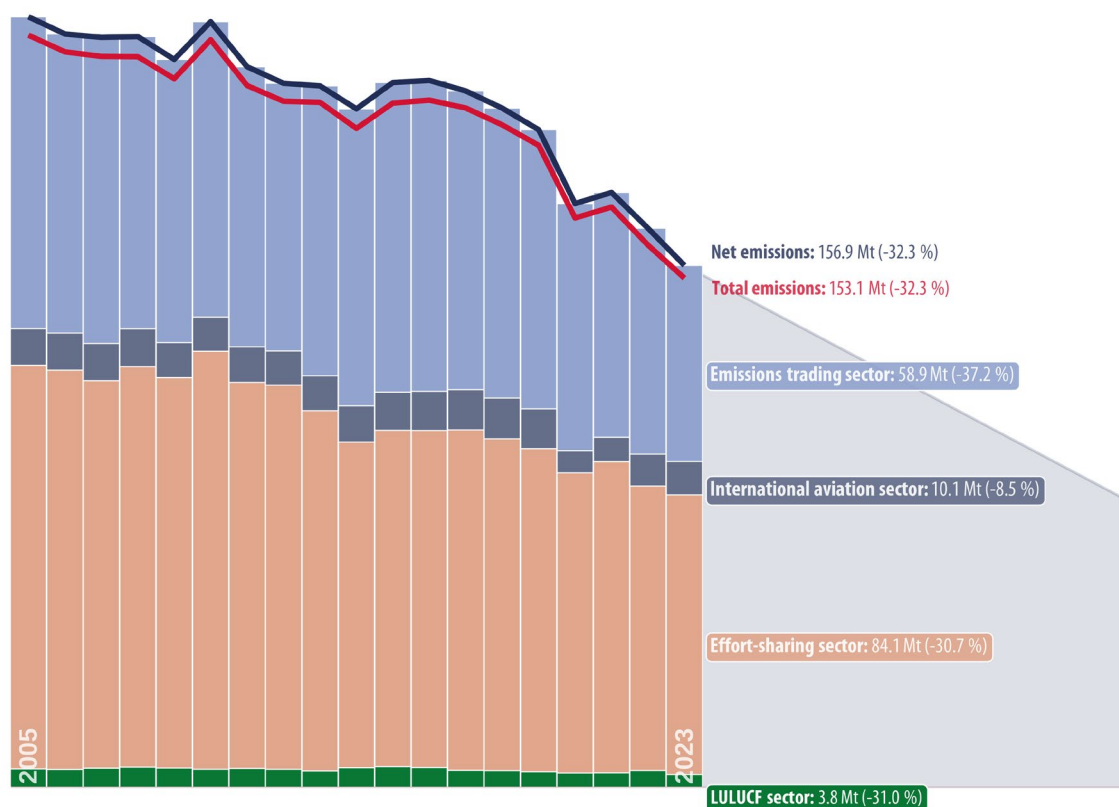


The Netherlands' climate action strategy

The Netherlands aims to reach climate neutrality by 2050 (see trajectory in Figure 1) and deliver a 55 % greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction by 2030 compared with 1990. The country accounts for 5.3 % of the EU's net GHG emissions, and achieved a net emissions reduction of 32.3 % between 2005 and 2023, greater than the EU average reduction of 30.5 % over the same period. Emissions from sectors under the EU emissions trading system (ETS) fell by 37.2 %. Because of the role of agriculture, the Dutch land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector has continually caused net emissions. For the effort-sharing sectors, the country over-achieved its targets for 2020, yet needs extra effort to deliver on the updated 2030 obligations. In July 2023, it proposed a revision of its recovery and resilience plan with a REPowerEU chapter, and submitted a [draft](#) updated national energy and climate plan (NECP), which the European Commission [assessed](#) in December. The Netherlands was one of five Member States to submit their [final](#) updated NECP on time (on 26 June 2024).

In a 2023 [survey](#), 66 % of Dutch (against a 46 % EU average) identified climate change as one of the four most serious problems facing the world. More than two thirds expect national government, business and industry and/or the EU to tackle climate change; more than half find it to be a personal responsibility.

