

Regional Outlook 2019

NETHERLANDS

Regional Development Policy in the Netherlands



General policy approach

The Netherlands currently does not have an explicit regional policy, but applies a regional focus to several policy domains. The focus on regional strengths and attention to regional differences has been followed up and strengthened by the new government formed in October 2017. The new Regional Budget, for example, is a financial instrument that allows co-operation and collaboration between the national government, regional governments, the business community, academia and civil society on addressing specific regional challenges.

In addition, the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations co-ordinates the National Urban Agenda (Agenda Stad), which includes measures to boost economic growth, quality of life and innovation in Dutch cities and supports the creation of city deals.

The third Rural Development Programme has a focus on innovation and sustainability to enable the agricultural sector to maintain a strong competitive position with fewer negative effects for the environment, landscape and society.

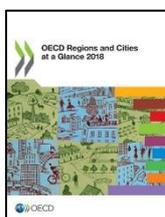
Recent policy changes

- In 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality introduced the Regional Budget as a financial instrument to address specific regional challenges and foster co-operation between the national government, regional governments, the business community, academia and civil society. The fund contains EUR 950 million for the 2018-22 period.
- The National Environmental Planning Strategy (NOVI), which will be implemented in 2019, will provide a comprehensive vision for the living environment in the Netherlands. The Dutch provinces and municipalities will also develop local and provincial environmental planning strategies, which together will comprise long-term national and regional plans for the broader living environment in the Netherlands. Four priorities have been identified: 1) stimulate sustainable economic growth potential for the Netherlands; 2) provide space for climate change and the energy transition; 3) foster strong and sustainable cities and regions with capacities for living, housing and mobility; and 4) work towards future-resistant development of rural areas.
- The Top Sector programme offers a broad-based approach to stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation, mainly through fiscal instruments, as well as a focus on nine priority sectors. The policy has an impact on the environment and innovation resources located in different regions. This policy was renewed and strengthened in 2018 through the Mission Driven Innovation Policy.
- In 2016, the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REOS) was initiated by the national government and regional partners (triple helix). It focuses on the three most important economic regions in the Netherlands and provides the strategy to stay among the most successful global economies, for example by increasing the connection between these urban areas and their economic hubs to achieve more cohesion and improve the sustainability of economic activities.

Institutional arrangements to prepare for global megatrends

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At the national level, the National Environmental Planning Strategy will provide a comprehensive vision of the physical environment, and replace several existing policy plans (for example, the National Policy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning). Its development goes hand-in-hand with the new Environmental and Planning Act (Omgevingswet), which will enter into effect in January 2021. The Environmental and Planning Act seeks to modernise, harmonise and simplify current rules on land-use planning, environmental protection, nature conservation, construction of buildings, protection of cultural heritage, water management, urban and rural development, development of major public and private works, and mining and earth removal, and integrate such rules into one legal framework.

At the subnational level, the Environmental and Planning Act also requires provinces and municipalities to develop a vision on their entire living environment. The visions are future-oriented and provide a broad strategic outlook on how to deal with upcoming trends. These visions are called provincial environmental planning strategies and municipal environmental planning strategies.

OECD Regional Outlook 2019: Leveraging Megatrends for Cities and Rural Areas

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