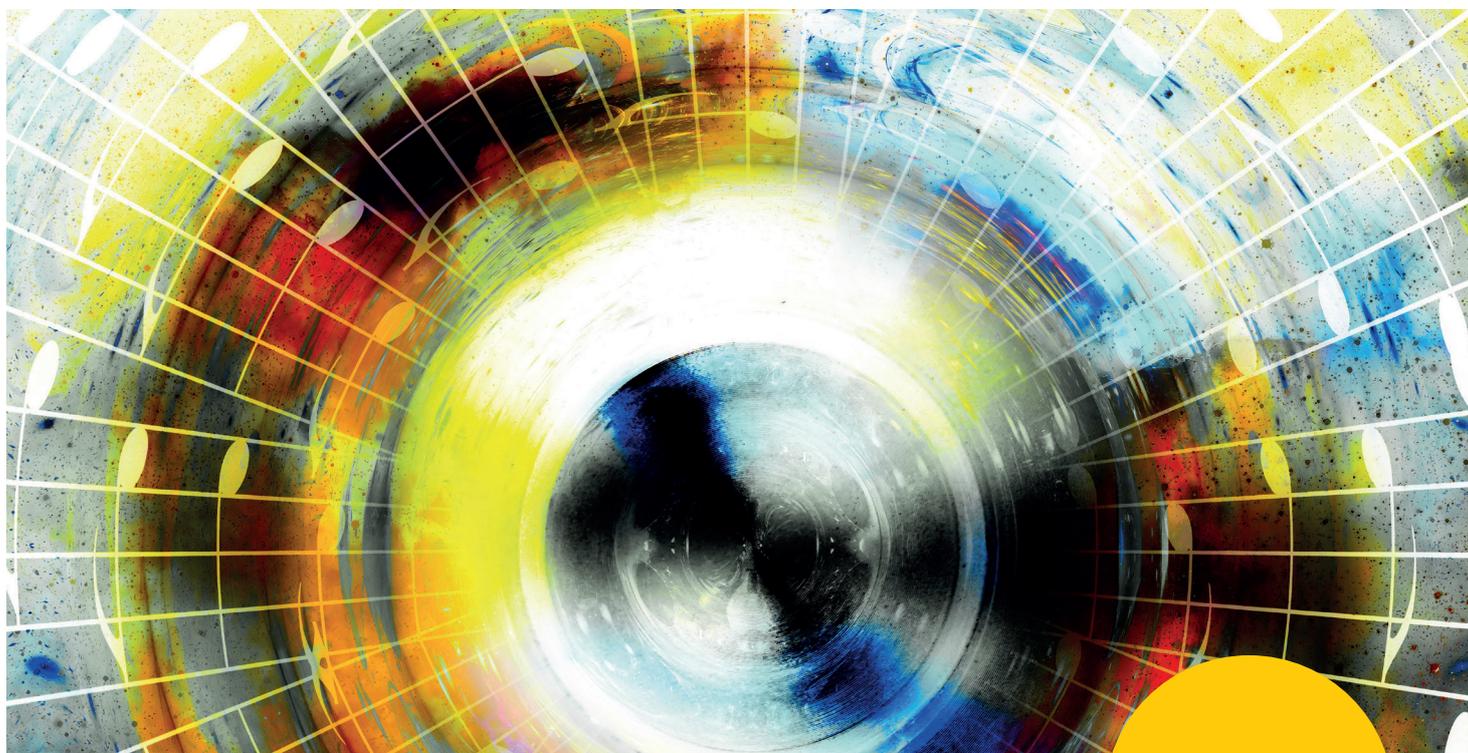


Interreg
North Sea Region
CUPIDO

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION



CUPIDO

CULTURE POWER: INSPIRE TO DEVELOP RURAL AREAS

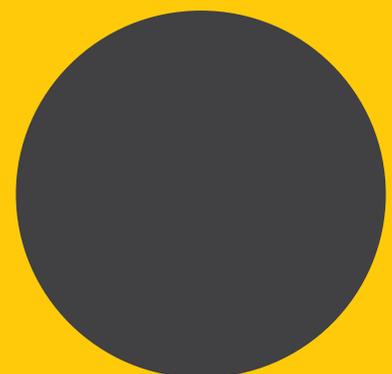


INSPIRATION PACKAGE MIDDELBURG

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**Power of culture, analysis of the
characteristic cultural DNA of the
city in order to serve tourism policy**





