

# Project owners in creating and deciding on project concepts in practice

Case study research about creating and deciding on project concepts in the front-end phase of projects to accommodate organisations



# Content

## Why & How

Introduction and relevance



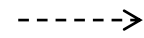
Conceptual model



Research questions



Research method



## What

Literature study



Case studies

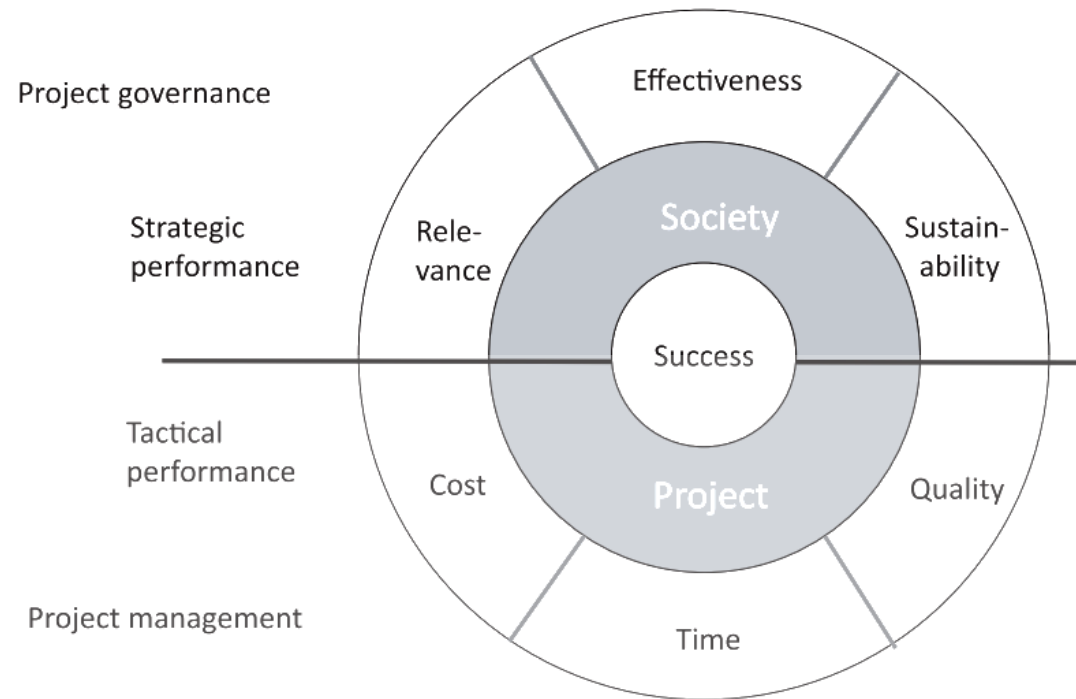


Discussion of findings

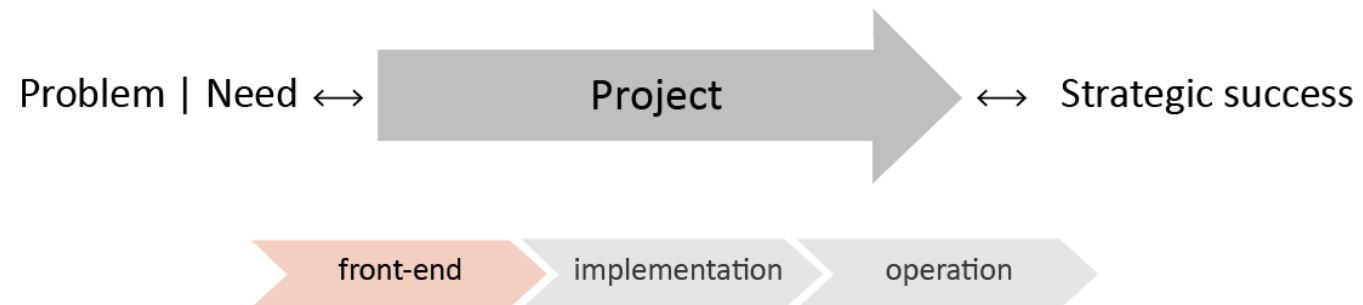
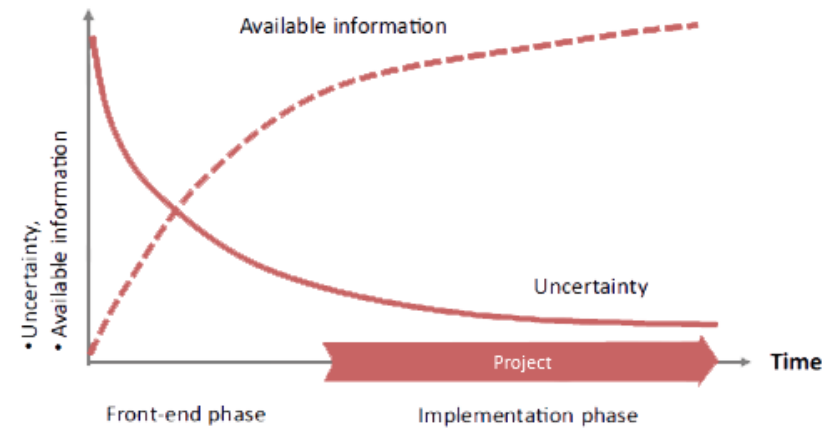
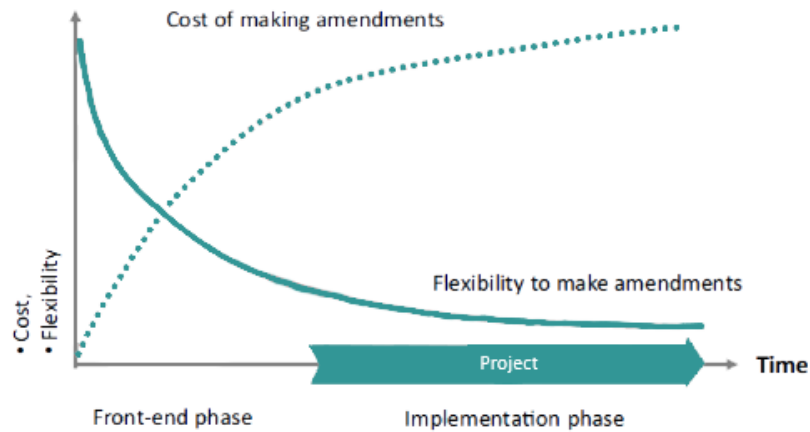


