

## About the editors

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Roel Rutten and Frans Boekema have been working as a team on the learning region for the better part of a decade. In 1998 they organized their first international seminar on the learning region, the results of which were published in an edited volume in 2000. Another conference followed in 2000, and again the outcomes were published in an edited volume in 2003. These two projects laid the groundwork for the present book. Two further seminars followed in 2002 and 2004. Although these seminars did not focus exclusively on the learning region, they dealt with the same questions and concepts that underlie the subject. The outcomes of these seminars were published in two special issues of *European Planning Studies* in 2004 and 2005 respectively. The seminars that Rutten and Boekema organized also served to build a network of international scholars working in the field of regions and innovation. Attending conferences in order to present their work was another element of the same strategy. Most notably, Rutten and Boekema participated in the conferences of the Regional Studies Association (in Europe) and the Western Regional Science Association (in the USA). The work that Rutten and Boekema presented and discussed at these conferences was often published in the form of book chapters.

The networking, the discussions at conferences, and the publications culminated, as if by an inescapable logic, in the present volume. Over the years, Rutten and Boekema have made connections with several of the most renowned scholars in the field of regions and innovation, and have developed their own approach to the learning region. Based on this combination of people and ideas, the present volume aims to make an important contribution to the literature on the learning region.

To date, Rutten and Boekema continue to work on follow-up projects on the learning region.

**Roel Rutten** (b. 1971) is Assistant Professor of Organization Studies in the Department of Organization Studies at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. He began his career as a consultant for ERAC (European Regional Affairs Consultants) in 1994. Among other things, ERAC specialized in European regional innovation policy, and it is in this field that Rutten was working during his ERAC years, from 1994 through 2001. During that same period he wrote a PhD thesis on regional innovation networks. The thesis was based

on an in-depth case study of the innovation network of Océ (a manufacturer of copiers and printers in the Netherlands) and its suppliers. Rutten began his present occupation in 2001. Among other things, he was involved in an evaluation study of approximately 100 temporary product development networks of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Eindhoven region in the Netherlands.

**Frans Boekema** (b. 1949) is Professor of Economic Geography and Extraordinary Professor of Euregional Management at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands and Associate Professor of Regional Economics at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. He studied regional economics and economic geography at Tilburg University and began his career as Assistant Professor in the department of Regional Economics in 1976. In 1986 he completed his dissertation on local initiatives and regional development. In 1990 he was appointed Associate Professor of Regional Economics and Economic Geography at Tilburg University and became part-time Professor in Economic Geography at the Faculty of Management Sciences of Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands in 1995. During this time he was also working as manager of the Regional Economic Department of the Economic Institute Tilburg, a research and consultancy institute. In 2006 he was appointed Extraordinary Professor of Euregional Management at Radboud University in Nijmegen. His main fields of research activities are: local and regional development, technological development and regional innovation systems, borders, border regions and border-crossing activities, clusters, networks and learning regions. He has published many articles and books on these subjects in the past decades.