1. INTRODUCTION

Middelburg is working towards a prosperous future. Art and culture are important core values and economic driving forces for this future. Within the Interreg North Sea Region Cupido project, the partnership that consists of 8 regions in 7 countries around the North Sea cooperates closely and exchanges experiences to lift forward culture as a driver in local and regional economic development and to explore its potential.

The Cupido project's overall objective is to develop new business opportunities in the cultural and cultural heritage sector to reinforce the economic position, competitiveness and social cohesion of the involved regions and cities. Shaping the cultural infrastructure and strengthening the cultural identity in order to serve as tourism and economic policies form an important spearhead in Middelburg.

The ultimate objective is to develop a lively and bustling city that is appealing to residents, businesses and visitors. Preserving the intrinsic value of art and culture is important. However, the arts and culture sector also has a social and economic significance to residents, visitors and businesses. The social significance is reflected in the attractiveness of Middelburg as place of abode or residence and in the effects such as pride, satisfaction, leisure experience, atmosphere and creativity development. The economic significance to visitors and businesses is reflected in the image of Middelburg, which is influenced by the arts and culture sector and therefore increases the attractiveness to visitors and businesses. The arts and culture sector generates revenues, which subsequently have an impact on the production and employment. (see report "De eerste stap richting een (nog meer) bewuste toeristische bestemming", Kenniscentrum Zeeland)

The so-called Middelburg Quality Atlas was presented in 2010. This report outlines an integral vision of the future up to 2030 for each sector. Following this, the municipality of Middelburg drew up the City Centre Action Plan (Actieplan Binnenstad) in collaboration with city centre entrepreneurs and residents in 2015, in which each subarea has a development profile. In the Action Plan, a clear decision was made for several streets and squares that together form the core shopping area of Middelburg. The municipality wants a concentration of retail and catering businesses in this area while maintaining the quality and character of the landscape.

The municipality's cultural heritage policy focuses on preserving through development. Cultural heritage must serve a purpose in order to be preserved. The municipality is also working on modifying the purpose of monuments if it contributes to their preservation. The municipality has even set up a separate private limited liability partnership (BV) for monuments so it can take charge of the development itself if necessary. An example of this are the Kloveniersdoelen.

The Cupido project enables insight into new business approaches, stimulates the development of products and services and new start-ups.

Based on the core values of the city jointly discovering opportunities for a valuable positioning of the city, in which its rich heritage, history, art and culture form the starting points for new concepts at company level. This data forms the basis for a future-oriented tourism and recreation policy. By using a narrative approach the stories of the place will be developed taking into account the different audiences.

A distinctive profile that results in Middelburg being able to welcome more visitors and generating more revenue. This preserves and strengthens employment.





2. CULTURAL PROFILE THE DNA OF THE CITY

During the Golden Age (17th century), Middelburg was the second city of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the Netherlands after Amsterdam, because of the trade and the hundreds of ships that were built there. And although Middelburg was hit hard in the Second World War, its glorious past is still fully visible. The Dutch Golden Age was a time when great wealth was gained through international trade. The VOC played a large role in this prosperity. Today you can still experience the time of the VOC in Middelburg by its 1200 listed monuments.

Its international orientation made Middelburg a city with an open mind to other cultures. It is no coincidence that here every two years the presentation of the Four Freedom Awards take place.

Until the end of the 16th Century, Middelburg was the largest commercial city in the Netherlands with an extensive wine industry. The many beautiful historical buildings bring to mind this flourishing era. Middelburg is a compact city where you walk along canals, cobbled streets and passageways, visit museums or sit outside at one of the many cafés and feel like you're back in the Dutch Golden Age.

Today in the 21st century many VOC remains are to be seen and are part of daily street view in the town. There are many examples of old VOC buildings, such as the VOC wharf in the middle of the City, where you also can see many warehouses. Are houses being used for wine, tobacco, spices, etc from all over the Dutch Empire.

