Waste prevention country profile

Netherlands

February 2025

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European Environment Agency

Country profile: The Netherlands

General information

Name of the country/ region	The Netherlands
Geographical coverage of the waste prevention programme (national/ regional)	National
Type of programme (stand alone or integrated into waste management plan or into the circular economy strategy)	Stand-alone
Title of programme and link to programme	Afvalpreventieprogramma Nederland https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2021/02/18/afvalpreventieprogramma-nederland
Duration of programme	2020 - N/A
Language	Dutch
Contact person in the country/region	Afvalbeheer@rws.nl
Development process of the programme/ revision	The programme was adopted in December 2020 and published in February 2021.
Foreseen budget for implementation of the programme	N/A

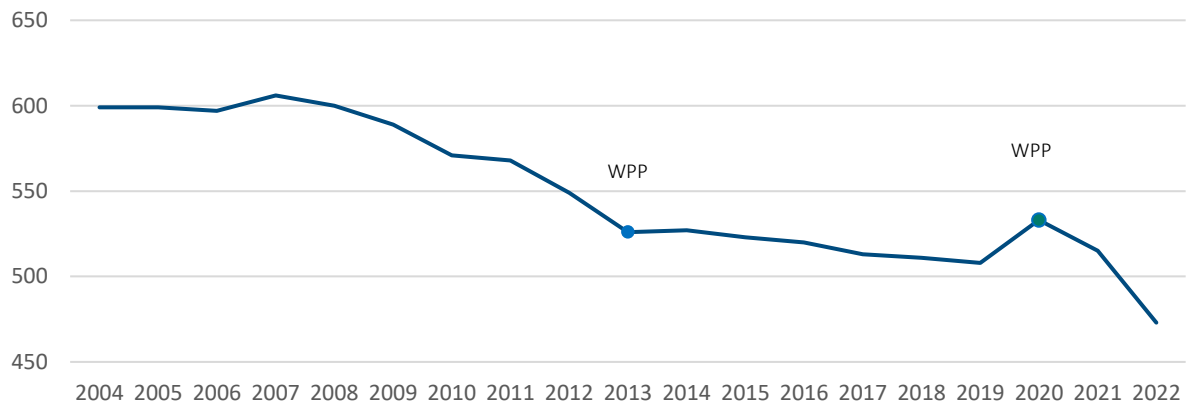
WASTE GENERATION

The following figures illustrate the progress towards waste prevention and decoupling of waste generation from economic growth in the Netherlands.

Municipal solid waste (MSW)

Municipal waste generation in the Netherlands decreased between 2010 and 2022 (Figure 1). In 2022, the country generated 473 kg/cap of municipal waste, which is significantly below the estimated EU27 average of 513 kg/cap.

