

Strategic Agenda for the Metalektro 2022 - 2027

A joint strategy on Labour Relations – Labour Market – Industrial Policy

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1. Foreword

The Strategic Agenda for the Metalektro is an extension of the collective agreement concluded in 2021 setting out how the employers and trade unions plan to jointly address the serious challenges facing the Metalektro sector with respect to labour relations, the labour market and industrial policy.

Overarching long-term objective

The social partners' overarching long-term objective is to ensure that the Metalektro remains a successful and competitive sector that provides good work and contributes to broad welfare and prosperity in the Netherlands and the EU.

Together we want to make a success of the digital and energy transitions. Employers want flexibility and skilled personnel; employees want good and engaging work with opportunities for personal development and growth. Together we are responsible for safeguarding the sector's competitiveness through innovation. In that context, technological and social innovation complement each other in our efforts to exploit the potential of technological innovation in reaching our common goal.

This strategic agenda translates that goal into specific objectives relating to labour relations, industrial policy and the labour market. Each chapter describes and explains the shared ambitions in one of those domains.

This strategic agenda forms the basis for action programmes the parties to the collective agreement will draw up each year. The specific actions will be evaluated annually on the basis of the Strategic Agenda and the ambitions set out in it.

2. The Metalektro sector

The Metalworking and Electrical Engineering Industry (Metalektro) is one of the principal drivers of sustainable economic growth, employment, prosperity and welfare in the Netherlands. The industry's importance for the Netherlands is also growing steadily by virtue of its interconnectedness with other sectors. The aim of this strategic agenda is to ensure that the Metalektro sector can continue to perform that function. Metalektro is a prominent sector in the Netherlands and can best be described as the Dutch technological industry. With 1,350 companies and 159,710 employees,¹ it generates turnover of more than € 155 billion.² The sector encompasses a wide range of sub-sectors including:

Facts and figures for Metalektro

- 1350 companies
- 159,710 employees
- € 155 billion turnover

- Aviation and aerospace
- Automotive and shipping
- High-tech
- Electrical engineering
- Service and maintenance
- Metals industry

Metalektro: a multiplier effect on the Dutch economy

The Metalektro sector provides solutions for major social challenges such as the energy transition, digitalisation, the sustainability of the healthcare system and the agri-food sector and demographic changes. Every day businesses invent, produce and sell technologies that change our lives. Metalektro (the technological industry) is the economic engine of the Netherlands. An inventive manufacturing industry is the breeding ground for modern innovation, the catalyst for increased productivity and the launch pad for a leap forward in well-being, sustainability and prosperity. Furthermore, every euro in manufacturing production generates roughly one euro in output elsewhere in the economy.³ In terms of direct and indirect employment, we can also see that a single job in the technological industry creates 1.3 jobs elsewhere in the economy. Thirty-four percent of the income earned by the private sector is related to industry. This is almost a quarter of the country's total GDP.⁴ As the core of manufacturing industry, the Metalektro sector therefore has a multiplier effect on the Dutch economy.

A job in Metalektro offers future-proof work with plenty of opportunity. That is also apparent from the characteristics of jobs in the sector. Those jobs are important to our economy and offer above-modal salaries. In 2021, the average earnings per FTE were € 60,550, compared with the national average of € 46,100. Many of the jobs are full-time, with an average working week of 36.4 hours. They are jobs for hardworking skilled workers – two-thirds are for employees with MBO qualifications and one-third for graduates at HBO/university level.⁵ These employees earn enough to buy a house and a car and to pay for their children's education. These incomes are important for both the local and national economy. A larger proportion of the employees in the Metalektro sector have permanent contracts (90%) than in the general economy (61%) and there are more full-time jobs (89%) in the sector than in the Netherlands as a whole (50.5%).

