



DUTCH SUBSEA CABLE COALITION

FACTSHEET

The importance of subsea cables

- 98% of all global internet traffic is carried over subsea cables at some point.
- Demand for bandwidth in the Netherlands is expected to grow by approximately 35% per year over the next 10 years.

De huidige status van zeekabels

- The majority of subsea cables in the Netherlands date back to the 1990s and early 2000s.
- Many cables are reaching the end of their technical lifespan and are no longer economically viable.
- In the coming years, the number of active subsea cables is expected to decline from 11 to 4.

The Netherlands is losing its position as a digital mainport

- Subsea cables are crucial for economic activity: companies locate where digital infrastructure is strong
- Cable outages can lead to relocation of business activity and are difficult to reverse
- Countries such as Germany, Austria and Belgium are highly dependent on Dutch data infrastructure; 34% of Germany's international bandwidth demand passes through the Netherlands
- Other countries (such as France and Portugal) are investing heavily in new subsea cables; without investment, data traffic and economic activity may shift to these countries
- Unlike other infrastructure (such as roads, energy and water), digital infrastructure in the Netherlands is largely left to the market

Satellites, subsea cables and terrestrial cables

- Satellites can handle up to 100 Gbps, but many operate at only 20–40 Gbps.
- Subsea cables can carry up to 60 Tbps per fibre pair, and modern cables can contain up to nearly 96 fibre pairs.
- Terrestrial cables are more vulnerable than subsea cables, with breaks occurring more frequently due to excavation works. Subsea cables experience fewer faults: the number of breaks remains stable (~200 per year), despite network growth.

Costs and deployment

- A transatlantic subsea cable from the Netherlands to, for example, South America costs roughly the same as 15 km of dual carriageway in the Netherlands.
- The deployment of a new subsea cable takes at least 2 to 5 years.
- Installing new subsea cables in the North Sea is complex. The North Sea is one of the busiest seas in the world due to shipping, fisheries, oil and gas extraction, and offshore wind farms. In addition, it is relatively shallow, meaning cables must be buried in the sandy seabed to prevent damage.

The importance of open access

- Since 2017, major technology companies such as Google, Meta and Amazon have been heavily investing in their own private cable systems.
- Today, around 65% of data traffic runs through these hyperscaler-owned cables.
- Closed cable systems increase dependency on a small number of large companies and may pose risks to autonomy and the economy.
- Open-access cables provide transparency and accessibility, and can be compared to public infrastructure such as railways, highways or energy networks.

What is needed?

The coalition calls for two actions:

1. Joint investment in at least two new open-access intercontinental subsea cables
2. Accelerating permitting and policy processes to ensure the Netherlands remains attractive for cable and data centre investments



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