



the netherlands in figures



Statistics Netherlands



the netherlands in europe	2
population	4
economy	6
international trade	8
labour force	10
prosperity	12
health	14
holidays	16
transport	18
agriculture	20
knowledge-based economy	22
regional aspects	24



Statistics Netherlands





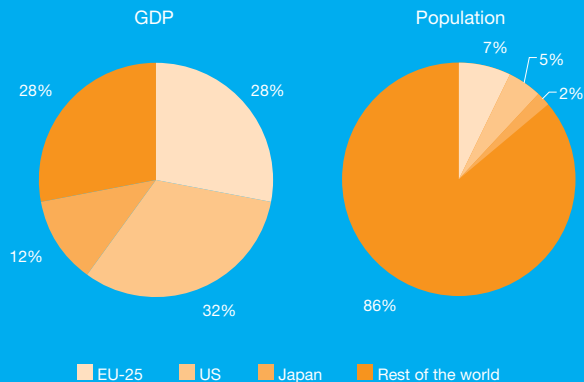
the netherlands

The Netherlands and the EU The most far-reaching enlargement to date of the European Union came into effect on 1 May 2004. Ten new countries joined the EU, bringing the total number of members to 25. In terms of land area the Netherlands is one of the smallest countries in the EU-25; only five countries are smaller. In terms of population, however, it is the seventh largest country. Unsurprisingly, therefore, after Malta the Netherlands is the most densely populated country in the EU, with 479 inhabitants per square kilometre. The Netherlands has the sixth largest economy in the EU, and is one of most prosperous countries: only in Luxembourg, Denmark and Ireland is GDP per capita higher.

Economic superpowers The European Union (EU), the United States (US) and Japan are the three most powerful economies in the world. Together they account for nearly three-quarters of global production. The economies of the EU-25 and the US are about equal in size, and more than twice as big as that of Japan. The EU has the largest population of the three; its 456 million inhabitants account for just over 7 percent of the world's 6.3 billion inhabitants. The populations of the US and Japan are 293 and 127 million people respectively. The land area of the three economies together accounts for just over 10 percent of the land in the world. Japan is the most densely populated, with 349 inhabitants per square kilometre. With 116 people per square kilometre, the EU is much more crowded than the US, which has only 31 inhabitants per square kilometre.

in the eu

**Gross domestic product (% of world production), 2002
and population (% of world population), 2003**



Source: World Bank, US Census Bureau.

The Netherlands and the EU-25

	unit	Netherlands	EU-25	Share of the Netherlands in EU-25 (%)
Area	1 000 km ²	33.8	3 973	0.9
Population	mln	16.3	456	3.6
Older than 65 yrs		2.3	75	3.0
Gross domestic product	bln euro	444.6	9 607	4.6
Unemployment (total)	1 000	321.0	19 031	1.7

Source: Eurostat, US Census Bureau, Statistics Netherlands.



population

More than 16 million inhabitants

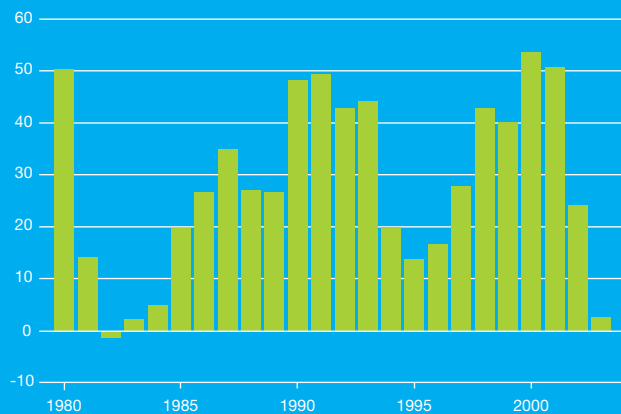
The population of the Netherlands has grown by 2 million people since 1980, to more than 16 million in 2003. Half of this growth consists of foreigners with a non-western background. Between 1980 and 2003 the number of non-westerners grew from 500 thousand to 1.6 million. Just over half of them are immigrants, the first generation non-western foreigners. The other half - the second generation - consists of their children, born in the Netherlands. In 2003 people of non-western descent accounted for 10 percent of the population. In 1980 this was only 3 percent. The Dutch population has changed in other aspects too: there are relatively fewer young people and more over-65s, and the share of people living alone has increased from 8 percent to 15 percent.

