

How much money does the government spend on climate policy? The ministers concerned do not provide parliament with clear and comprehensive information. Furthermore, there is no clear definition of 'climate policy' and the amounts reportedly spent on climate measures are inconsistent.

The House of Representatives and the Senate were informed of these findings in an audit report published by the Netherlands Court of Audit on 25 January 2023. Under the government's Climate Memorandum, nearly €6.8 billion will be spent on climate-related measures this year. This amount can double if the House agrees to the establishment of a new climate fund of about €35 billion. Three ministers report on climate expenditure every year: the Minister of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy (EZK) does so in her budget, which the Minister of Finance summarises in the Budget Memorandum, and the Minister for Climate and Energy Policy (KE) issues an annual Climate Memorandum. The information in these documents, however, is sometimes inconsistent.

Records not transparent; House has incomplete picture of expenditure

The ministers' records and checks of climate expenditure are not transparent and the amounts in their documents differ from those in the line ministers' budgets. In some cases, the difference can be as much as €200 million per annum. In addition, there is no clear definition of climate policy or climate expenditure. The Minister for KE has a statutory duty to provide information on climate expenditure. The Climate Memorandum does not include certain expenditure incurred by funds and state-owned enterprises or expenditure on climate policy outside the Netherlands. Neither does it contain information on government schemes, including tax arrangements, that are at odds with the government's climate goals. Owing to the lack of clear definitions, it is uncertain whether ministries classify the measures they take as climate policy or not. The Minister for KE does not check this when preparing the Climate Memorandum.