

Stichting Internationaal Onderwijs
Foundation for International Education in The Netherlands



STARTING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN THE NETHERLANDS; A GUIDE

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1. Introduction

Several international schools are located throughout The Netherlands. These schools are primarily for children of expatriates (expats), also known as "internationals", who are staying in the Netherlands temporarily. The Netherlands seems to be an attractive location for many international organisations and companies. Employees are offered good facilities and proximity to international education is certainly considered one of the most important! The status of the current situation tells us that the number of expats is still on the increase and therefore municipalities and school boards regularly undertake research into the feasibility of establishing a new international education facility. We have issued this guide to support these explorations.

This guide is for international primary and secondary schools (for children aged from 4 to about 18 years old) and is based on information available on the 1st of August 2019. Despite the careful approach to constructing this guide, the accuracy and completeness of the content cannot be guaranteed and therefore no rights or claims can be derived from this.

Reader's guide

Chapter 2 describes some common terms. Chapter 3 discusses a fundamental choice that any international school initiative needs to make: to opt for government funding or not? Depending on that choice either Chapter 4 or Chapter 5 forms a relevant follow-up. Chapter 6 focuses on the substantive aspects of international education. Substantive choices can be consequential for the potential recognition process. Additionally there are consequences for the organisation of education, the recruitment of staff and other matters like that. Chapter 7 provides planning advice and a practical approach for the foundation of an international school. The final chapter provides an overview of some organisations that can be useful when establishing an international school.

Please note that all legal documents referred to in this guide are only available in Dutch.

2. Definition of terms

The terms below are arranged by relation, not alphabetically.

Internationalisation:

"Internationalisation" in Dutch education implies an increased awareness of the role and meaning of cross-border relationships in the curriculum of mainstream schools.

Bilingual education

known as *tto - tweetalig onderwijs* in the Netherlands: (secondary) education for students in mainstream Dutch education and according to the mainstream Dutch curriculum and preparation for Dutch diplomas. Partly taught in the working language English (or another modern foreign language).

Bilingual Middle Years Programme (MYP):

(secondary) education for pupils in mainstream Dutch education, partly taught in English, according to an international curriculum (the IB Middle Years Programme).

International education:

schools with an international curriculum, primarily for children of "expats".

IGO/IGBO/IGVO:

Internationaal Georiënteerd Onderwijs; internationally oriented (Primary or Secondary) education; the description of international departments at Dutch schools that are recognised and co-financed by regular grants from the Dutch government.

Dutch International (Primary/Secondary) Schools, DIPS/DISS:

English-language description of the group of schools with IGO/IGBO/IGVO approval. The Dutch funded international schools are united as 'The Dutch International Primary Schools' (DIPS - these are the schools with an IGBO department) and 'The Dutch International Secondary Schools' (DISS - these are the schools with an IGVO department). Both

organisations work closely together and form a platform for the exchange of experience and expertise, they organise training and they look after the interests of the affiliated schools in communication with OCW and other organisations and institutions. They also maintain a joint website: [Dutch International Schools: Home](#)

European schools:

schools (co-) maintained by the European Union, intended for children of European institution employees. In the Netherlands, there are European schools located in Bergen (N-H) and in The Hague.

B4 schools:

International, Foreign and Embassy schools recognised by, but not funded by the Dutch government.

Foreign schools:

schools supervised by the authorities of a foreign country as regards the programme of education given at that school, such as British Schools, Deutsche Schule, École Français.

International schools:

schools that are appropriately accredited as such by one of the international accreditation organisations as listed by the Dutch government.

Embassy schools:

schools that are exclusively accessible to the children of embassy staff and fall under the authority of the country concerned.

Expats:

expatriates temporarily in the Netherlands (of foreign or Dutch nationality), as well as Dutch nationals returning from a foreign posting or for whom a posting abroad is imminent.

School fees:

compulsory school fees to be paid by parents/guardians of students at International, European and Foreign schools.