Some inhabitants of Middelburg were of national importance because of their inventions or importance in mapping the world. It was the Middelburger Hans Lipperhey who invented the binocular and telescope. Inventions which contributed to the development of science all over the world.

To the general public the man Jacob Roggeveen is rather unknown. But when you name 'Easter Island', everyone knows its story. And it was Roggeveen, a Middelburg explorer who discovered that Island. Since the Golden Age Middelburg developed itself as the capital city of Zeeland, where also national departmental institutions were founded. In developing in that manner the employment of the city was focused on governing, law and public administration. The average income of the city was above average so inhabitants could spend a larger part of their income into culture and art. The city has even today a fine centre of culture and art, such as "De Vleeshal" which is an exhibition center of international importance. The focus on art led in the 20th century to the foundation of the Roosevelt Academy. The first university college in the Netherlands, which also focused on liberal arts and science. Today, every university in our country has its own university college.

In addition to culture, the city of Middelburg has an extensive range of shops, restaurants, cafes and bars, which mainly can exist thanks to its visitors. The most important activities are therefore shopping, visiting restaurants/cafes/bars/terraces, walking and strolling.

The city has many attractions* for tourists to stroll along, but their stories remain untold. Some attractions tell the story behind the monuments, such as the canal cruise through Middelburg. There is also the Zeeuws Museum, but this museum does not tell the story of Middelburg's history. The Zeeuws Museum does however offer guided tours.

During the tourist season, daily walking tours or guided visits to the Town Hall are offered. The walking tours are all product related. There are no themed walking tours available, although these kinds of tours provide interesting opportunities to the city.

* See also www.uitinmiddelburg.nl/nl/locaties/categorie:bezienswaardigheden.htm

3. CORE VALUES OF THE CITY

A. THE PROCESS AND RESULTS SURVEY

The first step will be to identify what Middelburg and Walcheren stand for. What are the core values of the city and its region?

The main task in the CUPIDO project is to identify the city's DNA - or core values - and how we tell the stories of the city, so people create a personal connection to our city. What are the city's core values? Together with the many involved parties, both cultural heritage providers and leisure sectors, we have to find a way to tell the story of the city. The conducted in-depth interviews are part of the building blocks to develop the city's unambiguous story.

15 in-depth interviews were held in the city of Middelburg with 6 "cultural players" and 9 "business partners". The conversations took place via a "survey outline", which was the same for all participating regions in the Cupid project.

The interview results with stakeholders (business and cultural providers) in the city give a good picture of the DNA and values of Middelburg. This also indicates where the opportunities lie for a valuable positioning of our city. The greatest opportunities lie where the core values of the city match with the trends and values of today's consumers. This will make up a large part of the work to be carried out. Which core values and which value combinations match best and provide the best chance of success?

Cultural Players: their meaning according to the official definition

The cultural players explain the meaning of culture and cultural heritage mainly in more abstract terms, such as the enriching, elevating and imaginative aspect of it...

"Cultural heritage provides a framework to look at history and culture means - from a consumer's point of view - that there is always something to do.

Culture / Cultural heritage is the "raison d'être" (reason for being). It is a "binding agent" in the relationship between people. It lifts everything to a higher, broader scope.

Culture / Cultural heritage exists to be shared with and passed on to people. Culture | Cultural heritage can create experiences. Culture | Cultural heritage is the "raison d'être" (reason for being).

They contribute to what they consider to be the cultural essence or "core business".

“Middelburg is a GREAT culture city (even though we are small)”

Business partners: a lively setting to work and live in

The business partners look for a meaning of culture / cultural heritage that is literally “closer to home”.

For them, culture and cultural heritage is the city’s tangible setting, in which they can live and work. For some, this setting is “one big open-air museum that breathes history”, while others in fact ask themselves how this setting can become more than just something static that is maintained: “How to INCORPORATE cultural heritage to keep it alive?”.

