

Job description

Personal and confidential

Chief Information Officer Thales Nederland

2026

1. ABOUT THALES

2. ABOUT THE ROLE

3. IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

4. TEAM

A circular inset in the top left corner shows a close-up of a mechanical component, possibly a fan or a filter, with a grid-like pattern.

1. ABOUT THALES

2. ABOUT THE ROLE

3. IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

4. TEAM

A circular inset in the bottom left corner shows a close-up of a mechanical component, possibly a valve or a connector, with a complex, angular shape.

1. ABOUT THALES (1)

A Global Technology Leader in Defence and Security

Thales is a global technology company operating across defence, aerospace, space, cybersecurity and digital security, with a strong heritage in advanced engineering and mission-critical technology. The company serves governments, defence organisations and critical infrastructure providers worldwide. Within the international Thales Group, the Netherlands plays a strategically important role in the design, engineering and production of advanced defence and security systems, including radar, naval systems, communication solutions and integrated command-and-control technologies. The Dutch organisation operates primarily from Hengelo and Amsterdam, employs over 3000 people and generates close to EUR 900mio annual revenues.

Thales Netherlands is recognised for its deep technical expertise and operates in a highly regulated and security-sensitive environment, where cybersecurity, compliance and operational reliability are fundamental. Its technologies contribute directly to national and allied security and are increasingly interconnected with broader European and NATO defence ecosystems. IT therefore plays a critical enabling role, providing the secure, reliable and scalable digital foundation required for engineering, production and service delivery.

Thales Netherlands is currently undergoing a fundamental transformation. Historically, the organisation operated relatively decentralised, with local systems and solutions supporting specific business and project requirements. While this provided flexibility, it also resulted in a heterogeneous IT and application landscape. The organisation is now moving towards greater standardisation, industrialisation and harmonisation, with closer alignment to Group-wide IT standards, architectures and operating models.

This development reflects the broader direction of Thales Group towards greater global consistency and scalability. While local solutions remain necessary for specific business, regulatory or defence requirements, Thales Netherlands is increasingly adopting common governance frameworks, processes and technology platforms. The ambition is to create a more predictable, efficient and scalable IT environment that supports operational excellence and future growth, while retaining the engineering strength and flexibility that characterise the Dutch organisation.

1. ABOUT THALES (2)

Scaling and Professionalising the Organisation

Thales Netherlands operates in a market characterised by rapidly growing demand for defence and security solutions. This market dynamic is creating a new level of scale and complexity for the organisation. While Thales has traditionally been highly successful in the project-based development and delivery of sophisticated technological solutions, its continued growth requires increasingly scalable processes, standardised ways of working and a more industrial approach to operations and production. This development also requires further professionalisation of enabling functions, including IT.

The broader defence and security sector is being shaped by geopolitical tensions, increasing defence budgets, higher cybersecurity requirements and increasingly complex regulation. At the same time, organisations are becoming more dependent on digital technology and data. Thales must therefore be able to scale and innovate rapidly while continuing to meet stringent requirements regarding security, compliance, availability and reliability. In this environment, enterprise IT, security and operational excellence directly contribute to the organisation's ability to execute and grow.

Preparing Thales for its Next Phase

For Thales Netherlands, the current period represents an important inflection point. Under a largely renewed leadership team, the organisation is preparing for its next phase of growth. The organisation is preparing for a substantial ramp-up in capacity over the coming years, placing unprecedented demands on processes, systems, data and the scalability of the IT environment. Thales will need to professionalise its processes and establish a robust foundation for future initiatives. This requires a CIO who not only provides technological direction, but who can accelerate execution, improve performance and drive sustainable organisational change.

The strategic IT agenda therefore focuses on harmonising and simplifying the application landscape, improving the stability and performance of IT operations, further strengthening governance and security, and significantly improving the internal user experience. In parallel, Thales aims to further operationalise data-driven ways of working and prepare the organisation for future Group-wide technology programmes. A central challenge will be to combine greater standardisation and uniformity with the specific requirements of a complex defence and engineering environment, while positioning IT increasingly as a business facilitator and enabler of growth.

