



Cities on the frontline: local practices for active inclusion in Rotterdam

Social return



Cities for Active Inclusion

CITIES FOR ACTIVE INCLUSION

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rotterdam context

The EU's ten-year Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth aims to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion. This includes the objective of increasing the employment rate for people aged 20-64 years to 75%¹. However, due to the economic crisis, the risk of poverty and social exclusion has actually grown in 18 of the EU's member states since 2008. Not only has there been an increase in the number of individuals at risk of exclusion, the social and economic costs for society as a whole have increased.

The Netherlands and Rotterdam are no exception. 2012 was a difficult year, and the economic outlook for 2013 is uncertain. Only in 2015 is significant and sustainable economic growth expected.

Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands. With its strategic location on the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta, it is a major international commercial centre and one of the world's largest ports. The city itself has a population of some 616 000, and the greater Rotterdam area (Rotterdam-Rijnmond) has some 1.3 million inhabitants.

As in many countries, the Dutch economy is strongly influenced by international economic trends across Europe and worldwide; and Rotterdam's position as the largest European seaport and gateway to Europe, means that its economy is particularly linked to economic conditions elsewhere. In fact, in 2012, the throughput of goods in Rotterdam port saw a modest increase: by 1.7%. A total of 442 million tonnes of cargo was handled by the port in 2012, and this modest growth is expected to continue until 2020.

However, this growth in throughput does not necessarily mean that Rotterdam's employment levels are also increasing. In fact, from 2011 to 2012, total employment decreased by 1.1%; the number of vacancies fell by 19%; and unemployment grew, with the number of people claiming unemployment benefits increasing by 22.6%. In 2013, it is expected that unemployment will continue to rise, and job vacancies will continue to fall; but in 2014, a slight recovery in employment levels and vacancies is anticipated.

In terms of the types of employment available, the Netherlands, as elsewhere, has seen a change in the nature of employment over the past few decades: there are more skilled jobs and fewer unskilled jobs. Rotterdam has seen a shift in employment away from the traditional port-related sectors such as shipbuilding, construction, warehousing and transport. At the same time, there has been an increase in public sector jobs: in education; healthcare and wellbeing; and public management. Along with this shift in the nature of employment, Rotterdam has experienced shortages of trained staff in healthcare, ICT and engineering. A large proportion of unemployed people in Rotterdam are low-skilled, and with the decrease in low-skilled jobs, there are relatively few work opportunities for vulnerable low-skilled people. This makes them even more at risk of losing their connection with the labour market.

¹ Source: Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth: COM (2010) 2020: 3 March 2010; European Council Conclusions: 17 June 2010

1.2 Innovative financial instruments

One of the main challenges that public authorities now face is how to adapt and modernise their social policies, in order to improve social outcomes and ensure active inclusion, but with limited funds.

One way for public authorities to achieve improved social outcomes is to use innovative financial instruments such as the following:

- **social clauses in procurement:** contractors are required to fulfill certain socially-responsible requirements;
- **micro-financing:** small socially-responsible organisations are offered free or low-cost loans and other financial services;
- **Social Impact Bonds:** these attract private capital to fund socially-responsible projects².

1.3 Social clauses in procurement

As purchasers of goods and services, EU public sector authorities account for a major share of the EU market. For example, EU public authorities account for up to 17% of the EU's gross domestic product in construction, business services, and information technology. In the Netherlands alone, annual purchases of goods and services by the national public authorities amount to some €60 billion. EU public authorities can therefore use social clauses in procurement to harness their purchasing power, in order to choose suppliers of goods and services that also deliver valuable social outcomes, and contribute to sustainable and inclusive development and growth.

Rotterdam has been incorporating social clauses in its procurement policy since 2005, and this was formalised in its 2012 Social Return Action Plan, which introduced the Social Return scheme.

The term 'Social Return' describes the percentage of the total contract that is spent on achieving social outcomes. For Rotterdam, this is the percentage spent on employing people furthest from the labour market.

