benelux region with Germany (and La Grande Region), large theoretical growth potentials were found. Reversed, the legal-administrative border effect therefore implies a 'loss' of 3% to 20% GDP.

Consequently, the presence of an opportunity or growth potential does not mean that it can actually be cashed in. Even with the removal of all legal and administrative border barriers, the border is likely to remain a factor of importance. In the ITEM Border Effects Report 2022, for example, Noortmann and Kramer explored Euroregional perception.¹¹⁵ This indicates the presence or absence of a certain 'mental border'. CPB distinguishes six headings of border factors:

- Differences in language and culture
- Institutional and administrative differences
- Lack of transport networks
- Information gap and 'insider advantages'
- Psychological factors

¹¹² Rli, ROB & RVS, 2023, p. 47.

¹¹³ Weterings & Van Gessel-Dabekaussen, 2015, p. 33.

¹¹⁴ Caragliu et al, 2018.

¹¹⁵ Noortmann, M. & Kramer, S. (2022). *Has the border resident's perception of the "border" changed since the COVID-19 crisis?* ITEM Border effects report 2022.

- Economic disparities and asymmetric effects

Hooijen et al distinguish between 'hard factors', such as legislative and institutional differences, limited language skills, and 'soft factors', such as psychological factors, culture, political views and norms and values.

The question is also what value the 'border' itself has. For instance, the proximity of a border itself can also contribute to people's broad prosperity. Examples can be cited from precisely the diversity in the cross-border region, from which people can draw value. For example, people can benefit from price differences (e.g. cheaper groceries or petrol), system differences (e.g. free childcare in Belgium, the availability/availability of certain healthcare services and the availability/availability of drugs or fireworks) and extract value from the interaction with differences in culture and language.

Necessary horizontal integration in multi-level system

In summary, broad prosperity requires an understanding of what *is in* the cross-border region and what the (desired) situation *could be*. Particular attention should be paid to the 'border effect'. Reducing the barrier effect of the border to increase opportunities in the cross-border labour market is a complex task. It requires coordination between different policy fields and levels of government in the respective neighbouring countries.¹¹⁶ This is already a longer-standing discussion around multi-level governance in a cross-border context. The involvement of relevant actors across the border is important not only to minimise the 'border effect' and realise opportunities, but also to provide cross-border trade-offs. After all, one person's policy may also affect another.

In the national context, this discussion is mainly conducted in vertical lines. In 'Every region counts', the advisory councils argue for a better relationship between state and region. Regarding NRW's sustainability policy, it is also noted that it aims to strengthen vertical integration in the multi-level political system (interaction between Land and the national SDG strategy and the UN 2030 Agenda).¹¹⁷

More recently, Beck introduced the concept of horizontal integration.¹¹⁸ It draws attention, from an *administrative science* perspective, to the horizontal functioning between neighbouring countries and regions within European integration. Whereas European integration functions mainly vertically (Europe - member state - region), cross-border cooperation between neighbouring countries and border regions can constitute a specific horizontal function in multi-level governance. Also with regard to SDGs and broad prosperity and their regional implications, a strong focus on the vertical level can be observed. In line with the ideas of horizontal integration, but also in promoting broad prosperity in border (crossborder) regions, it is important to place this in a cross-border multi-level system. With regard to Dutch municipalities, section 3.2 cited the discussion in the literature of the importance of interregional and supraregional coordination. In a cross-border perspective, this deserves special attention, as competences and powers are not necessarily at similar levels. Examples with regard to education, crisis management, border work, security, etc. have been outlined in various ITEM studies. Here, the question therefore arises what the right cross-border *scale is for* realising impact (minimising

¹¹⁶ Hooijen & Mertens, 2020; Weterings and Van Gessel-Dabekaussen, 2015.

¹¹⁷ <https://nachhaltigkeit.nrw.de/en/sustainability-in-north-rhine-westphalia/sustainability-strategy-nrw-2020>

¹¹⁸ Beck, 2022.

border effects and realising opportunities) as well as identifying and weighing up trade-offs and effects. Existing structures can be measured against this yardstick, such as municipal partnerships (like BeNeGo, MAHHL, Eurode), Euroregions, the Benelux Union and bilateral governance structures like the Borderland Agenda Netherlands-NRW, Cooperation Agenda Netherlands-Netherlands and the Flemish-Dutch Summit. Given the diversity in competences, it is likely that this is also theme-specific. The discussion around the right scale level for such cross-border coordination, prioritisation and consideration has not yet been clarified in practice, policy and science.¹¹⁹

