

30 Netherlands

This country profile reports on recent trends in entrepreneurship and self-employment by women, youth, seniors, immigrants and people with disabilities in the Netherlands relative to the European Union average. It also highlights recent policy developments and current inclusive entrepreneurship policy issues.

Recent trends in inclusive entrepreneurship activities

The share of people starting and managing new businesses (i.e. TEA rate) (13%) was nearly double the European Union (EU) average (7%) over the period 2018-22. This was also true among women (11% vs. 6%), youth (18-30 years old) (17% vs. 9%) and seniors (50-64 years old) (8% vs. 4%). If everyone was as active in business creation as 30-49 year old men, there would be an additional 285 000 early-stage entrepreneurs. About 90% of these “missing” entrepreneurs would be women and the majority would be over 50 years old. The self-employment rate was 15% in 2022, which was above the EU average (13%). Despite a slight decline in self-employment across the EU over the past decade, the rate was constant in the Netherlands. Seniors and immigrants were the most likely groups to be self-employed and employers in 2022.

Recent policy developments

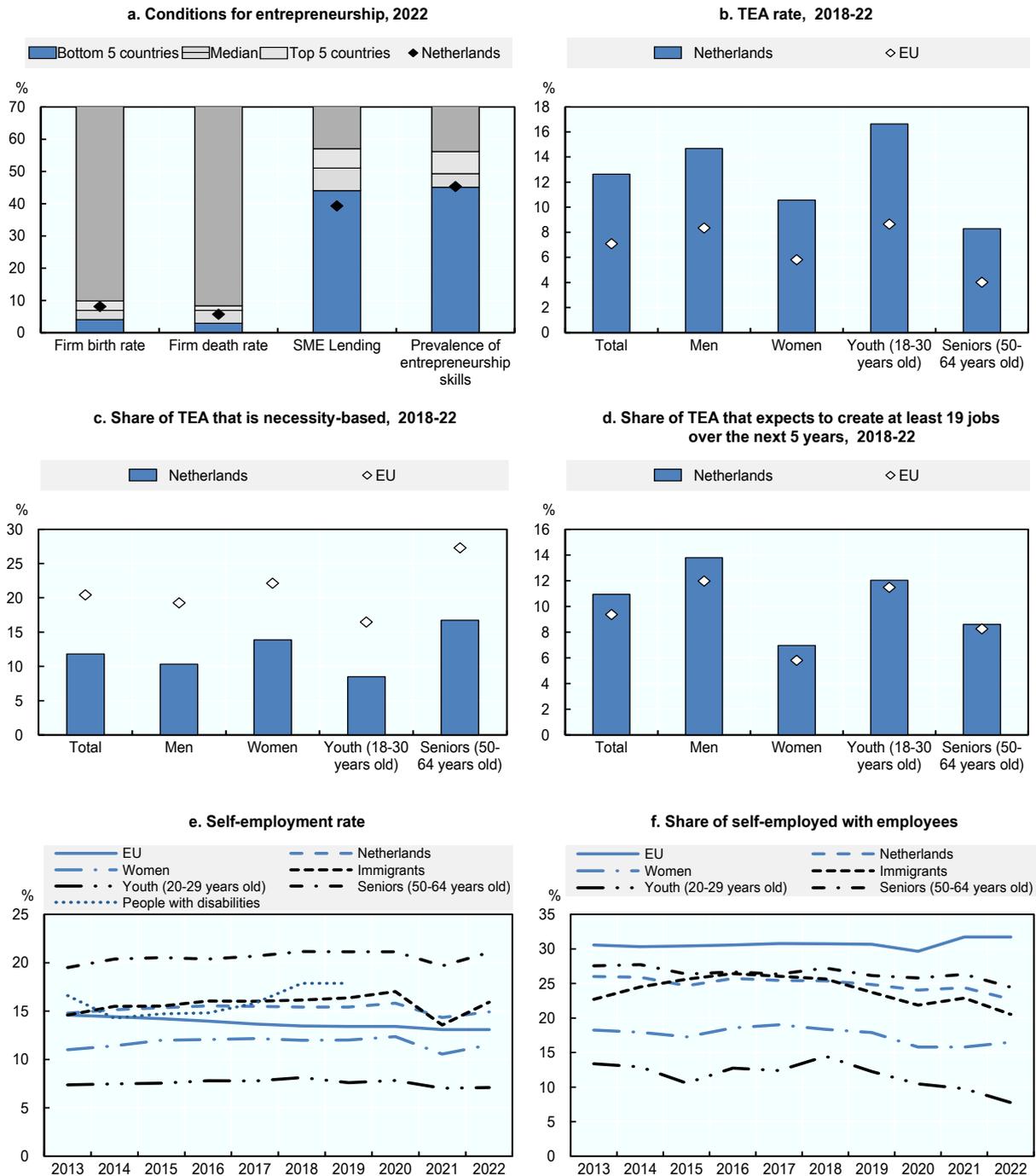
In October 2022, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate, which is responsible for entrepreneurship policies, presented to the House of Representatives the Strategic Agenda for Enterprise Policy. This covers challenges such as high energy prices, personnel shortages, complex regulations, the rapid pace of the green and digital transitions and a scarcity of physical space. Regarding entrepreneurship, the ministry’s focus will be on: i) stimulating start-ups and scale-ups within innovative ecosystems; ii) promoting the creation and growth of start-ups from knowledge institutions; and iii) supporting start-ups that offer solutions to societal challenges.

Hot policy issue

An important feature of the policy landscape are ongoing efforts to tackle so-called “bogus self-employment” in the platform economy, which accounts for a significant portion of self-employed workers in the Netherlands. In June 2022, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment presented the labour market reform plan, which outlines steps to level the playing field between employees and the self-employed. This will involve adjustments to tax and social security incentives that previously made self-employment more attractive than employment contracts. Other major planned changes are the introduction of compulsory disability insurance for the self-employed, the abolition of zero-hours contracts, and the conversion of on-call contracts to permanent basic contracts with a minimum number of hours.

Inclusive entrepreneurship indicators

Figure 30.1. Entrepreneurship and self-employment data for the Netherlands



Note: In Panel a, the data for the EU median for SME lending excludes the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta and Romania. The EU median for the entrepreneurship skills indicator excludes: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia and Malta. In Panels b-d, the data for the EU average refers to a population-weighted average and excludes Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia and Malta. Please see Chapter 10 for detailed notes on the figures.

Source: (Eurostat, 2023; GEM, 2023; OECD, 2023). Please see Chapter 10 for full citations.



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