



The role of The Netherlands in international platforms and supranational bodies on international CSR matters

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1 Conclusions & Recommendations

This report evaluates the contribution of The Netherlands to international agreements and legislation in the field of international corporate social responsibility (ICSR), which is increasingly referred to as responsible business conduct. This evaluation is part of a wider evaluation of the Dutch policy on international corporate social responsibility as developed and implemented between 2012 and 2018.

The scope of this report is focused on the OECD MNE Guidelines, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the efforts of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Garment/Textile and Extractives sectors. This first chapter draws the key conclusions based on the learnings across the different subsections of the report. Each conclusion is accompanied by one or more recommendations. The first conclusion is not the most important one, yet a semantic one which influences the language used in the rest of the report.

1.1 The narrative and language around CSR and Responsible Business Conduct are in development.

The term ICSR is not used outside The Netherlands and therefore causes unnecessary confusion. The terms CSR and sustainability are losing ground, often associated with philanthropy and environmental issues respectively. The term Responsible Business Conduct is gaining ground, most likely driven by the consistent use of that term by the OECD Working Party. However, it is always spelled out fully, not abbreviated to RBC. The SER has also adopted this terminology, progressing from ICSR covenants to RBC agreements. This new terminology also avoids the use of the unknown term covenants.

- No longer use the Dutch terms ICSR and covenants, instead consistently refer to responsible business conduct and (multi-stakeholder) sector agreements. Spell out responsible business conduct;
- Use the terms CSR and responsible business conduct interchangeably, but always illustrate what is meant with some examples, to avoid confusion with philanthropy.

1 Conclusions & Recommendations

1.2 The Dutch government lacks an overall policy on Responsible Business Conduct.

Several policy documents and legislation have been released by different ministries (CSR Pays off, NAP B&HR, transposition of the EU Non-Financial Reporting Directive, etc), but they are not explicitly connected to each other or to important international developments such as the SDGs launched in 2015. As there is no national vision or theory of change, nor a process for interministerial alignment, there is a risk of fragmentation and inconsistency across ministries and even across departments within ministries. This is further worsened by frequent rotation of staff within the relevant directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- Develop an overall, government-wide vision on responsible business conduct linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, with a corresponding theory of change;
- Connect a broader set of sustainable development topics into this vision and a corresponding action plan, including environmental topics (such as climate change and circular economy) and social topics (such as living wage and labour conditions);
- Create a mechanism to regularly connect and align the efforts and people across departments and ministries. This should not become an administrative burden, but rather focus on consistency, dilemmas, trade-offs and the prevention of unintended consequences;
- Review the policy at least biannually to explicitly address the connection to and relevance of new important developments (such as the SDGs in 2015).

1.3 The Netherlands is widely acknowledged as a leader in the field of responsible business conduct.

Representatives from other countries, NGOs, labour unions and international organisations credit The Netherlands and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its active contribution to various international partnerships and initiatives. In addition to the active contributions to the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct, the focus on Human Rights and Sustainable Value Chains and the active role of The Netherlands to finalize the negotiations for the EU Conflict Mineral Regulation during its 2016 EU Presidency added to this. Other countries credited for their leadership in this field are France and to a lesser extent Germany.

- Continue to leverage the convening power of The Netherlands;
- Continue to monitor developments in other countries closely.

1.4 The external perception is that Dutch responsible business conduct policy is predominantly focused on voluntary measures, avoiding legislation as much as possible.

This may be caused by the strong focus on the voluntary sectoral responsible business conduct agreements and the efforts to scale this sectoral approach through partnership with other national sectoral initiatives. Several of the external stakeholders also commented that The Netherlands is attempting to scale up the sectoral agreement approach, yet without always being sensitive to contextual differences in what is possible and perhaps acting a bit prematurely without adequate proof of its effectiveness.

- Consistently highlight the intended smart mix of hard and soft law measures in responsible business conduct policies and position the sector agreements in that context, rather than solely focusing on the voluntary sector agreements;
- Implement and highlight policy measures to drive uptake of responsible business conduct by laggard companies, such as exclusion from subsidies, government tenders and economic diplomacy benefits like trade missions;
- Focus on promoting the sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach, rather than striving to replicate the Dutch sectoral agreements in other countries or at the EU level.

1.5 The responsible business conduct efforts of the Dutch government have led to increased awareness and engagement in companies, but it is too early to assess the impact on the actual conditions in global value chains.

Interviews in the business sector indicate that the activities initiated and funded by The Netherlands have led to increased awareness and engagement among Dutch companies and the wider MNE business community. They also seem to have contributed to the development and dissemination of global standards, guidelines and (sectoral) guidance.

- Continue to work closely with the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct, the EU and other drivers in this field;
- Stimulate that they assess the impacts of international agreements and legislation in global value chains.

1 Conclusions & Recommendations

1.6 The Netherlands' contributions to the work of the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct was highly visible and much appreciated.

Funding a full-time chair for this working party for five years is seen by many as an exceptional contribution. Also, all people interviewed credited the strategic insight, commitment and network of the chair of the working party as instrumental to its effectiveness as well as to developing sectoral and cross sector due diligence guidance documents and further development of the NCP system. His role at the OECD also benefited the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its work in this field.

- Stay closely connected to the Working Party on responsible business conduct at the OECD, for example by providing senior staff as support to the incoming chair;
- Continue to highlight the relevance of the OECD MNE Guidelines within the context of increased attention for the SDGs and the UNGPs.

quote

"In the field of responsible business conduct, the implementation of Dutch policy is split up across ministries and departments. At times, there is a lack of coherence even within a single ministry. Other countries are struggling with this as well."

Joseph Wilde, OECD Watch/SOMO

1.7 The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is well placed to drive convergence across international sectoral initiatives in the Garment/Textile and Extractives sectors.

The Ministry has deep, in-house expertise on both sectors and is involved in many initiatives in both of these sectors. The flip-side of involvement in so many initiatives could be fragmentation and lack of focus.

- For focus sectors, create an overall sector action plan with a sectoral theory of change to connect the efforts and drive focus and convergence.

1.8 Despite repeated calls by The Netherlands (in partnership with likeminded countries), the European Commission has not yet updated the EU CSR policy.