Changing immigration rates

The migration surplus (immigrants minus emigrants) has shown strong fluctuations in the last twenty years, ranging between 0 and 50 thousand. These swings are partly connected with the economic cycle. Immigration tends to drop off in times of rising unemployment, as it did in the early eighties, for example. In the years since 2000, too, falling economic growth has led to lower labour immigration rates. But immigration policy also affects the migration surplus. Stricter immigration rules introduced in 1994 resulted in a sharp fall in the number of immigrants, and the more recent drop was caused by the stricter Dutch asylum policy. The nature of migration has also changed. In 1980 a large part of immigration consisted of relatives arriving from Morocco and Turkey to reunite with their families. More recently, marriage migration has become more popular.

Migration surplus (incl. administrative corrections)

x 1 000



Population

	unit	1980	1990	2000	2003
Total population	1 000	14 091	14 893	15 864	16 193
Younger than 20 yrs	%	31.5	25.7	24.4	24.5
65 yrs or older		11.5	12.8	13.6	13.8
Non-western foreigners	1 000	475	831	1 409	1 623
First generation		382	562	886	1 005
Second generation		93	269	523	618
Households	1 000	5 006	6 061	6 801	7 002
One person		1 085	1 813	2 272	2 389
Two or more people		3 921	4 249	4 529	4 612



More international, more prosperous

The Dutch economy has changed considerably in the last twenty years. This is reflected in both the source and the amount of the national income. Today nearly half of the Dutch gross domestic product (GDP) is generated by commercial services. In 1980 this was 36 percent. Moreover the Dutch economy has become increasingly internationally oriented. Compared with twenty years ago, more goods and services are sold abroad, and more are imported from other countries. Since 1980 imports and exports have grown by much more than GDP. Part of this growth was caused by the substantial increase in re-exports. The Dutch standard of living has increased considerably. In 2003, per capita GDP was nearly one and a half times the level in 1980.

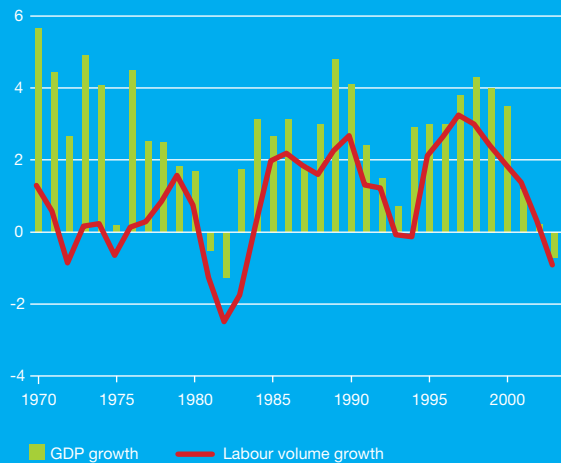
The 'Polder model'

The Dutch economy started to stall at the end of the seventies. Unemployment rose to above 10 percent, against a background of high inflation and hefty wage increases. The gloomy situation pressed trade unions, employers and the government to negotiate an agreement encompassing wage restraints, shorter working hours and tax cuts. The remaining margin for pay increases created by this Polder model was used to create new jobs in the private sector. This successful approach pushed up employment by an average 1.8 percent annually in the period 1984-2000. The job growth was accompanied by a slower growth in labour productivity, which rose by an average 1.1 percent a year in the same period. In the period 2000-2003 the economy again suffered a setback, and unemployment has again started to rise. Once more employers and employees have agreed to curb wage increases.