Conclusions & Recommendations

# Project success

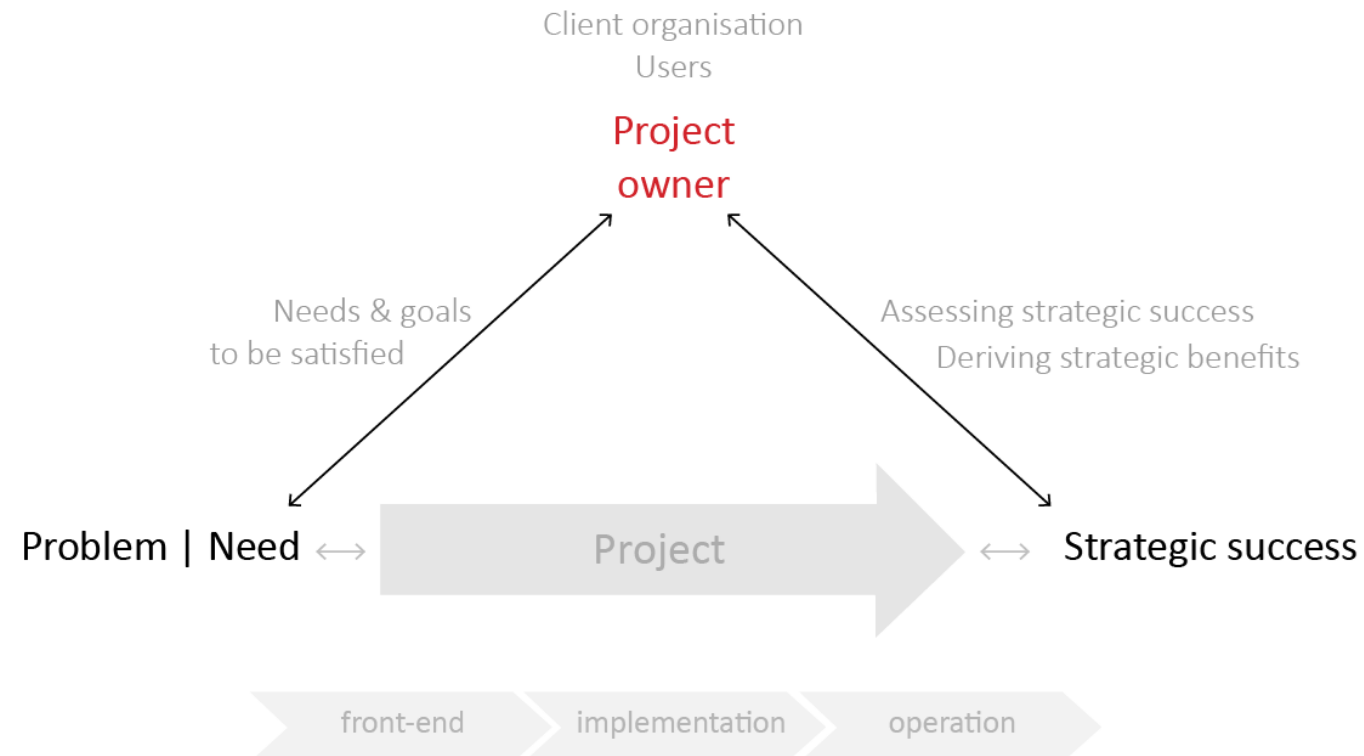


# Front-end phase



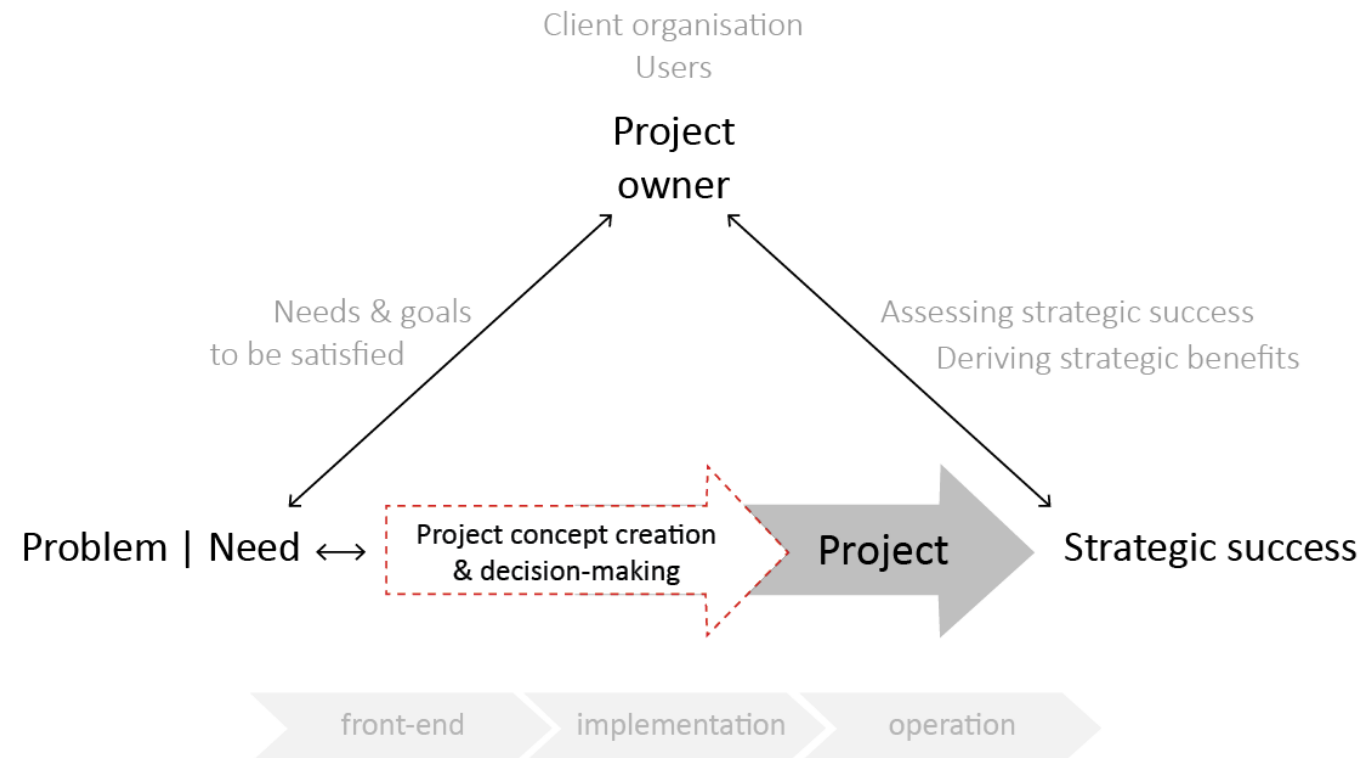
# The project owner

“The person who on behalf of the base [client/owner] organisation is responsible for the project”  
(Andersen, 2012, p. 68).



# Project concepts

The conceptual solution that is chosen to satisfy the need of the client/owner organisation and thus solve their problem (Samset, 2010).



# Conceptual model



# Research aim

Explore the project concept creation and decision-making process to **identify critical aspects for project owners to focus on** in creating and deciding on project concepts in practice for projects related to accommodating organisations (research scope).



## Main research question

What are **critical aspects for project owners to focus on** in creating and deciding on project concepts in practice during the front-end phase of projects related to accommodating an organisation?



# Research sub questions

## *Sub question 1*

*What is studied on the **project owner** in the project **front-end** and in relation to **strategy alignment**?*

## *Sub question 2*

*What does the **process** of creating and deciding on project concepts in response to triggers look like in practice?*

## *Sub question 3*

*Who is **involved** in creating and deciding on project concepts in practice?*

## *Sub question 4*

*How is the **alignment with the owner's strategies and users' needs** incorporated in creating and deciding on project concepts?*

