The Netherlands form part of Europe and are member of the European Union since the beginning. On the limited territory of 40.000 km², a very flat, partly below sea level cultivated land, 17 million inhabitants are living. In the densely populated western part, a large number of nationalities and cultures can be found. As an international trade and immigrant country this diversity in the population, has a long history. The Netherlands being a place where promotion of freedom of expression has gone hand in hand with entrepreneurship, has developed a large variety of book- and media related industries and library- and information services, ranging from school and public libraries to specialised libraries and the National Library. The main actors in the Dutch library landscape are presented here in a developmental context. As the Dutch cherish their freedom and independence, one may be astonished about the number of organisations, institutions and groupings working in the information and library field, causing an abundance of abbreviations, for which I can only warn the international reader.

Academic libraries, UKB cooperative

Dutch universities have a long academic tradition. The first Dutch university was founded in Leiden in 1575 by prince William of Orange. Today the Netherlands has 14 research universities, all of which offer high-standard education and research. There are three universities of technology, in Delft, Eindhoven and Twente, and one university which focuses on agriculture and life sciences: Wageningen. The remaining ten research universities are broad-based. There are also eight university medical centres. Around 280.000 students are enrolled for one of the academic bachelor (400) or master studies (800). The number of studies offered has decreased by 10%, mainly due to merging of smaller subject studies. The number of students has doubled since 1980. Every year around 50.000 new students enter the universities. In contrast to many other European countries, there is still a demographic wave in the Netherlands, causing an estimate of a growing influx until 2020-2021 of 36%. Nevertheless, government investment and annual subsidy per student has decreased from €19.500 (2001) to €14.300 (2015). Per student 27% less budget is available. Academic staff has not increased at the same pace, save for PhD staff, and support staff has decreased (total staff: 41.667 FTE). At the same time staff has become more international at almost all levels, and part-timers are increasing, now 40%. This is mainly due to the financial situation of universities, confronted with 9%
less state subsidies, a low state investment in R&D (hardly 2% of BNP) research and development, and the need of investments in renovation of their buildings from the 60ies and 70ies. More income has to be realised through subvention of special projects or paid research. This situation also affects the libraries.

University libraries, increasingly centralised, have a mixed budget: for facilities provided centrally and for resources (acquisition, databases, media) provided by faculties. Innovation started early by the proposal of the Tilburg University to build a new high tech library, in 1992. The cooperation of its library and computer centre resulted in Utrecht in the Electronic Library project (1995-1998). Increasing cooperation among the university libraries in this field led to a steering group for innovative projects, later integrated in SURF.

About SURF
SURF is the collaborative ICT organisation for Dutch higher education and research. The SURF cooperative serves as a joint platform where Dutch research universities, universities of applied sciences, university medical centres, research institutions and senior secondary vocational education institutions, work together to develop ICT innovations. SURF U.A. Cooperative is a cooperative association (of 69 affiliated organisations) with excluded liability. It comprises the cooperative office (SURF office) and three operating companies: SURFmarket (ICT offers for education and research; online store for students and staff), SURFnet (ICT infrastructure networks used by 180 institutions) and SURFsara, Netherlands’ national supercomputing centre.

In its policy plan 2015-2018, SURF focuses on a federative e-infrastructure for education and research; optimal use of data, tailor-made education; impact of research; safe and reliable environment, and efficiency and safety in work processes.

The 13 university libraries are working together in an informal cooperative body, called UKB (1977), which also includes the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB, the National Library) in The Hague. Associate members are Open University Netherlands, the Working Group of Special Academic Libraries (WSWB), Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). 15 research institutes are connected to the KNAW, among them is DANS: Data Archiving and Networked Services which promotes sustained access to digital research data, through the NARCIS portal. It encourages researchers to permanently archive and reuse data, e.g. through the EASY online archiving system and the Dutch Dataverse Network.

The UKB consortium is not formalised. Although negotiations take place on behalf of the consortium, no one can commit or sign on behalf of the entire consortium. Apart from more traditional subjects - cataloguing, interlibrary loan, collection management - other items such as licensing policies, e-learning and innovation in the Digital Library are discussed in committees and working groups.