This is slightly different from Social Return on Investment (SRoI) which refers to a standardised method of measuring the actual value of the social outcomes (relative to the resources invested) that is not reflected in conventional financial accounts³.

In the Netherlands, Social Return is now being used in both national and municipal public procurement.

1.4 Active inclusion

The EU's active inclusion strategy was designed for use right across the EU.⁴ It offers a framework to help ensure that there are opportunities for those who are furthest from the labour market to fully participate in society: through inclusive labour markets, through an adequate minimum income, and through access to good quality social services. In the Netherlands, as in many other countries, having a job is regarded the best way to full participation in society and thus to social inclusion.

² Social Impact Bonds are also known as Pay for Success bonds or Social Benefit bonds: public authorities and not-for-profit organisations can use these time-limited bonds to help attract private investment capital from socially interested investors, and investors are given a proportion of the achieved cost savings.

³ For more information on SRoI: www.thesroinetwork.org and/or <http://bit.ly/15zNedT>.

⁴ EC recommendation on active inclusion of people excluded from labour market: 3 October 2008.

Rotterdam's Social Return scheme aims to promote inclusive labour markets, by opening up the labour market to those who are at a considerable distance to it. By using Social Return in its commissioning process, Rotterdam can influence the market and set a good example by requiring its contractors to deliver inclusive outcomes. This can help to highlight the importance of corporate social responsibility and inclusive labour markets to other organisations and to society in general.

1.5 Local legal context

Rotterdam's Social Return Action Plan provides the local legislation governing Rotterdam's social clauses in procurement. This was approved in June 2011 by Rotterdam city council's executive board (the mayor and vice-mayors) and was published in spring 2012. This social return action plan provides a framework for how to get the best value from public funds (i.e. tax-payers' money), while at the same time promoting sustainable and inclusive opportunities.

1.6 National and EU legal context

The Dutch government's Public Procurement Act (Aanbestedingswet) which came into effect on 1 April 2013, provides the national legal framework for Social Return clauses. Rotterdam's Social Return Action Plan is very much in line with this new legislation. To acquire any contract from the national government worth over €250,000, contractors have to include at least a 5% Social Return in their bid, and preferably more. The exact percentage is negotiated with the department that is commissioning the contract. Rotterdam's Social Return Action Plan also complies with EU-directive 2004/17/EC and EU-directive 2004/18/EC.

1.7 Public procurement marketplace

Rotterdam municipality buys some €1.3bn worth of public works, goods and services annually. For about two thirds of Rotterdam's procurement budget, which represents procurement worth €0.8 billion,⁵ Rotterdam gives potential suppliers incentives to generate employment opportunities for people who are furthest from the labour market.

In terms of EU procurement thresholds, public works contracts worth over €5m, national public goods and services contracts worth €130 000 or more, and municipal goods and services contracts worth €200 000 or more must be offered EU-wide. Municipal contracts worth €150 000 to €200 000 are classified as nationwide public procurements, and must be offered nationally.

As in municipalities across the EU, Rotterdam municipality uses different procurement procedures depending on the value of the contract. Contracts worth up to €15,000 are classified as simple private procurements and a tender process need not be used. Contracts worth €15 000 to €150 000 are classified as multiple private procurements, so the general principles for responsible public procurement apply, and at least three competitive bids must be sought.

⁵ The remaining third of Rotterdam's purchases consist of contracts worth less than €15,000 each.

2. CASE STUDY: SOCIAL RETURN SCHEME IN ROTTERDAM

Rotterdam has used social clauses in procurement since 2005. Rotterdam's Social Return Action Plan, published in spring 2012, formalises this use of social clauses in procurement to create a powerful instrument for achieving the city's employment goals. The city's Social Return scheme enables the city to use its purchasing power to specify and achieve social outcomes through the introduction of social clauses in all its procurement and purchase contracts worth over €15 000.

2.1.1 Social Return percentages and thresholds

Originally, Rotterdam's social clauses in procurement used a 5% regulation. This required contractors for large scale public works worth over €225 000, to spend 5% of the contract value to the employment of long-term unemployed people and/or trainees.