# Research method



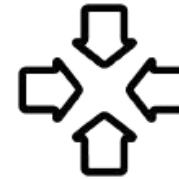
Literature study

SQ 1



Case studies

SQ 2-4



Synthesis

Main RQ



# Literature study



Literature study



Case studies



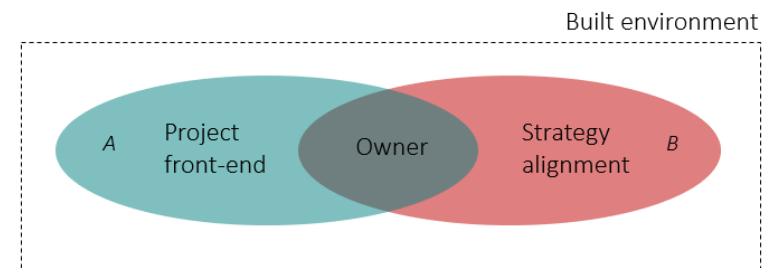
Synthesis



Systematic literature search

Project studies & real estate studies

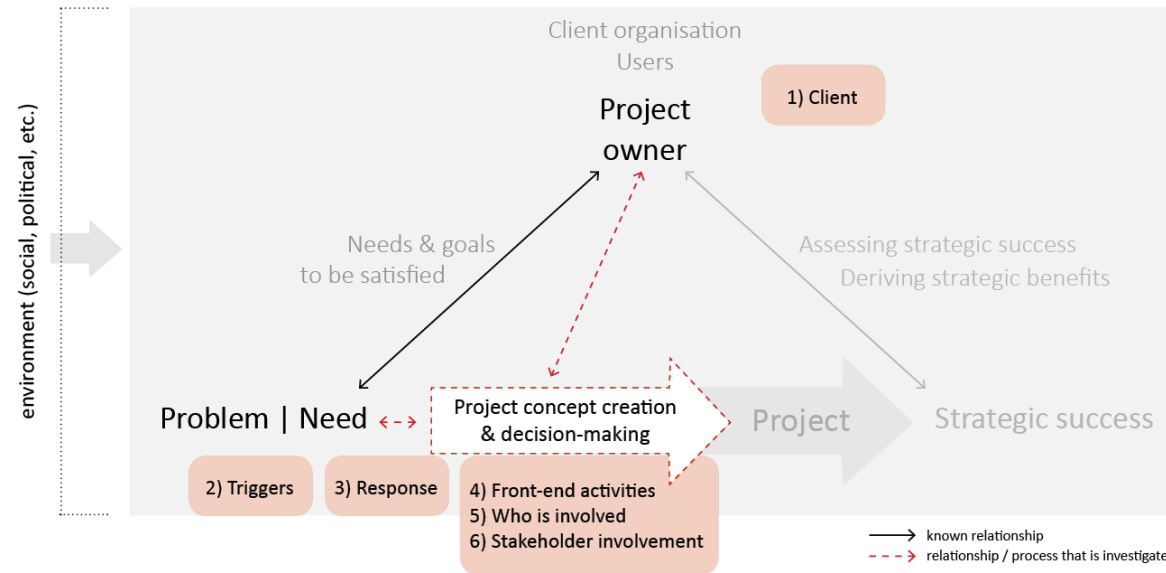
Definitions & Theoretical framework



# Definitions

- **Project owner**  
The person(s) who **is/are responsible for the project within the client/owner organisation** and is/are to ensure that the project's objectives are met and ambitions are realised.
- **The front-end phase**  
The phase **from the definition of the need of the client/owner organisation** and the initial visualisation (idea creation) of project concepts **until the final decision is made to do the project**, and the project moves into the design phase.
- **Project concept**  
The chosen project concept is the initial idea which sets the project in motion: **the conceptual solution chosen to satisfy the need of the client/owner organisation** or solve their problem associated with accommodating their organisation (scope of this research).

# Theoretical framework

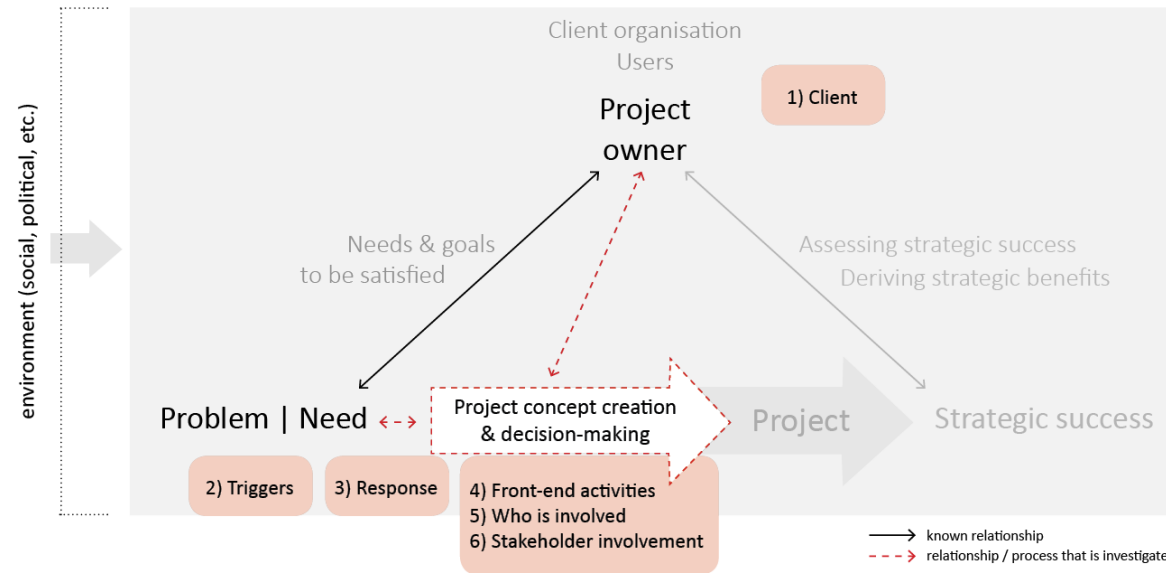


<b>1) Client</b>
Primary/secondary
Experienced/novice
Complexity
<b>2) Triggers</b>
Internal/external
Existing/predicted need
CRE strategy
<b>3) Response</b>
Proactive/reactive

