Summary of Raad voor de leefomgeving en inrastructuur (2020)  
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**Summary**

This open letter attempts to answer the question about which government measures will be most aligned with a green recovery, supporting both economic recovery and the sustainability transition. The main argument is that there is no tension between these two goals as they both reinforce one another. The letter first sets the background by naming the current infrastructure problems in the Netherlands and listing the changes that have come about as a result of COVID-19. Then, it explores three options for policy makers: status quo, pause sustainability transition projects and intensify sustainability transition. Finally, it advocates to pause sustainability transition projects in mobility and tourism, while engaging other sectors in intensifying the sustainability transition. A list of specific measures is overviewed in each sector.

**Implications for infrastructure**   
There are very specific policy recommendations for housing, energy, mobility, aviation, maritime transport and infrastructure restoration. In addition, the investment in sustainable earning models is stressed, which strengthen the economy in the long-term as well as an equal distribution of measures in all regions.

**Stock-and-flow diagram**

The model narrates the story of the interrelationships between sustainability transition projects (which can also be thought of as ‘green policies’) and economic growth, mediated by public funds and natural resource quality. Since the letter argues for policy approaches which may impact sustainability projects at a different time in their progress, a distinguishment is made between proposed, running and completed projects.

Completed projects positive affect Dutch natural resource quality, i.e. they reflect well on the natural environment (climate, biodiversity, soil etc.) Further, as argued by the paper, the state of Dutch natural resource quality has a delayed effect on the Dutch GDP growth rate. In turn, the state of the economy, or Dutch GDP growth rate drives Public income through taxation and Government willingness to invest in green recovery policies. Public income increases Public funds and subsequently Public expenditures.

Similarly, Public funds and Change in natural resource quality also affect Government willingness to invest in green recovery policies, which can be emphasized as the central variable in the model. As such, it is an arrayed variable as it aims to capture the government’s overall attitude to sustainability projects along their progress timeline, including the willingness to: (1) accept new projects, (2) intensify completion of running projects and (3) pause completion of running projects. Notably, the Government willingness to invest in green recovery policies is influenced by three different sources of information: Change in natural resource quality, Anticipated change in GDP growth rate and Public funds. It then goes on to affect project acceptance and completion, ultimately affecting the Change in GDP growth rate.



Figure 1. Stock-and-flow diagram based on Raad voor de leefomgeving en inrastructuur (2020)

Apart from the stocks and the central variable (see Table 1), the most interesting variables in the model are those with “Effect” in their name as they are nonlinear variables attempting to describe the exact nature of the causal relationships (see Table 2). Notwithstanding the following variables form a parking lot, i.e. they are yet to be included in the model despite being implied in the letter: Public adaptability, Government policy appraisal, (Changing) social norms and behavior. They are representative of public behavior, which is currently out of the scope of this model.

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| **Variable name** | **Description** | **Quote** | **Page** |
| Dutch natural resource quality | An aggregate variable portraying the state of the natural environment | We are currently at the limits of what our planet can handle. As a result, the climate is changing, biodiversity is declining, and our raw materials are depleted. | 3 |
| Government willingness to invest in green recovery | An arrayed variable depicting the government’s attitude and action in regard to sustainability transition projects | The council sees three action perspectives that the national government can consider with a view to economic recovery and sustainable development. | 7 |
| Public funds | Funds to be used for investment in projects | A successful green recovery policy requires a mix of investments | 6 |
| Dutch GDP growth rate | The GDP growth rate is an indicator of the Dutch economy | The Council realizes that the economic setback that the current crisis is causing in the first place requires effective policy impulses aimed at employment and economic recovery. | 26 |
| Number of sustainability projects running in the Netherlands | The number of projects and initiatives already underway for the purpose of fulfilling the SDGs | The council therefore calls for the agenda to emerge green from the crisis to be an agenda for the whole of the Netherlands and thus to tie in with the many initiatives already underway by citizens, companies and social institutions. | 27 |

Table 1. A description of the most important variables in the model.

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| **N.** | **Page** | **Quote** | **Causal link** |
| 1 | 2 | However, the council does not intend to prioritize sustainability agendas over economic recovery policies. According to the council, both orientations can actually reinforce each other. | Project completion rate -> Number of completed sustainability projects in the Netherlands -> Change in Dutch natural resource quality -> Dutch natural resource quality ->Change in GDP growth rate -> Dutch GDP growth rate |
| 2 | 2 | However, the council does not intend to prioritize sustainability agendas over economic recovery policies. According to the council, both orientations can actually reinforce each other. | Dutch GDP growth rate -> Public income -> Public funds -> Government willingness to invest in green recovery -> Project completion rate |
| 3 | 3 | These are long-term problems that may seem less urgent in times of pandemic. After all we do not experience its effects every day. | Change in Dutch natural resource quality -> Government willingness to invest in green recovery |
| 4 | 3 | These are long-term problems that may seem less urgent in times of pandemic. | Anticipated change in GDP growth rate -> Government willingness to invest in green recovery |
| 5 | 4 | Just like the corona virus, all these sustainability challenges will have a drastic effect on the economy. | Change in Dutch natural resource quality -> Change in GDP growth rate |
| 6 | 7 | The council sees three action perspectives that the national government can consider with a view to economic recovery and sustainable development. | Government willingness to invest in green recovery -> Project completion rate Government willingness to invest in green recovery-> Project acceptance rate |
| 7 | 26 | The Council realizes that the economic setback that the current crisis is causing in the first place requires effective policy impulses aimed at employment and economic recovery. | Number of sustainability projects running in the Netherlands -> Change in GDP growth rate  Number of sustainability projects running in the Netherlands -> Public expenditures |

Table 2. Causal links found within Raad voor de leefomgeving en inrastructuur (2020)

**References**

Raad voor de leefomgeving en inrastructuur (2020) *Groen uit de crisis* https://www.rli.nl/publicaties/2020/advies/groen-uit-de-crisis, accessed on 7 October 2020.