

FINAL REPORT

International Tourism in Amstelland



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Landscape

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Executive Summary

The main purpose of this research is to increase the knowledge on the ways Amstelland is currently attractive for tourists and how its potential for attracting tourists can be increased. We have performed a literature review and field work consisting of semi-structured interviews and participatory observation in Amstelland for a total of four days, in which we have talked to 22 local entrepreneurs and 13 international tourists. The low number of tourists present, time constraints and researchers' bias are considered the main limitations of the research. Our main finding is that most international tourists come only for Amsterdam. If they do come to Amstelland, their main motivation is an interest in the Dutch rural landscape and a desire for escaping the city centre. We have designed three strategies for attracting more international tourists to Amstelland. Firstly, to attract nature-loving tourists for a longer stay by establishing a form of rural tourism. Secondly, to organise package tours through Amstelland with themes around nature and Dutch culture for tourists who stay in Amsterdam. A final strategy is to provide (accommodation) facilities for tourists in Amstelland who want to visit Amsterdam, so that they will spend more money in the area. (Elements of) these strategies can be combined to strengthen the identity of Amstelland as a whole.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Introductie

Amstelland is een ruraal gebied tussen Amsterdam, Amstelveen en Uithoorn, waar veel boerenbedrijven zijn, polders, water, en recreatiemogelijkheden in de vorm van fietsen, paardrijden en watersporten. Als onderdeel van een breder onderzoek van Alterra heeft het studententeam 'Hop-On Amstelland' een kortlopend onderzoek gedaan naar internationaal toerisme in dit gebied. De algemene onderzoeksvraag: 'Op welke manieren is Amstelland op dit moment interessant voor internationaal toerisme en hoe kan dit verder ontwikkeld worden?' zal worden beantwoord door middel van de volgende drie sub-vragen.

1. Hoe verkrijgen internationale toeristen informatie over Amstelland?
2. Wat is de motivatie van toeristen om naar Amstelland te komen?
3. Wat kan Amstelland doen om meer toeristen naar het gebied te trekken?

Binnen dit kwalitatieve onderzoek is gebruik gemaakt van interviews met zowel horeca ondernemers, alsmede internationale toeristen in het gebied. Daarnaast is door middel van participatieve observatie gekeken naar wat het gebied te bieden heeft voor internationale toeristen, en een beeld te krijgen van de sfeer in de omgeving. De data (veld notities) is geanalyseerd door deze te verbinden met bestaande literatuur over toeristen motivatie en image building. Aan de hand van deze analyse zijn drie strategieën gemaakt om op verscheidene manieren toeristen naar het gebied te trekken.

Data

In het algemeen hebben wij ondervonden dat er op dit moment nog niet veel toeristen naar het gebied komen, alhoewel er nog wel potentie is voor groei vanuit het oogpunt van de meeste horeca uitbaters. Als toeristen wel komen is dat vaak omdat ze in Amsterdam verblijven en een keer buiten de stad iets willen doen. De andere vorm waarin toeristen Amstelland bezoeken is met bussen die stoppen op de meest toeristische plekken, namelijk de Riekermolenvolgd door een kort bezoek aan de Rembrandt Hoeve. Maar een zeer kleine groep verblijft daadwerkelijk in Amstelland zelf voor meer dan een dag om het gebied te kunnen zien.

Hoe verkrijgen internationale toeristen informatie over Amstelland?

Internationale toeristen zoeken voornamelijk op internet naar informatie over het gebied dat ze gaan bezoeken, alleen er is maar weinig informatie in Engels beschikbaar over het gebied en aparte recreatie mogelijkheden staan los van elkaar aangeboden. Hierdoor is het niet duidelijk dat Amstelland een gebied is waar verschillende attracties met elkaar in verbinding staan. Dit wordt nog

versterkt doordat horeca eigenaren veelal geen informatie aanbieden over het gebied zelf of over andere attracties in Amstelland.

Wat is de motivatie van toeristen om Amstelland te bezoeken?

Motivatie kan verdeeld worden in 'push' en 'pull' motivatie, waar 'push' motivatie gaat om interne motieven van de toerist om ergens naartoe te willen; er werd bijvoorbeeld genoemd dat ze in Amstelland de rust opzoeken. 'Pull' motivatie zijn aspecten die het landschap te bieden heeft die toeristen aantrekken. In het geval van Amstelland zijn dit de platheid en ruimte, die in combinatie met al het water en de kleine dorpjes een 'echt Nederlandse' uitstraling geeft. Wij kunnen hieruit opmaken dat de toerist Amstelland waardeert juist omdat het een andere ervaring kan bieden dan de drukte in Amsterdam. Dit is een combinatie van cultuur en natuur, zowel met betrekking tot de eet- en slaapgelegenheden, alsmede de activiteiten en omgeving.

Wat kan Amstelland doen om meer toeristen naar het gebied te trekken?

De reden dat op dit moment niet veel toeristen het gebied bezoeken is een combinatie van gebrek aan tijd en interesse, en een gebrek aan de juiste informatie. Hierin kan Amstelland zich dus verder ontwikkelen. Faciliteiten en recreatie mogelijkheden zijn aanwezig, maar dit kan uitgebreid worden aan de hand van wat toeristen zouden willen: goedkope accommodatie, een verbinding met de stad en natuur of cultuur gebonden attracties.

Advies

Het advies bestaat uit drie strategieën. De eerste is bedoeld om een specifiekere doelgroep aan te trekken voor ruraal toerisme. Dit zijn de mensen die interesse hebben in het landschap en de culturele historie, en daarom langer in Amstelland zouden willen verblijven. De tweede en laatste strategie zijn bedoeld om meer 'mainstream' toerisme aan te trekken voor toeristen die vooral gefocust zijn op Amsterdam, en graag wat highlights buiten de stad willen betrekken bij hun vakantie. In het algemeen is het van belang dat Amstelland zichzelf gaat profileren als een eenheid met een eigen identiteit, hiervoor is samenwerking tussen verschillende belanghebbenden nodig. Dit kan zijn in de vorm van structurele ontmoetingen om interesses en doelen voor het gebied te bespreken.

Strategie 1: Ruraal toerisme

Deze strategie is bedoeld om het toerisme te laten groeien in Amstelland op relatief kleine schaal, door internationale toeristen kennis te laten maken met het leven in het gebied. Horeca ondernemers kunnen door gebruik van bijvoorbeeld Trip Advisor adverteren, en de mogelijkheden tot fietsen, tot rust komen en water recreatie aan te prijzen. Dit zijn elementen die Amstelland van oudsher al bezit, en

daarom erg geschikt voor deze vorm van kleinschalig toerisme. Een verbetering van de wegen voor fietsers is hiervoor van belang, alsmede Engelstalige aanduiding van routes en uitleg over het gebied.

Strategie 2: Massa toerisme

Deze strategie is bedoeld om een bredere groep van 'mainstream' toeristen aan te spreken, in de vorm van thematische fiets toers. Dit legt een verbinding tussen Amsterdam (waar deze toers beginnen) en Amstelland, zodat toeristen die voor Amsterdam komen op een gemakkelijke en leuke manier het buitengebied kunnen ontdekken. Een voorbeeld van een toer is de Scenic Rembrandt Tour. Hier begint men met een bezoek aan het Rembrandt Museum voor de landschapsgezichten, en gaat de groep daarna op de fiets naar Amstelland om de inspiratie hiervoor in het echt te kunnen aanschouwen. Dit kan eventueel worden gecombineerd met een lunch in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel. Collaboratie tussen toer organisaties, Amsterdam Marketing en ondernemers in Amstelland is hierbij wel van belang.

Strategie 3: Accommodatie

Om een gedeelte van de grote groep internationale toeristen die alleen voor de stad komen toch naar Amstelland te krijgen, is het derde advies om accommodatie voor deze groep aan te bieden. Dit houdt in dat er mogelijkheden moeten worden gecreëerd voor goedkope accommodatie in combinatie met een goede verbinding van en naar de stad. Denk hierbij aan een camping of hostel tussen Ouderkerk aan de Amstel en Amsterdam, of accommodaties die ook fietsen en routes naar de stad aanbieden als onderdeel van de slaapgelegenheid. Hiermee kan vervolgens geadverteerd worden op reiswebsites en vanuit Amsterdam. Er zijn niet veel aanpassingen nodig om deze doelgroep te kunnen faciliteren.

Introduction

In this research, the motivations for international tourists to visit Amstelland and the opportunities for increasing international tourism in the area are explored. Amstelland is a rural area located between Amsterdam, Amstelveen and Uithoorn (see Appendix 1). The area is characterized by the winding Amstel River and canals, next to cultivated fields, nature conservation sites and recreational areas (Groengebied Amstelland, 2015).

This research is carried out as part of the Wageningen University (WU) course *Academic Consultancy Training* (ACT). This course is aimed towards students in their Master phase, and encompasses eight weeks. We carry out this ACT-project for a research team of the institute Alterra. This institution is engaged in a broader research on Amstelland, commissioned by citizen organisation Stichting Beschermers Amstelland (SBA). Following from the first discussions with our commissioner from Alterra, the relevance of this project relates to the expansion of Amsterdam city's borders, pressuring the current balance between agriculture and nature present in Amstelland, which shares borders with this expanding urban hub. Moreover, there is an increasing number of tourists in Amsterdam, and it is expected that this number will increase up to 16 million tourists per year within five years, which results in the problem of increasing crowdedness (Bremmer & Winterman, 23 April 2015). Within this context, it was formulated that investments in tourism in Amstelland could generate an opportunity for spreading out tourists over a larger area and in this way generate an extra income for the area, which could potentially contribute to the protection of the landscape as it is now, and assist in the development and improvement of facilities. Our research departs from this assumption.