IPC/IMYC:

International Primary Curriculum (international curriculum for primary); International Middle Years Curriculum (international curriculum for lower secondary).

IBO:

International Baccalaureate Organization.

IB PYP/MYP/CP/DP:

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme/Middle Years Programme/Career-related Programme/Diploma Programme; international curricula for (respectively) primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education.

IGCSE:

International General Certificate of Secondary Education; internationally recognised version of the British secondary education diploma.

HAVO

Higher general secondary education

VWO

Pre-university education

OCW:

Dutch Ministry of Education Culture and Science (*Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap*). In this guide we will refer to the Ministry of Education as OCW.

DUO:

Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs; 'Education Implementation Service', this institution implements the laws and regulations of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. In this guide we will refer to DUO

WOT:

Wet op het onderwijs toezicht; Education Supervision Act. The supervision is carried out by the Education Inspectorate.

WPO:

Wet op het Primair Onderwijs; Dutch Primary Education Act

WVO:

Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs; Dutch Secondary Education Act

Lpw:

Leerplichtwet 1969; Compulsory Education Act 1969. In this guide we will refer to the Act.

Nuffic:

Dutch organisation for internationalisation in Dutch education, from primary and secondary to vocational and higher education and research.

IND:

Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst; 'Immigration and Naturalisation Service', a department of the Ministry of Justice and Security which assesses all applications for residence in the Netherlands and all applications for Dutch nationality.

3. Government funding?

In the Netherlands international education is offered both at schools subsidised by the Dutch national government and at recognised international schools that are not funded by the national government as referred to in Article 1 (b4) and Article 1a of the Compulsory Education Act (the so-called b4 schools). In both cases, other preconditions (partially) apply. This is why a decision on funding will impact the further development of the initiative to start a new international school facility.

Of course, government funding generates income and might, therefore, seem attractive. What reasons then may lead to the foundation of an international school facility that is not funded by the government?

It is conceivable that recognition and funding by the Dutch national government are not possible, for example, due to inability to demonstrate an interest and demand for the school or because another school which is approved and funded by the Dutch national government has already been established relatively nearby.

It is also conceivable that the school does not want to or cannot meet the conditions set by the Dutch government to receive funding (such as the obligatory connection to a mainstream Dutch school; these conditions are discussed in more detail below).

4. Legal frameworks for government-funded International schools

There are several primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands with international departments that are approved and funded as such by the Dutch government (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). These schools united to create the platform; "Dutch International Schools", which now involves 21 primary schools and 16 secondary schools.

Government policy concerning the recognition and funding of this type of school has gradually developed over time. This type of education is referred to as Internationally Oriented (Primary or Secondary) Education (IGO/IGBO/IGVO). The recognition and funding for IGBO are laid down in the amended act WPO "Verankering afdelingen voor IGBO", [Stb.2012, 216](#) (in Dutch only) and for IGVO in the "Beleidsregel IGVO 2010" [Staatscourant 2010, 9401](#) (in Dutch only).

First some generally applicable principles are discussed below. Followed by rules that apply to IGBO and IGVO. Subsequently, the regulations that apply to both IGBO and IGVO are discussed.

OCW only recognises and funds IGO as a "department" associated with a mainstream (approved and government-funded) Dutch school. This means that IGBO or IGVO must always be connected to an established Dutch primary and/or secondary school. Concerning secondary education, this must be a school community that consists of at least higher general secondary education and pre-university education. The required connection with a mainstream school is partially related to the incentive to integrate and partially to the Ministry's procedural method of solely maintaining subsidy relationships with schools that are approved under the Primary and Secondary Education Act (WPO and WVO)

Although OCW assesses applications for an IGBO and an IGVO department separately (different departments within the Ministry), a common criterion also applies, namely that both an IGBO and an IGVO site should be present (or should be available within the foreseeable future) within a municipality (or within the immediate vicinity). An IGBO initiative must therefore always take into account the (future) availability of an IGVO provision and vice versa.

