2FAST
MARKET DEVELOPMENT

EUROPEAN MARKET SERIES

Netherlands Economic and Market Outlook

Market strengths, investment pathways and the operating environment

Rotterdam, Netherlands · Photograph: Igor Passchier / Pexels

2FAST — MARKET DEVELOPMENT

November 2026 | Data cutoff: 1 November 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A compact market with a European reach

A high-income economy combining specialised production, knowledge-intensive services and international distribution.

€1.171tn	18.13m	1.6%
2025 nominal GDP [1]	Residents, 1 Jan 2026 [5]	2025 real GDP growth [1]

The Netherlands offers substantial domestic purchasing power and access to business networks serving wider Europe. Household and government consumption together represented 69.3% of nominal GDP in 2025. Actual individual consumption per person was 19% above the EU average in purchasing-power terms. [1,4]

Where the economic strengths are clearest

Precision engineering and semiconductor equipment, food and agricultural technology, life sciences, business services and logistics provide distinct entry points. The semiconductor ecosystem generated an estimated €45.6bn of related turnover in 2025. Dutch R&D spending reached €26.4bn in 2024, with businesses providing most of the expenditure. [22,32]

Rotterdam handled 428.4m tonnes of cargo in 2025, while Schiphol handled 1.43m tonnes. These gateways connect domestic activity with European supply chains; their throughput does not measure Dutch final consumption. [33,35]

What to investigate first

2FAST analysis: supplier qualification in precision manufacturing; process and resource efficiency in food and chemicals; research and regulated production services in life sciences; and specialised distribution and digital integration merit targeted study. Their commercial relevance depends on the customer's application, procurement route and service requirements.

An evidence-led entry decision combines customer validation with a site-level review of skills, electricity capacity, environmental permissions and delivery economics. Financial FDI totals and gross imports are context indicators, not evidence of orders. [14,17,38–41]

Latest pulse: GDP increased 0.6% quarter-on-quarter in Q3 2026. CPB's September forecast envisaged real growth of 1.4% in 2026 and 1.2% in 2027. The quarterly result is an estimate; the annual figures are forecasts. [2,53]

READER GUIDE

Scope, structure and reading conventions

Data cutoff: 1 November 2026. The report covers the European Netherlands.

Section	Pages	Purpose
Market scale and demand	4–8	European position, growth, households, labour and sector composition
Trade and foreign investment	9–13	Trade definitions, products, services, FDI and operating businesses
Industrial and innovation strengths	14–18	Technology, food, health, digital, chemicals, maritime and R&D
Locations and operating environment	19–25	Clusters, gateways, costs, sites, establishment and regulation
Projects, outlook and pathways	26–29	Real examples, published forecasts and areas for commercial study
Methods, sources and contact	30–35	Data interpretation, image credits, references and contact details

Geography and statistical boundaries

National totals refer to the European Netherlands unless a source note states a different scope. They exclude Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten and do not combine the European economy with Bonaire, Sint Eustatius or Saba. CBS publishes Caribbean Netherlands GDP separately. Group financial results may cover worldwide operations; port and airport statistics cover the named facility. [57]

How to read the evidence

The latest complete year is usually 2025; structural input–output, multinational and R&D statistics remain at 2024. Monthly and quarterly observations from 2026 are explicitly labelled. "Forecast" means a published projection, and "estimate" or "provisional" retains the status assigned by the producer.

Numbered references identify original sources. Charts specify period, unit and scope; the accompanying workbook contains values, definitions, links and derived calculations. Boxes labelled "2FAST analysis" are interpretation, not published statistics or confirmed business opportunities.

EUROPEAN POSITION

A sizeable economy with high purchasing power

Comparable annual data place Dutch market scale alongside other open, advanced European economies.

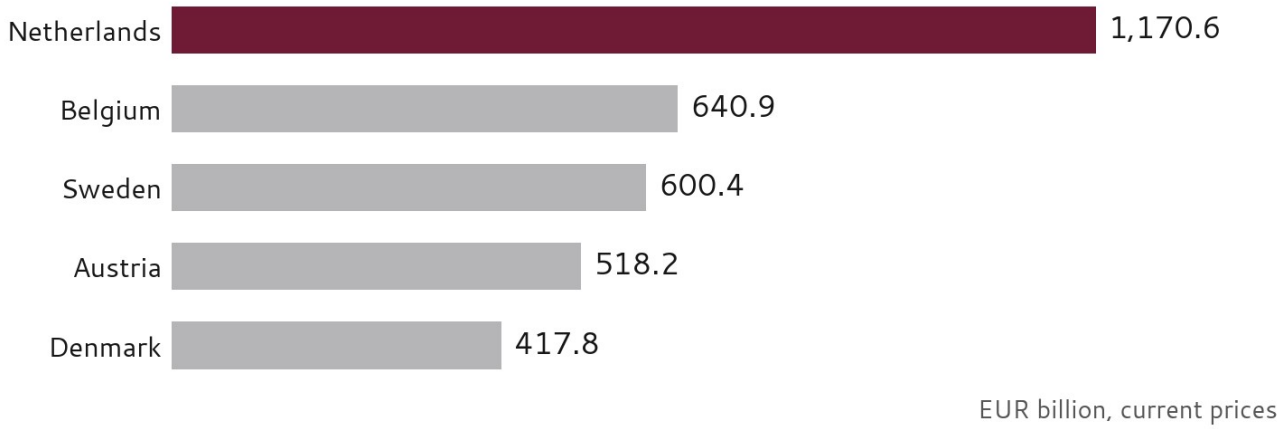

Figure 1. GDP at current prices, 2025 (€bn). Eurostat common vintage, updated 22 October 2026. Named national economies; provisional where flagged. [3]

The Dutch economy was larger in nominal euro terms than Belgium, Sweden, Austria or Denmark in this comparison. Germany, the neighbouring industrial market, was much larger at €4,529.7bn. The Netherlands represented 6.2% of EU27 nominal GDP, calculated from the same dataset. Exchange rates affect comparisons with non-euro economies. [3]

Purchasing-power indicator, 2025	Netherlands	Germany	EU27
Actual individual consumption per capita	119	120	100

Actual individual consumption includes goods and services consumed by households, including individually provided public services. It is a welfare and consumption-volume indicator, not a measure of disposable cash or a retail sales forecast. The Dutch value supports the case for a high-income market while leaving large differences between customer segments. [4]

2FAST analysis: assess the Netherlands as both a distinct, demanding home market and a location within European value chains. Benchmark product-level demand against comparable markets; use Germany to understand neighbouring scale, not as a like-for-like population peer.

MACROECONOMY

Growth rests on domestic demand and external links

Annual national accounts distinguish market size, real growth and the components of expenditure.