The focus lies on international tourists as a potential group that could be (more) interested in Amstelland. As there is a lack of specific data on international tourism in Amstelland, this research aims at filling this knowledge gap, in order for SBA to develop a strategy that could involve international tourists for sustaining and preserving Amstelland. The advice formulated in this research adheres to this purpose by giving examples of what strategies could be employed in order to attract more international tourists. The terms 'international tourists' and 'tourists' will be used interchangeably from this point onwards, to denote international tourists.

This report presents a theoretical framework, methodology, results and analysis of the data collected in the field, and finally a conclusion and an advice. The research is guided by the following main research question: *In what ways is Amstelland currently attractive for tourists and how could its potential for attracting tourists be increased?* This research question is based on two parts: an assessment of the current situation regarding international tourists visiting Amstelland in terms of

values and motivations, and suggestions on what strategies could be developed in order to enhance its attractiveness for international tourists.

The sub-questions that will successively be answered in the analysis are: *How do international tourists obtain information on Amstelland? What are international tourists' motivations to visit Amstelland? What does Amstelland need to attract more tourists?* In the first sub-question we are concerned with ways tourists' obtain information on Amstelland. Addressing the second sub-question, we describe the reasons for tourists to visit the area: what they find interesting or appealing. Answering the third sub-question, we elaborate on what is missing in Amstelland, or what improvements/changes could be created in the area to make the area more attractive to tourists. After answering these three sub-questions, while connecting them to our theoretical framework, an answer to the central research question will be presented in the conclusion of this research. We end the report by providing practical advice based on our findings, namely on the strategies with which more tourists can be attracted to Amstelland. The advice has been divided into three separate strategy scenarios that can be implemented separately or combined.

Theoretical framework

In this chapter, several concepts and theories that we use throughout this report will be discussed, to provide a theoretical basis for this research.

Typical tourist and motivation theory (push and pull factors)

This section explains two major strands in academic literature on tourism, respectively the 'typical tourist' of Cohen (1979) and 'tourist motivation theory' of Elands and Lengkeek (2000). Cohen (1979) defines several characteristics of the 'typical tourist'. Firstly, he proposes the typical tourist is attached to the centre of his or her own society, not alienated from it, and aims to recreate as a form of escape from stress. Second, Cohen adds that the typical tourist has little quest for authentic experiences. Within the category of 'typical tourist', distinctions can be made on the basis of the tourists' modes of activity during his or her holiday, and on what his or her motives for travelling are. With regard to the modes of activity, tourists should be given the opportunity to express their individuality within a broader range of activities.

Elands and Lengkeek (2000) have classified tourist motivation into five experience modes, following Cohen (1979). The first mode is named 'amusement', which is characterised by fun and temporality. The second and third modes are 'change' (escape, relaxation and recovery) and 'interest' (search for interesting stories, variation and imagination). Finally, the fourth and fifth mode comprise 'rapture', characterised by self-discovery and unexpectedness, and 'dedication', which has been characterised by a quest for authenticity and being merged in a 'back-stage' world (Elands & Lengkeek, 2000).

The two views on tourism as explained by Cohen and Elands and Lengkeek have been used to distinguish five different categories for pull motivations in this research: culture, pleasure, physical engagement, amusement and social engagement (following Elands & Lengkeek, 2012; Goossen & de Boer, 2008). These may lead to a stimulation of inherent push motivations such as excitement and togetherness. The push motivations are related to the tourist's desire, emotional aspects and socio-psychological motives and therefore capture a broad scope. Pull motivations are associated with the attributes of the destination choices, that is cognitive aspects and motives that do not originate from the tourists themselves (Pearce, 1982; Goossens, 2000). Tourists are pushed by their (emotional) needs and pulled by the (emotional) benefits of leisure at a destination.

Motivation theory can be used to gain understanding on the reasons why tourists show interest or disinterest in visiting Amstelland. Motivation is an element of market segmentation in tourism. It can be

defined as psychological or biological needs and wants, including integral forces that arouse, direct and integrate a person's behaviour and activity (Pearce, 1982). As explained above, tourists are motivated to escape their routine of daily life and seek new or different experiences. Tourists crave the pleasurable meanings of the destination (Goossens, 2000). Accessibility, attractions, entertainment and infrastructure are the most common pull factors of a destination, and have different meanings for different tourists. Today, it is assumed that tourists who travel to cultural destinations seek new knowledge and tourists who travel for recreational purposes escape from their routines (Nikjoo and Ketabi, 2015). In this research, we relate tourist motivations to visit Amstelland to the theory described above.

Rural tourism versus mass tourism

This section explains two contrasting strands in tourism: rural tourism and mass tourism. Rural areas are in the process of being transformed into spaces of (increasing) consumption, sometimes replacing agricultural production (Ilbery, 1998, in Markantoni & Strijker, 2012). Increasingly, the countryside becomes the background for, for example, campsites, recreational areas and bed and breakfasts. Additionally, diversified farming emerges, which can be described as multifunctional farms that are not only used to produce food, but also to provide public goods (biodiversity, agricultural landscape) and services (tourism, energy, educational services) (Ageron et al., 2012; Ginaldi et al., 2012, in Sgroi et al., 2014). Rural tourism has been defined by Lane (1994; in Sgroi et al., 2014) as tourism which integrates the unique characteristics of heritage, such as the environment, economy and history. It is suggested that rural tourism should be executed on a small scale, follow traditions and grow slowly. The local resources of the rural area can be consumed by the tourists. Local cooperation can be fostered by the integration of networks between actors. The motto of this small scale type of tourism is not "what can I buy that I do not have" but "what can I try that I have not yet experienced" (Sgroi et al., 2014). Seasonality can be by-passed with tourism in rural areas. Furthermore, rural areas serve as an escape from urban areas, making them increasingly popular holiday destinations as urban areas are expanding (Roberts & Hall, 2003).

Rural tourism can be seen as an answer to mass tourism, which, according to Pigram & Wahab (2004) is defined as the participation of a large number of tourists. Mass tourism products are meant to provide a quick and easy experience for a short time (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987, in Elands and Lengkeek, 2000). In comparison to rural tourism, mass tourism includes a larger number of tourists and can be executed on a larger scale. In this research, mass tourism is associated with the mainstream tourists in Amsterdam.

One specific type of mass tourism we identify is packaged tour guiding. Packaged tour guiding consists of a round trip by various modes of transportation (bike/boat/bus) carried out by a tour

organizer/travel agent and offered to tourists (adapted from Pearce, 1987). Concretely, they consist of a package including transport and optionally associated activities and lunch or dinner. The attractions or destinations can be related to different socio-cultural elements (history, art, ways of life, monuments, architecture), often regrouped around one theme (Jafari, Singh, Kaur & Singh, 1982). In this way a coherent image is created that appeals to the tourists' and responds to their interests, creating a pleasant experience (Bramwell & Benur, 2015). The tours are often supported by promotion to make them more available to tourists. We identify packaged tour guiding as mass tourism because it can appeal to a broad group of tourists. We will refer back to packaged tour guiding in our advice.

Nature

The concept of nature in this report is used to distinguish the green, peri-urban agricultural landscape from the inner city of Amsterdam, as a unique selling point of Amstelland. However, in general, we will refer to Amstelland as a rural area. The elements of Amstelland that are referred to as nature are its biodiversity, lakes, polders, and its agricultural land use, even though this landscape is largely man-made.

Destination image and branding

In this section, we explain destination image and branding, as these concepts will play a role in our advice. A destination image is defined as "an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination" (Crompton, 1979 in Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006). More importantly, in today's competitive environment, creating and managing an appropriate destination image has become vital for effective product positioning according to Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal (2006). As tourism services are intangible, "the tourism destination images projected in information space will greatly influence the destination images as perceived by consumers" (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007, p. 15). Moreover, according to Govers, Go and Kumar (2007) it seems that tourism promotion, as part of the image building process, does not stand alone; rather it is dependent on many other available information sources, such as newspapers and the Internet.

To form a destination image, according to Govers, Go and Kumar (2007), one first has to make sure that the destination image to be promoted is in line with the destination's true identity. Secondly, materials such as promotional images form the basis for a perceived destination image in the mind of the consumer prior to the visit, which set the tourists' quality expectations. Related to this is a finding from another study: the more the destination is promoted and made attractive in for instance a brochure, the more positive the outlook will be for incoming tourism (Molina, Gomez and Martin-Consuegra, 2010).

After a destination image has been formed, destination branding comes into play. Destination branding can be defined as “a way to communicate a destination’s unique identity by differentiating a destination from its competitors” (Morrison & Anderson, 2002 in Qu, Kim & Im, 2011: 466). Destination brands exert two important functions: identification of the destination and differentiation from competitors (Qu, Kim & Im, 2011). The brand identity is critical for the generalization of desirable characteristics projected by the supplier’s perspective. Defining a target market is thus crucial, because some aspects of a destination may seem positive to one group, while unattractive to another (Fan, 2006 in Qu, Kim & Im, 2011). Differentiation is another crucial aspect of destination branding; “the key to branding is that consumers perceive a difference among brands in a product category” (Qu, Kim & Im, 2011: 466). It is thus important for Amstelland to be able to differentiate itself from Amsterdam and other nearby areas, and use these points of difference as a branding strategy.

Methods

In this chapter the process of the research is described, outlining the practice of data gathering and analysis and the limitations of our research. As this research is mainly based on qualitative research methods, we have conducted semi-structured interviews, supported by questionnaires, as well as participant observation. Additional methods of collecting data consisted of performing literature research as well as the organization of a bike tour through Amstelland.