Permission to start an IGBO or IGVO department and (partial) funding for such a provision are granted by OCW. Giving permission is entirely based on the aforementioned regulations and falls outside the regular frameworks for school planning (such as the Regional Education Facilities Plan).

An established school is required to seek permission from OCW to start IGBO and IGVO (even besides the funding effects) because the educational provision of IGBO and IGVO deviates from the normal requirements of the Dutch Primary and Secondary Education Act. For example, the use of English as the working language is a departure from the Primary and Secondary Education Act.

4.1 IGBO regulations

Since the amendment of the Primary Education Act in connection with regulations of IGBO the following rules are applicable (Government Gazette 2012, 216):

- **Working language.** In principle, the provisions of the Primary Education Act apply in full. However, contrary to the Primary Education Act, IGBO education may be given in the English language, provided that at least 10% of teaching is in Dutch or is spent on Dutch language lessons (Article 9, paragraph 14, WPO).
- **Establishment and cancellation of IGBO department.** To obtain permission for the establishment of a new IGBO department, based on a prognosis model it must be shown that the norm of at least 80 pupils can be reached within 5 years. When assessing the application, the Ministry of Education also assesses whether the requested facility fits in an even national distribution. In practice, the board of The Dutch International Primary Schools is consulted for advice. A (substantiated) application must be submitted to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science before the 1st of October, in the school year prior to the set up of the department. A decision will be taken on this before the 1st of January. Cancellation of funding is appropriate if there are less than 30 pupils in the IGBO department three consecutive years on the date of October 1st. This does not apply during the first 5 school years after establishment if the number of students is less than 80.

The explanatory memorandum to this Royal Decree provides further information on this [Parliamentary document 32795, no. 3](#) (in Dutch only).

4.2 IGVO regulations

The following aspects are highlighted in the "Beleidsregel IGVO 2010" (IGVO Policy Rule), Stcrt. in 2010, 9401 and 2012, 14878:

- **Identification.** OCW legitimises the deviation from the Secondary Education Act by considering IGVO as a course as referred to in Article 73 of the Secondary Education Act. This means that the provisions of the Secondary Education Act only apply to the IGVO insofar as they are explicitly declared applicable in the IGVO Policy Rule.
- **Establishment and cancellation of an IGVO provision.** To obtain permission for the establishment of a new IGVO department, the interest of at least 120 students (spread over six years) must be demonstrated. When assessing the application, OCW also assesses whether the requested facility fits within an even national distribution. In practice, the board of The Dutch International Secondary Schools is consulted for advice. A (substantiated) application must be submitted to OCW before the 31st of October of any year. A decision will follow within four months of the application submission. Cancellation of funding is relevant if, in the period in which not all six grades are yet offered, one of the grades has fewer than 12 pupils for two consecutive years, or from the moment that all six school years are offered, and for two consecutive years the school is attended by fewer than 100 students. The relevant reference date is always the 1st of October.
- **Curriculum.** The IGVO Policy Rule distinguishes the following for IGVO:
 - a "Middle Years Programme" that covers the first four years of the Secondary Education and is aimed at obtaining the IB MYP certificate or the IGCSE exam;
 - the "Diploma Programme" that is equivalent to the 5th and 6th grade of the university preparatory education and is aimed at obtaining the IB-diploma.

IGVO also has compulsory annual teaching hours following the regulation for Dutch schools. The IGVO Policy Rule also stipulates that 10% of the lessons must be given in Dutch and the range of courses must also be in line with the curriculum requirements set by the IBO.

4.3 IGO regulations

4.3.1 Competence requirements

The same authorisation rules apply to teachers appointed in the IGO, as for teachers at mainstream Dutch schools. In practice, this means that teachers from abroad must have their diplomas and teaching qualifications approved by DUO.