economy

GDP and labour volume

% volume change



Economic key indicators

	unit	1980	1990	2000	2003 ¹⁾
GDP (volume)	1980=100	100	124.8	166.1	167.3
GDP per capita	1 000 euro	15.4	18.2	22.8	22.5
Goods producers	% of value added	37.4	34.3	28.6	27.3
Commercial services		35.9	42.1	48.9	48.5
Non-commercial services		26.7	23.6	22.2	24.1
Imports (volume)	1980=100	100	140.7	263.8	270.9
Exports (volume)		100	154.0	296.1	301.4
Labour productivity (volume)	1980=100	100	117.3	131.3	131.7

¹⁾ Provisional figures.



international

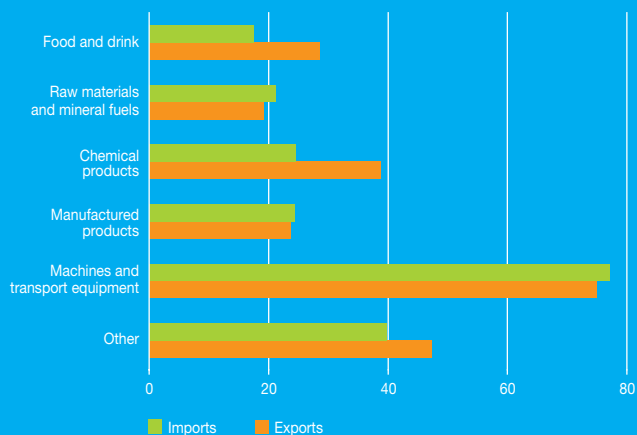
Nation of exports The Netherlands has traditionally always been a trading nation, with extensive import and export flows. In the period 1980-2003, the value of Dutch exports rose from 67 to 232 billion euro. The value of imports also grew, but more slowly: from 69 to 204 billion euro. Three-quarters of Dutch exports in 2003 went to the fourteen 'old' countries of the European Union, while half of imports came from these countries. Germany is still the Netherlands' most important trading partner by far, accounting for nearly a quarter of Dutch exports and one fifth of imports.

Goods package More than half of Dutch imports and exports consist of foodstuffs, chemical products and machines. The share of the latter category (including transport equipment) is the largest by far. In 2003, 32 percent of exports and 38 percent of imports consisted of machines. The largest category within machines is computers, most of which are imported into the Netherlands en route to other countries. Indeed a considerable proportion of goods imported into the Netherlands leave the country again immediately, or after brief processing, thus contributing to Dutch exports. Many of these goods are imported from the US and Asia and are destined for the European hinterland. This largely explains why the Netherlands has a trade deficit with non-EU countries, and a trade surplus with the fourteen 'old' EU countries.

trade

Goods imported to and exported from the Netherlands, 2003

bln euro



International trade

bln euro

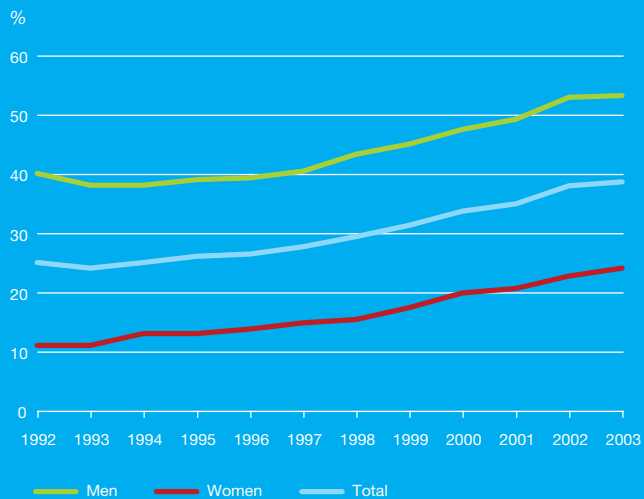
	1980	1990	2000	2003
Export value, total	67	109	232	232
EU countries (15)	53	87	179	176
Germany	20	30	60	57
Import value, total	69	104	216	204
EU countries (15)	41	71	119	116
Germany	16	27	38	41
Balance of trade, total	-2	5	16	28
EU countries (15)	12	16	60	60
Germany	4	3	22	16
Non-EU (15) countries	-14	-13	-44	-32

labour force

More women in work In 2003, 7.1 million people in the Netherlands had a paid job of at least twelve hours a week. This is the equivalent of 65 percent of the Dutch population aged 15-64 years. Twenty-two years earlier labour participation was 52 percent. The employed labour force grew faster than the total population between 1981 and 2003. Most of this growth was caused by higher employment rates for women, who have been in the process of catching up their male peers for years. The labour participation rate for women rose from 30 percent in 1981 to 55 percent in 2003. There is still a large gap between male and female participation, though: three-quarters of 15-64 year-old men had a job in 2003.

