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# **BUSINESS CLIMATE SURVEY FOR SWEDISH COMPANIES IN THE NETHERLANDS 2023**

A REPORT FROM TEAM SWEDEN IN THE NETHERLANDS

## **KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS REPORT**

**Swedish Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands**  
Sanjdul Huda (Project Leader), Kerstin Gerlagh

**Business Sweden**

**Embassy of Sweden in the Hague**



# FOREWORD

Swedish companies have always recognised the importance of the Dutch market, and this understanding remains unchanged. The Netherlands is Sweden's seventh-largest export market (94 billion SEK) and the third-largest market for imports (206 billion SEK). With its geographically advantageous location, together with its high level of digitalisation, technological advancements, innovative practices, and commitment to sustainability, the Netherlands makes an appealing destination for Swedish enterprises. The Dutch market is a valuable testing ground for Swedish companies seeking expansion into other European countries or even globally. The business climate in the Netherlands shares notable similarities with that of Sweden. It fosters a positive environment for Swedish products, which consumers highly regard for their innovation, technology, quality, and sustainability.

To gain insights into the Dutch market, Team Sweden in the Netherlands conducted the third Business Climate Survey among Swedish companies operating in the country. The findings of this survey, presented in this report, were collected between March and April 2023. It is important to note that the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, as well as high inflation, may have influenced the responses obtained.

The Business Climate Survey was first conducted globally in 2020, and in 2021, Team Sweden extended it to 21 countries including the Netherlands. In 2023, the survey included 23 markets from all continents. Regularly conducting this survey enables us to monitor and analyse changes over time. The primary objective of the Business Climate Report is to enhance our understanding of Swedish companies' performance in the Netherlands while gaining a deeper appreciation of the opportunities and challenges presented by the Dutch market. Moreover, it serves as a valuable reference for bilateral trade dialogues between Sweden and the Netherlands.

Team Sweden is collectively very committed and pleased to continue supporting Swedish companies operating in the Dutch market. Although Sweden and the Netherlands already enjoy a strong trade relationship, these two countries remain committed to further strengthening it. We extend our sincere gratitude to the participating companies and respondents who have contributed to the survey. Their invaluable input has made it possible to present an accurate and insightful assessment of the Dutch market.



**H.E. Mr Johannes Oljelund**  
The Ambassador of Sweden



**Johan Uhlin**  
Chairman of the Swedish  
Chamber of Commerce



**Tomas Korseman**  
Trade & Investment  
Commissioner Netherlands

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Profitability

83%

of the respondents described their financial performance as profitable in 2022.



## Economic Outlook

74%

of respondents projected their turnover to increase in the coming 12 months compared to the previous 12 months.



## Investment

43%

of the respondents will increase their investments in the Netherlands in the coming 12 months.



## Top Success Factors

1. Sustainability
2. Sales competence
3. Staff development



## Business Climate in the Netherlands

70%

of the respondents perceived the Dutch business climate to be very good/good.



## Challenges in the Dutch Market

1. Specialists and key personnel
2. Licenses, permits and approvals
3. Labour market regulation



## Swedish Brand

89%

of the respondents consider that the Swedish Brand contributes partially/very much to their business.



## Acting Sustainably

87%

of the respondents believe that their customers partially/very much emphasise environmental aspects in their purchasing decision.



## Women in Management

13%

of the companies have a management team consisting of more than 50% women.

# ABOUT THE SURVEY

## A diverse range of Swedish companies provides a nuanced view of the Dutch business climate for a third consecutive year

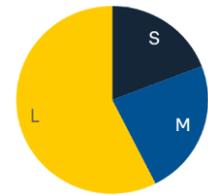
The Business Climate Survey is an initiative that seeks to identify the opportunities and challenges Swedish companies face when conducting business worldwide. This year marks the survey's third consecutive year in the Netherlands, a Team Sweden project based upon a unique partnership between Business Sweden and Swedish Chambers International, the association of Swedish Chambers abroad.

The survey aims to shed light on how Swedish companies, established in the Netherlands, experience the Dutch business climate. It provides essential insights into the country's economic outlook, specific market parameters, and success factors for Swedish companies to succeed in the Dutch market. Furthermore, the survey also inquires about the role of Swedish companies in the sustainability agenda and human rights. Team Sweden conducts the survey to support institutions, investors, and other relevant stakeholders in developing Swedish business activities in the Netherlands.

This year, the survey was distributed to a selective sample of 170 local executives representing Swedish companies, with 47 providing answers, leading to a 28 per cent response rate. The answers were collected between March 13th and April 4th, 2023. In comparison, last year's response rate was 42 per cent. However, the selected sample for this year's survey was increased by 50 per cent. Therefore, it is worth noting that the respondents represent a diverse range of Swedish companies in terms of size and industries, giving a nuanced view of the Dutch business climate. The size and industry compositions of the respondents do not reflect the overall Dutch business landscape. As such, any statistics presented in this report solely indicate our respondents' experience in the Netherlands.

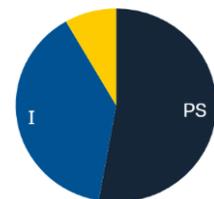
Around 57 per cent of the respondents represented large companies, 23 per cent medium-sized companies, and the remaining 19 per cent were small companies. More detail, the industrial sector represented 39 per cent of the respondents, the professional service sector accounted for 53 per cent, and the consumer sector eight per cent. The majority of the participants, comprising 57 per cent, were mature companies operating in the Netherlands for over twenty years. Approximately 26 per cent were experienced companies that entered the Dutch market between 2002 and 2016, while the remaining 17 per cent were newcomers with only a few years of experience.

### SIZE OF COMPANY



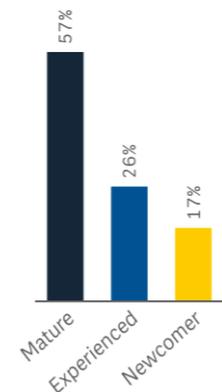
NOTE: Global employees. Large >1000. Medium 250-1000. Small 0-249

### MAIN INDUSTRY



NOTE: Industrial 39%. Professional services 53%. Consumer 8%.