Most people recognise that there is already a lot going on in this setting: culture / cultural heritage does not only mean buildings, but also events, stories, markets, folkloric traditions, the Kunst- en Cultuurroute (Art and Culture Route), the Stadsbrouwerij (City Brewery): “Middelburg is a GREAT culture city (even though we are small)”.

B. MIDDELBURG IS CULTURALLY AND HISTORICALLY VERY STRONG

The city consists of a compact group of well-preserved monuments and historic buildings. The eye-catching monuments and the many attractive small streets and back paths in the old city centre give the city a strong cultural-historical appearance with potential. However, this means that Middelburg has make sure these assets are preserved.

Middelburg competes with cities such as Bruges, Ghent, Gouda, Haarlem, Deventer and Delft, ... The Abdijcomplex (Middelburg Abbey) with the Zeeuws Museum, the historic city centre, the Vleeshal (centre for Modern Art), Archive Slaverny (Unesco Heritage) and its location on the water can help Middelburg stand out. Its peripheral location is within the Netherlands but is also very close to the Flemish medieval cities of Bruges and Ghent, as well as the Golden Age city of Antwerp. This offers opportunities for the international marketing of Middelburg. An important asset is that Middelburg offers its visitors a sense of security through its compactness. The city centre is easy to navigate, which makes people feel safe.



Middelburg's unique character

There is plenty of progressiveness and effectiveness. The strong architectural town hall is given a new role (University College Roosevelt) and attracts a relatively high number of visitors. The kloveniersdoelen is an attractive meeting place for culture and art lovers and can serve as a film theatre. The new Schouwburg (theatre) has an attractive programme for a broad audience. The Concert Hall and Auditorium create more intimacy for visitors and performers. The Oostkerk (church) will be sustainably redesigned and will experiment as a stage for all kinds of cultural activities. There is a high level of drive and involvement among a number of key players in Middelburg. This translates into a wide range of events and activities, such as "City of Dance" and food festival. In short, Middelburg is in motion.

Middelburg as a pivot for the island of Walcheren

Vlissingen and its boulevard form a modern maritime hotspot. Veere is characterised by history and water, where visitors can imagine themselves in the past. The coast offers plenty of relaxation on and near the water. Middelburg is the pivot of Walcheren both on a physical and substantive level. It has a great cultural-historical and vibrant range of restaurants/cafes/bars, retail, art and galleries. For this, the Drvkkery (bookshop) is the perfect meeting point and starting point for a discovery journey through the city.

So if one mentions the DNA of Middelburg it is about core values such as:

- Culture**
- VOC**
- Food & Wine**
- Spices**
- Monuments**
- Freedom**
- Proud**
- Dignified**
- Rich**
- Confidence**
- Trade**

Together with these values come colours and as: gold foil – marble and platina. All to express the richness of the city and the richness of the DNA.

4. THE MOST IMPORTANT GLOBAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS

The Future Trends

The leisure sector offers both opportunities and challenges. After all, the tourist/visitor becomes more fickle, more assertive, more demanding and more critical. A consumer who demands quality and sustainability, but also wants to be first in line. The role of city management and tourism and recreation has changed considerably over the years. This is based on social, cultural and economic trends and developments. A number of important consumer trends and relevant trends for culture and history are discussed in more detail here. These trends form the source of inspiration and building blocks for new future mindsets and new product-market combinations.

Globalization

Globalization is the process of integrating economies into the world, driven by the new transportation and communication options. On the one hand it means that the world is getting bigger: we can go anywhere. It also means that the world is getting smaller: products are produced and transported all over the world. People can be continuously connected to each other worldwide. The changes in the world have a major impact on the individuality of cultures.

Demand Economy

The consumer knows what he wants and especially what he no longer wants. Now

that his trust in the big institutions has been damaged, he is increasingly taking matters into his own hands. He knows what he wants and globalization and the internet make it easier for him to get it. We are moving from a supply to a demand economy.

New (Newism)

'New' has never before been as important as it is now. For consumers raised in an 'expectation economy', new has a positive sound anyway, especially for the younger generations. The flow of new and better products is endless now. These new products can easily be tried out (without too much risk), especially online. New also has a status element: new equals interesting, (even more) experiences and being the first to do or have something.

