

GLEAM NSR

Interreg
North Sea



Co-funded by
the European Union

GLEAM NSR

Zero emission zones: how, when and for whom do they work?

WEBINAR | JANUARY 21, 2026



Green logistics for a just net zero carbon
economy in the North Sea Region

Agenda

1 GLEAM NSR

2 Key lessons from the Netherlands' 10-year journey towards ZE zones

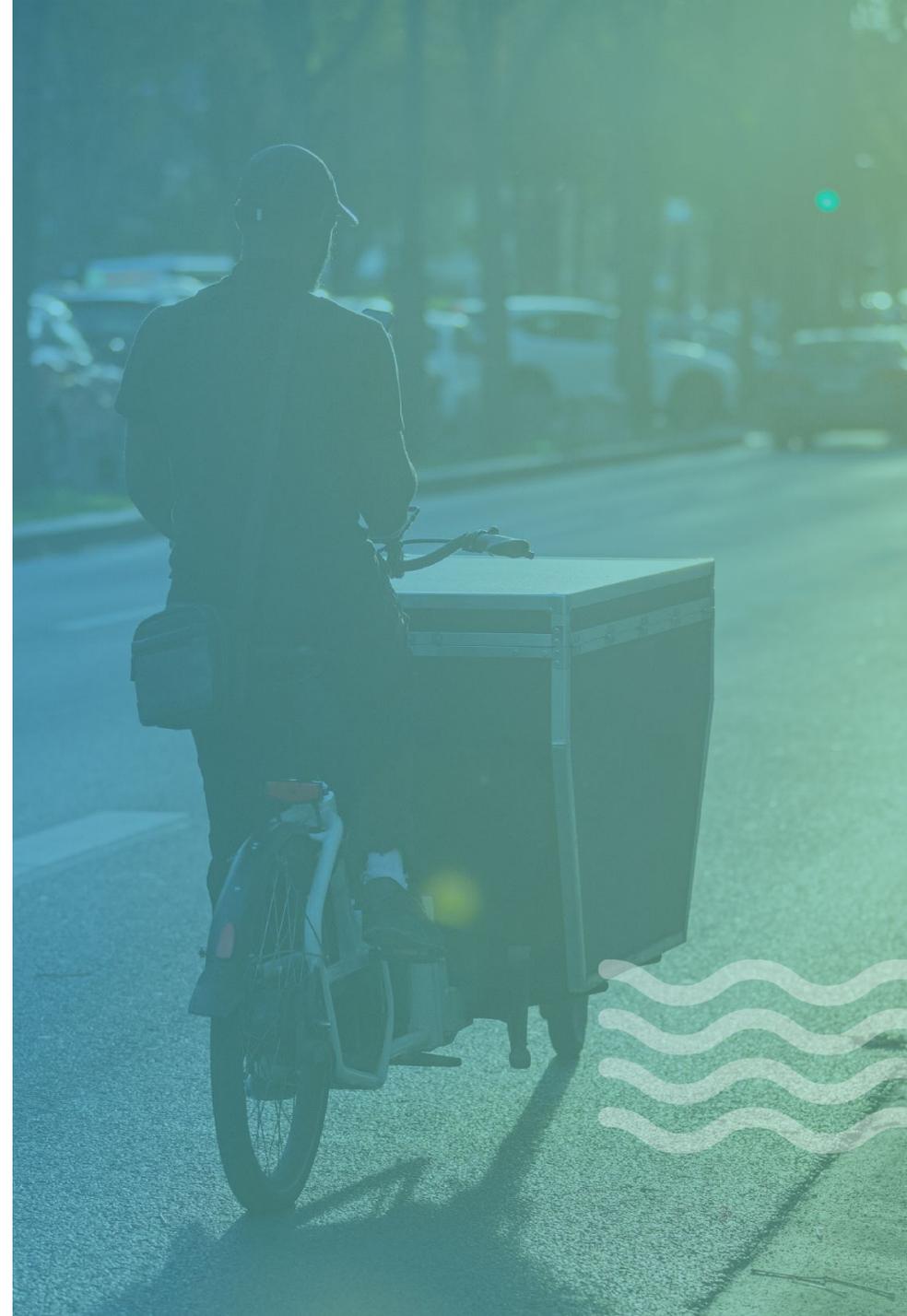
3 Rotterdam city-level perspective

4 Q&A

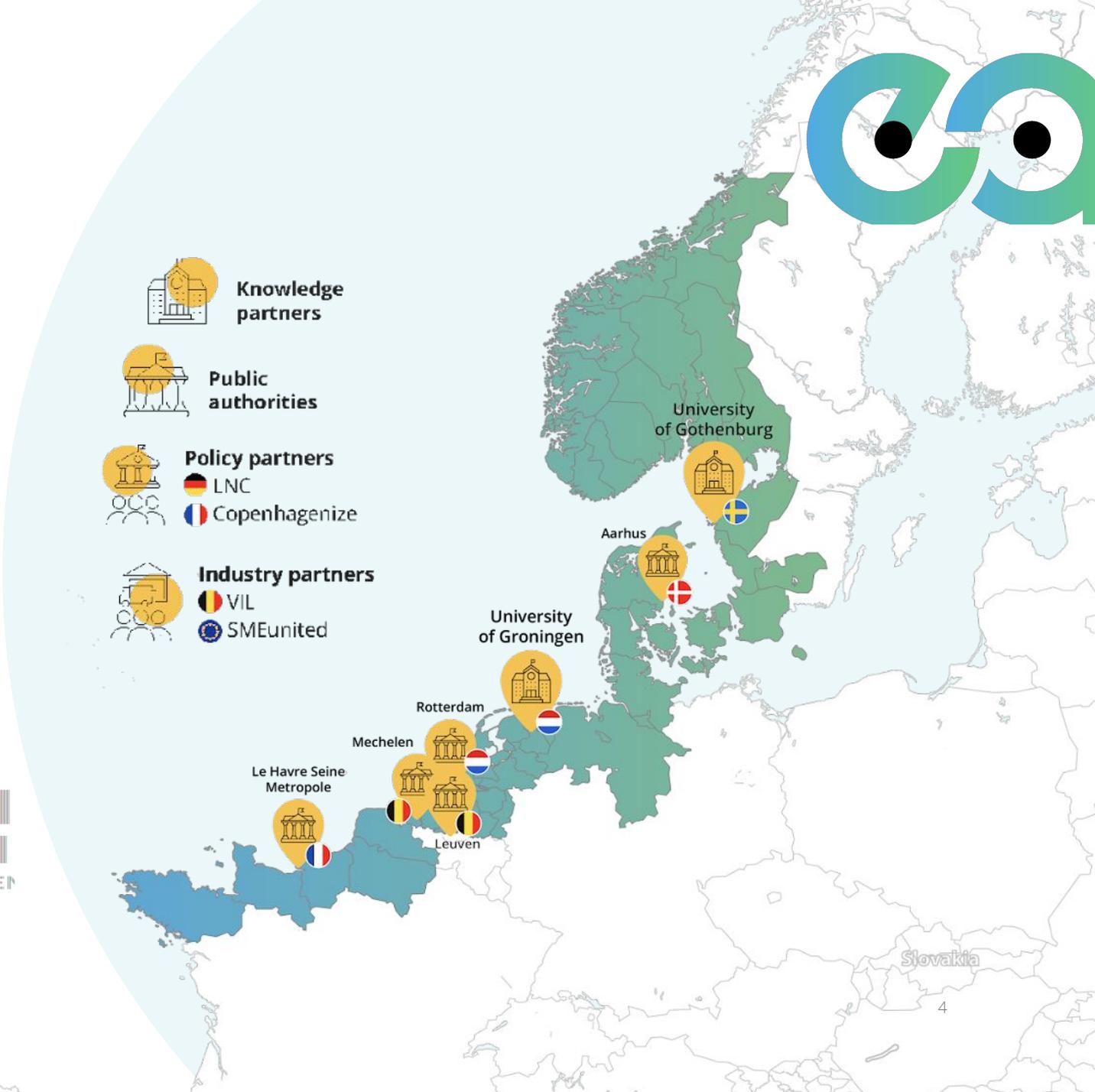
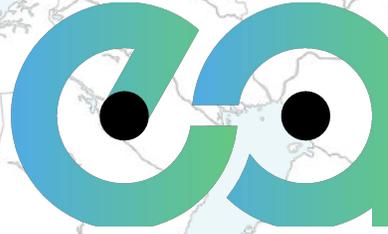


What is GLEAM NSR ?

