

Nuffic in 2011. Annual report in a nutshell.

“Calm in the midst of stormy waves” was once the motto of William of Orange. It could well be used for Nuffic in the year 2011. The economic crisis and the subsequent cutbacks by the Dutch government provided a background that can certainly be called stormy. Nuffic stood firm, however, and developed new policy in preparation for what was to come. “Linking knowledge worldwide” is and remains Nuffic’s core ambition. In 2011, Nuffic continued to work steadily on improving its service. Quality assurance by means of renewal was the main objective. What this means in concrete terms is explained below.

The multi-year activity plan 2008–2011 came to an end in 2011. A selection of the results achieved:

- The international Netherlands Fellowship Programmes, which Nuffic manages on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are now entirely digital. This makes the administration easier for all concerned – not just Nuffic, but also the higher education institutions in the Netherlands, the Dutch embassies in developing countries and the grant applicants themselves. As a result, the programmes have become more customer-friendly.
- The website will be completely renewed in 2012 so that visitors can find the information they are looking for much more quickly. The focus in 2011 was on preparing the way for these major changes, which will shortly be visible.
- The Netherlands International Education Monitor – also known as NIEM – went online. This new source of information, fuelled by the knowledge and expertise of Nuffic, is particularly convenient for policy officers in the field of higher education.
- Nuffic worked hard in 2011 on making its relations with the universities of applied sciences more effective. The key to this is account management. The intention is to ensure that the service provided by Nuffic matches up more closely with the needs of the institutions. A project was started in 2011, as part of which Nuffic directors and the relevant account manager visited board members of universities of applied sciences to exchange thoughts about what is desirable and possible in the wide field of internationalisation.
- By means of a reorganisation, the Nuffic information services have now been linked together in a logical manner. This makes the provision of information by Nuffic more efficient and fit-for-purpose. The first positive effects are noticeable in practice.
- New working areas were explored. To this end, a collaboration agenda was drawn up with the European Platform, which focuses on internationalisation in primary and secondary education. A result of this is the activities relating to the ‘gap year’. Young people can choose to spend a year acquiring international experience after obtaining their secondary school diploma, by taking jobs or traineeships abroad or just by travelling, and then enrolling for tertiary education a year later. What can Nuffic do to help young people use their gap year to improve their competencies? A second project is the ‘on-line internationalisation learning environment’, a digital collection that is being developed of various course modules via the internet, for everyone working in the field of education. Fruitful cooperation has also taken place with the Immigration and Naturalisation Service IND, the Ministry of Education’s executive agency DUO and study programme selection aid Studiekeuze 123. This covers several projects, classified by Nuffic as part of the *Rode Loper* programme. This *rode loper* or red carpet is laid down for foreign students. The intention is to minimise the number of problems they face when realising their educational dreams in the Netherlands. Naturally, the quality and thoroughness of the admission processes must be maintained. Intensive collaboration and mutual trust between all the organisations

involved is a fundamental requirement for this. This was more than satisfied in 2011, although not all *Rode-Loper* projects have yet been concluded.

Nuffic has divided its products and services into three working areas: Programme Management, Information Services and Expertise. The following results were achieved in 2011:

Programme Management

In 2011, the keyword where programme management was concerned was cutbacks. The Ministry of Education closed down the Huygens programme from which international grants were awarded for the most outstanding students. The Huygens programme was divided into two parts, one for Dutch students who wished to go abroad and one for foreign students with ambitions in the Netherlands. Naturally, the applications already received were processed, so that 94 more grants were awarded to Dutch students and 194 to candidates from abroad.

The State Secretary for Development Cooperation imposed a budget reduction of 30% on the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP), which award grants to students from developing countries. The programmes awarded 2150 grants.

The same applied to the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE), a programme for institutional collaboration. Both NICHE and NFP are managed on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NICHE is a recently introduced programme. At the end of 2011, 46 subsidy decisions had been issued. In the meantime, there were 130 projects active in fourteen developing countries, which were covered by the NPT, the programme that was replaced by NICHE. 49 projects have been completed. The completion of the other projects is planned for 2012 and 2013.

In the European Commission's Lifelong Learning programme, the following awards were made in the academic year 2011- 2012 in connection with the Erasmus programme: 6692 student grants, 3132 internship grants, 290 staff training grants and 845 teaching assignments.

Information Services

- Giving advice on the background to foreign titles, diplomas and degrees continued to be an important activity for Nuffic. In 2011, advisory services were provided 12,500 times. At the same time, a start was made on the development of a digital advisory environment. In the future, this will make it possible for institutions to make simple valuations themselves using a Nuffic database. The public can already make use of 56 country modules with background information about the structure of education and the recognition of the most common foreign diplomas and degrees in the Netherlands.
- Nuffic has Netherlands Education Support Offices in Brazil, Mexico, Russia, China, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea and Indonesia and desks in India and Taipei. They play a crucial role in the international positioning of higher education. This is not just a question of attracting students, but also of offering the services that the Dutch higher education system can provide, such as consultancy or institutional collaboration, for example in setting up sandwich programmes. Nuffic specialises in generic promotion, and the institutions can supplement this with their own promotional information. In 2011, this led to participation in student fairs in numerous countries. The Nesos also supported research universities and universities of applied sciences in their search for new partners. A primary aspect, however, is outstanding visibility on the internet. A central position is occupied by the site www.studyinholland.nl. This was completely renewed, making it much easier for visitors to find the information they are looking for about the many opportunities to study in the Netherlands.

The search engine Studyfinder, a coproduction by Nuffic and Studiekeuze 123, keeps searchers from getting lost and prevents disappointment.

- The counterpart of www.studyfinder.nl is wilweg.nl, which helps Dutch students with international ambitions. All the information has been updated.
- These channels are supplemented by a public information service that deals with dozens of phone calls and emails every day. Naturally, the 'frequently asked questions' in 2011 were also added to the regular channels of information.

Expertise

The Nuffic researchers published 16 studies and recommendations in 2011. Examples are "International recruitment: policies and developments in selected countries" and "Alignment of higher professional education with the needs of the local labour market: the case of Mozambique".

The annual edition of "*Mobiliteit in Beeld*" (Mapping Mobility) was again published in 2011, giving the most recent figures available about the international mobility of students. At the same time, the Internationalisation Monitor for Education in the Netherlands (IMON) was produced in collaboration with international education consultancy CINOP and the European Platform.

[For more information: click here for Nuffic key figures 2011 in a nutshell \(in Dutch\).](#)

[Read the full annual report here.](#)