



**NETHERLANDS REVIEW OF ICT DIFFUSION TO BUSINESS
RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANALYSIS**



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Netherlands review of ICT diffusion to business Recommendations and analysis

The OECD review of the Netherlands' policies to diffuse information and communication technology to business recommends that to accelerate diffusion policies need to:

- Increase their emphasis on strengthening ICT entrepreneurship and improving human capital and pay increasing attention to ICT skills at all levels.
- Foster ICT-related R&D and improve research-industry links.
- Further develop initiatives to improve business information and advisory services for SMEs, particularly to tackle more complex e-business applications.
- Strengthen recent efforts to increase policy transparency and undertake systematic policy evaluation.
- In the light of the rapid evolution and growing importance of digital content, the Netherlands government should re-assess the public sector role and priority given to content creation and use.

The review points out that the Netherlands is building on a good ICT infrastructure, has a consistent market-led policy stance and cautious budget policy, which should provide a stable framework for more focused ICT policies. However it is clearly recognised that the Netherlands is not performing as well as desired on the innovation front, that productivity growth has been lagging, and that attracting human resources into S&T and the relative lack of high-tech entrepreneurship need addressing.

In the field of policy measures for business ICT applications, the setting of targets is complicated by the difficulty of defining measurable e-business advances. In the past targets have tended to be relatively weak and easy to achieve. Specific policies to diffuse ICTs to business are also constrained to some extent by the general market-led approach to policy and by budget limitations.

Current policy priorities suggest that the Netherlands is aiming to redress imbalances and create a strong position for the future and recent policy changes need to be continued and reinforced. The government should continue its recent efforts to put in place clear and transparent coordination and more systematic evaluation processes. Priorities to stimulate ICT R&D and innovation and the diffusion of ICTs to businesses and SMEs in particular, are welcome. They include increasing the links between those carrying out research and businesses so that new applications can be more easily adopted and focus on the most productive uses, and in particular increasing the diffusion of ICT to SMEs where the largest efficiency and productivity gains can be achieved.

The Netherlands has been developing effective policies to help diffusion of ICT to SMEs and although the scope is limited in terms of the share of total firms that can be reached, the government has been building effective public-private partnerships with firms and business organisations to expand demonstration and outreach. Attention is also being paid to creating the framework conditions to increase diffusion of ICTs to business in the areas of trust, security and privacy.

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