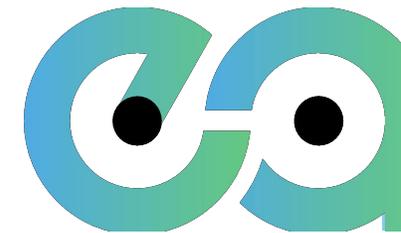
- **3.5 year** Interreg North Sea Region project
- **Goal:** support public authorities to develop and implement ambitious policies and actions for sustainable urban logistics, ensuring that both larger enterprises and SMEs can thrive through the transition.
- **How:** multi-level, multi-stakeholder collaboration platforms; expert and peer-to-peer support
- **Budget: €2.9M**



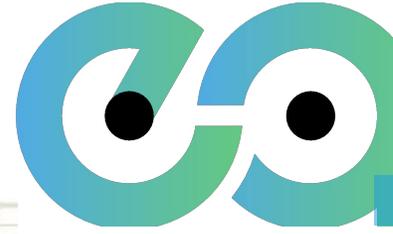
Consortium Partners



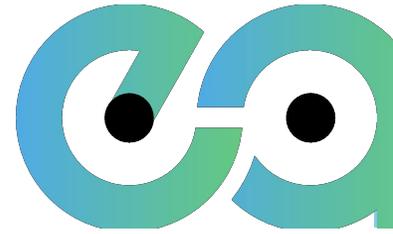
Key lessons from the Netherlands' 10-year journey towards ZE zones



