

Letter of 3 October 2011 from the State Secretary for Infrastructure & the Environment, the Minister for European Affairs & International Cooperation, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovation and the Minister of the Interior & Kingdom Relations to the House of Representatives on the Sustainability Agenda: 'A Green Growth Strategy for the Netherlands'

In drawing up this Sustainability Agenda, the government has responded to the desire of society and politicians for a vision of and plan for sustainable development. This agenda:

- fulfils State Secretary Joop Atsma's undertaking, in his letter of 18 January 2011 (31 209, no. 146), to draw up an agenda for sustainability;
- implements the Van der Werf motion requesting regular reports on the government's efforts to achieve sustainability (21 501-08, no. 359);
- implements the Haverkamp/Leegte motion (32 500 XII, no. 26) requesting that the sustainable potential of society be tapped, and that to this end scientists, citizens, organisations and companies be canvassed for their suggestions via modern media such as internet consultation;
- implements the Thieme et al. motion requesting that the Netherlands' ecological footprint be reduced (32 500 V, no. 114);
- implements the Ferrier motion requesting that environment and climate be mainstreamed as a cross-cutting theme in development policy, as part of the priorities food security and water (32 605 V, no. 45).

Summary

This Sustainability Agenda sets out the government's ambitions to make society more sustainable, as well as our main focal points and planned actions for creating a green economy.

The government aims to achieve growth that does not exhaust the natural capital of the Earth, and to strengthen our economy. Green growth will ensure that future generations are able to meet their needs and will also provide opportunities for Dutch industry, which is a world leader in sectors such as water and food production. Investing in green growth means investing in competitiveness. There is growing recognition of the fact that the interests of 'people', 'planet'

and 'profit' can be reconciled, and that this is indeed necessary to remain competitive. We can make our economy greener only if we join forces, not only at home, but also on a European scale and internationally. There is much work to be done. The last Sustainability Monitor for the Netherlands revealed that our society has some way to go in ensuring stewardship of our natural capital.^{1 2} The government seeks to create conditions for green growth by entering into international agreements, putting in place smart and efficient legislation and, where necessary, making existing financial incentives smarter. We also seek to forge links between companies, civil society organisations and public authorities, and provide inspiring prospects for innovative sustainable initiatives.

A green economy can only be achieved with companies and other civil society actors. The government will encourage the leading sectors that have included sustainability ambitions in their agendas to realise those ambitions in practice. We will also enter into 'green deals' with companies and other civil society actors, and will agree a Local Climate Agenda with local and regional authorities.

International agreements like the EU targets for sustainable growth will guide these efforts. The government will foster international agreements aimed at sustainability, thus ensuring a level playing field for Dutch companies. Along with our civil society partners we will explore new ways of implementing agreements, with a focus on the following focal points and actions:

Focal points	Actions
Raw materials and product chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient use of raw materials • Biobased economy and more sustainable biomass • More sustainable international marketing chains • Sustainable building
Sustainable use of land and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International collaboration on sustainable land and water management

¹ Statistics Netherlands, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) and the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), 'Sustainability Monitor for the Netherlands 2011', <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/dossiers/duurzaamheid/publicaties/publicaties/archief/2011/2011-sustainable-development-pub.htm>.

² See also the letter from the State Secretary for the Environment of 19 September 2011, Parliamentary Papers 30 196, no. 144. AVT12/IM103896A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading sector 'water' to seize market opportunities • Recognition of value of ecosystem services • Sustainable use of soil and water
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sustainable agriculture • More sustainable livestock farming • Food security • Sustainable food systems • More sustainable European agriculture and fisheries policy • Transparency in food chain and on food wastage
Climate and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International climate agenda • National Climate Roadmap 2050 • Local Climate Agenda • Decentralised sustainable energy generation • Green gas • Energy saving in built environment
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicles • Sustainable road and rail transport • Sustainable air travel • Sustainable shipping
Cross-cutting actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of regulatory obstacles • Knowledge and innovation for corporate social responsibility and transparency • Use of public authorities' market position and operational management • Rio+20: international efforts on sustainability • Sustainable spatial development

Chapter 1. Green growth

Economic growth must be *sustainable*. More and more companies, citizens and organisations are becoming convinced of this fact. We will be able to maintain our competitiveness and standard of living only if we preserve the resources on which our prosperity is built for the current

global population and for future generations. This means we must focus on the social, economic and ecological dimensions of policy and the connections between them; on 'people, profit and planet', in other words, both here and elsewhere, now and in the future. Sustainable policy is thus not only a matter of a clean environment or sustainable energy supplies, it also has implications for the competitiveness of our economy and for the ability of our health care, education, culture, jobs and financial system to meet the challenges of the future. It thus in fact impacts on all of government policy. Given the urgency of the issues surrounding climate change, raw materials and biodiversity, and their links with the economy, and given the direct responsibility of the ministries that are working together on this issue, this Sustainability Agenda highlights issues where 'profit' and 'planet', economics and the environment, come together. These two dimensions are crucial to human wellbeing. However, we have not overlooked the 'people' aspect, particularly when it comes to the international dimension.

The recently published Sustainability Monitor for the Netherlands addresses some concerns for the future, including the fact that we are eating into our natural capital (e.g. raw materials, water, the soil, climate, clean air and biodiversity). This has a global dimension, since the Netherlands is dependent to a large extent on natural capital beyond its borders. Eating into our natural capital could increasingly have a negative impact on the economy. That is why the transition to green growth is so necessary. This ambition also implies opportunities for future development. Countries and companies that provide solutions to sustainability issues will benefit on the global market. Companies, citizens and civil society organisations are increasingly aware of this fact, and recognise the advantages of adopting a sustainable approach. The government wants to join with them in grasping the many opportunities to achieve green growth both in the Netherlands and internationally.

The government's vision

Citizens, companies and civil society organisations are putting their shoulder to the wheel of green economic growth. The government seeks to encourage and facilitate this. Sustainability policy has entered a new phase, both in the Netherlands and internationally, as evidenced by the international focus on green growth and green economics. After a phase in which governments directed the process, mainly through targets and frameworks, companies and organisations are now taking up the challenge themselves. This is a positive development. The government will focus its efforts largely on supporting civil society actors and helping create conditions in which

innovation and new sustainable enterprise can thrive. This support will take the form of connecting actors in networks, providing knowledge and information, establishing clear and workable statutory frameworks, doing sustainable and innovation-oriented procurement and, where necessary, making financial and tax incentives for innovation smarter. This agenda sets out what the government's input will be. We are keen to enter into consultations with civil society on the agenda, and will endeavour to do so at national and international level. We see this agenda as the start of a joint process.

Urgency

Sustainability has become a major factor in companies' competitiveness. It is also a prerequisite for human wellbeing. Since the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 were adopted 20 years ago, big steps have been taken in the right direction. The soil, air and water in the Netherlands have become cleaner, for example, thanks in part to reductions in emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ammonia and chlorofluorocarbons.

Nevertheless, Statistics Netherlands and the three policy analysis agencies (CPB, PBL and SCP) observed in the 2011 Sustainability Monitor for the Netherlands that we are still eating into our natural capital, both here in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Our current standard of living is high by international standards. But it is accompanied by an ongoing loss of biodiversity, growing pressure on the environment, and an increasing scarcity of natural resources. These developments threaten the further increase in our prosperity and welfare. According to the Monitor, the main challenges lie in reversing negative trends in climate, biodiversity and the use of raw materials.