Higher employment at older ages Some 39 percent of 55-64 year-olds had a paid job of at least twelve hours a week in 2003. This is lower than the labour participation rate for 45-55 year-olds, of whom 75 percent had a job. The percentage of older people in employment today is significantly higher than some ten years ago. Participation in this age group was at its lowest level at that time, with one quarter of 55-64 year-olds in work. This was the result of the sharp fall in employment among older men in the seventies and eighties. Participation rates of older women hardly changed in this period. The tide turned in the nineties. At the low point in 1994, 38 percent of older men had a paid job. Since then their participation has risen, and in 2003 it was 53 percent. Participation among older women has also increased since the early nineties, from 11 to 24 percent.

Labour participation among 55-64 year-olds



Total and employed population aged 15-64 yrs

	unit	1981	1990	2000	2003
Total	1 000	9 365	10 228	10 728	10 920
Employed		4 848	5 644	6 917	7 114
Labour participation	%	52	55	64	65
Men	1 000	4 738	5 182	5 434	5 525
Employed		3 477	3 686	4 161	4 162
Labour participation	%	73	71	77	75
Women	1 000	4 627	5 046	5 294	5 395
Employed		1 400	1 958	2 755	2 952
Labour participation	%	30	39	52	55



Income inequality has grown...

Dutch households had an average disposable income of 27.7 thousand euro in 2001. This is nearly 3 thousand euro more than in the previous year. The increase was partly caused by extensive tax reforms in 2001.

Provisional calculations for 2002 show a small increase in disposable income.

Income inequality increased in the period 1981-2001. In 2001 the disposable income of the richest twenty percent of households was 6.4 times as much as that of the poorest twenty percent. The disparity grew in the second half of the eighties when wages rose quickly, while minimum wage levels and social benefits were frozen. In 2001, too, income inequality rose, as tax reforms increased the purchasing power of people with income from labour by more than that of those claiming benefit.

... but so has purchasing power

The average purchasing power of households rose by nearly 30 percent between 1981 and 2002. The increase was not a smooth one, though. In the early eighties, the stagnating economy resulted in prices rising more quickly than wages and benefits, which meant that consumers were able to buy less with their money. After 1985 inflation fell and purchasing power started to rise quickly again. In 1990 it was 8 percent higher than in 1981.

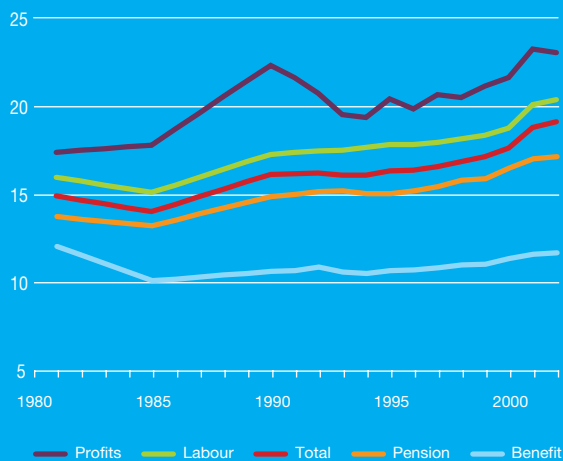
At the beginning of the nineties the economy fell into a dip again, and in 1995 average purchasing power was hardly higher than in 1990. It picked up subsequently, as incomes increased, partly because fewer households were dependent on a benefit. Tax reforms pushed up purchasing power even further in 2001, but the strong growth came to halt in 2002.

prosperity

13

Purchasing power by main source of household income

1 000 euro



Income

	unit	1981	1990	2000	2001 ¹⁾
Disposable income per household	1 000 euro	15.0	18.4	24.8	27.7
One person		8.6	10.5	14.8	16.3
Two or more people		16.9	21.7	29.9	33.8
Income inequality	<i>highest 20%/lowest 20%</i>	5.2	5.9	5.8	6.4
Income share of 20% highest incomes	%	37.0	38.6	38.4	39.8
Income share of 20% lowest incomes		7.2	6.6	6.6	6.2

¹⁾ Provisional figures.