However, Rotterdam has extended the requirements and replaced the 5% clause with a 5% to 50% Social Return clause⁶. The aim is to maximise active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market. From 1 January 2013, under the Social Return scheme, every contract worth over €15 000 must allocate between 5% and 50% of the contract value on providing employment opportunities for disadvantaged people⁷.

2.1.2 Social Return scheme objectives

The Social Return scheme in Rotterdam is strongly labour-market focused and has the following key objectives:

- **to increase labour market participation:** for people who are furthest from the labour market
- **to increase employability:** among people who are furthest from the labour market: through skills training, traineeships and opportunities to learn on the job
- **to increase sustainable and social public procurement:** in the city of Rotterdam;
- **to reduce public spending:** to reduce social benefits and other costs by getting people furthest from the labour market into work: for 2012 and 2013, the anticipated savings are €10m to €25m, depending on the exact number of people who are provided with a job
- **to commit contractors to achieving their job targets:** so that the contracts succeed in actively including people who are furthest from the labour market, and help meet Rotterdam's employment policies through corporate responsibility
- **to retain highly educated people:** to encourage talented higher education students and graduates to remain in Rotterdam, by at least offering them temporary job opportunities and work placements.

In the Netherlands, local authorities receive national government funding to pay for monetary social benefits (i.e. minimum income schemes) and employment programmes. These employment programmes focus on integrating long-term unemployed people and other vulnerable people into the labour market. However, in the Netherlands as in many countries, the economic crisis has

⁶ Rotterdam introduced the 5% to 50% clause in 2011.

⁷ In addition to its Social Return scheme, Rotterdam also uses its procurement policies to achieve its goals on CO2-reduction, Fairtrade, and decent working conditions defined by the International Labour Organisation.

resulted in severe cuts in public spending. In particular, these include significant cuts in government funding for local municipal employment services. Consequently, cities still face the challenge of actively including people furthest away from the labour market, but with less funding. The Social Return scheme now offers local authorities throughout the Netherlands the opportunity of using their strong market position to promote active inclusion of the most vulnerable people who are furthest from the labour market.

2.1.3 Social Return target groups

Rotterdam's latest Social Return regulations (which came into effect on 1 January 2013) broadened the Social Return target groups of people. Organisations winning public contracts with a Social Return clause are now required to provide employment opportunities to people from any of the following Social Return target groups:

- people who have been unemployed long-term⁸
- unemployed people who are older or who have physical or mental disabilities⁹
- students in vocational education aged 12 years and above¹⁰.

This Social Return scheme is aimed at all organisations, both private and public, that are tendering for municipal contracts in Rotterdam, whether these are works contracts, or contracts for goods or services.

2.1.4 Social Return employment opportunities

The Social Return scheme can be implemented in different ways, to provide a range of different work-related opportunities to people furthest from the labour market. Contractors are encouraged to develop creative and innovative solutions, tailored to the possibilities in their particular sector and contract, but also reflecting Rotterdam's employment



⁸ Unemployment benefit is paid for three to 38 months, depending on work history and salary levels; unemployed people who cannot provide for themselves and have no claim to other social security benefits receive minimum income support,

⁹ Unemployed people with physical or mental disabilities who need adapted work conditions receive assistance under the Dutch Sheltered Employment Act; and various other acts ensure a minimum income for people in other situations who are unable to work.