The sector also faces challenges. The average age of the working population is rising and more people are leaving the workforce than are entering it. The ageing population is also creating problems with staffing levels. An additional problem is that working conditions in the sector are sometimes strenuous, with heavy work, shift work and other factors that make the work more onerous. There is still a lot of ground to be made up in terms

¹ Metalektro in cijfers, A+O Metalektro, 12.2021 (<https://metalektro.incijfers.nl/>)

² CBS, Statline, Bedrijfsleven; arbeids- en financiële gegevens per branche, 2019, SBI 2008 24-30, 33

³ (<https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/achtergrond/2017/40/belang-ontwikkeling-en-structuur-van-de-nederlandse-industrie>)

⁴ Nederland maakt, Thomas Grosfeld, VNO-NCW, MKB-Nederland, January 2016 (https://www.vno-ncw.nl/sites/default/files/nederland_maaht_-_brochure_vno-ncw_en_mkb-nederland.pdf)

⁵ Metalektro in cijfers, A+O Metalektro, 12.2021 (<https://metalektro.incijfers.nl/>)

of diversity and inclusion: women currently account for just 6% of the technical professionals in the Metalektro sector.

3. Metalektro preparing for the future with productive labour relations

The Metalektro sector faces a number of challenges. New technologies, specific wishes of clients, new rules and regulations and demographic and social trends are just a few of the factors that are having a major impact on employees and businesses. Only a sector that is aware of developments in companies and their workforce and their needs can remain future-proof. Close cooperation between employees and employers is therefore essential for achieving the objectives we have formulated for our sector in this strategic agenda. The works council/trade unions have a role to play in the dialogue with the employees.

“We, the social partners, wish to approach the future in a spirit of partnership rather than confrontation.”

Cooperation between employers and employees enables us to be more successful in achieving our common goal: making Metalektro a successful and competitive sector that provides good work and contributes to broad welfare and prosperity in the Netherlands and the EU.

However, cooperation cannot be taken for granted because there are also conflicting interests and differing views on how we can achieve the common goals. This has led to labour unrest and instability in recent years, which has been harmful for the Metalektro, the employers and the people who work in the sector. The parties to the collective agreement therefore wish to invest in good and constructive labour relations that take account of the diverse interests and focus on the common long-term objectives.

By organising stable and constructive labour relations through dialogue, consultation and negotiation, agreements can be reached on how the Metalektro sector can remain competitive and continue to provide good jobs in the future, taking into account the interests of the employers and the employees. That is the purpose of the collective agreement and the negotiations leading up to it. The collective agreement can bring stability and peace for both employees and companies.

Continuous dialogue between employers and employees

However, stable labour relations require more than just organised negotiations on a collective agreement every few years. To achieve our common goals and interests in the longer term, a continuous dialogue is needed between employers and employees in the sector, and within the companies themselves. A dialogue in which the social partners analyse developments in the sector in the short and long term, formulate a joint vision for the future of the sector and search for and find solutions for the problems, challenges and opportunities they have jointly identified.

A mature, continuous social dialogue creates stable and constructive labour relations and reinforces the collective agreement process. In this way, the collective agreement helps to establish future-proof workplace practices and provides a framework for further consultation on those practices within companies.

Ambitions for Labour Relations

3.1 – Continuous constructive social dialogue

Strong social partners and effective social dialogue play an important role in a sector's economic and social development. Effective social dialogue leads to less conflict, better protection of employees, better work, stable employment and higher productivity.

Social dialogue makes an important contribution to the growth and continuity of broad welfare.

In that context, it is important for employers' associations and trade unions to weigh their conflicting short-term interests against the common interests in the longer term. Employers and trade unions must together demonstrate to the government how the sector contributes to broad welfare in the Netherlands.

It is important to remain constantly aware of each other's interests, also outside the collective agreement process.

The social partners in the Metalektro sector therefore jointly express the following ambition:

"From this point on we will work together for the sector as partners.

We will do so by conducting a continuous social dialogue in the sector."

3.2 – Stable collective agreement process

The agility of employers and employees, the quality of work and productivity are all best served by a constructive relationship between companies, trade unions and employees. After all, if the foundations are sound, employees take pleasure in their work and productivity soars.

Accordingly, employees and companies both benefit from a collective agreement concluded in a constructive climate. That depends greatly on the quality and intensity of the collective agreement process.