### AGE OF COMPANIES



NOTE: Mature (>2000). Experienced (2001-2015). Newcomer (2016-).

# ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

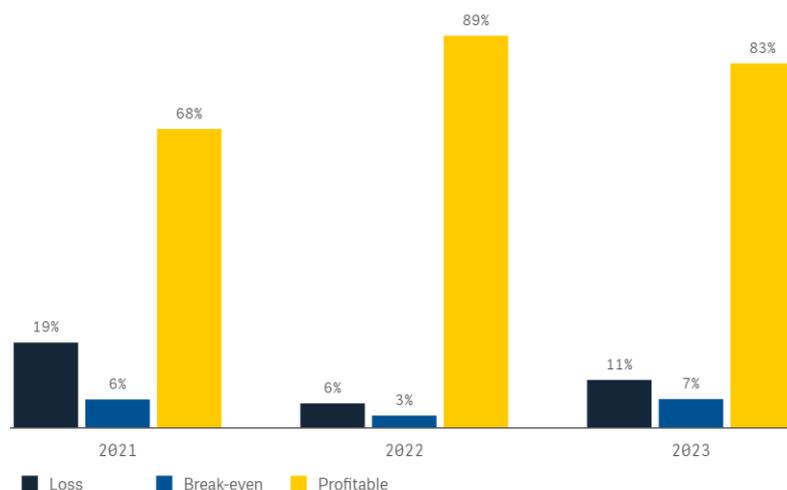
## Swedish companies continue to remain profitable

Over the years, Swedish companies in the Netherlands have continued to improve their financial performance. In 2021, 68 per cent of the participating companies reported a profit, a figure that climbed to 89 per cent by 2022. This substantial increase suggests a recovering economy that is rebounding from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's survey shows that 83 per cent of companies are considered profitable, with the majority being small and large companies. Medium-sized companies had an even distribution among loss, break-even, and profitability. The percentage of companies reporting a loss decreased from 19 per cent in 2021 to six per cent in 2022, further supporting an improving economy and enhanced financial performance for businesses. However, the data also shows a slight increase in the percentage of companies expecting a loss in 2023, reaching 11 per cent.

When considering the age of companies, it becomes evident that newcomers have encountered more challenges in their financial performance, with over half of them reporting a loss in the current year's report. Conversely, mature and experienced companies appear more profitable.

### HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR COMPANY'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN THE NETHERLANDS IN 2022?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 46. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

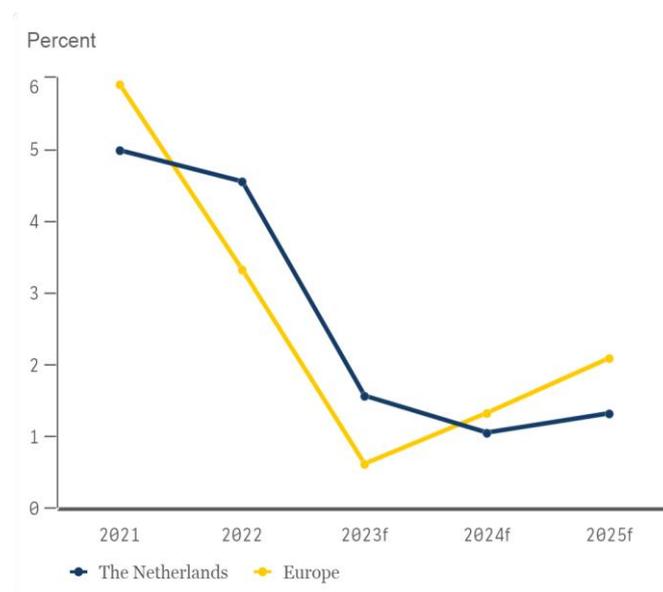
## The Dutch GDP Growth

The Dutch economy has shown resilience in the aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak, aligning with the overall trend in the European economy, as evidenced by GDP growth of 4.8 per cent 2021. However, recent data indicates that the GDP growth for the Netherlands and Europe has significantly decreased in 2022, with a projected growth rate of approximately 1.8 per cent for the Netherlands in 2023. The decline can be attributed to several potential factors, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting energy crisis, leading to heavy inflation and uncertainties in the European market (European Commission: Economy and Finance).

The impact of these external factors has been significant, affecting both producers and consumers. It is worth recognising that the Dutch economy is highly dependent on exports, and any economic instability in the global market can significantly impact the Netherlands' GDP growth (Netherlands Enterprise Agency).

Looking ahead, the GDP growth for Europe is expected to surpass that of the Netherlands before 2024 and continue to grow. According to the economic forecast for the Netherlands by the European Commission, high inflation rates have reduced households' purchasing power while also constraining financial conditions and labour shortages.

### PROJECTED GDP GROWTH IN THE NETHERLANDS



SOURCE: Oxford Economics, GDP, real, annual growth. Last update: 26 April 2023.

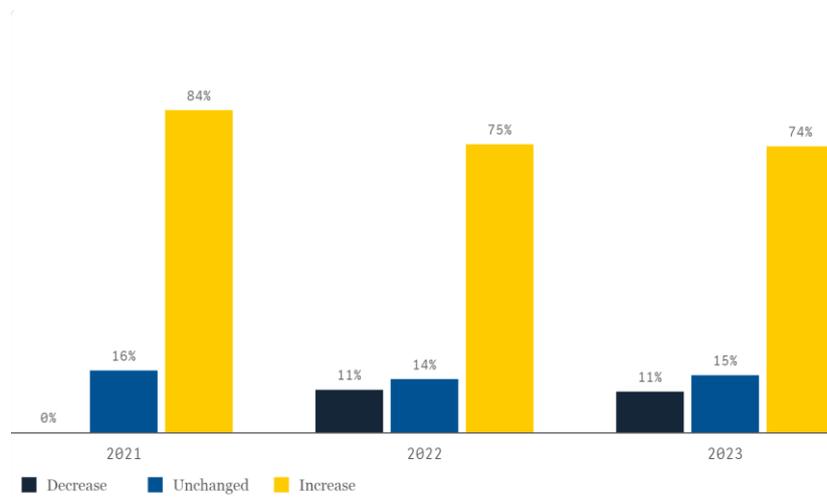
## An optimistic view of turnover for companies in the consumer sector

Swedish companies in the Netherlands tend to have an optimistic view of turnover when observing the results from the past years. 84 per cent of the respondents answered that they had a positive view in 2021, and 75 per cent in 2022. This year was no different, as 74 per cent of the respondents answered that they expect their turnover to increase in the upcoming 12 months.