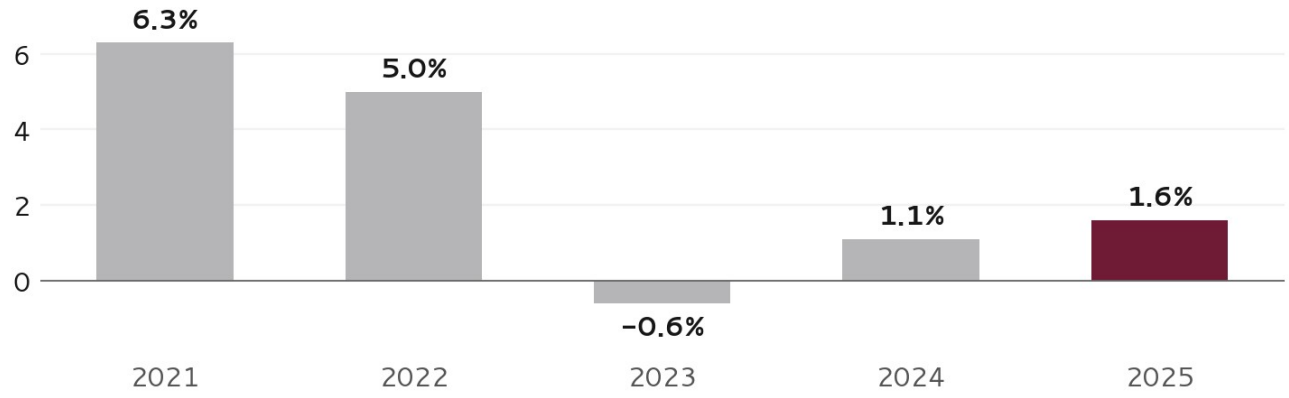

Figure 2. Real GDP growth, annual %. European Netherlands; 2025 provisional. Nominal GDP in 2025 was €1,170.579bn. [1]

Expenditure component, 2025	€bn	Share of GDP
Households and NPISH	507.0	43.3%
Government consumption	303.9	26.0%
Gross fixed capital formation	235.4	20.1%
Changes in inventories	1.5	0.1%
Exports less imports	122.7	10.5%

Shares are calculated at current prices. Exports were €955.3bn and imports €832.6bn on the national-accounts basis. Their difference completes the expenditure identity; it does not identify the domestic value added created by exporters or their contribution to real growth. [1]

The Q3 2026 first estimate showed 0.6% growth from the preceding quarter. Consumption and exports increased, while fixed investment declined slightly. This provides a more current activity signal than the full-year accounts, but remains subject to revision. [2]

2FAST analysis: use consumption to frame domestic customers, investment to frame capital-goods demand and sector-specific output to test industrial demand. A single headline GDP forecast cannot substitute for these different purchasing cycles.

HOUSEHOLDS AND DEMAND

An affluent, increasingly diverse customer base

Population, household structure and real income provide a better starting point for demand analysis than imports.

8.47m	40.3%	+1.2%
Private households [6]	One-person households[1] [6]	Median purchasing power, 2025 [8]

At 1 January 2026 the Netherlands had 18,130,208 residents and 8,474,674 private households, including 3,412,202 one-person households. By the end of September, the population was approximately 18.19m. Growth in the first nine months came from net migration, with deaths exceeding births. [5–7]

Income and spending are related, but different

CBS estimated median purchasing-power growth of 1.2% in 2025; households whose main income came from employment recorded a larger 2.2% increase. The statistic tracks changes in real disposable income for households and should not be read as equal growth in every spending category. [8]

Household and NPISH consumption in the national accounts totalled €507.0bn in 2025 and rose 1.2% in volume terms. Government consumption of €303.9bn also supports service demand, including publicly financed activities. Neither aggregate is a direct estimate of the addressable market for a particular supplier. [1]

Latest consumption signal: August 2026	Volume growth, y/y
Total domestic household consumption	2.1%
Goods / services	3.1% / 1.4%
Durable goods	5.5%
Food, beverages and tobacco	2.1%

Monthly figures are provisional and shopping-day adjusted. Domestic consumption includes spending in the Netherlands by residents and non-residents; this differs from resident household final consumption. [65]

2FAST analysis: segment by household type, geography and use case. Validate price points with actual channels and competitors; national purchasing-power averages do not establish willingness to pay.

[1] Calculated as one-person households / all private households. Household counts are not the same as dwellings.

LABOUR AND CAPABILITIES

Skills and productivity shape the business case

A strong employment base supports demand while making recruitment and process design central to execution.

Figure 3. Average hourly labour cost, 2025 (€/hour). Enterprises with 10+ employees; economy excluding agriculture and public administration. Wages plus non-wage employer costs. [10]

9.831m

Employed, Sep 2026 [9]

4.0%

Unemployment, Sep 2026 [9]

These labour-force measures cover people aged 15–74 and are seasonally adjusted. They count people, not full-time-equivalent capacity. Sectoral and regional availability may differ substantially from the national unemployment rate. [9]

The OECD identifies weak productivity growth, labour shortages and extensive part-time work as structural considerations. The European Commission also highlights skills, housing and infrastructure constraints alongside the country's high productivity level. [11,12]

Operating requirement	Practical response to assess
Specialist engineering and research	Recruitment lead time, university links and training pipeline
Production and technical maintenance	Automation, shift design, apprenticeships and retention
International staff	Housing availability, relocation cost and role-specific work permissions

2FAST analysis: compare output per paid hour and whole-team cost, including training and supervision. The Dutch cost profile is more compatible with differentiated, reliable and productive operations than with a strategy based only on inexpensive labour.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Services anchor a diversified production economy

Gross value added shows where production occurs, without confusing it with expenditure or sales.

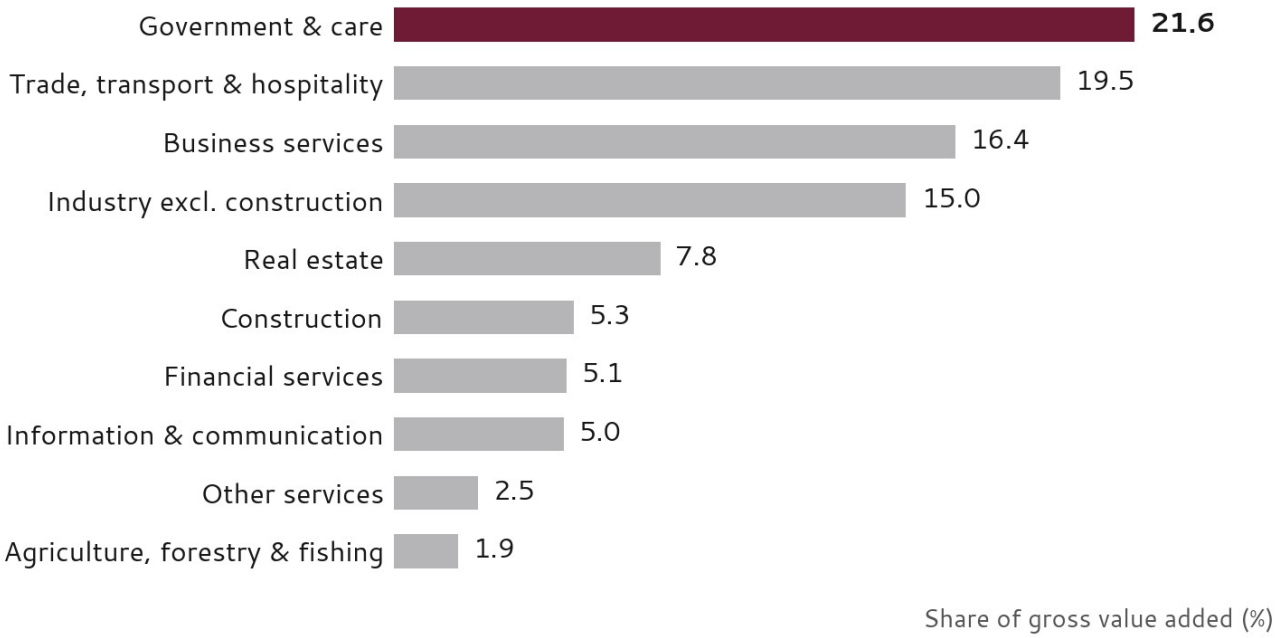

Figure 4. Share of gross value added at basic prices, 2025 (%). European Netherlands; total GVA €1,049.834bn. Calculated shares; rounded. [1]

Government and care, trade-related services and business services form the largest broad groups. Manufacturing generated €122.9bn of GVA within the wider industry category. Agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed €19.8bn, but food processing, machinery, trading and logistics sit in other industries. [1]

National-accounts bridge, 2025	€bn
Gross value added, basic prices	1,049.834
Taxes less subsidies on products	120.745
Gross domestic product, market prices	1,170.579

2FAST analysis: assess clusters across sector boundaries. A food-technology sale may reach a processor, greenhouse operator or research centre; a semiconductor supplier may sell engineering services as well as manufactured components. Sector turnover and cluster exports are not additive measures of GDP.