4.2. Empirical exploration

The previous section shows that in terms of the cross-border dimension for border regions, much is still unknown or unavailable. Therefore, to further explore the cross-border dimension of broad prosperity for border regions, an empirical exploration was also conducted. The results of this study are based on previous literature review, as well as interviews with 10 participants (researchers and policy officers) in an online (group) interview in October 2023 with the aim of exploring together with the participants what meaning can be given to the measurement of broad prosperity and policy around broad prosperity in border regions. The results of this research are also based on qualitative data from 16 participants in a workshop "Steering for Impact: Broad Prosperity in Border Regions", where participants shared initial ideas on impact, challenges and opportunities around broad prosperity in border regions, which was held during the Two-Day Conference of the National Network Broad Prosperity, 27 and 28 September 2023 in Leeuwarden. See the Annex for an overview of the participants.

Qualitative research was chosen because it allows for exploration of new insights, which can lead to richer, contextually relevant findings. The results of this study are seen as a starting point for further studies around broad prosperity in border regions. We use thematic analysis to identify and understand patterns, repeating ideas and meaningful themes in the qualitative interview data. We applied deductive and inductive coding given the exploratory nature of this study. An inductive approach derives themes from the available data, while a deductive approach uses predefined themes that are expected to be present in the data.

Six overarching themes emerged from the analysis, namely: 1) Broad prosperity is (not) borderless, 2) Broad prosperity in border regions 3) Impact of broad prosperity in a border region, 4) Cross-border complexity and measurement challenges in assessing broad prosperity in border regions, 5) Broad prosperity and border regions: an integrated approach for policy and 6) (In)measurable aspects of broad prosperity for decision-making, which are discussed in the following sections.

Broad prosperity is (not) limitless

Broad welfare is borderless, as the demarcation of a particular geographical territory should not affect the welfare of people in a particular area. Broad welfare is determined from the perspective of

¹¹⁹ This discussion was also one of the focal points of the ITEM Annual Conference 2023: <https://crossborderitem.eu/events/item-jaarconferentie-2023-save-the-date/>

individuals and communities, where they make decisions based on their current needs and subjective judgements. At the same time, these choices have global consequences, such as CO2 emissions and international production effects, which bring positive and negative impacts, making broad welfare boundless from this perspective as well. Moreover, broad welfare is not limitless in time, as decisions made today affect future generations, even if not consciously.

However, while one can look at people's lifeworlds, such as their choice of school or leisure activities, politics limits itself to national borders or requires cooperation to influence these lifeworlds. This leads to border barriers, with policymakers often focusing primarily on their own constituencies and less on people across the border. Cultural barriers also play a role, as people's subjective experiences and comfort levels matter in their choices. As a result, broad welfare cannot be borderless either.

Broad prosperity in border regions

There is always broad prosperity regardless of which region. It is a phenomenon in itself whether it is low or high and in what aspects it is low or high. Broad prosperity is always a combination of qualities in different dimensions and different values that together give value to life in a particular region. Broad prosperity in border regions is about the aspects that cannot be measured or cannot be measured well, but are very important for broad prosperity. It is also important to recognise that in border regions, aspects of broad prosperity may be influential but outside the sphere of influence of decision-makers. This may be due to events across the border that have an impact on broad welfare but over which local decision-makers have little control.

Broad welfare in border regions assumes that it differs from broad welfare in a non-border region. It is likely that broad prosperity in border regions differs from non-border regions because of the direct influence of international factors and the specific challenges and opportunities arising from the proximity of different countries. This can result in cultural diversity, cross-border cooperation, access to international markets and differences in legislation and policies affecting prosperity in border regions. Understanding these unique dynamics is essential to developing targeted policies for measuring broad prosperity in border regions.

Impact of broad welfare in a border region

The impact of broad prosperity is highly dependent on the specific geographical, and policy context in which it takes place. The impact of broad prosperity in a border region is influenced by several factors, such as accessibility, accessibility, happiness and satisfaction, perceived broad prosperity, increasing well-being on all sides of the border, legislation, but also by cooperation between border regions, cross-border interactions and by minimising border barriers. This highlights the importance of the 'elsewhere' dimension within the framework of broad prosperity, although it also indicates that the impact of broad prosperity is unlimited and therefore not region-specific. Strengthening the collective values of each border region and perceiving change in the areas of need in the region also contribute to the impact of broad prosperity.