Figure 1 – The Netherlands' greenhouse gas emissions in million tonnes (Mt), 2005–2023



Data source: European Environment Agency ([EEA](#)), 2024.

This briefing is one in a series covering all EU Member States.

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Gregor Erbach with Noor Dewulf; Graphics: Ville Seppälä

Climate Action Research and Tracking Service, Members' Research Service

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The Netherlands' starting point

The Dutch [Climate Law](#) was adopted in 2019 and updated in 2023 to align it with the European Climate Law. It sets targets for climate neutrality by 2050 and a CO₂-free electricity sector by 2035, and aims for a 55 % reduction of net GHG emissions by 2030 compared with 1990 levels. To achieve the 2030 target with certainty, the Netherlands opted for an 'over-programming' of measures, aiming for a 60 % emissions reduction by that date. The approach developed in the [climate policy programme](#), and complemented by the [spring climate decision](#) in 2023, is based on the principle that Dutch climate policy should be just, implementable and ambitious. The country's [long-term strategy](#) dates from 2019 and is still based on the previous climate targets.

The Netherlands [reached](#) its 2020 EU targets for GHG emissions and energy consumption, but had to make use of statistical transfers from other Member States to reach its 2020 target for the share of renewable energy. Between 2005 and 2023, the country succeeded in reducing emissions in all sectors. Emissions per capita fell by 38 % since 2005, reaching 8.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) in 2023, which is above the EU average of 7.2 tonnes. In addition, the Dutch economy's carbon intensity was reduced by 49 % between 2005 and 2023, and stands at 20 % below the EU average.

The Council's 2024 [country-specific recommendations](#) for the Netherlands call for further efforts on sustainable agriculture and improved framework conditions for investment in the electricity grid. The Commission's [country report](#) identifies capacity constraints in the electricity grid as impediments to the roll-out of renewable energy sources and to economic activity.

According to the 2025 [Climate Change Performance Index](#) (CCPI), the Netherlands is the second best performer, after Denmark. The CCPI ranks countries based on their climate protection performance using primarily quantitative data, with experts providing qualitative evaluation of a country's forward-looking climate policies. The experts highlight that the new government is largely continuing the country's well-developed climate policy system.

Climate action governance

The Dutch Climate Law sets the overall targets, and requires the government to draw up a 10-year [climate plan](#) every 5 years. The plan sets out policies and measures. The schedule for the preparation of the climate plans is aligned with the NECPs required under the EU's [Governance Regulation](#). The government must draw up a yearly [climate memorandum](#) and biannual progress reports. The climate memorandum accounts for climate policy, reflects on progress made in the past year, and compares this with national and EU-level targets. The Dutch Council of State has an advisory role regarding climate policy, while the PBL (*Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving*) is tasked with delivering an annual [climate and energy outlook](#). The independent and interdisciplinary [Netherlands Scientific Climate Council](#), established in April 2023, delivers science-based, strategic climate policy advice for the Dutch government and parliament, on request and on its own initiative.

To ensure public participation, the Climate Law requires the government to use input from various levels of government, such as the provinces, city councils, water authorities, and other relevant stakeholders. In the [climate agreement](#), the government, businesses, and civil society organisations have jointly agreed measures for the next 10 years, and sectoral targets to reach the national emissions reduction targets. The agreement is followed up through the [National Climate Platform](#), founded in 2022. The platform connects citizens, business and government. It holds an 'acceleration dialogue' to identify opportunities, as well as obstacles, for speeding up climate action, performs analyses, and helps prepare political decisions.