<b>4) Front-end activities</b>
<b>Strategic analysis/definition and decision-making</b>
Setting scope, aims & ambitions
Analysing context & risks
Evaluating & decision-making
<b>Operational and preparatory</b>
Define the project team
Estimate costs and benefits
Develop project brief
Prepare for design and execution (procurement)
<b>Aligning</b>
Strategy alignment
Stakeholder management

<b>5) Who is involved</b>
Internal/external
Project owner, users, decision-makers, front-end planning team
<b>6) Stakeholder involvement (alignment strategies)</b>
Control-oriented
Involvement-oriented
- Coordination (inform)
- Communication (participate)
- Decision-making (decision-making)

# Theoretical framework

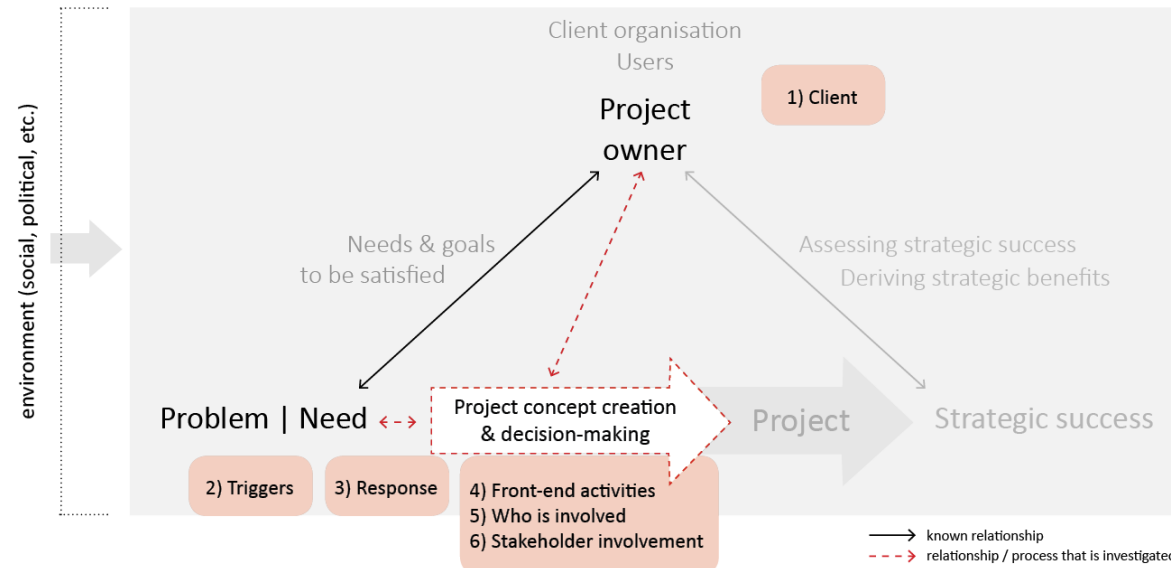


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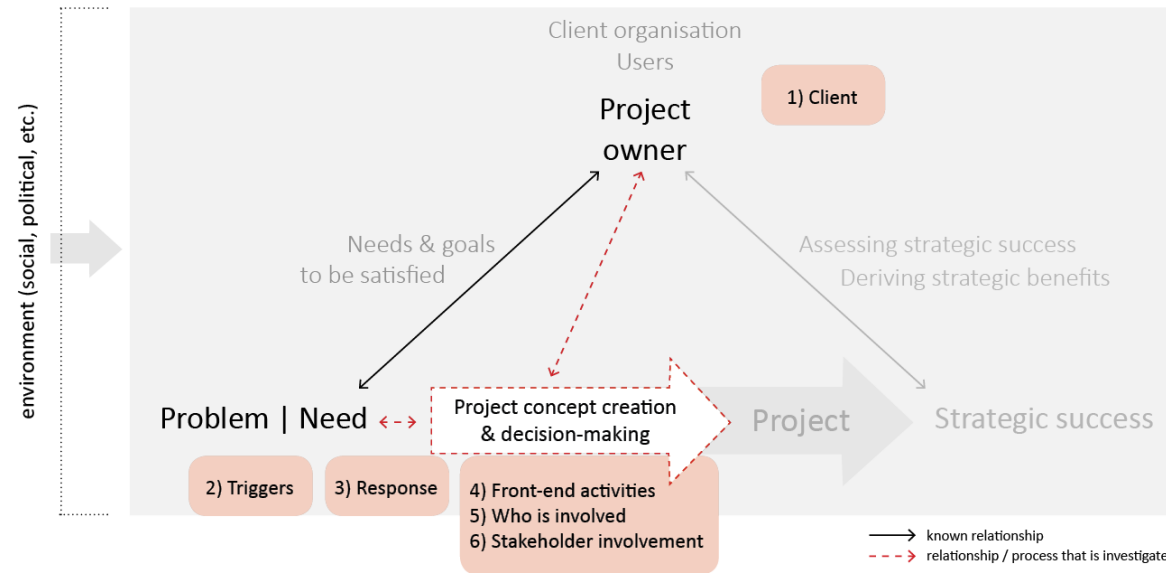
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# Theoretical framework