More in-depth, small and medium-sized companies are more optimistic about an increase in their turnovers than larger companies, with 89 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively. In contrast, large companies are the most pessimistic, with 19 per cent expecting a decrease in 2023. Sector-wise, the professional service sector reported a lower percentage of companies expecting a decrease in turnover than the industrial sector, with five per cent and 29 per cent, respectively. The consumer sector emerged as the most favourable, with 100 per cent of the companies expressing their anticipation of an increase in their turnovers. Experienced companies and newcomers had a higher percentage of companies expecting an increase in turnover than mature companies. This suggests that younger and more agile companies are better positioned to adapt to changes in the dynamic market environment and seize emerging opportunities.

The data indicate some uncertainty in the market for the coming year, with 11 per cent of the companies expecting their turnover to decrease. Notably, a larger percentage of the responding companies expect an increase, pointing out that there are still opportunities for growth and development in the Dutch market.

### COMPARED TO THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING 12 MONTHS FOR YOUR INDUSTRY IN THE NETHERLANDS REGARDING TURNOVER?



NOTE: Decrease and increase represent aggregations of slight/significant development changes. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

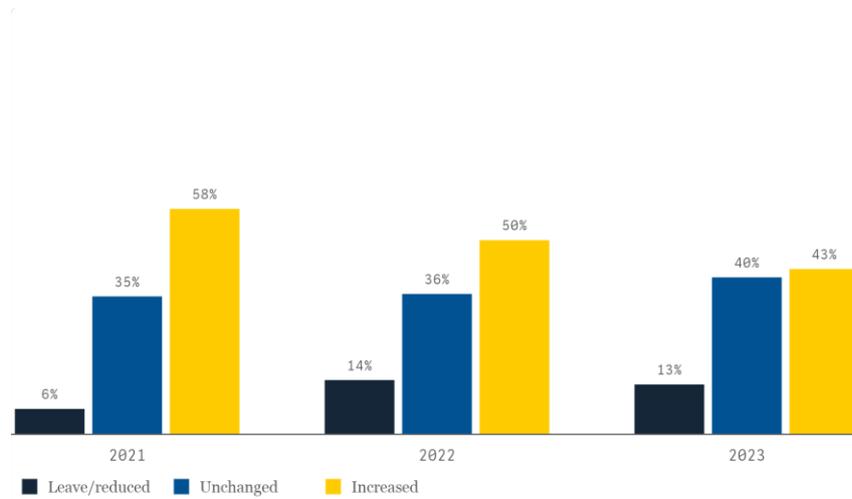
## More cautious investment plans

Over the past two years, there has been a slight shift in investment plans among companies in the Netherlands. In 2021, 58 per cent of the respondents reported an increase in their investment plan, but this figure has now declined to 43 per cent. The percentage of companies planning to maintain their investments at the current level has remained relatively stable, around 35 to 40 per cent. With a minor decrease from last year, 13 per cent of the respondents stated that they plan to leave the market or reduce their investments in the upcoming 12 months.

Small companies show the highest percentage of businesses planning to increase their investments. On the other hand, medium-sized companies have the highest percentage of planning to reduce their investments. Regarding investment plans for different sectors, companies in the consumer sector plan to increase their investments the most. In contrast, companies in the professional service sector have the highest percentage of reducing their investments. Newcomers show the highest percentage of companies planning to increase their investments.

The data suggests some uncertainty among companies regarding their investment plans for the coming year in the Netherlands. Although the percentage of companies planning to increase their investments has decreased, many companies still have such plans. Echoing the previous question, small companies and newcomers seem most optimistic about increasing their investments, while medium-sized companies and those in the professional service sector are the most cautious. One possible reason for companies to hold back investment decisions could be the ongoing economic uncertainty resulting in companies being more cautious about investing in new projects.

### WHAT ARE YOUR COMPANY'S INVESTMENT PLANS FOR THE COMING 12 MONTHS IN THE NETHERLANDS, COMPARED TO THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



NOTE: Reduced and increased represent aggregations of slight/significant development changes. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

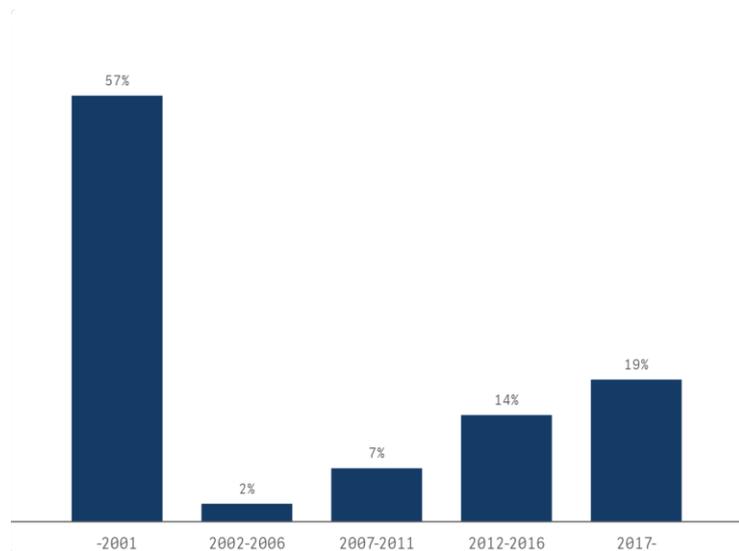
# THE MARKET

## The establishment of Swedish companies in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has been an attractive destination for businesses seeking growth and expansion opportunities for many years. It is ranked as the most competitive economy in Europe by WEF Competitiveness Index, and one of the best countries for doing business in terms of a strong economy and favourable tax climate, according to Forbes Business List. The country's strategic location provides access to over 170 million consumers within 500 km, making it an ideal destination for companies seeking to expand their market reach (NFIA). The Netherlands is also highly ranked in digital connectivity, making it easier for businesses to operate online or in person. This connectivity opens up doors for greater collaboration, making the Netherlands one of the top five countries for innovation (Global Innovation Index).

