

# Foreword

Although unemployment rose to 6.5% in the Netherlands in the wake of the COVID-19 shock, the labour market quickly returned to pre-pandemic levels. Amsterdam and the Netherlands are now facing an unprecedented level of labour market tightness. In the first quarter of 2022, 19 of the 35 regions in the Netherlands reported more than four job vacancies for every short-term unemployed. Amsterdam experienced an even larger shortage of workers with only one short-term unemployed worker available for every six job openings.

Tight labour markets provide opportunities for municipalities in the Netherlands, to address long-term unemployment and assist the economically inactive into the labour market, including through stronger engagement with employers. However, to deliver on these goals, municipalities require adequate funding from the national government, as well as an improved, and detailed, understanding of the local population. At the same time, the increasing engagement of municipalities in preventing job losses and the facilitation of work-to-work transitions raises further important questions on their role in the national and local adult learning system.

This OECD report examines local labour market opportunities and challenges in Amsterdam and other large cities in the Netherlands. It analyses the functioning of national, regional and local labour market institutions in the Netherlands and discusses potential bottlenecks that could hamper the effective provision of local labour market services. It further highlights policy options for strengthening the capacity of municipalities to support vulnerable population groups in making the transition from social welfare recipients to workers. The report also discusses the role of municipalities in the Netherlands' adult learning system.

This OECD report is part of the series of OECD Reviews on Local Job Creation within the Programme of Work of the OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme. Created in 1982, the LEED Programme aims to contribute to the creation of more and better jobs for more productive and inclusive economies. It produces guidance to make the implementation of national policies more effective at the local level, and to stimulate innovative local practices that can be scaled up. The OECD LEED Directing Committee, which gathers governments of OECD member and non-member countries, oversees the work of the LEED Programme.

# Acknowledgements

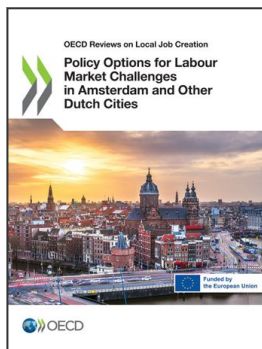
This report was prepared by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities led by Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director. This work was conducted as part of the OECD's Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Programme.

The report and underlying project were co-ordinated by Kristine Langenbucher (Deputy Head of the Local Employment, Skills and Social Innovation Division, OECD). Lars Ludolph (Labour Market Economist, LESI), Wessel Vermeulen (Economist, OECD Trento Centre for Local Development) and Harm-Jan Rouwendal (University of Groningen) conducted the analysis and drafted the report. Pilar Philip (OECD) prepared the report for publication. We thank Daniela Glocker, Nicolas Gonne, Steven Cassimon, Stijn Broecke (all OECD) for providing comments to the draft report.

The report was produced as part of the project Supporting job creation, skills development and social inclusion in cities in the Netherlands. This project is being carried out with funding by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) and in co-operation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (under framework delegation agreement REFORM/IM2021/009).

The OECD Secretariat expresses its gratitude to stakeholders in Amsterdam and the Netherlands. Special thanks are due to the Municipality of Amsterdam and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Arjan Ploegmaker (Municipality of Amsterdam), Britt Stenberg (Municipality of Amsterdam), Janne van Eerten (Municipality of Amsterdam), Bart de Geus (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment) and Koen Koolstra (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment) supported the OECD throughout the project in facilitating contacts with stakeholders in Amsterdam and in national institutions. Karin Borst (Municipality of Amsterdam), Elisa Gomez Aleman (DG REFORM, European Commission), Michel van Smoorenburg (*Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen*, UWV) and Imane Tahiri (*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten*, VNG) formed the project's advisory group and provided extensive comments on earlier drafts of the report. Representatives and stakeholders from a range of institutions and organisations were consulted over the course of the project. The OECD would like to thank Yvonne Bernardt and Jef Wintermans (*Sociaal Economische Raad*, SER), as well as other colleagues from the SER, Klarita Sadiraj (*Sociaal and Cultural Planbureau*, SCP), and Bas Ennik ("Regional Mobility Team" Amsterdam). Furthermore, the OECD would like to thank representatives of the Amsterdam local employment and social service office *AmsterdamWerkt! & Sociaal Werk*, the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, the ROC MBO College Amsterdam West, the *House of Skills* Amsterdam, the "Regional Work Centre" Amsterdam, the Municipality of Utrecht, the Municipality of Rotterdam, and the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht for providing valuable insights into their work. Idske de Jong and Feiko de Grip (Municipality of Amsterdam) provided helpful statistical assistance.

The OECD also thanks all participants of the 14 October 2022 workshop, where draft findings of this report were discussed. Special thanks to Niels Tubbing (Municipality of Amsterdam) for moderating the discussions.



From:

## Policy Options for Labour Market Challenges in Amsterdam and Other Dutch Cities

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/181c0fff-en>

### Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2023), "Foreword", in *Policy Options for Labour Market Challenges in Amsterdam and Other Dutch Cities*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/d035bef1-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.