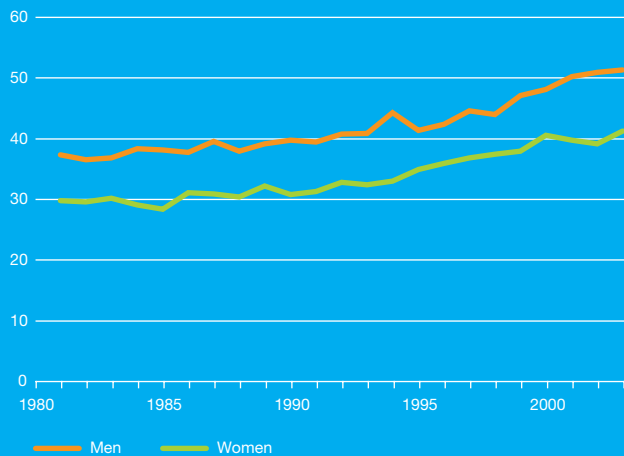
health

Fewer GP house calls Some three-quarters of the Dutch population consulted their general practitioner (GP) at least once in 2003. This percentage rose from 69 in 1981 to 75 in 1990, and has been fairly constant since then. The Dutch contacted their GP nearly four times on average in 2003. The form these contacts take has changed since 1981. While house calls by GPs accounted for 14 percent of consultations in 1981, this had fallen to 4 percent by 2003. Consultations by telephone on the other hand more than doubled from 6 to 13 percent. More than 78 percent of the population had at least one appointment with a dentist in 2003. This was up from 61 percent in 1981. On average the Dutch visit their dentists nearly three times a year. By far most dental appointments are for regular check-ups.

More people overweight Like smoking and excessive drinking, being overweight is a serious health risk. An increasing proportion of Dutch adults are overweight. The percentage of the population aged 20 years and older who are overweight (body mass index > 25) rose from 33 to 46 between 1981 and 2003. The share of people who are seriously obese even doubled to 11 percent. Relatively more men than women are overweight: over half of men weigh too much, compared with 41 percent of women.

Overweight (body mass index of 25 or higher)

% of population aged 20 yrs or older



Contact with GP and dentist

	unit	1981	1990	2000	2003
Contact with GP in 1 year	%	69.3	75.4	75.6	74.4
Consultations per person in 1 year	<i>1</i>	3.6	3.7	4.1	3.9
Form of contact with GP					
At GP's surgery	%	80.2	79.5	81.8	82.4
House calls by GP		13.7	12	5.2	3.9
Telephone		5.5	7.6	12.5	12.8
Contact with dentist in 1 year	%	60.9	71.3	78.2	78.2
Consultations per person in 1 year	<i>1</i>	.	1.9	2.4	2.6



Six out of ten holidays abroad

Three-quarters of the Dutch population went on holiday at least once in 2003, compared with 68 percent of the population in 1980. The total number of holidays rose by two-thirds to more than 22 million in the same period. Not only are more Dutch people going on holiday, therefore, they are also going more often. In 2003 holidaymakers went on holiday twice a year on average. More and more people are holidaying abroad, too. In 2003 six in ten holidays were spent outside the Netherlands, up from five in ten in 1980. This trend is also reflected in holiday spending; the amount spent on foreign holidays tripled in the space of twenty years, while that spent on holidays within the Netherlands doubled.