Within the EU there are many sub-plans related to responsible business conduct, but these are not connected. There is opportunity to create a new overarching plan connecting the SDGs, UNGPs, OECD Guidelines and other initiatives, which would be best addressed at the EU rather than at the national level. Yet the political will to achieve this seems absent in the current European Commission.

- Continue to partner with likeminded member states to call on the European Commission for an update to the CSR action plan. In parallel, set an example by working with other member states to align national initiatives;
- Continue to partner with likeminded countries and international organisations to engage business to take responsibility for their value chains.

quote

"The Netherlands should continue to fulfil a pioneering role in this field, even if the European Commission is less engaged. It is well-placed to partner with like-minded states to promote and create stronger obligations for companies."

Catelene Passchier, FNV/NCP/ILO

1.9 There are many Dutch people active in the Responsible Business Conduct field.

This includes Dutch nationals at international organisations such as the ILO, the Business Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD, CSR Europe, etc. This could potentially backfire and create a perception that this is too much of a Dutch affair, without the support of other countries and stakeholders. Also, this could create an overreliance on funding from the Dutch government.

- Always (encourage to) recruit funding and other support from other countries to broaden the support base.

2.1 Background and objectives

This evaluation report is part of the evaluation of the Dutch policy on international corporate social responsibility (ICSR) as developed and implemented between 2012 and 2018. This evaluation process is coordinated and led by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

This evaluation reviews Dutch ICSR policy with a clear focus on the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the development and implementation of five instruments:

1) sector covenants; 2) frameworks for private sector instruments; 3) frameworks for procurement by the government; 4) international agreements and legislation; 5) activities of Dutch embassies.

This report is focused on the policy area of international agreements and legislation. The government has participated in various international, multilateral initiatives with the aim to promote ICSR, for example by introducing laws, regulations or (voluntary) standards. In general, such measures aim to create leverage (critical mass) for realising changes in global supply chains and a level playing field. Agenda-setting initiatives often focus on specific sectors such as textiles/garments and extractives.

The research should provide answers to the following questions:

- What activities have been undertaken by the Dutch government to address international CSR at the EU, international organisations and other governments?
- What has been the relevance of these activities in view of the aim to reduce problems in global supply chains?
- What outputs and (intermediate) outcomes have resulted from these activities? Or what results are expected from these activities?
- What have been positive or negative, unintended effects of these activities? (e.g. in terms of prices and competition)
- How do the outputs/outcomes of the activities compare to the inputs? (efficiency)
- To what extent can results of international cooperation and legislation be attributed to the efforts of the Dutch government? What has been the position and agenda-setting role of the Dutch government in these initiatives?
- How coherent has the Dutch government been regarding its role in international CSR initiatives? What is the coherence vis-à-vis other policies of the Dutch government, e.g. on competition?

2.2 Organisation of this report

Chapter 1 of this report provides conclusions and recommendations, based on the lessons learnt from this evaluation process.

Chapter 2 is the introduction to this report, providing information on the background, objectives, and the structure of the report.

Chapter 3 of this report is dedicated to the support provided to and the dissemination of the OECD MNE Guidelines and the associated guidance documents. **Chapter 4** focuses on the actions around the UNPGS. The OECD Guidelines and the UNGPs (which are integrated into the 2011 update of the OECD Guidelines) are the key frameworks on which the 2012-2018 responsible business conduct policy of The Netherlands are based.

Chapter 5 focuses on international initiatives in the extractive sector, followed by **chapter 6** which focuses on international initiatives in the textile and garments sector. These two sectors were selected as they are focus sectors for The Netherlands and internationally.

Chapter 7 of this report explores the efforts undertaken by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to internationally extend the Dutch approach on responsible business conduct.

Each chapter is structured the same way, starting with some context to the policy area, followed by insight into the input and activities of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the output, outcomes and impacts of each policy area. Where relevant, these findings are supported by quotes from the people interviewed outside of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These insights are then combined into lessons learnt. Each chapter closes with an assessment against the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, additionality, relevance, efficiency and coherence.

Throughout the report, the term responsible business conduct is used instead of ICSR. Many of the Dutch policy documents use the term ICSR, yet this term is unfamiliar outside The Netherlands, where the terms responsible business conduct and CSR used more frequently. The appendices provide a glossary of the terms used and an overview of the people interviewed in the course of the project. Wherever possible, documents and websites referenced in this report are included as footnotes on the respective pages of each chapter.

2.3 Methodology and disclaimer

The research was conducted through a combination of desk research and interviews. After a (desk research) quick scan of a long list of international initiatives in which The Netherlands played a relevant role, a selection of key instruments and themes was made in an interactive workshop. Workshop participants included representatives from the Sustainable Economic Development Department (DDE), the Department of International Trade Policy and Economic Governance (IMH), the Multilateral Organisations and Human Rights Department (DMM), and the Inclusive Green Growth Department (IGG) as well as the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB).

To be considered for the focus phase, instruments and initiatives had to meet the following selection criteria.

- International/multilateral scope;
- With the aim to promote or enforce responsible business conduct;
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has/had an active stake;
- Developed and implemented between 2012-2018.

By placing other key initiatives on a scale ranging from “limited influence of The Netherlands” to “fully initiated by The Netherlands”, a pattern emerged highlighting the multifaceted work of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to (further) develop initiatives in the textile sector and around the extraction of raw materials and the elaborate contribution to the dissemination of the OECD Guidelines. Therefore, initiatives in these two sectors and the OECD Guidelines were selected for the focus phase of this evaluation research process. By no means does this selection imply that other initiatives and instruments on the long list are not important, or that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not influence them as part of the ICSR policy. A selection was made to warrant an effective evaluation process, yielding insights on the contribution of The Netherlands to key instruments as well as initiatives in specific, focus sectors.

The focus phase consisted of a series of interviews within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by interviews with representatives from international organisations, other governments, business and other relevant stakeholders. The business community was not included in the scope of the stakeholders for this research, as they have less sight of The Netherlands’ contribution to international developments and frameworks than the other stakeholders.

The research was conducted by an independent consultant, Marjolein Baghuis of Change in Context between September and December 2018. This report is not an in-depth academic study or analysis. It is a policy evaluation report with a limited scope in the instruments and initiatives researched.