Companies are increasingly acknowledging the need to get to grips with sustainability. This is no longer a matter only for the frontrunners; the rest of the field is making rapid headway.

Companies are concerned about the continuity and cost of their raw materials and energy supply, about their image and about the demands of customers and government. In response, they are demanding more sustainability from their suppliers and making sustainability a permanent feature of their corporate strategy. Civil society organisations are mobilising public opinion, and focusing in part on sustainable production and consumption. Consumers and investors are also increasingly keen to make sustainable choices. Other countries (China, Korea,

Brazil etc.) are adjusting their economies accordingly.³ By anticipating these developments now, the Netherlands will be able to use its strong position in terms of knowledge and economic activity and increase its competitiveness. With its strong chemicals industry, its agricultural sector and its energy and logistics sector, we have the means to profile ourselves as a country that develops and applies smart solutions, acquiring a competitive edge when it comes to sustainability.

Green growth

The focus on green growth is in part a response to the Green Growth Strategy recently presented by the OECD, which aims to achieve economic growth without excessive exploitation of the natural resources that are so important to our wellbeing.⁴ Besides investment and innovation, the transition to such an economy also requires a government that sets parameters and an economy that is able to adapt. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) endorses this strategy in its report 'Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication'. One of the two items on the agenda for the Rio+20 conference on sustainability in 2012 is achieving green growth worldwide. Dutch companies, civil society and the government will be able to make a major contribution to this goal via the Rio+20 national platform.

In its advisory reports on 'Globalisation', 'International Corporate Social Responsibility' and, above all, 'Making Sustainable Growth Work', the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) has been pressing for sustainability to become a top priority and for the economy to become structurally more sustainable. It points out that this would bring major opportunities, including new economic activity and jobs.⁵ The SER makes several important recommendations as to how this might be achieved. In this agenda, and in the letter to parliament on private sector policy, the government sets out how it is implementing these recommendations, within the budgetary framework defined in the coalition agreement. This involves, among other things, an emphasis on European targets, innovation, collaboration, international chains, monitoring and a focus on knowledge development and training.

³ In its 12th five-year plan, China focuses on clean tech (half of the chosen sectors are clean tech). China has now overtaken the United States as the world's biggest investor in clean technology.

⁴ OECD report, 'Towards Green Growth', May 2011, Paris.

⁵ http://www.ser.nl/nl/media/Files/Internet/Talen/Engels/2011/2011_10.ashx.

Sustainability is a hot topic in society

We can now see that the importance of sustainable development is broadly accepted in Dutch society. Eight out of ten Dutch people think it is important or very important for companies to focus on sustainability.⁶ Consumers are buying more and more sustainable products. Citizens are themselves becoming sustainable producers, establishing local energy companies for example. Sustainability is high on the agenda of many civil society organisations, schools and research institutions.⁷ A growing number of Dutch companies, both large and small, are giving sustainability a key role in their operations. Solutions to sustainability issues are a big growth market, and have for some time no longer been the preserve of pioneers. A broad range of companies are recognising the opportunities inherent in sustainable business and see that it can be profitable, that sustainable production is not necessarily more expensive, and that it can give them a competitive edge. There are many successful examples.⁸ Some sectors of Dutch industry are benefiting hugely from their sustainable choices. Better use of waste is leading to growth in the recycling sector. Farmers have been successfully selling organic produce. Chemical products based on biomass have a growing share of the market. The success of sustainable services and products is leading to a further broadening of the base for sustainable business and consumption. Both central government and local and regional authorities are playing an increasingly important role in fostering and supporting civil society initiatives.

Linking green growth and an energetic society

In its Trends Report *The Energetic Society: In Search of a Governance Philosophy for a Clean Economy*, the PBL recommends linking the developments outlined above.⁹ Green growth can be achieved using the creativity, commitment and problem-solving ability of society as a whole. PBL calls this 'the energetic society'.

The government acknowledges the value of linking these developments. We seek to consolidate and foster the popular support for sustainability that has grown in society to ensure that its

⁶ *Duurzaamheids Kompas* (Sustainability Compass) #4, 2010, Market Response and Schuttelaar & Partners, p. 18.

⁷ A process in which over 400 people participated resulted in a report entitled 'Duurzaam Denken Doen' (Think Sustainably, Act Sustainably) containing recommendations for and examples of initiatives by individuals, companies and organisations. See: www.ourcommonfuture.nl.

⁸ See: www.mvonderland.nl/sites/default/files/CSR_passport_EN.pdf, <http://degroenezaak.com>, <http://www.metaalunie.nl/Page.aspx?pageType=NewsItem&pageID=1997&Stats=Nieuws> (Sustainability number two trend after specialisation), <http://www.vno-ncw.nl/siteCollectionDocuments/Cmsdocs/broc215.pdf>, <http://www.1001klimaatoplossingen.nl/>, <http://www.duurzaamgebouwd.nl/home>, www.ourcommonfuture.nl.

⁹ http://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/cms/publicaties/Energetic_society_WEB.pdf.

dynamics are directed more than ever towards greater sustainability. The government acknowledges the importance of the knowledge and competences of consumers, producers, employees and educational institutions in the field of green growth. We seek to exploit the potential of dynamic regulations that promote sustainable growth, and enter into a dialogue with civil society actors about long-term goals, using the approach taken with the leading economic sectors as an example.

International goals and collaboration

We can only create a green economy in collaboration with other countries. Issues like biodiversity, climate change, and scarce raw materials, water, energy and protein can only be addressed successfully in international frameworks. Much of the Netherlands' international cooperation takes place via the European Union and international organisations. Europe is essential for our security, prosperity and freedom, and thus also for sustainable development. European sustainability rules, when applied throughout the internal market, provide a strong incentive for making products and production chains more sustainable.

The government will encourage the signing of European and global agreements geared to green growth, thus ensuring a level playing field for Dutch industry and supporting greater sustainability in international marketing chains.

To promote the internal market and protect the environment, a number of European goals have been adopted, including: a 20% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020, a target for renewable energy (for the Netherlands, a 14% share by 2020), an emissions ceiling for acidifying substances (National Emissions Ceilings) and rules for manure, air quality targets and water quality (Water Framework Directive).

Our country is also pressing for investment in sustainable economic growth in developing countries, with the aim of making them more self-reliant. Economic growth driven by a strong private sector is important, but is not enough in itself to reduce poverty. Mainstreaming environment and climate is also essential.

Removing obstacles to green growth

Legal or financial frameworks can either create or disrupt a level playing field for sustainable products and services. The government will hold talks with industry and NGOs to establish

whether rules, legislation, grants and other potential obstacles to green growth can be adjusted, within the budgetary framework of the coalition agreement and without detriment to the Netherlands' competitive position.

Focal points and actions

In this agenda the government highlights the areas in most urgent need of action, where a coherent approach will bring added value, and where the chances of boosting green growth and Dutch industry are greatest. Combined with the leading sectors identified in the policy document 'To the Top' and the recommendations of the 'top teams', this gives us the following priority areas:

- Raw materials and production chains
- Sustainable use of water and land
- Food
- Climate and energy
- Mobility

In chapter 2, the government indicates each focal point's level of urgency and ambition, and sets out the main action to be taken on each of them. A number of other action points cut across several focal points. Chapter 3 sets out the government's plans for follow-up action, monitoring and collaboration with civil society actors.