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<p>2) Triggers</p> <p>Internal/external</p> <p>Existing/predicted n</p> <p>CRE strategy</p>	<p><b>Strategic analysis/definition and decision-making</b></p>	<p>holder involvement</p> <p>ment strategies)</p>
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	<p>Analysing context &amp; risks</p>	<p>on (inform)</p>
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  - Decision-making (decision-making)



# Case studies



# Client organisations & project owners

## 1) Royal FloraHolland (RFH)      The reorganisation of the housing of the office employees

- Flower auction
- 3 office locations in NL (2014)  
Naaldwijk, Rijnsburg & Aalsmeer
- Monopolist
- Flowers & Plants (physical products)
- Up to date

## 2) Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV)      The resettlement of 180 Amsterdam based employees

- Engineering and project management consultancy
- 12 office locations in NL (2015)
- Competitive market
- Consultancy (knowledge)
- Showcase / frontrunner

# Process & triggers

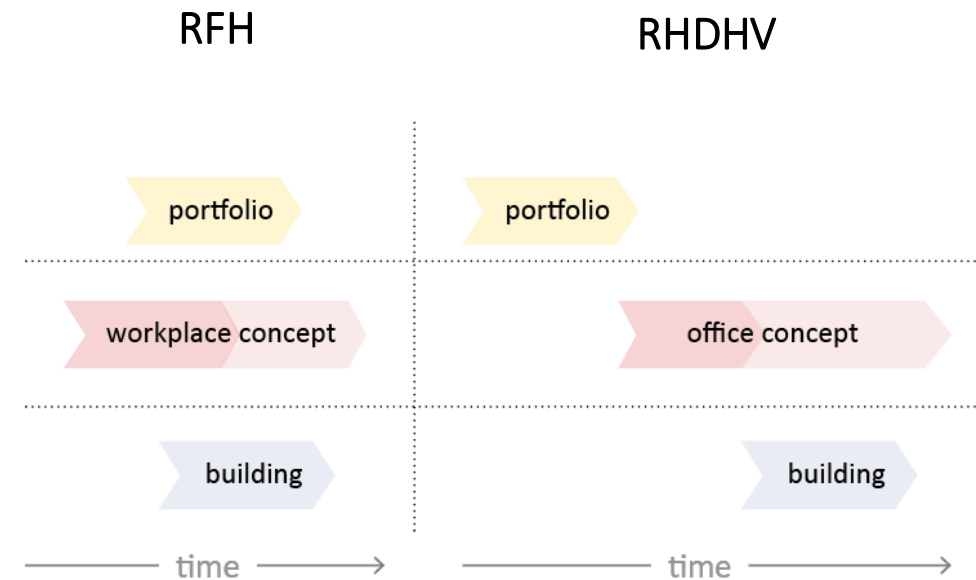
- Triggers
- Response to triggers

Portfolio (of locations) level project concepts

Office/Workplace project concepts

Building/location project concepts

- Consecutively/parallel
  - Decision making
  - Order



# Project concepts

## 1) Royal FloraHolland (RFH)      The reorganisation of the housing of the office employees

workplace/office

Implementing the workplace concept SamenWerken

portfolio (of locations)

in the existing locations Naaldwijk & Aalsmeer

building/locations

through refurbishing the Naaldwijk office and integrating Zuidzicht (Aalsmeer) in an extension.

## 2) Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV)      The resettlement of 180 Amsterdam based employees

building/locations

Transforming an old garage

portfolio (of locations)

in Amsterdam

workplace/office

into a shared office space

# Front-end activities

## portfolio (of locations)

- User's needs (travel time) and strategic goals (strategy alignment)
- History & Core business

## workplace/office

- Current business operations > ambitions > project brief
- Stakeholder management & strategy alignment

## building/locations

- Requirements & ambitions
- Logical thinking, availability
- Aligned with users' needs and strategic goals (strategy alignment)

*“we believe that we should organise our office environment close to our customers, and that customer is located on the auction site”*

(Manager RE&L RHF, 2020).

