

## Recent developments in Dutch design contest culture

Cilly Jansen, Architectuur Lokaal

1 September 2016

*At ICC Delft 2014, Architectuur Lokaal delivered a paper on Dutch competition culture within the architectural sector. Based on the database of the Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden (Helpdesk for Architecture Selections of the Architectuur Lokaal foundation, hereafter referred to as 'Steunpunt'; Steunpunt 1997), a spectacular increase of 74% was reported in design contests in 2012. The Steunpunt focuses on what it calls 'architectural commissions'. It defines an 'architectural commission' as a commission or contract, including 'a full design component'. An architectural commission must include the production of a design, not just the detailing or engineering of an available design.*

*The paper contains an exhaustive explanation of the status and way of working of the Steunpunt and surveyed competition culture in the Netherlands within the architectural sector and focused on tenders for architecture and design contests in the period from 2006 to 2013 (Geertse 2014). Since then, the number of contests has continued to increase (Graph. 1). This has occurred within a period of great change in the context of how architecture is realised. As the government reduces its involvement in the building sector, the client role is no longer reserved for public parties, and numerous other 'players' are now taking the lead.*

*The question, increasingly, is how social challenges can be translated into physical terms. The central concern is how the city, as opposed to buildings, is used. The themes concern sustainability, energy, climate resilience, water safety, mobility, population decline and growth, vacancy levels and redevelopment. In addition, issues relating to healthcare, ageing population and refugee accommodation need to be addressed. The (built) consequences are the result of a well-considered process with clear management and realistic financial cover, and in the most favourable case based on an ambitious vision of interdisciplinary teams (Jansen & Van 't Klooster 2015).*

*Design contest procedures, by their nature, are an interesting instrument in this changing environment. Such contests amount to a search for the best design and not, as in the case of tenders for architecture, for the most suitable office that can carry out a specifically described commission. Interest in contests, among both architects (design contests) and property developers who work with architects (development contests), and which concern various forms of realisation, has been increasing since 2012.*

*This paper examines recent developments in the culture of contests in the Netherlands during the period from 2013 to August 2016 on the basis of data collected by the Steunpunt (SESAM; Geertse 2014). In response to changes in the client role for construction projects in the Netherlands, and the way in which these projects are realised, Architectuur Lokaal developed new, simplified procedures for both design contests ('Kompas bij Prijsvragen', 2013) and development contests ('Kompas bij Ontwikkelcompetities', 2014), which comply with European regulations. This paper also explains the system as well as the results. One of these procedures appears to be the favourite. Interest in this procedure is also coming from other countries.*



**Graph 1. Tender procedures for architecture (traditional design services contracts and integrated contracts including design services) and design contests in the Netherlands in the period 2006-2015. 'Tenders for architecture' = traditional contracts + integrated contracts. Not visible in the graph: 42 contests in the period January – July 2016. Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuropdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM**

## Context

Dutch authorities, in both central government, the provinces, municipalities and water boards, are looking for new ways of working because problems may not be easily defined nowadays, there are no known or proscribed solutions, and the results of consultations with the public bring uncertainty. The traditional linear organisation of construction projects from clients (public authorities) through to architects and consultation (users) has completely altered. The resulting reversal from *top-down* to *bottom-up* in recent years has already given way to other forms of collaboration, often based on 'participation processes'. What does this mean for the clients role and design in construction projects?

These questions arise in the case of both smaller, new projects and normal construction projects such as schools or cultural buildings, which are largely publicly funded. The design and construction of these projects are often subject to (European) tenders, but the practice of risk-averse, excessively legally structured procedures in which aims and ambitions recede into the background, persists. PIANOo, the government centre for procurement expertise on European tenders, has advocated a 'crusade against legalisation' (Blankena 2016; Koenen 2016). Government authorities that have lost some of their organisational power increasingly appoint advisors who do not necessarily possess the necessary knowledge for architecture commissioning and, because of their temporary involvement, cannot guarantee continuity through the process nor can they secure knowledge acquired in the early procurement stages through to completion. The percentage of failed tenders found in our researches can increasingly be ascribed to the involvement of occasional advisors, who in some cases applied irrelevant legislation (Architectuur Lokaal 2014). In 2015, seven local authorities were tempted to tender the same number of construction projects in integrated

DBFMO (Design build finance maintenance and operation - known as PFI in the UK) procedures; all seven procedures failed (Architectuur Lokaal 2016-1). Such problems start with the choice for unsuitable procedures, such as fully integrated contracts for modest school buildings. To prevent this, Architectuur Lokaal and Delft University of Technology developed the *KOMPASwijzer*, a digital tool to select an appropriate building organisation form (Prins & Van Doorn 2015).

More and more, it comes down to the fact that (public) clients no longer know what to do and haven't got the expertise to address the issues. They are looking for solutions to new problems, which must generate added value, both literally and figuratively, for the surroundings. Tender managers for major contractors are also searching for innovative ideas; they want to make successful submissions for larger projects that have to be tendered at European level. In these tenders, established architecture firms often lose out to newcomers (Jansen 2015-2). Many offices that often won architectural tenders in the past are specialised in projects that now occur with far less frequency, such as new town halls, large apartment complexes, offices and urban design plans. "Anybody who wants to win a tender for architecture has to collaborate better, invest in innovation, and focus on new contract forms and less prestigious, but still relevant projects such as school buildings." (Cobouw 2015).

Within current competition culture it is also apparent that architects are increasingly resorting to policy arguments, the effect of which is that discussion concerning the importance of architecture, quality and the architectural choices made is overshadowed. They are not always fully familiar with the current state of affairs in relation to architect selection procedures. An urban designer complained on the ArchiNed digital platform that in the first quarter of 2016, zero European open procurement procedures were announced, while the amount of European non-public design contests has risen strongly (Van de Wetering 2016). It is but one example of the deeply rooted mistrust among architects in the Netherlands concerning procurement and the lack of knowledge of the practice of architect selection procedures. Non-public procurement procedures are public procedures in which, after a preselection in the first round, the architect selection takes place in a second, non-public round among a limited number of candidates. This prevents too many architects from submitting too many elaborated designs, forcing everybody to spend too much money even though the chance of winning a commission is small.

Innovative solutions may be expected from younger designers, but they rarely stand a chance of securing architectural commissions that are tendered in this way owing to their lack of financial turnover, experience and a project portfolio. According to the Royal Institute of Dutch Architecture firms (BNA), architects who do meet the requirements for architecture tenders take part less frequently because the high number of participants reduces their chances of winning, the selection criteria for reference projects are set too high and fees are rarely offered for work done. All investment is therefore wasted. Advisers working for clients understand such complaints, but they argue that clients in procurement procedures have to find out about competences in order to compare offices. "Otherwise you might as well hold a lottery instead, which is something architects totally hate." (Cobouw 2016-1; Cobouw 2016-2).