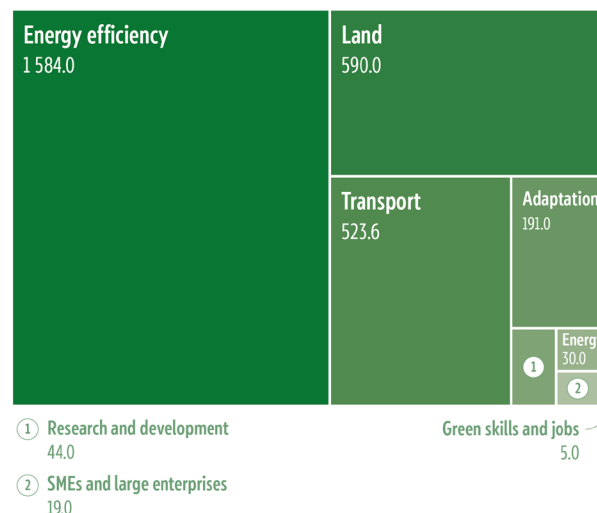
The first Dutch [climate adaptation strategy](#) dates from 2016. The [national adaption plan](#) from 2023 aims to accelerate climate resilience. Together with the 2023 [climate scenarios](#) and the latest [review of climate risks](#), it will feed into a new climate adaption strategy expected for 2026.

Climate action in the national recovery and resilience plan

The Dutch [national recovery and resilience plan](#) (NRRP) is one of the smallest, with a volume of €5.44 billion, equivalent to 0.7 % of the country's 2019 gross domestic product. In 2023, the original plan was amended and extended with a REPowerEU chapter. The Dutch plan [allocates](#) 54.9 % of the spending to climate action, far above the compulsory 37 % target under the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

As Figure 2 shows, by far the largest project in the [Dutch NRRP](#) is the [investment subsidy](#) for sustainable energy and energy savings, with a volume of €1.36 billion. The NRRP supports offshore wind energy with €694 million and green hydrogen with €68 million. Projects in the transport sector address inland waterways, sustainable aviation, rail traffic management, intelligent roadside stations, and safe, smart and sustainable mobility. In agriculture, the plan supports measures to reduce [nitrogen](#) pollution, one of the Netherlands' main environmental challenges.

Figure 2 – NRRP climate dimension (€ million)



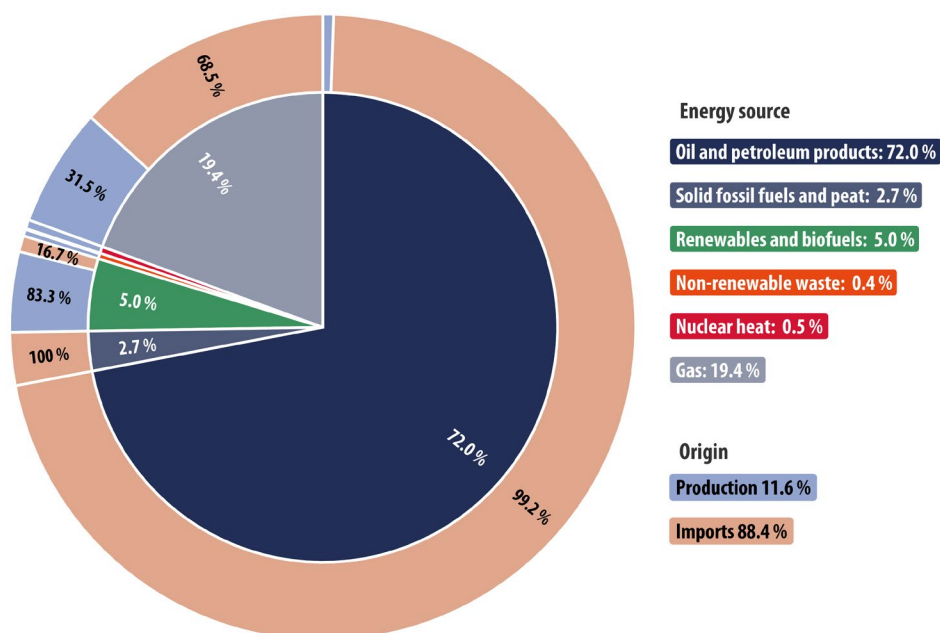
Data source: [European Commission](#), 2023; graphic by Lucille Killmayer, EPRS.