Over the last decade, UKB moved forward by intensifying cooperation (e.g. information infrastructure, standardization of metadata, management training programme for ‘high potentials’ in the member libraries. (This was later adopted and extended by LIBER, the cooperation of European academic libraries) and further professionalizing collaborative processes (e.g. license negotiations).

In its Strategic Plan 2011-2015, UKB describes The Academic Library on its Way to the Cloud. It puts the national information infrastructure in international perspective. This has led to the major decision to make use of the WorldShare platform of OCLC for cooperative cataloguing and interlibrary loan. The Dutch Central Catalogue should be visible in WorldCat as virtual collection of the Netherlands. An Action Plan for the in depth transition 2014-2016 is currently in full force.

UKB works for extending licenses to include e-books and to provide users with convenient discovery functionality for all types of materials. Sustainable access will be guaranteed by contracts with international repositories such as the e-Depot of the National Library of the Netherlands (KB).

In general the Dutch library and research community has been active in promoting open access and the Dutch libraries have been on the forefront of signing the Berlin Declaration, and actions such as declaring 2009 to be ‘Open Access Year’. UKB managed to make agreements with major publishers: a new licensing model with Springer, and showed its teeth when Elsevier changed its policy in 2011; negotiations on licenses and open access take place at the highest governance level. Open Access has now received political support, both at home, by the Ministry (2013) and at the European level (2016): the principle is that all research financed with public funds, should be publicly available for everyone. The Dutch ministry opted for the golden route: the author pays the publisher for the publication and the publisher makes the whole series publication online and freely accessible. This should be completely realised within 10 years. During the Dutch EU presidency 2016, Open Access has been promoted and set as a European standard.

UKB participates in FOBID Netherlands Library Forum, especially in the Legal Committee, working as a watchdog on copyright and other legal matters, from the point of view of libraries and their users.
It also provides an overview of statistics and trends. By comparing aggregated sector-wide values throughout the years, general trends can be determined. See this graph as an example.

![Graph UKB: Use of resources 2009 – 2012. Raw data are converted to index numbers.](image)

As the graph shows, the use of printed resources is still declining. Also, the number of searches in bibliographic databases such as Web of Science is getting lower, possibly as a result of the use of alternative facilities, such as discovery systems or Google Scholar. The use of e-content is still increasing.

**Libraries in Higher Education: Universities of Applied Sciences, SHB cooperative**

In the last decades a concentration of Higher Education institutes has taken place, the merger also included name changes into Universities of Applied Sciences. There are about 40 other higher education libraries, of which 32 form part of the SHB (Samenwerkingsverband Hogeschool Bibliotheeken), the cooperative body of higher education libraries in the Netherlands. Following the good example of UKB, the SHB has set up a similar benchmark, in which 18 HE libraries cooperate. Trends in the latest Benchmark 2014 are the rise of digital sources in the collections. In average, HE spends €90,- per student on the library for collection and staff costs. Expected budget increase for research facilities is not perceived. As expected, the number of book loans decreases. Digital media are more heavily used, but cannot easily be demonstrated due to the wide variety in the composition of the collections. In average 50% of media budget is spent on digital media, but policies towards digital may divert strongly. HE libraries invest relatively much in students and teacher training of information skills, provided by information specialist staff. InHolland is a HE example of a complete ‘digital-only library’, a radical decision and transition to encourage students and staff to make use of the increasing digital sources.