### **The right issues**

Until a few years ago design contests organised in the Netherlands were mostly concerned with 'ideas contests' in which any commitment to realise them was usually non-binding (SESAM). Often, such contests demanded excessive time, cost and work, and due to the increasing number of participants, the chances of winning were reduced further.

This is an old problem. In 1905 the architecture office of Ed Cuypers was one of 216 international participants in the competition to design the Peace Palace in The Hague. He made four submissions, consisting of so many detail drawings that a whole railway carriage was needed to transport them from Amsterdam to The Hague (Coolen 2013). The costs incurred by the office were considerably higher than the design fee, and Cuypers did not win the contest.

Even today there are still contests in which all participants are invited at their own expense to submit a full design. A familiar recent example is the contest for the Guggenheim Museum Helsinki in 2014, in which over 1700 architects submitted a complete design, including a model, even though the realisation of the winning design was not guaranteed. Since 1988, some 23,333 designers have submitted fully elaborated designs in the 13 rounds of the international European competition held every two years. Of those, 475 ended up as winners. This averages out at 1,795 submissions per round, in which, with an average of 40 winners in each round, the chance of winning was under 2%. After 2000, no winning designs have resulted in commissions in the participating European countries (European Europe 2015; Jansen & Van 't Klooster 2016).

Those involved in design contests were asked what, apart from economic conditions, might have been the reasons for the lack of commissions. This quick scan resulted in the widely shared view that projects in a spatial context have become projects in a complex context at the level of area development. The projects are more multifunctional, and in design contests they should be formulated on the basis of a greater spatial perspective, broader theme and integral nature, in which participants can be asked to adapt their vision to a site (possibly of their own choosing). They should be offered cultural space and support to develop propositions for reflection and innovation in relation to social and economic questions that can be translated into architectural, urban design and landscape proposals. Within this context, the contest projects could be reformulated, and a strategy for process, funding, social development or sustainability could be formulated at the same time. The realisation of winning submissions – also for temporary projects – in which innovative and inclusive solutions are put into practice, could be interpreted more broadly. Apart from the actual construction of a building project, one could also consider designers taking a seat at the negotiating table, carrying out of a feasibility studies, or setting in motion a process or a follow-up commission in the form of design research. In addition, the built result is the result of the combination of a number of themes and iterated factors rather than as was previously the case, the realisation of specific building as distinguished entities (Jansen & Van 't Klooster 2016).

Today therefore it is a matter of getting the right *issues*. Some months ago the Chief Government Architect published his agenda, in which he formulated his vision of challenges such as redesignation and transformation, with an emphasis on social themes (Chief Government Architect, 2016).

### **New partners**

A study of the effects of policy measures upon tenders by the Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) noted that when organising competitions requiring innovative approaches, design contest are an effective tool, but that the Netherlands lags behind internationally in this area (CPB 2016; Van Noort 2016). More traditional approaches to building commissioning are less likely to lead to innovation and clients still need new solutions. In the Netherlands design contests are increasingly becoming to be recognised as a means to deliver this innovation. This approach is being adopted not just by traditional public clients but also by new 'players' such as energy suppliers or water boards. These new players have also shown an inclination to develop and

explore new typologies of design contests based on conceptual project definitions, with explicit conceptual considerations related to how they are required to be realised. In these situations there may be less pre conception than otherwise about the spatial resolution, the programme or processes that are needed to derive the solution.

In a debate on competitions among Dutch city architects in December 2015, chaired by Chief Government Architect Floris Alkemade, it was pointed out that these new players frequently demand architects take a new and leading role which calls upon their special skills to solve new spatial possibilities (Atelier Chief Government Architect 2015). The power of creative design defines new topics. In other words, they need the input of architects to shape and imagine the implications of new technological possibilities. These parties are prepared to invest in design research and eliciting in depth dialogue with architects, but they are not keen on receiving dozens of drawn plan propositions (Architectuur Lokaal 2016-2). They prefer a limited number of succinct focused proposals that really address and drill down into their specific questions. A design contest can do this well in two rounds by offering a theoretical basis for practical solutions in the first round; in the second round a limited number of selected visions can then be elaborated. Because they then know what they are investing in, they are prepared to invest in the second phase (funding opportunities could also form part of the assignment).

The risk that young architects might make large speculative competition investments, even though the chances of a prize or a commission may be remote, is no longer considered justifiable – not just by the profession and industry, but also in law. The Dutch Procurement Act is based on the principle of proportionality, which requires that the conditions of a tender must be proportionate to the nature and size of the commission. The act was amended in July 2016 (Council of State, 2016). The amendments increase inter alia opportunities for market dialogue and possibilities for investigating sustainable and innovative solutions within the processes (PIANOo 2016). Linked to this Procurement Act are the so-called ‘Proportionality Guidelines’ that expand on the detail of the principles, and must be followed (Schrijfgroep Gids Proportionaliteit 2016). This is the case since 2013, but unfortunately regulatory developments have not been picked up swiftly.

### **Contests as alternative**

Although it remains a common misunderstanding that a design contest is not allowed in cases where the client is a (public) party that is obliged to tender, the design contest as an alternative to other competition processes is starting to gain a renewed foothold in the Netherlands. Under procurement law a design contest is a uniquely special procedure for inviting participants to supply a service that requires them to implement or propose to draw up a plan, vision or design. The principle differences with other competitive selection procedures (where the alternative involves selecting the most suitable firm) is that the best design solution is selected entirely anonymously; and that at least one third of the jury should have professional expertise equivalent to those of the participants.

As a result, design contests offer many interesting possibilities particularly for younger generations of designers who often have no chance of making a breakthrough in architectural selection procedures otherwise. Organizing a design contest means choosing explicitly from comparison of a range of various possible solutions and stimulating the quality of these solutions through competition. The efforts of the participants in making a plan, vision or design are rewarded with prize-money or a design fee. A follow-up commission can also be awarded directly on the basis of the submission, or the contest can be seen as the selection stage of the procedure for choosing

one or more participants (the contest winners) where a follow-up commission is awarded by a negotiated procedure. This covers a wide range of options and possibilities while ensuring design contest procedures comply with public procurement law. In turn this maps out how design contests can be structured and organised.