Data collection

In this section, we will explain our main methods for data collection: literature research, field research based on semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and participant observation, and finally the organisation of a bike tour.

Literature research

We performed background research on the area through articles from the WU library as well as websites on the area. Additionally, we used the theoretical model as described by Elands & Lengkeek (2012) and Goossen & De Boer (2008) that differentiates among five motives that distinguish five different types of tourists. We also reviewed literature on destination image and branding as well as on rural and mass tourism, with the aim to provide a theoretical foundation. The motive identification is not used for the selection of the research subjects itself, but for categorization of the subjects over these five types after gathering information about their reasons to visit the area. In addition, we have consulted websites of various businesses and organisations related to our research, such as the websites of IAmsterdam/Amsterdam Marketing, SBA, Groengebied Amstelland, local entrepreneurs and bike tour companies.

Field research

We performed field research in Amstelland for four days: a daytrip on the 22nd of May, and three days from the 9th to the 11th of June. During these days of fieldwork, groups of two to three people covered different areas in Amstelland. We set up different clusters in advance, containing businesses close to each other.

Semi-structured interviews

As our main interview method, we made use of semi-structured interviews. In a semi-structured interview, interviewers begin with a small number of open-ended questions, but spend considerable time probing participant responses, encouraging them to provide more detail and clarification (Harris & Brown, 2010). Semi-structured interviews give flexibility to go more in-depth into some of the questions

if needed, and to respond to what the participants are saying when there was more information to be gathered.

We performed semi-structured interviews with 22 businesses in the area; cafés, restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, recreational providers etc. This includes telephone interviews with businesses when they were not available at the time of visit. An outline of the interview guide is presented in Appendix 3. Additionally, we performed semi-structured interviews with 13 tourists we encountered in the area. As the observed tourists were concentrated in the North of Amstelland, we interviewed most tourists there. A summary of the interview content conducted with tourists and organisations can be found in, respectively, Appendices 4 and 5.

Questionnaires

Tourist interviews were complemented with questionnaires to be able to quantify and visualize some of the basic data more easily. This questionnaire is partly based on the tourist motivation theory above. In total we gathered 5 questionnaires (see Appendix 7). A different questionnaire made for participants of the tour, which is described below, can be found in Appendix 8.

Participant observation

We used participant observation to complement the data collected from interviews. Participant observation has the advantage of allowing access to information from various sources based on the researchers' observations (De Munck & Sobo, 1998). Participant observation is in this way a solid method to develop data and draw explanatory conclusions (De Munck & Sobo, 1998).

Collecting documents

In addition to the semi-structured interviews and participant observation, during our field work, we have collected pictures, flyers and other documents providing relevant information on tourism in Amstelland. Examples of existing bicycle tour flyers collected can be found in Appendix 6.

Bike tour

Next to typical field research, we organized a tour to observe international tourists' attitude to Amstelland and to interview them about their opinion on a bike tour through the area. For the purpose of promotion, we created a poster and flyers (see Appendix 9) and contacted bike rentals and hotels in the centre of Amsterdam to ask whether they would be willing to cooperate with us for promotion in exchange for tourists who decide to participate at the tour renting a bike at their business. Approximately twenty bike rentals and hotels agreed to these terms and we distributed the promotion material on Friday the 5th of June, six days before the tour. We set a route through Amstelland for the

tour and looked up interesting spots as places to stop (see Appendix 2). The tour was planned to take place on Thursday the 11th of June but we received no tourists at the set time at either of the locations we set as a meeting point. We thus had to cancel the tour. We have defined several reasons why international tourists did not join our tour: (i) insufficient or unattractive promotion, (ii) lack of credibility, (iii) bad timing, (iv) warm weather, (v) fixed schedules of tourists, (vi) lack of interest in anywhere outside of Amsterdam, and (vii) no access to bicycles. However, since we do not have clear data on this, we decided to exclude the tour from the analysis.

Field notes and analysis

For our field notes and coding, we followed the method of Bernard (2006). This method entails creating jottings during the day, documenting our observations and interactions, which are transformed into descriptive, analytical and methodological field notes at the end of the day. Afterwards, we created a coding tree (see Appendix 10), with which these field notes were coded to look for patterns and relationships among the information gathered.

Limitations

Our research is inevitably constrained by some limitations. One of our limitations is our own bias, as we are influenced by our own preconceptions. For example, since five team members all have the Dutch nationality, they may have overlooked elements of the landscape that are interesting for international tourists. However, the international team members helped to gather data from diverse perspectives, countering this limitation partly. Another limitation is our time constraint; we could only afford to plan in a few days of field research due to our tight planning. Additionally, the days of field research carried out were during weekdays in May and June, which are months before the high season. Also, one of our research days was cold and windy. This means that we might not have encountered as many tourists as we would have in the summer months and on weekends. We especially have less tourist questionnaires than we expected, so we cannot generalize the findings from the questionnaire. We were therefore partly limited to use the opinions and thoughts of business owners as proxies for gathering information on tourists. Moreover, our tour did not attract any tourists, so we could not extract data during the tour as expected, which can be considered a limitation as well. A final limitation, related to the tour, is that the flyer that has been designed, the title of the flyer “free bike tour bringing tourists into the wild” as well as the graphical representation of Amstelland (with mountains and forests) does not properly represent the true image of Amstelland. This representation of Amstelland might also have contributed to the fact that no tourists joined the tour, as it might have caused inaccurate expectations.

Analysis

Our main findings centre around three general topics that relate the three sub-questions of this research: international tourists' access to information about Amstelland; motivations for international tourists to visit Amstelland; and what Amstelland needs to attract more tourists. The data, consisting of field notes and interviews, as well as literature, are used to answer the three research questions.

Access - How do international tourists obtain information on Amstelland?

In this part of the analysis, the first sub-question will be discussed. This paragraph has been divided into three parts: information about Amstelland, information on businesses in Amstelland and information provided in Amstelland.

Information about Amstelland

Information on Amstelland, as a whole integrated area, is not provided in most travel guides, nor at central tourist information desks in Amsterdam. There is information available on Groengebied-Amstelland on the IAmsterdam website, represented as an area with beaches, playgrounds and picnic fields (IAmsterdam, 2015). As well as information on Gaasperpark, presented as a recreational area and nature reserve with a lake where several water activities can be held and a campsite (IAmsterdam, 2015). However, as we perceived during our field research, this information does not include everything nor represents Amstelland as one area. Similarly, in Amstelland itself, most of the businesses we have interviewed do not provide information about the general Amstelland area, except for details relating to their own business and what they are offering or organising. Some bike tour companies in Amsterdam that offer tours passing parts of Amstelland only provide information on those specific parts of the area (for instance Mike Bike Countryside tour, or Joy ride tours, see Appendix 6). Maps of the whole area were only available at a few locations, for example the Zomerbloemen Pluktuin. Interestingly, personal internet research gave us results on relatively extensive information on Waterland on the website of IAmsterdam, which represents a rural area similar to Amstelland. This promotion model could similarly be used for to increase the visibility of Amstelland (IAmsterdam, 2015).

Some tourists we interviewed had performed online research before their arrival, for example on the travel websites Frommer's and Lonely Planet, with the purpose to gain more information about Amsterdam, its surroundings, and locations and attractions to visit. The majority found themselves in Amstelland solely because they chose to join an organized bike tour that passed the cheese farm and the windmill in the North of Amstelland. One visitor who was in the area for a boat competition at Ouderkerkerplas even mentioned that *"if I wanted to find information on this area, I would not have*

been able to find it on the Internet". The lack of online information forms an obstacle for international tourists to discover the area and the recreational opportunities and facilities it offers. The owner of a hotel in Amstelland mentioned that his international customers do not require information from him anymore for recommendations on "*where to go*" or "*the best things to do*", as their holiday planning is set up in advance through relying on information provided on the internet. If this information does not include Amstelland, Amstelland will subsequently not be included in their planning. Remarkably, when we questioned the business owners in Amstelland about their role in providing information about Amstelland, a large number stated that they redirect the tourists outside of Amstelland, advising the tourists to visit the city centre of Amsterdam or Zaandam.

Information about businesses in Amstelland

There are several options for potential customers to recruit information on the businesses they visit in Amstelland. Information can mostly be found online, for example via Facebook, TripAdvisor or websites of the businesses. However, many local entrepreneurs do not have a website in English, and only few advertise on TripAdvisor. Some entrepreneurs who advertised on TripAdvisor noticed an increase in international customers. The importance of visibility on the Internet is represented by the comment of a business owner who has set up a page in English and stated that he "*believes this is very much in his advantage*". Another option for tourists to get to know about businesses in Amstelland is through recommendations by friends or family. Lastly, some businesses stated that people drive by and visit their enterprise by coincidence.

Information provided in Amstelland

An insufficiency in the provision of information for international tourists concerns the language of direction- and bicycle route signs and information boards on buildings, history and nature within Amstelland: most of them are exclusively in Dutch, which inevitably complicates orientation in the area for tourists. Additionally, they miss out on interesting information on the curiosities of the area. The problem of language also counts for a part of the hotels, restaurants and cafes and other recreational providers, as not all of them provide their menus, posters and other advertisements in English and/or other foreign languages. Relating to this lack of information provision for tourists in Amstelland, one of the business owners, mentioned that Ouderkerk aan de Amstel -one of the villages in Amstelland- does not have a tourist information centre.

It can be concluded that tourists tend to obtain information on places to visit and recreational opportunities via the Internet. Little information can be found online promoting Amstelland as an integrated area. Instead, only some fragmented information can be found on certain highlights of Amstelland.

