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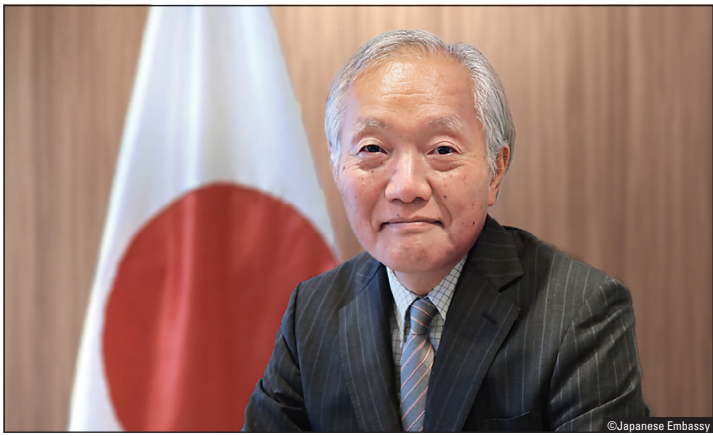
## The Netherlands: A recovering economy rediscovers Japan

The Netherlands is on track to revive its economy in 2021 following the pandemic. Despite reductions in foreign trade, private consumption and investment, the Dutch economy remains resilient through strong digitalization, quality infrastructure and high living standards.

With world-renowned international companies and a growing number of small and midsize enterprises, the Netherlands' diverse economy is well positioned for tomorrow.

The country's strong partnership with Japan continues to go from strength to strength and the Netherlands remains highly attractive for Japanese investors.

"Approximately 600 Japanese companies are based in the Netherlands," said H.E. Ambassador Hidehisa Horinouchi. "After Brexit (the 'British exit' that saw the U.K. leave the European Union), the number of companies relocating to the Netherlands has been growing and therefore the importance of the Netherlands as a business hub in Europe is increasing."



Hidehisa Horinouchi, Ambassador of Japan to the Netherlands

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The Netherlands and Japan share a close bond in terms of business, culture and people-to-people exchanges.

"People from Japan and the

Netherlands share common values and commonalities," said Hideaki Takase, chairman of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Netherlands. "Japan and the Netherlands are small countries and each economy leverages their commercial endeavors. Both our

peoples are highly educated and our 400-year history is a factor in keeping our strong relationship moving forward."

The historical ties between the two countries continue today and culture, trade and food are an important part of the Netherlands-Japan relationship. Today, the Dutch economy is driven by innovative new industries and traditional businesses.

"The Netherlands and Japan have a long-standing relationship during which they have influenced each other in terms of business, people, culture and cuisine," said Hokkai Suisan owner Marinus Noordbos. "The Dutch are inspired by Japanese food culture and as a leading supplier of traditionally prepared Japanese fish products since 1993, Hokkai Suisan is proud to share the wonderful flavors of Japanese cuisine with our customers in the Netherlands and across Europe."

Visit [www.sms-bridges.com](http://www.sms-bridges.com) and [www.japantimes.co.jp](http://www.japantimes.co.jp) to read the full 2021 Netherlands Report.

Insights and analysis on the Netherlands-Japan economic and cultural relationship include comments from **Christa de Kemp-Everts**, managing director of DUJAT (Dutch and Japanese Trade Federation); **Bart Jan Koopman**, director at evofenedex; **Akira Havermans**, chairman of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Japan; **Kris Schiermeier**, director of the Japan Museum Siebold-Huis; **Hans Kuijpers**, director of Investment Projects, Americas and NE Asia and **Michiel Bakhuizen**, strategic advisor and spokesperson for the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency; **Elise Wessels**, director and owner at Nihon no hanga — Japanese Print Collection; and **Takeshi Gotoh**. ♦

## High-tech expertise and unique collaboration – Fujifilm has established deep roots in Brabant

Japan and the Netherlands have had a special relationship lasting over 400 years, one that is still thriving today. During that time, the countries have both grown to become global players in the fields of innovation and technology.