Relationship to Green Deal, Local Climate Agenda and Letter on Private Sector Policy

The Sustainability Agenda is closely related to the policy document 'To the Top' and the letter on the Green Deal which are being sent to the House at the same time, and with the Local Climate Agenda, which will be launched in the autumn. It also has strong links with the Raw Materials Memorandum and the Letter presenting the spearheads of development policy previously sent to the House. Frequent reference will therefore be made to these documents in the following chapter.

The policy document 'To the Top' aims to strengthen leading sectors of the Dutch economy and facilitate green initiatives launched by civil society actors. The ambitions laid out in the Sustainability Agenda will be fleshed out in the Local Climate Agenda, in the letter to parliament on waste policy, and in various 'green deals'. The Local Climate Agenda will include agreements on climate and sustainability at local level.

The figure below shows the relationship between the three documents being submitted more or less simultaneously to the House of Representatives.

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Financing the Sustainability Agenda

The costs of all actions and aspirations in this Sustainability Agenda are manageable and have been covered for the entire duration using the resources available in the relevant budgets. This is possible because they were already provided for in the current budgets of the relevant ministries.

Chapter 2. Government sets to work on sustainability

2.1 Focal point: Raw materials and production chains

Level of urgency and ambition

The growing global population and rising prosperity are increasing the demand for both biotic resources (such as food, wood and cotton) and abiotic resources (such as metals, minerals and fossil fuels). They are also increasing the pressure on the Earth. Our demands are outstripping the earth's capacity to absorb and provide. In the longer term, we will not be able to take an adequate supply of raw materials for granted.¹⁰ We therefore have to find smarter ways to produce and consume, using other raw materials in some cases, combined with more efficient use and more reuse/recycling.

The Raw Materials Memorandum presented to the House on 15 July 2011 explained what role central government envisages for itself in this area in the years ahead.¹¹ Government will focus on three lines of action: safeguarding a sustainable supply of raw materials for the Dutch economy, curbing demand and making it more sustainable where possible, and using raw materials more efficiently and sustainably. The Raw Materials Memorandum stresses that industry bears primary responsibility for the availability of raw materials for the Dutch economy.

¹⁰ Although in most cases raw materials are not being physically exhausted, there is a problem of economic and political scarcity. See the Raw Materials Memorandum for an analysis (Parliamentary Papers 32 852, no. 1).

¹¹ Parliamentary Papers 32 852, no. 1.
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An open international trading system is crucial in ensuring this. It is at risk, however. Economic diplomacy as regards raw materials will therefore be stepped up. The government has appointed a Special Representative on Natural Resources to help put in place a Dutch international policy for the long term, and to achieve a sustainably secure supply of raw materials and other resources.

The position of developing countries requires special attention, because the sustainable extraction and processing of raw materials can be a catalyst for economic growth, export and poverty reduction. Development cooperation focused on good governance, transparency and sustainable use of space can help ensure that the profits from raw material exports actually boost a country's development. This provides a basis for more trade and improved transparency (thanks to the implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and similar initiatives) and a more stable supply of raw materials with fewer price fluctuations.

The government welcomes the initiative for a resource-efficient Europe because the continuity of the supply of resources will benefit from a coherent European approach. We believe that a major shift is needed to achieve a resource-efficient Europe, and we actively support the development of suitable market-based instruments designed to achieve such a shift.

This autumn the European Commission will present the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, setting out a policy vision linked to a programme of work. One important element of this programme will be a review of legislation on sustainable consumption and production policy (SCP), including Green Procurement, the Eco-design Directive and the European Ecolabel. The Roadmap is also expected to include incentives that will make it easier for the environment to be factored into the price of products. The Dutch government will make an active contribution to these efforts.

Summary of efforts on focal point ‘Sustainable use of water and land’

Government actions	Relevant leading sectors	Green deal examples	Other policy processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient use of raw materials • Biobased economy and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-food • Horticulture • Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of Port of Rotterdam for biofuels and storage and transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic diplomacy on raw materials • Transparency on

<p>more sustainable biomass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sustainable international trade • Sustainable building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemicals • High-tech • Water • Life sciences • Logistics • Creative industry 	<p>of solid biomass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overarching deal with Dutch employers' associations (VNO-NCW & MKB-NL) Society for Nature and Environment 	<p>consequences of extracting and using raw materials (e.g. EITI and similar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global public goods¹
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¹ Global public goods (GPGs) are all those transboundary global goods or services where market forces do not work perfectly and international cooperation is needed to safeguard global supplies. GPGs include a stable climate, a reliable multilateral trading system, international financial stability, food security and peace & security. A policy memorandum on GPGs is currently being prepared.

Action: Efficient use of raw materials

Waste is a source of valuable raw materials and other materials from which new products can be made. The Netherlands has a good international reputation as a country that has succeeded in raising its recycling rate. This benefits not only the environment but also the economy. The letter on waste policy sent to the House on 25 August 2011 explains how the Netherlands can further strengthen its lead and how we can raise our recycling rate from 80% now to 83% by 2015. The Netherlands must increasingly become a 'raw materials roundabout'.

Textiles, plastics, phosphates and electrical equipment are particularly promising material streams. A strategy for these streams will be worked out in consultation with the waste sector, industry as a whole and research institutions by the end of 2011. The Minerals Cycle Task Force, with members from the animal feed industry, the Dutch Federation of Agriculture and Horticulture (LTO), the manure trade, central government and Wageningen University, is working on ways of closing mineral cycles, focusing initially on phosphate.

Government will also join with representatives of industry, research institutions, civil society organisations and the Biodiversity and Business Platform to draw up a programme by the end of

2011 for the implementation of the actions set out in the Raw Materials Memorandum.¹² This will include deciding which like-minded countries offer the best prospects of cooperation on sustainable resource management. In early 2012 the parties concerned will see how the programme should be fleshed out with actions arising from the report of the Biodiversity and Natural Resources Task Force (due in December 2011). Options for public-private partnerships in this area will be explored.

Action: Biobased economy and more sustainable biomass

The government seeks to enable the Netherlands to become one of the top three biobased economies in the world. Our country must also seize the opportunity to become the European gateway for sustainable biotic resources. The government will consult with the Dutch port authorities to determine what steps need to be taken to achieve this ambition, and whether and how central government can facilitate this. We will also issue proposals in the autumn for the transition to a biobased economy that uses biomass for materials, chemicals, energy and production of transport fuel. In the long term, use of non-sustainable biomass will be avoided, taking account of price trends, the interests of the local population, and the impact on land use, biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and food supply. Statutory requirements will be imposed for sustainable biofuels, timber and, in the near future, biomass for energy. The experience gained will be used as a basis for broadening the European sustainability requirements to other biomass applications, and the existing requirements will be further elaborated, preferably at European level. The forthcoming Communication by the European Commission on a 'European Strategy and Action Plan towards a sustainable biobased economy by 2020' (publication announced for December 2011) is relevant in this respect. The Communication will take up the recommendations of the Lead Market Initiative (e.g. on standardisation, certification and more sustainable biobased products). The Advisory Committee on the Sustainability of Biomass (the Corbey Committee) will present recommendations as to how biomass can be made more sustainable.