Motivations - What are tourist motivations to visit Amstelland?

For answering the second sub-question, we identified a set of motivations for tourists to visit Amstelland. In this section, we connect these motivations with our theoretical framework.

Push factors

A reason to visit appointed by both local business owners and tourists is the quietness of the area. Some tourists also mentioned in the short interviews they wanted to see more than the city of Amsterdam, looking for something more calm and tranquillity. The Amstelland scenery thus forms an attribute that, in this case, is inherent to the push motivation of desire for escape, rest and relaxation.

Pull factors

Amstelland is a rural area, characterized by meadows with cows, sheep and horses, fields filled with wild flowers, meandering canals and lakes, and a diversity of birds. These natural areas alternate with small villages with paved roads, centuries old brick houses, churches of different styles and windmills. International tourists come to enjoy the countryside and are fascinated by the polders and the different levels of water. This is reflected in the following quote of an American tourist: *“Here in The Netherlands it is all about hydrology. You guys fight the water everyday”*. He and his wife indicated that they were especially interested in the countryside and the hydrology of the area. They wanted to see something more than only the city of Amsterdam. The above belongs to the pull motivation of culture, which has appeared as the most common reason for tourists to come to the area.

Furthermore, some tourists appreciate the aesthetic value of the area, yet they visit specific places only, for example the windmill and the cheese farm in the North or the tulip farm in the Southern part of the area. These places are typical elements of the mainstream image of a Dutch countryside, but also provide pleasure and amusement as pull motivations. However, other parts of Amstelland that are equally typically Dutch remain less well-known than the three above-mentioned points: there are cafés that offer Dutch food, more windmills and other farms, even Dutch heritage. The historical museum Ouder-Amstel is one of the small attractions that has been attracting an increasing number tourists in the past years, including international tourists (see Appendix 11), but still remains small in scale. One finding explaining this large difference between highly visited areas and unvisited areas is that international tourists have better access to the well-known areas, via organized bus and bike tours.

Finally, another reason for tourists coming to Amstelland not belonging to the predetermined pull motivation categories is accommodation. This is an aspect especially related with Amstelland and the fact that it is located relatively close to the city of Amsterdam. Most businesses and international tourists who are using accommodation in the area, in fact come for the inner city. They choose to

camp or stay in a B&B in Amstelland simply because it is close to the metro line and cheaper than staying in a similar type of accommodation in the inner city. We note here that although people stay in the area, they even then go to the inner city. One of their conditions for choosing to stay in Amstelland is therefore the relatively short distance to the city centre, which is why the Gaaspercamping is popular amongst internationals, and that there are less horeca facilities the further one moves away from the city. The categories physical engagement and social engagement did not come back as pull motivations in the results. In addition, it is important to note that push and pull factors are often related and combined in tourists' motivations to visit specific destinations.

In relation to the theory on rural and mass tourism, we distinguish two types of tourist groups in the area: (i) the tourists who come to the area by themselves because of their inherent interest in exploring the surroundings of the place they are visiting, and (ii), the tourists who visit specific places through an organized tour. The first group relates to rural tourism, in which the tourists' engagement with his or her environment is central, whereas the second group relates to mass tourism, which is more focused on quick entertainment.

To summarize, motivations for tourists to visit Amstelland are the tranquillity of the area and its natural and cultural characteristics. Tourists prefer to be taken to Amstelland via an organized tour. In addition, tourists who do not visit Amstelland sometimes do stay in the area for practical reasons.

What is needed - What does Amstelland need to attract more tourists?

In this section we will discuss and answer the third and last sub-question. Our data shows that the most important reason for not visiting Amstelland is a combination of a lack of time and interest in the area, as well as a lack of knowledge on and insufficient access to the area. In most of the interviews, both tourists and entrepreneurs, mention that tourists only come to or stay in Amstelland because they are visiting Amsterdam.

Our interviewees indicated that there is no competition with Amsterdam and Amstelland cannot replace Amsterdam. This is confirmed by an Australian couple, who stayed at the Gaasper Camping close to Amstelland: "*Often we choose green areas to camp, in preference to cities, we prefer to stay in the green area. We stayed away from bigger cities. Amsterdam is an exception, you really have to see Amsterdam*". Especially the city trippers that only visit Amsterdam for a weekend and stay in the city centre are not likely to go to Amstelland. Tourists who are staying for a midweek or longer, and especially those who find lodging in Amstelland, more often go into the area for one day. We investigated which elements of Amstelland, in terms of sightseeing and recreation, facilities and accessibility, could be developed or improved in order to attract more tourists.

Sightseeing and recreation

As described in the previous section, the main reasons for tourists to visit Amstelland are nature and culture, which merge together as 'typically Dutch' elements. These include windmill Rieker molen and cheese and clogs farm De Rembrandt Hoeve, which most tourists visit on a tour (bike or bus) that partly crosses the Amstelland area. The history of the area is also vital. Its world famous Jewish cemetery, for instance, attracts tourists from around the world. Amstelland needs to sustain the natural and cultural values, which are typically Dutch, in order to thrive as an international destination (Richel-Bottinga, 2001; Van der Doe & Spijkerman, 1996, in Arts and Leroy, 2006). Many entrepreneurs in the area stated that they believe international tourists will not come to Amstelland unless there are more opportunities for recreation and entertainment. This indicates that Amstelland needs more entertainment for tourists, like specific places for sightseeing or recreation. As an example, the Amstel River and various lakes of Amstelland carry the potential to offer recreation through water sports facilities, such as sailing, windsurfing and canoeing.

Facilities

Several local entrepreneurs stated that there should be more facilities that attract tourists, such as restaurants, cafes and places for accommodation. From our observations, we have found that there are no restaurants or cafes around the Ouderkerkerplas or Gaasperplas, whereas these lakes do have the recreational opportunities of water sports, beaches and bird watching areas. We did, however, encounter initiatives among local entrepreneurs to increase the facilities in these areas. For instance, the Ouderkerkerplas association of surf and sailing is looking to serve alcohol and food to non-members as well. This could increase the number of tourists stopping by the lake. Diversified farms, for instance selling homemade products or running a camp site, could specifically target international tourists as customers to make the area more attractive (Jongeneel, Polman & Slangen, 2008). Examples of businesses like this already present in the area are the Rembrandt Hoeve (cheese farm) and the Boerententencamping (farmer camping).

Accessibility

As many people who are staying in Amstelland come mostly for the city, physical access to the city and infrastructure are important. Currently, public transport to and from Amstelland is insufficient. This is reflected in the remark of a respondent from Speelboerderij Elsenhove, who mentioned that "*there is only a regular line bus, tourists cannot find those type of buses easily.*" Moreover, a respondent from Brasserie Paardenburg pointed out that parking is a problem: "*People pay 8 euros for 1 day, even if you just stay there for 5 minutes.*" International tourists that already visit Amstelland often do so with an organised bike or bus tour. The reason for this could be a preference of tourists to be led around rather than having to find their way themselves. This is consistent with the theory on mass tourism, in

which tourists have a quick and easy experience for a short period of time (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987, in Elands & Lengkeek, 2000). Lastly, as explained in the first section of this chapter, tourists' access to information on Amstelland could be improved.

In summary, as indicated by our respondents, what Amstelland needs is the maintenance of its natural and cultural heritage, more opportunities in terms of entertainment and facilities, and better access with regard to transport and information.

Conclusion

Our research sought to explain first the international tourists' access to information about Amstelland, second their motivations to visit (push and pull motivations), and third what is needed to attract more tourists.

International tourists perform online research to plan their trip but the amount of information on Amstelland is limited. Amstelland is only incidentally visited and most visits are sought out through organized bike tours and bus tours that can be planned in advance. As to businesses, they are mostly promoted online individually and only a number have websites in English. There is thus room for multiple improvements, such as creating a coherent website for what Amstelland has to offer in terms of recreation, locations to visit, activities and tours and the cafés restaurants and hotels in the area.

Tourists visit Amstelland with varying motivations. Push factors included the desire to escape (from the inner city of Amsterdam) and relax. Pull factors included culture, pleasure and amusement. Indeed, tourists are pulled to Amstelland because of its rural landscape and its cultural heritage. Although some parts of Amstelland have an increasing number of tourists, it remains small scale. Reasons for tourists not to visit Amstelland are a lack of time and interest, as well as a lack of knowledge about the area. Tourists who stay longer than a mid-week or find lodging in Amstelland are more likely to spend time in the area.

Despite Amstelland's weak competition position with regard to Amsterdam, it can offer something different in terms of nature and culture. However, access to the area and recreational opportunities still need improvement to attract more tourists. In the last chapter of this report, an advice is provided which distinguishes three strategies for attracting more tourists. In the advice, a link will be made between the theoretical basis on rural and mass tourism, and the typical tourist and tourist motivations.

Advice

In this chapter, we provide an advice consisting of three different strategies that could enhance the attractiveness of Amstelland for international tourism. The strategies cater for different tourist target groups, identified according to their push and pull motivations. The advice is mainly formulated to support Stichting Beschermers Amstelland, but some of the more practical recommendations can be implemented by different parties specifically, such as horeca owners or municipalities.

The advice is two sided. On the one hand, the strategies introduce practical recommendations, and on the other hand they can be combined to increase the image building (branding) of Amstelland. It is a combination of short-term practical changes and long-term changes relating to image building directly that is needed to develop the area in terms of attractiveness for tourists. Our research sheds light on the current status, problems and improvement opportunities in terms of tourist visits in Amstelland. Further research could be directed towards more data collection from tourists, both in Amsterdam and Amstelland, to gain better understanding on what they expect from the area. Also, branding opportunities for Amstelland can be further investigated. Finally, a broader research on the relationship between tourism revenues and conservation of the area can be beneficial in the context of long term viability of tourism increase in the area.