Most Swedish companies in the Netherlands have been active in the market since the last century, as 57 per cent of respondents answered that they established operations in 2001 or earlier. While the largest Swedish companies in the Netherlands are primarily prominent industrial actors, there has been a significant increase in medium-sized and small companies in the professional services sector. 19 per cent of respondents answered that they entered the Dutch market in 2017 and beyond.

### IN WHAT YEAR DID YOUR COMPANY ESTABLISH OPERATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

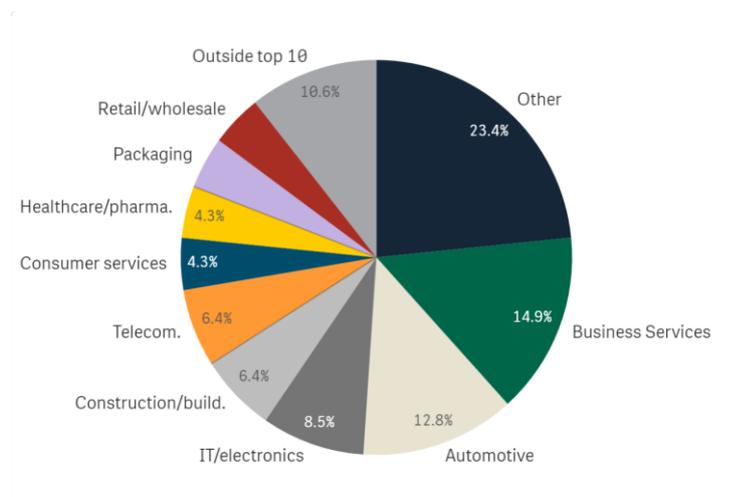
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

## Diverse industries and workforce composition

Swedish companies operating in the Netherlands are active in diverse industries. Sectors such as Business Services, Automotive, and IT/electronics continues to hold a substantial presence in the Dutch market. While the survey does not provide a complete overview of all Swedish companies, it contributes to our understanding of the Dutch economy.

Regarding the local number of full-time resources, small companies represented 77 per cent of participants, while medium-sized companies accounted for 15 per cent. Large companies represented nine per cent of the respondents.

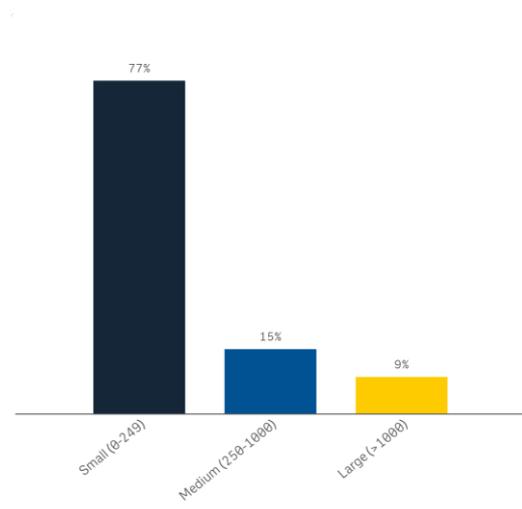
### WHAT IS YOUR COMPANY'S MAIN INDUSTRY IN THE NETHERLANDS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

### SWEDISH FIRMS' LOCAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN THE NETHERLANDS IN 2023



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

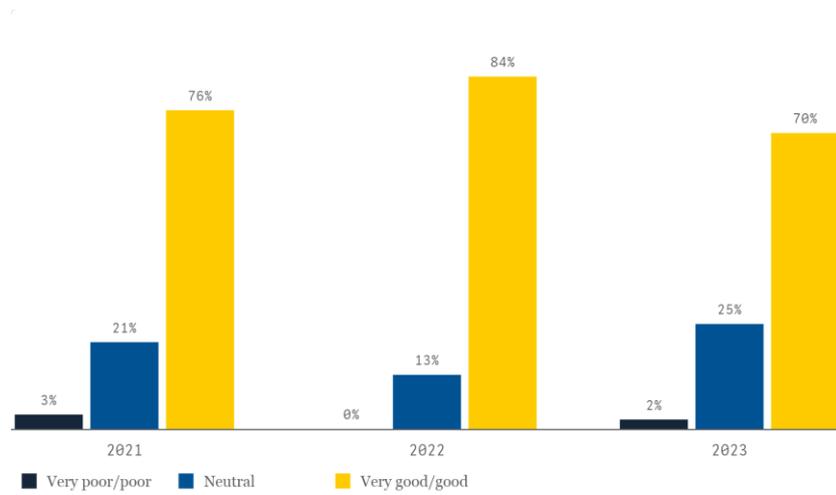
## A positive view of the Dutch business climate

Swedish companies have consistently held a positive perception of the Dutch business climate. When the survey was conducted for the first time in the Netherlands in 2021, 76 per cent of respondents rated it as very good/good, while only three per cent considered it poor. This positive sentiment further increased in 2022, with 84 per cent rating the business climate positively. However, in 2023, there was a slight decline in the percentage of respondents who rated the business climate as very good/good, with 70 per cent expressing positive views. Additionally, 25 per cent maintained neutral, and two per cent perceived the business climate as poor.

The professional service sector had the lowest percentage of respondents with a positive perception, while the industrial and consumer sectors had the highest. Newcomers to the market had a higher percentage of respondents with a poor perception, while mature and experienced companies reported none. These differences could be due to challenges faced by new companies in navigating regulations or establishing a customer base.

The unpredictability of the business climate in the Netherlands was mentioned by a respondent, referring to global events that have influenced potential customers' decisions. This observation underscores the business challenges in the present economic and political landscape. While Swedish companies generally hold a positive view of the business climate in the Dutch market, it is important to acknowledge the presence of uncertainties and risks that businesses must navigate to succeed in all countries. It is also important to note that the presented data only represents a minor perception of Swedish companies operating in the Netherlands.

### HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE CURRENT BUSINESS CLIMATE IN THE NETHERLANDS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 44. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

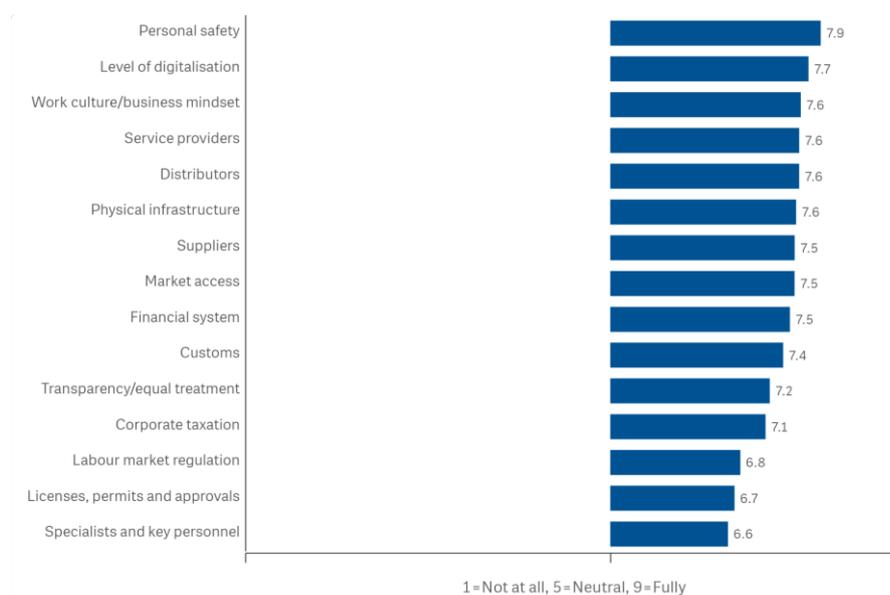
## Swedish companies are satisfied with the overall Dutch market condition

Several factors determine the business environment's conduciveness to success. The respondents in the survey were broadly positive about the Dutch market conditions, indicating that Swedish companies seem to be satisfied. On average, Personal safety, Level of digitalisation, and Work culture/business mindset were rated as the top conditions meeting their business needs in the Netherlands. Regarding the Level of digitalisation, both countries have continuously proven to be at the forefront of digital connectivity and integration of digital technologies for a greener ecosystem. The Netherlands is 3rd in the EU's Digital Economy and Social Index (DESI), while Sweden is 4th.

There are some persistent findings regarding market conditions where the Netherlands is not performing as successfully. Specialists and key personnel were identified as the least favourable market conditions. A respondent commented that companies are facing difficulties in balancing the demand for more technical personnel and providing housing. It implies that even if recruitment of skilled workers from abroad is considered, the challenging housing market makes it impractical or unfeasible. Labour market regulations were also at the lower end of the favourable market conditions. It was mentioned by one respondent that the tension in the labour market is a barrier to meeting their needs, as it may hinder some companies' ability to expand their workforce.

Nonetheless, among the 15 identified conditions in the survey, the respondents gave all options a score above 5 (neutral) out of 9, suggesting that they are satisfied with the market conditions.

### HOW WELL DO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMPANY IN THE NETHERLANDS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47.

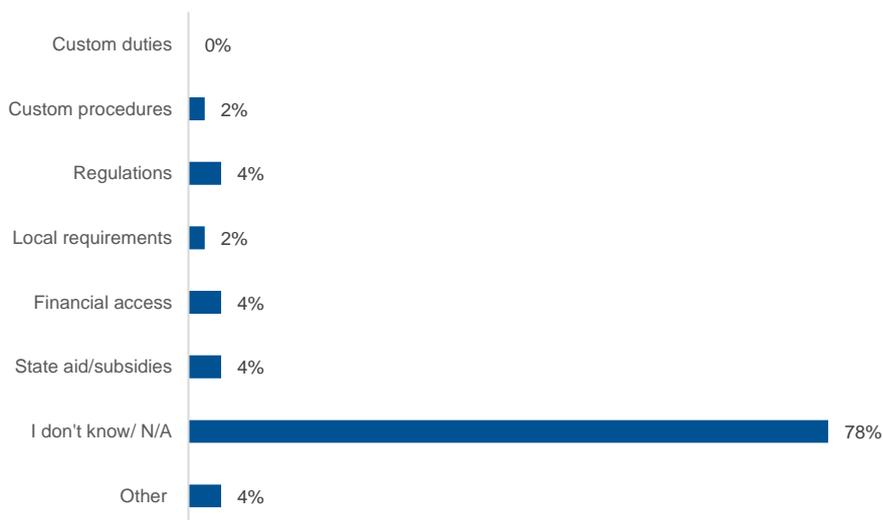
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

## Trade barriers for Swedish companies

Most of the respondents, 78 per cent, answered that they either do not know or did not encounter any trade barriers in the past year that had a noticeable negative impact on their operations. Only a small percentage encountered trade barriers related to State aid/subsidies, Financial access, and Regulations, with four per cent respectively. It is important to note that companies can encounter trade barriers in various ways, and these barriers can limit or restrict trade between countries and negatively impact a company's ability to operate. This year's survey results are very similar to last year's, with a slight decrease in Customs procedures, from nine per cent to two per cent.

The fact that most Swedish companies did not report encountering trade barriers in the past year may indicate a free trade environment between the two countries.

### HAS YOUR COMPANY IN THE PAST YEAR ENCOUNTERED TRADE BARRIERS IN THE NETHERLANDS WITH A NOTICEABLY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OPERATIONS, IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47.

