



111,713 ICT firms and counting

The number of Dutch ICT enterprises grew from 92,620 in 2021 to 111,713 in 2024, a rise of 21% straight through the cooling.

Summary

While the IT vacancy rate fell sharply after 2022, the business register kept moving the other way: from 92,620 ICT enterprises in 2021 to 111,713 in 2024, growth of 21% in three years. Employment in the sector grew along to 386,306 people in 2023, 8% more than in 2021, at fewer than four people per enterprise. The sector stands at 3.8% of Dutch employment, against 3.4% on average in the EU, and 5.3% of value added. The growth sits mostly in very small firms, and that is the real finding.

This library described earlier how the IT market cooled without loosening: vacancies fell, unemployment stayed low, employment kept growing. This paper adds the register side. What did the number of ICT enterprises do over the same period? The answer: grow, hard.

One in five added in three years

The Netherlands counted 111,713 ICT enterprises in 2024. In 2021 there were 92,620. Growth of 21% in three years, straight through the rate rises, the tech layoffs and the falling vacancy rate.

111,713 ICT enterprises in the Netherlands in 2024



Number of ICT enterprises in the Netherlands per year. Eurostat, sbs_ovw_act, retrieved 1 September 2026.

Employment grew more calmly: from 357,478 people in 2021 to 386,306 in 2023, a rise of 8%. For 2024 the statistic does not yet publish employment.

The growth sits in the smallest firms

Divide the two series and the nature of the growth becomes visible: fewer than four people per enterprise, and the average is sinking. Of the 386,306 people working in the sector in 2023, 344,634 were employees; the rest work as proprietors.

The register grows mostly at the bottom, with one-person and micro firms. That squares with what the cooling did to the labour market: part of the specialists who no longer found, or wanted, a salaried vacancy now stand in the register as a company. The sector did not shrink; it crumbled further.

A sector of size

For context: ICT sector personnel made up 3.8% of total Dutch employment in 2023, against 3.4% on average in the EU. Ireland is the outlier at 6.1%, Sweden follows at 4.8%. In value added the Dutch ICT sector is larger than in people: 5.3% in 2023.

The Netherlands thus holds an above-average but not exceptional ICT sector in people, one that produces a lot of value per person and organises itself ever more finely across more and smaller firms.

What the register does not say

- An enterprise is a legal unit, not a workplace. The growth of solo self-employment and the register are entangled: a specialist moving from salaried work to a personal company changes nothing about the work and much about the count.
- The indicators fill at different speeds. For 2024 the enterprise counts are in and employment is not yet; this paper therefore compares employment to 2023 and enterprises to 2024.
- The ICT aggregate contains a small manufacturing slice beside services; in the Netherlands it is negligible at 0.1% of employment, so this is factually a services story.

What this means

- **The quotable number.** 111,713 ICT enterprises in 2024, 21% more than in 2021, on 8% more employment through 2023. The cooling did not slow the register.
- **The client fragments.** Whoever sells to or recruits from the ICT sector deals with ever more and ever smaller parties. The average client and the average candidate sit in a firm of fewer than four people.
- **Salaried work and self-employment are connected vessels here.** A cooler vacancy market pushes specialists into the register, not into unemployment. Recruitment pressure does not disappear; it moves to the contracting market.
- **The real scarcity remains people.** The sector grows in firms and value, but the personnel share moves slowly. More companies does not mean more specialists.

Method and sources

Enterprise counts and employment come from Eurostat, dataset sbs_ovw_act, structural business statistics, ICT special aggregate, Netherlands, reference years 2021 through 2024, with employment for 2024 not yet published at the time of retrieval. The personnel share comes from isoc_bde15ap, reference year 2023; the Dutch series in it has gaps in earlier years, so nothing is computed further back than the published years. The value added share comes from isoc_bde15ag, reference year 2023. All retrieved on 1 September 2026, licensed CC BY 4.0.

People per enterprise is our division of employment by enterprise counts for matching years. The reading that growth sits in micro firms follows from those averages; a direct size-class breakdown for these years would make it more precise and is missing here.

Europe, Growth, IT

Sources

- Eurostat (sbs_ovw_act), ondernemingen naar activiteit, CC BY 4.0
- Eurostat (isoc_bde15ap), ICT-sectorpersoneel in de werkgelegenheid, CC BY 4.0
- Eurostat (isoc_bde15ag), ICT-sector in de toegevoegde waarde, CC BY 4.0