France most popular destination

The number of foreign holidays dropped slightly in 2003: the Dutch spent 16.8 million short breaks and holidays abroad, 300 thousand fewer than in 2002. France remains the most popular country for Dutch holidaymakers. They spent more than 17 percent of all foreign holidays there in 2003, although this was down on the 20 percent spent there in 2002. Germany and Belgium are in second and third place respectively, accounting for 15 and 14 percent of Dutch holidays. In the Mediterranean, Spain and Greece have become slightly less popular destinations for Dutch holidaymakers, whereas Turkey is gaining popularity.

holidays

17

Foreign destinations (holidays and short breaks)

% of total



Holidays (i.e. four or more nights spent away from home)

	unit	1980	1990	2000	2003
People taking at least one holiday	%	67.5	69.9	74.0	74.8
Total number of holidays	<i>mln</i>	13.6	16.4	19.0	22.0
In the Netherlands	%	50	46	39	41
Abroad		50	54	61	59
Spending on holidays	<i>bln euro</i>	3.9	5.7	9.3	10.8
In the Netherlands		1.0	1.1	1.5	1.8
Abroad		2.9	4.6	7.8	9.0

transport

Getting around In January 2003 8.4 million motor vehicles were registered in the Netherlands, more than one and a half times the number in 1980. Eight in ten motor vehicles are cars, one in ten is a van, and one in twenty a motorcycle. In the last quarter of a century the number of motorcycles has increased fivefold and the number of vans has quadrupled. The number of heavy goods vehicles consisting of tractors for trailers tripled, although the number of other heavy goods vehicles remained about the same. The number of cars increased by half.

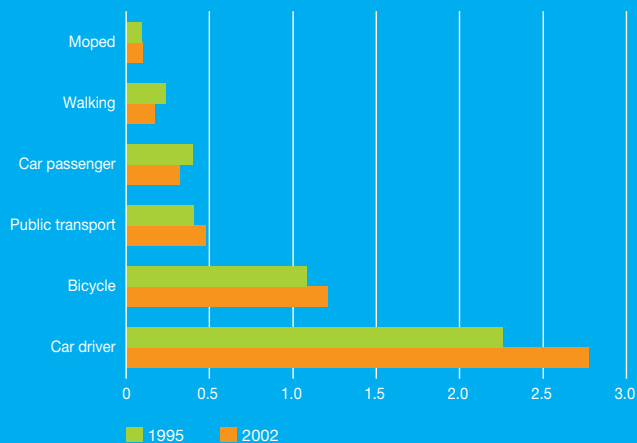
In addition to being a nation of drivers, the Dutch are also keen cyclists: more than 80 percent of the population have at least one bicycle.

Getting to work On average, more than 5 million people travelled to and from work in the Netherlands every working day in 2002, 13 percent more than in 1995. Just over 60 percent of these commuters travelled by car, nearly 10 percent used public transport, one quarter cycled and 3 percent walked to work. Car drivers were responsible for most of the growth in the number of commuter kilometres. On an average working day in 2002, they drove 26 million kilometres more than on a similar day in 1995. Part of this increase was the result of the extra half kilometre each driver travels to work on average compared with 1995. But by far most of the increase was caused by the growing number of car drivers among commuters: over half a million more people drove to work in 2002 than in 1995.



Commuters

x mln



Vehicles

x 1 000

	1980	1990	2000	2003
Motor vehicles	4 993	5 801	7 641	8 388
Cars	4 515	5 118	6 343	6 855
Motorcycles	103	143	414	494
Vans	222	385	696	836
HGV tractors (for trailers)	23	33	57	63
Other heavy goods vehicles (HGV)	87	84	83	82
Other	43	38	48	58
Bicycle owners	10 580	11 850	13 026	13 197¹⁾

¹⁾ 2002.