In its strategic planning for 2015-2018, SHB focuses on valuable and esteemed partnership with education, research and professional practice. Within that scope, SHB has formulated five strategic spearheads to position itself as an innovative platform. They are related to quality of content and service, visibility in education and research, partnerships and internationalization and related staff development. SHB wants to reach these aims by means of representation of interests and knowledge sharing. One feature of cooperation is the HE Knowledge Bank, providing access to knowledge products of 25 HE institutes: 39.000 papers by students and publications by lectors, sorted by current HE themes like Health, Education, IT & Media. Most publications are available in open access (32.700).
SURF Foundation aims through its programme SURFshare to realise a common infrastructure for enhancing access and exchange of research information through interoperable repositories. Apart from the Knowledge Bank, another portal has been created: LOREnet, a portal to provide easier access to teaching aids at research universities and universities of applied sciences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities of Applied Sciences</th>
<th>Graduation papers</th>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Educational resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Bank for Universities of Applied Sciences</td>
<td>Knowledge Bank for Universities of Applied Sciences</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE BANK</td>
<td>LOREnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research universities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NARCIS</td>
<td>LOREnet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SHB is member of FOBiD and participates in the FOBiD Board and its legal committee FJC. It is also active in stimulating cooperation among library types and participates in providing statistics for the international community.

**National Library: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the power of the network**

The Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands was founded in 1798, starting with the decision of the parliament of the Republic (!) to turn the collection of the fled Governor, Stadhouder Willem V, into a national library. As the wall decoration in the KB tells: the royal sound has its roots in the revolution! The first 5500 items have grown into 7 million; the title National Library was only legally attributed in 1982, when the KB moved to its current premises next to the Central Railway Station in The Hague. The systematic acquisition of all Dutch titles only started in 1974, there is no legal deposit, but publishers deliver these items on a voluntary basis. Now, the KB is the central deposit library for all printed and some electronic publications produced in the Netherlands, and also serves as an international deposit library for e-journals. It is responsible for the coordination of national preservation and digitisation projects. The library furthermore compiles a variety of national special collections in the humanities and social sciences, and research collections related to Dutch culture, history and language. Since 1993, the KB has operated as a non-departmental public body (ZBO), financed by the Ministry for Education, Culture & Science.

The statutory tasks of the KB not only relate to higher education and research (Act WHW), but, since 2015, also to the system of public library provisions (Act Wsob). A major merger of the KB with national public library service organisations was realised on 1st January 2015. The KB has now a budget of around 89 million Euro, and staff of 322 FTE, serving during 52 opening hours a week, apart from online services.

The policy plan 2015-2018 ‘The power of our network’ describes the KB’s strategy for putting these tasks into practice. Building on its strong strategy towards the digital library 2010-2013, KB now combines this strategy with a refined focus on the extended user network: 4 million public library users (adults/children 50/50%, 1 million business and private ‘researchers’, genealogists, heritage-lovers, students; 100+ data researchers of 10.000 digital humanist researchers. They should easily find everything that the library has to offer, wherever they start their search; have a platform for research in Dutch publications; have access to as much digital content as possible, as freely as possible for everyone; experience just one library, regardless of their first point of contact; will be tempted and helped to use the Dutch library collection, and can rely on continued access to Dutch books, newspapers and magazines, and international academic publications, both now and in the future. For preservation and sustainability, KB also collects digital born titles and has a website harvesting programme. The KB continues to acquire precious prints and rare books, and special collections such as the Biblioteca Philosophica Hermetica. KB has also started to make use of ‘flipbooks’, opening up important and valuable books to the general public.

One of the main tools for users is the new service Delpher (www.delpher.nl), developed as the national infrastructure for full-text access to books, newspapers and magazines in association with the university libraries of Amsterdam (UvA), Leiden, Utrecht and Groningen, and the Meertens Institute. Currently, Delpher contains more than 320.000 books, 1,3 million Dutch newspapers, 1,5 million pages from Dutch magazines and 1,5 million radio bulletins. The titles of the digitised works are included in the GGC/WorldCat, which serves as a digitisation index. The ambition towards 2018 is to have 90% of all Dutch publications before 1940, digitally available – major digitization projects with Google and Proquest, partnerships with the wider library network, help to realise this. KB participates in the Dutch Digital heritage Network for making the Dutch heritage more visible, practicable and sustainable. The vast majority of material is being digitised as part of Metamorfoze, the national...
programme for the conservation of printed heritage. Suriname newspapers, not available in the Netherlands have been digitized by the Suriname Archives on behalf of the KB. The Digital Library of Dutch Literature is now also in Delpher full text searchable, comprising thousands of literary texts, secondary literature and supplementary information, such as biographies and audio-visual material. The role of the KB regarding public libraries is included in the following paragraph.