4.3.2 Target group

Admission to the IGO is only for students who either:

- have foreign nationality or have a foreign nationality additional to the Dutch nationality and who have at least one parent/guardian employed in the Netherlands or the border region of the Netherlands for a certain period, or
- have the Dutch nationality, but have spent a long time abroad because at least one of the parents/guardians was working abroad for a certain period and as a result of which the pupil was educated there for more than two years according to the relevant education system, or
- have the Dutch nationality and a valid employer's statement or another type of statement confirming that their parents/guardians will be sent abroad within two years and for at least two years and that they, the student will move abroad too.

4.3.3 Funding and school fees

Approved IGO departments receive funding for pupils who belong to the target group; which is equal to the amount for a pupil in primary education or a pupil in higher general secondary education/university preparatory education, increased with a supplement per pupil. OCW recognises that this fund does not cover all costs and that it is customary for IGO students to be charged an additional "school fee". Therefore, the Explanatory Memorandum to the IGBO legislative amendment states that in case of refusal to pay the financial contribution, the board may decide to refuse the child to the IGBO department and refer them to mainstream education. The Policy Rule stipulates that the admission of a

student to the IGVO department depends on the satisfactory completion of this school fee set by the competent authority. This makes it clear that it is not a "voluntary parental contribution" in the sense of art. 40 paragraph 1 of the Primary Education Act and art. 27 paragraph 2 of the Secondary Education Act.

4.3.4 Finance

Permission to start an IGO department automatically gives the right to funding per student enrolled in this department. The funding consists of three components:

- Firstly, these students are included in the usual student-related funding that the school receives from OCW.
- Secondly, the Ministry gives a supplement to this regular funding. This supplement is about €500 per student per year.
- Thirdly, IGO students are included in the accommodation compensation that the municipality receives. The compensation differs per municipality and it is at the discretion of the municipality whether they decide to contribute more or less than the government allowance.

As mentioned, in practice government funding is insufficient. Actual costs are higher and are caused by, among other things:

- smaller classes (due to greater individual attention required as a result of large language, cultural and level differences);
- a wide range of subjects offered (including, for example, education in different mother tongue languages) and the principle that most subjects are taught at two levels in secondary education;
- recruitment of staff (teachers and management) from abroad (native speakers);
- membership of and accreditation by international educational organisations;
- development of expertise abroad (conferences and training for teachers and management).

Additionally, expats generally have greater expectations of a school and the school building than typical Dutch standards. This includes catering facilities, modern teaching resources, security, sports- and theatre facilities. Because of these circumstances, the costs per pupil

at international schools can easily amount to at least about € 10,000 per pupil in primary education to about € 17,000 per pupil in secondary education¹.

In reality, the difference between operating costs and government funding is covered by parents in the form of school fees and (often incidental) company contributions or other forms of sponsorship. The exact amount of the school fee can be found on the website of the various schools.

Summary

Amounts per student	Primary education	Secondary education
Cost per mainstream student	± € 6.900	± € 8.500
Cost per international student	± € 10.400 - € 14.400	± € 13.300 - € 17.500
Government subsidy per mainstream student	€ 6.900	€ 8.500
Extra government international funding	€ 500	€ 500
School fee per student	€ 3.500 - € 7.500	€ 4.800 - € 9.000

¹ The amounts mentioned in this paragraph are global indications, based on the situation in September 2019.

5. Legal frameworks for B4 schools

According to Article 1 (b4) of the Compulsory Education Act 1969, there may be other educational facilities in addition to the mainstream IGBO and IGVO schools, that can provide the required education but are not funded by the Dutch government. International, Foreign and Embassy schools are classed as so-called b4 schools.

These schools do not have to deal with government rules that are specifically aimed at the government-funded IGBO and IGVO schools. On the other hand, they must take account of the "Regulation for Designation of International and Foreign Schools" based on Article 1a Compulsory Education Act, Government Gazette 2011, 2764 and 2012, 14065. [Staatsblad \(in Dutch\) 2011, 2764](#).

In addition to the regulations for designating and cancelling the b4 school approval, this regulation also contains directives regarding the admission of pupils with Dutch nationality and their Dutch-language education.