The first strategy discussed will focus on a specific target group that represents a niche, namely that of rural tourism. This strategy is linked to elements Amstelland inherently possesses, for instance open space, quietness and tranquillity. The second and third strategy are meant for a larger target group of international tourists more in line with mass tourism as differentiated from rural tourism in the theoretical framework. The second strategy will strengthen the connection between Amsterdam city and Amstelland by drawing tourists out of the centre with themed package tours, and the final strategy caters to tourists who want to visit the city of Amsterdam, but look for cheap accommodation in more quiet surroundings.

Advice strategy 1: Rural tourism

After analysing our data, we noticed some overlap between rural tourism and the current situation in Amstelland, as elements of rural tourism are already present in the area and can be further developed. Local businesses such as hotel 't Jagershuis, B&B Villa Oldenhoff, Sail & Surf Association Ouderkerkerplas and Elsenhove that were interviewed indicated they were open to receive more tourists, however they mentioned that they do not look for a great increase in number of tourists as they also have other target groups. A manager at Speelboerderij Elsenhove said, "*We don't want to double the visitors in the farm*". This view on just a slight increase in tourism from the entrepreneurs'

perspective is coherent with rural tourism, since this focuses on low-key individual tourism. Another aspect of rural tourism is that it consists of nature- and culture-based activities, which are already offered in Amstelland to some extent, such as the numerous opportunities for water sports, cycling and hiking. Next to this, accommodation, such as the Boerententencamping (farmer camping), provides an opportunity for experiencing the area almost as locals would. Finally, the views present a 'typically Dutch' landscape, which is supported by some of the activities that can be undertaken, such as picking tulips at the Zomerbloemen Pluktuin, taking an old fashioned ferry across the Amstel and seeing windmills up close. The owner of the Zomerbloemen Pluktuin mentioned that *"tourists will like the different level of the water in comparison to the land"* in Amstelland. This was also mentioned by tourists and several other business owners.

Practical developments, such as constructing safe bicycle paths and cycling routes with signs and explanations in English can aid the increase of rural tourism in Amstelland. The owner of the Boerententencamping mentioned: *"the roads are very small and there are also cars driving around which could scare off tourists"*. Two tourists from New Jersey mentioned that they chose to cycle outside of the city because: *"it is a lot more peaceful and chilled than the city. We do not want to cycle in the city because it is so busy and therefore stressful"*. About half the tourists interviewed cycled or had the intention to cycle in the area and/or the city, making this transportation element important to include in tourism considerations. Next to this, the image of Amstelland can be strengthened by promoting the area as a unity, making use of online platforms such as Trip Advisor, or an own coherent website. In this way, the information may reach more people, as well as establish a link between different elements in the area. Complementary to this, yearly events can be organized in the high season, for example events that focus on the promotion and display of Dutch rural culture, focused on international tourists and promoted through social media and travel websites.

The benefits of this rural tourism strategy are its strong link with existing touristic elements Amstelland already has to offer, giving it many opportunities for upscaling. Additionally, businesses are open to receive more international tourists in their establishments and could therefore play a role in promotion. Next to this, some establishments prefer avoiding cooperation with big organisations in Amsterdam, and developing rural tourism does not require this collaboration. However, since it is a niche market the drawback is that it potentially will not have enough impact to make a difference for the overall development in Amstelland, as the target group for this strategy is limited. Generally this strategy is a good option when one wants to limit attractions to a specific target group, and as a way to start connections between different establishments in the area through promoting this type of tourism.

Advice strategy 2: Mass tourism

The second strategy that can be implemented relates to a more commercial type of tourism, in the form of organised tours, or packaged tour guiding as explained in the theoretical framework. We suggest themed tours that combine experiences in Amsterdam and Amstelland in order to attract more tourists. Although there are a few guided tours offered going through Amstelland (such as Mike's Bike Tour), these for instance take the whole day and do not centre on a theme. Most importantly, such tours do not necessarily present Amstelland as a unity or invite tourists to do more in the area aside from just passing through.

Some examples of thematic guided tours through Amsterdam and Amstelland are given below.

- *The scenic Rembrandt tour.* Guided group visit the Rembrandt Museum with a focus on landscape paintings, after which the group is taken to Amstelland to see these landscapes in real life, and observe how Rembrandt could have been inspired for his paintings.
- *The canal tour.* Guided boat tour starting on the inner canals of Amsterdam and going out to the Hogedijk in Amstelland, explaining the use of canals over the centuries, as well as the hydrology (polders, dykes) and the role this has played in the Netherlands.
- *The Jewish History tour.* Guided group visit through the house of Anne Frank/Jewish History museum, combined with a visit of the Portuguese-Jewish cemetery and the historical museum Ouder-Amstel in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel.
- *The Rural Dutch tour.* Start with a guided tour through the Rijksmuseum with a focus on famous paintings of rural scenes (De Aardappeleters/Het Melkmeisje etc.), then hop on bicycles to pay a visit of the Cheese farm and windmill in Amstelland. This can be extended by cycling further south to a flower picking garden which includes using the ferry.

The target audience for packaged tour guiding are city hoppers who want to experience pleasure and culture. They are tourists who go to Amsterdam for a couple of days and are interested in seeing highlights, preferably in the context of the safe haven of a guided tour. From our interviews and observations this was found to be the biggest group visiting Amstelland, thus we predict that this would happen on a larger scale than rural tourism. There are several advantages to exploring this option: firstly, it contributes to solving the issue of overcrowding in the inner city. Additionally, it allows to increase visitation rates to Amstelland, while maintaining oversight of where tourists go. In addition, by defining which places will be visited, peace can be secured in other areas dedicated to nature.

In this case, collaboration between bus/boat/bicycle tour organizers, Amsterdam Marketing and Stichting Beschermers Amstelland could be beneficial. Tour agencies and Amsterdam Marketing can collaborate on promoting and organising the actual tours. Additionally, cooperation with cafés and

restaurants near the planned activity in Amstelland can be sought, since these can benefit from the extra international tourists visiting their establishment and the exposure. In this scenario SBA can act as a mediator, bringing these parties together, keeping the overview as well as represent the long-term interest of the area. Lastly, as both the municipality of Amsterdam (less tourists in the centre) and the villages in Amstelland (increased visibility and visits) can benefit from these tours, it would thus be useful to include them in the discussion. Certain facilities might need upgrading in case of realization of the tours. The specific attractions that will be visited might need to be secured, explanation panels in foreign languages could be installed, and clear rules should be set and discussed with the different tour operators.

The benefit of this strategy is that it is interesting for a larger target group, unlike the first strategy, and using themes can attract the tourist who is interested mainly in Amsterdam more easily, since it creates a connection between the two places. This option does not necessarily require high investments in infrastructure or organisations, but if it grows in the future, cycling and activity related facilities may need improvement. The drawback of this strategy is that at this moment one cannot predict the number of tourists it may attract and the effect this will have on other development aspects such as the local businesses and landscape. It requires cooperation with many different parties, which will have to be facilitated in some form where these groups can come together. Overall this strategy is a good option when there is an interest in collaborating to attract more tourists in an accessible way, and using themes to start building an image for Amstelland.

Advice strategy 3: Accommodation

Amsterdam is put under pressure by the rise in number of tourists that visit the city, and it becomes increasingly difficult to accommodate them. Simultaneously, the lodging facilities in Amstelland, hotels, B&B's and campsites, do have the capacity to accommodate more tourists, as do the restaurants and cafes in the area (though not by a large amount, as stated previously). As one of our respondents phrased this: "*No problem, we'll just add some extra tables*". In addition, certain tourists who do not visit the Amstelland area in particular, still prefer to stay in Amstelland, because it is cheap in comparison to the facilities in the city centre, and they like the quietness. For example an American lady said: "*I like it like this, as the countryside*", contrasting it with the higher pace of life in the city.

The third strategy is therefore a matter of supply and demand: Amstelland could fill the gap between the number of tourists visiting Amsterdam and the capacity of the facilities in the city centre. What tourists are looking for is cheap accommodation and a good transport connection to the city centre, the Amsterdam municipality is looking for a way to spread tourists over a larger area, and Amstelland is looking for economic benefits from an increase in tourist spending in the area. Accommodating tourists in Amstelland thus follows logically from these demands. Transportation options can be increased by

having accommodation facilities offer bicycles and routes to the city centre, making this form of transport more accessible. An added value for the tourists is that they will have more space than they would when staying in the city centre. The specific target group that can be reached with this strategy is therefore a broad group of tourists who do not want to spend too much money on their city trip, or who would prefer to enjoy more personal space during their stay. This strategy could for example be ideal for attracting families. The duration of the stay of the tourists that would be attracted by this strategy could be anything between a few days to a couple of weeks.

Despite the fact that this accommodation strategy may not attract tourists that are specifically interested in Amstelland itself, the step towards visiting the area becomes smaller for tourists who already stay in the area: they do not have to travel far to reach Amsterdam and their interest can be sparked because they get an impression on what Amstelland looks like when travelling back and forth from the inner city. Some viewpoints on the kind of accommodation that is interesting to develop is illustrated by the comment of the following American tourist: *“If more hotels have to be built it is better if they follow the local architecture as the little houses and farms, not big hotels”*. In addition, the accommodations can be used as central places for the promotion of Amstelland. This strategy can be combined with enhancing the access to Amstelland by, for example, organising tours that depart from tourist accommodations, and designing footpaths and cycling routes. Lastly, tourists will likely spend money not only on their accommodation, but also on drinks in cafes, dinner in restaurants, groceries in supermarkets, and on travel and bike rental. An added benefit of this is that it allows for local entrepreneurs in Amstelland to profit from the tourists' money, without having to adjust the area too much to meet tourists' preferences with regard to attractions and amusement. The authenticity and local atmosphere can in this way be sustained.

