

European Cohesion Policy in the Netherlands

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The European Union (EU) comprises 27 Member States forming a community and single market of 493 million citizens. However, great economic and social disparities still remain among these countries and their 271 regions. European Cohesion Policy is at the centre of the effort to improve the competitive position of the Union as a whole, and its weakest regions in particular.

Through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), otherwise known as the Structural Funds, as well as the Cohesion Fund, it invests in thousands of projects across all of Europe's regions to achieve its primary task: to promote economic and social cohesion by reducing these disparities between Member States and regions. With a budget of **€347 billion** for 2007–13, Cohesion Policy represents the single largest source of financial support at EU level for investment in growth and jobs, designed to enable *all regions* to compete effectively in the internal market.

However, as the challenges facing Europe's regions have changed over time, so too has the policy. Against a background of momentous change in the Union as a result of enlargement and of increasing globalisation, concerns about energy supplies, demographic decline, climate change and more recently, world recession, the policy has evolved, in step, as a key part of the response to meet these new realities.

Cohesion Policy 2007–13



IMPACT AND RESULTS OF COHESION POLICY IN THE NETHERLANDS

- Between 2000 and 2006, Cohesion Policy helped to create 75 000 jobs across the Netherlands.
- Between 2007 and 2013, innovation is expected to amount to half of Cohesion Policy spending in the Netherlands.
- Cohesion Policy programmes contributed to increasing public investment levels between 1993 and 2005.

A SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

- Helped create 75 000 jobs
- Boosted public investment



EUROPEAN INVESTMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS – 2007–13

For the 2007–13 period, the Netherlands has been allocated almost **€2 billion** in total: €1.7 billion under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective¹, and €247 million under the European Territorial Cooperation Objective.

Under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, the Netherlands has five programmes: one national programme which is co-financed by the ESF and four regional programmes co-financed by the ERDF. All Dutch regions fall under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective.

FUNDS FOR THE NETHERLANDS IN BILLION € 2007–13

Objective	Fund	EU	National Public	National Private	Total
Regional Competitiveness and Employment	ERDF	0.85	0.9	0.2	2
	ESF	0.85	0.7	0.5	2
Total Regional Competitiveness and Employment		1.7			
Total European Territorial Cooperation*	ERDF	0.2	-	-	0.2
TOTAL		1.9	1.6	0.7	4.2

Figures have been rounded up

* Each Territorial Cooperation programme includes a minimum of 15% co-financing from each participating Member State.

DELIVERING THE LISBON STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND JOBS

The relaunch of the Union's Lisbon Strategy in 2005 aimed to bolster the competitive position of EU regions in the world economy by placing growth, jobs and competitiveness at the top of the Union's agenda. For the 2007–13 period, European Cohesion Policy has attached increasing importance to delivering the so-called 'Lisbon objectives'.

For the programming period 2007–13, the Netherlands has focused its Cohesion Policy towards innovation, with at least 50% of resources directed towards this priority. The Netherlands has earmarked 80% of the total Structural Funds to support the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs. This is a significant increase compared to the 2000–06 period, when the figure was well below 50%.

MAIN PRIORITIES OF COHESION POLICY IN THE NETHERLANDS, 2007–13

Promotion of **research and innovation** is the most important strategic priority for the Netherlands in 2007–13. In financial terms, the Netherlands plans to invest over €800 million of Structural Funds (49% of its total Community allocation) in fields that will promote research and innovation. The objective is to support over 500 Research & Development (R&D) projects attracting more than €220 million of R&D investments.

Business support, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), will amount to some €214 million. The aim is to support nearly 5 000 SMEs and create 750 new businesses. The Dutch programmes are expected to generate investment leverage, mobilising some €687 million of private investments.

Nearly €150 million will be invested in **labour market** measures to build **a skilled and adaptable workforce**, in particular by **raising levels of skills and qualifications**. The majority of these funds will be devoted to extending employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups, in particular young people with difficulties, by setting up special training programmes.

A further €413 million of Structural Funds will also be invested in skills and training measures.

The Netherlands will invest €72 million in **addressing poverty and social exclusion**. This also includes measures to help the reintegration of ex-offenders back into the labour market.

€67 million is planned for investment in developing and improving **information and communication technologies (ICT infrastructure)** and services. The aim is to improve access to, and efficient use of, ICT by small and medium-sized enterprises and citizens.

The Netherlands will invest €56 million in transport infrastructure and accessibility.

Improving the **environment, promoting sustainable growth and combating climate change** are important priorities for the Netherlands in 2007–13. The country plans to invest some €297 million of Structural Funds in the environment and sustainable development. Of this amount, €83.5 million will target climate change and €49 million will be used to promote the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

THE ESSENTIALS, 2007–13

- Nearly €808 million for research and innovation
- €413 to help workers adapt to the changing job market and workplace
- €214 million to support business and in particular SMEs

Some 21% of funds in each regional programme will be invested in urban development and regeneration, with the 'West' programme reserving a third of the Community allocation for the development of the four big cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.