Action: More sustainable international marketing chains

The government will actively contribute to efforts to make international marketing chains more sustainable, with a particular focus on self-reliance, good governance and stability in developing

¹² This platform was established in November 2010 by the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW), the SME Association MKB-Nederland, LTO and the Dutch branch of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
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countries. These efforts will involve both strengthening the national legal infrastructure of countries, working through public-private partnerships (like the Sustainable Trade Initiative, IDH), and applying social conditions to public procurement.

Government will support industry in its efforts to make international marketing chains more sustainable, with a key focus on the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which provide a basis for corporate social responsibility. The IDH (in which companies, NGOs and trade unions work together) is an important driver of efforts to make international marketing and production chains more sustainable in developing countries. It aims among other things to ensure that, by 2015, 50% of cocoa consumed in the Netherlands, 100% of the soya processed in the Netherlands, 50% of the tropical timber on the Dutch market and 80% of the palm oil consumed in Northwest Europe is certified sustainable. Government will top up the contributions from the companies concerned with a further €20 million a year up to 2015.

Action: Sustainable building

Sustainability is increasingly becoming a guiding principle in the construction industry. The aim is to reduce the environmental impact of the use of materials, energy and water over the entire life cycle of a building or other structure, in part through the reuse of buildings and materials. The government has opted for a performance-based approach, for which the rules and calculation methods in the Buildings Decree 2002 can serve as a basis. This approach ties in perfectly with that of the European policy agenda for construction, and will foster innovation both at product level and in the construction process. As a major commissioner of office buildings and infrastructural works, government will set a good example. This government will make further agreements with the sector concerning the reductions to be achieved and limits to be observed. The involvement of residents, other users and owners will be crucial. This approach will also meet the commitment made at the parliamentary committee meeting on waste of 6 April 2011 concerning sustainable use of materials in construction.

2.2 Focal point: Sustainable use of water and land

Level of urgency and ambition

It is estimated that by around 2025 two-thirds of the world's population will live in regions suffering 'water stress', putting their socioeconomic progress at risk. Particularly in many developing countries, the most basic human requirements will be in jeopardy. The loss of

biodiversity and scarcity of natural resources will lead to increasing tension and conflict. Sustainable use of water and land is thus vital. Examples of sustainable use include measures to preserve the fertility of the soil, climate regulation, flood storage and flood protection.

The European Commission has designated 2012 the Year of Water. In this connection, the EU is to publish a 'Blueprint to Safeguard European Waters'. In preparation for this, the existing EU rules on water are being reviewed. The growing problems of water scarcity and drought will be a focus of attention.

In the Netherlands, too, sustainable use of land and water requires constant attention, particularly the good management of the available supply of fresh water. The National Water Plan provides a framework for this. The Netherlands' Delta Programme anticipates the consequences of climate change and subsidence.

Summary of efforts on focal point 'Sustainable use of water and land'

Government actions	Relevant leading sectors	Green deal examples	Other policy processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International collaboration on sustainable water and land management • Water sector to seize commercial opportunities • High value on ecosystem services • Sustainable use of soil and water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Agri-food • Horticulture 	Association of Water Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Biodiversity Works' policy programme (2008-2011) • Sustainable landfill management • International commitments: EU Biodiversity Strategy and Committee for Animal Biotechnology (CBD) Strategic Plan

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Water Plan • Delta Programme
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Action: International collaboration on sustainable water and land management

Water (water security and flood protection) is one of the four spearheads of development cooperation policy as set out in the Letter presenting the spearheads of development policy. Environment and climate are a cross-cutting theme of development policy. Considering environment and climate as an integral factor is not only necessary for development goals to be achieved, it will also prevent us making inappropriate investments which in the long run are not sustainable and/or not climate-proof. Policy focuses on the efficient and sustainable use of water, particularly in agriculture, and on safer deltas and river basins, improved access to drinking water and sanitation, and integrated water management, with a specific focus on ecosystem management. The Netherlands also works to strengthen the political, institutional and financial aspects of sustainable water management. Our total investment in water (including sanitation) will amount to approximately €181 million in 2012.

Loss of biodiversity in developing countries is often the result of intensive arable and livestock farming. Using land and water in a smarter, more sustainable way can prevent loss of biodiversity. Dutch knowledge and experience have proved both useful and welcome on this issue. The Global Partnership on Nutrient Management established by the Netherlands is one example. It aims to optimise food production, thus improving environmental quality and reducing the pressure to cultivate natural areas. The Netherlands remains active in this area and plans to continue investing in capacity building for sustainable land and water use in the coming years. In spring 2012 we will hold an international meeting to discuss specific experiences of sustainable land use. The potential for public-private partnerships in sustainable land and water use will be explored. In response to requests from developing countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will launch pilot projects in three countries focusing on integrated water management and especially on the environment and ecosystem management.

Action: Water top sector to seize commercial opportunities

The recommendations of the top team on water underline the importance of sustainability. Almost all the business cases in its report embrace the idea of sustainability as a commercial opportunity. The theme 'More crop per drop', for example, focuses on the supply of high-quality

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fresh water for the production of food and biomass. The theme 'Water for all' is concerned with the sustainable production of water for domestic and industrial consumption and the treatment of waste water. And with its 'Enabling delta life' theme, the sector is helping to improve living conditions and economic activity in densely populated deltas, with nature as an ally. The sector will launch at least ten business cases in 2012.

Action: High value on ecosystem services

The government seeks to ensure that the economic and social value of the services the Earth provides (known as ‘ecosystem services’) are considered in the decisions made by government, industry and consumers. We will study how this can best be achieved, partly on the basis of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the forthcoming recommendations of the Biodiversity and Natural Resources Task Force, and taking account of the Dutch Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study.

Action: Sustainable use of the subsurface and water

The government will enter into agreements with local and regional authorities and sectors of civil society concerning the use of the subsurface for commercial activities, the use of bulk flows of soil, dredged spoil and other materials in the subsurface and in surface waters, and the use of the subsurface for new activities. We seek to encourage innovation and create scope for sustainable experimentation. The potential for using waste water to produce energy and raw materials appears promising, for example. Innovation is needed to reduce the consumption of energy and chemicals in swimming pools while lowering operating costs.

2.3 Focal point: Food

Level of urgency and ambition

There are currently almost seven billion people on the planet. By 2050 there are likely to be nine billion. The consumption of meat, fish and dairy produce is increasing sharply. This is a good thing for many people, particularly in developing countries, where there is a shortage of protein. The production of animal protein places a greater burden on natural resources than the production of vegetables, however.

Global food production will need to increase substantially if we are to feed nine billion mouths by 2050. International agreements have been made with this in mind, including the Millennium Development Goals. Only sustainable intensification of production will enable us to provide the world’s population with enough food and a balanced diet. Food must be produced with respect for people, economies, animals, plants and the environment, both in the Netherlands and elsewhere. Food production’s negative impact on biodiversity, climate and water must be minimised. That is why we are working to reduce our ecological footprint in other countries.