Overall the benefits of this strategy are that it does not require many structural changes, and it caters to the need of directing tourists away from the city centre. In this scenario the current landscape and atmosphere can be maintained more easily, where some changes may be required to facilitate tours for the second strategy. One drawback is the current connectivity with the city, both where not all roads in the area are suitable for inexperienced cyclists, and the boat as well as bus connections are not frequent enough for easy travel. Next to this, the strategy does not aim to draw tourists into the area or market the area as a travel destination that is separate from Amsterdam, which may make it more difficult to build a separate identity for Amstelland.

Practical recommendations

The strategies mentioned above can be implemented separately, or combined to form one plan that approaches tourism from different sides. What is important for each of those is to connect with other interested stakeholders to reach a common ground in approaching tourism. Following is a final list of

the practical recommendations that can help Stichting Beschermers Amstelland, businesses and other relevant stakeholders to implement the strategies:

- Meetings with different stakeholders should be held to increase awareness on the different opportunities for tourism in the area as well as to reach a common viewpoint of what Amstelland represents and how this image can be marketed to tourists. This can build consistency on the representation of Amstelland online and across facilities in the area.
- An image of Amstelland can be constructed and promoted through a good website, which is accessible to non-Dutch speakers and includes information on Amstelland's characteristics as well as on all specific facilities and attractions, all linked to one identity.
- The public transport connection between Amsterdam and Amstelland could be improved in cooperation with the municipalities: more frequent bus connections, at more places, and until later in the evening. The same counts for the ferries to cross the Amstel.
- Local entrepreneurs and organisations can collaborate with the Amsterdam municipality and Amsterdam Marketing to ensure financial support and promotion. In addition, they can seek collaboration with other tourist information centres and travel guides.
- New facilities for accommodation could be established that specifically answer the needs of international tourists. An example could be a combined campsite and hostel between Amsterdam and Ouderkerk, close to the Amstel.
- Existing facilities can be improved or adjusted to the needs of the tourists. For instance, the bike repair shop in Ouderkerk could also start bike rentals. In addition, entrepreneurs can provide information, such as menus, flyers and maps in English.
- All local enterprises that could gain income from tourists should have information accessible for tourists on the Internet, for example on TripAdvisor and Facebook. Here it can be linked to other activities that can be undertaken in Amstelland, relating to its image.
- Bicycle, bus and boat tours can be organised that depart from the main tourist attractions and places for accommodation (both in Amstelland and in Amsterdam). Footpaths and bicycle routes should pass by the main tourist attractions and places for accommodation (in Amstelland).

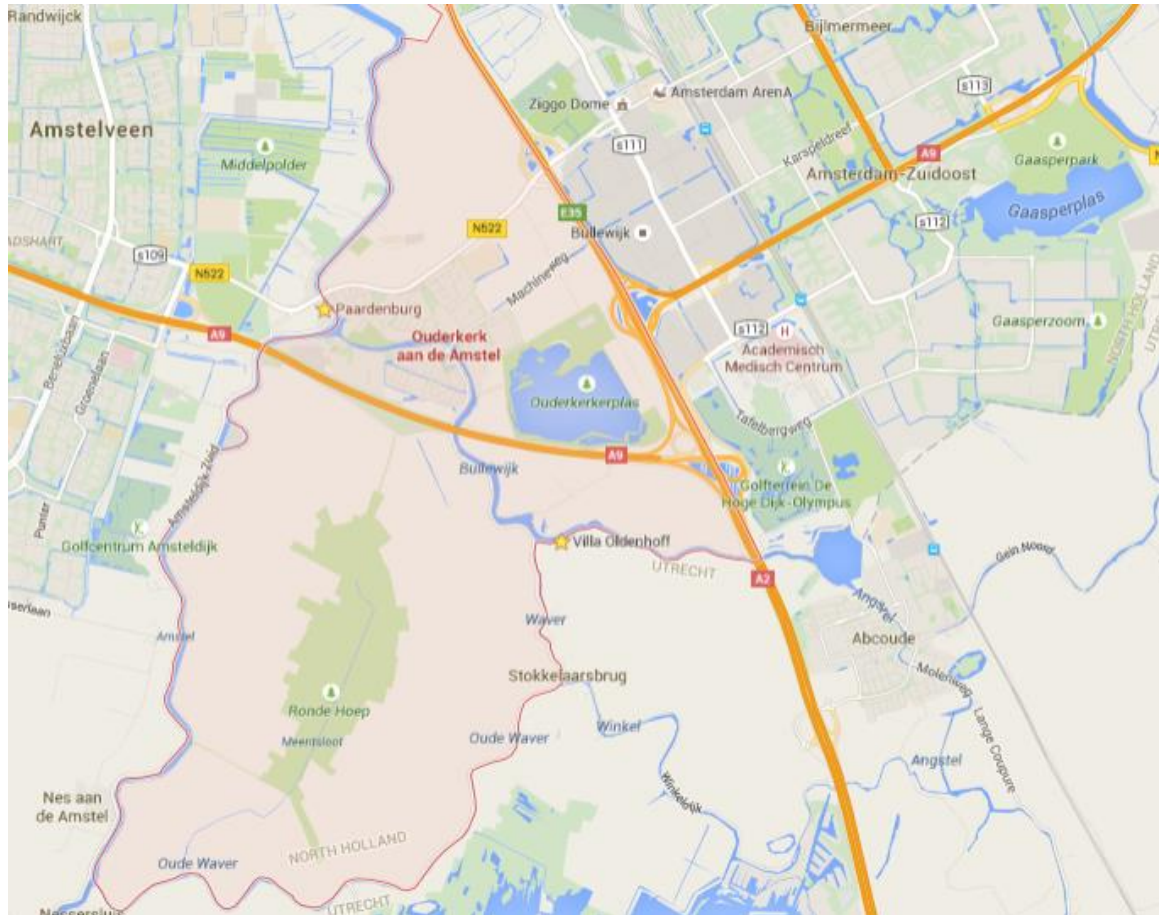
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Appendices

1: Map of Amstelland



2. Tour design Amstelland with photos

- St. Urbanus church & presby ...
- Elisabeth Hoeve
- ouderkerk aan de amstel
- Oudekerkerplas
- sibiz
- CGK Ouderkerk aan de Amstel
- swimming pool
- De Poortwachters
- Amstelkerk
- Little islands
- Fort bij Abcoude
- Portugese Israëli council of ...
- Bakery Out
- Hoogendijk
- Kerk bridge
- St. urbanuskerk
- Farm "Care and Hope"
- Abcoude
- Karma wooden dike house
- Townhall
- Botshol
- glass sculptures
- De port watchers
- Gemaal de Ronde Hoep
- Golfterrein De Hoge Dijk-Oly ...
- War monument
- Council house
- Abcoudemeer



3: Semi-structured interview

Topics for semi-structured interviews with tourists (5 min max)

How they heard about Amsterdam

- How did you hear about this area?
- Did you do any research by yourself to find it? How?

What motivates them to come to Amstelland

- Why did you decide to come to this area?
- What did you expect when coming here? (relaxation, sport, ...)?

How they experience Amstelland

- How long are you staying in Amstelland?
- What have you done so far in Amstelland?
- How did you enjoy it and would you recommend it?

What they think about recreational Amstelland

- Have you been to any cafés and restaurants in the area?
- If not: did you know that there are cafés and restaurants in the area?
- Have you visited anything in particular (bike rental, boerengolf etc., windmill)?
- What would you like to see in Amstelland? What would make your experience here better?

Topics for semi-structured interviews with organisations (10 min max)

Information on the frequency of international tourists encountered

- Do international tourists visit this facility?
- How many international tourists per day/month/year come to your facility?

Information on the activities that international tourists engage in

- Why do tourists come to your facility?
- Do you provide information (in English) on (other) facilities in the area?
- How do you think international tourists explore the area?
- What do tourists tell you of what they think of the area?

Potential to increase international tourist activity

- Do you think there is a way to attract more international tourists to Amstelland? How?
- Do you think there is a way to attract more international tourists to your facility? How?