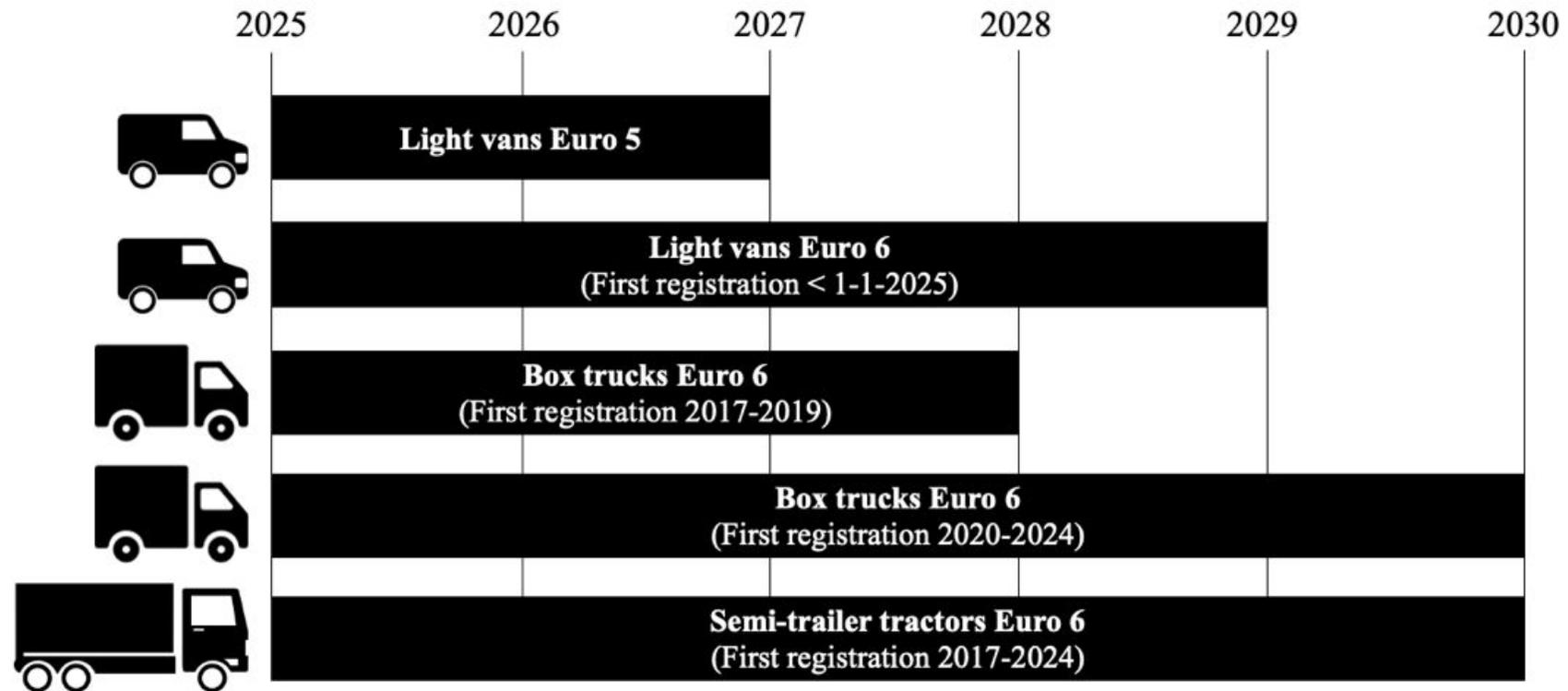
18 zero-emission zones

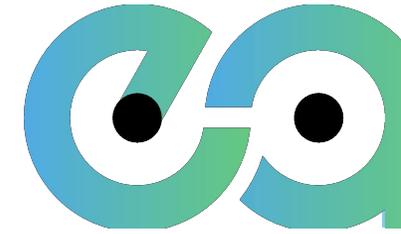


18 "zero-emission" zones



Access to zero-emission zones





The 10-year journey in three phases

Experimentation and learning in front-runner cities (Rotterdam, Groningen, Amsterdam)

2014-2019

Early local preparation

National preparation & formalization

2016-2021

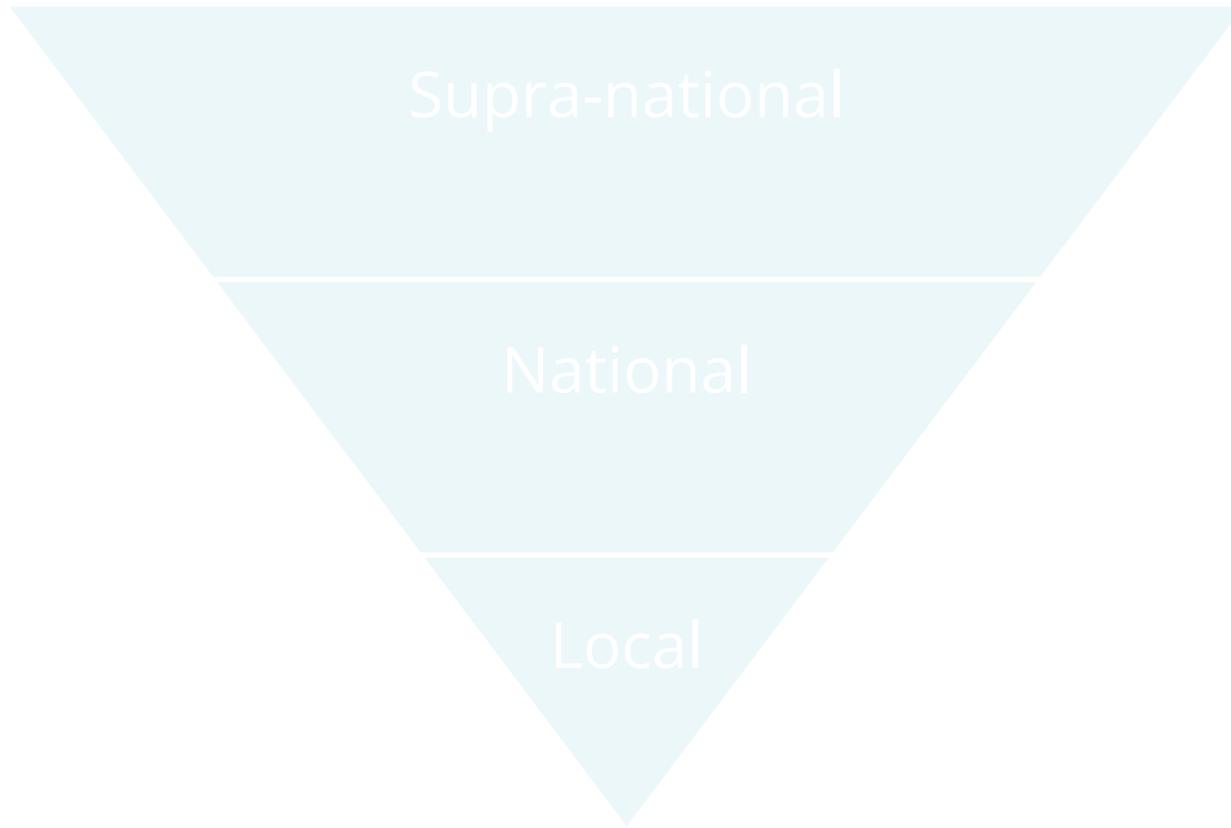
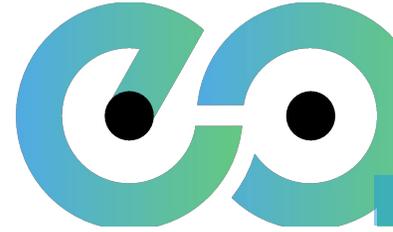
National agreements and legal/administrative groundwork