In the policy period under review, due to a change in government, two ministers led the Aid & Trade agenda. In the external interviews, most people reflected that the policy focus and objectives seemed unchanged after the change from Lilianne Ploumen to Sigrid Kaag. Yet several interviewees commented that the personal interest on specific topics seems to differ substantially, leading to different actions by the two ministers.

3 The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

3.1 Context

The OECD Guidelines are recommendations to companies on themes such as human rights, labour rights, the environment, consumer interests, corruption, innovation, competition and taxation¹. They provide voluntary principles and standards for responsible business conduct, hence without strict, legally enforceable requirements.

In 2011, just prior to the policy period under evaluation, the OECD Guidelines were updated. Besides the financial support of The Netherlands to this revision process, many Dutch nationals played an important role in the development process. As of the 2011 update, the OECD Guidelines integrate the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The UNGPs encourage governments to expect from business that they respect human rights throughout their operations.

The OECD Guidelines and the UNGPs urge business to carry out due diligence. By signing the OECD MNE Guidelines and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the Dutch government has agreed to address companies on their behaviour. Both of these instruments are central to the Dutch policy on responsible business conduct.

In 2013, the OECD Investment Committee established the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct. Its mandate is to assist in furthering the effectiveness of the guidelines, fostering NCP functional equivalence, pursuing the proactive agenda, promoting engagement with non-adhering countries, partner organisations, and stakeholders, and serving as central point of information on the guidelines. The proactive agenda includes the development of sectoral guidance for the extractives, financial, garment and footwear, and agricultural sectors.

quote

"As a small trading nation, The Netherlands understands the need for international standards very well. Fairness is seen to be in the national interest, with consensus and social dialogue providing an enabling environment for trade."

Dan Rees, BetterWork

¹ More information is available on the OECD Responsible Business Conduct website

The table below provides insight into the objectives of these initiatives, as well as the financial support by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Details of the activities undertaken by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the context of these initiatives are provided in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Name	Main objective	Targeting change by	Funding by MFA '12-'18
OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct	Furthering the effectiveness of the OECD Guidelines	Companies headquartered in OECD countries	Budget not available
Sectoral Guidance	Tailored guidance on due diligence for companies in specific sectors	Companies in the textile, agricultural minerals, extractive and financial sectors	Budget not available

3.2 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

During the policy period under evaluation, The Netherlands invested staff and budget resources to strengthen both the awareness and the impact of the OECD Guidelines.

From 2013 to 2018, Roel Nieuwenkamp served as the first **Chair of the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct**. During this time, he was based fulltime at the OECD, yet he remained formally employed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was seconded to the OECD with a clear objective to further the implementation of the OECD Guidelines and to contribute towards an international level playing field for responsible business conduct. According to both internal and external sources, he did this extremely well. He both succeeded in his mission based on the Dutch policy, yet at the same time he managed to maintain a neutral chair’s role, albeit a very active one.

His activities at the OECD included:

- Integrating the OECD Guidelines into international declarations and policies;
- Driving the establishment and quality of National Contact Points (NCPs) in OECD countries, which are important for the implementation of the OECD Guidelines;
- Boosting the structural capacity of and support for the responsible business conduct secretariat within the OECD. This included creating alliances with other countries to generate broader (financial) support for OECD initiatives;
- Creating demand and support for sectoral guidance by involving business and other stakeholders, and by making smart use of the parallel developments of the Dutch RBC voluntary agreements and the OECD sector guidance.

3 The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

Besides the investment in the working party chair, The Netherlands also financially supported the **development of sectoral guidance on due diligence** for the textile sector, the agricultural sector and the financial sector and contributed to the OECD Due Diligence Guidance on Responsible Business Conduct. Furthermore, The Netherlands Ministry is always well-represented and vocal at meetings around the OECD Guidelines, providing insights from the Dutch voluntary sector covenants wherever relevant. It shows strong commitment and interest to join such meetings with a delegation of three to four people. The Dutch delegations consistently advocate a multi-stakeholder approach, the creation of a level playing field and the strengthening of the NCPs. However, some of the people interviewed had the perception that the contribution of the Dutch government is skewed towards the process side, rather than the content itself.

In addition, The Netherlands' permanent delegation to the OECD also takes initiative to regularly convene like-minded countries on the topic of responsible business conduct. Prior to relevant OECD meetings, the so-called **Friends of Responsible Business Conduct** meet to determine a joint strategy. Members of this group include the Ambassadors to the OECD of countries like Canada, France, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Dutch permanent delegation also successfully called for the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs and Investment Directorates within the OECD Secretariat to work together better.

quote

"For most working party chairs at the OECD, that role comes on top of another role they have within their national government. It shows very strong commitment from the Dutch government that the chair could dedicate his full attention to this role. He was fully funded by The Netherlands, including an extensive travel budget to promote responsible business conduct and the OECD MNE Guidelines around the world."

Cristina Tebar-Less, OECD

The permanent delegation at the OECD and the chair of the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct worked together with the (Dutch permanent representation to the) ILO to **align and connect the OECD Guidelines and the ILO MNE declaration**². This was also supported by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs. The underlying objective was to ensure a more coherent set of expectations towards companies and to avoid the establishment of a parallel system of National Contact Points for the ILO, rather than connecting this to the OECD NCPs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds the **independent National Contact Point**³ and houses its secretariat. The NCP is tasked with raising awareness of the OECD Guidelines with businesses, trade unions and non-governmental organisations; and contributing to the resolution of issues that arise from the alleged non-observance of the Guidelines in specific instances. The functioning of the Dutch NCP is subject to a separate evaluation and is not included in this report.

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds **OECD Watch**⁴, a global network of civil society organisations. Its key aim is to inform and advise the wider NGO community on how to make use of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and its associated grievance mechanism to achieve corporate accountability and access to remedy.

3.3 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, research on the outcomes and impact of policy in this field is extremely limited and even so, results are very hard to attribute to specific initiatives. This section provides an overview of the outputs generated in the context of the OECD Guidelines.

Through the outreach efforts of the chair of the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct, the OECD Guidelines are now embedded in the work of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, the European Union institutions, the Council of Europe, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Organization of American States⁵. In 2015, when Germany hosted the G7, the OECD Guidelines were referenced in the Leaders' Declaration⁶.