'Newism' does not mean that all attention from new consumers will be focused on the 'new'. Classic products and/or services and brands have unprecedented opportunities in this dynamic world. As long as they consistently offer good quality and class. Value is in a relevant, consistent and well-told story behind a product or service. In ease, tradition, local and customized work.

App yourself healthy

The do-it-yourself trend is playing an increasingly important role. The tourist likes to organize everything himself and knows

very well what he wants. For some time the do-it-yourself concept has also penetrated the cultural-historical sector. Entrepreneurs can respond to this trend by actively using these apps to promote their offer and to offer special packages.

Meaning instead of experience

Experience and experiencing something become the most important drivers for the consumer's choice process. The experience economy is primarily focused on fulfilling the emotional needs of people. Within this concept, a further deepening emerges: consumption should not only be more fun, but should also contribute to personal development, the meaning economy. As a result of this shift to more intangible issues, more attention is being paid to nature, sustainability, authenticity, wellness (health) and culture.

The consumer strives for meaning, inspiration and self-development and is after authentic experiences and encounters. The entrepreneur who takes on the role of happiness or lifestyle manager is assured of a vital future.

Planned spontaneity

Consumers want to go somewhere spontaneously, but at the same time knowing where they are and who or what is nearby. This is becoming increasingly easier because location has become a vital part of social networks and apps (from existing providers that add location info, such as Facebook's 'Places' and Google's 'Hotpot'). Visitors with the same interests can meet each other and do things together.

A good example of this is LikeOurselves, where people with the same interests come into contact with each other through mobile groups that can arise spontaneously.

Own less

The 'own less' trend responds to gaining as many experiences as possible without the responsibilities of ownership. Shared ownership and the leasing of lifestyle products open up opportunities to constantly participate in the latest offering. Or to constantly gain new and very different experiences. Or to enjoy luxury that would otherwise remain out of reach. Programs with public sharing bicycles or shared cars are a worldwide success.

Bargains as a status symbol

For consumers, taking advantage of good deals has become a way of life. Bargain hunting has become a permanent part of the daily lives of millions of consumers. The same holds for tourists. Bargain hunting provides the necessary admiration from other consumers. It is often no longer about saving money, but about the challenge. It is also becoming a status symbol. The bargain trend will grow even further as a result of, among other things:

- More for Less: Although many people currently have less to spend or just spend less, tourists are constantly looking for more experiences.
- The Medium is the Motivation: Consumers who are looking for a vacation are constantly being alerted to good deals and discounts

through new (and therefore much more exciting and interesting) technologies. A good example is vakantievervelingen.nl.

- Best of the Best: Because online not only good deals can be found, but also reviews can be viewed right away, consumers know for sure that they are paying the best price for the best item or service.

Easy to contribute

consumers for business improvement is not new. Currently, more and more innovations are being developed that make this crowdsourcing possible in a way that is as customer-friendly as possible. Most people like being given the opportunity to contribute to something or to be part of a larger whole. But the reality is that most consumers, although they may want to contribute, find it too much of a hassle. The 'IDLE sourcing' initiatives will therefore increase.

A well-known example is TripAdvisor. Entrepreneurs will make more use of these apps to make themselves more known.

Touchscreen world

The touchscreen is the way to get in touch with the consumer. The touchscreen is also the means to get in touch with the 'cloud', in which everything the consumer wants to use is immediately available.

Examples are the touchscreens of Adidas and Intel, on which customers can browse through around 8,000 different shoes, the possibility to watch sports games on the iPad while shopping and ordering food via their own iPad.

Human brand/personality behind the product

Consumers love products that are human: vulnerable and brilliant or, on the contrary, brilliant because of their vulnerability. Two developments are important in this brand trend:

- Human brands: due to a growing aversion to purely commercial and the influence of an increasingly influential online culture (with all its openness and directness), consumers are ignoring characterless, boring brands and opting for brands that exude personality.
- Transparency: the large number of reviews, assessments and other uncensored information that is released online creates almost complete transparency, which means that any shortcomings of companies will be discovered and discussed anyway.