TRADE INTERPRETATION

A gateway economy requires careful measurement

Exports from Dutch production, re-exports and transit have different economic meanings.

Concept	Meaning and appropriate use
Domestic goods exports	Goods produced or substantially processed in the Netherlands; useful for understanding production-linked markets.
Re-exports	Previously imported goods exported with little or no substantial processing, involving Dutch resident ownership; associated trading and logistics can create Dutch value added.
Transit / quasi-transit	Foreign-owned goods passing through the country; quasi-transit includes customs formalities. Physical movement and customs records need not imply Dutch ownership or final use.

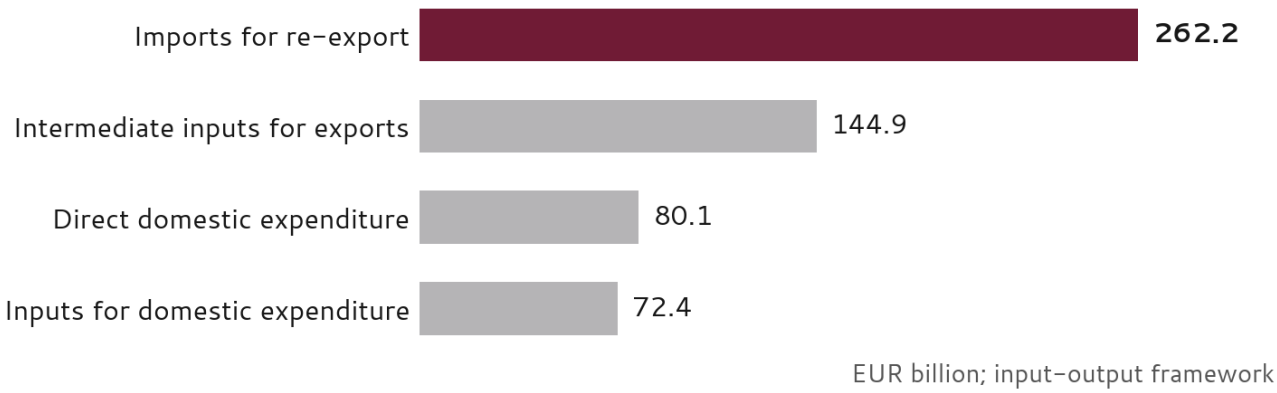

Figure 5. Use of imported goods, 2024 (€bn). CBS input-output framework, provisional; European Netherlands. Components sum to €559.6bn. [14]

In merchandise statistics, 2025 domestic goods exports were €334.5bn and re-exports €319.1bn. Re-exports represented about 48.8% of the combined rounded values. These are national ownership-based statistics; a customs/community-concept total can include different flows. [13,18]

The €80.1bn of direct imports for domestic expenditure in the 2024 input-output table is not household consumption alone. It includes relevant final uses such as investment. Do not subtract gross exports from imports to estimate a domestic product market, or mix this table with the 2025 merchandise series. [14]

GOODS TRADE

European customers and global sourcing

The trade mix reflects production capabilities, energy flows and a major redistribution function.

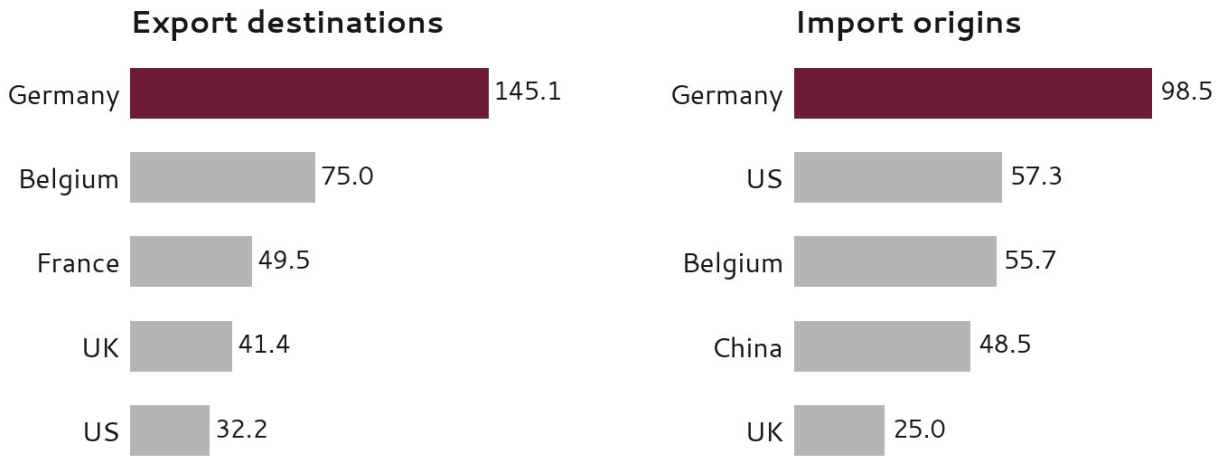

Figure 6. Five largest goods export destinations and import origins, 2025 (€bn, rounded). CBS national ownership concept; provisional. [13]

Selected products, 2025	Exports €bn	Imports €bn
Refined petroleum products	48.5	24.2
Specialised machinery and equipment	29.2	9.7
Telephones, modems and routers	25.5	29.3
Medicines	16.6	11.3
Medical instruments and devices	13.2	11.7

Total goods exports were €653.7bn and imports €582.9bn in 2025. Export volumes increased 2.9% while values rose 1.2%; lower prices explain the difference. Germany and Belgium dominate nearby trade relationships, while the United States and China are important origins of imports. [13]

The latest monthly release available at cutoff showed August 2026 export volumes 4.9% above a year earlier, adjusted for working-day composition. This is a monthly signal, not a year-to-date result. [19]

2FAST analysis: a high trade value identifies a supply-chain category worth investigating. Ownership, re-export intensity, distributor role and end use must be checked before treating it as Dutch customer demand. Product rows are selected, not a complete market ranking.

SERVICES AND VALUE CREATION

Services carry a large share of export earnings

International services sales and the value retained from exports reveal complementary strengths.

€337.0bn

Services exports, 2025 [15]

€299.5bn

Services imports, 2025 [15]

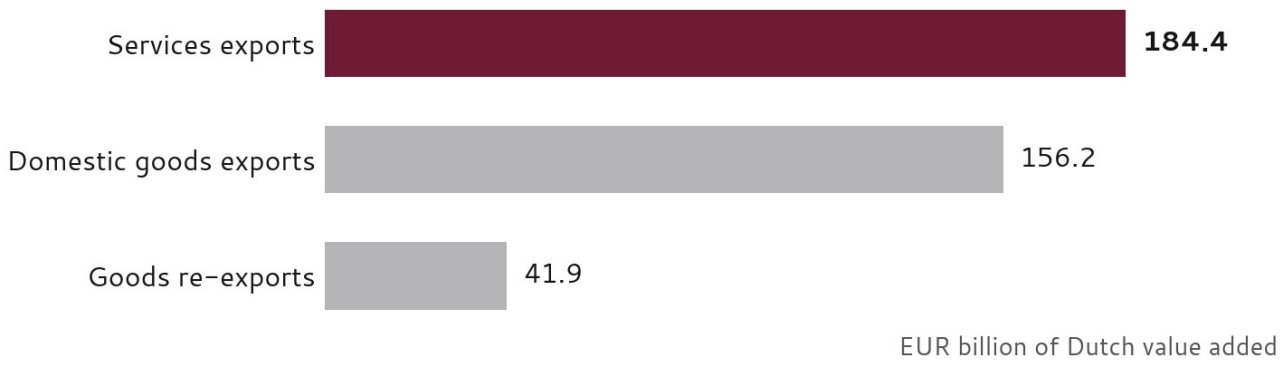

Figure 7. Dutch value added earned from exports, 2024 (€bn). CBS input-output estimates, provisional; total €382.49bn. Distinct from gross export sales. [14,16]