Note: Measures relating to offshore wind are categorised under 'Transport' and 'Land', and hydrogen-related measures under 'Research and development'.

Energy situation

The Netherlands is an important [energy trade hub](#) for Europe. In 2022, the Netherlands produced 25 million tonnes of oil equivalent (Mtoe) of energy, imported 187 Mtoe and exported 124 Mtoe, while 50 Mtoe were consumed within the country.

Figure 3 – Energy mix and import dependency, 2022



Data source: Eurostat ([nrg_bal_sd](#)), 2024.

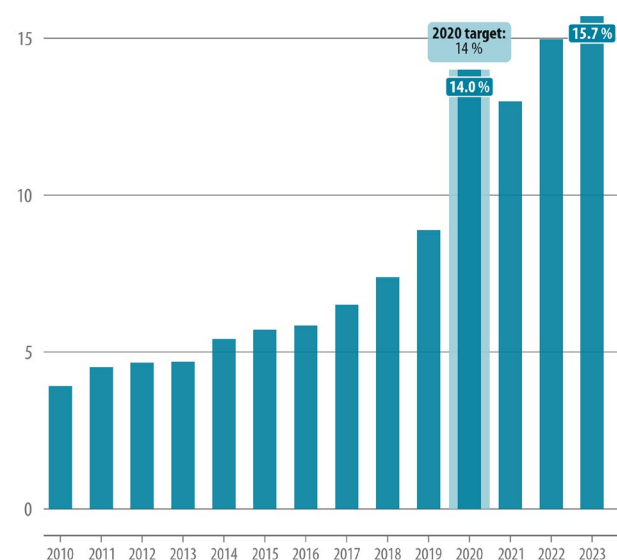
Oil and petroleum products, almost all imported, accounted for 72 % of the Dutch energy supply in 2022. However, half of the imports are directly exported to other countries. The other half is used by Dutch refineries, which export much of their product, mostly to European countries. Oil and petroleum products account for 42 % of final energy consumption in the Netherlands.

Natural gas plays an important role in the Dutch energy system, accounting for 19.4 % of energy supply, as shown in Figure 3 above, and 32 % of final energy consumption in the country. Although the Netherlands has substantial natural gas reserves and has historically been a large exporter of gas, it was a net importer of gas in 2022. This is a result of the phase-out, completed in October 2023, of the Groningen gas field, owing to [induced earthquakes](#).

Coal plays only a minor role in the Netherlands, with a 2.7 % share of energy supply. The country depends entirely on imports, as domestic coal mining ended in the 1970s. The use of coal for electricity generation will be [prohibited](#) as of 2030.

Electricity generation capacity in the Netherlands increased from almost 21 gigawatts (GW) in 2000 to 60 GW in 2023, in large part because of the [expansion](#) of renewable energy sources. However, the electricity grid has not kept up, and the country suffers from [grid bottlenecks](#) that slow down the further electrification of the economy. In line with the [national energy system plan](#), adopted in December 2023, €8 billion of [annual investment](#) in energy grids is planned. To reach the target of carbon-free electricity generation by 2035, the country plans to make use of offshore wind and solar, nuclear power, batteries and hydrogen for energy storage, and flexible demand to avoid peak loads. **Nuclear power** accounted for 3 % of Dutch electricity generation in 2022. The country has only [one operational nuclear power plant](#), with a capacity of 482 megawatts. A previous decision to phase out nuclear power was overturned in 2021, and the country intends to build four new large nuclear power plants, and possibly multiple smaller ones.

Figure 4 – Renewable energy share in final energy consumption



Data source: Eurostat ([nrg_ind_ren](#)), 2024.