Architectuur Lokaal has developed a range of digital manuals Kompas ('Compass') that are compliant with European and national regulations for use in selection procedures of architectural projects. These are available free of charge to everybody on an open and publically accessible platform (Fig. 1). These valuable, popular, well used and handy tools promote and deliver for clients and their advisors the requisite and appropriate expertise and advice that sustains and enhances more professional procurement practice and thus contribute to a more healthy building culture in the Netherlands. More specifically for example, they outline how the organisers and participants can keep expenditure as low as possible by providing clear procedures that enable them to do so; whilst maintaining fair and proportionate competitive access focused on delivering the best qualitative solutions. The clarity and relative simplicity of the digital manuals provide for the construction industry tools that are both effective and efficient. The resulting standardisation contributes towards the recognition and transparency of competitions in the Netherlands. These manuals are supported by the Association of Dutch Municipalities, the Chief Government Architect and professional organisations.

	<b>what's the client looking for?</b>			
	<b>KompasWijzer 2015</b>			
↓	↓	↓	↓	
<b>most suitable firm</b>		<b>best plan</b>		
↓	↓	↓	↓	
office for architecture	contractor	architect	projectdeveloper	
↓	↓	↓	↓	
procurement of architect services	procurement of works & design	design contest	development contest	
↓	↓	↓	↓	
<b>Kompas Architect Services</b> 2013	<b>Kompas Design Build</b> in development	<b>Kompas Design Contests</b> 2013	<b>Kompas Development Contests</b> 2014	

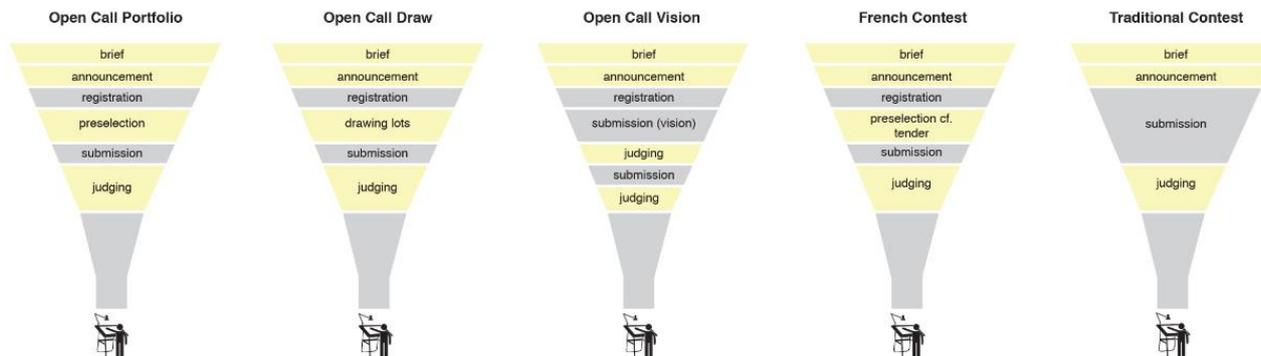
**Fig. 1. Manuals 'Compass'**

The booming interest in architectural competitions in 2012 required appropriate tools, which were not then available (Geertse 2014). Moreover, there was insufficient insight into the way in which commissions unfolded below the European procurement thresholds. The Chief Government Architect therefore advocated transparency in all schemes of national interest (College van Rijksadviseurs 2013). For these reasons, and to stimulate the better competition culture within the context of current challenges and the partners involved, Architectuur Lokaal developed two digital manuals which focused on the selection of the best plan: *KOMPAS bij Prijsvragen* (Compass Design Contests) and *KOMPAS Ontwikkelcompetities* (Compass Development Competitions) from their previous 'old' paper (pre-digital) editions of *Compasses*, using these as a template (Van Campen & Hendrikse 1997; Architectuur Lokaal 2001) (Fig.1).

These new easy-to-use electronic manuals consist of forms requiring digital inputs accompanied by explanatory guidance, with the move through the design contest procedure taken step by step. The result is a set of regulations for a design contest which can be fully tailored to needs, and which

can be organised for either a European or a national procedure (Notably in procedural terms, and in all events, the difference between a European and a national procedure is not that great).

## Five types of design contest



**Fig. 2 Structure Compass procedures Architectuur Lokaal for design contests, from brief to winner.**

KOMPAS bij Prijsvragen (Compass Design Contests) encompasses five clearly defined contest procedures (Fig.2):

### 1. Open Call Based on Portfolio

A public project design contest, derived from the Open Call in Flanders (Flemish Government Architect 2005) – that in turn was derived from a procedure developed by the Chief Government Architect of the Netherlands (Patijn 2000). After the tender announcement, interested parties can apply by submitting a portfolio in the first round. A selection committee selects a limited number of participants for the contest, who then in the second round submit a design which is assessed by an independent jury. After the contest, the organiser can, through negotiation in the final round, commission one or more participants for a follow-up project.

### 2. Open Call Based on Draw

A non-public competition that offers particularly for small projects economic advantages. After the contest is announced all interested parties can apply in the first round. The desired number of participants for the second round of the design contest are selected from all applicants by means of a lottery (random selection). The applicants thus selected make a submission that is assessed by an independent jury in the second round.

### 3. Open Call based on a Vision

A public or non-public contest in two rounds. The participants make a direct submission; with no preselection. The first round takes the character of an 'ideas' contest with the participants submitting a concise (written and illustrated) vision of the project. No design is submitted as strict submission requirements are stipulated to avoid large volumes of work. An independent jury selects a limited number of submissions; with the designers of these invited to elaborate their vision further, for a fee, in a second round. This procedure involves a merge of the 'ideas competition followed by a 'multiple assignment' [meervoudige opdracht], derived from the first Compass Architecture Competitions and Multiple Assignments (Van Campen & Hendrikse 1997).