4: Summary of interviews with tourist

	Who?	Where?	How did they find information on Amstelland?	What did they like in Amstelland?	What is missing in Amstelland?
22-5, morning	Japanese lady with husband	Gaasperplas	Via business and job searching	Nice park	They came for business
22-5, midday	Middle-aged American couple from New Jersey	Ouderkerk a/d Amstel	Internet and bike rental.	The typical Dutch landscape and quietness.	They come for the city but are interested in the countryside
22-5, midday	German boating competitor, with family	Ouderkerkerplas	His German boating organisation	Cycling opportunities and good location for the competition.	Information. Not a holiday destination.
22-5, afternoon	American couple	Rembrandt Hoeve	Bicycle tour via the internet	Windmills, beer and hydrology	They come for the city but are interested in the countryside
10-6, morning	Middle-aged couple from New Zealand	Gaaspercamping		Easy access and close to city. Many cyclists, nature is important.	They come for the city but are interested in the countryside
10-6, morning	Elderly couple from Denmark	Gaaspercamping		Cycling, canals. Nice green area.	They come for the city.
10-6, morning	Group of British young adults	Gaaspercamping	Internet	Camping was clean, experiencing the city	They come for the city
10-6, morning	British woman with husband	Gaaspercamping	Previous experience	Walking in Gaasperpark	They come for the city
10-6, morning	Young French couple	Gaaspercamping	Internet	Peaceful and low price	They come for the city
10-6, morning	Elderly Australian couple	Gaaspercamping	Previous experience	Close to the city	They come for the city
10-6, morning	Middle-aged German man with wife	Gaaspercamping	Previous experience	Walking the dog in the park	They come for the city, shops are closed. For nature he would go elsewhere.
10-6, morning	Elderly American man with wife	Gaaspercamping	Internet and friends	Friendly people and good facilities for camper. Close to the city	They come for the city
10-6, afternoon	American couple	Windmill the Riekermol	Internet, Trip Advisor	Countryside atmosphere, different from city	They come for the city but are interested in the countryside

5: Summary of interviews with organisations

	Who?	Where?	How is the access to information for tourists?	What do tourists like in Amstelland?	What is missing in Amstelland?
22-5, morning	Surf and Sailing Association	Ouderkerkerplas	Only flyers of business, happy to tell people more	Nice area for picnics in summer, watersports, cycling, walking, rollerblading	Not many tourists come, but there is potential. Support from municipality (Ouderkerk a/d Amstel) for expansion business
22-5, morning	Speelboerderij Elsenhove	In between Amstelveen and Ouderkerk	Google for Facebook and website in English	Beautiful surroundings. Family activities	Connection between local entrepreneurs and marketing organisations/tour companies. Transport. Potential for more tourists, not double. Not the target group.
22-5, morning	Groengebied Amstelland	Between Ouderkerk and Amsterdam		Rembrandt Hoeve and Riekermolens	More attractions and recreation opportunities. Connection between different organisations. Not many tourists come but there is potential
22-5, midday	Villa Oldenhoff	Near Rondehoep	Trip Advisor and Booking.com, high ratings. No information on Amstelland, only verbal	Tranquility in contrast to city. Typical Dutch landscape, openness and flatness	Tourists come for Amsterdam, information on Amstelland. Mostly business guests. Transport.
22-5, afternoon	Restaurant de Voetangel	Near Rondehoep	Via company or in Amsterdam	High water level, beautiful and surprising so close to city. Cycling.	Tourists come from Amsterdam only for daytrips. Not the target group
9-6, morning	Hotel Campanile	Gaasperpark	Internet	Lower price than city centre, easy connection with metro.	Tourists come for the city, not for the green area.
9-6, morning	Snackbar Gaasperplas	Gaasperpark	Via Gaaspercamping	Cheaper than city. Nice in summer	Tourists come for the city. Green area is dependent on weather. There are no attractions that draw tourists.
9-6, afternoon	Brasserie Paardenburg	Ouderkerk a/d Amstel	Via travel company and internet. No brochures. Points people to famous attractions	Polders and Amstel river. Close to centre of Amsterdam.	Not enough to do in Amstelland. Not many tourists come but there is potential. Transport (expensive).
9-6, afternoon	Restaurant twist	Ouderkerk a/d Amstel	No information in English	*their restaurant*, different from other options in Ouderkerk	Good weather.

9-6, afternoon	Poffertjeskraam	Ouderkerk a/d Amstel	Trip Advisor and bicycle rentals. No menu or information in English	Cycling, Jewish Cemetary, beautiful nature (Rondehoep)	More focus on Jewish tourism. Not many international tourists come but there is more potential. Not many attractions
10-6, midday	Historical Museum Ouder-Amstel	Ouderkerk a/d Amstel	Sign outside, accidental. Information in many languages, many leaflets	Their museum, cosiness, jewish cemetary. History of the area	Access to information, visibility online
10-6, afternoon	't Jagershuis	Ouderkerk a/d Amstel	Internet, also for places to visit. Redirects tourists to Amsterdam or Zaandam	Cycling and Ouderkerk	Transport and connectivity with the city. Not enough attractions.
10-6, afternoon	Rembrandt Hoeve	Between Ouderkerk and Amsterdam	Tour companies. Internet	Typical Dutch, cycling, kind people.	Good weather. No connection to other parts of Amstelland. Many tourists come.
10-6, afternoon	Bus tour organiser	Riekermol	Tour company	Typical Dutch, only hotspots	Tourists come for main attractions, the tour company decides which ones are visited
11-6, morning	Ferry man	Nes a/d Amstel	Boat and bicycle tours	Typical Dutch, water and using boat and bicycle	More routes. Sometimes tourists come, more potential
11-6, morning	Zomerbloemen pluktuin	Nes a/d Amstel	Internet, sign next to the road	Seasonal plants (tulips and pumpkins). Quietness in contrast to Amsterdam	More routes and facilities. Tourists are not target group but potential for more.
11-6, morning	Boerententen camping	Rondehoep	Internet, just driving around. No advertising in English. Gives information verbally, refers to the city	Dikes, close to city, water level, open space and calmness	Ouderkerk lacks a centre and VVV, transport and tour connections. Collaboration between organisations.
11-6, afternoon	Mike's bike tour	Amsterdam	Information transfer through guide and flyer	Cheese/clog farm and Amsterdamse bos	Many international tourists
Phone interview	Tulip Inn	Gaasperpark		Close to city	More promotion. Many tourists come, only for city
Phone Interview	Reijgershoeve B&B	Gaasperpark	No information on Amstelland, does not want to bother guests	Close to city	Most guests are tourists that come for city,
Phone interview	Boerderij Langerlust	Gaasperpark	No menu or website in English, low visibility	Nice for children	Not many tourists, potential for more but not their target group
Phone interview	Boerderij Polderzicht	Ouderkerk a/d Amstel		Polder and water landscape, quiet in contrast to city. Cycling	Mainly Dutch tourists

6: Flyers of bicycle tours collected during fieldwork

Countryside Bike Tour

Reservations preferred but walk ins accepted

A Great way to explore the Dutch landscape


We'll begin with a brief introduction and then we bike a little through the city where we give you a run down on skinny bridges, crooked building and bike filled canals. We then continue biking out to the beautiful countryside south of Amsterdam along the Amstel River, where we'll pass by funky houseboats, rowing clubs and people fishing. We'll show you one of the few remaining authentic windmills and visit an entertaining Dutch farmer at his cheese farm/clog factory, where he will demonstrate the traditional art of making wooden shoes. You can also have some free samples of authentic Dutch cheese, try on wooden shoes and go cow tipping (if you can catch them). Coming back into town we ride through the polders and parks such as the Amsterdamse Bos and Vondel park before finishing.

This guided bike tour is 20-25 kilometres long and lasts +/- 4 hours. We do not feel it is a strenuous tour and it is suitable from 10 years and above. It is a very flat ride with the hills consisting of bridges over bits of water. We do have stops throughout the tour so you are not riding for 4 hours straight. Join us for a fun and informative ride you'll be glad you decided to take!

Lunch: Feel free to pack a snack or lunch for out at the cheese farm.

March - November	
Daily	11:00
* No tours on Kingsday 27th of April 2015	
Prices	
Adults	25 €
Students/65+	22 €
Kids (10 -12)	18 €

Meeting point: Kerkstraat 134



Country Tour



Take a leisurely ride through Holland's flat, green landscape and visit a working farm in the heart of the Dutch countryside. The local farmer reveals the secrets of making wooden shoes and traditional, handmade Dutch cheeses. Enjoy delicious free cheese samples and pet the milking cows. If you like the cheese, the farmer will gladly sell you some or even carve your name on a pair of wooden shoes.

Other photogenic stops include: a windmill built in 1636 and a floating houseboat village. We explain how the Dutch (using windmills) claimed the Netherlands from the sea and take a few photos of you in front of the picturesque windmill. This is one of our most popular tours, so book early! Bring a snack if feel you may want to eat more than just cheese.



Tour Meeting Time: 10:15am
Tour Departure Time: 10:30am
Tour Duration: 4-5 hours
Tour Days: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, & Monday

7: Questionnaire for tourists in Amstelland



QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TOURISTS IN AMSTELLAND

Please be completely honest, as it will safeguard the integrity of our research.

PART A: RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND *(Please circle the right category)*

1. Age

- Below 20
- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Above 60

2. Sex

- Female
- Male

3. Nationality

.....

4. Travel company

- Friends
- Family
- Colleagues
- Alone
- Other

PART B: AMSTELLAND *(Please circle the right category)*

1. Have you been to the Amstelland area before?

- Yes
- No

2. How much time are you planning to spend here?

- 1-3 hrs
- 4-6 hrs
- 1 day
- 2-3 days
- Other

3. How do you know about Amstelland?

- Word of mouth
- Friends/family/colleague
- Social media
- Newspaper/brochure/newsletter
- Via tourist companies (e.g. hotels, tourist agencies, bike rentals)
- Other

4. What are the main reasons to visit Amstelland? On a scale from 1 = not important at all to 5 = extremely important

Culture (e.g. to visit historical and cultural places or to meet local people)	1	2	3	4	5
Pleasure seeking/fantasy (e.g. to seek adventure or to escape from daily life)	1	2	3	4	5
Physical experience (e.g. to be active or to get close to nature)	1	2	3	4	5
Amusement (e.g. to relax, enjoy the good weather or to recall memories)	1	2	3	4	5
Social (e.g. visit or spend time with friends and relatives)	1	2	3	4	5

5. How important is maintaining/preserving an area like Amstelland to you? On a scale from 1 = not important at all to 5 = extremely important

1 2 3 4 5

6. How do you evaluate the following aspects in Amstelland?
On a scale from 1 = very low to 5 = very high

Easy transport	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Hotels	1	2	3	4	5
Nature	1	2	3	4	5
Cafes and restaurants	1	2	3	4	5

7. Which facilities are important to have more of in Amstelland?
On a scale from 1 = not important at all to 5 = extremely important

Easy transport	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Hotels	1	2	3	4	5
Nature	1	2	3	4	5
Cafes and restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
Other				
				

8. How do you value this experience of Amstelland? On a scale from 1 = very low to 5 = very high

1 2 3 4 5

9. Do you plan to revisit this area? Please explain why.

- Yes
- No

Because,.....
.....
.....