In 2020, the share of **renewable energy sources** (RES) in final energy consumption was 11.5 %, falling short of the country's binding EU-level target of 14 %. The Netherlands therefore had to make use of a statistical transfer to reach the target, which explains the peak in Figure 4. Under the EU Renewable Energy Directive, the Netherlands has an indicative 2030 RES target of 39 %. It expects to reach that share with new policies announced in 2024. The country aims to produce 2 billion cubic metres of [green gas](#) by 2030, and to increase offshore wind capacity from 3 GW in 2022 to 21 GW in 2032 following a [detailed plan](#) and combining offshore wind parks with solar power. Part of the generated electricity would be used to produce renewable hydrogen offshore. For 2032, the country [envisages](#) 8 GW electrolysis capacity for the production of renewable hydrogen. The Netherlands launched the public-private [national hydrogen programme](#) in 2022.

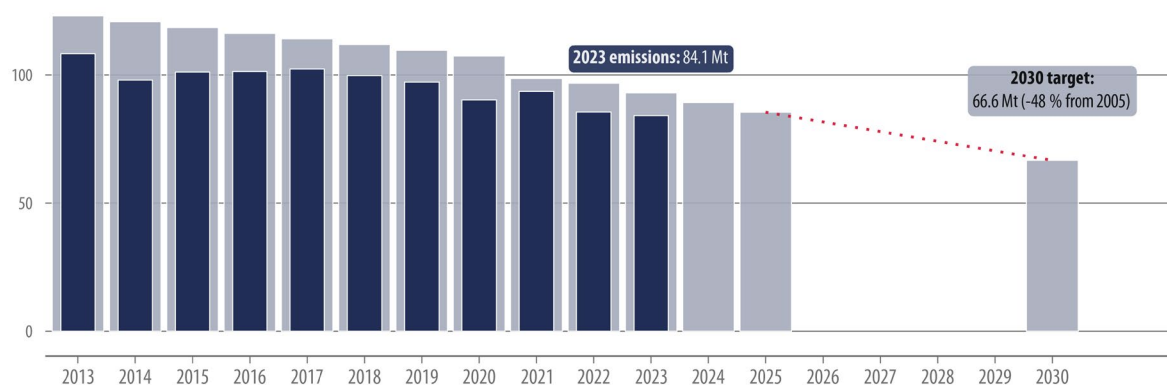
The Netherlands plans to draw up a [North Sea energy infrastructure plan 2050](#) with a strategic view of future offshore energy hubs and infrastructure. It coordinates [energy planning](#) and policy internationally in the [Pentalateral Energy Forum](#) and the [North Seas Energy Cooperation](#).

Sectoral challenges and strategies

Energy industries were responsible for 24.5 % of Dutch GHG emissions in 2023, while other industries accounted for 19.9 %. Energy industries achieved a 45 % emissions reduction from 2005 to 2023, and other industries, 30 %. The Netherlands has a national CO₂ levy to ensure that the industrial sector meets its 2030 target in the Dutch climate agreement. In 2024, industrial installations pay €74.17 per tCO₂e for emissions above a threshold that decreases every year.

According to the Dutch NECP, a Climate and Transition Fund of €35 billion to finance climate and energy policy measures has been established for the next 10 years, in addition to the current subsidy scheme for stimulation of sustainable energy production and climate transition (**SDE++**). The scheme supports renewable electricity and gas, renewable and low-carbon heat and low-carbon production, and has a budget of €11.5 billion for 2024.

Figure 5 – Netherlands' emissions under the Effort-sharing Decision/Regulation



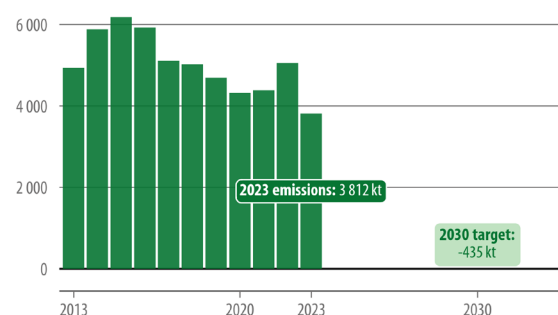
Data source: [EEA](#), 2024.