Random Acts of Kindness (RAK)

In other words, approaching consumers with random friendly acts, a spontaneous action that may lead to a bond between entrepreneur and customer.

Identity

We feel the need to emphasize who we are as individuals. Partly because we live in a world where the individual comes first. We have many roles: at work, as a parent, as a volunteer, as an informal caregiver (Dutch: mantelzorger), etc. In addition, there is also the online world. In social media we can assume other identities and convey an image of how we would like to be, instead of how we really are.

History Light

From the need to emphasize our identity more, we are also increasingly interested in history. Not for dates, but for history and culture in bite-sized pieces: history light.

Tradition

Based on our sense of insecurity, we seek our safety not only in sharing business and doing things ourselves, but also in Holland (Great Britain, Flanders, Sweden) and in history. Nostalgia partly determines our behavior: the desire for the time when everything was still good. Traditions and rituals are an important part of this. But then loaded with experience in a contemporary way. Or own rituals that we shape ourselves.

Creative intelligence

We like to express our uniqueness in creativity as well. After all, in this era everyone is a writer, artist, designer, rapper, fashionista or master chef. With a little creativity you can distinguish yourself well from other people. At the same time, we also need a little help. Because how do you actually make clothes? How do you prepare a fresh meal? And how do you make money with your blog?

Storytelling

The major general stories have lost their validity. The world we thought we knew has changed irreversibly. But we do need stories. As entertainment, but also as a guide and as an example. Hence the need for all reality series on television. Good examples are Farmer Wants a Wife, vlogs from influencers and regional soaps, but also the invented realities such as Expeditie Robinson. Hence the new role models in the person of entertainers and athletes. This explains the invasion of major brands on personal social media. The role models want to tell their story to the consumer as a guide in the big angry world. They are your new friends: brand friends.



5. SPECIFIC TRENDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ART AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Experience economy

Cultural experiences are becoming a market opportunity. The extremer the better: An opera performed in a meadow, the Passion of Christ as staged as a musical in the streets of a city, a theatre play at the location of a waste plant; an asylum for the mentally ill as a location for visual art installations. And not only the art product but also the working and making of the product has the attention of the audience. Tours back stage in theatres; open master classes by famous dancers; workshops in Taiko drumming at the big Japanese drums that require years of dedication to master, etc. The 'professional amateur' wants to be entertained continuously and at ever new and surprising locations.

Culture shop

Arts and culture in the broad sense have become a treasure trove. First of all for the creative makers: they mix and match disciplines, styles and epochs in ever new interpretations of or references to cultural products throughout history. But they are also a treasure trove for the cultural consumer. Vermeer's milkmaid on your wall as wallpaper is an option. Using the entire collection of the Dutch National Museum (Rijksmuseum) as possible prints for your whatever you like: Van Gogh's starry night printed on your bathing suit; other famous artworks where ever and how ever you want them. Art and

culture have become suppliers for images for the cultural consumer to play with and as a means to show their identity to the outside world.

Digital culture

Culture in digital shape other than movies originated in the eighties. As the world has been digitalising at an ever higher pace since then also the manifestations and media of digital culture have changed. Digital visual art has evolved from small videos to big multimedia installations for instance. Along with the digitizing world came the need for digitalizing museum collections. At first for professional use, later open for a general audience looking for more information on specific works of art and cultural artifacts. Enhanced by the corona virus lock downs we are now experiencing new digital ways and platforms for experiencing art. The actual visit to the locations is temporarily prohibited but culture still finds a way to go out to people. Art and culture become an 'insperience': and experience to be digitally consumed in your own home. Special benefit for this development that it makes cultural expressions more accessible for people with special needs.



6. IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling is a multi-layered and multipurpose phenomenon. People and places use storytelling as a branding, (content) marketing, organisational management and innovation strategy and tool.

Throughout time, storytelling has been used as a form of communication and a way to exchange knowledge and experience. Stories shape people's values and beliefs. Stories evoke emotions. In a marketing context stories are used to convey brand values to the consumer in an easy to understand manner. Storytelling has the power to strengthen a brand both internally and externally.