#### 4. 'French Contest'

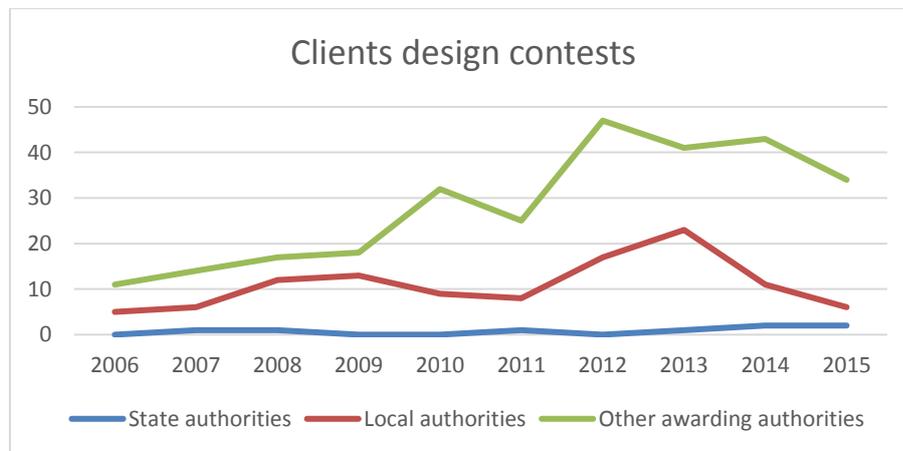
A non-public project contest, based on the European procedure that is customary in France. This procedure can be appropriate for prestigious projects. After the contest announcement, interested parties can apply. A committee selects a limited number of participants in a way comparable to the selection phase in a regular Dutch non-public tender procedure. The selected participants submit designs, which are assessed by an independent jury. After the contest, the organiser can commission one or more participants for a follow-up phase.

#### 5. Traditional Contest

A public or non-public contest. In this contest all participants submit a complete submission in the first round.

#### *Design contests in practice*

In the period from 2013 to August 2016, the Steunpunt at Architectuur Lokaal registered 197 design contests. 50 of the organisers were subject to mandatory public procurement (27%). Just 19 contests (10%) were open across Europe; and 10 contests from private clients were invitation-only. Contests in the Netherlands are no longer organised for large, prestigious building projects, and the 'French contest' procedure is not used. Contests on the basis of drawing lots or portfolios are also absent. 140 (75%) of the remaining 158 contests concern national public procedures; they are increasingly organised according to an Open Call Based on a Vision, while use of traditional contest procedures has become increasingly undesirable.



**Graph 2. Clients behind design contests in the period 2006-2015.**

**Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM**

60 of the contests (31%) concern new buildings or extensions; 19 (10%) concern redevelopment and renovation. 108 contests (58%) concern neither of these. In the case of 23 contests, the project involved housing, site development or area development (12%), in 48 contests it concerned public space (26%), in 59 contests it involved art and culture, traffic and transport, and in addition some projects concerned government accommodation and offices etc. (32%). The remaining 57 contests (30%) concerned other types of projects. Contests that can be categorised as 'other' and do not involve new buildings or re-designation but mostly focus on issues in the context of pop-up developments, start-ups, food, future visions, flexibility, smart cities etc.

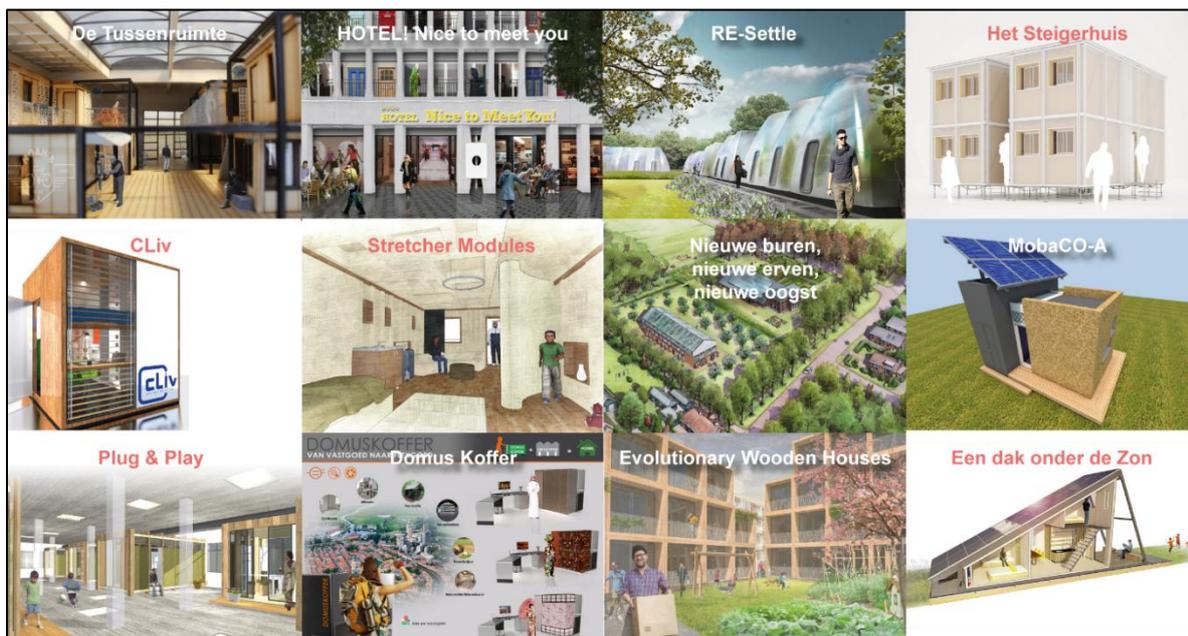
It is notable that interest in Open Calls based on visions is now strong among clients, financiers and architects. In such contests in practice more architects take part and more do so repeatedly;

even though the number of participants increases all the time and the chance of winning declines as a result - it is providing an alternative to the traditional contest. This confirms the assumption that the format is now recognised and the procedure meets a need: thereby providing young designers with greater opportunities to access the market. Evidently from the uptake this is also offering a viably efficient alternative to the traditional practice of asking participants to draw up complete designs for no fee.

A 'vision' contest is divided into two rounds, the first of which is anonymous, so that designers can participate no matter what their level of experience. After an information meeting at the start of the contest, participants in the first round are invited to come up with a concise vision of the project with reference images. So they are not asked to come up with a fully elaborated design for no fee. Participation in multidisciplinary teams is recommended; collaboration between architects and installation engineers, structural engineers, artists, financing, manufacturers, philosophers, health-care specialists view assignments and opportunities differently to institutional clients, who still often view architecture as nothing more than pretty buildings. Sometimes, in the first round the site for the project may not even have been decided upon. Taken together, the visions offer a wonderful source of information for organisers and financiers, giving them insight into the range of directions and the amount of knowledge concerning a particular question. Chief Government architect Floris Alkemade: "The rules of the game change continually in a climate of changing challenges and social renewal. A focus on conceptualisation therefore offers an outcome." (Architectuur Lokaal, 2016-2). Five visions are usually selected by anonymous jury selection for elaboration in the second round, which often starts with an information meeting on site (which has been decided by then) and a design fee is paid for this stage. The procedure is aimed at offering the winning designer a concrete commission to realise the project. The first winning schemes selected by this procedure are now under construction; they were designed by (young) architects who would not have been given a chance through tender procedures.

