

Doing business in The Netherlands



Are you a member of a UK company wishing to export overseas?

Interested in entering or expanding your activity in the Dutch market? Then this guide is for you!

The main objective of this **Doing Business Guide** is to provide you with basic knowledge about The Netherlands; an overview of the market, business culture, potential opportunities and an introduction to other relevant issues. Novice exporters in particular will find it a useful starting point.

Further assistance is available from the UKTI team in The Netherlands. Full contact details are available at the end of this guide.



Important Information - Sanctions and Embargoes

Some countries maybe subject to export restrictions due to sanctions and embargoes placed on them by the UN or EU. Exporting companies are responsible for checking that their goods can be exported and that they are using the correct licences.

Further information is available on the [Businesslink site](#)

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Content

<u>Introduction</u>	4
<u>Preparing to export to The Netherlands</u>	8
<u>How to do business in The Netherlands</u>	9
<u>Business Etiquette, Language and Culture</u>	13
<u>What are the challenges?</u>	14
<u>How to Invest in The Netherlands</u>	14
<u>Contacts</u>	16
<u>Resources/Useful Links</u>	17

Introduction

The Netherlands is a sovereign country located in Northwest Europe that, together with the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba in the Caribbean Sea, constitute the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Netherlands is a parliamentary democratic constitutional monarchy. It is bordered by the North Sea to the north and west, Belgium to the south, and Germany to the east.

The Netherlands is often called Holland, a pars pro toto, as North and South Holland are actually two of its twelve provinces. The word *Dutch* is used to refer to the people, the language, and anything pertaining to the Netherlands. This lexical difference between the noun and the adjective is a peculiarity of the English language and does not exist in the Dutch language. The adjective 'Dutch' is derived from the language that was spoken in the area, called 'Diets', which equals Middle Dutch.

The Netherlands is a geographically low-lying country, with about 20% of its area and 21% of its population located below sea level. Significant land area has been gained through land reclamation and preserved through an elaborate system of polders and dikes. Much of the Netherlands is formed by the estuary of three important European rivers, which together with their distributaries form the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta. Most of the country is very flat, with the exception of foothills in the far southeast and several low-hill ranges in the central parts. The capital of the Netherlands is Amsterdam, even though the Dutch government is situated in The Hague.

Strengths of the market

In brief these are:

- Open and internationally oriented economy, used to imports, early adopter of new technologies.
- English widely spoken & accepted as business language.
- Many flight connections from (regional) UK airports to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Eindhoven.
- Entry route to other Dutch speaking markets (Belgium).
- Right on the UK's doorstep with low entry barriers, the Netherlands is a prime market for UK companies.
- The Netherlands is the UK's fourth largest goods and import market (2010: goods imports £30 billion and goods exports £22 billion)

Opportunities in The Netherlands

The Netherlands is one of Europe's most dynamic centres of trade and industry and home to one of the most open and internationally oriented economies in the world. It is a highly competitive, growing market with opportunities for trade in all sectors, especially for small- and medium-sized businesses.

Barriers to market entry are low and the transparent legal Framework and sophisticated financial services system, which combined, make the market an attractive place for UK companies. Geographically close to the UK with excellent transportation links to main and regional UK airports, make exploring the market cost effective.

Trade between UK and The Netherlands

UK exports are mainly in the following sectors:

- Petroleum and gas products and related services.
- Medical and pharmaceutical products
- Chemicals

- ICT and Telecommunication
- Food and Drink
- Financial Services

It is not difficult to see why UK companies are attracted towards doing business with the Netherlands. The country is both Anglophone (over 75% of the population speak English) and Anglophile (the Dutch and the British get on well together and share many characteristics).

Economic Overview

The Netherlands has a prosperous and open economy in which the government has reduced its role since the 1980s. Industrial activity is predominantly in food-processing (Unilever, Heineken), financial services (ING), chemicals (DSM), petroleum refining (Shell), and electrical machinery (Philips, ASML).