Figure 1 Municipal waste generation in Netherlands (kg per capita), 2004-2022

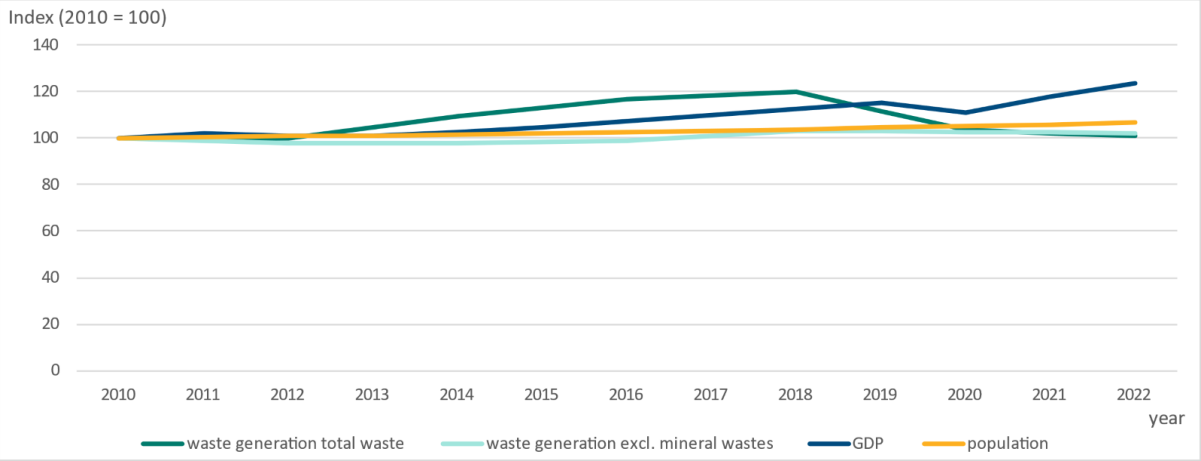


Source: Eurostat [ENV_WASMUN].
Note: As of reference year 2020, new reporting rules apply for calculating recycled municipal waste pursuant to the targets laid down in Article 11.2(c-e) of Directive 2008/98/EC. However, it is unclear based on the information available whether these new reporting rules have been implemented in The Netherlands yet.

Total waste

Until 2018, the total amount of waste generated in the Netherlands increased followed by a significant decrease (Figure 2). This trend is primarily driven by the by far largest single waste category, namely dredging spoils which accounts for 39-48% of total waste over the whole period. Excluding the major mineral waste categories (which include dredging spoils) results in a stabilisation of the overall waste generation trend. This is mainly due to a limited increase or stagnation of the largest waste categories namely, animal and vegetable wastes, recyclable wastes and mixed wastes. More specifically, mixed and recyclable waste generation stagnated and the generation of animal and vegetal waste only slightly increased. The Netherlands' GDP showed a steady growth with a drop in 2020, most likely due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Only from 2020 onward, a slight decoupling of total waste generation from economic growth could be observed.

Figure 2 Generation of waste (total and excluding major mineral wastes), population and economic development, 2010-2022



Source: Eurostat [ENV_WASGEN, NAMA_10_PC, DEMO_GIND]
Note: Waste generation data for odd years are interpolated.

WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Objectives and priorities

1.	Waste prevention objectives of the Programme - quantitative objectives (waste reduction) - qualitative objectives (reduction of hazardous substances/ environmental impacts)	The objective is a shift towards a circular economy handling natural resources as efficiently as possible and ensuring the lowest possible environmental impact (p.6). Strategic goals: 1. Raw materials in existing chains are put to high-quality use. This increase in efficiency and can lead to a reduction in the demand for raw materials in existing chains (p.9). 2. Wherever new raw materials are needed, fossil, critical and non-sustainably produced raw materials should be replaced by sustainably produced, renewable and widely available raw materials (p.9) The aim is to avoid the use of critical materials on the one hand and, on the other hand, to preserve the materials available in the economy and thus prevent them from being lost as waste (p.11). 3. The development of new production methods, the design of new products and the redesign of areas (p.9). Further goals: - Reducing waste and the use of raw materials (p.6). - Measures to reduce the pollutant content in materials and products that lead to an increased use of secondary raw materials, as the materials remain available for further use (p.6). - Stimulate producers and consumers, remove obstacles, promote new forms of financing and build knowledge and experience (p.10). - Introduce and expand circular procurement processes in central government (p.10). - Lower CO2 emissions. The government uses mechanisms to encourage the market to invest in products and services with lower CO2 emissions and more recycling.
2.	Sectors covered	• Construction and infrastructure; • manufacturing; • households; • private service activities/hospitality; • public services.
3.	Priority waste types	• Food/organic; • construction and demolition waste; • hazardous waste and critical raw materials • packaging; • waste electrical and electronic equipment /batteries; manufacturing waste; • bulky waste;

4.	Target groups	Business, knowledge institutes, nature and environmental organisations, governments, trade unions, financial institutions, and other civil society organisations (p.9).