When looking at the Netherlands, Brabant is the province for innovation and knowledge. This province has evolved into a hotbed of innovative ecosystems in high-tech systems and life sciences. It is the No. 1 region in research and development spending and more than 50% of all patent applications in the Netherlands are generated here. No wonder Brabant has attracted so many Japanese companies, whether to settle here or to do business with our bright companies.



Edwin Zonder, Senior Project Manager at Brabant Development Agency (BOM) and Albert van Maren, Vice President of Fujifilm Manufacturing Europe

### Reinvention made possible

Fujifilm Manufacturing Europe is one of those bright companies that was established in Brabant. Tilburg to be precise. It's a long-lasting relationship that started in 1982.

"Brabant plays a pivotal role in Fujifilm's transformation journey. Our location in Tilburg transformed from a producer of film and photographic paper into an R&D and manufacturing organization that brings solutions for the challenges in society," said Albert van Maren, vice president of Fujifilm Manufacturing Europe. "Currently, the focus is shifting toward energy, environment and health care, the result of a transition in which Fujifilm Tilburg is reinventing itself. And Brabant is the place to do so."

The company is currently building a factory in Tilburg for the production of cell culture media, a product used to make vaccines and medicines. It's a big shift, but according to Van Maren there are also a lot of similarities with existing processes.

larities with existing processes.

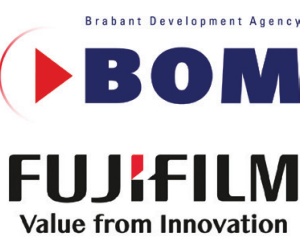
"It concerns other raw materials, but the production methods and the high-quality standards are not new. Our Tilburg site has the possibility to go for carbon dioxide-neutral production, which is also of vital importance for our customers," he said.

### Collaboration

After almost 40 years in Brabant, Fujifilm has established deep roots in the local and regional communities. The Brabant Development Agency (BOM) has supported the company ever since, said Edwin Zonder, senior project manager at BOM. "Fujifilm is of great importance to the Netherlands, Brabant and the ecosystem."

We enjoy an excellent relationship with Fujifilm and we believe that their presence is stimulating and will further initiate innovation in Brabant. As BOM, we are proud of their current developments and the support we have been able to offer, together with our partners."

BOM offers services and support designed to provide foreign companies with information and a network to explore business opportunities in Brabant. ♦ [www.bom.nl](http://www.bom.nl)



## Kintetsu World Express (Benelux): Supporting people in their daily lives

The Netherlands is at the heart of the European freight forwarding, customs brokerage and logistics industries.

Japan-headquartered Kintetsu World Express celebrated its 50th anniversary last year and as "A Global Brand Born in Japan," the company is strengthening its commitment to Europe.

In addition to Belgium and Luxembourg, the Netherlands is part of the Benelux economic union. In 1990, Kintetsu World Express (Benelux) B.V. (KWE Benelux), was established at Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands to handle international freight and provide customs clearance services.

Today KWE Benelux operates from three strategic locations in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Brussels and provides customers with total logistics services,



Ryusuke "Jack" Kutsuna, Managing Director and Joshua Van Altena, General Manager of Kintetsu World Express (Benelux)

including air freight forwarding, sea freight forwarding, warehousing and distribution.

In accordance with Kintetsu World Express' long-term vision of becoming a global Top 10 solution partner, KWE Ben-

elux has been driving volume expansion and even recently entered the challenging perishable goods market.

This year sees the company redesigning and renovating its Schiphol Airport warehouse

with work scheduled for completion in autumn.

The 12,000-sq.-meter facility will include temperature-controlled zones (cold storage), to enable better handling of health care, pharmaceutical and medical products. The temperature-controlled warehouse will have two cold storage areas — one between 15 and 25 degrees Celsius, and a specialized one between 2 and 8 degrees.

To ensure health care products reach their destinations safely, swiftly and with traceability, KWE Benelux will also offer medical and pharmaceutical customers high-quality air shipment and logistics solutions.