The Netherlands has the 16th largest economy in the world, and ranks 9th in GDP (nominal) per capita. Between 1998 and 2000 annual economic growth (GDP) averaged nearly 4%, well above the European average. Growth slowed considerably from 2001 to 2005 with the global economic slowdown, but accelerated to 4.1% in the third quarter of 2007. After the global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009 which also affected the Netherlands, 2010 was a year of recovery. The Dutch economy grew by 1.8 percent. Inflation is 1.2%, and unemployment is at 4.3% of the labour force.

The Netherlands introduced the euro in 1999. It is one of the 16 sovereign states that make up the Eurozone.

Amsterdam is the financial and business capital of the Netherlands. The Amsterdam Stock Exchange (AEX), part of Euronext, is the world's oldest stock exchange and is one of Europe's largest bourses. It is situated near Dam Square in the city's centre. As a founding member of the euro, the Netherlands replaced (for accounting purposes) its former currency, the "Gulden" (guilder), on 1 January 1999, along with 15 other adopters of the Euro. Actual euro coins and banknotes followed on 1 January 2002. One euro was equivalent to 2.20371 Dutch guilders.

The Netherlands' location gives it prime access to markets in the UK and Germany, with the port of Rotterdam being the largest port in Europe. Other important parts of the economy are international trade, banking and transport.

Amsterdam is the 5th busiest tourist destination in Europe with more than 4.2 million international visitors.

GDP	591,477 billion euro (2010)
GDP per capita	Purchasing power parity:
\$41,691 (2010)	
Economic growth	1.7% (2010)
Working population	7,391 million (2010)
Unemployed	4.5% (2010)
European economic growth	1.8% (2010)
Inflation rate	1.1% (2010)
Inflation rate Euro zone	2.1% (2010)
International trade	Exports: 461.5 billion euro (2010) (goods and services)
	Imports: 412 billion euro (2010) (goods and services)
Export commodities	Machinery and equipment, chemicals, fuels, foodstuffs
Import commodities	Machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, fuels,

	foodstuffs, clothing
Export partners	Germany 25.5%; Belgium 12.49%; France 9.27%; UK 8.17%; Italy 5.07%; US 3.97% (2009)
Import partners	Germany: 17.16%; China: 11.58%; Belgium: 8.68%; US: 7.77%; UK: 5.72%; Russia: 4.47; France: 4.4% (2009)

Population

The Netherlands have an estimated population of 16,656, million (as of 1 January 2011). It is the 11th most populous country in Europe and the 61st most populous country in the world.

The majority of the population of the Netherlands is ethnically Dutch. A 2011 estimate counted: 79.4% Dutch, 5.5% from other EU countries, 2.28% Indonesian (Indo-Dutch, South Moluccan), 2.34% Turkish, 2.07% Surinamese, 2.14% Moroccan, 0.85% Antillean and Aruban, and 6.0% others.

The Netherlands is the 30th most densely populated country in the world, with 401 inhabitants per square kilometer (41,526 sq km total area)—or 491 people per square kilometer (33,889 sq km) if only the land area is counted. It is the most densely populated country in Europe with a population over 16.6 million.

The Randstad is the country's largest conurbation located in the west of the country and contains the four largest cities: Amsterdam in the province North Holland, Rotterdam and The Hague in the province South Holland, and Utrecht in the province Utrecht. The Randstad has a population of approximately 7.6 million inhabitants and is the 6th largest metropolitan area in Europe.

Political Overview

The Netherlands has been a constitutional monarchy since 1815 and a parliamentary democracy since 1848. The Netherlands is described as a consociational state. Dutch politics and governance are characterised by an effort to achieve broad consensus on important issues, within both the political community and society as a whole. In 2010, The Economist ranked The Netherlands as the tenth most democratic country in the world.

The monarch, at present Queen Beatrix, is the head of state. Constitutionally, the position is equipped with limited powers. The monarch can exert some influence during the formation of a new cabinet, where they serve as neutral arbiter between the political parties. Additionally, the king (the title queen has no constitutional significance) has the right to be informed and consulted. Depending on the personality and qualities of the king and the ministers, the king might have *influence* beyond the *power* granted by the constitution.