10. Do have any additional comments or suggestions about Amstelland?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your response; your help is truly appreciated!

The results will be processed anonymously. If there are any further questions or you would like to receive the final results of our study, contact us on: act.amstelland@gmail.com

8: Questionnaire for tour participants



HOP-ON AMSTELLAND TOUR QUESTIONNAIRE

Please be completely honest, as it will safeguard the integrity of our research.

PART A: RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND *(Please circle the right category)*

1. Age

- Below 20
- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Above 60

2. Sex

- Female
- Male

3. Nationality

.....

4. Travel company

- Friends
- Family
- Colleagues
- Alone
- Other

PART B: AMSTELLAND *(Please circle the right category)*

1. Did you already know about Amstelland, if yes how?

- No
- Word of mouth

- Friends/family/colleague
- Social media
- Newspaper/brochure/newsletter
- Tourist companies (travel agencies, hotels, bike rentals)
- Other.....

2. Have you been to the Amstelland area before?

- Yes
- No

3. What are the main reasons for joining this tour? On a scale from 1 = not important at all to 5 = extremely important

Culture (e.g. to visit historical and cultural places or to meet local people)	1	2	3	4	5
Pleasure seeking/fantasy (e.g. to seek adventure or to escape from daily life)	1	2	3	4	5
Physical experience (e.g. to be active or to get close to nature)	1	2	3	4	5
Amusement (e.g. to relax, enjoy the good weather)	1	2	3	4	5
Social (e.g. visit or spend time with friends and relatives)	1	2	3	4	5

4. How important is maintaining/preserving an area like Amstelland to you?

On a scale from 1 = not important at all to 5 = extremely important

1 2 3 4 5

5. How do you evaluate the following aspects in Amstelland?
On a scale from 1 = very low to 5 = very high

Easy transport	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Hotels	1	2	3	4	5
Nature	1	2	3	4	5
Cafes and restaurants	1	2	3	4	5

6. Which facilities are important to have more of in Amstelland?
On a scale from 1 = not important at all to 5 = extremely important

Easy transport	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Hotels	1	2	3	4	5
Nature	1	2	3	4	5
Cafes and restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
Other				

7. How do you value this experience of Amstelland? On a scale from 1 = very low to 5 = very high

1 2 3 4 5

8. Do you plan to revisit this area? Please explain why.

- Yes
- No

Because,

.....

.....

9. Do have any additional comments or suggestions about Amstelland?

.....

.....


.....

.....

Thanks for your response; your help is truly appreciated!

The results will be processed anonymously. If there are any further questions or you would like to receive the final results of our study, contact us on: act.amstelland@gmail.com

9: Flyer for tour


**FREE BIKE TOUR
BRINGING TOURISTS
INTO THE WILD**
THURSDAY, JUNE 11TH 2015
**LOOK FOR THE SIGN:
"HOP-ON AMSTELLAND"**

Meeting point I :
 Museum Square
 (IAmsterdam Letters)
 Time: 10:00

Meeting point II :
 Cinema Pathe' Arena
 (Bijlmer Arena Train Station)
 Time: 10:30

Hop-on Amstelland consists of a student research team of Wageningen University that organizes this tour from the Amsterdam city centre to the lovely rural area of Amstelland. The tour is for free, but you are kindly asked to bring your own bike. We would like to hear about your experience of the tour.

Any questions/enquiry, please email us at: act.amstelland@gmail.com
 Find us on facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hoponamstelland>

10: Coding tree

<p>Personal details</p> <p>Tourists</p> <p> Age</p> <p> Nationality</p> <p> Company</p> <p> Alone</p> <p>Partner</p> <p> Family</p> <p> Friends</p> <p> Colleagues</p> <p> Reason for trip</p> <p> Holiday</p> <p>Business</p> <p>Duration of trip</p> <p> Entrepreneurs</p> <p> Age</p> <p> Type of enterprise</p> <p> Lodging</p> <p> Restaurant/cafe</p> <p> Sightseeing</p> <p> Organised tours</p> <p> Recreation</p> <p> Transport</p> <p> Organisations</p> <p> Age</p> <p> Type of organisation</p>	<p>Pers.</p> <p>Pers.tou.</p> <p> Pers.tou.age.</p> <p> Pers.tou.nat.</p> <p> Pers.tou.com.</p> <p> Pers.tou.com.alo.</p> <p>Pers.tou.com.par.</p> <p> Pers.tou.com.fam.</p> <p>Pers.tou.com.fri.</p> <p> Pers.tou.com.col.</p> <p> Pers.tou.rea.</p> <p> Pers.tou.rea.hol.</p> <p> Pers.tou.rea.bus.</p> <p>Pers.tou.dur.</p> <p>Pers.ent.</p> <p> Pers.ent.age.</p> <p> Pers.ent.typ.</p> <p> Pers.ent.typ.lod.</p> <p> Pers.ent.typ.res.</p> <p> Pers.ent.typ.sig.</p> <p> Pers.ent.typ.org.</p> <p> Pers.ent.typ.rec.</p> <p> Pers.ent.typ.tra.</p> <p>Pers.org.</p> <p> Pers.org.age.</p> <p> Pers.org.typ.</p>
<p>Enterprises</p> <p>Customers</p> <p> Locals</p> <p> Tourists</p> <p> International</p> <p> Dutch</p> <p> Business</p> <p>Target group</p> <p> Locals</p>	<p>Ent.</p> <p>Ent.cus.</p> <p> Ent.cus.loc.</p> <p> Ent.cus.tou.</p> <p> Ent.cus.tou.int.</p> <p> Ent.cus.tou.dut.</p> <p> Ent.cus.bus.</p> <p>Ent.tar.</p> <p> Ent.tar.loc.</p>

Tourists International Dutch Business Initiatives/innovation Cooperation Promotion	Ent.tar.tou. Ent.tar.tou.int. Ent.tar.tou.dut. Ent.tar.bus. Ent.ini. Ent.ini.coo. Ent.ini.pro.
Amstelland Environment Nature Culture Dutch character Sightseeing Weather Facilities Lodging Restaurant/cafe Organised tours Recreation Available routes Transport Physical engagement Relaxation and rest Escaping (Amsterdam)	Ams. Ams.env. Ams.env.nat.. Ams.env.cul. Ams.env.dut. Ams.env.sig. Ams.env.wea. Ams.fac. Ams.fac.lod. Ams.fac.res. Ams.fac.org. Ams.fac.rec. Ams.fac.ava. Ams.fac.tra. Ams.phy. Ams.rel. Ams.esc.
Access To information Websites Travel guides Flyers/posters/leaflets Mouth publicity Signs Maps Menus To Amstelland Transport Available routes	Acc. Acc.inf. Acc.inf.web. Acc.inf.tra. Acc.inf.fly. Acc.inf.mou. Acc.inf.sign. Acc.inf.map. Acc.inf.men. Acc.ams. Acc.ams.tra. Acc.ams.ava.
Tourists	Tou.

Reasons for visiting Amstelland	Tou.vis.
Environment	Tou.vis.env.
Nature	Tou.vis.env.nat.
Culture	Tou.vis.env.cul.
Dutch character	Tou.vis.env.dut.
Sightseeing	Tou.vis.env.sig.
Nice weather	Tou.vis.env.wea.
Facilities	Tou.vis.fac.
Lodging	Tou.vis.fac.lod.
Restaurant/cafe	Tou.vis.fac.res.
Organised tours	Tou.vis.fac.org.
Recreation	Tou.vis.fac.rec.
Available routes	Tou.vis.fac.ava.
Transport	Tou.vis.fac.tra.
Physical engagement	Tou.vis.phy.
Relaxation and rest	Tou.vis.rel.
Escaping (Amsterdam)	Tou.vis.esc.
Reasons for not visiting Amstelland	Tou.not.
Only for Amsterdam	Tou.not.onl.
No(t enough) interest in environment	Tou.not.env.
Nature	Tou.not.env.nat.
Dutch character	Tou.not.env.dut.
Sightseeing	Tou.not.env.sig.
Weather	Tou.not.env.wea.
No(t enough) facilities	Tou.not.fac.
Lodging	Tou.not.fac.lod.
Restaurant/cafe	Tou.not.fac.res.
Organised tours	Tou.not.fac.org.
Recreation	Tou.not.fac.rec.
Available routes	Tou.not.fac.ava.
Transport	Tou.not.fac.tra.
No(t enough) access	Tou.not.acc.
To information	Tou.not.acc.inf.
To Amstelland	Tou.not.acc.ams.
No(t enough) time	Tou.not.tim.

Lodging: hotels, B&B, camping

Sightseeing: places to visit/attractions (e.g. Jewish museum, cheese farm), events

Culture: e.g. parks, architecture

Recreation: e.g. playground, sunbathing, leisurely doing watersports

Organised tours: bike/bus/boat tours

Transport: public transport, bike rental, waterways

Physical engagement: doing sports (running, biking, watersports)

Relaxation and rest: space, calmness

Weather: refers not only to good weather but also to 'summer' as an indicator for good weather

11: Historical museum Ouder-Amstel visitor data