² The ILO MNE Declaration (2017), ILO website

³ More information is available on the NCP website

⁴ More information is available on the OECD Watch website

⁵ More information on the achievements of the Working Party on responsible business conduct and its Chair available in A Glass Half Full (2018, OECD, Nyenrode, Netherlands)

⁶ G7 Summit Germany, Leaders' Declaration, Think Ahead. Act Together (2015)

3 The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

To date, 48 governments have committed to create an **NCP**⁷. Through a system of peer reviews⁸ and offering other support, the quality of NCPs has increased significantly. In 2017, both the NCPs and the peer review system were included in the ministerial statement made by the OECD Council, which is binding for member states.

The Dutch NCP is recognized as an example for other NCPs, extending its impact beyond Dutch companies.

In five years, the **Responsible Business Conduct secretariat at the OECD** grew from one to 15 people. This was made possible by voluntary contributions from individual member countries as well as structural funding from within the OECD. This not only secures continuation of the responsible business conduct secretariat, but also makes it less of a Dutch affair.



"As the OECD is based on economic cooperation, it is seen as an important and business-friendly institution by the business community. It is therefore smart for The Netherlands to continue investing in the OECD and its different instruments."

Catelene Passchier, FNV/NCP/ILO

Through sector-level multi-stakeholder processes, the text of the OECD Guidelines developed from negotiated, quite difficult to read guidelines, to more concrete, **sectoral guidance documents**. These documents are now available for five sectors: extractives, minerals, agriculture, garments and the financial sector⁹. The sectoral guidance for due diligence is seen as useful and effective, making due diligence more concrete and actionable for companies in these specific sectors.

⁷ A list of active NCPs is available on the OECD MNE Guidelines website

⁸ An overview of completed peer reviews is available on the OECD MNE Guidelines website

⁹ An overview of sectoral guidance is available on the OECD MNE Guidelines website

Connecting with the Dutch sectoral agreements allowed for mutual learning and benefitting from each other's experience and insights. In May 2018, a cross-sectoral guidance document on due diligence¹⁰ was released, providing advice on how to perform due diligence in practice.

Based on these outputs, the outcome is growing awareness, commitment and action by the business community in the field of responsible business conduct. And this is expected to continue growing in the years to come.

3.4 Lessons learnt

1. Roel Nieuwenkamp's network and insight into relevant developments made him effective for the OECD and The Netherlands. With him moving to a new role outside the OECD, it will be key to undertake efforts to stay connected to developments in the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct.
2. The strong focus on the OECD Guidelines has been very successful for The Netherlands and the OECD, yet there may be a need to raise and/or maintain the relevance of the OECD Guidelines in the new narrative which is increasingly dominated by the SDGs and the UNGPs.
3. There are many Dutch people involved in this field. Some people interviewed felt that there are perhaps too many and this could backfire. So far this does not seem to be the case, but it is important to beware of this and always involve people from other countries to generate a broader support base.



"The OECD MNE Guidelines are central to Dutch policy on responsible business conduct, but today they seem to play a less central role in the policies of other countries. The SDGs and UNGPs have become the key frameworks going forward."

Bernedine Bos, CSR Europe

¹⁰ OECD, Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct (2018)

3 The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

3.5 Assessment against the evaluation criteria

The mix of activities and support for the OECD Guidelines and related initiatives are *relevant* to improve conditions in global value chains. The work of the chair of the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct at the OECD was applauded time and again in the interviews as highly *relevant* and *effective*.

The significant investment by The Netherlands and the chair's personal effectiveness were critical (*additional*) for the effectiveness of the Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct.

The Netherlands has consistently supported the OECD and the developments to further the dissemination and impact of the OECD Guidelines. These activities are *coherent* with each other and with the overall Dutch responsible business conduct policy.

However, it is too early to assess whether these investments by the Dutch government have been either *effective* or *efficient* in driving change in global value chains and company behaviour, ultimately impacting people on the ground.

4 The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

4.1 Context

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) are a set of guidelines for states and companies to prevent, address and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations¹¹. They were endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011. To promote the effective and comprehensive dissemination and implementation of the UNGPs a UN Working Group¹² was established. This Working Group is composed of five independent experts, of balanced geographical representation.

As of the 2011 update, the OECD Guidelines integrate the UNGPs. By signing the OECD MNE Guidelines and the UNGPs, the Dutch government has agreed to address companies on their behaviour. Both of these instruments are central to the Dutch policy on responsible business conduct. For the integration of the UNGPs, in 2014, the Dutch government released a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights¹³.

4.2 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

The Netherlands contributes to the work of the **Working Group** by providing input to the consultations for its reports that serve as further guidance and interpretations of the UNGPs. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs also actively participates in the annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, for example by speaking on panels. Furthermore, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports other countries in the process to adopt a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, and it has initiated a European peer learning exercise, which was subsequently organised by Belgium.

During the 2016 Dutch **EU Presidency**, business and human rights was a prominent theme on the agenda. In May 2016, a pan-European multi-stakeholder conference Business and Human Rights was jointly organised by European civil society and The Netherlands to advance the implementation of the Business and Human Rights agenda of the European Union and its member states¹⁴.

¹¹ More information available on the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre website

¹² More information available on the UN Human Rights website

¹³ The full National Action Plan is available on the Business and Human Rights website

¹⁴ More information available on the EU Roadmap conference website

4 The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The Netherlands was very active in the formulation of the **Recommendation of the Council of Europe's** Committee of Ministers to Member States on business and human rights¹⁵. Every five years, all Council of Europe members must report to the Committee of Ministers on the progress of national implementation of the recommendation. The annexes to the recommendation give substantive suggestions as to how states should fulfil their duty to protect, how to promote corporate responsibility to respect human rights and how to ensure access to remedy. In June 2016, the Council of the European Union released Council Conclusions on Business and Human Rights¹⁶. As requested by those conclusions, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency presented its recommendations on access to remedy at the EU level in the area of business and human rights in 2017.