Constructive labour relations are crucial in this respect. The social partners in the Metalektro sector therefore express the following joint ambition:

"We will devote ourselves to a stable collective agreement process."

3.3 – Future-proof collective agreement and pension

Support for the collective agreement and pension agreements cannot be taken for granted. Various developments – such as individualisation, changes in the labour market and the diversity of the sector – mean that collective agreements need to be evaluated, and if necessary adjusted.

The collective agreement is the cornerstone of the Metalektro sector and provides a pretext for regular communication and consultation between employers and trade unions/employees.

The collective agreement provides companies with the scope to adapt to changing circumstances and offers employees the necessary security during those changes. That will continue by incorporating new topics in the collective agreement in order to respond to the challenges facing the Metalektro sector.

Employers and employees are positive about the current collective agreement.

"The social partners express the ambition of devoting themselves to a collective agreement that reflects the diversity of the sector, the employers and the employees and which has manifest added value."

4. Industrial policy for a competitive Metalektro

The challenges facing the Netherlands and the Metalektro sector are interconnected both strategically and in terms of their impact. The principal task is to accelerate the digitalisation and energy transitions, but the sector also needs to improve labour productivity and its innovative capacity in order to increase its competitiveness, reverse the growing shortage of skilled technical personnel and find a response to the changing relationships in global politics and the geopoliticisation of the global economy. The entire industry is confronted with these challenges, from multinationals to techno-starters and from basic industry to high-tech.

Standing firm in this complex environment demands a clear strategy. A strategy that ensures the sector remains agile, attractive, innovative and top-class. To achieve this, we need to improve the learning capacity and the flexibility of employees and companies, since innovation ultimately comes from people and networks.

To create a healthy economic climate for companies and employees in the Metalektro sector, the parties to the collective agreement need each other, but sometimes also political support. Close collaboration within the sector enhances the competitiveness of the technological industry. That in turn creates welfare and incomes for employees in the sector, and via the sector also generates sustainable and stable welfare and income for the rest of the country. This calls for a shared vision of industrial policy.

Industrial policy establishes basic conditions

The aim of industrial policy is to create favourable conditions for maintaining the competitiveness of the technological industry. More specifically, it requires active efforts by governments to improve industry's capacity to adapt to structural change, to support the business climate and collaboration between enterprises, and to unlock the potential of industry, R&D and technology.⁶ Industrial policy in the EU is also closely entwined with other policy areas, such as trade, the internal market, research and innovation, employment, environmental protection and public health. The specific aims of the EU's industrial policy are:

- (1) "speeding up the adjustment of industry to structural changes"
- (2) "encouraging an environment favourable to initiative and to the development of undertakings throughout the Union, particularly small and medium-sized undertakings"
- (3) "encouraging an environment favourable to cooperation between undertakings" and
- (4) "fostering better exploitation of the industrial potential of policies of innovation, research and technological development".

In our view, key aspects of industrial policy are:

- Improving competitiveness and seizing export opportunities
- Accelerating the digital and climate transitions
- Strengthening the resilience of the single market with a level playing field
- Innovative companies with a rich learning environment and good jobs
- Increasing broad welfare by exploiting technology to resolve social problems and creating interesting jobs with good salaries
- Preventing unfair trade practices

This calls for new investment in people and in technologies and a regulatory framework that guarantees fairness and efficiency. It requires public support for an ambitious investment agenda. And a political and administrative system capable of providing direction and formulating consistent and coherent policy, in which choices for the long term are made in consultation with the relevant sectors.

Importance of an international level playing field

The Dutch technological industry generates more than half of its turnover abroad. The international value chains of companies are also closely integrated. Consequently, the sector is vulnerable to incidents such as the imposition of import tariffs by other countries or trade wars, but also to events like the Covid-19 epidemic and

⁶ Article 173 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

cyclical developments. The sector's international competitive position is also under increasing pressure from heavy investment in other countries. The Netherlands currently stands mid-table in the rankings for spending on R&D. The Netherlands invests 2.18% of GDP on R&D, while Germany is planning to increase investment to 3.5%. South Korea raised its R&D budget to 4.5% of GDP in 2019, and the Chinese R&D budget has risen thirty-fold since 1991. Another factor is that some countries no longer play according to the rules-based liberal international order. A world in which the United States played the role of global policeman has made way for a world of competing power blocs fighting to be the first to apply and scale up the latest technology.