In practice, the executive power is formed by the 'ministerraad', the deliberative council of the Dutch cabinet. The cabinet consists usually of twelve to sixteen ministers and a varying number of state secretaries. The head of government is the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, who often is the leader of the largest party of the coalition. In fact, this has been continuously the case since 1973. The Prime Minister is a *primus inter pares*, meaning he has no explicit powers beyond those of the other ministers. Currently, the Prime Minister is Mark Rutte.

The cabinet is responsible to the bicameral parliament, the States-General which also has legislative powers. The 150 members of the House of Representatives, the Lower House, are elected in direct elections, which are held every four years or after the fall of the cabinet (by

example: when one of the chambers carries a motion of no-confidence, the cabinet offers its resignation to the monarch). The States-Provincial are directly elected every four years as well. The members of the provincial assemblies elect the 75 members of the Senate, the upper house, which has less legislative powers, as it can merely reject laws, not propose or amend them. Both trade unions and employer organisations are consulted beforehand in policymaking in the financial, economic and social areas. They meet regularly with government in the Social-Economic Council. This body advises government and its advice cannot be put aside easily. While historically the Dutch foreign policy was characterized by neutrality, since the Second World War the Netherlands became a member of a large number of international organizations, most prominently the UN, NATO and the EU. The Dutch economy is very open and relies on international trade.

Due to the multi-party system, no single party has ever held a majority in parliament since the 19th century, and coalition cabinets had to be formed. Since suffrage became universal in 1919, the Dutch political system has been dominated by three families of political parties: the strongest family were the Christian democrats, currently represented by the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), second were the social democrats, of which the Labour Party (PvdA) is currently the largest party, and third were the liberals, of which the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) is the main representative. These cooperated in coalition cabinets in which the Christian democrats had always been a partner.

On 20 February 2010, the cabinet (coalition between CDA, PvdA and Christian Union) fell as the PvdA refused to prolong the involvement of the Dutch Army in Uruzgan, Afghanistan. New elections were held in June 2010, with devastating results for the previously largest party, the CDA, which lost about half of its seats, resulting in 21 seats. The VVD became the largest party with 31 seat, closely followed by the PvdA with 30 seats. The big winner of the 2010 elections was Geert Wilders whose PVV more than doubled in number of seats. Negotiation talks for a new government have resulted in a VVD-led minority government in coalition with CDA as of 14 October 2010. This minority government is supported by PVV.

Getting here and advice about your stay

FCO Travel Advice

The FCO website has travel advice to help you prepare for your visits overseas and to stay safe and secure while you are there.

For advice [please visit the FCO Travel section](#)

Getting here

By air

The two main airports in the Netherlands are Schiphol and Rotterdam – The Hague international airport. There are many connections between the main London airports, but also with other regional airports in the UK.

By boat/ferry

UK Trade & Investment [Doing business in The Netherlands](#)

There are three ferry services between the UK and the Netherlands:

- IJmuiden – Newcastle by DFDS Seaways (www.dfdsseaways.co.uk)
- Rotterdam – Hull by P&O Ferries (www.poferries.com)
- Hook of Holland – Harwich by Stena Line (www.stenaline.co.uk)

It is recommended to contact the local ferry services direct for more information.

Rail

The Netherlands can be reached via Brussels through Eurostar. It is recommended to check the Eurostar website on www.eurostar.co.uk.

Visas

Passports are required by everyone, apart from EU residents travelling on national ID cards. Visas are required by all, except for nationals of the EU and Schengen Accord signatory countries, North America, Australasia and Japan. For further exceptions, please contact your nearest Dutch consulate. Schengen visas cover all entry requirements; for business trips, an original invitation from a business contact in the Netherlands is necessary when applying.

Preparing to export to The Netherlands

Local representation or market presence is important. Appointing an agent is a cost-effective mechanism to enter the market but it can be difficult and costly to terminate the arrangement. An importer distributor agreement is a better option because the Dutch distributor purchases the product and shares the risk.

The appointment of a local partner/representative will only be the first step. The Netherlands is known for its 'direct' business environment, and where personal relationships therefore are important. This requires an investment primarily of time and personal presence. Likewise, product training for the agent's workforce is essential, as are regular updates on developments, modifications, competitor activity, etc. Therefore regular visits to the market, especially during the early phase, are an important part of a successful interaction with the agent / distributor. British companies wishing to approach the Dutch market are advised to undertake as much market research and planning as possible in the UK.

