



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Increasing urbanisation

The total built-up area in the Netherlands increased by 3.5% between 1993 and 1996. This increase brings the amount of urbanised land to ten per cent of the total area of the country. The area of woods and forests grew by more than the built-up area in the same period, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands. Both increases are at the expense of the available 'green open spaces' in the Netherlands.

More built-up areas

Over 100 square kilometres of new built-up areas were added to the existing total between 1993 and 1996. This is nearly the equivalent of the built-up area of Rotterdam and brings the total built-up area of the Netherlands to 9.4% of the country's total land area. The increase was largest in the province Zuid-Holland, where 23 square kilometres of green land was developed. The province Noord-Brabant has the largest area of developed land in an absolute sense, Flevoland the smallest.

Increases in wooded areas

There are more forests and woods than built-up areas in the Netherlands. Over 125 square kilometres of new wooded areas were planted between 1993 and 1996, bringing the total of woods and forests to 9.5% of the total area of the Netherlands. However, like the urban development of land, the planting of new woodlands is at the expense of other green open space.

Woodlands have increased relatively most - by one third - in the provinces Groningen and Zuid-Holland. The increase in Groningen consists largely of the cultivation of state subsidised quick-growing trees on agricultural land. The province of Gelderland has by far the most woodland, Zeeland the least.

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Other green spaces diminishing

The remainder of green land in the Netherlands consists mainly of agricultural land and natural countryside. The area of land used for agriculture decreased by nearly 250 square kilometres between 1993 and 1996, the equivalent of an area the size of Amsterdam. The area of natural countryside diminished by over 30 square kilometres. A large part of this area was used to plant new woodland.

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