In other words, the international context on which the Metalektro sector depends so heavily is a turbulent one. This emphasises the importance for the sector of an international level playing field, in terms of laws and regulations in the Netherlands but also compared with other countries.

Importance of innovative companies with a rich learning environment

Digitalisation in the manufacturing industry is a dominant trend globally. Robotisation, Artificial Intelligence, 5G and Big Data are enabling companies in the technological industry to radically modernise product development and production processes and to bring totally new products onto the market. They are also opening the door to new business models. Moreover, technology plays a key role in resolving social problems.

But it is not an autonomous development and will demand a major effort on the part of companies and employees. Companies will have to invest in increasing their agility so that they can constantly adapt to the changing demands of the market. New technologies call for innovative labour organisations. Meanwhile, the emergence of new key technologies requires greater investment in R&D and will create more uncertainty – no one knows what the future holds. These major transitions present significant opportunities. Opportunities that can and must be seized so that everyone can benefit from an increasingly digital and sustainable world with continued structural growth of our prosperity and welfare. A successful and competitive industry that people want to work in will make this happen. Creating a bigger international cake is a challenge for all of us, at both national and EU level.

The social partners are in agreement that it is only through innovation and technological progress that the social transitions can be successfully completed and prosperity and welfare in the Netherlands can be secured, now and in the future.

The Netherlands should aim to occupy the top spot in the Global Innovation Index.⁷ The Metalektro sector will benefit from that, since a good climate for business and innovation leads to powerful future-proof companies that provide good work in the long term. Only a healthy business climate will ensure that we can grasp the opportunities arising from the transition to a sustainable and digital economy. Only by making innovation worthwhile for companies and the people in them will we be able to apply our technological solutions worldwide. The result will be a favourable environment for the launching of initiatives for the development of companies and their employees. Social innovation is also a factor in this process because of its power to strengthen the potential of technological innovation through innovative methods of organising labour and the quality of work.

Social Innovation

Social innovation is the implementation of new methods of labour organisation and measures to maximise the use of the competences of employees with a view to improving the company's performance and developing talent.

The employee will make the difference

In this agenda we highlight the employee's contribution to a company's success. We do so in the conviction that there is more to doing business than technological development, IT and other business models. It is the employee that has to make the difference. It is crucial that the employee possesses the right skills, and not just the 'hard' technical and technological skills, but also 'soft' skills, such as creativity, problem-solving capacity, the ability to work in multidisciplinary teams, flexibility and the ability to cope with change.

Investing in the workforce is essential if employees are to master these skills and make full use of them. Investment by the employer, but also by the employees themselves (continuous learning). Employers and

⁷ https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2021/nl.pdf

employee representatives (works council/trade unions) must strive to create a culture within the company that fosters the development of skills and is based on the key concepts of trust and involvement. That is only possible if employees are genuinely involved in the development, implementation and use of new technologies and do not merely suffer the consequences of them. This means that the attitudes towards the people in the organisation have to change.

Ambitions for industrial policy

4.1 – United in pursuit of improved broad welfare in the Netherlands

The concept of broad welfare embraces people, planet and profit. In addition to the financial and economic dimension, welfare also has a social and ecological dimension. An increase in the gross national product (GNP) does not automatically mean that everyone is also better off and healthier or that the quality of the living environment (nature and ecology) improves.

The pursuit of a high level of broad welfare and prosperity means continuously looking for ways of integrating and balancing the economic, social and ecological dimensions.

The different dimensions of broad welfare are reflected in the following objectives of the social partners:

- Balanced economic growth, appropriate to sustainable development
- New investment in people, in technologies and in a regulatory framework suited to enabling companies to accelerate innovation and bring new products and services onto the market.
- Job retention
- A fair income distribution
- With good work for employees
- Exploiting the opportunities technology provides for the social transitions.