¹ The Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective is applicable to 172 regions in the EU, representing 65% of the EU-27 population. It aims to enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of regions, as well as to boost their employment levels. It should be noted that the rural development and fisheries policies are separate and do not form part of this brochure.

● BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS

In Europe today, economic success is often dependent on a region's capacity to develop networks with other regions. Cooperation and sharing experience between regions can be a key trigger in stimulating a dynamic, forward-looking regional development process. The EU has an important role to play in brokering and supporting such partnerships, both between regions within the Union, and with neighbouring regions outside. Thousands of projects developed over many years under the INTERREG initiative have demonstrated the benefits for regions of working in partnership, sharing ideas and charting new and innovative ways of harnessing European investment.

The **European Territorial Cooperation Objective** is financed through the ERDF for the period 2007–13 and supports

cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation programmes to encourage regions and cities across the EU and further afield to work together and learn from each other.

In the Netherlands, there are 6 territorial cooperation programmes (ERDF contribution: €247 million): four cross-border cooperation programmes with other Member States and two transnational programmes. In addition, the Netherlands takes part in all four interregional cooperation programmes (total budget for all the 27 EU Member States: €443 million)²: INTERACT II, URBACT II, ESPON/ORATE and INTERREG IV C.

² INTERREG IVC promotes exchange of experience and good practices among the regions, URBACT – thematic city networks, INTERACT – support for cooperation programme management organisation, ESPON – an observation network for spatial planning.



Working together to improve water conservation in Tilburg's grasslands

The Netherlands

€1.9 billion for 2007–13

Boosting growth, jobs and competitiveness

Regional Policy on the ground

COMMUNICATING IN THE COMMUNITY: ALMERE COMMUNITY INTERNET PORTAL

The aim of the 'Almere Kennisstad' (Almere Knowledge City) initiative is to use ICT to address a number of different social issues in the city of Almere. The Community Internet Portal, or 'Wijkportaal Literatuurwijk', is an Almere Knowledge City project which aims to improve communication between citizens and public service providers in the Literatuurwijk district. The portal brings the district's residents and service providers into contact with each other in a new and different way through the use of ICT. The two specific objectives of the project are to increase the levels of participation of the local inhabitants in the running of the district, and to improve the welfare and quality of life of the inhabitants.

The project was developed around a health-care centre in the Literatuurwijk district. The portal has effectively become the virtual branch of the health centre. People who do not have access to the Internet can also visit the health centre and use its Internet facilities. Inhabitants of the Literatuurwijk district can use the Internet portal to communicate with the police, the local doctor and other local service providers. All queries and requests are answered within a reasonable time frame, and there is also a digital bulletin board where inhabitants can communicate with each other.

The Literatuurwijk project, which is now successfully up and running, can act as a model for the building of Internet portals in other city districts. In relation to Almere, the objective is to establish Internet portals in all other districts of the city within the next few years.

The total cost of the project was €451 232, with an EU contribution of €231 759.

Website: <http://www.almerekennisstad.nl/>



The doctor is now only a click away for the people of Literatuurwijk in Almere

MOBIMAX

Mobimax is a form of 'à la carte' public transport, a new concept, devised by the Dutch authorities, which combines taxi-style service with traditional public transport. With a single telephone call, an itinerary is organised on request to take the traveller where he or she wishes, including places not covered by the public transport network. People can therefore travel from door to door or attend sporting or cultural events making use of the best possible combination of different methods of transport, all for tariffs only slightly higher than (or in some cases the same as) normal lines, and significantly lower than taxi charges. Further reductions are offered to the disabled, and the taxis and buses are accessible for wheelchairs.

The Mobimax project was set up in the suburban region of Noordoostpolder, and became operational in April 2000. Then, October 2001 saw the beginning of the implementation of the 'Public transport on demand' project (Collectief Vraagafhankelijk Vervoer or CVV) in the region of Dronten, also co-financed by the EU.

The new formula has been very successful and the number of users has surpassed expectations: so much so that on 4 April 2005, 'Regiotaxi Flevoland' was set up to take over from the preceding projects, this time without EU assistance. It covers the areas of Noordoostpolder, Dronten, Zeewolde and, from 2006, Lelystad.

The total cost of the project was €540 356, with an EU contribution of €183 311.

Website: <http://www.dronten.nl/>



More information

EU Regional Policy

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/

Cohesion Policy in the Netherlands

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/netherlands/index_en.htm

National website

www.structuurfondsen.ez.nl

European Social Fund

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/>