

The Netherlands has brought environmental issues into sharp focus long before many other European countries. This is the result of a combination of factors including the large-scale Dutch agricultural sector, energy-intensive chemical and petrochemical industries, a dense population, and the role the Netherlands plays as a major distribution centre. The Dutch environmental sector has evolved a solid reputation for developing sophisticated technologies for air purification, wastewater treatment, household waste processing, recycling, soil decontamination and groundwater purification. This sector is now poised to flourish in the international marketplace. Despite Dutch proficiency, there is ample room in the Netherlands' environmental sector for complementary innovative Canadian technologies and niche-market products, particularly in the areas of soil remediation, water purification and recycling.

Environmental technology centres

In the Netherlands, technology centres are the driving force behind the development of new techniques for processing waste and cleaning the air, water and soil. Originally these centres made extensive use of existing process and mining technologies, but, with the launch of new subsidy schemes by the government, research institutes and private sector companies have been encouraged to work together to develop new applications.

One such institute, the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), has created a business park where small companies developing promising new environmental techniques can make use of extensive facilities and, if necessary, receive financial assistance from TNO.

The low sedimentation rates and minimal odour make their patented compact anaerobic purification systems very popular with the food industry. Indeed, most of the anaerobic water treatment plants used in the world's breweries originate in the Netherlands.

Environmental products and services

The Netherlands

Environment biotechnology

Environmental biotechnology is one of the most advanced areas of research in the Netherlands. Dutch universities are conducting research into various types of bacteria with the ability to break down pollutants. Research is also focused on the recovery of primary raw materials.

Water treatment

Water treatment is a cornerstone of the Netherlands' environmental industry, with Dutch engineers in worldwide demand as consultants in the design and manufacture of water treatment plants utilizing high-capacity biological purification methods. Dutch environmental companies have also acquired an international reputation in the construction of industrial water treatment plants.

In spite of Dutch expertise in this field, there is ample opportunity for Canadian companies to contribute new and advanced technologies to the Netherlands' water treatment sector. Trojan and Zenon are two such Canadian companies already active and successful in the Dutch market.

Soil remediation

Soil cleaning in the Netherlands has also achieved worldwide recognition, with its reputation founded on expertise in cleaning up highly complex "cocktails" of pollutants, often reducing them to undetectable levels. Polluted ground, including dredged material from the rivers, is a major problem in the Netherlands — one that invites solutions from Canadian companies with new and innovative technologies.

Dutch trade fairs

Utrecht — April 24-26, 2001 — Ecotech International Environment Trade Fair (www.ecotech.nl/) held every two years, focuses on waste processing, recycling and environmental management.

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Useful Web sites

- The Swedish National Energy Administration: www.stem.se/
- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency: www.environment.se/international/
- The Swedish Power Association: www.kvf.se/en/index.html
- Invest in Sweden Agency, fact and figures: www.isa.se

- Sustainable Sweden, government Web site: www.hallbarasverige.gov.se/eng/

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