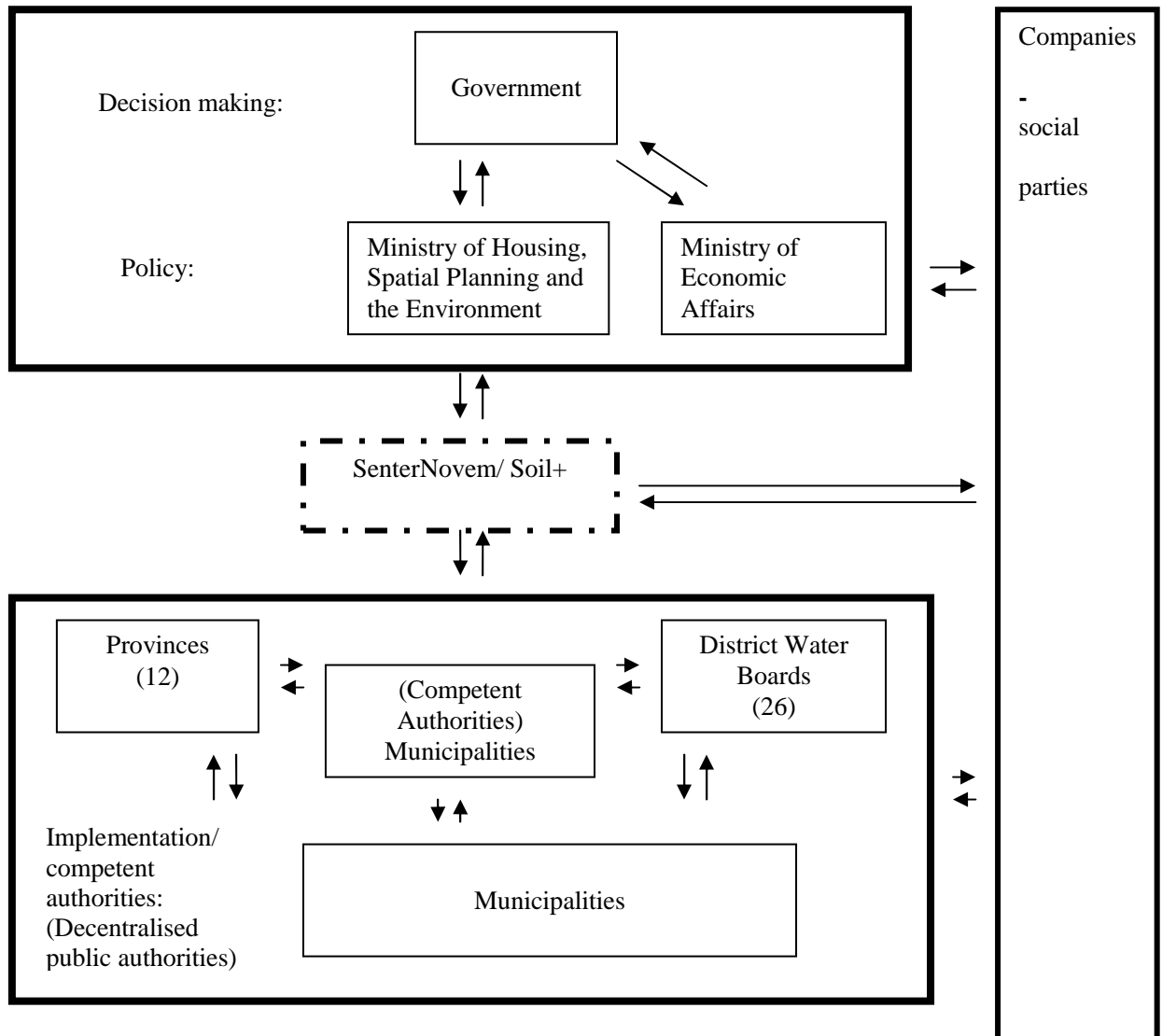


Dutch “institutional structure”



Central government:

The Dutch central government consists of the Queen and the ministers. The ministers are appointed from the political parties that form the cabinet, which are elected every four years by the citizens of the Netherlands. The parties in the central government work together with the opposition parties (those which are not in the cabinet) to take the final decisions about policies to be adopted.

The Netherlands have a total of 13 ministries. SenterNovem/Soil+ works directly with two of these ministries. These are:

The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment:

The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (referred to as 'VROM' in Dutch) is in charge of making and enforcing policy in these areas. In the field of soil management, the ministry bears responsibility for the sustainable use of the soil. Soil+ was established in 2005 as an administrative and consultive body for the Ministry of VROM to coordinate with the implementation of soil policy and soil management.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs:

The Ministry van Economic Affairs is responsible for economic growth and the organisation of the economy in the Netherlands. SenterNovem provides services to operationalise these policies.

SenterNovem/ Soil+:

SenterNovem is an agency of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. It pursues government policy in various policy areas such as innovation, the environment and sustainability. In this role, SenterNovem maintains contact with public authorities, social organisations, knowledge institutions and companies. These parties can go to SenterNovem for subsidies, knowledge exchange, public information and process supervision.

Soil+ is a taskgroup in the SenterNovem agency. However, it is an assignment of the Ministry of VROM and, in this position, acts as a link between policy formation by the central government¹ and the actual implementation of these policies by the provinces, municipalities (competent authorities) and district water boards

Provinces:

The Netherlands is divided into 12 provinces. The provinces form an administrative layer between the central government and the municipalities. In close cooperation with the central government, the municipalities and the district water boards, the provinces perform duties in such areas as spatial planning, traffic and transport, economics, agriculture, the environment, recreation, nature and landscape, welfare, culture, administrative organisation, supervision of the district water boards and supervision of the finances of the municipalities.

Municipalities/competent authority municipalities:

The Netherlands has 441 municipalities. The municipality is the smallest administrative unit in the Netherlands and exists alongside the central government and the provinces. A municipality is responsible for policy within its borders. Important duties of a municipality include for example those that relate to spatial planning, environmental legislation and ensuring the proper flow of traffic. Due to the decentralisation process in recent years, the central government has transferred an increasing number of duties to the municipalities.

Based on the [Soil Protection Act (Wbb) and the Environmental Protection Act (Wm)], some municipalities have more duties and powers than other municipalities with regard to soil policy and management. In general, these 'competent authority' municipalities are the large municipalities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht. This means, for example, that duties normally performed by a province are instead implemented by the competent authority municipality.

District water boards:

There are 26 district water boards in the Netherlands. The district water boards are established and dissolved by provincial bye-law, and bear responsibility for dams and water management in the Netherlands. Other duties, such as environmental management and other water management matters, can also be assigned to a district water board.

¹ Central government: all the ministries (including all departments that are part of the individual organisation), the budget funds and the agencies.