UKTI's team in The Netherlands can provide a range of services to British-based companies wishing to grow their business in the Dutch market. Our services include the provision of market information, validated lists of agents/potential partners, key market players or potential customers; establishing the interest of such contacts in working with the company; and arranging appointments. In addition, they can also organise events for you to meet contacts or promote a company and its products/services.

You can commission these services under which are chargeable and operated by UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) to assist British-based companies wishing to enter or expand their business in overseas markets. Under this service, the Embassy's Trade & Investment Advisers, who have wide local experience and knowledge, can identify business partners and provide the support and advice most relevant to your company's specific needs in the market.

To find out more about commissioning work, please contact your local UKTI office. See www.ukti.gov.uk

How to do business in The Netherlands

What companies should consider when doing business

The Netherlands have been one of the founders of the current EU, so European business practices and standards generally apply.

Gateways/Locations – Key areas for business

Although The Randstad is considered to be the largest commercial centre (with a population of approximately 7.6 million), there are industrial clusters and R&D centres in other major cities and regions, including North Netherlands (Renewable Energy), Wageningen (home to the Food and Nutrition Delta), Leeuwarden (Water Technology) and Eindhoven (Electronics/Advanced Engineering), and others.

Market entry and start up considerations

British companies can approach the Dutch market in several ways:

- Export direct;
- Set up an agency;
- Appoint a distributor;
- Form a joint venture or manufacture under licence agreement with a Dutch company or they can acquire all or part of a Dutch company.

In the case of direct exports it is advisable to have a local representative either on a commission basis or as an importer/distributor.

Joint venture partnerships and acquisition options are not chosen by many foreign companies seeking a market share, as the Dutch are very internationally oriented. The success of relationship will very much depend on the nature of the product/service and the level of domestic competition. The Netherlands is a small and well developed market so personal acquaintances are important. Having Dutch partners is recommended in establishing your own business. Personal contact with potential and existing clients and regular visits to the market are vital.

In most cases doing business in the Netherlands requires local representation in the form of an agent or distributor.

The appointment of a local partner/representative will only be the first step. The Netherlands is a market where personal relationships are important. This requires an investment primarily of time and personal presence. Likewise, product training for the agent's workforce is essential, as are regular updates on developments, modifications, competitor activity etc. Therefore regular visits to the market, especially during the early phase, are an important part of a successful interaction with the agent / distributor.

Advertising & Sales Promotion

The most successful types of advertising available in the Netherlands are television and radio commercials, internet advertisements, advertisements published in daily newspapers and magazines and in specialised trade directories. British Exporters should consult their Dutch representative before embarking on a comprehensive advertising campaign. There are many advertising agencies in the Netherlands, some specialising in television, others in radio commercials and direct mailing.

Internet usage is high in the Netherlands as well as in Business-to-consumer as in Business-to-Business market. The majority of the Dutch companies have their own website.

Customs and Regulations

In the Netherlands, the law on commercial agents is covered by directive 86/653 of the European Union. This directive can be accessed in the EUR-LEX database: eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm

The EVD can assist businesses by providing a model of a contract specially developed for activities requiring a mercantile agent to promote the sale of goods in the Netherlands. The model is laid out in such a way that it may be easily adapted to the needs of each activity and type of agent. The branch organisation for intermediaries in the Netherlands is Verbond van Nederlandse Tussenpersonen (VNT). They can provide assistance in finding a commercial agent. Members of the VNT are associations from specific sectors dealing with intermediaries. The following organisations are members of the VNT:

- Association of intermediaries, VNT: www.vnt.org
- Intermediaries in wine and spirits (Dutch only): www.va-branche.nl
- Intermediaries in textiles and clothing (Dutch only): www.nvkt.nl
- Timber agents: www.nata-timberagents.nl

VNT also represents the following sectors: sanitary equipment; tools; machinery; footwear; paper; and furniture.

Customs and tariffs

For customs and tax purposes, the European Union (EU) distinguishes 3 distinct areas:

- a customs area;
- an excise area;
- a VAT area.