Public Libraries

Public libraries have been introduced around 1900, on initiative of well to do liberals, church groups and the labour organisations. This diversity in the roots of the public library service disappeared in the 1950ies when all libraries became truly public without denomination, are professionally run libraries and members of the Netherlands Public Library Association (VOB). Currently, the public library network in the Netherlands comprises 156 public library organisations (legal form: non profit foundations) and 9 provincial library service organisations with a total of approximately 1000 libraries and service points (2015). They are serving 3.8 million children (61%) and adults with a library card, who borrow 73 million printed books. 234.000 of them have an e-book account. The free Holiday app made the total number of E-book loans 4 million (2015). Libraries are, with some exceptions, e.g. The Hague, not part of local government administration. Due to a process of upscaling, making library organisations stronger, the number of library organisations reduced from 542 to 156 in the period 2000-2015. This library organisation as foundation has a board of private persons; the foundation receives the public subsidy for the running of the public library. The library still has to cover around 15-19% of own income. Therefore, almost all public libraries work on subscription fees from the users. The Public Library Act 1975 introduced a three-layered library system and fee-free services for children up to 18 years of age. Decentralisation legislation in the 1980ies have brought the libraries under municipal responsibility. The new Act (2015) defines the roles of the various players within the national network. The library provisions at a national, provincial and municipal level form the participants of the public library system:

- KB, National Library of the Netherlands with the task of managing the public library system, improving the coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the public library system; running the Dutch digital public library; and implementing the policy for the visually handicapped
- Provincial supporting institutes, especially for innovation in the physical library domain, interlibrary loan, coordination, and general support of the network.
- Local public libraries should give the general public access to information and culture, guided by principles such as independence, credibility, accessibility, pluralism and authenticity. Their concrete tasks are: to make available knowledge and information; to facilitate learning; to promote reading and a taste for literature; to promote art and culture; to organize social encounters and debate. (One may recognize the roots in the UNESCO/IFLA Public Library Manifesto).

The network of Dutch libraries works closely together and features the following components:

- the national library catalogue including the entire range of all public libraries
- Inter-library lending traffic; A joint collection plan
- Nationwide digital infrastructure and a digital collection
- A national library card – harmonization of membership records / coordination of general terms and conditions for the use of the library
- Service provision to education.

An additional regulation requires that the publicly funded organisations under the Act deliver data (on collections, loans etc.) for general library statistic. As a result, the figures for 2015 (100% participation) could be presented much earlier. KB has tendered for the set up of a datawarehouse in which anonymised data will be used for benchmarking, library monitor and promotion issues.

Dutch public libraries are popular among international colleagues for various reasons. Because of the foundation-form, library managers have more freedom to run the library as they see fit to meet the new challenges in finances (budget cuts, other income), in services (supporting literacy for e-government; tax forms), in new audiences (refugees, entrepreneurs, researchers) and new workstyles (self steering teams, cross learning).

A major discussion among Dutch public libraries has taken place (and continues) regarding the best way to ensure access to information, regardless of the format in with information is presented, and to maintain the principles of public service (non discrimination, democracy, transparency) and professional quality in services, collections and management, while likewise to provide evidence to (political) stakeholders of relevant service to citizens of all ages and walks of life. Studies in other branches: bookshops, restaurants, banks, retail in general, have lead to the development of a library service concepts based on retail applications. Most libraries now make use of this national formula. The first library to present the new logo and retail concept was in a new branch of Zwolle, which
proved to be successful from the beginning: enthusiastic comment from the increasing group of
visitors and members; better display of titles, increasing loans, larger variety of requests. Most libraries
wish to be the meeting place in the city/community, where there is place for everyone. Books and
media are ranged according to themes, and have frontal presentations; easily accessible for reading
on the spot, at home, for group work etc. A news cafe, a game circle for playing on the Wii or a fablab
are other facilities. Rooms for teaching, lectures and theatre are available. Films are shown three
times a week, alternating with theatre, debate or comedy. This is what Dutch libraries attempt to
realise, in partnerships with other organisations. They form multifunctional units, e.g. a cultural centre
or kultuhrs (a Dutch version of this Scandinavian idea). Three provinces have promoted the
kultuhrs-concept. New and renovated libraries, by famous architects can be found in eg. Arnhem
(including heritage centre artotheek and art/music school), Amersfoort (incl. local archive and music
school), Gouda (former chocolate factory); branch libraries in Utrecht, Wijk bij Duurstede, Assen
(incl. filmtheatre). All libraries have good catering facilities, from coffee corner to grand cafés.