¹⁰ The Social Return scheme can include job placements for pupils on preparatory, lower secondary and special-needs vocational education and training courses (i.e. voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs; middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, niveau 1 & 2; VSO and Praktijkonderwijs); students taking vocational courses benefit significantly from work experience as it increases their employability.

policies. Social Return employment opportunities that meet municipal requirements include:

- **sustainable long-term employment:** lasting longer than six months, for people in the Social Return target groups
- **temporary job placements and secondments:** for people in the Social Return target groups
- **purchase of services from Robedrijf:** Rotterdam's municipal social enterprise, Robedrijf, employs people in the Social Return target groups
- **in-work training -on-the-job opportunities:** for people in the Social Return target groups;
- **short-term (max 6 months) work -related initiatives such as:**
 - **preparatory programmes:** to enable people who are not yet ready for the labour market to take the next step
 - **traineeships:** as part of formal education or as a way of gaining work experience while retaining their benefit payments
 - **transfer of know-how and/or training:** for example, a company that has been awarded an auditing contract, could meet their Social Return obligations by helping voluntary organisations in Rotterdam to set up their bookkeeping systems
 - **social skills coaching:** developing skills that enhance people's employability, even if they are not directly related to a job.

In exceptional cases, when no other option is available, contractors tendering for municipal contracts in Rotterdam can choose not to include the Social Return employment opportunities (see the list above) in their tender proposals. Instead, in order to be eligible for a public contract, the contractor must commit to making a financial contribution to a social fund; the money is used to fund activities that achieve the goals set out in Rotterdam's employment policies.

2.1.5 Social Return coordination centre

The Social Return scheme is applied through Rotterdam's sustainable public procurement and purchasing policy, which covers purchases by all Rotterdam's municipal departments.

Publicising the use of Social Return clauses throughout all the municipal departments and among all potential contractors in all business sectors is important. Therefore, the city has established a new Social Return coordination centre, with a staff of eight people. Their main task is to ensure that Social Return is incorporated into the following seven stages of the citywide procurement and purchasing process:

- **Preparation of the purchase:** in the context of the works, products or services to be procured, explore the possible Social Return options, advise on the most appropriate Social Return approach for this contract; and set the Social Return goals
- **Specification:** choose the particular Social Return target groups and the Social Return initiatives to be specified in the contract
- **Selection:** for all the tenders received from potential contractors, assess and compare the expected Social Return values i.e. their likely impact in terms of actively including people in the target groups, as well as other outcomes such as cost-savings
- **Contracting:** signing the contract with the selected contractor; consulting the contractor; drawing up a concrete action plan for implementing the Social Return agreements
- **Ordering:** monitoring and reporting on how the contractor is putting in place the contract provisions for Social Return

- **Contract management:** regular monitoring and reporting on how the Social Return agreement is being met during the contract period; developing and communicating plans for improving the Social Return outcomes of the contract; sanctioning and rewarding the contractor; communication of the Social Return results
- **Follow-up:** reporting and communication of the results of any revised plans for improving the Social Return outcomes of the contract.

2.1.6 Innovation

In its impact on the public procurement and purchasing process, Rotterdam's Social Return scheme is an innovative approach. For the first time, Rotterdam's purchasing power is being used to promote corporate social responsibility among all potential contractors, as well as requiring winning contractors to provide new employment opportunities to people at a distance from the labour market.

2.1.7 Social Return responsibilities

The Social Return scheme was agreed by Rotterdam's executive board (consisting of the mayor and vice-mayors), in June 2011. The Social Return scheme is currently a project within Rotterdam's municipal department for work and income, and the vice-mayor for work, income and care is responsible for reporting on the progress of the Social Return scheme to the executive board.

2.2 Key successes

In 2011, taking into account the economic climate, Rotterdam agreed that its ideal objective for the two year period of 2012 and 2013 would be to create a minimum of 840 full time equivalent jobs for disadvantaged long-term unemployed people who are furthest from the labour market. If possible, the aim was to create 1,900 full time equivalent jobs. These objectives were divided into objectives for the different Social Return target groups of people, as shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Rotterdam's Social Return scheme: targets for 2012 and 2013

Target group for Social Return	Instrument	2012 (full time equivalents)		2013 (full time equivalents)		TOTALS (full time equivalents)	
		Target	Minimum realisation	Target	Minimum realisation	Target	Minimum realisation
People who have been unemployed long-term	Sustainable long-term job placement	500	175	700	245	1200	420
People with a disability	Training-on-the-job, placement, secondment	175	35	175	35	350	70
Students	Traineeship	175	175	175	175	350	350
TOTALS		850	385	1050	455	1,900	840

During 2012, the Social Return scheme was implemented in the municipal procurement contracts for:

- environmental maintenance and landscaping;
- cleaning/window cleaning of municipal buildings;
- catering;
- public transport;
- various public infrastructure works.