When analysing impacts of broad welfare, it is important to look broadly at policy impacts and ensure that it touches the vision, mission and strategy of broad welfare on all sides of the border. A good

distribution of burdens and benefits at the border and within it is also important. Steering and measuring broad prosperity in border regions is a complex issue that needs to be approached regionally and multidimensionally.

Cross-border complexity and measurement challenges in assessing broad welfare in border regions

It is essential to investigate to what extent broad welfare in border regions differs from non-border regions and where possible adjustments or corrections in the concept are needed. It is therefore crucial to collect comprehensive and detailed data for a 360-degree view of municipalities. This will help identify the specific characteristics of border regions and understand where they differ from other regions. Moreover, it is important to consider the complexity of border regions, where people often live in one country and work in another, which affects perceptions, perceptions and welfare, and also complicates data collection and interpretation.

When measuring broad welfare with surveys, perceptions of different aspects of life are measured regardless of where those activities take place, thus including cross-border effects. These subjective indicators allow partial meaning to be given to (Dutch) regional figures of broad welfare. For example, satisfaction with leisure time or when people benefit from things they find on the other side of the border (e.g. fuelling, shopping), this does show up in the data, as it is a subjective impression of personal welfare measured there. However, the challenge lies in measuring objective indicators, as these often depend on national registrations, such as the Dutch Land Registry, which does not apply to Germany or Belgium. In border regions, this makes it important to take into account what happens across the border, as it can lead to distorted estimates of broad welfare in municipalities and illustrates the challenge of moving from welfare monitoring to effective policy in this context. However, it is a complex issue that requires caution. It is not right to argue that it is completely wrong if regions on the other side of the border are not included. While the understanding of the quantitative aspects may be deficient, on the other hand, the qualitative appreciation across the border may also be overestimated.

The future challenges around measuring the impact of broad welfare in a border region appear diverse and complex. These include problems with incomplete and incomparable data between neighbouring countries (regions) and the availability of figures. In addition, issues related to frameworks and indicators play a role in measuring impact. For example, indicators may correspond more to the collective values of the community. Measuring impact of broad welfare in a border region requires uniform data collection, agreement and harmonisation of the concept of broad welfare.

Broad welfare indicators are often confined to administrative boundaries, even at the national level, and they do not include the interferences between regions. Also, cross-border perspectives are little highlighted in these measurements. Understanding the impact of borders on regional dynamics and how this influences behaviour and actions is essential for policies and solutions to improve regional prosperity. It is about border country dynamics and their advantages and disadvantages and how to deal with them.

It is important to understand the extent to which residents of border regions can benefit from facilities across the border, such as shopping offers. Unfortunately, there is limited information available, for example on travel behaviour and international payments in the border region. A possible initiative is

to map facilities across the border and expand existing indicators with data on the proximity of these facilities. This will result in more information on things like supermarkets, petrol stations and theatres.

Several indicators of broad welfare offer valuable insights, but it is important to realise that these insights are often limited because they are limited to measurable aspects and cannot adequately measure all relevant factors. To overcome these limitations, it is necessary to understand the underlying mechanisms: why is an indicator high or low, and what causes it? This understanding of causality is crucial for designing effective interventions and actually improving broad welfare.

It argues that policies for broad welfare and the measurement of broad welfare within a (border) region should take into account significant differences within the region (neighbourhood, district, municipal level), with the relevance of the area varying depending on the specific indicator, such as walking distance for e.g. shopping supply. So it varies what kind of activity is involved and even which part of the Netherlands one lives in. Already, what people experience as 'region' in practice differs considerably from the conceptual definition used for measurement purposes. Defining 'the region' and who is competent to determine it is an important issue.

It is also important to pay attention to the fact that there are many topics where the border is not a big deal at all in most of the border region, because those barriers are still very hard. For example, for Groningen and Drenthe, foreign countries are far away, or it is all rural and border regions will be much more focused on the Netherlands than on the international, making international aspects less prominent than national ones and making a clear distinction important.

However, the future holds opportunities for measuring the impact of broad prosperity in border regions through quantitative and qualitative border data and through cooperation and synergy between various stakeholders. It is also indicated that fostering a sense of community and adopting a common language can help measure impact of broad prosperity across borders.