In the context of this statutory order the following three substantive issues particularly require attention:

5.1 Compulsory education

All children aged between 5 and 16 years old and living in the Netherlands are subject to compulsory education under the Dutch Compulsory Education Act. Young adults aged 16 and 17 years old are subject to qualification if they do not yet have a basic qualification. A basic qualification is a diploma or a certificate of a minimum level. Which means that these young adults must, in principle, attend a school that meets the requirements of the Compulsory Education Act as long as they do not have a basic qualification.

A request for designation as a b4 school according to the aforementioned regulation must be submitted by the competent authority of the school, in writing to DUO in Dutch or in English. The application is accompanied by proof of supervision by a recognised international accreditation organisation (for a list of recognised organisations see Annex 1 of the above-mentioned regulation), or by the authorities of the mother country

supervising the school (this applies, for example, to the British Schools, Deutsche Schule, École Français). The school may determine the working language of the school, however, Dutch cannot be the official language at a designated b4 school.

Once the application is approved, the Minister informs the local Compulsory Education Officer of the schools' location. Supervision of compulsory education compliance is also exercised by the Compulsory Education Officer.

5.2 Quality of education and inspection supervision

The supervision of funded International education is the same as the supervision of mainstream Dutch education.

The supervision of the b4 schools is carried out by one of the designated international accreditation organisations, or by the authorities of the mother country. In principle, the Dutch government assumes that the quality of education is sufficiently guaranteed under this supervision.

With the exception of the Embassy schools, the International and Foreign schools that offer education in French, German or English may also accept pupils with the Dutch nationality. Education for pupils who (also) have the Dutch nationality includes providing education in Dutch that meets certain criteria (see Appendix 2 of the Designation Regulations for International and Foreign Schools).

The role of the Dutch inspectorate at the b4 schools is limited to the supervision of Dutch language lessons for these students.

The inspectorate will apply the following criteria for this supervision:

- the Dutch language curriculum must cover the Attainment targets;
- a due account must be taken of the language and educational background of the pupils;
- education in the Dutch language must be of sufficient quality; the results of Dutch-language education at the end of the school period must be at a level that corresponds to that of the Dutch final school exams.

5.3 Qualification and competence of teaching staff

Education may only be provided by individuals with educational qualifications recognised by the supervisory authority and they must be in possession of a "declaration of conduct" (VOG).

6. Education at international schools

International education refers to the content of the educational offer. International schools must have an educational programme on offer that:

- is not tied to a specific country or culture;
- allows room for differentiation in language and culture;
- is arranged in such a way that intake and transfers are possible at any time;
- educates to an exit-level that is internationally recognised.

There is no "prescribed" international curriculum. International schools are free to organise their educational programme. The following curricula are most common at international schools in the Netherlands:

In primary education:

- the International Primary Curriculum (IPC);
- the IBO Primary Years Programme (IB PYP);

In lower secondary education:

- the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC)
- the Middle Years Programme of the IBO (IB MYP);
- the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) of the Cambridge International Education Institute;

In upper secondary education:

- the IBO's IB Career-related Programme (the International Baccalaureat or IB-CP).
- the IBO's IB Diploma Programme (the International Baccalaureate or IB-DP).

International Primary Curriculum

Currently, the IPC is the most widely used standard in international schools in the Netherlands. This curriculum was developed in 2000 by English and Dutch education specialists. The programme includes education in all subjects except for language and

mathematics. International schools in the Netherlands that use the IPC often adopt a British teaching method for language and mathematics teaching. There is also a Dutch version of the IPC that is now being used by approximately 350 mainstream Dutch primary schools.

A school that wants to use the IPC must have a license and must purchase the necessary materials. This involves costs and delivery times, but there is no need to meet specific conditions beforehand. Of course, teachers must be familiar with or become familiar with working with the IPC. Training is required. The IPC offers different training options and it is also possible to gain accreditation to become an officially accredited IPC school.