Currently, within the United Nations, a legally **binding instrument** is in development on Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises with respect to human rights¹⁷. This process was initiated in 2014 through a resolution drafted by Ecuador and South Africa, which was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council. Initially, the European Union did not support this resolution and therefore did not participate in the first session of the working group to develop the UN Binding Treaty in 2015. As an EU member state, The Netherlands was not engaged in the process either. For the second and third session in October 2016 and 2017, the EU was present during the deliberations of the intergovernmental working group.

4.3 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

The efforts around the UNGPs by The Netherlands have raised awareness of business and human rights both among EU Member States and business.

Given the complexity and the global nature of issues that are covered by the remit of business and human rights, The Netherlands made a plea for a joint position in the EU on the development of the binding treaty. The EU expressed concerns about the mandate of the intergovernmental working group and brought forward two points:

¹⁵ Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on business and human rights

¹⁶ Council of the European Union, Council Conclusions on Business and Human Rights (2016)

¹⁷ More information available on the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre website

- Any legally binding measure must be based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and should serve the goal to further strengthen and implement them;
- A legally binding measure must be applicable to all economic actors.

The zero draft that was released in the summer of 2018 did not contain a reference to the UNGPs and the draft maintains a focus on ‘business activities of transnational character’ rather than the scope of all companies. This raises the question whether the intergovernmental working group takes the input of the EU into account. As the process unfolds both The Netherlands and the EU will continue to formulate their positions, taking into account the promotion of the UNGPs as an important objective.

4.4 Lessons learnt

1. The Netherlands has actively raised awareness for the need for governments to address the topic of business and human rights, especially within the EU.
2. The Netherlands contributes to the development process of initiatives stemming from the UNGPs, in a constructively critical manner, often within the EU context. This is a different role compared to the support of the further development and deployment of the OECD MNE Guidelines.

4.5 Assessment against the evaluation criteria

The actions taken by the Dutch government around the UNGPs in the international context have a *consistent* focus on raising awareness of the importance of business and human rights for governments.

The actions taken – including the plea to develop a joint EU position on the binding treaty development process - are *relevant* in the current international context.

On raising awareness and supporting other member states with the development of their National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, the activities seem to be both *efficient* and *effective*. It is too early to fully assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the efforts undertaken around the Binding Treaty as this is still in development. The efforts of The Netherlands around the UNGPs certainly contribute to the international developments, yet they are less *critical/additional* than the efforts around the OECD MNE Guidelines.

5 International initiatives in the Extractive Sector

5.1 Context

The 2014 sector risk analysis¹⁸ conducted for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs identified extractives as a key sector with risks in global value chains of Dutch companies, thus warranting attention and action from the Dutch government.

From 2011 to 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had a Special Envoy Natural Resources. Initially, this role was focused more on securing a sufficient supply of national resources. Over time, the focus shifted to also include the promotion of responsible sourcing of minerals. The institutional priority on this sector was further strengthened by personal commitment of people in the role.

Key international initiatives related to extractives in which the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved are:

- EU Conflict Mineral Regulation
- EU Partnership for Responsible Minerals
- Extractive Initiative Transparency Initiative
- Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights
- Natural Stone collaboration between Belgium and The Netherlands

quote

"The Netherlands is very visible in extractive sector initiatives. It has diplomats specialized in extractive issues working on initiatives like EITI and EPRM"

Genevieve Jean van Rossum, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The table on the following page provides insight into the objectives of these initiatives, as well as the financial support by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Details of the activities undertaken by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the context of these initiatives are provided in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

¹⁸ KPMG MVO Sector Risico Analyse (in Dutch, 2014)

Name	Main objective	Targeting change by	Funding by MFA '12-'18
EU Conflict Mineral Regulation	Tackle the trade in minerals being used to finance armed groups in conflict-affected and high-risk areas	Importers of potential conflict minerals	Budget not available
EU Partnership for Responsible Minerals	Better social and economic conditions for mine workers and local mining communities	Companies operating in the mining sector	2016-2019 € 3.75 million
Extractive Initiative Transparency Initiative	Promote transparency and accountability in countries' management of extractives	Countries	2011-2014 (EITI) € 1 million 2017-2020 (EGPS) € 2 million
Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights	Offer human rights guidance for extractive sector companies	Extractive sector companies	2013-2019 € 335,000
Natural Stone collaboration with Belgium*	Avoid risks in terms of human rights, environmental pollution and child labour in natural stone value chains.	Importers of natural stone (companies and authorities)	Budget not available
OECD Due diligence guidance for Responsible Mineral Supply Chains°	Develop sectoral guidance for due diligence through a multi-stakeholder process	Brands, retailers, suppliers	€ 250,000

* There are similar sector agreements for gold and metals. As these are primarily focused on Dutch companies, these are not included in this evaluation track.
° Covered in the earlier chapter on the Dutch contribution to the OECD.

5.2 EU Conflict Minerals Regulation

In 2014, in reaction to the US Dodd-Frank Act rule on conflict minerals, the European Commission proposed an integrated EU approach to tackle the trade in minerals being used to finance armed groups in conflict-affected and high-risk areas¹⁹. The European Parliament wanted to develop a regulation mandating due diligence on conflict minerals incorporating the OECD Guidelines. However, across the member states, the preferred approach was a more voluntary approach to due diligence.

5.2.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

The Netherlands used the EU presidency (January-June 2016) to progress the EU proposal on a Regulation on Conflict Minerals, analogous to the Dodd-Frank Act in the US. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs created momentum in the negotiations for this EU regulation through two main interventions. The Director for International Trade Policy and Economic Governance visited the majority of European capitals to meet with relevant policy makers to understand their needs, resistance and acceptance levels. This consensus-seeking process also involved talks with representatives of the European Parliament and the EU Trade Commissioner, as well as with NGOs and the private sector.

¹⁹ The Conflict Minerals Regulation explained, European Commission website

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To ensure an effective and workable regulation and to avoid a disproportionate burden on SMEs, the Dutch MFA team set the objective that the regulation should cover 95% of the imports. In parallel to the conversations between the Dutch Ministry Foreign Affairs and representatives of 20 member states, the member states were asked to share anonymous customs data on the number and quantities of imports registered in their country. Data analysis by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs showed that in order to cover 95% of the imported volume, far fewer than 95% of the companies would need to be included. The analysis led to proposals for thresholds per material covered in the Regulation; only imports above the threshold are covered. By being pragmatic about the applicability, the coverage of the regulation is extensive, while not overburdening the SMEs responsible for the remaining 5% of the imported volume. This also makes the enforcement more manageable. This policy development process built on the learnings of the implementation of the Dodd-Frank act in the USA²⁰.