This resulted in the active inclusion of 451 people who were furthest from the labour market: they were given work experience, traineeships, secondments and/or subsidised job placements, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Rotterdam's Social return scheme: 2012 achievements

Target group for Social Return	Achieved in 2012	Type of placement
People who were long-term unemployed	188	Work experience, subsidised remuneration, and traineeships
People with a disability	225	Group secondment
Students	38	Traineeships
TOTAL	451	

2.2.1 Environmental maintenance and landscaping

Rotterdam's environmental maintenance and landscaping contract includes tree management, street cleansing, and maintaining parks and open spaces. This type of work can offer good employment opportunities for people in the Social Return target groups. Moreover, there is a lot of work to do: Rotterdam spends €14-€15 million per year on environmental maintenance. A Social Return clause was included in the contract, and during the tendering process, Rotterdam invited

employers with experience of employing people in the Social Return target groups to meet employers without such experience. This worked really well, as it helped to identify the companies that would be best able to successfully employ people from the Social Return target groups.

As a result of the Social Return clause in the new environmental maintenance and landscaping contract, 170 people have either been placed or seconded to the contract: this translates to 100 full time equivalent jobs, which amounts to a 20% Social Return for this contract. While working on the contract, 57 of these 170 people have already acquired new skills, and have been awarded the relevant diplomas or certificates, to improve their future employability. The current environmental maintenance contract lasts for 18 months, and can be renewed for another 18 months. Social Return can really help to achieve positive change for disadvantaged people who are given employment opportunities, as highlighted in the article reproduced in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: interview with Bert de Man, Social Return scheme worker

Bert de Man: like a fish in the water

For many people who are used to working in a Sheltered Workshop -¹¹ it's quite a big step to leave their sheltered employment and go and work for an external employer, but not for Bert de Man¹². Bert is now in the second year of his placement at GKB, a company that undertakes environmental maintenance and landscaping. At GKB, Bert says he feels like the proverbial fish in the water: he feels very happy there. For Bert, the pleasant atmosphere is the most important aspect: "I have a very good relationship with my colleagues. We work in quite autonomous teams, but are happy to give each other a hand, if needed. As a team, we know what work needs to be done and we can do it at our own pace. As long as it gets done properly and it is finished in time, it's OK. I like that".

Bert is very happy that he was offered the chance to work at GKB. Recently, he has achieved certification to work safely with machinery and with hazardous substances. "I really like working here. I can get all kinds of certificates and training that will help me to keep learning. Because you're never too old to learn, are you?" says Bert, with a broad smile.

Source: 'Stadswerker': Issue 3: April 2013

2.2.2 Manufacture of refuse containers

In early 2012, part of Rotterdam's municipal social enterprise organisation was privatised to create a privately-owned company called Ferro-Fix. Ferro-Fix manufactures quality metal products and employs some 125 workers who are in Rotterdam's Social Return target groups. Privatisation means that Ferro-Fix can not only continue to bid for contracts from Rotterdam municipality, it can now bid for public procurement contracts from other municipal authorities in other areas.

One of the most interesting contracts that Ferro-Fix has managed to win is the production and assembly of galvanized steel refuse containers for Groningen, in the north of the Netherlands. Ferro-Fix was already manufacturing the underground containers that citizens in Rotterdam use for refuse. In 2012, when Groningen municipality, started a tender process for underground refuse containers, this included a Social Return clause. Ferro-Fix put in a bid, and won the contract. The four-year contract, worth € 1.8 million, enables Ferro-Fix to employ 15 disadvantaged people in the Social Return target groups for the four-year contract period. All the parts needed for the

¹¹ A sheltered workshop is an organisation which employs people with disabilities in a separate supportive environment.

