

Developments in The Netherlands (Round Table of the SLT)

Together with the presentation of the 2008 budget, the Dutch cabinet presented the following measures:

Energy sector

- A new subsidy for the production of sustainable energy will be introduced. With this new measure, in advance of European legislation, requirements can be put in place for biomass. The new Stimuleringsregeling duurzame energie (Renewable Energy Incentive Scheme, or SDE) subsidy scheme promoting large-scale renewable energy will be introduced to replace the Milieukwaliteit Elektriciteitsproductie (Environmentally Friendly Electricity Generation, or MEP) scheme. This will involve investments in such areas as wind energy. In order to achieve the targets, it will be necessary to double the capacity of land-based wind energy production and promote the production of wind energy at sea in the coming four years.
Two demonstration projects for the capture and storage of CO₂ will be implemented at coal-fired power stations as part of a European programme.
- To make people more alert to their energy consumption the introduction of smart meters will become compulsory. This Cabinet period around 2 million households will have smart meters.
- The security of electricity supply will be guaranteed through the transfer of the management of the regional electricity grids of 110 kiloVolt and more to national grid manager TenneT from 1 January 2008.
- 1 July 2008 a group ban will come into force. This means that from 1 January 2011 network managers are no longer allowed to be part of a group that also includes suppliers, traders or producers of gas or electricity.

New energy for the climat (Clean and Efficient action plan)

- Entitled Nieuwe energie voor het klimaat (New Energy for the Climate), the Clean and Efficient action plan, outlines the measures the Dutch government intends to implement to achieve the program's ambitious objectives. An additional €140 million – with possible increases to €500 million – have been earmarked across the government over and above the current budget of €1.3 billion.
The aim of the project Schoon en Zuinig is:
 - To decrease the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, in particular CO₂, with 30% in 2020 compared to 1990 levels.
 - To double the rate of energy conservation in the coming years from 1% to 2% a year.
 - To increase the share of renewable sources of energy in 2020 from the current level of around 2% to 20% of the total energy consumption.
- The government will be implementing various policy instruments: market incentives ('the polluter pays'), standards (e.g. energy consumption requirements for lighting, appliances and cars), temporary incentives (e.g. subsidies for renewable energy), innovation (with a primary emphasis on energy transition), and climate and energy diplomacy (EU-level lobbying). These will impact every sector in society.
- The Cabinet has the aim to realise within its term (2007-2011) 2000 MW wind energy on shore, 450 MW wind energy off-shore and 500 MW additional electricity generated with biomass.

Manufacturing sector

- The energy conservation agreements in current covenants with the manufacturing sector will be toughened. The Dutch government would like to see the introduction of an obligation to achieve a 20% improvement in energy efficiency (compared to 2005 levels) by 2020. In addition, an additional energy saving of 10% should be achieved along the rest of the chain.
- Ten branch programmes will be initiated to achieve an energy conservation rate of 50% in the chain by 2030, with the paper industry and chemical sector leading the way.

Traffic and transportation sector

- The compulsory level of admixture of biofuels will increase after 2010 from the current rate of 2% to 5.75%. Starting in 2008, a reporting obligation on the sustainability of the biomass will be introduced for biomass used for electricity generation and fuel. Taxes will be made 'greener'. Environmentally friendly behaviour will be rewarded, while polluting behaviour will become more expensive. The purchase tax for energy-efficient cars will be reduced.
- Increases in the environmental performance of vehicles (both passenger and commercial vehicles) will be achieved by promoting innovations in technology and fuels and by establishing European guidelines for CO₂ emissions.

Built-up environment

- The government will help finance the Meer met minder (More With Less) plan to be implemented together with energy companies, housing corporations and construction firms. This plan focuses on energy conservation in existing buildings and residential constructions. As part of this plan, 500,000 buildings and residential constructions will be renovated and made more energy efficient in 2011.
- A subsidy scheme for renewable energy (solar water heaters, heat pumps and solar panels) will be introduced, enabling 100,000 existing residential constructions to take advantage of these renewable energy options.
- The energy performance coefficient (i.e. the minimum energy efficiency requirements) applied to new developments will be tightened from 0.8% to 0.6% in 2011 and further toughened to 0.4% in 2015, representing a doubling in energy efficiency. By 2020, new developments will have to be energy neutral.

Agricultural and horticultural sector

- The subsidy scheme promoting the construction of energy efficient glasshouses will be intensified.
- Measures will be implemented to address other greenhouse gases, such as methane and nitrous oxide, focusing on livestock feed, accommodation and targeted agriculture/fertilizing.
- As nearly half of Dutch greenhouse gas emissions are eligible for the European system of emissions trading, the Dutch government is going to plead its case at EU level for significant and ambitious improvements to the system of emissions trading. The European system of emissions trading should be aiming for a reduction of 30%.

The government is also prepared to seize opportunities. A climate-friendly economy is also a competitive economy. The Netherlands is capable of taking a position as world leader in the development of new, clean technologies. In doing so, the government will tie in to the work that has already been done in collaboration with market parties as part of the EnergieTransitie (EnergyTransition) policy.