With extensive expertise in shipping pharmaceutical products and medical equipment, KWE Benelux is certified under Good Distribution Practices, a

quality system for warehouses and distribution centers for medicines.

This year has seen KWE Benelux supporting the international transportation of COVID-19 vaccines with a dedicated operations task force of health care specialists.

"We are very proud and privileged to be able to support this crucial mission," said Ryusuke "Jack" Kutsuna, managing director of KWE Benelux.

"As a leading logistics service provider, we intend to remain a crucial, yet 'backseat' partner as we continue supporting people in their daily lives." ♦ [www.kwe.com](http://www.kwe.com)



## Plugwise: Switching on energy-reduction solutions from the Netherlands to Japan

Driven by the concept that the greenest energy is the energy that is not used, Dutch company Plugwise is delivering innovative energy-saving products and solutions to customers across the world.

Headquartered in Sassenheim in the province of South Holland, Plugwise is proud of its Dutch heritage. The company's fully automated production facility is located in Eindhoven and today the family business has grown into a truly innovative company.

Taking on competitors such as Honeywell, Google Nest and Tado, Plugwise is driven to succeed in the international energy management business.

The company is partnering with small firms, international companies and private individuals to deliver an extensive range of energy management systems. Plugwise solutions incorpo-



Reinder Sanders, Chief Executive Officer of Plugwise

rate technologies dependent on outside temperature to control home and office temperatures. Home and office rooms, or "zones," are heated more efficiently through the company's temperature systems.

Plugwise solutions connect

to boilers, heat pumps, district heating and other forms of water heating and cooling systems, both before and after regulation.

Traditionally, a boiler is always on, with its temperature dependent on the outside temperature. Plugwise smart systems enable boilers to be switched off when not in use, thus saving energy and reducing costs.

Other Plugwise technologies utilize multiple external influences, such as temperature, wind and sun, and incorporate 48-hour weather forecasts to help further reduce customer energy requirements.

Plugwise systems can also cool zones if the connected boiler or heat pump is capable of cooling. Zones can be heated at specific times with innovative "dynamic preheating" solutions. Plugwise technology takes into account heating schedules and the impact of heating multiple zones in



Remco Aberson, Head of Asia-Pacific, Plugwise

close proximity to one another.

By providing customers with accurate, up-to-date information on their energy consumption via the Plugwise smart meter reader, Plugwise customers are able to save up to 40% on energy costs.

The company sees huge potential in Asia and has been active in Japan and across key Asian markets since 2012.

"Today Plugwise is partly Japanese-owned and we enjoy close ties with our Japanese customers and friends," Plugwise CEO Reinder Sanders said. "We are driven to continually grow our business and support our customers in Japan and across Asia," added Plugwise's Asia-Pacific chief Remco Aberson.

With the company actively bridging the Netherlands and Japan, Plugwise is well positioned to help customers in Asia reduce their energy usage and costs. ♦ [www.plugwise.com](http://www.plugwise.com)



## Discover the Utrecht region

In 1961, Anton Geesink, originally from Utrecht, was the first foreigner to win gold at the World Judo Championships. Miffy, the little bunny, was "born" in Utrecht, and Siegfried Aikman from Amersfoort in the Utrecht region helped Japan's national men's hockey team win gold at the 2018 Asian Games and go on to the Tokyo Olympics.

Today, the Utrecht region is strengthening its ties with Japan. As a "green city" in the Netherlands with canals, parks, beautiful castles and country mansions, Utrecht values the work-life balance. The European Commission's Regional Innovation Scoreboard ranks Utrecht particularly high in infrastructure, human capital and health.

The Utrecht region offers ac-

cess to over 145 million consumers within a 500-kilometer radius and 7.2 million employees within a one-hour commute. It is centrally located in both the Netherlands and Western Europe.

With one of the most highly educated workforces in the Netherlands, the Utrecht region has more than 70,000 students. Over half the labor force has an academic degree and more than 75% of the population speaks three languages.