Regarding the basic backoffice activities, most library technical work is centralised. NBD/Biblion is the
central library supplier for all public libraries and provides all buying, binding and supply services
necessary for libraries (similar to EKZ). It was set up in 1970 by the associations of publishers,
booksellers and public libraries, to provide an efficient and cost effective library service. It delivers 3
million media annually, based on in house developed machinery and innovation of production
processes (RFID, standing orders, shelf-ready connecting, labels, media presentation) to make media
'library ready'. It also has a service for schools, and acts as an educational and professional
publisher, from its new premises (since 2014) in Zoetermeer, near The Hague.

Central solutions is also true for Music service: Centrale Discotheek Rotterdam (CDR). Music library
services are performed by the unique CDR, located in Rotterdam Public Library, a dedicated,
innovative service to music lovers, in online and streaming services, and music education. It has the
largest music collection in Europe, in fact, the CDR, serves as the national library for music, and was
the first to present an internet catalogue, Musicweb, now containing 500.000 cd's, 300.000 lp's and
30.000 music video's. They can be 'borrowed' through a public library card: inside the library all 6
million tracks can be listened to; for home-use Muziekweb offers 30-seconds fragments and music
information, an integrated service.

Reading, literacy and lifelong learning
Because of the size of the country, a number of library activities, often based on local initiatives, have
turned into national programmes. This is true for many programmes related to reading, the number 1
for public libraries. Promotion of reading, literacy and digital skills is part of extensive national
programmes, e.g. Art of Reading. An extensive development and service package supports libraries,
to deliver BoekStart, and participate in National Reading Aloud Days or the establish a Language
House/Café or a digital skills walk-in. Partnerships include Foundation Reading (Stichting Lezen) and
CPNB, the force of joint Dutch book promotion. 2016 being the Year of Reading, the cooperative for
book promotion, CPNB, demonstrates its value as unique cooperation of publishers and booksellers
since 1983, with which libraries are aligned in realizing major book programmes and events, such as the
(Children's) Book Week. Libraries took the initiative for the Netherlands reads. By joining forces
major sponsors such as the Dutch Railways and major media attention for books and reading are
successfully realized for a number of decades.

In the Netherlands mostly public libraries have provided library, reading and book services to schools.
That's why no large number of specific school libraries has been developed. Libraries have stressed
the importance of free reading, reading for pleasure, designed reading development programmes
following the school curriculum, involved school children in visits, Children's Jury and Reading aloud
contests. Now, a new concept 'the library at school' (dBoS) has been introduced, followed by 75% of
the public libraries and 40% of primary schools. Based on a joint policy, evidence based programmes
and reading/media coaching are part of strengthening children's language, reading and media skills
(and of their teachers). Scientific monitoring makes results visible and convincing for school boards
and municipalities.