4.2 – Improving the business climate and promoting an international level playing field

A competitive, circular and sustainable economy throughout the Netherlands is the basis for nationwide prosperity and welfare, now and in the future. The Netherlands is one of the most dynamic and competitive knowledge economies in the world and has the ambition of being a leader in the development, application and export of smart and sustainable products, technologies and services.

Metalektro is one of the Netherlands' top sectors. To maintain that position, the social partners in the Metalektro sector are jointly committed to ensuring:

- A good climate for investment and business in the Netherlands for industrial/Metalektro companies
- An international level playing field
- Responsible wage cost development
- Retention of companies and work for the Dutch economy
- Public support for an ambitious investment agenda, more technical personnel and European cooperation.

4.3 – Promoting innovative companies with rich learning environments

The ingenuity of companies in the sector and their employees has generated economic growth for decades. With innovations that make us more productive and which also create greater welfare, since technology increasingly provides solutions for social problems in areas such as health care, the energy transition and creating a sustainable food chain.

Technology is constantly evolving and we are in the midst of a transition to steadily more advanced technologies. Training and learning organisations in which employees can make full use of their skills and talents are important for exploiting the potential of technology.

The social partners are therefore committed to:

- Accelerating the transformation of companies into Smart Industry businesses
- Strengthening the position of the Field Labs
- Enabling a learning culture to grow and flourish in companies

5. Stable labour market through appealing work and lifelong development

Features of Metalektro

- 45.2 is the average age
- 47% work in it for longer than 10 years
- 90% permanent contract
- 36.4 hours average working week
- 58% MBO 2-4
- 14% are women

The most important prerequisite for a company's business is having sufficient well-trained personnel. The important thing for employees is to have good and challenging work in the sector. This calls for a labour market that generates an adequate influx of personnel to the Metalektro sector, who then have sufficient opportunities for permanent development in companies offering good working conditions and terms of employment and a learning culture. By meeting these conditions, the sector will retain its existing employees and will attract people who want to work in it, since

employees perform best in innovative labour organisations that offer appealing and challenging work.

The importance of innovative labour organisations

Innovative labour organisations are enterprises in which employees play a central role in the business process, enjoy a high degree of autonomy and receive a lot of trust from the organisation, and are actively involved in changes in the work or in the business process. These companies realise that their commitment is essential for the development of their employees' skills. They understand what skills their employees need and use and encourage the development of skills with a wide range of activities in the workplace.

In a recent study,⁸ the European Commission surveyed 21,869 companies and identified the types of labour organisation that performed best in terms of business performance in combination with workplace well-being. In other words, which types of labour organisation will be tomorrow's winners.

The conclusion from this survey was that companies that invest heavily in their employees and with a large degree of employee involvement in the organisation performed best. In these companies:

- employees have a high degree of autonomy
- management expects a lot from employees
- there are extensive opportunities for training and learning
- there is direct employee involvement in decision-making
- the company uses various forms of incentives and/or variable remuneration.

Employees benefit from flexibility in maintaining a good work-life balance. Workers who continuously develop their skills in companies with good labour relations are better able to organise their own work than their peers for whom these conditions don't apply. Consequently, they can make an active contribution to change within the labour organisation and are able to fully exploit the potential of robotisation and digitisation. Social innovation is a crucial aspect of innovative labour organisations. By employing practices such as employee autonomy, self-rostering and delegation of responsibilities to lower-level employees in the organisation, innovative labour organisations help to strengthen technological innovation. The specific details of these practices can be worked out by employers and employees within the companies themselves. They can jointly determine the degree of flexibility required by employers and employees and the interests of the company's competitiveness. Respect for the professionalism of employees is an important condition in this respect. Other conditions are jobs with sufficient hours to provide a stable and adequate income and future prospects, with work being performed in various teams. It is naturally the employer's role to encourage this.

Working in the technological industry.