Summary of efforts on focal point 'Food'

Government actions	Relevant leading sectors	Green deal examples	Other policy processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sustainable agriculture • More sustainable livestock farming • Food security • Sustainable food systems • More sustainable European agriculture and fisheries policy • Transparency in food chain and on food wastage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-food • Horticulture 	Energy-neutral dairy farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sustainable trade and production of biotic resources • Measures against food loss • Memorandum on 'Agriculture, rural enterprise and food security in developing countries' (Parliamentary Paper 31 250, no. 71)

Action: More sustainable agriculture

Dutch agriculture has become more sustainable in recent years. Its burden on the environment has declined sharply, without any substantial decline in profits. But we are not done yet. To achieve European and domestic environmental targets while ensuring that Dutch agriculture continues to contribute to food security and a sustainable economy, agriculture needs to be made much more sustainable (both here and elsewhere). The government will focus on further reducing the impact of Dutch agriculture on the quality of the living environment and the functioning of ecosystems both in the Netherlands and abroad through the raw materials it uses, emissions (transboundary and otherwise) to soil, water and air, and through marketing chains. The government will seek collaboration with the agri-food sector on this issue. We will flesh out our views on sustainable agriculture in letters on specific aspects of policy, such as manure policy and livestock factory farming.

Action: More sustainable livestock farming

More sustainable livestock farming remains high on this government's agenda. By 2023 livestock farming in the Netherlands should have developed into a sustainable industry in all respects, producing in a manner that respects people, animals and the environment everywhere in the world, and that enjoys broad public support.

In its report '*Op weg naar een duurzame veehouderij*' (Towards Sustainable Livestock Farming) (June 2010), the PBL explained that, though livestock farming has become more sustainable over the past few years, major steps are still needed. There is a particular need for a clear timetable up to 2023. Central government has taken up the issue, in collaboration with industry and civil society organisations, in a partnership on the Sustainable Livestock Farming Agenda.

Action: Food security

The Netherlands seeks to increase the food security of developing countries, thus boosting their self-reliance and economic growth. This is one of the four spearheads of its policy on development cooperation, in which environmental and climate issues play an integral part.¹³ The private sector is playing an increasingly important role in tackling the issue of food scarcity, a development which the government welcomes. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is devising programmes focusing on sustainable food production chains and food security in countries with which the Netherlands has a bilateral development relationship. It is working with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation on this issue, and seeks to tie in with the efforts of the leading sectors agri-food and horticulture & source materials. Greater food security is the key objective, with support provided through multilateral and bilateral channels and partnership programmes with industry and civil society. A letter on food security will be sent to the House this autumn.

Action: Sustainable food systems

The interministerial programme for sustainable food systems is based on the idea that food security and sustainability should be mutually reinforcing, and focuses on a transition to a sustainable global food system, which includes measures to tackle food loss. The programme encourages innovation in the food chain, particularly innovations in the production of sustainable protein for **food [?]**, feed and other biobased uses that provide international commercial opportunities.

¹³ See the Letter presenting the spearheads of development policy (Parliamentary Paper 32 605, no. 2) AVT12/IM103896A

Companies in the agri-food sector are working on an accelerated agenda for innovative proteins. The agenda will be complete by the end of November 2011.

The Netherlands also raises the issue internationally, at the FAO and EU in particular. We are, for example, the driving force behind the 'global agenda of action for sustainable livestock sector development', a multi-stakeholder initiative supported by the FAO, which will be launched in spring 2012.

Action: More sustainable European agriculture and fisheries policy

The government is pressing for the changes to the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in 2013 and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 2014 to make a substantial contribution to more sustainable food production in Europe. The new CFP will have to be fundamentally changed to turn the fisheries industry into a profitable, economically and ecologically sustainable and socially acceptable sector. The sector will have to become more responsive to demand, and cooperation within the system must be improved. Producer organisations will also have to take up the task of promoting sustainability. In the new CFP governments must leave more to the market and give only targeted support in order to encourage fishermen to become more entrepreneurial. In the long term, there will be no more generic support for fisheries, only targeted payments to encourage sustainability and competitiveness.

As regards the new CAP, the government will press for direct payments to farmers to be transformed into targeted payments. These payments must focus primarily on strengthening the sustainability and innovative capacity of the agricultural sector. Secondly, they must reward socially beneficial activities by the sector that are not required under law (and are not rewarded by the market). These would include nature, landscape and water management activities, actions that strengthen biodiversity, and improvements to animal health and welfare.

Action: Transparency in food chain and on food wastage

Consumers need reliable information about how their food has been produced. Only then can they make an informed choice. All actors in the agri-food chain can profile themselves by showing which products have been produced with particular care for people, animals, nature or the environment. Preventing food loss and ensuring high-quality recycling of waste flows is a key aspect of this. The government plans to commission an informational website on sustainable

food, in collaboration with industry and food marketing boards. It will go online in 2012. The Netherlands Nutrition Centre (in collaboration with industry and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) will further develop the databank between 2011 and 2014 and provide support in training future professionals in the nutrition sector.

2.4 Focal point: Climate and energy

Level of urgency and ambition

Global emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases are a factor in climate change, which leads to problems in water management, ecosystems, food supplies and health, and increases the risk of flooding. Our society and economy are also vulnerable because of our dependence on imports of raw materials and fuel. It is therefore important that policies be developed to limit climate change and its effects and increase the security of our energy supply.

In view of the reductions that developed countries as a group will be required to make, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in order to achieve the two degree target, it was agreed in the European Council that emissions in 2050 will be 80 to 95% lower than in 1990. This assumes that developing countries, particularly the more advanced ones, will also make sufficient effort to curb their emissions.

An important milestone on the road to a climate-neutral economy by 2050 will come in 2020, when, according to the European targets, greenhouse gas emissions should be 20% below 1990 levels. This reduction consists of binding objectives for the sectors that fall under the European emissions trading system (ETS) and for other, non-ETS sectors.¹⁴ The ETS covers electricity companies, large-scale industry and larger combined heat and power plants. The Netherlands sees the ETS as an important tool for reducing CO₂ emissions in the EU. Under a properly functioning ETS, it is up to the market to choose the most efficient technology and ensure that reductions in CO₂ emissions are achieved at the lowest possible cost to society. The non-ETS sectors will also have to reduce their emissions. The government has described its strategy for these sectors in the government-wide climate strategy 'On the road to 2020', which was sent to the House in June 2011 (Parliamentary Paper 32 813, no. 1).

¹⁴ Major non-ETS sectors include: transport, built environment, the great majority of primary agriculture and horticulture, smaller-scale industry, waste processors and some energy distribution companies.
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Besides the target for greenhouse gases, Europe also has a binding target for renewable energy. By 2020, 14% of the Netherlands' energy must come from renewable sources.¹⁵ The government will adhere to this European target. Developing countries also badly need access to affordable renewable energy to achieve climate-proof economic development. The Netherlands is helping create facilities for renewable energy in developing countries under the Promoting Renewable Energy Programme (PREP). Dutch expertise is being provided via public-private partnerships, and Dutch companies are taking advantage of opportunities to respond to demand in developing countries.

Summary of efforts on focal point 'Climate and energy'

Government actions	Relevant leading sectors	Green deal examples	Other policy processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International climate agenda • National Climate Roadmap 2050 • Local Climate Agenda • Decentralised sustainable energy generation • Green gas • Energy saving in built environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Water • Agri-food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated greening of energy supply • Solar experimental region in North Brabant • Use of residual heat by Akzo-Nobel at FC Twente football stadium • Climate-neutral construction in Amsterdam from 2015 • Biofermentation in agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Report 2011 (31 510, no. 45) • Underground Thermal Energy Storage Partnership Programme (Government Gazette no. 4830, 5 April 2011)

¹⁵ The renewable energy need not be produced in the Netherlands. Various flexible mechanisms allow renewable energy to be produced where the costs are lowest.