Libraries have also been strong partners in combatting illiteracy, a priority target for Dutch
Government. Even nowadays approximately 1.3 million residents of the Netherlands between the ages
of 16 and 65 have. Count on skills! was Launched to combine - and give a boost to - various separate
efforts to counter this problem. Of course prevention or low literacy will be a major element of Count
on Skills! The reading promotion program The Art of Reading focusses on this prevention and aims at
children (0-18 years) and families. Count on Skills is a national action programme by the ministries of
Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) and Health, Welfare
and Sport (VWS) aimed at preventing and combating illiteracy and promoting reading, supplementary
to regular education programmes.
Adapted reading
The library service for the blind and the visually impaired is fully embedded in the public library service. The target group is formed by the blind or otherwise visually impaired (300,000), dyslexics (400-700,000) and people that cannot handle a ‘normal’ book because of a handicap. The number of readers of adapted reading is 41,000 (50% dyslexics and 33% > 65 years)
The overall integrated services have a one stop service for users: Bibliotheekservice Passend Lezen (BPL). BPL ensures a good collection for the blind and visually impaired, contributes to the promotion of the collection, including newspapers, magazines, Jumpprint, Tactile, and stimulates innovation. Dedicon and CBB are responsible for the special production for print-disabled people: 2,300 audio titles a year and 72,000 titles in total available; in braille 700 titles a year, added to the collection of over 14,000 titles. It is still a small part of the annual production of general Dutch book titles: 16,500.
The implementation of the Public Library Provisions System Act (Wsob) on 1 January 2015 made the KB responsible for the adapted reading services. In its coordinating role the National Library is in contact with the players in the field for research and development, investigation, study, cooperation, sharing knowledge etc. and, of course with the readers.

National Innovation Agenda
Building on the new library law VNG, IPO, OCW, KB and the Association of Public Libraries (VOB) agreed on a national Innovation Agenda, a guiding framework for innovation in the library network and in both the physical and digital domain. Innovation covers developing ideas as well as the dissemination and implementation of innovation. The four priorities for the period 2016-2018 are: Youth and Education; Participation and empowerment; Personal development, and Change and widening of the classical library.
Regarding participation: one of the initiatives is an agreement between public libraries (KB) and the Tax Office, in helping citizens to use digital forms. As the number of tax offices had to decrease, the network of public libraries was mobilised to help with the necessary digital skills. The programme includes staff training and runs 2016-2019. Another project on digital literacy is about E-citizenship with a pilot in three public libraries, supplying digital support to citizens, supported by KB, VOB and the Ministry.
Among the tasks of the KB is set up and maintenance of the National digital infrastructure. For the public libraries this refers to the joint website infrastructure. Website As A Service – the national and local websites form a unity. It further means the National Catalogue (collection of the Netherlands): The (local) library website offers every civilian access to the national catalogue, the complete joint physical and digital collections (joint range). Whereas outlets / libraries, offer an up-to-date collection geared to the target group, the catalogue offers a complete range. Up to 20% of all items borrowed have been ordered via the Internet. The digital library includes the centrally organized purchase of digital works: Funds from all municipalities have been made available for the purchase of content for the joint digital library. The KB procurement committee is made up by members of the Netherlands Public Library Association. The digital library will offer e-books, e-music audiobooks, databanks, articles and content for education, all accessible by the same catalogue. It features a single copy, multi user model for e-books that has been very successful, also due to the Holiday app by which both library patrons and non-patrons can down load and stream e-books, be it recent or older ones.
For further development, KB has started a dialogue with public libraries on the roadmap for the digital infrastructure.

Science for Everyone
KB has started a project on Science for Everyone, aiming at bringing scientific publications closer to the wider audience. Inspired by Dutch Open Access policy and the Open Science transition, KB will in cooperation with the public library network, university libraries and other scientific stakeholders work for easier access to scientific publications and guidance for the users. Different forms of teaching and learning can be connected to these sources, such as MOOCs. Universities like Delft provide MOOCs, within 3 years 1 million subscriptions have been counted. In average those students are 29 years of age. Solar energy was its first topic. Already reality: Public libraries participate in the Weekend of Science. Public Library Almere organises Science Cafés, Hengelo Library calls its academics readings: science for everyone, Utrecht Public Library has a children’s university; fablabs and science information are some of the assets public libraries already offer.