1. ABOUT THALES

2. ABOUT THE ROLE

3. IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

4. TEAM

2. ABOUT THE ROLE (1)

Location: Hengelo (hybrid)

Reports to: COO

Position: Dutch leadership team and international CIO network; functional line to Group IT.

Context

The CIO leads an IT organisation of approximately 180 employees across three organisational levels and 17 agile squads, with around 14 direct reports in the IT Leadership Team. The role combines substantial local leadership responsibility with an important position within Thales' international IT organisation.

Thales is moving from an environment in which local solutions and historically developed systems played an important role towards a model centred around Group standards, scalability, stronger governance and more uniform processes. At the same time, rapid business growth requires greater speed of execution, increased stability and predictability of operational IT services, and stronger alignment between IT and the business.

The previous CIO has transitioned into another position within the organisation, creating the opportunity to appoint an experienced enterprise CIO who can lead the IT organisation through its next phase of development. In parallel, Thales Netherlands needs to prepare for major future Group initiatives, including further systems harmonisation and a planned global ERP transformation towards 2030.



2. ABOUT THE ROLE (2)

The Assignment

The primary mandate of the CIO is to build and lead a future-proof IT organisation that combines security, stability and scalability with tangible business impact. The CIO leads the entire IS/IT organisation and translates the company's strategy into a clear technology and IT agenda. The emphasis is not on technological innovation as an objective in itself, but on creating an IT function that accelerates execution, enables better decision-making and supports the organisation in achieving its growth ambitions.

The CIO is accountable for IT strategy, the operating model, budgets, resource and workforce planning, governance and the overall performance of the IT organisation. Close collaboration with business leaders, functional leaders and international stakeholders is essential.

From an operational perspective, a key priority is to improve stability while driving standardisation and modernisation. The current environment includes a fragmented application landscape, with a significant proportion of IT capacity dedicated to maintaining existing systems. The CIO will lead the rationalisation, modernisation and harmonisation of applications, infrastructure and processes. This includes strengthening demand management, improving the prioritisation of initiatives and introducing greater transparency through KPIs and performance dashboards. Enterprise architecture, ERP and PLM-related transformations, security-by-design and readiness for future Group-wide implementations are important elements of the agenda.

The CIO operates within a complex international stakeholder environment. While reporting directly to the COO, the role is embedded in a global matrix involving Group IT, business units and global business lines. The CIO chairs the IT Crisis Management Team, participates in the broader crisis governance structure and is responsible for ensuring compliance with defence regulations and Thales security standards. Close cooperation with Business Improvement, HR, Procurement and the wider leadership team will be critical. Success requires the ability to create alignment, provide clear direction, deliver visible results and bring people along in a more standardised and data-driven way of working.

2. ABOUT THE ROLE (3)

Success in the Role

This section outlines what success looks like for the CIO in the short and longer term, focusing on stabilising, professionalising and transforming the IT organisation in line with Thales' strategy:

- A clear IT baseline and multi-year improvement roadmap are in place.
- IT stability, performance and predictability have improved.
- Strong prioritisation and demand management processes are established.
- Progress is made in application rationalisation and standardisation.
- Collaboration between business, IT and international stakeholders is strengthened.
- KPI, dashboard and reporting structures are professionalised.
- The IT organisation is ready for the future global ERP transformation.
- The application landscape is significantly simplified and harmonised.
- Internal user experience is significantly improved and IT is increasingly perceived as a business enabler.
- Security and compliance maturity is further strengthened.
- Data-driven working is embedded in decision-making.
- IT is recognised as a strategic partner for business growth.

Key Accountabilities

- Develop and execute the multi-year IT strategy
- Prioritize IT investments based on ROI, risk analysis, and business impact.
- Lead the IS/IT organisation, including budgets, resources and workforce planning
- Ensure security, compliance and cyber resilience
- Drive availability, performance and reliability of IT services
- Lead transformation, modernisation and harmonisation of applications, processes and platforms
- Strengthen business-IT alignment and demand management
- Contribute to international IT governance and Group programmes
- Develop leadership, talent and performance
- Collaborate with senior management to align IT initiatives with business needs.

Key Strategic Balances

The CIO must balance local needs with global standards, modernisation with stability, speed with rigour in a defence context, and scalability with control. In addition, security and compliance must be balanced with user experience, and central governance with local autonomy, while driving change in a long-tenured organisation.