The positive points

- 71.2% regularly have autonomy
- 74.8% regularly come up with their own solutions
- 70.1% find the work varied
- 86.9% are very satisfied with their salary
- 86.9% are satisfied with the collective agreement

What could improve

- 59.9% of the jobs demand creativity
- 40.1% are given time to come up with new ideas
- 1 in 4 managers do not encourage development
- 42.71% have physically onerous / heavy work
- 24.6% are dissatisfied with the possibilities for determining their own working hours

⁸ European Company Survey 2019 - Workplace practices unlocking employee potential, Eurofound, 13.10.2020

New competences of employers

In referring to the people in the company we are talking about employees, but also employers, since the developments in technology and society call for a different outlook on work, learning and development, and dynamic careers. Employees will be confronted with change more frequently than ever, including changes in duties and functions, the products and services they work on, the working environment and the company itself. The same applies for employers, who have the additional responsibility of supporting employees in these change management processes. This requires specific competences, some of them entirely new, on the part of the employer, who will have to remain well-informed about developments in technology and IT that will bring about changes in the company and the sector. This raises questions such as: How will we exploit these developments in our company? How will they change our business processes? What are the implications for our employees? Working within the framework of a shared business strategy is essential for identifying and developing these, sometimes new, competences. One of the tasks of the managers is to involve employees in changes relating to business processes and the personal development relating to them.

Knowledge and skills from abroad

The Netherlands has one of the strongest economies in the world. The open character of the economy is one of the factors behind that leading position. There is huge demand for skilled workers and working in the technological industry often calls for specific knowledge and skills.

We don't find these employees exclusively in this country. There are not enough of them available on the Dutch labour market. We therefore have to look to other countries and recognise and facilitate the demand and need for knowledge and professional skills from abroad. We not only need labour migrants; their presence also has a distinctly positive impact on our economy and welfare.

Permanent shortages

The Netherlands faces a growing shortage of people with the right (technological) knowledge and skills. And the deficit is growing. According to one study (*by FME*), 93% of companies in the technological industry currently experience staff shortages. But what is the cause?

First and foremost, the Dutch working population is ageing. More people are retiring than are leaving education and entering the labour market. The problem is doubly urgent for technological sectors because the number of people looking for a job on completion of a technical education, regardless of the level, is lagging far behind the growing demand for workers with technological skills.

Moreover, because of the fourth industrial revolution – the current wave of digitalisation – a growing number of other, non-technological sectors are now also recruiting from the ranks of the technically skilled.

Invest in employees

The pace of radical change due to technological development is rapidly accelerating. McKinsey predicts that by 2030 the human capital cycle in the Netherlands will be just ten years, compared with 25 years now. This trend is also clearly visible within companies: 91% of employees observe that their companies are already using new technology and are exploring the opportunities created by new technology.

Employers and employees must therefore anticipate and continue to invest in lifelong development. Digitalisation is leading to new business models in the Netherlands. But implementing a new business model depends entirely on the extent to which we are able to learn new skills in time.

The growing shortage of technically trained personnel is by far the greatest source of concern for the technological industry. The situation is becoming even more urgent because, in addition to staff shortages, entirely new skill sets are required if a company is to be able to fully exploit the potential of digitalisation and new technologies. This combination of personnel shortages, new skills and a shorter human capital cycle highlight the growing need for lifelong development, a good match between the labour market and education and innovative organisations in which everyone is involved and able to fulfil their potential.

Every employee counts: the importance of good employability

Employability is essentially a question of employees retaining their motivation and skills and remaining healthy until their retirement. This means continuing to enjoy their work in their current and future jobs, employing their skills and not having to meet requirements that damage their health because they exceed their physical and mental capabilities. Employability also involves keeping up with new developments, personal development and remaining attractive for the labour market.

Motivation, ability and health are the pillars of permanent employability. Employers and employees have a shared interest in maintaining and improving employability. For employers, it is a question of ensuring that their employees can continue to make an effective contribution to the organisation. For employees, it is about continuing to perform useful work that they enjoy until they retire.