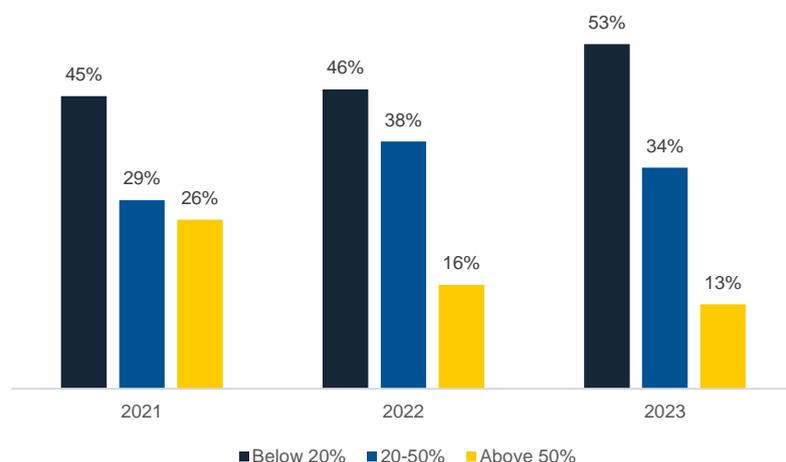
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

## Towards gender-equal management

Sweden has consistently proven its position as one of the leading countries in Europe in terms of gender equality in business and workplaces, as indicated by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). As anticipated, Sweden ranked first among EU member states, while the Netherlands ranked third in 2022. The report suggests that Swedish and Dutch companies are committed to advancing gender equality, ensuring equal pay and opportunities for women in managerial positions.

In 2021, the survey results indicated that Swedish companies in the Netherlands still had progress in achieving gender balance within their management teams. Specifically, 45 per cent of the respondents had less than 20 per cent female representation in their management team. 29 per cent had a female representation of 20 to 50 per cent, while 26 per cent had more than half of their management team composed of women. In 2023, data shows a decline in companies with more than half of their management team comprised of women, dropping to 13 per cent. In contrast, there has been an increase in the proportion of companies with less than 20 per cent representation of females in their management team, reaching 53 per cent. Companies representing female staff between 20 to 50 per cent have remained relatively stable over the years, with 34 per cent in 2023. It is important to note that the sample selection of Swedish companies for this year's survey was increased by 50 per cent, which may have affected the distribution of the results.

### PLEASE ESTIMATE THE SHARE OF FEMALE STAFF IN YOUR MANAGEMENT TEAM LOCALLY



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47.

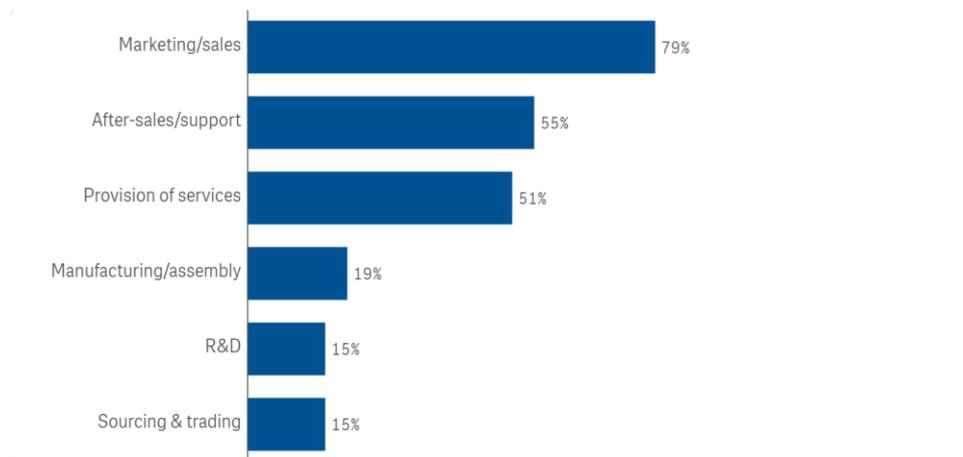
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

# HOW SWEDISH COMPANIES SUCCEED IN THE NETHERLANDS

## Marketing and sales activities recurrent at the top operations

For the third consecutive year, the survey results indicate that the primary operations of Swedish companies in the Dutch market revolve around Marketing and sales activities, with a significant majority of 79 per cent. Similarly, in previous years, after-sales support and the provision of services were prominent operations, with 55 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively. The category of Sourcing and trading showed the lowest percentage, accounting for only 15 per cent. These findings underscore the consistency in operational focus among Swedish companies operating in the Dutch market, even in the face of market uncertainty.

### OPERATIONS OF SWEDISH FIRMS IN THE MARKET



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

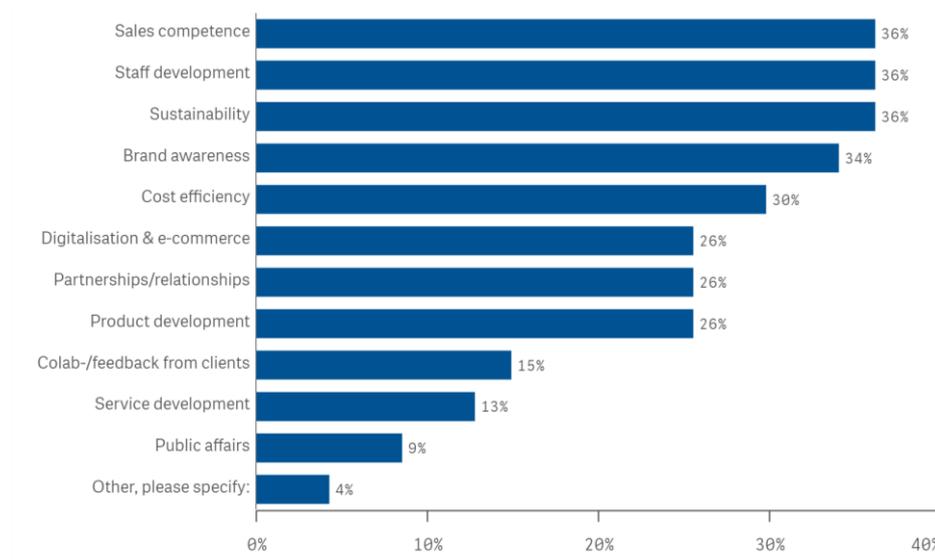
SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

## Sales competence and staff development are two of the most important driving forces for competitiveness, followed by sustainability

There are several factors contributing to strengthening the competitiveness of Swedish companies in the Dutch market. In this year's survey, Sales competence and Staff development shared first place, alongside Sustainability, each accounting for 36 per cent. Brand awareness, with 34 per cent, and Cost efficiency, with 30 per cent, were also considered important drivers of competitiveness. Public affairs, with only four per cent, ranked at the bottom of the list. It is worth noting that the sample size of Swedish companies included in this year's survey was expanded by 50 per cent, which might have influenced the distribution of outcomes.