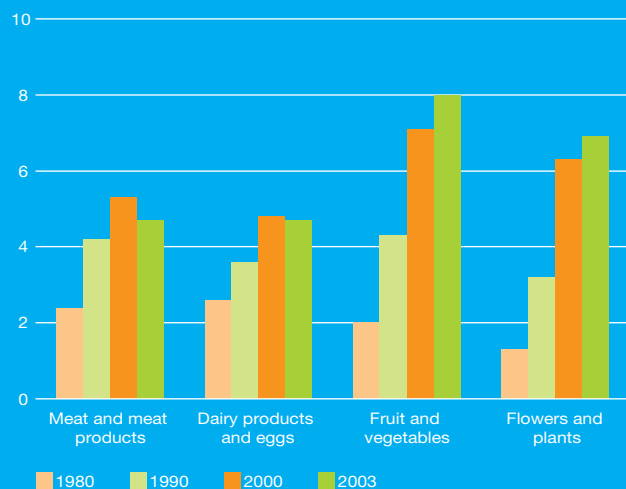
agriculture

Internationally oriented The agricultural sector in the Netherlands is largely geared to the export market. The main export products from this sector are flowers and plants, fruit and vegetables, dairy products and meat. Together these products represented an export value of 24.3 billion euro. Nearly 90 percent of agricultural products were exported to the fourteen 'old' countries of the European union, with Germany the main customer. Exports of agricultural products have remained stable in recent years; their total value of 31.5 billion euro accounts for around 14 percent of all Dutch exports.

Increase in scale The number of farms and horticultural businesses in the Netherlands is falling steadily. More than 40 percent of farmers and market gardeners have gone out of business since 1980. The remaining 85.5 thousand farms operate on nearly 2 million hectares of land, 57 percent of the total land area of the Netherlands. The agricultural sector accounts for 2.5 percent of the total gross domestic product (GDP). The quarter of largest farms in the Netherlands accounts for two-thirds of production by the sector. Of the remaining 65 thousand farms, more than half are too small to subsist on agricultural activities alone. These are smallholdings which are either in the process of being wound up, or have an additional source of income alongside their farming activities. Together, this substantial group - some 35 thousand farms - accounts for less than 8 percent of agricultural production.

Agricultural exports

bln euro



Agriculture

	unit	1980	1990	2000	2003
Businesses	<i>1 000</i>	145	125	97	86
Less than 5 ha		47	41	30	26
5 to 15 ha		47	35	24	20
15 to 50 ha		47	42	34	30
50 ha or more		4	6	9	10
Farmland	<i>mln ha</i>	2.02	2.01	1.96	1.92
Arable crops		0.70	0.80	0.81	0.81
Grass land		1.20	1.10	1.01	0.99
Horticultural crops		0.11	0.10	0.11	0.12

knowledge-based

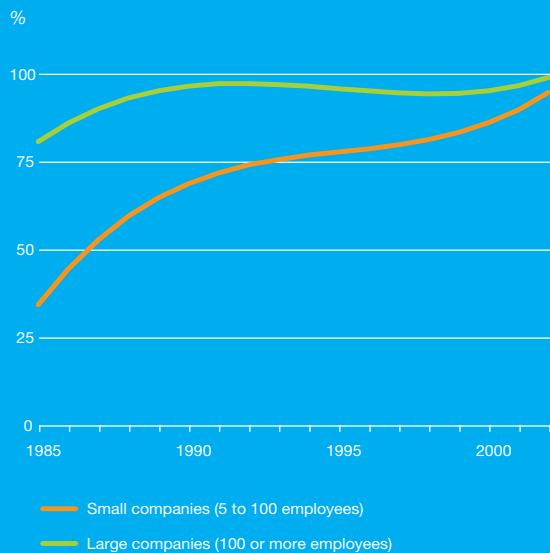
Research and development Spending on research and development (R&D) in the Netherlands rose by an average 2.5 percent a year in the period 2000-2002. This increase is well below the 5.1 percent growth in the value of the gross domestic product (GDP). As a result, R&D intensity, i.e. R&D spending as a percentage of GDP, fell from 1.90 percent in 2000 to 1.81 percent in 2002. Looking back further, the private sector in particular determined the development in R&D spending, and thus in R&D intensity in the period 1980 to 2002. On average, the private sector accounted for about 55 percent of R&D expenditure. The public sector - universities and research institutes together - provided the remainder.