Action: International climate agenda

New international agreements are needed to devise a balanced and effective international response to global warming and guarantee a level playing field for international companies. The Netherlands and the European Union are focusing their efforts on implementing the Cancún Agreements reached in Mexico in 2010 (on issues such as forests), continuing the negotiations on subjects on which there is no agreement yet (including market instruments, bunkers and agriculture) and taking further steps towards an international framework that is binding on all major polluters. The aim is to take a balanced set of decisions at the climate conference in Durban in late 2011. The House will shortly receive further information on the government's position at the Durban conference. Efforts are also being made in the framework of the Montreal Protocol to phase out hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are powerful greenhouse gases, and to tackle 'banks' (stocks) of these gases.

Action: National Climate Roadmap 2050

In response to the EU 'roadmap to a competitive low-carbon economy' and various international agreements, the Netherlands is focusing on the question of how we can achieve a climate-neutral economy by 2050. Various EU member states (including the UK, Germany and Denmark) have already addressed this issue. The Netherlands' roadmap examines the technological potential and economic opportunities for Dutch business, specified by sector (energy, manufacturing, built environment, transport and agriculture). The roadmap will be completed by November 2011.

Action: Local Climate Agenda

By 2030 more than 70% of carbon emissions will come from the areas in and around urban centres. Local authorities and other local parties therefore play an essential role in achieving climate targets. Local and provincial authorities and water authorities define their own climate ambitions and programmes. The Local Climate Agenda will be a joint agenda for these authorities and central government. It will highlight existing, inspiring climate initiatives, with the aim of giving them fresh impetus. Local and regional administrators have put themselves forward as 'climate ambassadors' who will campaign for the broader application of the initiatives in the agenda, with the help of central government. The government will for example develop a uniform monitoring system and facilitate a platform where local authorities can share their ambitions and experiences. The Local Climate Agenda will be adopted in autumn 2011.

Action: Decentralised sustainable energy generation

Our electricity network is not currently equipped for a large degree of decentralised energy generation. This requires intelligent networks that are able to match energy supply with demand. The government will designate five to ten areas where experiments can be carried out with intelligent networks.

Decentralised sustainable energy generation also offers great prospects. Take underground thermal energy storage, for example, or use of residual heat. It is estimated that these two techniques could supply 5% of our heating needs by 2020. Decentralised sustainable energy generation receives financial support under the Renewable Energy Grant Scheme+ (SDE+). The government is also encouraging sustainable energy initiatives by small-scale users by offsetting the electricity they generate sustainably against the electricity they purchase from their supplier (self-supply). The existing scheme for the offsetting of self-supply will be extended to owners' associations in apartment buildings, under an amendment to the Electricity Act, to comply with the House of Representatives' motion submitted by Paulus Jansen.

Action: Green gas

Green gas is biogas that has been treated in such a way that it can be supplied via the gas distribution network. It will make a major contribution to our efforts to meet our targets for renewable energy. The National Energy Renewable Action Plan states that by 2020, green gas could potentially contribute 24 PJ to our supply – roughly 750 million m³. The current contribution is estimated to be around 40 million m³. Of the €1.5 billion available under this year's SDE+ scheme, 1 billion has been earmarked for green gas projects. The government seeks to remove existing obstacles to the use of green gas, and encourage responsible consumption and innovation. We will explore how regulations and licensing can be improved, to stimulate the supply of green gas and guarantee sustainability. Monofermentation will be promoted, consultations will be held with other public authorities on how fermentation plants can best be incorporated into the country's spatial planning, and the list of substances (co-products) will be expanded in so far as possible within existing environmental regulations.

Action: Energy saving in built environment

With its action plan on energy saving in the built environment, the government hopes to give people and companies more control over their rising housing and energy costs, provide an extra

boost to the economy and help reach its climate objectives.¹⁶ Important measures for existing buildings include a broadening in mid-2012 of the use of the energy label for buildings, and the 'block-by-block' approach. Under European policy, from 2020 all new buildings must be energy-neutral. The energy performance coefficient (EPC) for new buildings will also be tightened up. From 31 December 2018 all new government buildings must be energy-neutral.

In late 2011 the government will draw up an action plan for stepping up compliance with and enforcement of the Environmental Management Act, and will encourage the development of Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), which supply energy conservation services. The Ministers of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovation, Finance and the Interior will explore the potential for a non-fiscal consumer price incentive.

2.5 Focal point: Mobility

Level of urgency and ambition

The Netherlands is a world leader in transport and logistics, and the transport sector is a central pillar of the Dutch economy. This small, densely populated country also generates many passenger kilometres. Every year, we travel hundreds of billions of kilometres on our roads, waterways and railways and in our airspace. Mobility is expected to continue to grow sharply over the coming decades, particularly in the freight sector.

All this travel has a clear downside: congestion, accidents and a high environmental impact. The transport sector, more than any other, is also highly dependent on fossil fuels, which will become scarce over the next few decades.

The government's ambition is to ensure that the Netherlands has one of the most efficient transport systems in Europe by 2020. In order to achieve this, we are implementing a transition agenda for sustainable transport, which focuses on energy-efficient transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, hydrogen-powered vehicles, the use of biogas and biofuels for transport, intelligent transport systems and smart logistics.

¹⁶ Parliamentary Papers 30 196, no. 131.
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The Netherlands is not alone in its efforts to achieve a sustainable transport system. In March 2011 the European Commission published its Transport White Paper¹⁷ outlining developments and challenges up to 2050 and announcing associated initiatives for the period to 2020. On 29 April the government informed the House by letter¹⁸ as to how the Transport White Paper relates to our own policy.

Summary of efforts on focal point ‘Mobility’

Government actions	Relevant leading sectors	Green deal examples	Other policy processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicles • Sustainable road and rail transport • Sustainable aviation • Sustainable shipping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics • Chemicals • Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in electric vehicles, e.g. by fleshing out plans for focus areas , including electric-powered public transport and urban distribution (North Brabant, Friesland, Rotterdam) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning (32 660, no. 17) • Administrative agreement on efficient public transport for the Randstad conurbation

Action: Electric vehicles

Promotion of electric vehicles is a good example of how green and growth can go hand in hand. In collaboration with other public authorities, companies and civil society actors, efforts will be made to expand the use of electric vehicles in the Netherlands over the next few years. This should also boost sustainable economic activity. An action plan called ‘Full Speed Ahead for Electric Vehicles’ describes how the Netherlands can develop into an attractive international test environment and launch market for electric vehicles. The target is to have some 15,000-20,000 electric cars by 2015, with a comprehensive and effective recharging infrastructure and associated services. The aim for 2020 is to have 200,000 electric vehicles, and in the long term the potential is estimated to be several million vehicles.