Business services, transport, telecommunications/computer/information services and intellectual-property charges are important components of international services trade. In 2025, business-services exports were around €110bn and transport exports around €67bn. Gross service flows can include multinational intra-group transactions. [15]

The export-earnings estimates allocate direct and supply-chain value added to exports. Services generated the largest of the three earnings groups in 2024, followed by domestic goods exports. Re-exports generated less value added per euro of gross shipments, while still supporting trading, transport and other activities. [16]

Keep the statistical frameworks separate

The international services series above is not interchangeable with the national-accounts service export figure. Coverage, adjustments, definitions and revisions differ. Comparisons in this report remain within each series; the two are not spliced into a single balance. [1,15]

2FAST analysis: market entry can involve engineering, maintenance, software, research and compliance services alongside physical goods. A distribution presence can create value, but its economics depend on margins and service content, not gross shipment totals.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Financial scale and productive activity are distinct

The Netherlands is a major international investment location and financial intermediary.

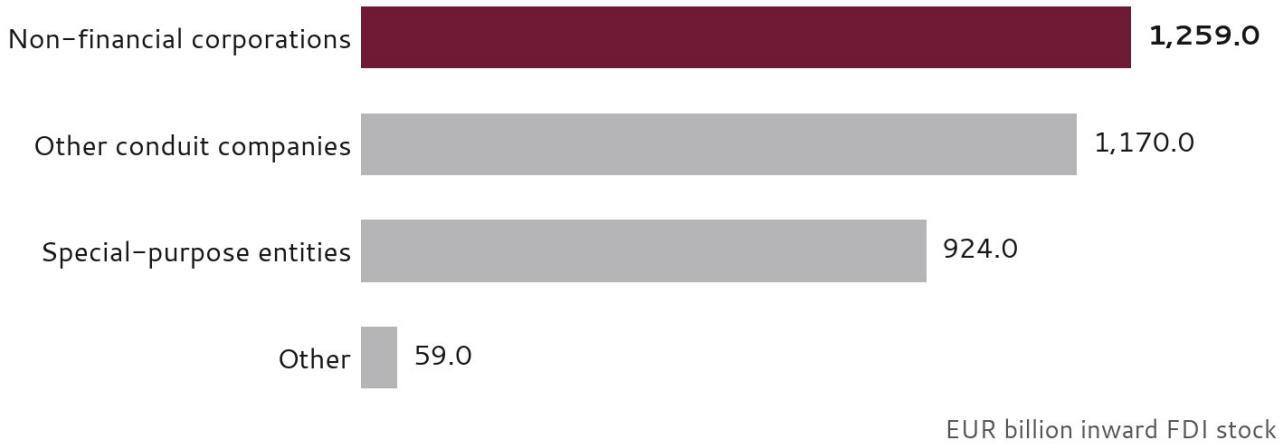

Figure 8. Inward direct-investment stock by entity type, end-2025 (€bn). DNB as published by CBS; European Netherlands. Total €3,412bn, sum of rounded components. [17]

Special-purpose entities and other conduit companies together represented €2,094bn, or 61.4% of the displayed inward stock. Excluding SPEs alone would therefore leave a substantial conduit component. Non-financial corporations accounted for €1,259bn, but this category is not a pure measure of greenfield factories or new productive capital. [17]

Measure	What it can establish	What it cannot establish alone
FDI stock	Accumulated cross-border financial position	New annual plant expenditure
FDI flow	Transactions during a period	A matching increase in jobs or output
Project announcement	An investor's stated intention	Completion, utilisation or realised returns

DNB reported €72bn of direct-investment inflows in the first half of 2026, largely linked to the United States and Germany. The financial series provides evidence of renewed flows through the Netherlands, rather than an equivalent volume of operational expansion. Stock changes also reflect valuation and other adjustments. [20]

2FAST analysis: evaluate an investment location using operating-company presence, suppliers, project status and actual employment alongside FDI data. Treat ultimate ownership, immediate investment origin and the location of activity as separate questions.

FOREIGN BUSINESS PRESENCE

Operating companies reveal the practical ecosystem

Enterprise statistics and supported projects complement the financial investment picture.

19,755
Foreign-owned multinationals, 2024 [17]

180
Supported foreign companies, 2025 [21]

53
Supported R&D projects, 2025 [21]

CBS counted 19,755 foreign-owned multinational enterprises in 2024. Their activities span trade, manufacturing, ICT and specialist business services. The coverage is the relevant business-economy population; it must not be read as a count of all foreign investors or every entity in the public and private economy. [17]

The Invest in Holland network supported 180 foreign companies establishing or expanding operations in 2025, including 53 R&D projects. This is a record of supported activity, not a census of all inward investment. It provides evidence that research capabilities remain relevant to location decisions. [21]

Selected activities of foreign-owned multinationals	Share of enterprises, 2024
Wholesale and retail trade	34.9%
Specialised business services	18.7%
Information and communication	13.1%
Manufacturing	12.7%

These enterprise shares describe the sector mix within the CBS foreign-multinational population, rather than shares of FDI value or employment. Other sectors account for the remainder. [17]

Channels for a location investigation

NFIA and regional investment-development networks can help identify ecosystems and investment conditions. Universities, science parks, port authorities and sector organisations can support technical and regional discovery. Their involvement does not establish buyer interest or guarantee incentives. [21,28,30,62]

2FAST analysis: define the operation first, then select the region and counterparties. A sales office, laboratory and electricity-intensive plant face different site, staffing and permitting requirements even within the same sector.

HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Precision manufacturing and semiconductors

The strongest proposition lies in specialised capabilities and access to demanding industrial networks.

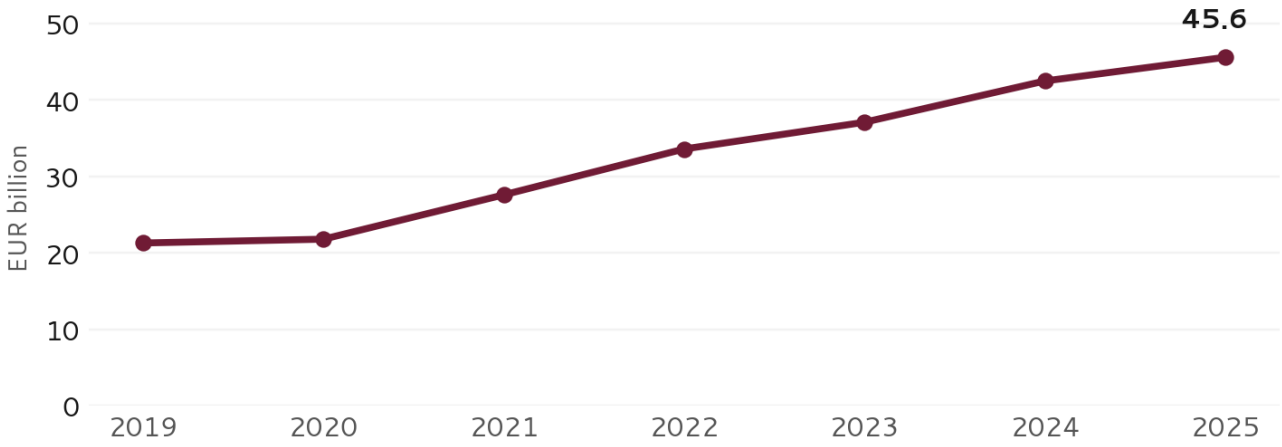

Figure 9. Estimated semiconductor-related turnover, 2019–2025 (€bn). CBS sector mapping; European Netherlands. Includes equipment, chips and relevant suppliers/services; not GVA. [22]

