



# BRIDGING THE GAP

## Enhancing Equitable Access & Innovation in Colorectal Cancer Care in Netherlands

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Netherlands** has one of the world's most comprehensive and efficient colorectal cancer (CRC) systems, with a population-wide organised screening programme, excellent follow-up adherence, and internationally recognised treatment outcomes. Nationwide standardisation, strong data infrastructure, and equitable access are defining features.

At **Level 5 maturity**, the focus is on fine-tuning personalised care pathways, accelerating adoption of precision oncology, maintaining cost sustainability, and ensuring that innovation benefits are shared equally across regions and demographics.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Sustaining excellence while personalising care

Since the launch of the national CRC screening programme in 2014, the Netherlands has achieved high participation rates and substantial downstaging of detected cancers.

Centralised quality monitoring through national registries and adherence to evidence-based guidelines have driven consistent outcomes across the country. Future priorities focus on enhancing risk stratification, integrating advanced diagnostics, expanding survivorship care, and maintaining financial sustainability in the face of growing innovation costs.





## COLORECTAL CANCER IN NETHERLANDS

### Current Landscape and Strategic Gaps

Pillar	Current Status	Strength	Policy Action
Early Detection & Diagnosis	Fully implemented nationwide FIT-based screening with high participation (~70%) and robust colonoscopy follow-up.	Strong central coordination, high compliance, and equity across regions.	Pilot personalised screening intervals based on risk modelling; strengthen outreach to non-participants.
Biomarker & Molecular Testing	Universal access to MSI/MMR, RAS/BRAF testing; widespread adoption of NGS panels for advanced CRC; integration into clinical pathways.	National molecular diagnostics infrastructure with reimbursement.	Advance whole-genome sequencing pilots; link molecular data to outcome registries for real-world evidence generation.
Treatment Access	High-quality, guideline-driven surgical, radiotherapy, and systemic therapies across all regions; robust MDT structures.	Strong hospital networks and national cancer centres.	Expand use of minimally invasive and robotic surgery; enhance access to clinical trials for rural patients.
Clinical Guidelines & Quality Standards	National, evidence-based guidelines updated regularly and monitored through the Dutch Cancer Registry; adherence is high.	Culture of audit and feedback drives uniform care quality.	Integrate patient-reported outcomes into national quality metrics.
Palliative & Survivorship Care	Comprehensive palliative care integrated early in treatment pathways; survivorship clinics expanding.	National policies supporting palliative care access.	Scale personalised survivorship programmes and strengthen psychological support for long-term survivors.





## CONCLUSION & Call to Action

The Netherlands' CRC care system is globally exemplary, with mature infrastructure and strong patient outcomes. The challenge now lies in refining risk-based prevention, embedding genomic and real-world data into decision-making, and sustaining affordability for emerging therapies. Strategic coordination between government, insurers, clinicians, and patient groups will ensure that advancements remain equitable and cost-effective.



**1 Adopt personalised screening** — move towards risk-based screening intervals and modalities.

**2 Integrate advanced genomics** — expand whole-genome sequencing pilots and link with clinical outcomes.

**3 Sustain affordability** — use health technology assessment and value-based reimbursement for high-cost drugs.

**4 Enhance survivorship** — expand psychological, social, and rehabilitation support in survivorship care.

**5 Maintain equity** — ensure rural and underserved populations have equal access to innovations and clinical trials.

## CONCLUSION

At **Level 5**, the Netherlands stands as a benchmark in CRC care. By focusing on personalisation, data integration, and sustainable innovation financing, the system can maintain its leading position while continuing to improve patient experience and long-term outcomes.