Targets, indicators and monitoring

1.	Indicators used to monitor progress	No indicators were found in the WPP
2.	Quantitative targets	- The total volume of waste should not exceed 61 mill. tonnes by 2023 and 63 mill. tonnes by 2029 (p.5). - The government aims at an intermediate goal of reducing primary material input by 50% materials (minerals, fossils, and metals) until 2030 (p.9). - Food waste per capita shall be halved by 2030 compared to 2015 (p.15). - The legal target of returning 90% of small and large plastic bottles through a deposit refund system (p.17). - By 2024, 20% less plastic shall be used in comparison to 2017 (p.20).
3.	Monitoring mechanism of the programme	The Dutch Environmental Agency (PBL) monitors, together with seven other knowledge institutions, the transition to a fully circular economy by 2050 and the progress towards the intermediate goal of halving the use of primary abiotic raw materials by 2030. The work program is divided into five work packages: reporting, transition monitoring, raw material and impact monitoring, scenario analysis and modeling, and policy evaluation. Waste prevention and reuse activities and other waste prevention issues such as the use of substances of very high concern and critical materials are considered.
4.	Evaluation of the programme	N/A

Prevention measures

Implemented prevention measures according to Article 9

The waste prevention programme includes the following measures that are proposed to avoid waste generation (Chapter 1.5):

Table 1: Specific waste prevention measures structured according to Art 9 WFD

Promote and support sustainable consumption models	Through the RPCE, the Netherlands is focusing on three strategic goals: 1. Raw materials in existing chains are put to high quality use. This increase in efficiency can lead to a decrease in the demand for raw materials in existing chains. 2. Where new raw materials are needed, fossil, critical and non-sustainably produced raw materials are replaced by sustainably produced, renewable and widely available raw materials. This not only makes the economy more future-proof, but also less dependent on fossil sources and their imports. In addition, the natural capital is preserved. 3. Developing new production methods, designing new products and redesigning areas. The government is also promoting new types of consumption. This leads to further chains that give the desired reduction, exchange and use an additional impetus.
Encourage the design, manufacturing and use of products that are resource-efficient, durable (including in terms of life span and absence of planned obsolence), reparable, re-usable and upgradable.	The CIRCO programme offers entrepreneurs tools to design their product or service and their business model in a circular way. By (re)designing products, services and business models, reuse and repair can be considered in the design phase (p.14).
Target products containing critical raw materials to prevent that those materials become waste.	On the initiative of the government, extended producer responsibility (UPV) was introduced in the Netherlands for electrical and electronic equipment, batteries and accumulators, end-of-life vehicles, tyres and packaging (p.10).
Encourage the re-use of products and the setting up of systems promoting repair and re-use activities, including in particular for electrical and electronic equipment, textiles and furniture, as well as packaging and construction materials and products.	The programme "Circular craft centres" supports pilot projects on how the different building blocks of a circular craft centre can best work together. Circular craft centres are central points where citizens can bring their products for reuse, repair or recycling (p.14). A circular craft centre consists of a repair facility, a recycling station, a thrift store,

	social partners and education. Since 2019, more than 60 circular craft centres have been started. Tools and materials are available at the Repair Café venue to carry out all kinds of reparation on e.g. clothes, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles or toys. The number of Cafés affiliated to the Repair Café Foundation increased from 160 to 668 in the period 2013-2017 (p.14). As a part of the programme "From Waste To Resource" (VANG), municipalities are supported in starting pilots to reduce waste generated by citizens. Examples of topics are washable diapers, buying second hand, repair, reusable cups and sharing of tools. All potential pilot projects for municipalities are captured in the "Menu Waste Prevention". As part of the transition agenda for the construction sector, the government and market participants are working on the material passport. A material pass contains information about the quality and origin of materials. This makes it easier to reuse materials in the event of a demolition or renovation (p. 14).
Encourage, as appropriate and without prejudice to intellectual property rights , the availability of spare parts, instruction manuals, technical information, or other instruments, equipment or software enabling the repair and re-use of products without compromising their quality and safety.	A national register for repairers (of devices) has been set up and a second version is currently being worked on, which should mainly include more functionalities and repairers. This version will be launched in the first half of 2025.
Reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques.	The foreseen material passport contains information about the quality and origin of materials. This facilitates the reuse of materials in case of demolition or renovation. In the Concrete Accord, manufacturers, customers and contractors have agreed to work together on sustainability (p.14).
Reduce the generation of food waste in primary production, in processing and manufacturing, in retail and other distribution of food, in restaurants and food services as well as in households as a contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to reduce by 50 % per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and to reduce food losses along production and supply chains by 2030.	The national agenda on food waste reduction 'Samen tegen Voedselverspilling' consists of four action lines, in which different measures are taken (p.15): 1. monitoring & impact: measure progress quantitatively; 2. working together against food waste in the chain: joining forces, networks and and knowledge in order to better implement (existing) solutions; 3. together against food waste at the consumer level: sustainable behavioural change among households;