[Broad prosperity and border regions: a comprehensive approach for policy](#)

The research highlights that steering for broad welfare in a border region can be more effective if it starts by identifying the specific problem to be addressed and developing a policy theory to solve it. In doing so, it is essential to identify trade-offs, paying attention to possible negative side-effects on groups that the policy is not primarily designed to address. Many factors come into play when solving problems and developing effective policies, and the monitor serves as a starting point to explore and understand what will and will not work. The real challenge lies in digging deeper. The monitor's indicator does not provide an immediate solution and will not provide immediate insight into the deeper issues. Detailed context-specific analysis within the region in question is often needed.

In addition, a learning policy cycle is of great importance, aligning practice and policy. It also underlines the importance of a common language and holistic approach in regional developments, especially in Euroregional contexts where Dutch, Belgian and German perspectives may differ. Dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders is crucial.

There is insufficient understanding of the specific impact of proximity to a border on broad welfare. It seems plausible that border regions differ from other regions, with the border perhaps being a cause of some of these differences while not others. From a policy perspective, investing in aspects that

improve broad welfare may have an effect on the other side of the border. While a national perspective could potentially show a negative return on investment, a cross-border perspective may indicate that this is a sensible strategy.

It is important to distinguish between indicators that are influenceable and those that are virtually uninfluenceable. This distinction should play a prominent role in policy discussions, with a focus on understanding what is impressionable and how causalities and mechanisms work between different concepts, including an understanding of the difference in systems (e.g. volunteering) on either side of the border.

When developing policies, it is important not only to focus on economic returns, but also to integrate sustainability and societal factors. However, the political system is not organised in such a broad welfare way. It is organised very sectorally, which makes integrated thinking and acting a challenge. Within the political-administrative domain, politics is always the final authority. Officials strive to make policy proposals as broad and well-founded as possible, but ultimately it is the democratically elected administrators who make the choices and distribute the budgets, representing the interests of their constituents. Government agencies can also play a more active role by encouraging businesses to contribute to broad prosperity in the region, creating multiple guiding actors. In addition, citizens themselves need to become more actively involved to promote broad prosperity in their region. This process requires cooperation between different stakeholders. Pursuing broad prosperity in policy therefore requires institutional changes and new dynamics between society, business and government. These changes are essential for an effective and comprehensive approach to truly integrate broad prosperity into (Euroregional) policy. Here, challenges are the influence of different governments in neighbouring countries, political support and cooperation between stakeholders.

Cross-border issues require cooperation. The starting point could be to look at the final outcome of an indicator and then analyse at a Euroregion level how exactly these outcomes manifest themselves. For example, are significant differences observed and what could be possible explanatory factors. Regional policy can contribute to this, provided it pays sufficient attention to cross-border issues. This requires involvement in European unification, getting to know neighbouring countries and growing awareness within border regions, built from the bottom up. It also requires some coordination at the national level, with a focus on social cohesion in Euroregional border areas. However, facilitating the conversation between policy officials from different departments, such as economic policy and social policy, is a challenge. This challenge becomes even more complex when the cross-border dimension is added. Often, this aspect is not given the priority it may deserve.

Emphasising reciprocity and sharing knowledge between regions will help discover new perspectives. Encouraging better conversation with stakeholders across borders will help develop more inclusive and sustainable policies. Seeking convergence and integration of (data) data will enable more uniform and efficient measurement of impact. These efforts will contribute to greater synergy between European countries and provide new angles to measure, understand and promote broad prosperity in border regions. The ultimate goal is to achieve harmonious European cooperation that focuses on inclusion, sustainable wellbeing and shared values, approaching and measuring broad prosperity in a holistic way.

(In)measurable aspects of broad welfare for decision-making

It is important to emphasise that what is measurable does not encompass the whole picture. There are unmeasurable aspects and nuances in each of these dimensions that also need to be considered. It is important that decision-makers, especially politicians working with broad welfare, base their decisions on their underlying values and goals, not solely on what is measurable. For example, if the focus is on increasing incomes and employment in the region, this may come at the expense of other aspects, and these trade-offs should be included in their decision-making. Broad welfare indicators provide insights into the current situation and changes in recent years, which are valuable tools to monitor longer-term trends, but they are not in themselves a substitute for decision-making.

Using the SDGs can provide a suitable common language for discussions around broad prosperity in border regions, especially if the same methodology is used to generate comparable data. International efforts are underway to promote statistical frameworks to arrive at a shared standard for measuring broad prosperity, with the speed of these developments potentially influenced in part by political factors.