Importance of good education

New technology calls for different knowledge and skills. The technical aspects of the work change, but there are also more and different forms of cooperation and an alternative style of management and communication. Employees therefore need to develop both hard skills (professional) and soft skills (such as cooperation, flexibility and learning ability). Since most training takes place in the workplace, it is important that it is a rich learning environment, in which employees can keep their skills up to date and are able to verify that, for example with a skills passport. Nevertheless, the massive retraining in new key technologies and digital skills that will be required calls for a customised approach. For example, through reform of the education system to improve the match with technological developments and the demands of the students. Technical and technological skills should have a place in every course. Studying engineering and technology should become a logical and sensible choice for everyone. The business community (parties to collective agreements / social partners) must form a structural partnership with education policymakers and educational institutions at every level, while also promoting intensive cooperation between employers, employees, the government and the education sector in the area of learning, work and innovation in regional hubs.

Unless the shortage of qualified (technical) personnel is resolved, there is a risk of companies or business units – such as R&D departments – moving abroad. Attractive workplace practices and innovative labour organisations are important for preventing that, but so is productivity growth through technological and social innovation, since there are fewer people available to perform the same amount of work. Talent comes into its own in innovative labour organisations that exploit the potential of technological innovation.

Diversity and the Metalektro

The technological sector is a man's world. To the extent that many women who follow a technical course ultimately decide not to look for work in the sector.

Since 2018, the number of women who choose a technical profile in school or follow a technical course at third level has grown. Nevertheless, too many talented women are still lost to technological companies, both during their education and when they have graduated and are starting out on their career. Relatively few women trained in a technological discipline enter a technical profession.

Ambitions for the labour market

5.1 – Transformation to innovative labour organisations

The transformation starts with awareness. Awareness of the current state of affairs in terms of aspects such as autonomy, trust, social support, development, leadership, involvement and remuneration. And taking into account trends and benchmarks and the relationships between the various aspects.

The transformation then calls for inspiration and information. We need the possibility to learn from each other, the room to experiment and the guidance of professionals to accelerate this transformation.

Finally, we want to support and facilitate the transformation wherever possible. A platform that is directly accessible for employees is known to be an effective instrument for lifelong development in combination with greater autonomy. Employees can use such a platform for scans, access to coaching and suggestions for their broader personal development that will help to improve their employability. Finally, there is a trend towards organising work along the lines of tasks and skills (rather than functions and qualifications) since that is a better way of utilising talent. A 'skills passport' encourages employees to do more with their abilities.

- Annual analysis/benchmark of current employment practices in the sector
- Support and facilitation of lifelong development and autonomy by means of a new platform that is directly accessible for employees
- We will implement a skills passport

5.2 – A solution for the staff shortages in the sector

The shortage of skilled technical personnel is an obstacle to the growth of the technological sector as well as other sectors in the economy, and has a negative impact on employees. To reduce this deficit, employers and trade unions must work together in training and retraining sufficient employees for the sector in the future.

Action is needed. We have to increase the number of people entering the sector. The technological industry must increase the appeal of technology as a profession and ensure that the sector retains everyone already working in it.

To counter the scarcity of personnel, it is essential that far more people choose a career in technology. It is also important for employees in the sector to be able to follow permanent education and that enough people enter the sector from other disciplines.

The social partners express their commitment to:

- Promoting lateral entry into the sector
- Being an appealing sector with a positive image
- Retention of employees
- Promoting diversity and inclusion

5.3 – United for strong (technical) education

To remain competitive and preserve our leading position in the world, technical know-how and craftsmanship are needed. We anticipate permanent staff shortages in the sector. This is due to too few young people opting for a technical education and the rapid pace of technological development.

From an economic and social perspective, it is important that the range of education in the country matches the labour market, so that every graduate of secondary or higher vocational education or a university has the opportunity to find work, for self-improvement and to contribute to broad welfare in the Netherlands. For years, the demand for skilled technical personnel has been greater than the number of graduates of science, technology and IT courses. And the Netherlands educates relatively fewer science, technology and IT students than other European countries.

We therefore plan to:

- Expand and intensify collaboration between employers, employees, government and the education sector in the innovative hubs such as Technohubs and Field Labs
- Create a strong technical stream at MBO level, together with the education sector
- Expand the focus on innovation of the Field Labs with a focus on skills
- Encourage more students to choose a technological course

6. Colophon