As shown in Figure 5, the Netherlands remained below allocations in each year covered under the Effort-sharing Decision (2013–2020). The 'fit for 55' revision of the Effort-sharing Regulation (ESR) sets the Dutch emissions reduction obligation for 2030 to 48 % compared with 2005. The Netherlands [expects](#) to reach this target, possibly making use of flexibilities with the ETS or LULUCF sectors. Sectors covered by the ESR include transport, buildings, agriculture, and small industrial installations. The new EU ETS for road transport and buildings (ETS2) will become operational in 2027/2028. The Netherlands [extended](#) the ETS2 to fuels used in additional sectors, including waterborne navigation, rail, agriculture, and other fossil fuel combustion.

The Netherlands regards [carbon capture and storage](#) as important for reducing CO₂ emissions in applications where alternatives are not readily available, particularly for reducing industrial emissions. The Netherlands expects to reach a CO₂ injection capacity of 10–15 million tonnes per year in the North Sea by 2030. The €1.3 billion [Porthos](#) (Port of Rotterdam CO₂ Transport Hub and Offshore Storage) project is expected to handle 2.5 million tonnes of captured CO₂ annually, starting in 2026.

The **transport** sector accounted for 17.3 % of Dutch GHG emissions in 2023, a 25 % reduction since 2005. The country pursues a [sustainable mobility policy](#) based on active mobility and sustainable passenger transport, electric cars, logistics, and sustainable fuels. The coalition agreement expects €265 million initially for the [greening of passenger transport](#).

Figure 6 – LULUCF emissions in the Netherlands



Data source: [EEA](#) (2030 target is based on 2016–2018 baseline), 2024.

Despite the growing number of **buildings** in the Netherlands, emissions relating to this sector have fallen by a third since 2005. [Measures](#) to further reduce the sector's emissions focus on energy-efficient insulation of 2.5 million units, low-carbon district heating, hybrid heat pumps and biogas.

Agriculture accounted for 11.7 % of Dutch emissions in 2023. The [national programme for rural areas](#) sets out an integrated approach to address multiple challenges, notably climate, nature, nitrogen, and water quality. The [greenhouse horticulture](#) sector should become climate-neutral by 2040.

By 2030, the Netherlands [must](#) reduce its LULUCF emissions by -435 kilotonnes of CO₂e (ktCO₂e) compared with its average emissions in 2016, 2017 and 2018 (where accounting adjustments may occur). In 2020, this baseline was 4 958 ktCO₂e (see Figure 6 above). The NECP [indicates](#) that the country expects to over-achieve its 2030 LULUCF obligation. The Dutch climate agreement aims to increase carbon storage in forests and wetlands by 400, to 800 ktCO₂e by 2030. The Dutch [forest strategy](#) envisages afforestation, reforestation and agroforestry to enhance carbon storage.

Latest policy developments

The [2024-2028 government programme](#), adopted in September 2024, vows to act on climate adaptation and update the adaptation strategy. It will continue existing climate policy agreements, but not introduce requirements on top of EU policy. The planned carbon tax increase and new rules for residential heating systems will be cancelled. The climate fund is due to be used for innovation and technology investment, such as hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. The government will focus on energy security and domestic production of sustainable energy. Existing energy transition funds should benefit low-income households and small businesses. Tax-reduced diesel for agriculture will be reintroduced, and [fossil fuel subsidies](#) will be phased out only at EU level.

The Netherlands Scientific Climate Council published an [advisory report](#) on the 2025-2035 climate plan in February 2024. It warns that the Dutch 2030 target can only be achieved with clear political decisions and after removing implementation bottlenecks. Moreover, the scientific council presented a [report on carbon dioxide removal](#) in July 2024, recommending a policy focus on permanent removals. The concerns about the 2030 target are confirmed by the PBL's October 2024 [climate and energy outlook](#), which concludes that the Netherlands will reach a 45 % to 52 % GHG emissions reduction by 2030, and is thus very likely to miss the 55 % target set in the Climate Law. In October 2024, the government published the [draft 2025-2035 climate plan](#) and launched a public consultation. The draft plan aims for a 90 % GHG reduction by 2040, as recommended in the PBL report on [just and feasible 2040 climate targets](#) for the Netherlands.

MAIN REFERENCES

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