	4. changing the rules: initiate or adapt laws and instruments, so that they contribute to the development of the circular economy.
Encourage food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products.	Financial incentives are set encouraging food donation; Food donations are tax deductible for companies as they can deduct the donation from their profits to reduce corporate income tax
Promote the reduction of the content of hazardous substances in materials and products, without prejudice to harmonised legal requirements concerning those materials and products laid down at Union level, and ensure that any supplier of an article as defined in point 33 of Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council provides the information pursuant to article 33(1) of that regulation to the European Chemicals Agency as from 5 January 2021.	Dutch policy aims at limiting the usage and the emissions of hazardous substances. For example, the 'Actieprogramma PFAS' stimulates companies to limit the usage of PFAS in products and production processes, ahead of the coming PFAS restriction. The Action programme is currently active on 5 topic areas (paper & cartons; fire fighting foam; textiles and carpets; cosmetics; and waste water treatment), and will be expanded in the coming year. Regarding hazardous substances in waste recycling is only allowed when environmental contamination and exposure risks are prevented. The Dutch policy allows to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether materials containing hazardous substances which cannot be removed from the material (1) can be reused in certain applications where the risks for human health and the environment are negligible, provided that (2) reuse has an overall advantage from a health, environmental and climate perspective, taking into account the full life-cycle of the products in which reuse may take place and which would otherwise require the use of primary materials.
Reduce the generation of waste, in particular waste that is not suitable for preparing for re-use or recycling.	With the Plastic Promise, the government has made agreements with other parties to prevent littering. This includes that festival organisers and food and beverage producers have agreed to switch to reusable cups and deposit systems as much as possible to prevent litter at festivals (p.18). In the Netherlands, there is a ban on the free distribution of plastic carrier bags. In addition, the Packaging Management Regulation 2014 stipulates that a deposit system applies to plastic bottles. This is extended to small plastic bottles (p.17).

	For products made of single-use plastic, manufacturers must bear the costs of informing consumers about the availability of reusable alternatives, the environmental impact of waste and appropriate waste management systems as part of the implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/904 (p.17). Within the programme "From Waste To Resource" (VANG), a frontrunning group of municipalities works on pilots and resource to decrease the amount of waste generated by citizens.
Identify products that are the main sources of littering, notably in natural and marine environments, and take appropriate measures to prevent and reduce litter from such products, where Member States decide to implement this obligation through market restrictions, they shall ensure that such restrictions are proportionate and non-discriminatory.	In order to implement the MSFD (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), a package of measures consisting of six clusters is being carried out for the North Sea: Agenda Setting and Awareness Raising, Beaches (e.g. the Clean Beaches Green Deal), River Basins (e.g. the Directorate General Public Works and Water Management's Litter Collection Programme), Maritime (e.g. the implementation of the Port Reception Facilities Directive in the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships Act), Fisheries (e.g. the Fisheries Green Deal) and Plastic Products (e.g. the voluntary reduction of emissions of microplastics in cosmetic products). For rivers, additional work is being done on a monitoring strategy, mapping plastic litter hotspots, developing pilots and testing collection systems, tackling littering behaviour on riverbanks and an approach with managers and users along riverbanks (p.16).
Aim to halt the generation of marine litter as a contribution towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds.	Under the 'Cleaner Beaches Green Deal', various organisations and communities have committed to keep their beaches cleaner (p.18).
Develop and support information campaigns to raise awareness about waste prevention and littering.	Through the VANG 'Huishoudelijk Afval' programme, the national government works together with municipalities on waste separation, waste prevention and closing chains. Among others, the programme contributes to reducing the amount of household waste. The 'Waste at School' programme targets to the reduction of waste in schools. Behavioural science knowledge is applied in practical projects. Knowledge is shared with professionals in municipalities, schools and companies through courses and online tools and knowledge products (p.17). Waste prevention-related campaigns serve to raise consumers' awareness of the environmental impact of waste materials and offer perspectives for action by providing more sustainable alternatives.