Some areas fall under the geographic territory of the EU, but do not belong to the customs area, the excise area and/or the VAT area of the EU. These areas are regarded as exceptional areas. Non-EU countries are also known as 'third countries'.

If you are importing goods from an exceptional area that does not belong to the customs area of the EU, the same rules apply that would also apply if you imported the goods from a non-EU country. The customs department has an overview of the customs and tax areas within the EU. The table detailed in the link hereunder shows whether an area is part of the customs area, VAT and/or excise area: www.douane.nl

Excise duty and consumer tax

What are excisable goods? In the Netherlands, the following goods are classified as excisable goods:

- beer;
- wine;
- Intermediate products (e.g. port, sherry and vermouth). Intermediate products refers to products where additional alcohol has been added to the alcohol that has been generated during the natural fermentation process;
- other alcoholic products (e.g. spirits and perfumes);
- tobacco products - in the form of pipe/cigarette tobacco, cigarettes and cigars;
- mineral oils (e.g. petrol, diesel oil and LPG)

Excise duties must be paid for the consumption of these goods. The Excise Duty Act (Wet op de accijns) therefore comprises rules concerning stocking, importing, producing, storing and/or receiving excisable goods from another Member State. The Customs department has extensive information available on this subject.

Further information: www.douane.nl

Legislation and Local Regulations

Companies are always advised to seek legal/taxation advice before entering into a joint venture or similar type of partnership. Lists of local lawyers and chartered accountants are available on request from the UKTI Section of the British Embassy in The Hague.

Taxes.

For centuries, the Netherlands has been a nation of traders. To ensure that this long-standing tradition endures, the Dutch government has created a competitive tax regime that stimulates entrepreneurship and foreign investment in the Netherlands. While corporate tax rates are in line with the country's European neighbours, there are numerous features that serve as an inducement to foreign companies to locate their operations in the Netherlands. In comparison with other (EU) countries, the Netherlands is known for its very competitive tax climate, resulting from its far-reaching tax treaty network, its system of bonded warehouses, and the possibility to conclude so-called 'advance tax rulings', whereby a company's future tax liability is determined.

The principal taxes in the Netherlands are corporate and personal taxes on income and value-added tax. Additionally, individuals are liable to a number of other taxes, such as inheritance and gift tax.

The fact that the Netherlands has signed treaties with more than eighty countries around the world emphasises its commitment to international and bilateral commerce. These treaties have been signed so that companies are not forced to pay double taxation. More information can be found on the site of the Dutch tax authorities, 'de belastingdienst' www.belastingdienst.nl

VAT

If a supply is not exempt and is not subject to the reverse-charge mechanism either, it is automatically taxed at one of three possible rates: the 0% rate, the 6% rate or the 19% rate.

0% rate

The 0% rate applies to entrepreneurs who do business outside the Netherlands. This usually involves the supply of goods to other countries.

6% rate

The low rate of VAT is 6%. This rate applies, for example, to the supply, import or intra-Community acquisition of:

- food, drink (excluding alcoholic beverages) and the ingredients used in their production;
- cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses;
- medicines;
- books, daily newspapers and magazines;
- agricultural and horticultural seeds;
- ornamental plants.

The following services are also taxed at 6%:

- passenger transport;
- paintwork on dwellings that are over 15 years old;
- hairdressing services;
- bicycle repairs;
- the letting of holiday homes;
- culture and recreation;
- practice of sports and sports events.

19% rate

In all other cases, you should charge VAT at the basic 19% rate. In other words, the 19% rate applies to supplies that are not exempt, not subject to the reverse-charge mechanism, not zero-rated and not taxed at 6%.

For information on Value Added Tax it is advisable to contact the Tax Department (Belastingdienst): www.belastingdienst.nl

Recruiting and Retaining Staffing

The Netherlands features one of the most highly educated, flexible and motivated workforces in Europe. Dutch professionals are also among the most multilingual in the world, enabling them to successfully operate in companies in any industry serving customers throughout the continent.