### Three examples

#### **A Home Away From Home 2016**



**Fig 3. A Home away from home, twelve visions selected for the second round**

In partnership with the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), the Chief Government Architect organised a design contest entitled *A Home Away From Home* in 2016. This design contest was organised as an Open Call procedure Based on a Vision. For the first round of this contest, which called for innovative solutions for the accommodation of asylum seekers, 366 designers submitted an outline vision. The contest was split into two categories: one for professionals (78% of the submissions) and one for students (22%). In the second round, 12 visions were selected for elaboration. Eleven of the participants received a fee of € 2,500, after which six winners each received € 10,000 in prize-money. The winning submissions were elaborated into prototypes, for which a fee will also be paid. All submissions were published digitally; sites for construction are currently being sought (COA 2016).

#### ***Kinderdijk Visitors Centre 2014***

The private foundation SWEK sought a design for a visitor centre at the entrance area to Kinderdijk, a World Heritage Site. The organiser, a private foundation, wanted a design in order to attract financiers. In the first round of the design contest based on a vision , 132 designers made submissions. Five of these were elaborated in the second round for a fee of € 5,000 each. As part of the procedure, the public were consulted and their views were taken into consideration by the jury in its assessment (SWEK 2014). The funding required was secured on the basis of the winning plan by a young architecture office. The design is now under construction and will be completed in 2017 (Architectuur Lokaal 2016-3).



***Fig. 4. World Heritage Kinderdijk, winning plan by Dorus Meurs & Michael Daane Bolier (M&DB ARCHITECTEN) & ARUP Nederland***

#### ***Prins Claus Bridge Dordrecht 2014***

The municipality of Dordrecht planned to tender for architecture services for an innovative bridge for pedestrians and bikes spanning 120 metres across the Wantij, connecting the historical town centre to the Stadswerven redevelopment area, but opted in the end for a design contest based on a vision. Some 126 designers entered the first round. In the second round, 5 selected designers from the Netherlands, Belgium and Croatia elaborated their vision for a fee of € 12,500. In this

contest the public were consulted on the proposals, and their responses were taken on board by the jury in its final verdict.

All submissions from both rounds are published on the internet (with the exception of the budget from the second round) (Municipality of Dordrecht 2014). The municipality showed courage and, in return, received a very innovative bridge typology from an architect who says that he would never have been able to design this bridge if he had to meet the requirements of a tender for architecture (Jansen 2015).

The bridge is under construction and will be completed in 2018.

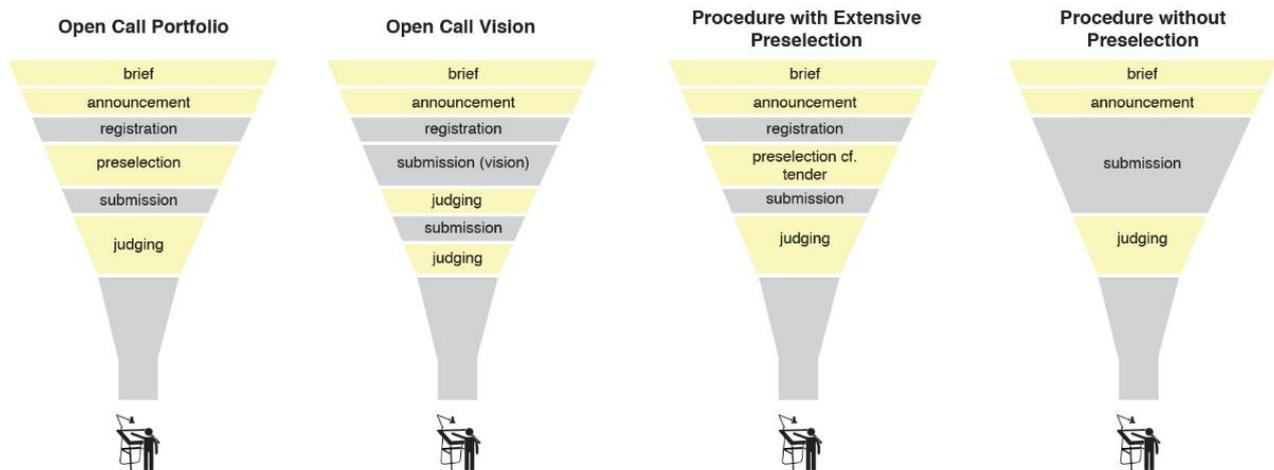


*Fig. 5 Prins Clausbrug Dordrecht, winning plan by René van Zuuk Architecten & ABT*

#### **Four types of development competition**

The Steunpunt also registers development competitions. These are competitions among project developers who buy a site from a public authority and are required to develop the designs on it at their own risk. Submissions are made in collaboration with architects. On the basis of a covenant with 16 parties (central government and professional bodies), Architectuur Lokaal published a first manual for development competitions in 2001 (Architectuur Lokaal 2001). The problems with these competitions were big: “Rarely are the conditions clearly stated in competition regulations. Rarely are good assessment criteria announced in advance, and seldom is an assessment report drawn up. And frequently, winning a contest proves no guarantee for securing the project,” according to the introduction to this book (De Reus 2001). The discontent with design contests among project developers was comparable with that among architects (Geertse 2014). The manual was revised in 2014 and has been available since then digitally under the name KOMPAS bij Ontwikkelcompetities (*Compass Development Competitions, see Fig. 1*). A development contest that follows the KOMPAS model is organised according to both a European and a national procedure.

KOMPAS bij Ontwikkelcompetities (*Compass Development Competitions*) encompasses four clearly defined competition procedures, which are broadly similar to the procedures for design contests (Fig. 6):



**Fig. 6 Structure Compass procedures Architectuur Lokaal for development competitions, from brief to winner**

### 1. Open Call Based on Portfolio

A light, non-public competition or bid procedure (procedure with preselection). After the announcement of the development project, all interested parties can apply by submitting a portfolio. On the basis of these portfolios, a selection committee chooses a limited number of participants to make a submission. The procedure can only be used for non-public procedures. A point of debate concerns which is more important: the portfolio of the developer, or the portfolio of the architect with whom the developer wishes to work. The relevance differs per project and should be agreed and articulated clearly at the outset.

### 2. Open Call Based on a Vision

A light (public or non-public) competition in two rounds. Participants submit a design directly. No preselection takes place. The first round takes the form of an ideas contest in which all participants are asked to give a concise vision of the project. The committee selects the submissions assessed to be the best anonymously. The designers of these submissions are invited to elaborate their propositions in a second round.