	Information is provided e.g. by Milieu Centraal and Voedingscentrum and the campaign "Iedereen doet wat" (everyone does something). In the programmes for littering, household waste and industrial waste, scientific behavioural knowledge is translated into practical measures for municipalities and the business community. In addition, knowledge about the circular economy is integrated into training courses at knowledge institutions, in secondary vocational education and in higher vocational education (p.11)

Additional implemented prevention measures, not covered by Article 9	A Dutch extended producer responsibility for electrical and electronic equipment, batteries and accumulators, end-of-life vehicles, tyres and packaging (UPV) has been introduced (p.10).

FOOD WASTE PREVENTION

Food waste generation

The food waste generation in the Netherlands has been following a decreasing trend. In 2010, Dutch households have generated around 795 000 tonnes of food waste per year on average (48 kg per person). In 2016, the household have generated 700 000 tonnes of food waste annually (41 kg per person), and in 2019, around 590 000 tonnes of food waste were generated (34 kg per person). This shows a decrease of about 25 % in nine years.[1] In 2022 the average annual food waste was 33.4 kg per person.

Measures to prevent food waste:

A Food Waste Challenges has been launched in 2019: Through a large-scale approach and specific solutions, gastronomes, hotels and restaurants were able to reduce their food waste by 21 % (p.16).

Since 2019, businesses and companies have the opportunity to receive individual advice on how to minimise food waste. The solutions/innovations found are actively shared with other companies and lead to less food waste (p.16).

The consumer campaign #wastefree launched in 2019 had the main theme 'Best-Before'. By better managing the best-before date, an average Dutch person can save about 5 kilos of food waste each year. To make the difference even clearer, the #Verspillingsvrij campaign continued in 2020 with TV and online coverage explaining the two best-before dates and giving tips on how to use them (p.16).

The #WasteFree week in September aims at inspiring Dutch people to produce less waste through challenges (p.16).

The initiative 'United against food waste' was launched 2018 in the Netherlands. The originator is the Task Force Circular Economy in Food, which consists of a large number of companies, research institutes, civil society organisations and government bodies. The task force aims to reduce food waste in the Netherlands by half in 2030 compared to 2015. The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality provide a budget of 7 mill. EUR over the period of four years to support this objective via investments in innovation, research, monitoring and education.[2]

[1]https://www.voedingscentrum.nl/Assets/Uploads/voedingscentrum/Documents/Professionals/Pers/Persmappen/Verspilling%202019/VC_Synthesis%20report%20on%20food%20waste%20in%20Dutch%20households%202019.pdf

[2] https://www.wur.nl/en/newsarticle/Dutch-agenda-against-food-waste-aims-to-cut-food-waste-by-half.htm

REUSE OF PRODUCTS

Data

According to 2021 data reported to the EEA according to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/19 (EEA, 2024), Netherlands re-used:

- 44 849 tonnes of textiles;
- 112 376 tonnes of electrical and electronic devices;
- 294 407 tonnes of furniture.