ICT use by companies The speed with which a new technology spreads usually follows a fixed pattern: first it is used by a few pioneers, then the masses become interested, and lastly it is accepted by the stragglers. This was how Dutch society became acquainted with information and communication technology (ICT), which is now widely used for many practical purposes. In the space of roughly two decades what began with the use of a few mainframe computers has developed into wide scale ICT use, including new developments such as the Internet and e-commerce. In the mid eighties eight in ten large companies in the Netherlands used computers. Smaller companies waited for a number of years, hesitating because of the necessary expertise, the costs and the limited range of possible applications. They only caught up with large companies in the area of ICT at the end of the nineties.

economy

23

Companies using computers



ICT use and R&D spending

	unit	1980	1990	2000	2002 ¹⁾
ICT use by companies % of all companies					
Large companies	.		69	87	95
Small companies	.		96	95	98
	.		68	86	94
R&D spending mln euro					
	1980=100	2 880	5 042	7 655	8 050
R&D spending		100	175.1	265.8	279.5
GDP (current prices)		100	151.5	250.3	276.7
R&D spending % of GDP					
Companies		1.79	2.07	1.90	1.81
Universities		0.93	1.09	1.11	1.03
Research institutes		0.44	0.58	0.53	0.51
		0.43	0.40	0.26	0.27

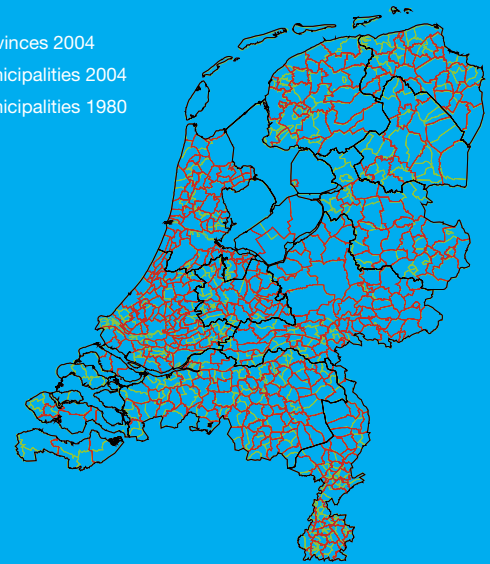
¹⁾ Provisional figures.

regional aspects

Constant change Natural boundaries are liable to change in the Netherlands: land has been reclaimed from lakes and urbanisation has increased. This has led to frequent changes in local administrative units. For a long time the Netherlands consisted of 11 provinces. In 1986 a twelfth province was established, created from land reclaimed from the former Zuyder Zee. At the municipal level, the country counted 810 municipalities in 1980, but only 483 in 2004, the result of yearly municipal mergers and redivisions. The number of smaller municipalities (fewer than 25 thousand inhabitants) in particular has diminished strongly. Although for years government policy had aimed at creating larger municipalities, today it is focusing more on collaboration between municipalities. With its continually changing administrative division, the Netherlands clearly differs from most other countries in Europe.

Provinces and municipalities

- Provinces 2004
- Municipalities 2004
- Municipalities 1980





Varied land use The most urbanised areas are in the west of the Netherlands. There the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, with the smaller towns and cities in between, have merged to form the so-called Randstad region. In the south-east of the country, too, there is a nearly contiguous group of cities, which - together with Aachen (Germany) and Liège (Belgium) - form a cross-border agglomeration. Most of the land in the north, the east and the south-west of the Netherlands is used for farming. Although there are urban areas there, they are smaller and more scattered. The regions are characterised by arable and livestock farming. Extensive areas of rural landscape - often in the form of wildlife sanctuaries, and national and regional parks - are mainly in the centre, the north-east and the south of the Netherlands. But government policy is also directed at preserving areas of open countryside and farmland in the densely populated west of the country.

Land use, 2000

- > 50% urban
- > 50% agricultural
- > 50% forests and natural areas
- mixed





The Netherlands in figures is compiled by Statistics Netherlands and gives an overview of some important aspects and developments of Dutch society in the last quarter of a century.

Visit our website
www.cbs.nl
for more figures,
other publications
and additional
information to
the figures
presented here.