The local recruitment industry is well developed. Companies such as Randstad, Tempoteam, Vedor and Manpower have a permanent base in the Netherlands. The UKTI Section of the British Embassy in The Hague keep an up-to-date list of recruitment agencies which they can supply to companies free of charge.

Documentation

Goods which are in free circulation within the European Union (i.e. those which are not liable to pay customs duty in the EU as they either originate there or the duty has already been paid) can move between Member States without any documentation. This does not apply to excise or controlled goods which still need documentation.

However it is advisable to still send normal commercial documentation with the export (e.g. invoices, packaging lists) for despatches to the Netherlands.

Labelling and Packaging Regulations

The European Union does not regulate packaging and labelling in general, with the exception of very specific high-risk product related cases. In the absence of any EU-wide rules, exporters should consult Dutch regulations. Importers or shipping agents are the first point of contact for shipping documents and outer packaging/labelling. EU customs legislation only regulates administrative procedures, such as type of certificate and the mention of rule of origin on the customs forms and shipping documents.

Getting your Goods to the Market

The main options for the Netherlands are sea-freight, road, airfreight, post, air parcel post and express or courier service and rail freight. For all methods, except post, it is often easier to use a freight forwarder. Forwarders should be approached in the early stages of market research rather than waiting until the goods are ready to go.

Standards and Technical Regulation

The Dutch Standards/Technical regulatory authority is the NEN (www.nen.nl). The NEN counsels in setting rules and regulations about products, procedures and services, and also publishes these. They support this process as an independent and reliable partner.

Intellectual Property Rights

The Netherlands Patent Office grants patents in the Netherlands and disseminates the knowledge derived from the patent literature. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's), entrepreneurs,

inventors, technology institutes, scientists, teachers and students can visit the office to obtain essential information. The Netherlands Patent Office is an agency of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

More information can be found on The Netherlands Patent Office: www.octrooicentrum.nl

Business Etiquette, Language and Culture

Language

In general, English is widely spoken in the Netherlands, and by far the favoured second language used in the field of commerce.

Whilst it is preferable for written correspondence to be in Dutch, it may also be conducted in English. Trade literature should preferably be in Dutch.

A list of local translators and interpreters is available on request from the UKTI Section of the British Embassy in The Hague.

Meetings and Presentations

As in other countries, more than anything it is important to target the right person in your contacts, the decision-maker. It is also preferable to establish new business contact via phone or e-mail, although the Dutch do not like cold callers. It is preferred to make an introduction by mutual contact, someone the company already knows and trusts.

The Dutch normally prefer to have face-to-face meetings, than keeping into contact by phone or email, which are seen as more impersonal. A meeting is often very business oriented, as the Dutch consider time is money.

Appointments should be made at least with 1 or 2 weeks in advance, and confirmed a few days before the actual meeting. Punctuality is vital.

Negotiations

The Dutch tend to be organised and work according to schedules. Punctuality, therefore, is essential.

Once a meeting is underway the Dutch get directly down to business. Dutch negotiators are generally very direct, effective and agile in their business dealings. Decisions are often reached by consensus, with all parties concerned being consulted.

In business, the Dutch are quite conservative and generally restrained in their behaviour. They do not value exaggeration or ostentation and they avoid any attitude indicating superiority; as the Dutch regularly say: "being yourself is good enough".

Outside the meeting-room, popular topics of conversation include: history, travel, art and sports (especially football). Politics, religion and some social issues (legalized prostitution, euthanasia, drugs policy, etc.) should generally be avoided.

As mentioned, the success in any business relationship will very much depend on the nature of the product/service and the level of domestic competition given that the Netherlands is a relatively small and well developed market. But developing a personal relationship with a Dutch partner can be just as significant as the product or service itself.

Personal contact with potential and existing partners/clients and regular visits to the market are very important and it is natural for the business relationship to grow over time.

What are the challenges?

Getting Paid – Terms of Payment

Credit is an important feature of the market. Many companies work on 90-120 days (this number tends to increase in State/Public Administration payments) and the method of payment is usually agreed when negotiating the contract. Open account is often used as payment method (Swift, bank draft and cheque).

It is advisable to quote in Euros. Large importers are more likely to want to use the Euro early on, given the advantages of lower transaction costs and transparent pricing between euro-zone countries.