1. ABOUT THALES

2. ABOUT THE ROLE

3. IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

4. TEAM

3. IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE (1)

The ideal candidate is an experienced enterprise IT leader with a proven ability to lead complex IT organisations through significant transformation and growth. Combining strategic perspective with strong execution, the CIO brings stability, structure and performance while driving modernisation and change.

The successful candidate combines urgency with patience and remains effective in a complex environment where change can take time. The CIO is resilient, pragmatic and highly execution-oriented, communicates in a clear and tangible way, and translates strategic ambitions into visible and measurable progress.

The candidate inspires confidence, creates focus and is able to challenge constructively without becoming frustrated by organisational complexity or resistance. They recognise and develop the considerable talent already present in the IT organisation, while addressing performance issues and strengthening accountability.

Enterprise IT Leadership

- The CIO brings substantial leadership experience and has successfully led sizeable IT organisations within complex, international environments.
- Minimum 15 years of experience in senior IT leadership roles, including at least 5 years as CIO or in a comparable end-responsibility position.
- Academic level of thinking and working, supported by a relevant Bachelor's or Master's degree in Information Technology, Computer Science, Engineering, Business Administration or a related discipline.
- Proven experience leading large IT organisations and sizeable, multidisciplinary teams.

- Strong track record in IT strategy, governance and operating model development.
- Experience operating within international matrix organisations and complex stakeholder environments.
- Comfortable navigating international governance and decision-making structures.

IT Transformation & Modernisation

The candidate has a strong track record of modernising complex IT landscapes while maintaining operational stability and accelerating execution.

- Proven experience leading large-scale IT transformation and modernisation programmes.
- Experience with major ERP transformations and familiarity with complex enterprise environments involving platforms such as Oracle, PTC Windchill, Primavera and Mendix is considered relevant.
- Strong understanding of enterprise architecture and hybrid hosting strategies.
- Experience in application rationalisation, modernisation and standardisation.
- Familiarity with Make-Team-Buy strategies and related sourcing decisions.
- Ability to translate a long-term technology agenda into tangible and measurable progress.

3. IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE (2)

Security, Compliance & Resilience

The CIO understands that security and resilience are integral to the IT operating model and has experience working in environments where continuity, compliance and risk management are critical.

- Experience in security-intensive and highly regulated environments.
- Strong understanding of cybersecurity, cyber resilience and enterprise risk management.
- Proven ability to embed security-by-design across systems, processes and technology decisions.
- Experience managing business continuity and IT crisis situations.
- Comfortable operating within defence-related or similarly stringent security and governance frameworks.

Business & Stakeholder Leadership

The successful candidate combines IT expertise with strong business judgement and is able to create alignment across a complex network of local and international stakeholders.

- Strong track record in business-IT alignment and positioning IT as a business enabler.
- Experience prioritising investments based on business impact, risk and strategic relevance.
- Excellent stakeholder management and communication skills.
- Proven ability to lead complex organisational change and bring people along in transformation.
- Effective in influencing senior stakeholders without relying on hierarchical authority.
- Strong international experience and ability to collaborate across functions, business units and geographies.

THALES



de vroedt & thierry
executive search & leadership consultancy

boer & croon

1. ABOUT THALES

2. ABOUT THE ROLE

3. IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

4. TEAM



4. TEAM DE VROEDT & THIERRY

Thales has appointed De Vroedt & Thierry Executive Search to support the recruitment and selection of its new Chief Information Officer (CIO).

The process starts with an introductory conversation with De Vroedt & Thierry, followed by an in-depth interview with Niekie Jansen, the responsible Partner leading the assignment. Candidates who progress will subsequently meet with key stakeholders within Thales.

Given the nature of Thales' activities, appointment is subject to the required background screening and Government VGB-A security clearance



Niekie Jansen

Partner Digital & Tech

+31 (0)20 6 627 627

info@devroedthenthierry.nl



Pieter Bas Jansen

Consultant

+31 (0)6 191 88 161

pieterbas@devroedthenthierry.nl



Boudewijn Meijs

Partner YESS

+31 (0)6 528 505 40

b.meijs@yessboercroon.nl