For the second consecutive year, Sustainability continues to be one of the most important driving forces, accounting for 36 per cent. While companies still recognise sustainability as a significant theme, one respondent mentions that priorities may shift towards short-term cost considerations rather than long-term sustainability. Therefore, companies must carefully balance sustainability and cost considerations to maintain competitiveness. These comments emphasise the importance of conducting a thorough cost/benefit analysis and finding sustainable solutions that align with customer expectations and financial realities.

### TO DATE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT IN MAINTAINING COMPETITIVENESS IN THE NETHERLANDS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

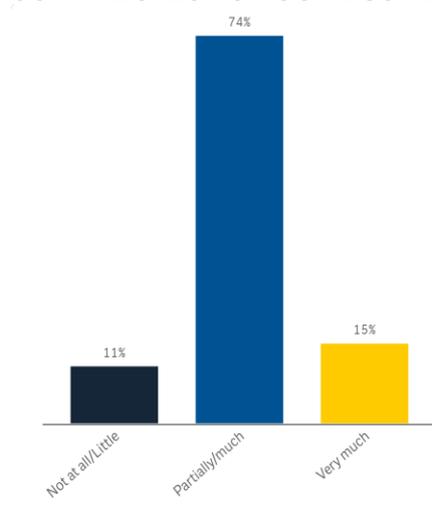
## The Swedish brand continues to excel in the Dutch market

The Swedish image in the Netherlands is viewed positively, with historical ties, trade relations, culture, and environmental contributions. The Dutch market has always been significant to Swedish companies and holds a favourable view of Sweden as both countries are strongly associated with high-quality welfare systems, innovation, technology, service management, logistics, and sustainability (Business Sweden).

The Swedish brand is perceived to contribute positively to the business of Swedish companies in the Dutch market. Throughout the years that the survey has been conducted in the Netherlands, between 2021 and 2023, over 80 per cent of the respondents believed that the Swedish brand contributes positively to their business. This year, 89 per cent responded that the brand contributes partially or very much.

Large companies benefit more from the Swedish brand than small or medium-sized companies, with 23 per cent reporting that the brand contributes very much to their business. The consumer sector reports the highest percentage of respondents, with 100 per cent, who believe that the Swedish brand contributes at least partially or very much, indicating that Swedish consumer products are highly regarded in the Netherlands. Newcomers to the Dutch market are more likely to believe that the Swedish brand contributes very much to their business, with 14 per cent, compared to mature and experienced companies, with 13 per cent and nine per cent, respectively. This could suggest that the Swedish brand is becoming more recognised and valued in the Dutch market, and new companies are leveraging this to their advantage

### TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD YOU ESTIMATE THAT THE “SWEDISH BRAND” CONTRIBUTES TO YOUR BUSINESS IN THE NETHERLANDS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 46. “Don’t know/Not applicable” responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

# ACTING SUSTAINABLY

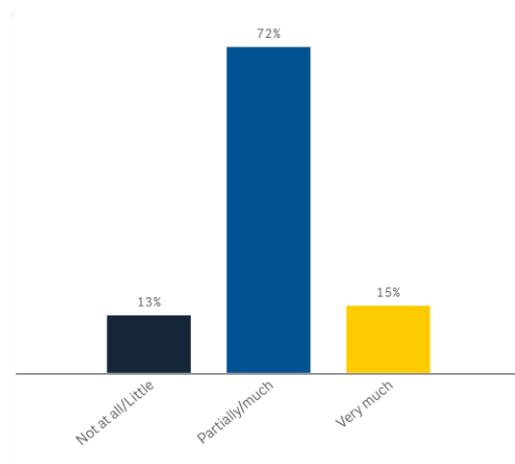
## Sustainability drives purchasing decisions

The new environmental policies and regulations enforced in the EU market impact customers' purchasing decisions, encouraging them to purchase more sustainable products (European Environment Agency). The survey confirms this trend, with 72 per cent of the responding companies reporting that their customers partially or much consider environmental aspects of a product or service when making a decision. This marks an increase compared to the previous year, where 68 per cent of customers considered environmental aspects.

When breaking down the data by company size, larger companies have more customers emphasising environmental aspects than smaller or medium-sized companies. With 21 per cent, the industrial sector had the highest percentage of customers who considered environmental aspects very much. In contrast, the professional service sector had none. Experienced companies had the lowest percentage who considered environmental aspects very much, with 18 per cent, compared to mature and newcomer companies.

Despite the positive trend toward sustainability, seen in the survey results, companies still face challenges in making fully sustainable decisions. Several respondents commented that there is still a long way to go in fully integrating sustainability into business models and consumer behaviour. There is a need for continued efforts to educate and incentivise customers towards sustainable choices and more substantial policy measures to promote sustainable business practices.

### TO WHAT EXTENT DO CUSTOMERS IN THE NETHERLANDS CONSIDER ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF A PRODUCT OR SERVICE IN THEIR PURCHASING DECISION?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

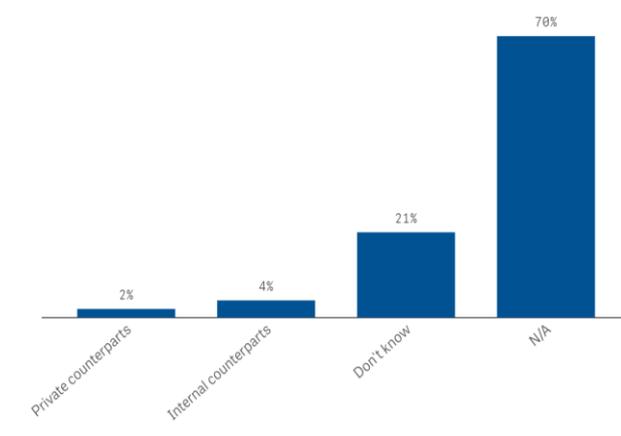
## Low exposure to corruption when conducting business in the Netherlands

Swedish companies in the Netherlands that participated in the survey appear to have relatively low exposure to corruption in their business activities. Sustainable business practices, including corporate governance, play a critical role. The prevailing business environment influences healthy corporate governance in a given country. Only two per cent of the respondents reported experiencing corruption from their private counterparts, while four per cent reported experiencing it from their internal counterparts. The majority of the respondents, accounting for 70 per cent, indicated that this data was unavailable, which may suggest that corruption is not a significant issue for them.