Operationalizing at scale, making formal decisions, creating exemptions, enforcement, and communication

2021-2025

Local implementation & adaptation/harmonization

Multi-level governance: who does what?



Paris Agreement & European Green Deal

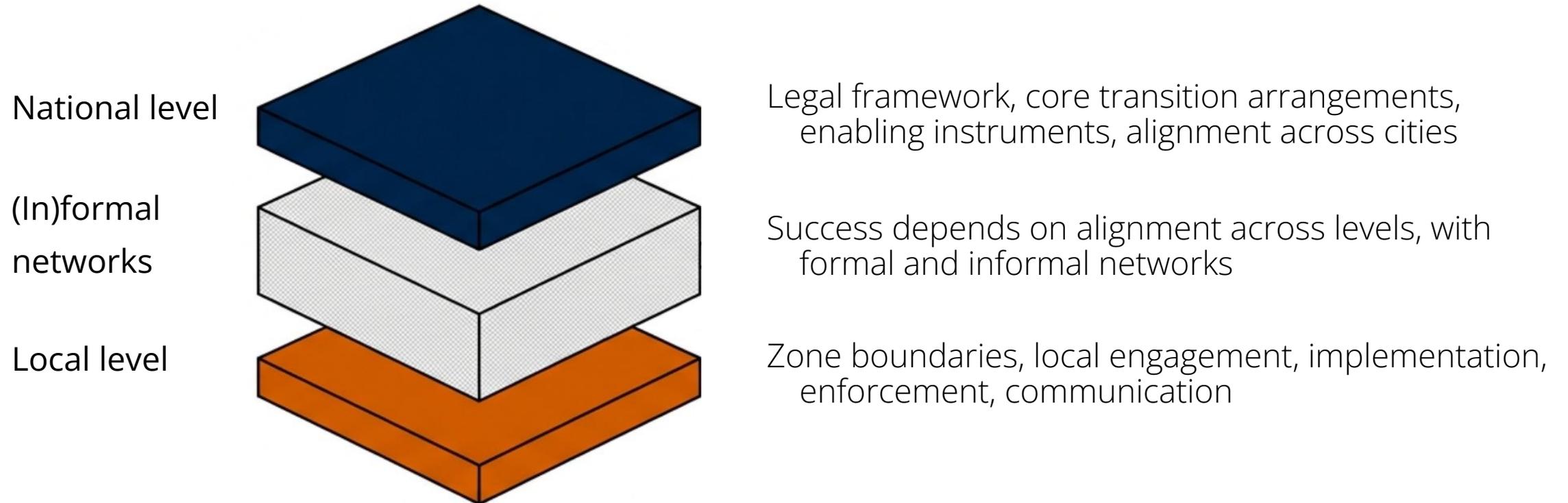
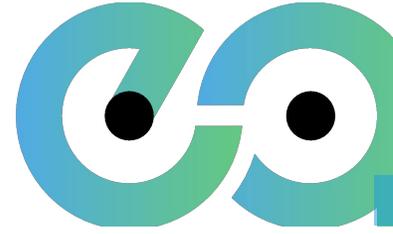
Dutch climate agreement, with implications for ZEZ:

- Mechanism: ZEZ in 30-40 cities
- Target: 1 Mton CO₂ reduction by 2030

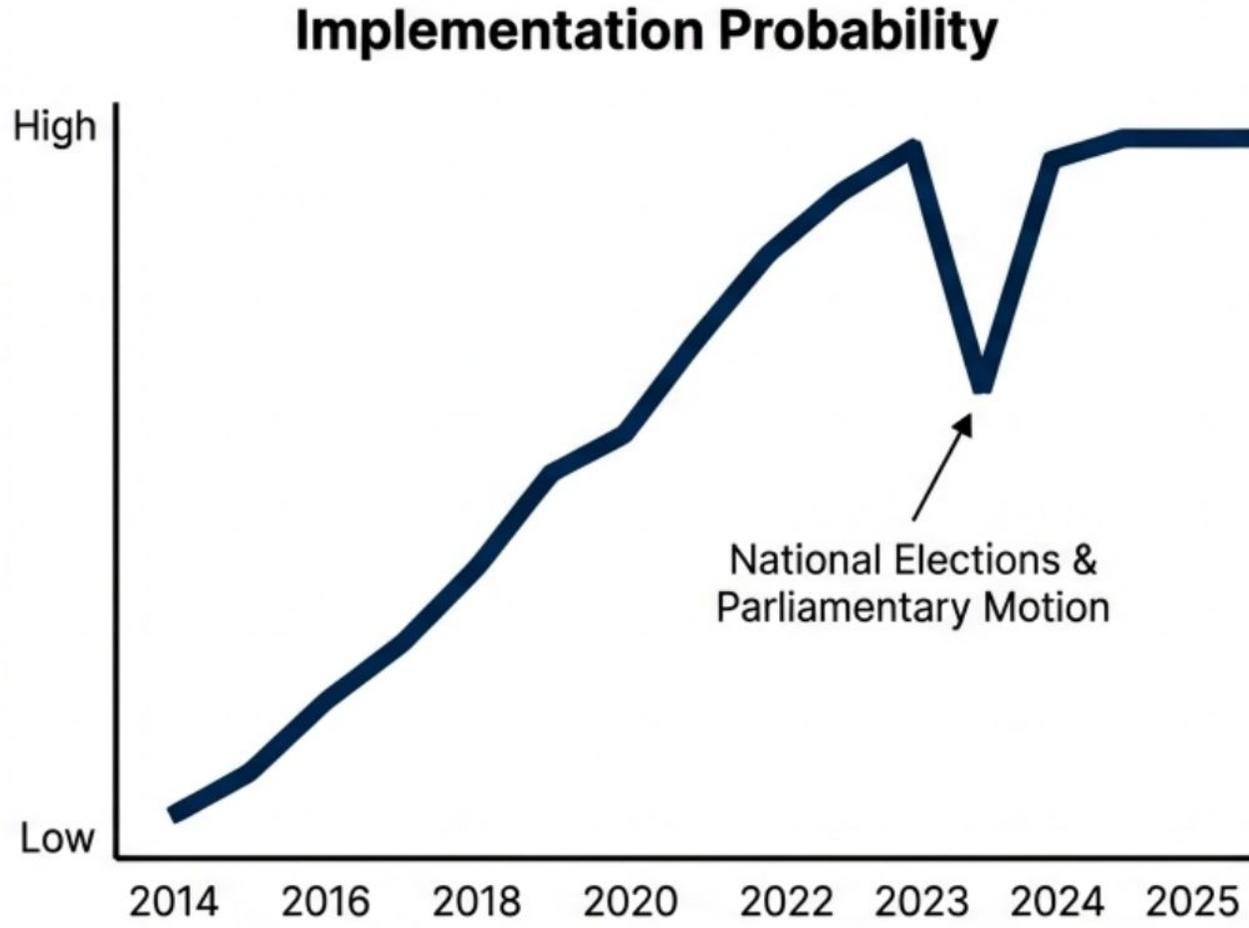
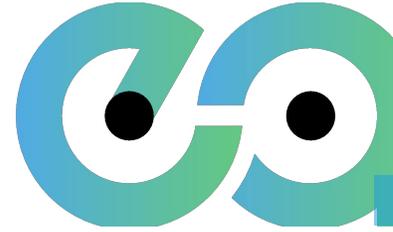
Municipal air quality & liveability goals:

- Tension between initial goals and climate agreements

Multi-level governance: who does what?



On the importance of (in)formal networks



Common bottlenecks we observed



CAPACITY

The infrastructure bottleneck

Grid congestion. Electricity grid cannot keep up with demand.

Exemption coordination. National vehicle authority was not ready for the central exemption desk, Amsterdam took over temporarily.



POLICY

The consistency challenge

Siloed politics. Inconsistent stances within national parties and between national and local parties.

Risk. A 'patchwork' of policies where every city has different rules.



INFORMATION

The awareness gap

SME gap. Difficulty reaching small companies, especially those whose core business is not logistics.

SMEs: why design choices matter

SMEs and subcontractors have less buffer for uncertainty and last-minute changes

Clarity on exemptions, timelines, and practical support reduces disruption

Early, sector-specific communication helps firms plan vehicles, charging, and operations

99%
of road carriers
in EU have **<50**
employees



Implications for public authorities

Ensure clarity and predictability: clear access rules by vehicle category, with stable transition timelines.

Design for implementability: charging readiness, staff capacity, exemptions and enforcement process, signage, and data flows.

Start early: a 3–5 year roadmap with clear milestones and decision points.

Harmonise where possible: reduce “patchwork” complexity for firms operating across multiple cities.

Make it SME-proof: targeted outreach/helpdesk, realistic transition support, and active involvement of business groups to safeguard feasibility and continuity.

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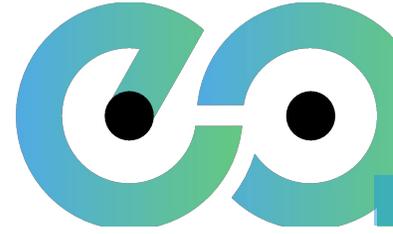
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2 Rotterdam city-level perspective
Issues and battles

3 Q&A



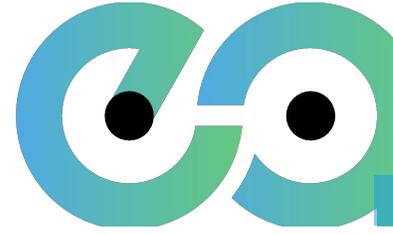
Choose your battles



Practical dilemma: sending warning letters to companies that their temporary exemption will expire and requires action is embraced as a good idea

But this good idea ends up on the wish list (change management of the contract between municipalities and the RDW (national vehicle registration authority))

Privacy issue



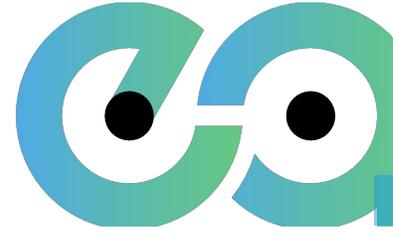
Example:

To monitor developments in vehicles used, we would sometimes like to not just count the number of vehicles and their emission properties, but also find out to which economic segment they belong. This way we could focus/tailor our flanking policy. It would also allow us to improve the our simulation model of city logistics with an additional information source

We're exploring this possibility. It involves sharing ANPR data with the Central Bureau of Statistics, which can combine licence number plates with SBI code (economic segment).

We have to deal with the privacy principle: gather no more information than strictly required for your task.