¹⁷ COM(2011) 144 final.
¹⁸ Parliamentary Papers 22112, no. 1163.
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Action: Sustainable road and rail transport

The government will continue the sustainable initiatives already launched for road transport (including the voluntary transport sector agreement on sustainable transport and the transitional strategy for sustainable transport). We will support the transition to sustainable transport with a combination of fiscal policy (set out in the Letter on vehicles policy and the fiscal agenda), European source control policy, the establishment of experimental projects for alternative fuels and clean and low-energy vehicles, and follow-up activities. A multi-year agreement (MJA) will stimulate the energy efficiency of the Dutch Railways and of rail passenger transport in general. Though this sector is already relatively energy efficient, fairly simple measures could produce further major energy savings. Besides the incentives provided in the MJA, the MJA system will also ensure clear and transparent reporting on the matter.

By 2020 at least 10% of the energy consumed by the European transport sector must come from renewable sources. Under Dutch and European legislation, biofuels are sustainable if they lead to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and do not lead to the clearing of rainforests, drainage of peat bogs or damage to nature areas. The Netherlands will focus on:

- a gradual increase in mandatory biofuel mixing from 4.25% now to 5.5% in 2014. This will be extended to aviation and inland shipping, depending in part on the costs of implementation and steps taken in neighbouring countries;
- ensuring that in talks in Brussels the effects of biofuel production on land use are considered when sustainability is assessed;
- the development of sustainability criteria for the use of solid biomass for energy, preferably at European level;
- major efforts to save energy in rail transport through the MJA system.

A joint initiative by the private sector and government has resulted in the production of green gas for road transport and the necessary refuelling infrastructure. The refuelling points will supply green gas by the end of 2011. Government is subsidising new refuelling points, higher blends of biofuels and the 'truck of the future'.

The Dutch Railways have made progress towards using only renewable energy to fuel their engines by 2020, thus supplying carbon-neutral passenger transport. This will allow them to

achieve 10% of the total carbon emission reductions expected of the entire transport sector by 2020.

Action: Sustainable aviation

The Civil Aviation Policy Memorandum states that the government will work with parties in the sector and research institutions to promote fuel-efficient, cleaner and quieter aircraft. The Netherlands is pressing for the creation of a Single European Sky (SES). Optimum management and use of European airspace and the introduction of new technologies should lead to lower greenhouse gas emissions in the order of a 10% reduction on each flight.

The EU has decided that the air transport sector will be included in the existing European emissions trading system as of 1 January 2012. From 2013 the total emission rights awarded to airlines – their ceiling, in other words – will equal 95% of historic emissions from the air transport sector. These have been defined as the average of the annual emissions in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Specific research into non-fossil kerosene is needed because this is currently one of the few options available for sustainable aviation. From 2011 40 tonnes of biokerosene will be produced each week, which will enable the Dutch air transport sector to make an initial saving of 5000 tonnes of CO₂ a year. The government will stimulate future developments in sustainable alternative fuels where possible.

The government also supports the initiatives being taken by Schiphol Airport to develop into a 'green mainport'. Experiments are currently underway with a new standards and enforcement system for Schiphol, focused on striking a balance between the interests of the aviation industry and local residents' quality of life. The National Air Quality Cooperation Programme should ensure that air quality around Schiphol meets the standards by 2015.

Action: Sustainable shipping

The government is pressing for a further reduction in CO₂, NO_x, SO₂ and fine particulate emissions from maritime and inland shipping. Its efforts are directed mainly at international level (the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCR) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)), with a view to protecting the competitiveness of the Dutch shipping sector. We are also supporting private sector initiatives to use LNG as fuel, and have joined Germany in

investigating, in consultation with commercial parties, whether emissions from engines currently in use on inland vessels can be reduced.

The Netherlands is also pressing for reductions in marine pollution caused by ocean-going vessels. We have actively contributed in the IMO to stricter standards for the dumping of sanitary and shipping-related waste (including rubbish), which will enter into force in 2013. The harmful effects of ballast water and antifoulants are being combated through the implementation of international ballast water and sediments agreements. Finally, the Netherlands is working through the IMO to promote the entry into force of the international Convention on the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, concluded in 2009 to ensure the responsible dismantling of ocean-going ships.

Dutch sea ports aim to rank among the world leaders in sustainability. The government is supporting this ambition with measures to:

- improve the living and working environment in the Rotterdam region (new nature and recreational areas and other liveability projects), as part of the sustainable expansion of Mainport Rotterdam (development of Maasvlakte 2 industrial area);
- promote Dutch seaports as potential import and transit facilities for biomass;
- increase the disposal of ships' waste at port reception facilities to reduce the dumping of waste at sea;
- co-finance a pilot project for shore side electricity; and
- award grants for sustainable seaport innovations.

2.6 Cross-cutting actions

Action: Removal of regulatory obstacles

Sustainable breakthroughs benefit from clear, simple and effective legislation. The Simply Better programme is working to integrate and radically simplify environmental legislation. A new Environmental Regulation Act will provide a framework for efforts to create a dynamic and sustainable living environment. The new legislation will help achieve the goals of the Sustainability Agenda by, among other things, removing existing obstacles to sustainable solutions and searching for ways of ensuring that regulations promote innovation.¹⁹ Specific

¹⁹ Following the example of Japan's Top Runner programme and Wisconsin's Green Tier programme, among others.

steps will include speeding up the approval of innovative experiments, and introducing environmental improvements in production processes. This often requires an amendment to a licence. Relatively few people know that a shortened licensing procedure (lasting no more than 14 weeks) applies if the change is 'environmentally neutral'. Along with licensing authorities, tips for licence applications and awards under the shortened procedure are being drawn up in order to promote use of this procedure. Efforts are also being made under the Green Deal and the policy document 'To the Top' to remove obstacles to doing business. In so far as obstacles do not fall within this framework, the State Secretary for Infrastructure and the Environment will coordinate their removal.

Action: Knowledge and innovation for corporate social responsibility and transparency

Companies that do business in a socially responsible way make a major contribution to the transition to a sustainable economy. In 2012 the National Contact Point will inform all the board chairs of stock market-listed companies what the new OECD guidelines will mean for their international operations. The government supports the initiative of the employers' and employees' associations in the SER to give substance to international corporate social responsibility (CSR). This initiative will be evaluated in 2012, after which decisions on follow-up will be taken. The government is also promoting CSR by enhancing companies' knowledge and awareness and encouraging transparency and dialogue. Over the next few years, the knowledge and networking organisation CSR Netherlands plans to reach some 200,000 businesses each year, and its aim is to ensure that by the end of 2014 around 100 sectoral organisations are actively promoting CSR in their sector. The Transparency Benchmark will continue in 2012 and 2013 to encourage social reporting and publicise developments at the country's 500 largest companies.

It is not only companies that need knowledge and competences for sustainable production and CSR. It is also a matter of raising awareness, building learning networks and creating a knowledge base in society to encourage and equip consumers, residents, activists, civil society organisations (e.g. NGOs) and public authorities to take their share of responsibility for sustainability. A green economy relies on well-educated people, from skilled workers with vocational qualifications to university researchers. Education is therefore a place to develop knowledge and competences, both for professionals and for the public. Many sustainability initiatives will succeed only if they can rely on sufficient public support, behavioural change and informed choices. To help develop sustainable competences (professional and otherwise), it was

recently decided, in consultation with the House, to continue knowledge and development programmes in 2012 and develop a new strategy for the subsequent period.²⁰ The government will develop this into an action programme in 2012.

The government seeks to help industry, civil society organisations and research institutions meet their need for more synergy, efficiency and transparency on sustainability criteria and methods of assessing sustainability (e.g. of products). This can be achieved by, for example, making it clearer which aspects of sustainability are measured by which methods and how those methods relate to one another.