"Over 1,000 foreign companies have established offices in the Utrecht region," said Anna Elferink, Utrecht region business adviser for Asia and the Pacific.

"We are happy to welcome new Japanese investors to the region to discover the advantages of the Utrecht region."

In the region approximately 60 Japanese companies employ over 3,000 people.

"Yokogawa's European headquarters has been here for about 40 years," said Shuji Mori, Yokogawa Electric Corp.'s senior vice president and chief executive for North and South Americas, Europe, Russia and CIS.

"Yokogawa regards the Utrecht province as an excellent region for foreign company investments due to government support, infrastructure, local commitment and connectivity with other regions in the Netherlands," Mori said.

Located in the Gooi and Vechtstreek area, Hilversum is home to the Netherlands' media and entertainment industry. "All the major Dutch broadcasters are based here, as are



Anna Elferink, Utrecht region Business Adviser for Asia and the Pacific

many international production companies," said Paul Kievit, president of NEC Enterprise Solutions EMEA & Americas.

"Hilversum Media Park is home to numerous young businesses that break down the boundaries between traditional and digital media. Other busi-

ness centers in the surrounding area include Arenapark, which is home to NEC Enterprise EMEA headquarters. With the Amsterdam Internet Exchange on the doorstep, providing one of the largest data-transport hubs in the world, the area has exceptional digital connectivity for bandwidth-hungry businesses. Excellent transport and road connections ensure potential clients and creative partners in Amsterdam are never far away."

Frank Rittinghaus, general manager of Nintendo Benelux concluded: "Close to Schiphol Airport and the Belgian and German borders, Utrecht is easily accessible by various means of transport and centrally located in the Netherlands. Utrecht is a fantastic location for Nintendo Benelux." ♦ <https://invest.utrechtregion.com>



## McDermott and Bull: Empowering change

As a global boutique executive search firm, McDermott and Bull prides itself on understanding client goals and making the best possible match for candidate, company and culture.

"We don't just present CVs, we deliver game changers," said Norbert Meijer, the company's managing partner and head of Japan desk.

"We value our client and candidate relationships and apply professional tools and modern techniques to localize, qualify and present our clients with executive talent."

McDermott and Bull offers the techniques, processes and tools utilized by larger firms combined with a more dynamic, personalized and collaborative service model.

"We are in a unique position to better understand our clients' needs, provide candidates with the best possible experience and establish the perfect fit between candidate and organization," Meijer said.

"In positive, but also negative, ways, the pandemic has changed almost everything. While employees used to work in the office full time, the hybrid model is now becoming more common with employees working from home more often. Heavily impacted industries such as automotive and aviation have experienced a decrease in demand while the acceleration of the digitalization



Norbert Meijer, Managing Partner and Head of Japan desk at McDermott and Bull

of our economy has led to an increase in online business models."

"Today leadership teams are asking: 'Do we have the right people on board to manage change? What kind of leadership skills will we need in the future? Do we need to address different markets to compensate for the losses we have suffered, and do we have the right talent in our organization to make that happen?'"

### The Japan connection

McDermott and Bull has a strong track record of working with Japanese companies. Meijer spent 17 years with a large Japanese corporation and held various international senior management positions.

"We are well connected to companies providing

services geared toward Japanese clients and we are proud to have a large number of long-time Japanese clients," Meijer said.

"We are an active member of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands and DUJAT and have published articles, addressed seminars and participated in trade missions to Japan," he said, referring to the Dutch and Japanese Trade Federation.

### The culture fit

Finding the right fit is important for McDermott and Bull. Selecting candidates raises three questions: Does the candidate have the right experience and education? Can expectations in terms of compensation be aligned? Will the candidate "fit" into the organization?

Business culture in Japanese companies is very different from European or North American firms and this culture fit is critical when working with Japanese firms.

Meijer concluded, "With almost 30 years of experience working with Japanese companies, we understand the differences and this knowledge guides us when selecting and qualifying candidates." ♦

[www.mbxec.com](http://www.mbxec.com)