Small companies appear to be the least aware of potential corruption, with 44 per cent reporting Don't know. Large companies, on the other hand, responded that they experience corruption in the form of Private counterparts and Internal counterparts, four per cent respectively. Private counterparts refer to external factors outside the company involved in business transactions or dealings, such as suppliers, clients, or contractors. Internal counterparts refer to internal factors within the company itself. The industrial sector appears to be the most exposed to corruption, with 14 per cent reporting exposure from internal counterparts and seven per cent from private counterparts.

It is worth noting that these findings are based on self-reported data. Nevertheless, the low overall percentages of reported corruption suggest that Swedish companies in the Netherlands are relatively free from corruption compared to other countries.

### HAS YOUR COMPANY IN THE NETHERLANDS BEEN EXPOSED TO CORRUPTION SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ATTEMPTS OF BRIBERY OR FRAUD IN CONTACTS WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

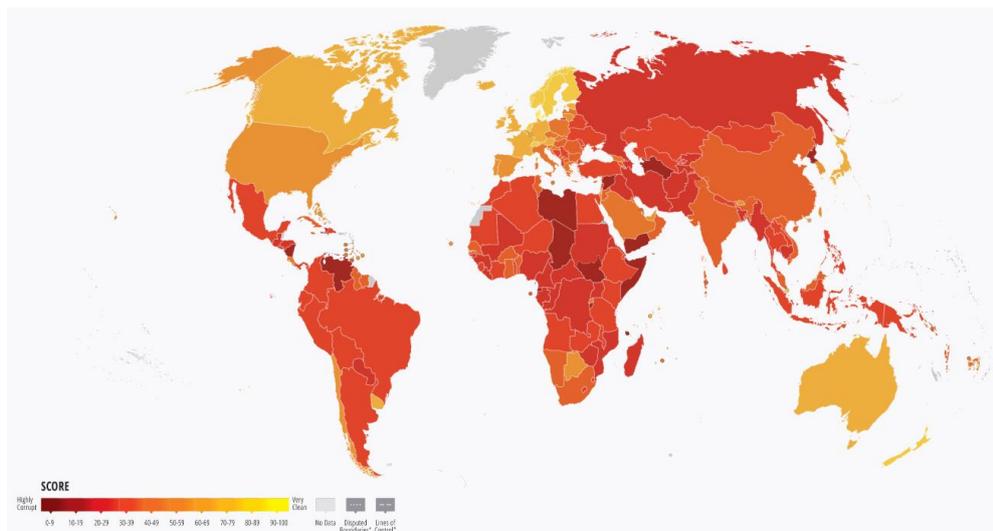


NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.

## CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX 2022

The relatively low incidence of reported corruption aligns with the country's strong performance in the global Corruption Perception Index 2022 (CPI), where the Netherlands ranks 8th out of 180 countries. Similarly, Sweden has consistently ranked high on the index and currently shares the 5th position with Singapore. Transparency International, launched in 1995, publishes the CPI annually to draw attention to corruption legislation on the international policy agenda and monitor corrupt corporate and public governance.



SOURCE: Transparency International.

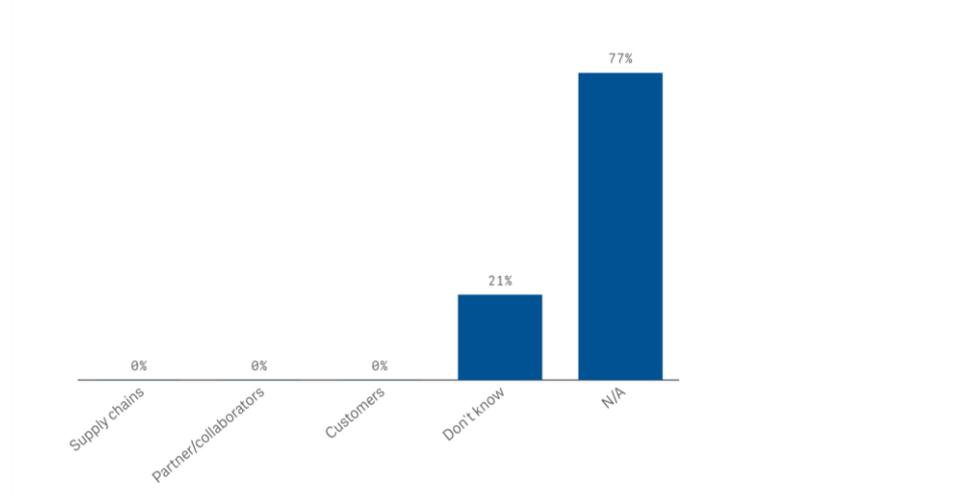
## Low risk of encountering violations against Human rights and/or labour rights

When reflecting on the previous question concerning corruption perception, it can be noted that the Netherlands maintains a good reputation for upholding human and labour rights. Given the positive business climate in the Netherlands, it was unsurprising that the Swedish companies who participated in the survey reported a low risk of encountering any such violations or abuses in their business activities. This perception was consistent across different sectors, as well as the size and age of the company.

None of the participating companies reported experiencing any violations or abuses in their supply chains, partnerships, or customer relations. However, it should be noted that 21 per cent of the respondents were uncertain about the risk of encountering such abuses.

The Netherlands, in line with other European nations, takes proactive measures to combat human rights abuses and promote the protection of freedom of expression. The country strictly prohibits discrimination based on various grounds, including political opinion, religion, belief, race, sex, and other protected characteristics. This holds true for businesses operating within the Netherlands, where discrimination in the workplace is also prohibited (Dutch National Action Plan).

### HAS YOUR COMPANY IN THE NETHERLANDS ENCOUNTERED ANY FORM OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND/OR LABOUR RIGHTS ABUSE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS?



NOTE: The number of respondents for this question was 47. "Don't know/Not applicable" responses are included but not shown in figure.

SOURCE: Business Climate Survey for Swedish Companies in the Netherlands 2023.