5. Conclusion and evaluation research themes

The conclusion of the literature review and the empirical data show that there is insufficient understanding of the specific impact of proximity to a border on broad welfare. The challenges around measuring and integrating broad welfare in border regions highlights the complexity and the need for a holistic approach to enable effective assessment. The impact of broad welfare in a border region is influenced by several factors, such as accessibility, perceived broad welfare, increasing welfare on all sides of the border, legislation, as well as cooperation between border regions and cross-border interactions. Challenges in assessing the impact of broad welfare in border regions are varied and complex. These challenges include problems with incomplete and non-comparable data between neighbouring countries (regions) and limitations in the availability of relevant statistics. Moreover, issues related to the frameworks and indicators used play a crucial role in measuring this impact.

The need for cross-border data

It is important to take into account what happens across borders in a regional monitor, as it can lead to distorted estimates of broad welfare in municipalities. Through subjective indicators, meaning can be given to regional figures of broad prosperity, but the challenge is in measuring and interpreting the objective indicators. Examples of objective indicators where the estimation is that the indicator can be more easily provided with a cross-border dimension are distance to the sports ground, primary school or café and nature and forest areas. Other objective indicators that are estimated to be more complex to provide with a cross-border dimension are, for example, emissions of particulate matter to air and nitrogen excretion from agriculture.

It is crucial to make sustained efforts in mapping statistics for border regions, with sustainability as a guiding principle. These statistics serve as the starting point for policy-making. Border data helps identify the specific problem to be addressed and develop a policy theory to solve it. Here, it is essential to identify trade-offs, where detailed context-specific analysis within the relevant region is often necessary. In this, it is also relevant to distinguish between indicators that can be influenced and those that are virtually uninfluenced. Moreover, it is important to understand how causalities and mechanisms work between different indicators, including an understanding of the difference in systems on either side of the border.

Cross-border interactions

The challenge lies not only in understanding what is across the border, but also in how easily one can access it. It is important to examine the impact and dynamics of and between regions on broad welfare. Understanding the impact of borders on regional dynamics and how this affects behaviour and actions is essential for policies and solutions to improve regional prosperity.

It is also important to pay attention to the fact that there are themes where the border does not play a role in most of the border region, because those barriers are still very hard. However, this also depends on the indicators that are used, for example, with economic indicators the border can often be harder than with indicators around culture and buying behaviour. This makes it important to

understand the extent to which residents of border regions can benefit from facilities across the border, such as shopping facilities.

Cross-border multi-level and multi-actor consideration framework

From a policy perspective, investing in measures to promote broad welfare can have positive effects that extend across borders. While a national perspective may show a negative return on investment, a cross-border perspective may indicate that this investment is a worthwhile strategy. A key aspect in this research is thus the concept of "trade-offs", where choices are needed, as striving for wider prosperity on one aspect, dimension or in a particular region may mean less wide prosperity on another aspect or dimension and in a particular region; these trade-offs can take place in time, space and thematic contexts. It is also important to recognise that certain aspects of broad prosperity may have an impact in border regions, but are outside the direct sphere of influence of decision-makers.

From a policy perspective, there is a need for a multi-actor approach, involving policymakers at different levels, from municipal to national. In doing so, it is essential to strive for a political system that is more oriented towards broad welfare, where institutional changes are crucial. These adjustments should not only promote cross-sectoral thinking, but also pay specific attention to the complexity created by the cross-border dimension. Involving various stakeholders and developing cooperation mechanisms can contribute to a more integrated approach to broad prosperity in the policy landscape.

Nevertheless, also with regard to SDGs and broad prosperity and the regional implications, a strong focus on the vertical level can be observed. In line with the idea of horizontal integration, but also in promoting broad prosperity in border (crossborder) regions, it is important to place this in a cross-border multi-level system. This implies that despite local issues, coordination in addition to regional, provincial or even national level, is also crucial at the Euroregional level. An additional level of complexity here is the system differences with regard to competences and powers. A relevant but still unknown question here is which scale is right for tackling and cross-border coordination of broad welfare. On the one hand, it requires local expertise on border-regional opportunities, possibilities and growth potential, and on the other hand, it requires possible supra-regional coordination for balancing (trade-offs) and prioritisation as well as the actual realisation of the desired situation. In all likelihood, this is highly theme-related and requires municipal partnerships, Euroregions as well as bilateral and possibly even multilateral governance structures around broad prosperity. It is important to consider this when addressing cross-border broad prosperity issues, where dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders is crucial.