¹² For privacy reasons we have used a fictitious name.

containers are manufactured in Rotterdam, and are then transported to Groningen, to be assembled by people from Social Return target groups in Groningen. In total, this contract will deliver a 70% Social Return.

2.2.3 Cleaning

The contract to clean Rotterdam's municipal buildings requires the winning contractors to hire people from Social Return target groups. As well as their job placement, these employees are provided with free skills training to become qualified cleaning operatives, which helps to improve their skills and future employability. The municipal cleaning contract anticipates a 19% Social Return.

2.2.4 Catering

Rotterdam's municipal catering contract also has a Social Return clause. The actual percentage of Social Return is as yet unknown, but is expected to be comparable to the cleaning contract.

2.2.5 Building and construction

In 2012, as a result of the Social Return scheme, 54 people from the Social Return target groups were employed on a large municipal roadworks contract: 46 job seekers and eight trainees. Another major municipal Social Return contract involves the construction of two new office buildings: the new extension of Rotterdam's City Hall; and a three-tower landmark building called The Rotterdam, located in the new De Kop van Zuid neighbourhood on the city's south bank. A significant number of people from the Social Return target groups are working on these two construction sites, and a video has been produced showing how the Social Return scheme is being successfully implemented in this contract. (See section 2.5 below for the web link to this video).

2.2.6 Caring for elderly people

One of Rotterdam's most recent Social Return procurement contracts is in the field of care for elderly people. The contract became effective on 1 April 2013 and amounts to €50 million annually. The expected rate of Social Return is 14%: 350 people from the Social Return target groups will be employed to help deliver this contract.

2.2.7 Social Return coordination centre

Rotterdam's Social Return coordination centre works to continually share Social Return know-how across all Rotterdam's municipal departments. For example, the centre has recently created a Social Return database and reporting tool, known as SIRO, to help share information.¹³ The coordination centre makes sure that all new contracts include Social Return and continues to monitor existing contracts.

The coordination centre also cooperates with different partners in various sectors to implement Social Return. For example, the centre is working with Rotterdam's Erasmus Medical Centre, which is the university's hospital and one of the biggest employers in the region. The Erasmus Medical

¹³ All stakeholders, including contractors, can check this for information on current and forthcoming tenders. This has already proved useful and other Dutch public authorities may be interested in adopting it.

Centre has made a commitment to implement Social Return in all its procurement and purchases, thus offering various employment opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers at all levels.

The Social Return coordination centre is also working with: Woonbron housing corporation; logistics companies in Rotterdam's port; other municipalities in the greater Rotterdam area (Rotterdam-Rijnmond); and training centres that offer courses in building maintenance (e.g. painting, decorating, and roofing).

2.3 Challenges

In its efforts to include Social Return in all Rotterdam's procurement and purchasing contracts, the Social Return coordination centre faces two main challenges. The first main challenge is that there is a relatively low level of awareness of Social Return and its benefits and implications among potential contractors. Most companies do not have any experience with employing people from the Social Return target groups and they are therefore hesitant about hiring them. Although some potential contractors are convinced of the value of social corporate responsibility and of employing people from the Social Return target groups, others try to avoid fulfilling their Social Return contractual obligations or simply decide not to tender.

To help overcome this challenge, the Social Return coordination centre organises meetings for potential contractors throughout each tender process, so that employers who have successfully employed people from the Social return target groups can explain the issues and benefits to other potential employers.

The Social Return coordination centre still has a significant amount of work to do, in terms of attracting more potential contractors to tender for municipal contracts, and partly in terms of persuading contractors to develop innovative ideas to meet Social Return requirements. The Social Return requirements need to be turned into day-to-day reality, in order to help actively include people who are furthest from the labour market.

The second main challenge for Rotterdam's Social Return coordination centre lies within the municipal organisation itself. Other cities in the Netherlands that have implemented Social Return, such as Amsterdam, have integrated their Social Return team into their main procurement department. However, Rotterdam municipality has placed the Social Return team within the employment and income department rather than in the purchase and procurement department.