CBS estimated semiconductor-related turnover at €45.6bn and employment at 43,200 in 2025. The sector mapping covers more than 300 companies and estimates the relevant part of diversified businesses. Its scope differs from a standard industry classification. [22]

ASML's worldwide 2025 net sales were €32.67bn and R&D expenditure €4.70bn. These consolidated group amounts illustrate the scale of a major ecosystem participant; they are not Dutch market output and must not be added to the CBS cluster estimate. [23]

Activity	Commercial relevance to investigate
Manufacturing and subsystems	Precision parts, motion, vacuum, optics, inspection and clean production
Research and development	Process knowledge, design, metrology and university collaboration
Services and lifecycle support	Quality systems, testing, maintenance, software and field engineering

2FAST analysis: Eindhoven/Brainport is a logical starting point for supplier-network research. Entry depends on demonstrated technical capability, traceability, quality performance and qualification time. Export-control applicability and customer-specific security requirements need product-level review. [30,62]

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

A production and knowledge platform beyond farming

Food processing, horticulture, agricultural technology and trade create connected but different markets.

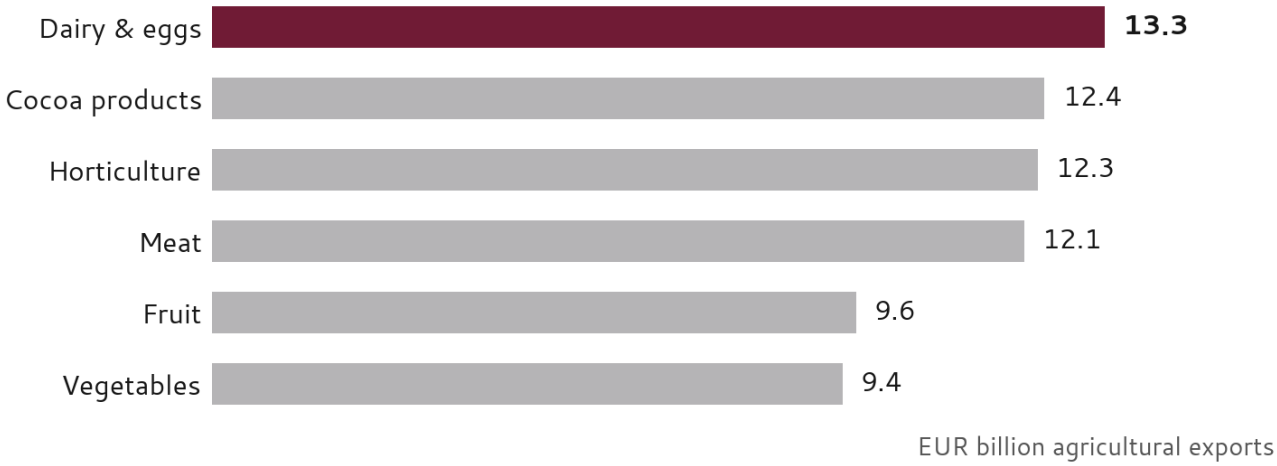

Figure 10. Selected agricultural export groups, 2025 (€bn). CBS/WUR January 2026 estimate; November–December estimated. Exports include domestic goods and re-exports. [24]

The initial estimate put agricultural exports at €137.5bn in 2025: €88.4bn of domestic exports and €49.1bn of re-exports. More than two-thirds of the increase in export value reflected prices. Cocoa and fruit flows are especially relevant reminders that trade strength need not imply local agricultural production. [24]

Part of the value chain	Products and services to examine
Primary production and horticulture	Climate control, sensors, irrigation efficiency and automation
Food manufacturing	Processing, hygiene, packaging, cold chain and quality assurance
Research and product development	Ingredients, fermentation, nutrition, trials and analytical services
Trading and distribution	Traceability, storage, handling and access to European channels

Wageningen combines university-linked knowledge with company research. Yakult opened its European R&D centre there in May 2026, an example of research investment rather than evidence of a new mass-production facility. [25]

2FAST analysis: match the offer to the operating customer. A greenhouse, branded food producer and international trader purchase different solutions. Validate food safety, energy and water requirements, equipment integration and after-sales support before estimating market share.

HEALTH AND DIGITAL SERVICES

Research density supports specialised applications

Life sciences and digital capabilities offer distinct routes into customers with demanding standards.

Life sciences, pharmaceuticals and medical technology

The Utrecht Science Park ecosystem includes the university medical centre, Hubrecht Institute, Princess Máxima Center and companies active in biotechnology and nutrition. Leiden/Katwijk is another relevant location for biopharmaceutical investigation; Lilly's proposed Katwijk manufacturing investment provides a concrete project example. [26–28]

Research services, clinical collaboration, regulated manufacturing and distribution are separate activities. They require different facilities, authorisations, quality systems and customers. A research cluster does not by itself establish demand for a finished medicine or a medical device.

Activity	Potential customer type	Entry requirements to verify
Biopharma process and laboratory services	Biotech firms, laboratories, manufacturers	Qualification, validation, biosafety and IP terms
Medical technology and diagnostics	Hospitals, laboratories, distributors	Applicable EU device regime, clinical evidence and procurement
Digital industrial applications	Manufacturers, logistics operators, SMEs	Cybersecurity, integration, data rights and measurable operational benefit

Digital capability with adoption work still to do

The Commission's 2026 Digital Decade assessment describes strong connectivity and research capabilities, including strategic technologies. It also identifies gaps in SME adoption and constraints on ICT skills. This supports investigating implementation, integration and cybersecurity services, rather than assuming all businesses have completed their digital transition. [29]

2FAST analysis: favour applications linked to a defined workflow—production quality, maintenance, supply-chain visibility or research productivity. Identify the budget owner, prove compatibility and clarify data governance before treating technical interest as a sales pipeline.

PROCESS INDUSTRY, MARITIME AND ENERGY

Industrial renewal creates application-led demand

Established production assets provide markets for specialised equipment, services and resource efficiency.

Wind turbines at Koningsbosch, Limburg. Photo: Lorna Pauli / Pexels. [60,61]

Ecosystem	Activities to distinguish	Areas for study
Chemicals and materials	Production, pilot plants, R&D and distribution	Process equipment, circular feedstocks, efficiency and emissions control
Maritime and offshore	Design, shipbuilding, equipment, servicing and port operations	Electrification, systems integration, maintenance and marine engineering
Energy transition	Generation, industrial use, grids and enabling infrastructure	Demand management, monitoring, storage integration and low-carbon process solutions

Rotterdam and the Chemelot area in Limburg offer different process-industry settings. NFIA identifies advanced-manufacturing and pilot activity at Brightlands Chemelot and industrial locations such as Delfzijl. The relevant asset, customer and utility network should determine the location shortlist. [30]

Damen reported 160 vessel deliveries worldwide in 2025. This illustrates a Dutch-headquartered maritime group's global reach, not the number of vessels manufactured within the Netherlands. [31]

2FAST analysis: renewal and efficiency projects can be more accessible than a new standalone plant. Confirm the asset owner's investment plan, shutdown schedule, electricity connection, feedstock and offtake arrangements; sector ambition is not an order.

INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

A substantial R&D base with practical entry routes

Business research, universities and specialist institutes connect production knowledge with commercial development.

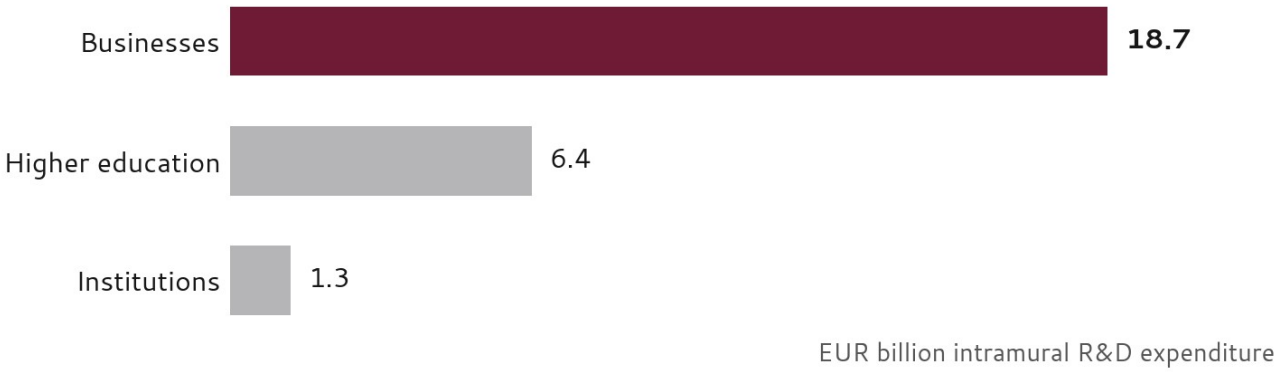

Figure 11. Intramural R&D expenditure, 2024 (€bn). European Netherlands; revised provisional. Components sum to €26.438bn. [32]

The published R&D intensity was 2.36% of GDP in 2024. Businesses accounted for €18.72bn, higher education €6.43bn and institutions €1.29bn. These are expenditure measures; they do not identify the amount available as grants to foreign companies. [32]

Collaboration route	What a prospective entrant should establish
University or research partnership	Scientific fit, facilities, ownership of results and publication terms
Customer-led development	A defined specification, qualification plan and purchasing sponsor
Pilot or demonstration activity	Scale-up criteria, site permissions, utility needs and operating responsibility
Local engineering or R&D team	Recruitment feasibility, management capacity and eligible activity under tax support

The WBSO scheme supports qualifying R&D through tax relief, subject to application and eligibility rules. It should be assessed against the proposed work and employing entity, rather than assumed from a company's technology label. [46]

2FAST analysis: cluster access is most valuable when it shortens the path to a qualified customer, technical partner or recruit. A useful first engagement has a clear problem statement, evidence of capability and agreement on how success will be measured.

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

A connected network of specialised locations

The map identifies selected centres for investigation; it is not a ranking of investment sites.

SELECTED ECONOMIC CENTRES

01 Amsterdam / Schiphol
Services, digital, air cargo

02 Rotterdam / Delft
Port, process industry, technology

03 Leiden / Katwijk
Life sciences and biopharma

04 Utrecht
Health, research and services

05 Wageningen
Food and agricultural R&D

06 Eindhoven
Semiconductor equipment, precision

07 Venlo
Cross-border distribution

08 Geleen / Chemelot
Chemicals and materials

09 Groningen / Eemshaven
Energy and northern industry

Figure 12. Selected economic centres and gateways in European Netherlands. Approximate positions; grouped locations are schematic. Natural Earth public-domain base; specialisations from institutional sources. [28,30,36,58,62]

The western urban network brings together business services, universities, life sciences and the main sea and air gateways. Eindhoven anchors a southern high-technology ecosystem, Wageningen specialises in food and agricultural research, and Limburg combines materials activity with cross-border distribution. Northern locations provide a different energy and industrial setting. [28,30,62]

2FAST analysis: choose by operational fit. Customer proximity, access to a specific research group, a qualified workforce or a usable utility connection can matter more than a city's general profile. The following page links locations to the questions that should drive a shortlist.

LOCATION CHOICES

Match the operating model to the cluster

Specialisation is useful only when it connects the entrant to customers, skills and infrastructure.

Location / ecosystem	Relevant activity and access	First checks
Amsterdam / Schiphol	Business and digital services; international air connectivity; specialised cargo and distribution	Office and technical talent needs, airport handling, cold-chain capability and access costs
Rotterdam / Delft	Port, process industry, logistics and technology; sea, barge, rail, road and pipeline links	Terminal/service fit, industrial permissions, utility capacity and research partner relevance
Eindhoven / Brainport	Precision engineering and semiconductor-equipment supplier networks	Qualification pathway, specialist recruitment, quality systems and supplier proximity
Utrecht	Health research, life sciences and business services; central domestic location	Clinical/research collaboration, procurement route and specialist staffing
Wageningen	Agricultural, food and nutrition research and company R&D	Scientific fit, pilot access, IP terms and connection to commercial processors
Leiden / Katwijk	Biopharma research and proposed pharmaceutical manufacturing	Regulated facility needs, project status, technical skills and supply-chain qualification
Geleen / Chemelot	Chemicals, materials and pilot-scale innovation	Feedstocks, shared utilities, emissions, water and process-safety requirements
Venlo / northern centres	Venlo: cross-border distribution. Groningen/Delfzijl/Eemshaven: northern research, industrial and energy activity	Actual consignee geography, transport model, workforce and site-specific connections

Source basis: science-park, investment-agency, company and port descriptions. Regional groupings are selected for commercial relevance, not a complete inventory of Dutch economic geography. [26–28,30,36,62]

2FAST analysis: build a shortlist around one operating specification and compare like-for-like sites. Ask each location for evidence on available capacity, permissions, lease terms and hiring conditions; general regional strengths do not settle site readiness.

LOGISTICS AND CONNECTIVITY

Gateways that serve more than the home market

Rotterdam and Schiphol connect Dutch activity with international and European supply chains.

428.4m t
Rotterdam throughput, 2025 [33]

14.2m TEU
Rotterdam containers, 2025 [33]

1.43m t
Schiphol cargo, 2025 [35]

Rotterdam's total throughput declined 1.7% in 2025 while container TEU increased 3.1%. Container units and cargo weight measure different things. In January–September 2026, overall throughput reached 323.2m tonnes, 0.9% above the corresponding period a year earlier. [33,34]

Connection	Commercial role	Decision variable
Sea and inland waterways	Bulk and container movements into European hinterlands	Terminal fit, transit time, waterway conditions and schedule flexibility
Rail and road	Continental distribution and inland-terminal access	Lane reliability, frequency, last-mile cost and inventory impact
Pipelines	Industrial energy and feedstock connections	Product compatibility, network access and contracted capacity
Air cargo	Time-sensitive and high-value supply chains	Handling certification, temperature control, flight capacity and delivered cost

The port describes road, rail, inland shipping and pipeline links as complementary connections. Schiphol's cargo statistics cover the airport, not all Dutch airfreight. Transit and European redistribution are part of the gateway model; neither gateway's volume can be assigned directly to Dutch consumers. [35,36]

2FAST analysis: compare the complete route to the consignee. Include customs, storage, VAT treatment, inland transport, service levels and reverse logistics. A Dutch hub is most valuable when it improves the chosen European distribution model.

OPERATING ECONOMICS

Evaluate total cost against productivity and service

National averages frame the discussion; customer and site specifications determine the investment model.