Payment and accounting systems are more advanced in the financial sector and in large businesses than in small and medium-sized businesses.

Lists of local lawyers and chartered accountants are available on request from the UKTI Section of the British Embassy in The Hague.

How to Invest in The Netherlands

The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency, NFIA, can assist businesses contemplating investment in the Netherlands. Many foreign companies have already established a subsidiary or headquarters in the Netherlands. Some reasons to invest in the Netherlands:

Strategic location in Europe

The Netherlands provides a strategic location from which to serve markets within the current and future European Union, the Middle East and Africa. The centrally-located geographical position of the Netherlands, combined with accessibility and an excellent infrastructure are some of the key reasons why numerous European, American and Asian companies have established facilities in the Netherlands.

International business environment

The Netherlands, long Europe's trading crossroads, is an obvious choice to locate an operation, whether it is a European headquarters, a Shared Services Centre, a Customer Care Centre, a distribution and logistics operation, or an R&D facility. The country's pro-business environment creates a strong basis and provides a gateway to Europe that helps international companies

penetrate into the continent. An international outlook and openness to foreign investment is firmly ingrained in the Dutch culture and this has yielded a wealth of world-class business partners who know how to deal with global business challenges in today's economy.

More information can be found on www.nfia.com

Contacts

If you have a specific export enquiry about the Netherlands which is not answered by the information on this report, you may contact:

UK Trade & Investment Enquiry Service

Tel: +44 (0)20 7215 8000

Fax: +44 (0)141 228 3693

Email: enquiries@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

You will be signposted to the appropriate section on our website or transferred **at local call rate** to the British Embassy in the Hague.

Otherwise contact the team in the Netherlands directly:

UKTI Trade & Investment The Netherlands

British Embassy in The Hague

Lange Voorhout 10, 2514 ED The Hague

Michiel Veldhuizen

Head of UK Trade and Investment

Tel: 00 31 70 427 0211

Email: trade.enquiries@fco.gov.uk

[UK Trade & Investment](#) can help you make the most of these opportunities and help you plan your approach to the market. You may find out more about the range of services available to UK companies trading internationally through your local International Trade Team.

We hope that you have found this guide useful. For further information, please contact your International Trade Adviser or one of the UKTI team in The Netherlands.

Resources/Useful Links

Country Information:

BBC Website

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

EU Points of Single contact

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/eu-go/index_en.htm

FCO Country Profile

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/>

Culture and communications

CILT – National Centre for Languages - Regional Language Network in your area:

http://www.cilt.org.uk/workplace/employer_support/in_your_area.aspx

Kwintessential culture guides:

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk>

Customs & Regulations

HM Revenue & Customs:

www.hmrc.gov.uk

Economic Information:

Economist

<http://www.economist.com/countries/>

Export Control

Export Control Organisation:

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/exportcontrol>

Export Finance and Insurance:

ECGD

<http://www.ecgd.gov.uk/>

Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property Office:

www.ipo.gov.uk

Market Access

Market Access Database for Tariffs (for non-EU markets only):

<http://mkaccdb.eu.int/mkaccdb2/indexPubli.htm>

SOLVIT – Overcoming Trade Barriers (EU Markets only)

www.bis.gov.uk/EUMarketAccessUnit

Standard and Technical Regulations:

British Standards Institution (BSI):

<http://www.bsigroup.com/en/sectorsandservices/Disciplines/ImportExport/>

National Physical Laboratory:

<http://www.npl.co.uk/>

Intellectual Property:

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk>

Trade Statistics

National Statistics Information:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html>

UK Trade Info:

<https://www.uktradeinfo.co.uk/>

Travel Advice

FCO Travel:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/>

NHS:

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcareabroad/>

Travel health:

<http://www.travelhealth.co.uk/>

Business Link: International Trade

Business Link's International Trade pages provide an overview of export basics including licensing, customs procedures, classifying and movement of goods, other regulatory information and export paperwork issues. It also introduces exporters to the UK Trade Tariff.

Essential reading for exporters!

Find out more at:

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.s=tl&r.lc=en&topicId=1079717544>

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