The space issue



In our long term spatial planning policy document (Omgevingsvisie “De Veranderstad” /Environmental Vision “The Changing City”), we explicitly mentioned the relevance of having available sufficient space for logistics companies. This category also includes city logistic hubs.

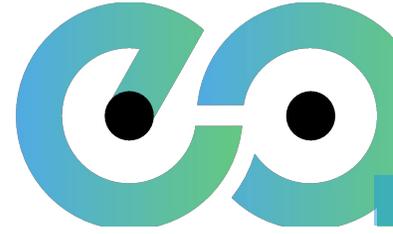
This claim was based on what appears in hindsight as an overestimation of required hub space to facilitate urban delivery with emissionless vehicles.

Meanwhile, other types of space required for delivery of professional goods and services proves to be more of an issue:

- loading/unloading (and the growing need to provide it indoors)
- urban logistic microhub space
- parking&charging facilities for LEVs

Recent development: pilot with cargobikes on the road instead of on cycle lanes.

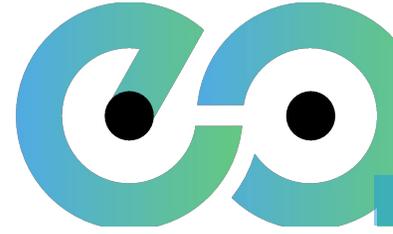
The efficiency issue



There appears to be a general preference for downscaling the size of urban delivery vehicles.

There may be an economic reason for individual entrepreneurs to critically look at the type of transport vehicle they need for their business (or even if they should altogether outsource the transport component of their business)

From the public interest point of view there is no structured view on the preference for small freight vehicles in specific parts of the city and/or specific parts of the day.



Autoluw (with few cars)

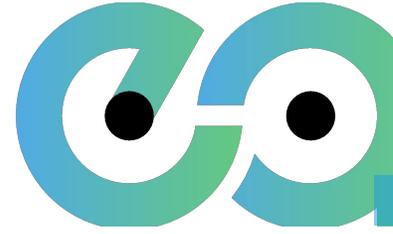
Autoluw (with few cars) is a popular term (buzz word) when discussing urban mobility policy.

The term refers to motorized vehicles in general. However, a distinction is required between passenger cars and logistic motorized vehicles delivering freight and/or services.

Two problems:

- 1) measures intended to improve accessibility and living conditions may be harmful to the city's economic functioning, as logistic vehicles also suffer from e.g. reduced infrastructure capacity
- 2) measures specifically aimed at reducing logistic motorized vehicles only have marginal effect in overall traffic burden (90% passenger cars versus 10 lorries, vans and touring cars/busses)

Is ZE city logistics the end station?

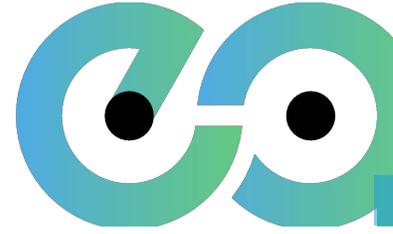


We need to find out if policy is still required when the Zero Emission-mission has been accomplished.

Sustainable =
without exhausting material resources +
minimizing externalities (traffic noise, traffic safety, accessibility)

Should we position city logistics in the economy department or in the mobility department?

Cities, unite!



Because of the need to harmonize the access regulation and the enforcement for the ZE zones, a strong bond has developed between the cities involved.

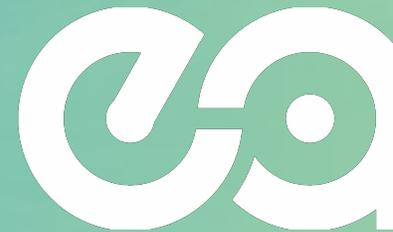
The benefits of inter-city cooperation in urban policy development may be extended to other aspects of urban freight traffic policy

- offering a level playing field to companies
- avoiding a patchwork of ("jungle") local regulations
- better and more effective and efficient research effort

Important role for national government to stimulate and support this

Enforcement of foreign vehicles = a transnational challenge
(Level playing field, relevant for all stakeholders)

Transnational cooperation, as in GLEAM, provides an additional boost



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