Cost item	Published reference	How to use it
Labour	€47.9 per hour, 2025 average employer cost [10]	Benchmark only; job mix, collective agreements, shifts and benefits change the result.
Electricity: 500–2,000 MWh/year	€0.245/kWh, H1 2026 [37]	Total including taxes and VAT; consumption band, contract and recoverability matter.
Electricity: 150,000+ MWh/year	€0.128/kWh, H1 2026 [37]	Different user class; not an achievable quote for a smaller operation.
Property and industrial land	No single comparable site price used	Obtain specification-matched quotations, service charges and available utility capacity.
Finance and working capital	ECB deposit facility: 2.50%, 29 October 2026 [63]	Euro-area policy reference; lending margins, collateral and maturity determine company financing costs.

Energy price is only one part of energy feasibility

The CBS figures are provisional half-year averages for non-household users in the stated annual consumption bands. They include VAT and taxes; recoverable VAT may not be an economic cost for an eligible business. The figures do not confirm that the desired connection or transport capacity is available. [37,38]

Finance: a large banking market, priced by borrower

DNB's March 2026 snapshot recorded €340bn of bank loans to Dutch businesses, with just under half extended to SMEs. Average interest on outstanding SME loans was about 3.6%, compared with 3.1% for larger firms. These historical portfolio rates are not new-loan quotations. [64]

2FAST analysis: compare productivity and the whole delivered-cost model. Obtain current financing and utility offers for the proposed operation, including ramp-up, working capital, maintenance and service commitments.

SITES AND PERMISSIONS

Resolve capacity and environmental fit early

Constraints are specific to the activity, location and network; they should be investigated before a site commitment.

Issue	Potential operational effect	Evidence or response to seek
Electricity congestion	Connection or contracted transport capacity may limit commissioning, expansion or electrification.	Written operator assessment; separate offtake from injection; examine phased loads and flexibility. [38]
Land and housing	Site suitability and recruitment can be affected by scarcity and local planning.	Permitted use, real availability, access and workforce housing assessment. [11,12]
Nitrogen and nature protection	Relevant emissions near protected habitats can affect permission for an activity.	Project-specific ecological assessment and competent-authority guidance; no blanket national conclusion. [12,39]
Water use and discharge	Abstraction, discharge and water-related works may require permission or notification.	Water-board/authority review of volume, quality, discharge and location. [40]
Other environmental effects	Noise, odour, waste, soil and process hazards may influence conditions.	Applicable activity rules, environmental plan and permit pathway through the Omgevingsloket. [39,41]

The Environment and Planning Act brings planning and environmental procedures into an integrated framework, but it does not make every project subject to the same permit. Requirements depend on the activity and its effects. [41]

2FAST analysis: make electricity, water, permitted use and environmental feasibility early decision gates for relevant industrial projects. For offices or light services, the material issues may instead be staffing, premises and data requirements. Obtain site-specific evidence rather than generalising industrial constraints to every entrant.

ESTABLISHMENT AND TAXATION

A clear framework, with entity-specific choices

The structure should follow the commercial activity, ownership and employment model.

Step	Core action
Choose the form	Compare a Dutch subsidiary, branch or other appropriate structure against liability, management and tax needs.
Incorporate and register	A BV is established through a civil-law notary; arrange KVK registration, relevant beneficial-ownership information and tax administration. [42,43]
Set up operations	Banking, bookkeeping, payroll, insurance, contracts and any premises or activity permissions.
Check cross-border obligations	VAT, customs, importer responsibility, employment and applicable investment screening.

19%	25.8%	21% / 9%
CIT on first €200,000 [44]	CIT above €200,000 [44]	Standard / reduced VAT [45]

Corporate income tax rates apply to taxable profit, not turnover. The reduced VAT rate applies only to qualifying supplies; exemptions and cross-border rules can change the treatment. Qualifying innovation-box income can be taxed at 9%, subject to the regime's conditions. [44,45]

Acquisitions and sensitive activities

Dutch investment-screening rules can be relevant to vital providers and sensitive technology. A June 2026 announcement proposed adding six technologies from January 2027; that prospective expansion is not treated here as already effective. Scope, control thresholds and filing obligations require transaction-specific review. [52]

2FAST analysis: establish responsibility for legal, tax, customs and regulatory work before signing operational commitments. The standard registration sequence is only one part of becoming ready to employ, import, manufacture or sell a regulated product.

SUPPORT AND MARKET REQUIREMENTS

Target support to eligible activity and verified timing

Incentives can support a project; eligibility and product compliance determine whether they are relevant.

Programme / requirement	Position at 1 November 2026	Application to assess
WBSO, 2026	36% on the first €391,020 qualifying base; 50% for qualifying starters; 16% above the first bracket. [46]	Eligible R&D work, personnel/cost base, application timing and records. Tax relief, not an automatic cash grant.
SDE++, 2026 round	€8bn budget; application window 27 October–26 November 2026. [47]	Eligible technology, phase, project readiness, permits and allocation criteria. Availability does not guarantee an award.
CE marking / product rules	Applies to products covered by relevant EU legislation. [48,49]	Conformity assessment, technical documentation, importer duties and the correct product regime.
Chemicals: REACH and CLP	Obligations depend on the substance, mixture, role and quantities. [50]	Registration responsibility, safety information, classification and labelling.
CBAM	Definitive regime began 1 January 2026. [51]	Covered goods, tariff codes, volumes, exemptions and reporting/authorisation responsibilities.

The relevant rules differ for food, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, machinery and digital services. A distributor does not automatically remove the manufacturer's or importer's obligations. Identify the responsible EU economic operator and documentation needed before shipment. [48,49]

2FAST analysis: map a product's tariff code, origin, intended use and regulated category before costing entry. Recheck programme windows and legal requirements at application or transaction date; the report records the position at cutoff, not perpetual availability.

COMPANY AND PROJECT EVIDENCE

Real examples, with their status made explicit

Selected cases illustrate types of economic activity; they are not endorsements or evidence of buyer demand.

Example	Verified activity / status	Economic significance
ASML	Worldwide 2025 net sales €32.67bn; R&D €4.70bn. Established global operations. [23]	Scale of equipment and engineering activity. Group accounts must not be treated as Dutch output or an open supplier tender.
Yakult, Wageningen	European R&D centre opened in May 2026. [25]	Company research investment linked to a food and nutrition knowledge ecosystem; a laboratory operation, not evidence of new production volume.
Eli Lilly, Katwijk	Announced €2.6bn manufacturing project; permit application in April 2026. Developer reported positive binding council advice in October. [26,27]	Potential regulated manufacturing and supplier demand. Permitting progress is distinct from construction completion, procurement availability and commissioning.
Damen Shipyards Group	160 vessel deliveries worldwide in 2025. [31]	International maritime design, production and services network. Worldwide deliveries are not domestic manufacturing statistics.

How to use project announcements

2FAST analysis: locate the current project phase, contracting entity, procurement route and qualification requirements. Check whether work is already awarded, delivered from existing global suppliers or suitable for a local provider. Announced capital expenditure can include several years and multiple types of spending.

The cases show four distinct activities: equipment and engineering, company research, planned regulated manufacturing and international maritime operations. Each connects to a different customer base, skills requirement and supplier qualification process.

PUBLISHED OUTLOOK

Moderate growth, with different forecast vintages

Forecasts describe conditional paths; more recent releases incorporate different information.