Storytelling needs to observe critical success factors for it to be effective and requires, for example, knowledge of narrative techniques and skills in narrative management. The members of the CUPIDO team offer this knowledge and envision to use narratives as the material that will make their approach an integrated one with sustainable results.

A strategic narrative:

- **facilitates and guides policy development**
- **focuses on the wishes and needs of those who should buy the services and goods to develop**
- **aims at engaging stakeholders**
- **brings coherence and focus in the (existing and to develop) cultural offer and experiences**
- **brings focus in marketing communication at a regional, local, sectoral and company level**



7. TARGET GROUPS: WHO IS VISITING THE CITY?

Another important related question is: Who visits the city of Middelburg? In order to answer this question, it is important to have detailed information of the different visitor profiles. At the moment this information is missing. Based on our own analyses we can make an estimation, but we need more in-depth information. For instance, in order to be able to offer custom made experiences.

Middelburg is a must-see destination for anyone staying in Zeeland and Walcheren in particular. Especially when the (summer) weather conditions are less favorable, (groups of) tourists visit the city. Most day visitors come from the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium and stay on the île of Walcheren. In addition, many hotels have been developed in the past 10, 15 years, such as hotel van der Valk, Fletcher hotel Middelburg, boutique hotel Roosevelt, hotel de Sprenck, hotel at the Dam, hotel Loskade 45, B&B 't Poorthuys, various city apartments (AirBenB) and B & B's. This is in line with the trend of increased urban tourism, in which people consciously choose to visit a city. This can be in the form of organized packages, via a tour operator, via self-organized day trips or multi-day stays. Those visitors come from France, UK, Italy, Spain etc. A large number of river cruises also moor in Middelburg. In recent years there is an increase of cultural visitors exploring the city.

The possible target groups will be further analysed and explored in the future. In our target group descriptions, we will base groups on the roots of the visitors on one hand and base groups on values and lifestyles on the other hand. This last approach can be directly applied to concepts and marketing. Those are the people who feel drawn to the scenarios.



8. POSITIONING SCENARIO'S BASED ON THE REGIONAL AND CITY VALUES COMBINED WITH TRENDS

If Middelburg wants to be equipped to face the future, then we will need more cooperation than ever before. Cooperation between (cultural) offerings and entrepreneurs must lead to widely supported sustainable initiatives. Bottom-up approach to ensure the continuity of the process or project proposals. In order to cooperate, individual entrepreneurs should not only think of their own business, but should also grant their neighbours success. **(Grant each other success)**. If we want to strengthen Middelburg socially and economically, we will have to cooperate more than ever.

Therefore, the product range must be in line with the consumer demand. The previous chapter outlined several developments and trends.

It comes down to doing the things we are good at together at the right time and in the right place, as well as what society or guests need.

APPENDIX

SCENARIO

MIDDELBURG IN 2035

Middelburg in 2035 is a city that is both very much in touch with its cultural inheritance and contemporary culture and society. It has always been that way but what with the flight digitalisation has taken, it has made the most of that development in a way that is compliant with the city's DNA and the demands of specific groups of inhabitants and visitors. The cleverness of this policy is that at the same time it protects the historical city against a tourism overload but is always accessible.

Middelburg has always cherished its monuments. But in the 21st century the city has turned its awareness of the vulnerability of these monuments into an inspiring policy on tourism. Key in this policy is a delicate balance of online and offline experience.

Already in 2024, as tourism levels went up again after the worldwide corona lockdowns, the city has limited its visitors per day. As with Venice in the early decades of this millennium there is a limited number of day tickets to visit the beautiful old city. Tourists happily comply with that because they know a visit to this historic city is special.

The demand for the tickets is high. Middelburg has cleverly used the low tourist business in corona times to map out the strategy for on- and offline visits to the city. Pilot projects like Middelburg buddies whom you could send through the city on discovery walks have highly contributed to that. Also the vlogs of experts on certain aspects of Middelburg's characteristics have gained attention of potential tourist both in Holland and abroad.