### 3. Procedure with Extensive Preselection

A non-public competition or bid procedure. After the announcement of the development project, interested parties can apply by submitting an application form along with all accompanying documents and information. From the applications, a selection committee chooses the desired number of participants to submit designs. This 'selection phase' is comparable to the selection phase in the normal Dutch non-public tender procedure. This procedure should be used only for large, complex development projects and cannot be used for non-public procedures.

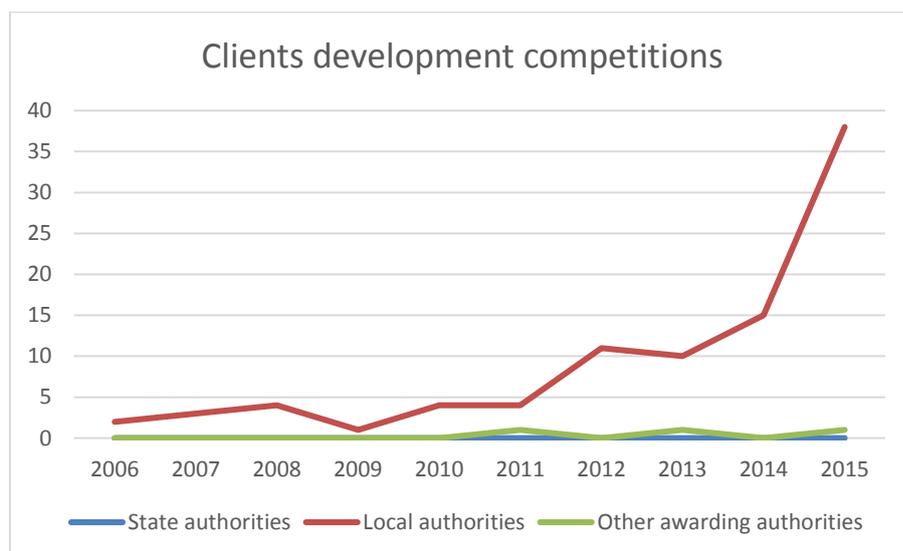
### 4. Procedure without Preselection

A public or non-public competition in which all participants submit a complete design immediately. Owing to the considerable social costs (depending on the nature and scale of what is required), this contests is less popular among both clients and developers and

architects. The procedure is suitable for non-public procedures. For public development contests, this procedure should only be considered if market consultation indicates that the number of interested market parties for the development project is limited. In all other cases, this procedure is rapidly disproportionate in the context of legislation.

### *Development contests in practice*

In the period from 2013 to August 2016, the Steunpunt at Architectuur Lokaal registered 77 development competitions that involved a complete architecture commission. Practically all organisers are obliged to put contracts out to tender (77) but it is not always easy to establish whether a development competition falls under the scope of procurement law, because land transactions and sale of property are not by definition public contracts that are subject to an obligation to tender. Because contracts that are not subject to an obligation to tender are not by definition announced on TenderNed, there is insufficient insight into the actual number of development competitions and the procedures applied in these selections. There is no other registration of such competitions in the Netherlands apart from that done by the Steunpunt. Insight into the practice is therefore limited.



**Graph 3. Clients behind development competitions in the period 2006-2015.**

**Source: Database Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden / SESAM**

27 competitions were organised according to a European public (18) or non-public (9) procedure (35%); 46 competitions were organised according to a national public (33) or non-public (13) procedure (60%); the 4 remaining competitions concerned an invitation-only procedure. 95% of the competitions were organised by municipalities, while the remaining procedures were organised by the central government or a developer. The most commonly applied procedure was the procedure without preselection, involving a full design submission. Almost all competitions, both public and non-public, were organised according to the procedure without preselection. Those undertaken under an Open Call Based on a Vision appear relatively unknown among development competitions.

55 of the competitions (71%) concerned new buildings; 17 (22%) concerned the redevelopment of vacant property such as former town halls. The projects in 61 competitions involved housing, site

development or area development (79%); the remaining 21% concerned various schemes for vacant structures.

#### *Two examples*

##### ***Development of the Lommerrijk site on Bergse Plas Rotterdam 2014***

The first development contest to follow the model of the Open Call based on a Vision was organised in 2014 by a private firm called Exploitatiemaatschappij Lommerrijk. The contest sought a viable development strategy for the redevelopment of the Lommerrijk site on Bergse Plas in Rotterdam. Support among all parties involved was an important principle because previous efforts to get the project going had run aground. In the first round, some 61 visions were submitted by teams of designers and with developers. All submissions were made under the responsibility of architecture offices. Four visions were selected for elaboration in the second round, and these teams were awarded a total of € 10,000 in prize-money. The elaborated designs were publically exhibited, surrounding residents have been consulted and are being fully engaged in progressing the implementation of the winning scheme. (Exploitatiemaatschappij Lommerrijk 2014).



***Fig. 7. Redevelopment Lommerrijk, winning plan by Laurens de Boer (ODC Architecture), Donald Marskamp (studio MARS), Harry van der Weijer (Maatwerk in bouwadvies) & Marit Janse (Marit Janse Landschapsarchitectuur)***

##### ***Apartments for families with children in the city of Rotterdam 2016***

The second example also comes from Rotterdam and was organised by the municipality. Rotterdam is the only Dutch municipality that employs a protocol for architect selections, and its procurement policy is directly linked to its architectural policy (Rotterdam 2014; Geertse 2014). Rotterdam is also the first Dutch municipality to directly experiment with a development competition in the form of the Open Call based on a Vision. In March 2016 the municipality called for visions that might better address the need for apartments for families with children, which is an uncommon typology in the Netherlands. The winner will be given a chance to realise the winning scheme on a central site located beside the River Maas. In the first round, a total of 149 teams of architects, construction

firms, property developers and groups of private individuals anonymously submitted a concise vision with reference images; no designs were required.

The jury selected five anonymous submissions. In this procedure it is notable that four of the five selected submissions were from architects who sought collaboration with a development party that could guarantee the purchase of the site. The reverse is the case with the 'traditional', fifth submission. The results of the second round are awaited and expected in autumn 2016 (Municipality of Rotterdam 2015).

### **Different national cultures**

The differences in competition cultures among European countries are big. A number of countries have a legally established competition system (among them Germany, Switzerland and France), and in Flanders the Flemish Government Architect plays a key role in local competitions. The underlying differences in the various national building practices are insufficiently discussed, even though they can be very decisive. The Netherlands does not offer professional protection of function for architects, only protection of title, whereas professional protection of function exists in Belgium. It is also an option whether or not there is a requirement for the qualifications of an architect to be sought for making an architectural tender submission under EU requirements. A number of Dutch competitions have therefore been open to 'everybody' as protection by reference to the qualification were not specified.