5.2.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

The combination of in-depth, bilateral engagement and data analysis was an effective way to reach a political agreement on the conflict mineral regulation in the trilogue across the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the EU. On June 15, political agreement^{21 22} was reached. Other key elements that advanced the political agreement were a transitional period for implementation, focus on conflict finance only (excluding other topics like child labour and environment) and the development of voluntary tools to increase the transparency and visibility of due diligence on conflict minerals in supply chains.

quote

"Although their initial stance always seems against binding regulation, I was grateful to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for bringing the negotiation for EU Conflict Minerals Regulation to an end."

Judith Sargentini, European Parliament

²⁰ Resource Policy, Exaggerating unintended effects? Competing narratives on the impact of conflict minerals regulation, Koch & Kinsbergen (2018)

²¹ Political understanding following the 15 June trilogue

²² EU Presidency leads to agreement on conflict minerals, Government of The Netherlands website news item 20 June 2016

The political agreement formed a solid foundation for the final version of the regulation. In November 2016, the text of the regulation and the declarations of the Council and the European Commission were agreed, and early 2017, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU adopted the legal text. As of 2021, EU importers of the covered minerals will need to carry out due diligence on conflict minerals in their supply chains. This due diligence is mandatory for the 600-800 largest European importers of these minerals. Partial voluntary due diligence is requested of approximately 900.000 companies further downstream in the supply chain.



“The current European Commission has developed very few policies in the field of responsible business conduct, except on conflict minerals. The Dutch government actively lobbied for this EU regulation with other member states, finding a balance between different needs, resulting in obligations which seem to be workable for business.”

Winand Quadvlieg, VNO NCW

It is too early to assess the outcomes and impact of this regulation as it is not yet in force. The regulation works across the EU but requires national enforcement. At this moment, several EU member states are struggling to find or establish an authority to enforce this regulation. The Netherlands is expected to appoint an authority for this in 2019. This EU regulation supports those companies already well-underway and has led to more awareness among the laggards in the industry. It will level the playing field for all EU-based companies from 2021 onwards.

5.3 European Partnership for Responsible Minerals

The European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM)²³ is a multi-stakeholder partnership created in 2015 to further better social and economic conditions for mine workers and local mining communities, by increasing the number of mines that adopt responsible mining practices in conflict and high-risk areas. It was set up to complement the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation.

The EPRM brings together government, the private sector and NGOs with the aim to end unintentional and unwanted financing of armed groups and the abuses that result from this.

²³ More information available on the EPRM website

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It does this by offering business a platform for investigating the origins of their raw materials and determining whether they have been mined in decent, conflict-free conditions.

Due diligence checks are performed on aspiring member companies. The initial focus is on tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold or their derivatives, often referred to as 3TG. These are the same minerals which are included in the US Dodd-Frank Act and in the European Conflict Mineral Regulation. Over time, EPRM may broaden the list of covered minerals to include other minerals such as cobalt, of which 60% is mined in conflict-affected and high-risk areas.

5.3.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

In addition to driving the political agreement behind the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation, in 2015, The Netherlands initiated the EPRM. By establishing a community of practice, EPRM strengthens companies' capacity to learn about due diligence. Through partnership and a multi-stakeholder approach, participants can share learnings and aim to achieve things they cannot do alone.

In setting up EPRM, The Netherlands looked for complementary skills in other partners. For example, Germany's technical expertise on monitoring & evaluation and the creation of supporting infrastructure for the initiative builds on the Dutch initiating and innovation roles.

5.3.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

While The Netherlands initiated EPRM and filled the first chair position, it currently is supported much more broadly. EPRM is funded by The Netherlands, the UK and Germany. The European Commission (DG Trade, DG Devco, DG Growth), some large companies and NGOs are also actively engaged. The secretariat is hosted by The Netherlands (at RVO).

quote

"The Dutch government has shown clear leadership on responsible minerals. During its EU presidency, it put responsible mineral sourcing on the agenda and laid the foundation for the EU Conflict Mineral Regulation. The Netherlands actively looked for partners and opportunities to align best practices. It helped spearhead the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals, to which it brought other governments and it hosts the secretariat."

Leah Butler, Responsible Business Alliance

In 2018, EPRM was chaired by the US-based Vice President of the Responsible Business Alliance and Director of the Conflict Free Sourcing Initiative within the Electronic Industry Citizen Coalition. As of 2019, The Netherlands based NGO Solidaridad has taken on the chair role.

EPRM has developed a strong name and an active network, yet it is too early to really assess the impact it has had. Most projects have a three-year timeline which have not gone full cycle. Also, it is very hard to measure the results of awareness-raising activities. To date, companies do not seem to be taking up due diligence in a structural way, although this differs across industries. The tech industry was relatively easy to engage, as many companies have already been working on responsible sourcing for the past decade. The automotive industry poses more of a challenge. NGOs seem to be more engaged, in reaction to the lack of engagement of the corporate sector.

In 2020, it will be more clear what outcomes and impact EPRM and its projects have delivered. In order to have scalable impact in the future, EPRM will need to grow. With more corporate members and additional countries involved, EPRM would be less dependent on the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The dominant role for The Netherlands on EPRM does raise questions, as it is not clear to all parties involved whether The Netherlands will continue this leadership role and funding going forward.

Only a few Dutch companies are involved in EPRM. Some of the people interviewed attribute this to the companies' investment in the voluntary RBC agreement on gold.

5.4 The Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)

EITI²⁴ was first launched by the UK Prime Minister in 2002 to promote transparency and accountability in countries' management of extractives. Guided by the belief that a country's natural resources belong to its citizens, the EITI established a global standard²⁵ to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources. The EITI Standard requires the disclosure of information along the extractive industry value chain from the point of extraction, to how revenues make their way through the government, and how they benefit the public.