# Front-end activities

portfolio (of locations)

- User's needs (travel time) and strategic goals (strategy alignment)
- History & Core business

workplace/office

- Current business operations > ambitions > project brief
- Stakeholder management & strategy alignment

building/locations

- Requirements & ambitions
- Logical thinking, availability
- Aligned with users' needs and strategic goals (strategy alignment)

*“Then we actually started looking at what is RHDHV’s mission: Enhancing Society Together.*

*What does it stand for, what is society in Amsterdam and who is Together?*

*And then we really zoomed in on: what is happening in Amsterdam in terms of business, and what does that look like in the future, and how can you actually use that ”*

(Business Developer RHDHV, 2020).

# Front-end activities

portfolio (of locations)

- User's needs (travel time) and strategic goals (strategy alignment)
- History & Core business

workplace/office

- Current business operations > ambitions > project brief
- Stakeholder management & strategy alignment

building/locations

- Requirements & ambitions
- Logical thinking, availability
- Decision-making based on strategy alignment

*“Because if you say ‘I am for solving the challenge in the city’, as we were saying as RHDHV back then, are you going to house yourself on the South-axis, or are you going to be located at those locations where you can make that difference”*

(Business Developer RHDHV, 2020).

# Who is involved

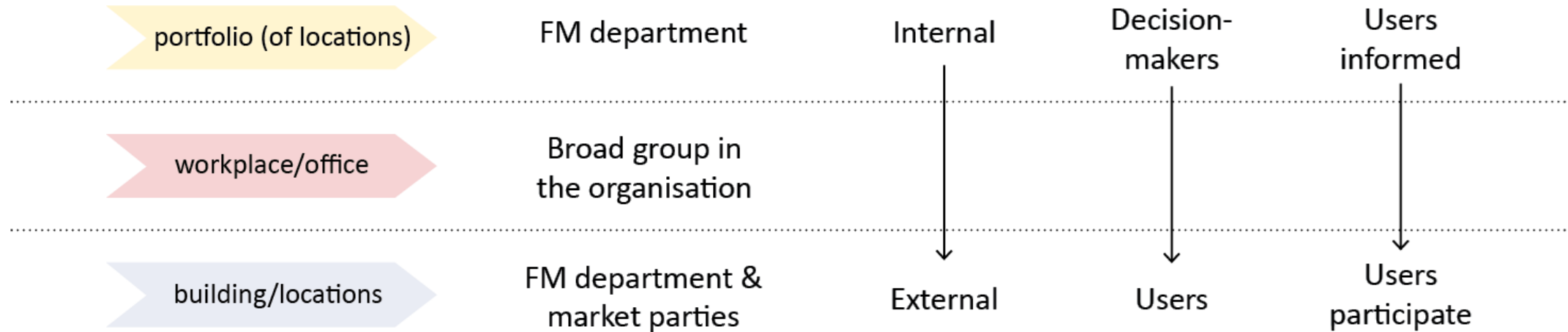


*“Involving the market parties, certainly, that has been really crucial.  
We could never have achieved this as a consultant”*

(Copper8 RHDHV, 2020).



