

The Netherlands: The smart choice for your future

Virtually every country in the world is facing major social challenges in the fields of health care, energy, mobility, safety and the climate. Dutch companies and research institutes are developing technology solutions that enhance everyday life and lighten some of its burdens.



The Netherlands is known for its pragmatic mentality, its smart application of technologies, its collaborative partnerships and its flat organization structure. As a result, highly skilled technical designers and shop floor employees are able to work together effortlessly and efficiently tackle issues without any qualms about speaking their minds. The good collaboration between government, research institutes and industry is another positive characteristic of our open Dutch culture.

The Netherlands' centuries-old tradition of creativity, pragmatism, entrepreneurship, openness and willingness to collaborate has proven to be the ideal breeding ground for high-tech systems and materials. A past example of these Dutch traits is the sawmill. Present-day solutions vary from navigation systems to systems that transform food-crop waste into energy. These qualities make the Netherlands the perfect place to find solutions to today's social challenges. Solutions that are often the result of crossovers in technology.

Key Enabling Technologies

It is not surprising that the Netherlands also plays a central role in the development of key enabling technologies. The high-tech systems and materials sector facilitates the development of many applications in the energy, food processing, chemical and life sciences sectors. The focus is on innovations in the fields of electronics, mechatronics, nanotechnology, applied materials, manufacturing processes and equipment. Philips, ASML, DAF, FEI, Océ, Vanderlande, Thales and Fokker are some of the OEMs contributing to the success of the Dutch high-tech ecosystem. Dutch companies and knowledge institutes invest heavily in European R&D programmes. In addition, substantial public-private partnerships have been forged in which industry and government make joint investments to promote the development of new knowledge and innovations. Large and small companies work closely together with research institutes such as TNO, NLR, MESA+, Holst Centre, ESTEC and ESI, as well as the Technical Universities of Delft, Twente and Eindhoven.

A joining of forces

A prime example of such a collaboration is the open high-tech supply chain Brainport Industries with its tier-one, tier-two and tier-three suppliers. OEMs competing on the international market for high-mix, low-volume, high-complexity machines are increasingly outsourcing the development and manufacturing of larger non-core modules and components to suppliers from the high-tech manufacturing industry. Suppliers are evolving from manufacturers to strategic development partners and as such are constantly compelled to expand their boundaries in terms of manufacturing and design. This can be quite challenging for individual suppliers in the high-tech chain. Collectively, however, they can lower the barriers to entry by forming a united front. Thanks to this supply chain, the OEMs will actually find it easier to serve their customers.

Another example is the Dutch Society for Precision Engineering (DSPE), a community consisting of engineers from all kinds of companies and institutes in the high-tech sector. All of the above are examples of how the Dutch high-tech ecosystem is able to deliver ever more creative solutions at an ever increasing pace.

Social and work environment

A point not to be neglected is the pleasant social and work climate in the Netherlands. The Dutch are seen as open-minded and informal in their personal relationships, and they speak English. Research shows that people value the high standard of living, salaries in the technology sector and the work-life balance the Netherlands has to offer. Research also shows that foreign technology peers see the Netherlands as a pioneering nation in the area of technology. All this plays a significant role in encouraging young Dutch people to seek employment in the technology sector. After all, an environment offering proper training, exciting jobs and good living conditions, gives young people trying to decide on their study or career paths ample opportunity for further self-development. People enjoy working in the Dutch advanced technology sector: companies usually have a low level of hierarchy, a multicultural setting and a highly result-oriented approach. It's an environment in which employees from different backgrounds quickly feel at home allowing them to develop their individual talents. Even as newcomers to the business they are given plenty of responsibility and offered good career prospects. Innovative companies effectively serve as technology playgrounds for 'golden heads and hands'. Working for companies with such a strong international competitive edge to develop solutions to highly topical social issues is positively challenging. Take ASML, where the focus is on 'shrink', i.e. the miniaturization of chips. ASML is a company to be reckoned with as almost all mobile phone chips are produced by their lithography machines. The smaller, the easier to handle.

Foreign subsidiaries

Foreign subsidiaries are drawn to the Netherlands thanks to its excellent business infrastructure, its open relationship with government, knowledge institutes and other companies, the high level of its technical universities, Dutch work ethic and the ensuing high productivity. Many Dutch companies owe their success to their mutual openness and transparency. What's more, the Dutch government is committed to reducing the administrative burden and simplifying regulations, in addition to which its special position as active launching customer plays an important role. The collaboration between industry and knowledge institutes is a point of particular interest. A perfect example is the Brainport region of Eindhoven. At the end of the last century, this region successfully transitioned from industrial manufacturing to a creative and high-tech knowledge economy. Industry, government and knowledge institutes have jointly formulated strategies aimed at promoting innovative developments at both the national and regional level. New technologies are an indispensable driving force behind innovations and progress in the 21st century. The key to any successful business is the ability to recognize the importance of a talented and creative workforce. After all, creativity helps shape the future. Tolerance, openness and cultural diversity are also crucial to economic growth. The Netherlands is one of the top players in the high-tech sector and the obvious choice for products, knowledge and concepts. It is also the obvious choice for high-end jobs for foreign knowledge workers, professionals, and, last but not least, training. It's also the place to be for research and development in the area of technology and innovation, and for collaboration and technology partnerships. All in all, the Netherlands is a country that offers excellent business conditions for domestic and foreign technology companies alike. It's an attractive place to live and work for entrepreneurs, researchers and students.

For more information

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