²⁴ More information is available on the EITI website

²⁵ More information on the EITI Standard is available on the EITI website

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5.4.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

The Netherlands has provided support for EITI in various ways. This includes funding from early on in the establishment process. The Netherlands actively promotes EITI membership and the EITI standards to resource-rich developing countries. The Netherlands is also active in the international board and the working groups of EITI. From 2012 to 2015, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs seconded one full time person to EITI. For 2017-2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also offers financial support for EITI-related projects under the Extractives Global Programmatic Support Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

5.4.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

This secondment did provide visibility of the Dutch investment in EITI. The role at EITI was supposed to be a strategic secondment, yet in the end, there was only limited contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hague, limiting the strategic influence by The Netherlands.

As of 2018, 51 countries were members of EITI²⁶. These are mostly non-OECD countries. The lack of OECD country members undermines their plea for developing countries to be more transparent. While The Netherlands actively supported EITI as of 2005, it did not become an implementing member until 2017, preceded by Norway (2009), the UK (2014) and Germany (2016). The Netherlands now has to be transparent itself as well. This includes accountability on gas exploration, fracking plans and the profits derived from the sale of natural resources such as oil and gas. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy is tasked with the collection and publication of the data required by EITI. Some of the interviewees commented that there seems to be resistance within this ministry to this transparency requirement.

5.5 The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

The Voluntary Principles (VPs)²⁷ offer human rights guidance specifically for extractive sector companies. They comprise of a set of principles designed to guide companies in maintaining the safety and security of their operations with respect for human rights. Participants in the Voluntary Principles Initiative – including governments, companies and NGOs – agree to proactively implement or assist in the implementation of the VPs.

²⁶ An overview of the member countries is available on the EITI website

²⁷ More information is available on the Voluntary Principles website

5.5.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

During 2012-2013, the Netherlands chaired the Voluntary Principle Initiative. During this period, the organisation became a foundation. During the entire period under review, several Dutch embassies promoted the VPs. From February 2017 to February 2018, The Netherlands chaired the Voluntary Principle Initiative.

The Netherlands continuously strives to inspire dialogue between companies and civil society. This fits well with the so-called “polder model”, the Dutch version of consensus-based economic and social policy development. In the field of extractives, companies and civil society often refused to be in the same room, let alone engage in dialogue to work on issue resolution or increased understanding of each other’s point of view. During the year of chairing the Voluntary Principle Initiative, The Netherlands organized a fieldtrip to Nigeria during which companies and NGOs jointly visited several ministries, the Nigerian police, a meeting of the security forces, a mining company and the Shell campus.

During its second year in the chair role, The Netherlands questioned whether it was worthwhile to continue with the Voluntary Principle Initiative if support from other constituencies did not pick up.

5.5.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

The focus on the multi-stakeholder approach was successful, both for the organisation itself and within activities organised, such as the fieldtrip to Nigeria in which both companies and NGOs participated. It created a stronger sense of shared goals and commitment.

The question raised on commitment by the Dutch chair to discontinue the Voluntary Principles Initiative sparked a stronger involvement from both companies and NGOs. Since then, participating companies have supported the initiative more by organizing conferences and other events; NGOs offered administrative support.

5.6 Natural stone collaboration with Belgium

The way natural stone is quarried and traded poses risks in terms of human rights, environmental pollution and child labour. To minimise the risk of such abuses and make the production and supply chain for natural stone as sustainable as possible, Dutch and Belgian parties in the sector, NGOs, trade unions and the Dutch and Flemish government are negotiating an RBC agreement on natural stone²⁸.

²⁸ More information about this process is available on the IRBC Agreements website of the SER

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The development of a voluntary agreement for the natural stone sector is part of a wider series of such so-called RBC agreements (or covenants) in The Netherlands. These are covered in a separate track of the evaluation process. The agreement for the natural stone sector is also included in this part of the evaluation because of the partnership with Belgian stakeholders.

After a scandal about child labour in the supply chain for the cobblestones (*kinderkopjes*) in Ghent, the Flemish government engaged the natural stone sector to work on an approach to avoid such issues in the future. This engagement process included many of the Dutch companies as well. In parallel, in The Netherlands, preparations were underway for an RBC agreement on natural stone. The companies from both countries then asked to investigate the opportunities for a joint approach, so the Dutch and Flemish governments would have the same expectations of natural stone companies.

5.6.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

Similar to other voluntary sectoral agreements, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs financially supports the creation process. It made sense to combine these processes, rather than develop local guidance in parallel. In addition to the Dutch and Flemish governments, the process includes the Benelux sectoral organisation (Febenat²⁹), as well as labour unions and NGOs.

5.6.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

The downside of this partnership is that the process is taking longer than if the scope had been limited to the Dutch sector, but the scope and the ambition are now set higher.

While the agreement is still in development, pilots have been set up to encourage companies and the authorities to develop more responsible business conduct practices when procuring natural stone. These pilots are supervised by a coalition of companies, trade unions, NGOs and the Dutch government.

²⁹ More information is available of the Febenat website

5.7 Other Initiatives in the Extractives Sector

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also supported the development of the **OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas**³⁰ which is also referenced in the OECD section of this report. This document was released in 2017 and offers detailed guidance for the textile and footwear sector. As it was created through a multi-stakeholder approach, it forms the fundament for due diligence efforts in the sector.

5.8 Lessons learnt on the involvement with the extractives sector

1. The various initiatives supported, and the actions taken by the Dutch government to drive responsible business conduct in the extractives sector include both mandatory and voluntary measures. This shows that the Dutch policy is not only relying on voluntary measures to change corporate behaviour.
2. The Netherlands supports many initiatives in the extractive sector, all working towards a similar objective, yet in different ways. These activities are quite complimentary. They each target different types of companies, such as EPRM and the VPs for leaders, OECD Due Diligence Guidance and the RBC agreements for the mainstream/learners and EU Conflict Mineral Regulation for the laggards. Through EITI, governments are targeted and reached as well, yet less so in the capacity of regulator or supporter for companies under their jurisdiction. However, a central vision with a clear theory of change across all initiatives in the extractives sector is lacking.
3. Across the various initiatives, it is important to broaden the support beyond the Dutch government and organisations. This process has started, but further support is needed to make such initiatives less dependent on funding and other support from The Netherlands.
4. There is a clear appreciation for the personal commitment and expertise of the Dutch experts and diplomats working on the different initiatives in the extractives sector.
5. The various initiatives have raised awareness of issues in the value chain, yet it is too early to assess the outcomes and impact of these efforts for improve the conditions in extractives value chains. The EU Conflict Mineral Regulation will take force in 2021 and the natural stone pilots have just started.