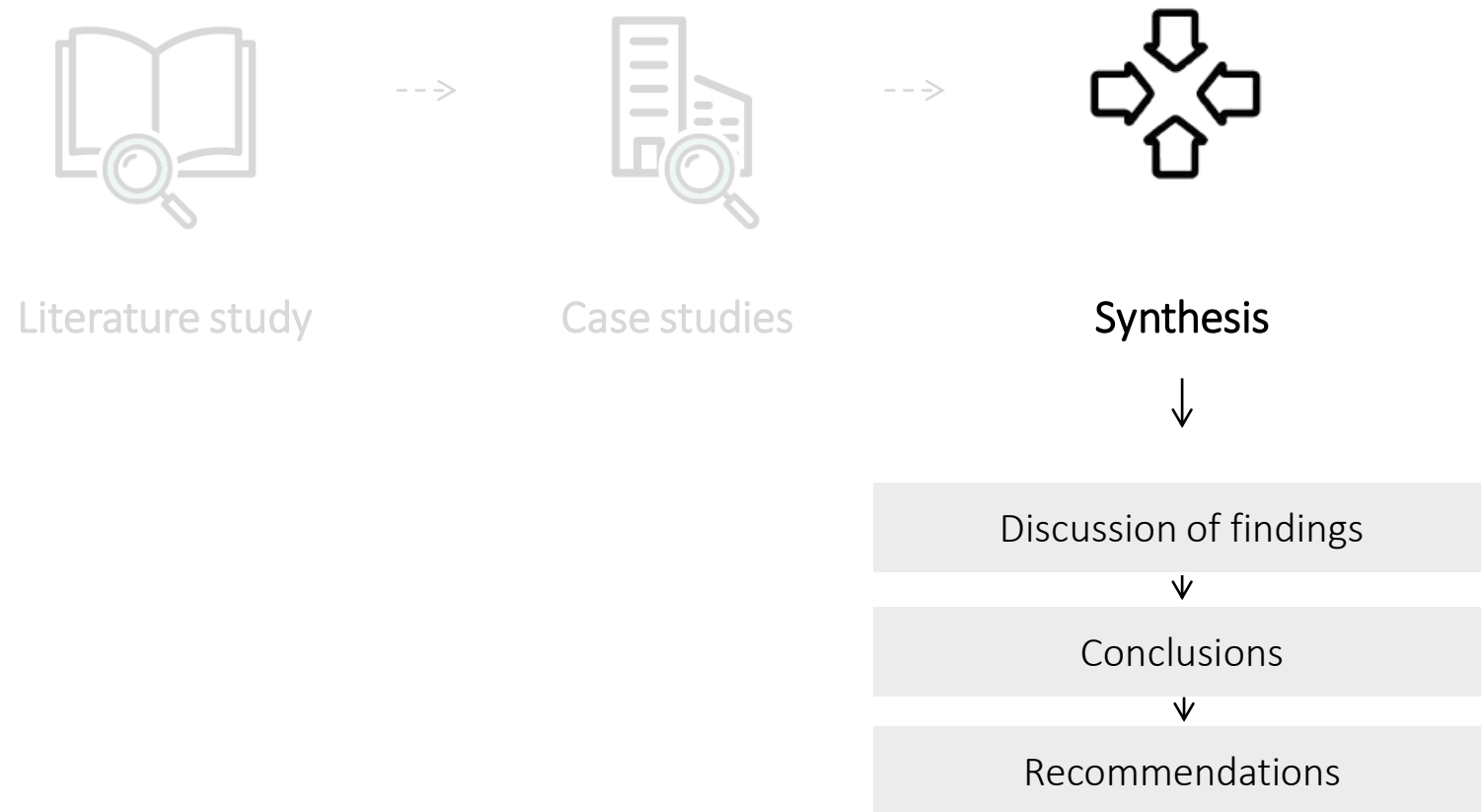
# Stakeholder involvement



*We ... decided to present the locations to 20 representatives of the Amsterdam office and see how they would respond. 18 out of 20 turned out to be enthusiastic about the garage”*

(Director Procurement & FM RHDHV, in Facts, 2018, pp. 1-2).

# Synthesis



# Discussion of findings

## Project owners

Communication

Creating the 'feeling of ownership'

## Procurement

## Owner project capabilities

(Winch & Leiringer, 2016)

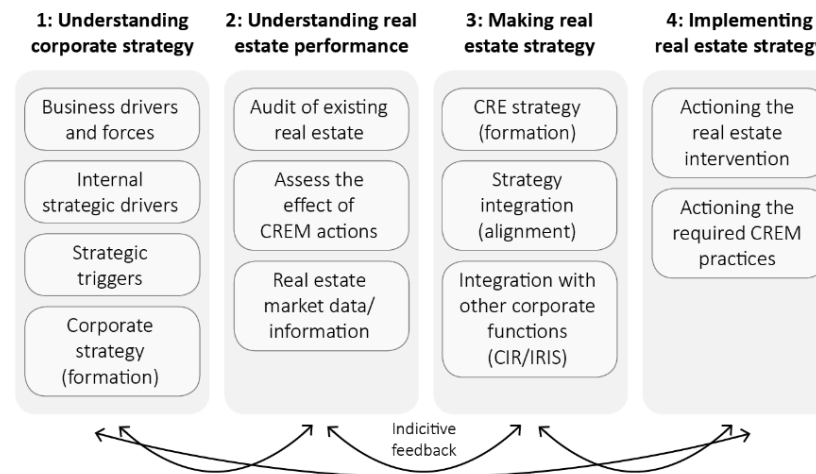
# Theoretical perspective

Project concept levels

Alignment

Building blocks of CRE alignment

Long term perspective



# Conclusions – Sub research questions

## *Sub question2*

*What does the **process** of creating and deciding on project concepts in response to triggers look like in practice?*

In different levels

consecutively or in parallel

covering most of the front-end

Continues strategy alignment process where stakeholder management is key

# Conclusions – Sub research questions

## *Sub question 3*

*Who is involved in creating and deciding on project concepts in practice?*

The more elaboration is required, the more external parties are involved  
& broader representation of internal stakeholders

# Conclusions – Sub research questions

## *Sub question 4*

*How is the alignment with the owner's strategies and users' needs incorporated in creating and deciding on project concepts?*

Continues, iterative

Generally more control-oriented  
(users: informed, management/executive board: decision making)

# Conclusions – Main research question

What are **critical aspects for project owners to focus on** in creating and deciding on project concepts in practice during the front-end phase of projects related to accommodating an organisation?

Creating and maintaining urgency & support for the project (concept)

1

Understanding the hierarchy, culture and history of the client organisation

2

Strategy alignment requires project owners to be translational and communicative

3

Active stakeholder management/involvement:  
Who to involve, how and when



# Recommendations for practice

Plan & evaluate

Zoom in/zoom out and experiment

As a consultant

Get to know the client organisation

Project owner

*“In the front-end phase, you get closer to organisations. You have to understand much better what the organisation needs” (Manager RE&L RFH, 2020).*

# Recommendations for further research

Consequences

More cases / ongoing case

Project studies & Real estate studies

Long term perspective > strategic success