A recent highly successful example of this was the *Tiny Housing* public development competition in Almere. The competition was organised according to an open procedure without preselection or a requirement that the submission be made by a qualified registered architect. The municipality is now negotiating with the 25 winners (from 245 submissions) about reserving sites for building the winning schemes at the BouwEXPO 2016-2017. 21 winners are professional architects or architecture students; 4 of them are non-professionals.

In countries such as the United Kingdom, in Flanders, and also outside Europe, there is a search for competition forms appropriate to our times. Malcolm Reading Consultants, one of the leading independent organisers of architectural competitions in the UK, responsible for the Finnish Guggenheim Competition and the American Van Alen Institute, and organiser of the New Rebuild By Design competition, have also approached Architectuur Lokaal to jointly explore how competition culture can improve (Winston 2013).

Since 2009 in Britain, members of the RIBA with their institute had been working intensely on European Procurement reform. As a result *Project Compass CIC* - a new, independent, non-commercial community interest company - was founded by a group of members. To allow open data sharing it has been specifically designed to twin with the Steunpunt at Architectuur Lokaal and adopts many similar features of the Steunpunt system. It provides a digital platform that can be understood equally in both nations with both parties aligning the construction data they collate so as to be better able to understand, evaluate and analyse the market. The British market did not have an independent national digital platform for the construction sector, nor a central contact point for new tender announcements until Project Compass implemented their digital platform at national level.

This joint initiative resulted in the establishment of The Fulcrum in March 2015 under a formal partnership agreement. This is the independent, non-commercial European portal for architectural tenders and contests. The Fulcrum intends to work towards lowering entry barriers to public contracts, increasing the efficiency, proportionality and transparency of architectural public

procurement, promulgating best and innovative practice, and stimulating cross-border trade. It aims to promote a healthy European building culture. The Fulcrum focuses on tenders and contests in the Netherlands and the UK.

Since its establishment in March 2015, both Dutch and British architectural contests have been accessible to all interested parties through this digital portal, and collaboration among designers in both countries has become more interesting. In the first 18 months the website attracted 39,000 visitors, who visited the site over 90,000 times (theFulcrum 2016). Other countries can join the Fulcrum initiative, provided that they are represented by an independent, non-commercial legal entity (theFulcrum 2015).

Discussions about further collaboration at European level took place in, among other places, Rome, Brussels and London, and with interested organisations from the Czech Republic, Scotland, Finland, Wallonia, Flanders, Lithuania, Estonia, Ireland, Austria and Switzerland. Interested centred on the data generated, the guidance available and the insights offered into the various ways of working within the European countries, and especially the transparency, simplification and accessibility of the commissions.

## **Conclusion**

Architects in the Netherlands often believe that a better competition culture for architecture exists elsewhere, in other countries, particularly in countries where architectural contests may be legally embedded at national level (see, for example, Van de Wetering, 2016). Among Dutch architects the Flemish Open Call, in which the team from the Flemish Government Architect carries out the preselection on behalf of municipalities, has also been popular for a while. But both ways of working are unthinkable in the Dutch situation. A legal contest culture and the delegation of selection procedures for local projects to a government advisor, are incompatible with the advancing decentralisation policy of the Dutch government.

On top of this, the Dutch central government has broadened its architecture policy to encompass the wider creative industries, and the policy stresses entrepreneurship. Designers, architects included, are expected to profile themselves as cultural entrepreneurs and project themselves internationally. This has led to some broad discussions. Recently, a young female singer and a young female writer argued in NRC, a national daily newspaper, that entrepreneurship was an excellent way for artists to flourish, since it forces them to look critically at their own work and ask what value does it add (Derwort & Kloek 2016). In architecture we see the same view, especially among younger designers. Numerous mostly younger architects now participate in Open Calls Based on Visions for both design and property development. They do not shy away from new financing possibilities and are sometimes even willing to invest in a development, or to assume the role of developer in a collaborative venture. Complaints about the staging of the contests in two rounds are negligible, which is probably down to the scope offered for visions and the limited effort - and hence costs - required in the first round.

It is probably premature to talk about a genuine new contest culture in the Netherlands, certainly in comparison with other European countries. But irrespective of the differing building cultures, the pragmatic Dutch-British collaboration is a cause for hope in efforts to eliminate the competition 'mess'.

## References

- Architectuur Lokaal (2001), *Kompas bij Ontwikkelingscompetities, Handleiding en voorbeeldmodellen bij het uitschrijven van ontwikkelingscompetities*, Amsterdam 16 May 2001.
- Architectuur Lokaal (2014), *Trends. Aanbesteden van architectuuroopdrachten in Nederland 2009-2013*, 3 april 2014 p.5).
- Architectuur Lokaal (2016-1), *Decentrale overheden vertellen zich aan DBFMO contracten*, press release Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden 18 January 2016.
- Architectuur Lokaal (2016-2), *Moed op de agenda van Europ(l)an*, Amsterdam 8 February 2016.
- Architectuur Lokaal (2016-3), *Winnend prijsvraagontwerp Kinderdijk wordt uitgevoerd*, press release 23 March 2016.
- Atelier Chief Government Architect with Architectuur Lokaal (2015), *Bouwmeestersdebat*, Amsterdam 11 December 2016.
- Blankena, F., *Aanbesteden verstrikt geraakt in de procedures*, iBestuur online, 19 January 2016.
- Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis: (CPB) (2016), *Kansrijk innovatiebeleid*, Boek 20, The Hague, 25 February 2016.
- Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) (2016) with Chief Government Architect, *A home Away from Home*, retrieved 21 August from [www.ahomeawayfromhome.nl](http://www.ahomeawayfromhome.nl)
- Chief Government Architect (2016), *De Agenda van de Rijksbouwmeester*, The Hague 21 April 2016.
- Chief Government Architect Flanders (2005). *De Open Oproep, een selectieprocedure voor ontwerpers van publieke opdrachten*, [www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/nl/instrumenten/open-oproep](http://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/nl/instrumenten/open-oproep), retrieved 21 August 2016.
- Cobouw (2015), *Architecten moeten slimmer samenwerken*, 28 October 2015.
- Cobouw (2016-1), *Architecten boycotten Europese aanbestedingen*, 22 August 2016.
- Cobouw (2016-2), *Aanbestedingen kosten architecten miljoenen*, 22 August 2016.
- College van Rijksadviseurs (2013), *De techniek van het verbinden. Agenda 2012-2013. Werkprogramma 2013*, The Hague, December 2012, p. 19.
- Coolen, M., *Den Haag zoals het was, Het Vredespaleis*, The Hague, 11 May 2013.