Action: Use of public authorities' market position and operational management

The government expects central government operations to be sustainable, and thus to be a trailblazer in the policy it is pursuing. Its targets are: 100% sustainable procurement; cost-effective measures designed to save 2% energy per year in central government buildings (rising to 25% in 2020); 20% lower carbon emissions by 2020; energy-neutral new buildings and renovation from 31 December 2018; application of social return on investment analysis in central government tendering procedures, and closed cycles for biomass and strategic scarce materials.

As a major consumer of energy and resources, central government can itself make a major contribution to the necessary savings and reduction in the use of available resources. This is one of the principles behind the Compact Government programme. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is responsible for ensuring that central government as a 'business' gives substance to sustainability, and he reports on these efforts in the annual report on operational management. A large proportion of the savings will be achieved in central government buildings. Healthy, sustainable buildings lead to greater productivity and lower energy consumption. Thus productivity, health and sustainability can go hand in hand. Over the next few years the priority will be three areas of operational management: energy, raw material chains and procurement. Sustainable action will be promoted at all levels of the organisation. Collaboration and coordination with industry, other public authorities and civil society organisations will be stepped up. In 2011 central government will join with local partners to determine whether there is a viable business case for sustainable energy provision to the government offices in The Hague and the naval base in Den Helder, among other locations. Central government will strive in its own

²⁰ Parliamentary committee meeting with members of government, 20 April 2011.
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operations for waste prevention and recycling of raw materials. Raw materials management yields sustainability benefits, as well as reducing costs and raising revenues.

Together, the various public authorities account for more than €60 billion of procurement a year, and they are keen to use this strong market position to promote sustainable development. They are doing so by applying environmental criteria to procurement at product level, giving the greatest possible functional specification, making arrangements with companies on supply chain responsibility, fostering sustainable innovation (e.g. by entrusting development to the Small Business Innovation Research programme (SBIR)) and taking account of social return-on-investment issues such as social conditions and the reintegration of vulnerable groups. The social conditions for Sustainable Procurement were published in summer 2011. The policy will be evaluated in the course of 2013. In June 2011, business associations VNO-NCW, MKB-NL, CSR Netherlands, the business sustainability network De Groene Zaak and the Dutch Association for Procurement and Supply Management (NEVI) issued a report with recommendations on improving sustainable procurement.²¹ This will serve as a guide for the further development of sustainable procurement. A governance structure is to be set up in the near future. Improved procurement criteria for the product groups that have the greatest environmental impact are expected to be available by mid-2012. Various public sector organisations have joined a partnership for sustainable procurement in civil engineering projects (Duurzaam GWW), in which public authorities, market players and research institutes are showcasing how the new sustainable procurement works. It would appear that economic, ecological and infrastructural interests are easily reconciled.

Action: Rio+20: international efforts on sustainability

At the Rio+20 conference (Rio de Janeiro, 4-6 June 2012), political agreements will be made on sustainable development on a global scale. The Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation is responsible for Dutch policy on international sustainability. The conference will focus on two issues: a green economy (to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction) and international environmental and sustainability governance. In the EU, the Netherlands is the lead country on the issue of a green economy. The Rio+20 National Platform, in which various sectors of civil society are represented, is developing its vision and will make

²¹ The recommendations include: improving tendering practices (e.g. by focusing on innovation-oriented procurement), improving procurement criteria, better monitoring/evaluation and more consideration of the international dimension.

suggestions to help achieve the Rio+20 goals. Its proposals will play a key role in the preparations for the Dutch input at Rio+20. The Netherlands is also agreeing public-private partnerships that can be presented before and at Rio+20. We plan to work more closely with organisations like the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the World Economic Forum on sustainable development and economic diplomacy. The Dutch Ambassador for Sustainable Development will promote our sustainability policy in international forums, and build bridges to the public, industry and politicians. The Dutch position, coordinated with the EU, will be adopted in late 2011/early 2012.

Action: Sustainable spatial development

The draft National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning emphasises sustainable transport, sustainable energy, flood protection, climate adaptation and the supply of fresh water. The Sustainable Spatial Development Programme has over the past two years allowed experience to be gained with sustainable regional development. In June 2011 the results of the programme were handed over to the Sustainable Development Spatial Platform, which was established in order to introduce a workable method for sustainable regional development. To facilitate the transfer of responsibilities, the government is providing the Platform with financial support until 2012, the idea being that other public authorities will take over this responsibility from 2013.

In the period up to 2012, the Platform will deliver:

- a network in which everyone concerned with regional development can obtain information about its sustainability;
- a comprehensive vision of and method for sustainable regional development;
- reviews of specific projects on all aspects of sustainability;
- guidelines on how to achieve sustainable regional development;
- supervision of a number of case studies to gain practical experience of sustainable regional development.

As a result of these actions, provincial and local authorities will put sustainable regional development into practice, looking not only at the spatial development side but also at how it can meet the demands of energy supply, drinking water supply and the use of raw materials.

Chapter 3. Organisation

Coordination and allocation of responsibilities

All ministers and state secretaries are responsible for sustainability in their own policy area, and report on it to the House in the usual manner. They will work on sustainability in accordance with the vision set out in this agenda.

To guarantee the consistency of policy, the State Secretary for Infrastructure & the Environment and the Minister for European Affairs & International Cooperation, who is responsible for coordinating matters relating to international sustainability, will together coordinate the sustainability agenda. They will do so in close consultation with the Ministers of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovation and the Interior & Kingdom Relations. These two members of government will, in addition to their own responsibilities, produce an overview of the government's plans, the allocation of tasks, the links between the different issues and success in achieving the annual targets. Where necessary, they will forge connections and promote collaboration on sustainability between the ministries and other parties.

Monitoring and new opportunities

To keep an eye on progress towards sustainability, the government will ask Statistics Netherlands to regularly update the indicators and visualisations in the Sustainability Monitor on its web site, and to monitor the greening of the Dutch economy using the OECD's green growth indicators. Statistics Netherlands will also be asked to further develop the information on the Netherlands' global ecological footprint in line with the motion by MP Marianne Thieme (Parliamentary Papers 32 500 V, no. 114).

The government will remain alert to new opportunities for green growth. It will ask the policy analysis agencies to look into the impact of the policy and the implications of trends and developments every two years. There will be consultations to discuss which of the agencies will take on this task, and how they will do so.

The government supports the UN's ambition to reach agreement on a set of indicators to show the rate of progress towards sustainable development.

Accountability

Separate monitoring and reporting by the minister or state secretary concerned has been arranged for most of the actions in the Sustainability Agenda. Every year the two members of government chiefly responsible will present to the House a general report on progress with the overall agenda.

Dialogue with the 'energetic society'

To ensure the Sustainability Agenda succeeds, the government wants to guarantee that it ties in with developments in sustainability in the 'energetic society'. This will allow its dynamism to be harnessed, as well as ensuring good coordination between government policy and the initiatives and aims of other parties. With a view to this, the government will enter into a dialogue with society, covering issues such as the opportunities for and threats to sustainable development, the shape that collaboration between different parties could take, and recommendations for the implementation of the Sustainability Agenda. The government sees this agenda as the start of a process involving civil society actors, and invites them to join it in making that process a success.