If you want to visit the city now you get offered a number of choices while preparing for your visit: do you want to meet locals and experience their work or life? Do you want to make use of augmented reality to experience the past in the present while walking around? Or do you want to attend the re-enactment of history the way it is being performed several times each year in the historic festivals? Are you interested in specific topics of Middelburg's history? Prospective visitors can choose for topics like maritime history, world war 2, VOC (trade with the far East), slavery, food & wine etc. Because every visitor or group of visitors makes different choices for their program, everyone has a unique experience.

Targeted mostly at Asian tourists - who notoriously do not have much time to spend on a holiday-tailor made packages are developed covering every aspect of the holiday and the choices therein. From choices on co2 neutral travel or not, to things to do, restaurants to eat and experiences to partake in. The Golden Age with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) is a never ending source of inspiration that

encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music and creative industries but also traditions and beliefs. As a shelter city, a large number of guests stay in the city every year. Middelburg received an award for the most hospitality city of the Netherlands. On the topic of slavery Middelburg and other key cities once involved in slavery have carefully put a program together that paints an honest picture of this sensitive part of history. Both descendants of slaves from all over the world and people generally interested in this topic plan a holiday visiting those cities one after another. Each city in its own way shows what slavery has brought the city and what it looked like in daily life. Middelburg passed on the idea of a slavery museum, but has created a unique position in telling the city's history on this topic. They ordered teams of app-designers and historians to develop experiences. The virtual reality centre where you can experience several aspects of the slavery was one of the reasons for the UN Slavery research Institute (established in 2025) to hold their annual conference in Middelburg. Also the augmented reality app that projects history over today's city is very much in demand amongst tourists. For the people who are not so digital personal assistants are available to guide them through the experiences. The virtual reality centre where you can experience several aspects of the slavery was one of the reasons for the UN Slavery research Institute (established in 2025) to hold their annual conference in Middelburg. Also the augmented reality app that projects history over today's city is very much in demand amongst tourists. For the people who are not so digital personal assistants are available to guide them through the experiences.

For those who were not able to get a day ticket, or people preparing for their visit beforehand, Middelburg has a strong online presence. The city uses platforms and games to inform people about all that Middelburg was and is. Information is gamified, ie that while playing an online game you get more information. That information can either be guided towards reaching a goal or designed as a world to explore at leisure.

The on- and offline worlds merge too. The shops in the online version are like the shops in real life. This took a great flight as shop streaming was developed during the corona epidemic. Thanks to shop streaming all the small specialty shops in Middelburg thrive because they are not limited to the people actually visiting the city. If you see some special food product that you want to order, you can. If you see a nice souvenir you can buy it even after your visit and have it home delivered.

As the policy has been executed for several years now, we can see it also connects people. Visitors are genuinely interested in the way of living of the Middelburgers. And the inhabitants of Middelburg happily share their stories. Friendships evolve, also online. There is a growing number of people visiting the city who have met in one of the apps or on one of the digital platforms dedicated to a characteristic of the city. They share an interest in a topic and decide to meet up in the city itself. It feels like having online inhabitants of the city as well apart from the real time inhabitants! These people love our city. They endorse the way the city has made Roosevelt four freedoms the pillars of public policy. In this city there is freedom of speech and of religion. It is a safe city and people take care of each other. It is a place people want to return to more than once, if not offline then at least online.



COLOPHON

Additionally

The report is a result of a constructive joint dialogues on policy, creative business and local involvement (eg. In-dept interviews with business- and cultural players). The Cupido partnership supports actions providing cultural and creative sectors and players with skills and competences by creative cross-sectorial and cross-border meetings.

The world is temporarily closed

COVID -19 has a huge impact on the cultural sector and resulted in the closure of museums, business, cultural attractions and potential visitors to these places confined to their homes. This has resulted in a huge surge of on-line heritage interactions, often through social media and accessible via devices available in the home. Culture professionals and volunteers work with heritage and culture on-line. We must prepare for a new future.

Because of COVID-19 the inspirational meeting with business and the cultural sector has been postponed. After this meeting has taken place, the results will be added to this Inspiration Package.

Trends and Scenario Middelburg in 2035: ROZENBROOD Prognose & Strategie

Photography:

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Pim Top (p. 17)

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