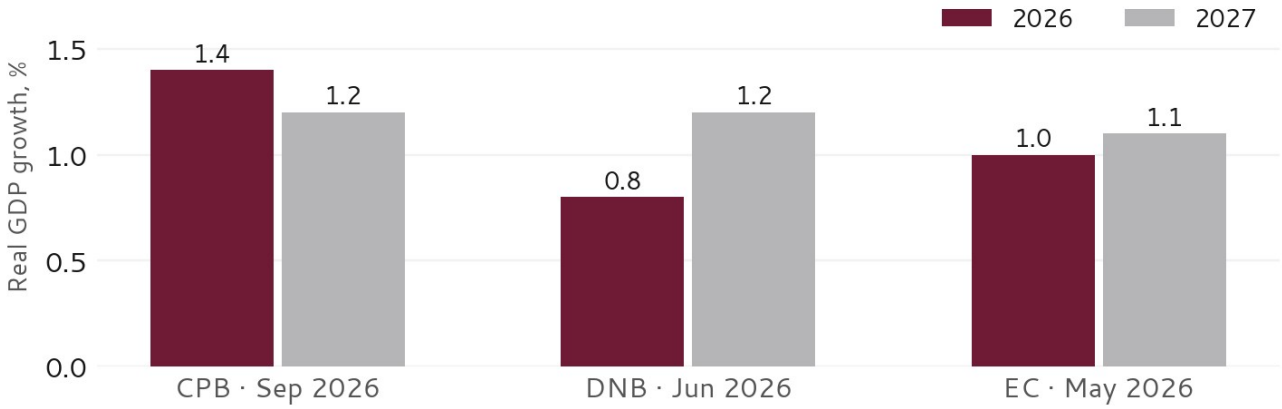

Figure 13. Published real GDP growth forecasts (%). CPB September 2026 via official Budget; DNB June 2026; European Commission May 2026 via Council recommendation. European Netherlands. [53,55,56]

CPB's September projection put real GDP growth at 1.4% in 2026 and 1.2% in 2027. It projected household consumption growth of 1.1% and 0.9%, and government consumption growth of 2.0% and 1.8%, respectively. CPI inflation was projected at 3.3% in 2026 and 2.7% in 2027. [53,54]

Supportive factors to monitor	Factors that can limit delivery
Household real-income resilience and public demand	Inflation and differences in household spending capacity
Specialist export and technology capabilities	External demand, trade restrictions and customer investment cycles
Industrial renewal and research investment	Skills, electricity, housing and project permissions

The Q3 GDP estimate published on 30 October provides information that postdates all three forecast rounds shown. The projection differences should therefore not be presented as simultaneous consensus uncertainty or averaged into a new 2FAST forecast. [2,53,55,56]

On 29 October the ECB kept its policy rates unchanged, while reporting continued energy-price pressure and tighter financing conditions across the euro area. This is a current external condition for the Dutch outlook, rather than a revised Dutch growth forecast. [63]

2FAST analysis: test a project against a range of utilisation, price and timing assumptions. The most useful early indicators are often customer orders, qualification progress and available capacity rather than small changes in a national growth forecast.

COMMERCIAL AND INVESTMENT PATHWAYS

Industrial applications worth investigating

These are evidence-backed areas for study, not confirmed opportunities or purchasing commitments.

Field and evidence	Offer, customer and market	Entry route and validation
Precision and semiconductor supply €45.6bn related turnover in 2025. [22]	Precision components, inspection, automation and engineering for equipment makers and qualified suppliers. Dutch industrial customers with global end markets.	Eindhoven/Brainport networks and customer qualification. Verify tolerances, capacity, certifications, traceability, IP and export controls; obtain a credible sourcing path.
Food-process efficiency Large domestic food export base; research activity. [24,25]	Processing, hygiene, packaging, sensors and resource-efficiency services for processors and technology integrators. Dutch plants; possible European replication.	Wageningen knowledge links and relevant production clusters. Verify food-contact rules, hygiene, line compatibility, service coverage and a measurable operating benefit.
Biopharma and laboratory services Research concentration and Katwijk project progress. [26–28]	Validation, analytical services, laboratory systems and qualified process inputs. Research centres, biotech firms and regulated manufacturers.	Utrecht and Leiden/Katwijk channels. Check quality regime, biosafety, vendor approval, project stage and procurement authority; distinguish clinical, research and production uses.
Industrial energy and process services Established process clusters and grid constraints. [30,38]	Monitoring, flexible-load control, efficiency and integration services for industrial asset owners. Primarily local operations, potentially wider EU customers.	Rotterdam, Chemelot and relevant northern sites. Verify grid/permit fit, operating data, shutdown windows, technology maturity and signed business-case assumptions.

2FAST analysis: prioritise an application with an identifiable problem and a reachable technical or procurement decision-maker. Obtain evidence of qualification and budget before committing to a permanent operating footprint.

COMMERCIAL AND INVESTMENT PATHWAYS

Services and distribution with a clear end customer

A Dutch presence is most useful when its role in the value chain is explicit.

Field and demand evidence	Offer, customer and market	Entry route, rules and further checks
Specialised European distribution Large re-export flows; sea and air gateways. [13,33,35]	Technical, temperature-sensitive or time-critical distribution for manufacturers and regional wholesalers. Usually wider Europe, with Dutch demand separately identified.	Rotterdam, Schiphol or inland logistics nodes according to consignments. Verify destination volumes, customs/VAT, product authorisations, handling certification, margins and inventory economics.
Industrial digital integration Strong infrastructure, but SME adoption gaps. [29]	Data integration, cybersecurity, production monitoring and maintenance applications. Dutch industrial and logistics firms; scalable EU use if proven.	Industry integrators and direct pilot customers. Validate data rights, security, integration cost, procurement ownership, support model and measured results.
Maritime lifecycle services International shipbuilding and service networks. [31,62]	Equipment servicing, electrification support, engineering and asset monitoring. Owners, yards and marine suppliers serving international fleets.	Port and maritime clusters. Verify class/flag requirements, marine references, warranty responsibilities, installed-base access and service coverage.

A staged route to entry

2FAST analysis: begin with a defined product and customer segment, test the route through interviews and documented procurement criteria, and compare partner-led delivery with a local entity. Use a pilot, qualification or initial commercial agreement to resolve the largest uncertainty before scaling.

A confirmed opportunity requires evidence such as a live procurement process, a qualified request, agreed commercial terms or a validated customer commitment. This report establishes investigation priorities; it does not claim that those conditions have been met.

METHODOLOGY AND CREDITS

Definitions that preserve the meaning of the evidence

Primary sources, transparent calculations and explicit boundaries underpin the report.

Topic	Method used
Geography	European Netherlands unless stated. Caribbean Netherlands and other Kingdom countries are not combined. Worldwide company results and facility data are labelled.
Values and growth	GDP at market prices; GVA at basic prices. Current euro values are separated from real volume growth. Quarter-on-quarter measures are seasonally adjusted where specified.
Trade	Merchandise ownership statistics, international services and national accounts remain separate. Input-output import use and export earnings retain their own year and framework.
FDI	Stocks, flows, conduit entities, operating companies and project announcements are distinguished. No conversion from FDI flows to jobs or capital expenditure is assumed.
Comparisons and calculations	European GDP comparisons use one Eurostat dataset/vintage. Shares use the stated numerator and denominator; rounding may affect displayed totals. Workbook formulas identify derived results.
Forecasts and limitations	Each forecast retains its producer and release date. No proprietary forecast or return estimate is presented. Source discrepancies and remaining gaps are logged in the workbook.

Images, map and identity

Cover: Rotterdam container terminal, Igor Passchier / Pexels, published 2 June 2025. Page 17: wind turbines at Koningsbosch, Lorna Pauli / Pexels, photographed 9 February 2026. Both are used under the Pexels licence; no endorsement is implied. [59–61]

Map: Natural Earth public-domain base, cropped to the European Netherlands and neighbours; selected location markers are approximate. Charts and map design: 2FAST analysis of the cited data. The original supplied 2FAST logo is used on white. Typeface: Cantarell. [58]

Research cutoff: 1 November 2026. Links were accessed during preparation. This is a general economic and market-development report; transaction-specific commercial, legal and technical due diligence remains necessary.

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