Evaluating European integration, socio-economic and sustainable development, Euroregional cohesion

For a well-functioning cross-border region, it is therefore important to work on cross-border data, better understanding and insight into cross-border interactions and effects and a cross-border multi-level assessment framework. In doing so, opportunities, the potential for growth and the corresponding prioritisation should mostly be put forward bottom-up from the cross-border region.

The dossier also reflects on current practice and concludes that the discussion around broad prosperity in a cross-border perspective is still relatively unknown. Nevertheless, broad prosperity is assigned an important role for policy, namely monitoring, evaluating, assessing desirability and explaining choices. On all four aspects, this should be done for border regions in a cross-border context, but this discussion is now mainly held vertically.

Based on the current findings, the question can be asked what the effects would be if the status quo is continued. After all, the Dutch government and decentralised authorities are expressing a stronger policy commitment to broad prosperity in the region. If interactions, opportunities and growth potential across the border are not taken into account, this could lead to inefficient or even counterproductive policy. This can also create border effects, which directly or indirectly affect day-to-day border traffic, Euroregional cohesion and very obvious: socio-economic and sustainable development. For example, the aforementioned example of connecting Parkstad Limburg across borders to the energy infrastructure of solar farms in NRW is an apparent 'quick win' for broad prosperity and socio-economic and sustainable development. Such opportunities do need to be in sight. Another example from the past concerns the nationwide coordination of COVID-19 patients. In certain border regions, such as the EMR, with high levels of cross-border cooperation, this has led to adverse rather than beneficial regional consequences.

In addition, many issues in border regions are inextricably linked across borders. For example, border regions often face environmental challenges that are cross-border in nature, such as water management and nature conservation. However, different regulations and policy frameworks on sides of the border to sharing natural resources such as rivers and forests can also become more complex because of cross-border aspects. While the objective may be legitimate from a broad welfare perspective, cross-border interdependence needs to be taken into account for border regions.

Particular attention should be paid to Euroregional cohesion and the effects that may exist there. This refers to the degree of cohesion, cooperation and integration between different actors in a cross-border region and ties in with the earlier conclusions around horizontal multi-level involvement. Euroregional cohesion also requires 'speaking the same language' across borders. Although the thinking behind broad prosperity can be seen as relatively universal, national elaboration, conceptualisation and certainly policy practices are different. This was discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. In particular, the Netherlands and Belgium have similar approaches in terms of indicators for welfare / broad welfare and their monitoring. For an effective approach around cross-border broad welfare, it is necessary that actors on both sides of the border have a common picture and understanding of the phenomenon of welfare / broad welfare, the situation (indicators), the desired picture and the policy measures to that end. Experiences such as around the NOVI point to the importance of not wanting to copy nationally developed concepts and strategies one-to-one to the other side of the border.¹²⁰ This can hinder rather than benefit Euroregional cohesion and cooperation. This also brings the discussion back to the starting point of this dossier and broad prosperity: promoting people's well-being, the extent to which this level of well-being can be maintained in the future, and everything that people consider valuable for a good life. With indicators, this has been fleshed out in national contexts, the task now is to connect and align this across borders as well.

¹²⁰ Unfried et al, 2020.

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43. Annex - Overview of participants in (group) interview and workshop

	Participants (alphabetical order)	Organisation	When
1.	Edwin Horlings	CBS	4 October 2023
2.	Frank Cörvers	ROA/Maastricht University	4 October 2023
3.	Hans Schmeets	CBS & FaSos, Maastricht Univeristy	4 October 2023
4.	Jan Lucas	Cross-border Business Development/Fontys lectureship	4 October 2023
5.	Johan van der Valk	CBS	4 October 2023
6.	Laury van den Ham	Province of Limburg	4 October 2023
7.	Mark Thissen	PBL	4 October 2023
8.	Marten Middeldorp	AtlasResearch	4 October 2023
9.	Martin Unfried	ITEM/Maastricht University	4 October 2023
10.	Vincent Pijnenburg	Cross-border Business Development/Fontys lectureship	3 October 2023
11 to 26	Workshop participants	Ministries, provinces, municipalities, research agencies and organisations (including Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Social and Economic Council (SER), Municipality of Terneuzen, the Wadden Islands, WAAI, Connect4Value)	28 September 2023
	Pim Mertens (Interviewer)	ITEM/Maastricht University	
	Inge Hooijen (Interviewer)	Neimed & Regional Capital	
	*Invitations were also sent to participants in the border regions of Germany and Belgium and to participants working for the European Committee of the Regions and European Commission, but unfortunately they		

	were not available at the time of the scheduled interviews.		
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