Implementation and development of the IPC in the Netherlands are supported by Great Learning Nederland B.V., www.ipc-nederland.nl. For further information, see www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com.

IB Primary Years Programme

The PYP is currently being used in several international schools in the Netherlands. The PYP is part of the on-going curriculum of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO; [Primary Years Programme](#)). The IBO is a private organisation that is the world market leader in international diploma-oriented education comparable to the pre-university education (VWO) diploma. The IBO assumes an integrated approach to areas of knowledge and development and has organised its course of programmes accordingly. The IBO has a branch in the Netherlands: [IB Global Center The Hague](#).

A school that wants to work according to the IB PYP curriculum first needs the authorisation of the IBO. This authorisation is given based on a written assessment procedure. Once authorisation has been granted, the IBO visits the school and checks for compliance with the programme. In a worst case scenario, this can lead to losing the IB PYP license.

International Middle Years Curriculum

The IMYC is a teaching method for lower secondary education in line with the IPC and thus forms part of the on-going curriculum. The programme is for students from about 11 to

about 15 years of age. Just like the IPC, a cross-curricular and thematic approach is adopted in a recurring learning cycle. There is a clear coherence between all subjects based on a 'Big Idea' with the exception of mathematics.

A school that wants to use the IMYC must have an IMYC membership with Great Learning Nederland B.V. for at least 3 years. This includes the purchase of the units, an implementation process, coaching and the development of expertise.

For further information: www.imyc-nederland.nl

IB Middle Years Programme

Currently most international secondary schools in the Netherlands use the IB MYP. Like the PYP, the MYP is part of the IBO's on-going curriculum (IBO; [Middle Years Programme](#)). However, the different components of the IB curriculum can be offered and followed independently of each other.

The IB MYP offers a programme for students from about 11 to about 16 years old. At the end of this programme, the students receive a school certificate (MYP certificate). However, the MYP does not (yet) conclude with an externally validated exam or diploma. After completing the MYP, students generally transfer to the IB Diploma Programme or other types of internationally-oriented or bilingual secondary vocational education.

A school that wants to work according to the IB MYP curriculum must first receive authorisation from the IBO. This authorisation is given based on a written assessment procedure. Once authorisation has been given, IBO visits the school and checks for compliance with the programme. In a worst case scenario this can lead to losing the IB MYP license.

International General Certificate of Secondary Education

Some international schools for secondary education in the Netherlands use the IGCSE. The IGCSE is an international variation of British secondary education for pupils between the ages of about 11 to about 16, which concludes with the IGCSE diploma. The final exam can

be done at various levels that can differ per subject. On average the final level can be equated with the Dutch HAVO (Higher General Secondary Education).

If sufficient subjects have been passed at the highest level ("A-level"), the IGCSE can sometimes grant admission to university. Educational content and examination for the IGCSE are standardised worldwide. Central quality control is carried out by the International Examinations Office of the University of Cambridge (www.cie.org.uk).

IB Diploma Programme

The IBO's Diploma Programme (IB DP) is the worldwide standard for completing international secondary education (at pre-university level). The IB diploma is recognised by most universities in the world as valid proof of admission. All international schools for secondary education in the Netherlands offer eligible students the ability to obtain the IB DP in the last two years of secondary education (16-18/19 years). Like the PYP and MYP, the DP is part of the IBO's on-going curriculum; ([IBO: Diploma Programme](#)). However, the different elements of the IB curriculum can be offered and followed independently of each other. For example, a school can offer the IGCSE in the lower classes, but switch to IB DP in the upper classes. The IB DP exam (the so called International Baccalaureate) is standardised worldwide and includes central quality control by IBO.

IB Career-related Programme

An alternative to the IBO DP as completion of international secondary education is the International Baccalaureate Career-Related Programme (IB CP). This curriculum is more practical than the DP and prepares students for professional training such as that offered in higher professional education and at universities. The IB CP exam is standardised worldwide and central quality control is in place. This variation is only offered at a few schools in the Netherlands.