Netherlands Public Library Association: VOB
The Netherlands Public Library Association was established in 1908 and all public libraries are still members. It is an association which merged in 2010 with the Employers Association for Public
Libraries. It means that the focus of the association – which has no individual professionals as members - is on employment issues, leadership and entrepreneurship for the benefit of libraries as organisations. Professional issues - if not of importance for advocacy - are mainly left to the individual libraries, provincial service organisations and national organisations. VOB has an office of around 11 fte, located in The Hague. The Association has only income from membership fees. The main tasks are defending the interests of public libraries. A number of groups are active for strategy and advocacy, for realising the national library card and consortium tasks for information infrastructure and digital content, both in cooperation with the National Library. VOB is one of the partners in the certification programme of public libraries. Cooperation and entrepreneurship are promoted in Route 2020, developing best practices and knowledge sharing. VOB has an (employment) legal aid desk, and makes overall contracts with partners for VOBmembership discount regarding insurances, legal aid, management services etc. VOB acts on behalf of the public libraries regarding the negotiations on the public lending right tariffs (Stichting Leenrechtonderhandelingen).

Certification
In the Netherlands it is not librarians but the public library that is certified. The certification programme aims at guaranteeing the quality of public library services. Standards have been laid down by the Netherlands Public Library Association (VOB) and the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG). A separate foundation, Stichting Certificering Openbare Bibliotheeken (SCOB), located in the KB, has been set up to organise and coordinate the audits and certification process. The public libraries are committed to the certification scheme since 2006. It has developed from a control into an improvement instrument based on dialogue inside and outside the organisation, with a number of stakeholders. The third round 2014-2017 has the motto: Visible Value, and encourages libraries to visualise their story to the community.

Developing the profession: KNVI association
The association for information professionals, KNVI, with special units for e.g. medical, law and special libraries/specialists brings annually the wider field of information professionals together in its congress, focusing on development of the profession. International colleagues may look for an equivalent of Library and Information Science, yet there is no specific library education at an academic level leading to working in (public) libraries- though there are somewhat related book- and media studies in Amsterdam and Leiden. Even at higher education level no specific library education can be found, partly due to mergers of HE. Nevertheless, library education needs much attention, as in the coming years an estimated 40% of the existing staff will leave due to retirement. An important challenge for the sector is to find the necessary new staff, and also to reflect on what competences are required of new employees. A competence index has been published as a basis for (accredited) education approaches, on both graduate and undergraduate level, and for library technicians. At the same time, other types of professions, e.g. cultural and science programmers, didactically skilled presenters, advocates and communication staff are equally needed, as the (public) library often works in a multifunctional, multicultural setting and in multi-partnerships.

FOBID Netherlands Library Forum
Where all national policies come together: set up in 1974, FOBID serves as umbrella organisation of the national library organisations. It includes the associations for public libraries (VOB), for Information professionals, (KNVI), the cooperative bodies for university libraries (UKB) and Higher Education Libraries (SHB), and the National Library (KB). Its main activities are cooperation in the field of advocacy on balanced copyright and international representation, advocacy and exchange. The legal committee (FJC) has also links with the European (EBLIDA) and international (IFLA) counterparts, and takes active part in position statements, lobby and advocacy work at various levels. The RDA committee, chaired by the KB, focuses on applying international metadata standards and supports RDA implementation.

FOBID serves as International Office, a one stop shop for information and visits to the libraries in the Netherlands, maintains contacts with the Dutch Caribbean Libraries, and provides information on international library issues. Annually, about 20 group visits are supported with tailor-made programmes. Other organisations such as Dedicon (adapted reading (e.g. braille)production) and OCLC support some aspects of the FOBID activities. Its office is in the National Library, close to EBLIDA and IFLA. That is why it took the initiative to seek cooperation with the Hague municipality and established a network under the title The Hague - World Library Capital, as many internationally focused library organisations are based in the Hague. Very welcome!
REFERENCES


Broekhof, K., Increasing the impact of school-library cooperation, (Studies related to De Bibliothek op School).


Langendonk, A., I. Bon, The Art of Reading, a Dutch reading promotion programme


On the Netherlands library landscape: www.libraries.nl Bibliothek.nl CDR music library services CPNB FOBID Netherlands Library Forum Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library NARCIS scientific portal Netherlands Public Library Association Reading Foundation SURF SHB libraries in Universities of Applied Sciences Tel mee met Taal= Count on Skills UKB cooperation of Academic libraries