

Drone Council Nederland

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The Drone Council Nederland (DCNL), established in the spring of 2022, is a public-private partnership bringing together representatives from the Dutch drone sector and relevant governmental authorities. The DCNL is a collaboration for and with the sector to give direction to the development of drone usage in the Netherlands by bringing together relevant interests and knowledge. From across the field various parties participate in the DCNL, namely governmental authorities, agencies and municipalities, drone manufacturers and operators, special interest groups, knowledge institutions and manned aviation.

Purpose & Objectives

The drone sector in the Netherlands is very young and dynamic, and currently organised only to a limited extent. In recent years, most interactions in the drone sector have been on an ad hoc basis. To gain more insight into developments in the drone sector, the various implicated parties require stronger coordination and more structural consultation. Structural cooperation is set up in the form of the Drone Council Netherlands (DCNL), which permits policy makers and drone sector parties to join forces.

The purpose of the DCNL is to make it possible for public and private parties to jointly create a national vision for the development and usage of drones in the Netherlands. We do this in coordination with the various interests of the drone sector parties, as well as the parties outside this sector, such as general aviation. To fulfil this objective, the DCNL focuses on the following goals:

- Create consensually agreed recommendations relative to drone-related development and formulate positions relative to the deployment of drones.
- Set up a network of public and private parties to improve and secure structural cooperation between them.
- Advise on policy and decision-making, laws and regulations, and licensing, supervision and enforcement.
- Promote knowledge sharing, both among drone parties and between drone parties and parties outside the drone sector.

The advice resulting from the Council can be directed to the parties collectively, to government parties such as legislator and regulator, but can also focus on knowledge institutions or (certain parts of) the industry.

Participants

Many different sectors and policy areas are involved in the development of drones and their operation. Their impact is widespread: developments in the drone sector touch on choices regarding mobility, safety, innovation

and privacy made at local, regional, national and European level. In short, a large number of parties are involved, from different perspectives and with diverse interests. The number of parties is expected to increase further in the coming years. On the other hand, we have the desire to achieve a decisive DCNL. This means that not every party can be involved to the same extent. The programme Board of the DCNL therefore consists of 10 participants and a chairman. The participants each represent a part of the industry or government. Incumbent participants and umbrella organisations all have the responsibility to organize the necessary mandate from their constituencies.

The following entities participate in the programme Board:

- Ministry of Infrastructure & Water Management
- DCRO – Association of Dutch Certified RPAS Operators
- KNVvL – Koninklijke Nederlandse Vereniging voor Luchtvaart (Royal Netherlands Association for Aviation)
- AOPA Netherlands – Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association Netherlands
- Rijkswaterstaat – State drone operators
- Dutch Drone Delta (national association to promote urban air mobility)
- Dutch Drone Platform (national network of test and innovation centres)
- Drone Netwerk Gemeenten (network of municipalities)
- Interprovinciale Contactgroep Luchtvaart (Inter-provincial Aviation Contact Group)
- DroneHub Noord Nederland (partnership to promote unmanned aviation in the northern provinces of the Netherlands).

Governance & Responsibilities

In April 2022, the DCNL organised a first meeting. During this meeting, the participating parties signed an agreement of cooperation, which describes the governance structure of DCNL and the responsibilities of the participants. The DCNL consists of a board and a number of working groups.

The Board is responsible for the steering and decision-making of the DCNL. The Board defines the work agenda and plays a strategic role in the development of the Dutch drone sector. The Board is chaired by an independent chairman who has knowledge of the drone sector. The chairman is responsible for making agreements between the cooperating parties and draws up an agenda of themes and issues.

A number of working groups have been established under the board. Currently there are two; 'Airspace' and 'Responsible Flying'. This number is expected to grow

in the coming years. The working groups form the heart of DCNL. Based on the goals and themes indicated in the DCNL's strategic plan 2022, the working groups start working on concrete issues. Each working group will formulate a plan with a problem definition, an approach and an intended result. For each working group, the parties having an interest in the issue to be dealt with are explored/identified and asked to join. Thus, parties that are not members of the DCNL Board can also participate in the working groups. The set-up of the working groups is monitored semi-annually by the Board and adjusted (temporarily) where necessary.

Working Groups

- The "Airspace" working group works with various sector parties and government bodies to examine the issues involved with integrating drones into airspace.
- The "Responsible Flying" working group works with various stakeholders to develop knowledge relative to the public acceptance of drones. These insights are taken into account by the drone sector in its further development.

Activities

Drones offer opportunities for a sustainable and innovative Netherlands. The practical applications are

manifold. Drones can help inspect infrastructure or nature; they can be used for package delivery; they can assist emergency services; and they drive sustainable aviation innovation. The Board is working on "the story of drones in the Netherlands" to better visualize the impact drones have on various sectors. A vision and strategy can help clarify how drone technology can contribute to (inter)national goals to which the Dutch government is committed.

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