A school that wants to offer the IB DP or IB-CP must first obtain authorisation from the IBO. This authorisation can only be granted to existing schools based on the assessment carried out by the IBO. This means that a new school cannot immediately start the IB DP or CP programme, but will first have to offer an underpinning programme. Once authorisation

has been granted, the school is still regularly visited by the IBO and checked for compliance. In the worst case scenario it can mean the loss of the IB DP or CP license.

Quality control

In addition to quality control by the licensors for the various curricula, there are also other certifications for international schools. For example, international schools can obtain recognition by international organisations such as the Council of International Schools (CIS; www.cois.org). These types of accreditations assess the quality of the school in a broad sense. If the accreditation standards are sufficiently met, the school is allowed to carry the accreditation certificate.

Funded international schools in the Netherlands fall under the normal supervision of the Dutch Education Inspectorate. The Inspectorate visits and checks schools in the Netherlands for educational validation. Reports of quality inspections conducted by the Inspectorate are published on the website of the Inspectorate. (www.onderwijsinspectie.nl)

7. Approach and planning of an international school

The following steps are recommended when considering an initiative to start an international education facility:

7.1 Global impression of the potential

The initiative to start an international school will be based on several indicators that there is a demand in the region. The business community, the municipality and the province may have received signals. Schools in the region can also give indications. For example, based on the considerable number of (children of) internationals at certain schools or an expected increase in numbers. If an application is made to OCW then a feasibility study must prove the interest in an International school.

Some research agencies in the Netherlands specialise in conducting market research, which focuses on; the number of internationally active companies and institutions in the region, the number of (children of) expats who are already settled or are expected to relocate, the existing offer of international education and its capacity. The research agencies Decisio and Rebel were commissioned by OCW and the Ministry of Economic Affairs to develop a prognosis model for the influx of international education. The agencies developed a trend-based prognosis model, with which the influx into international education can be predicted per region. [Research development trend prognosis model inflow international education Report](#). (in Dutch only)

7.2 Opting for Dutch government funding or not?

The decision to go for either government funding or private funding has quite an effect on the further development of the initiative for an international school. Aspects for consideration are mentioned in this guide. It is advisable to make this assessment at an early stage, at least regarding the preference (this can always be revised at a later stage). The decision to opt for funding or not will impact the further process.

7.3 If opting for government-funding: selecting primary and secondary schools as "mother schools"

In case a government-funded International school is the preferred option, the goal is to attach an IGO department to an already existing mainstream school. This means that schools (and their administrations) that are willing to take on an IGO department must be found. Co-managing an IGO department at a mainstream school is not straightforward. It has a major impact on the school board, school management and the rest of the school community. For example, the school board will be financially involved in the project and will also assume administrative responsibility for the IGO.

If the international department is housed in the same building or on the same site, this has consequences for staff members as well as the parents and pupils of the mainstream school. They will be faced with an international community in their school, in the schoolyard, and so on.

The Ministry stipulates that there is provision for both international primary and secondary education so that a transition is guaranteed. In practice, this can be tackled in phases: first start international primary education and then introduce international secondary education. However, even if only the IGBO starts, it must be clear which higher education facility is willing to take over an IGVO department in the future.

In international education worldwide, an on-going curriculum with both primary and secondary education are the rule rather than the exception, and the Dutch distinction, almost always in physical terms, is not familiar to most expats. Following this international example, more and more integrated facilities for IGBO and IGVO are emerging in the Netherlands (for example in Eindhoven, Arnhem, Amsterdam and The Hague). This can become complicated as the administrative responsibility for primary education and secondary education in The Netherlands are separate.