It should be noted that this data has been reported for the first time. More information about the interpretation and limitations of the data set are available (EEA, 2024).

Measures to support reuse

In 2016, the Cabinet launched a pilot project involving coalitions with municipalities, waste collectors, and recycling and repair companies. The collaboration of these stakeholders' aims to encourage reuse of products by updating second-hand shops, and reinforcing the repair and restoration culture through, for example, repair cafés.[3] In 2019, the very first repair Cafés has been launched in Amsterdam. Along with other contributors, the informative website 'repaircafe.org' has been developed, where 514 repair Cafés are listed.[4]

There are currently over 60 circular craft centres in the Netherlands. A circular craft centre ensures products and materials can be handed in to be repair and reused in thrift stores. Best practices include WaardeRing (Zwolle), a collaboration of dozens of partners giving a second chance to products and materials, and De Kringloper Roosendaal, a circular craft centre which repairs returned washing machines for producer BSH.

Best practice examples

Circular Friesland:

The province of Friesland launched Circular Friesland, an association of public and private partners focusing on the five main sectors: circular agriculture, circular plastic, organic waste streams, construction and saline agriculture. In collaboration with the national government and the Waste Fund, a national test centre for plastics has been launched in 2018 improving techniques of sorting, recycling and reusing plastic packaging. The centre also organises awareness-raising activities on circular economy.[5]

The 'Front Runnter Project' (Koploperproject):

The city of Groningen supports small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the transition towards a circular economy. In 2019, the municipality initiated the "Front Runner Project" (Koploperproject) to support SMEs in the implementation of more sustainable and circular business models. During a year, expert advisors of companies define a "sustainability profile" on which, each company establishes an action plan and a communication strategy. The project foresees networking events to promote the exchange of experiences and creates a permanent network among members.
Between 8 and 15 companies and SMEs are involved with this project alongside with 6 municipalities (Hogeland, Groningen, Oldambt, Stadskanaal, Westerkwartier, Westerwolde), the province of Groningen, banks, and educational institutions. Since 2015, six projects have been carried out in the

[3] A Circular Economy in the Netherlands by 2050, p.67
[4] https://www.repaircafe.org/
[5] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/fdda19f3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/fdda19f3-en

province of Groningen with around 65 participants, with 2 special projects on village houses and the food chain.[6]

Pilot washable diapers at day cares:
8% of Dutch residual household waste consists of diapers. To reduce this amount, a pilot was carried out in 2023 in which four daycares started working with washable diapers instead of disposable diapers. The pilot was initiated by the municipalities of Utrecht, Renkum and Apeldoorn, with support from the ministry of Infrastructure and Water management. The pilot shows that there was an overall positive response to the washable diapers, especially at daycares that already have a sustainable focus. The pilot project provides the base to roll out washable diapers at more daycares in the Netherlands and to reduce the total amount of diaper waste further.
Research is currently underway to determine whether introducing a form of producer responsibility for diapers will contribute to making the chain more circular and reducing the amount of waste.

Links to circular economy

Waste prevention is an integral part of the comprehensive transformation towards a circular economy. It reduces the input of natural resources into the economy as well as the necessary efforts to collect and recycle waste.

Approaches for improving circularity are often highly interlinked with successful waste prevention. The following table shows which circular strategies are explicitly integrated into Netherland´s waste prevention programme.

Topic	Addressed in the programme	Comments
Eco-design	Yes	E.g. as one of the main goals of sustainable production and consumption.
Repair, refurbishment and remanufacture	Yes	E.g. by the establishment of repair-cafés.
Recycling	Yes	E.g. by the introduction of deposit-refund-systems.
Economic incentives and finance	Yes	E.g. tax deductions towards food donation.
Circular business models	No	
Eco-innovation	Yes	E.g. by research and innovation through the knowledge- and innovation agenda KIA-CE.
Governance, skills and knowledge	Yes	E.g. through the CIRCO programme.

[6] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/fdda19f3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/fdda19f3-en