On the one hand, being part of the city's employment and income department means that it is easier for the team to find potential employers, as well as people in the Social Return target groups who would benefit from employment opportunities. But on the other hand, it means that it is difficult to work closely enough with the municipal buying team in the central purchase and procurement department. As a result, although Social Return clauses are incorporated into all the relevant contracts, opportunities to maximise the Social Return of each contract may be missed. The effectiveness of the Social Return scheme could perhaps be increased if the procurement director was also responsible for implementing Social Return.

2.4 Future plans and dissemination

2.4.1 Future plans

Until December 2013, Rotterdam's Social Return coordination centre has project status. After that, Rotterdam's executive board will decide how the Social Return coordination centre can be embedded into the municipal organisation. This will give the Social Return coordination centre a permanent status, in recognition of its important function and emphasising the city's intention to fully include Social Return in Rotterdam's public procurement process.

The Social Return coordination centre will continue to pursue the expansion of the Social return scheme through the inclusion of a social clause in every contract valued at over €15,000. Moreover, the Social Return coordination centre is currently developing a performance assessment tool which can be used to identify the extent to which contractors and other organisations have integrated Social Return into their business operations. This performance tool can also be used for certification purposes, and offers the opportunity for both the commissioning organisation and the contractor to show their commitment to Social Return.

The Dutch government's new Participation Act is another future development that could increase the use of Social Return clauses in the Netherlands as a whole. Starting on 1 January 2015, the new Participation Act will gradually introduce a quota scheme for larger employers, requiring 5% of total employment to be provided to people with disabilities. Under the Act, private and public enterprises will provide some 125,000 jobs to people with disabilities over the next 14 years. The number of jobs for people with disabilities will be regularly monitored, and there will be sanctions for organisations that do not achieve the specified quota.

In general, Social Return could offer a more flexible way for employers to meet their Participation Act obligations: they could use their procurement policies to help meet their quotas. Rotterdam will offer its relatively extensive expertise in Social Return to help the national government develop implementation plans for the new Participation Act. Rotterdam's executive board recognises the key role of employers in the success both of Social Return schemes and of job quota schemes. It is the employers that provide suitable new jobs for disadvantaged people, including people with disabilities who are the focus for the new Participation Act. This is why Rotterdam engages in continuous consultation with employers and employer interest groups, to exchange ideas, know-how and experience in terms of providing employment opportunities for people who are furthest from the labour market.

2.4.2 Dissemination

Part of the role of the Social Return coordination centre is to ensure that municipal departments and potential contractors are kept informed about the Social Return scheme and its results. The centre has established several public and internal municipal websites about Social Return, and has also achieved some useful media coverage.

Where relevant, the centre uses social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn; and also direct mail and emails. This helps to disseminate information with a large target audience of people who are involved in Social Return. In addition, the centre arranges informal gatherings with representatives of all the Social Return stakeholders, in order to maintain informal lines of communication.

Politically, Rotterdam's vice-mayor for work, income and care keeps the city council informed on Social Return progress and results. This helps to highlight the importance of the Social Return scheme in actively including people in Rotterdam who are furthest from the labour market.

2.5 Additional information

Basic information	Web link & Contact person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding source: the Social Return scheme is funded by the city of Rotterdam to 31 December 2013; thereafter, if the scheme continues as expected, funding from the municipality's regular resources. ▪ Level of funding: €600 000 for the duration of the project. ▪ Scheme location: The Social Return scheme is being implemented by the municipality, at city level. ▪ Start and end of the scheme: 1 April 2012 - 31 December 2013 (21 months). 	<p>Weblinks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ www.rotterdam.nl/inkoopenaanbesteding (in Dutch) ▪ www.wsprijnmond.nl (in Dutch) <p>Contacts: Kris Luijsterburg +31 10 498 23 47 k.luijsterburg@rotterdam.nl Jos Maaskant +31 10 498 26 08 a.maaskant@rotterdam.nl</p>



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