Council of State (2016), *Aanbestedingswet 2012, geldend van 01-07-2016 t/m heden, 1 April 2013*, revisited 1 July 2016, <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0032203/2016-07-01>

De Reus, C. de, *Speech to mark the signing of the Covenant on Design Contests 2001-2004*, The Dutch Association of Property Development Companies (NEPROM), The Hague 16 May 2001.

Derwort, P. & Kloek M. (2016), *Ondernemende kunstenaar moet leren niet meer in potjes te denken*, NRC Handelsblad, 18 August 2016, p. 16-17.

European Europe (2015), retrieved 19 August 2015 from <http://www.european-europe.eu/> and the website of the participating countries, published 19 August 2015. The *European Europe* website was taken as the guideline. The data from the various websites does not correspond consistently; the accuracy of the figures cannot be controlled.

Exploitatiemaatschappij Lommerrijk, *Open Oproep herontwikkeling Lommerrijk*, Rotterdam, 12 March 2014, retrieved 23 August 2016 from <http://arch-lokaal.nl/openoproepherontwikkelinglommerrijk/>

TheFulcrum.eu (2015), *TheFulcrum.eu to improve & make more transparent public procurement for architecture*, press release 16 March 2015 <http://arch-lokaal.nl/thefulcrum-eu-improve-make-transparent-public-procurement-architecture/>

The Fulcrum.eu (2016), numbers retrieved 19 August 2016 from Google Analytics.

Geertse, M. (2015), *Towards a professional commissioning practice, An assessment of recent public design competition culture in the Netherlands*, Architectuur Lokaal / ICC 2014. This paper contains an extensive explanation of the status and working method of the Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden of Architectuur Lokaal.

Jansen, C. (2015), *Brief van de dag, Nieuwe kansen voor jonge architecten*, De Volkskrant, 24 July 2015.

Jansen, C. (2015-2), *Gevestigde architectenbureaus blijven achter bij aanbestedingen*, Cobouw, 28 October 2015.

Jansen, C. & Van 't Klooster, I. (2015), *Europplan, Haalbaarheidsonderzoek voortzetting prijsvraag European NL vanaf 2016* (Feasibility study of the continuation of the European NL competition from 2016 on), Architectuur Lokaal, Amsterdam 12 November 2015 (unpublished).

Koenen, I. (2016), *Controle op aanbestedingsregels rigide en doorgeslagen*, Cobouw 43, 3 maart 2016 p. 3.

*KOMPAS bij Prijsvragen* (2013), Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden, Architectuur Lokaal, 2012, revisited August 2016), <http://www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl/kompas/>

*KOMPAS Ontwikkelcompetities* (2014), Steunpunt Architectuuroopdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden, Architectuur Lokaal (2014, revisited August 2016), <http://www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl/kompas/>

Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation & Ministry of Defense (2012). *Werken aan Ontwerpkracht. Actieagenda Architectuur en Ruimtelijk Ontwerp 2013-2016*. The Hague: Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation & Ministry of Defense.

Municipality of Dordrecht (2014), *Open Oproep Prins Clausbrug Dordrecht*, 3 December 2014. Retrieved 23 August from <http://arch-lokaal.nl/open-oproep-werelderfgoed-kinderdijk/>

Municipality of Rotterdam (2014), *Protocol ontwerperselecties*, Rotterdam 2014.

Municipality of Rotterdam (2015), *Open Oproep Gezinsappartementen*, Rotterdam, 30 October 2015. Retrieved 23 August from <http://arch-lokaal.nl/open-oproep-gezinsappartementen/>

Municipality of The Hague (2013). *Open Oproep Den Haag: bouwen op elkaar, gestapeld kleinschalig opdrachtgeverschap*. The Hague: Municipality of The Hague. Retrieved 19 August 2016 from [www.arch-lokaal.nl](http://www.arch-lokaal.nl)

Patijn, W. (2000). *Tips van de Rijksbouwmeester bij de selectie van architecten in het kader van de Europese aanbesteding*. Uitgeverij 010, Rotterdam

PIANOO (2016), *Aan de slag met de nieuwe aanbestedingswet 2012*, press release 27 June 2016, [www.pianoo.nl/actueel](http://www.pianoo.nl/actueel)

Prins, M. en Van Doorn, A. (2015), *KOMPASwijzer*, Delft University of Technology with Architectuur Lokaal,, December 2015. Retrieved 19 August 2016 from <http://www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl/kompas/>

PIANOO (2016), *Aan de slag met de nieuwe aanbestedingswet 2012*, Press release 27 June 2016, [www.pianoo.nl/actueel](http://www.pianoo.nl/actueel)

Schrijfgroep Gids Proportionaliteit (2016), *Gids Proportionaliteit 1e herziening april 2016*, The Hague, 15 January 2013.

SESAM (2012), online tool developed by Architectuur Lokaal (Steunpunt Architectuuropdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden) to interrogate its database, containing all publicly published tender procedures and contests for architectural design. Retrieved 19 August 2016 from [www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl/sesam/](http://www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl/sesam/)

Steunpunt Architectuuropdrachten & Ontwerpwedstrijden, Architectuur Lokaal (1997), data retrieved August 2016 from [www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl](http://www.ontwerpwedstrijden.nl). The Steunpunt focuses on what it calls 'architectural commissions'. It defines 'architectural commission' as a commission or contract, including 'a full design component'. An architectural commission must include the production of a design, not just the detailing or engineering of an available design (see Geertse, 2014).

Van Campen, J. & Hendrikse, M. (1997). *KOMPAS. Handleiding en voorbeeldmodellen bij het uitschrijven van prijsvragen en meervoudige opdrachten op het gebied van architectuur, stedenbouw en landschapsarchitectuur*. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010 / Architectuur Lokaal.

Van Noort, W. (2016), *Meer vernieuwing? Schrijf prijsvragen uit*, NRC, 26 February 2016.

Van de Wetering, H. (2016), *Openheid en ruimdenkendheid: de Zwitserse prijsvraagcultuur als inspiratiebron*, ArchiNed, 15 April 2016.

Winston, A. (2013). *Will Compass lead the way to work? Anna Winston discovers how a website from Holland could change the face of procurement in the UK*. Building Design, 11 November 2013. Retrieved 17 December 2013 from [www.bdonline.co.uk](http://www.bdonline.co.uk).