7.4 Contacting the municipality and other relevant instances

If there is sufficient prospect for starting an international school, after having carried out the previous steps, it is important to contact the municipality about this, partly because of the crucial role that the municipality plays in terms of educational accommodation. It is also important to further publicise the initiative to other interested parties. For example, through introductions at the municipality (and possibly regional government), at larger international companies and institutions in the region, at local education organisations, and existing "neighbouring" international schools (funded and unpaid). If government-funded international education is pursued, contact with the board of the national organisations of Dutch International Primary/Secondary Schools (DIPS and DISS) is recommended at this stage www.dutchinternationalschools.nl

7.5 Choice of curriculum and authorisation procedure

The curriculum choice for the international school can have important consequences for planning (authorisation procedures), finances (costs of license and materials) and staff recruitment (experience with certain curricula). That is why it is recommended to make a curriculum choice and start the authorisation procedure in this phase of the development.

7.6 If funded: apply for permission from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

If the aim is to start a funded International school, the application must be sent to OCW. Both the IGBO and the IGVO have specific requirements and deadlines, as discussed earlier in this guide. An application for IGBO will be processed by the Primary Education Directorate of OCW and by the Secondary Education Directorate of the same Ministry for IGVO. Both requests are handled and assessed separately, but of course, there is mutual coordination within the Ministry.

7.7 If not funded by the government: apply to DUO

As stated earlier in this guide (chapter 5) a non-funded provision for international education needs to be designated as a "school" according to the terms of the Compulsory Education Act. Given this recognition, it is advisable to check which of the possible international accreditation organisations must provide proof of supervision (see Appendix 1 of the Regulation for Designation of International and Foreign Schools) and then to apply for designation as a b4 school. Submit the application to: DUO, Postbus 30205, 2500 GE The Hague.

7.8 Looking for accommodation options

Finding appropriate accommodation for the new international school will be an important point of attention. Usually, the school starts in provisional accommodation, to wait and see how the actual number of students will develop. As a rule, vacant classrooms in existing school buildings will be explored first. The municipality and the user of the school building in question will have to be consulted. Once accommodation has been found, the extent of further structural adjustments should be considered. Bear in mind that international schools often work with smaller groups, but on the other hand, they often need more spaces for a more differentiated range of subjects.

7.9 Development of business plan and fundraising

In this phase of the process, further elaboration and the finalising of the business plan are in place. By now, there will now be some insight into the attainability of government funding, there will be a prognosis of the number of pupils, the housing situation will be clearer and costs for teaching materials and staff can be budgeted. When elaborating the business plan, now is also the time to determine the school fees and how potential deficits can be compensated in other ways.

7.10 Staff recruitment

As a rule, the establishment of an International school requires at least one manager (director or department leader) and several teachers. Regarding this, attention is again drawn to the on-average smaller group size. When recruiting staff, look for candidates who are very good English speakers (native or near-native speaker), familiar with international education (preferably with the chosen curriculum) and have adequate qualifications and experience. In practice, it is difficult to find them, certainly within the Netherlands.

International recruitment will be necessary for one or more positions. This calls for specific demands on the recruitment and selection procedure and takes a lot of time. Specialist recruitment agencies can also be consulted for this. Important hurdles are competence recognition (DUO) and any residence and work permit requirements (IND).

7.11 Student recruitment

If there is enough certainty about the expected start of the International school (government recognition if required, available accommodation, financing 'completed', staff expected) then a PR campaign can kick-off publicity of the start of the school and recruitment of students. The 1st of August of any year is a good date to open any school as the beginning of the school year is a good time for pupils to transfer. Take note that international schools have to deal with the intake and departure of students during the school year far more so than mainstream schools

A period of approximately two years is recommended for completing the entire process as described here.

8. Information

Relevant information about international education (in the Netherlands) can be found on the websites of the following organisations:

- Stichting Internationaal Onderwijs; www.sio.nl
- The Dutch International Schools; www.dutchinternationalschools.nl
- DUO; www.DUO.nl
- IPC; www.ipc-nederland.nl and www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com
- IBO; www.ibo.org
- IGCSE; www.cie.org.uk
- ECIS; www.ecis.org
- Nuffic; www.nuffic.nl

Accountability

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