³⁰ More information available on the OECD website

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5.9 Assessment against the evaluation criteria

The process to gain alignment on the EU Conflict Mineral Regulation was both *effective* and *additional*. The regulation would not have been established as quickly without the commitment of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, as the resulting regulation is based on the (lower) common denominator and very focused in its scope, it raises questions to what extent it will be effective in driving substantial change in business practices.

Furthermore, taking the initiative to streamline a development process for European regulation is seen by some as *less consistent* with Dutch responsible business conduct policy, which is often perceived to be primarily focused on voluntary initiatives. Also, The Netherlands generally looks at responsible business conduct in a much more holistic, integral fashion, rather than focusing on specific raw materials and related issues.

A noteworthy policy *inconsistency* is the perceived resistance by The Netherlands to the accountability required on its own extractive resources as an EITI member state. This can backfire when the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is promoting transparency and responsibility through EITI towards developing countries, while The Netherlands has only recently started holding itself accountable to the same standards.

Other initiatives supported and actions taken by the Dutch governmental to drive responsible business conduct in the extractive sector are more *consistent* with the perceived Dutch focus on voluntary measures. They all drive awareness of issues in the sector. Yet it is too early to assess whether the support to initiatives like EPRM, EITI, the VPs and the cooperation with Belgium on Natural Stone was either effective or efficient in improving the outcomes and impacts in international extractive value chains.

6 International initiatives in the Garment and Textile Sector

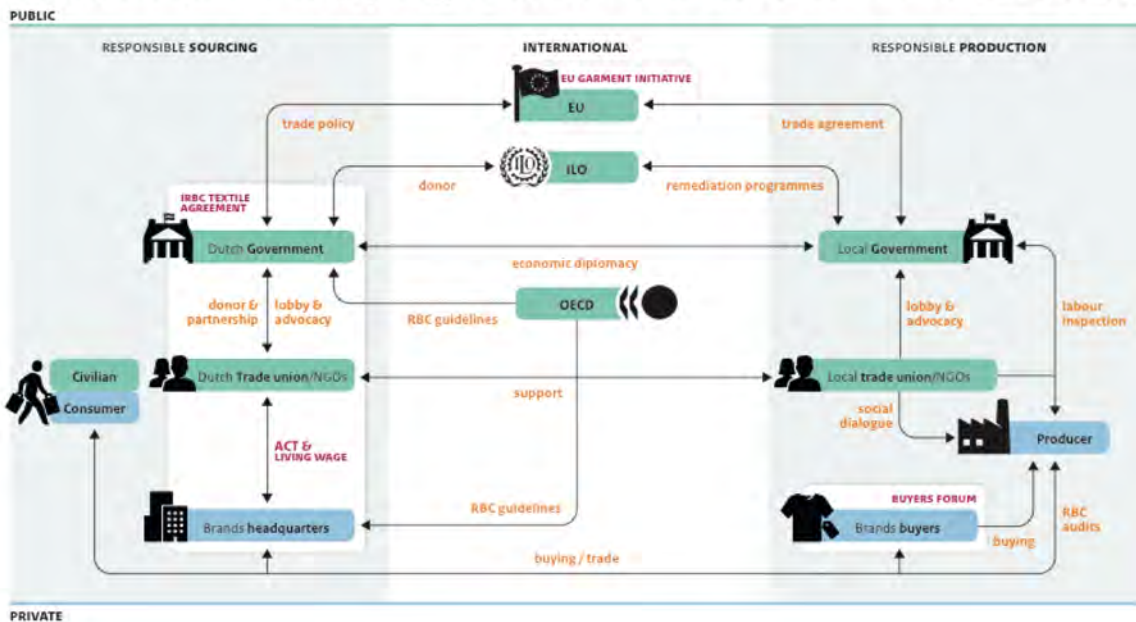
6.1 Context

In April 2013, the world was shocked by the collapse of Rana Plaza. Over 1100 people died in this terrible accident. This tragedy sparked a wave of initiatives at the national and international level to change the conditions in the garment and textile sector.

Similar to the extractives sector, a sector risk analysis³¹ identified the garment and textile sector as a key sector with risks in the value chain, thus warranting attention and action from the Dutch government.

To create an overview of initiatives in the textile value chain and the different possible interventions, in 2017 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed a stakeholder map.

Stakeholder Mapping Textile Sustainable Value Chain



³¹ KPMG MVO Sector Risico Analyse (in Dutch, 2014)

6 International initiatives in the Garment and Textile Sector

Key initiatives related to textile value chains in which the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved are:

- Bangladesh Accord and the ILO Bangladesh RMG Programme
- RBC Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (textile covenant)
- Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chains
- ILO Better Work Programme
- EU Flagship Garment Initiative
- Living Wage initiatives
- Other textile initiatives

The table on the next page provides insight into the objectives of these initiatives, as well as the financial support by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Details of the activities undertaken by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the context of these initiatives are provided in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

6.2 The Bangladesh Textile sector

The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh was signed on May 15, 2013.

It is a five-year independent, legally binding agreement³² between global brands, retailers and trade unions designed to build a safe and healthy Bangladeshi ready-made garment industry. All factories producing for Accord signatory companies are subject to independent inspections on fire, electrical and structural safety. Governments are not party to the accord, but they are involved by calling on companies headquartered in their country to adhere to the Bangladesh Accord and to drive at remediation by the industry. In parallel, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety was established, a legally non-binding, five-year commitment to improve safety in Bangladeshi ready-made garment factories³³. The Alliance was initiated by two US Senators and represents the majority of North American imports from Bangladesh.

More extensive coverage of the activities by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on responsible business conduct initiatives in and for Bangladesh is provided in the country study, which forms a separate track of the evaluation process. As the textile and garment sector is so prominent in Bangladesh, some of the key initiatives are also included in this report.

³² More information available on the Bangladesh Accord website

³³ More information available on the Bangladesh Alliance website

Name	Main objective	Targeting change by	Funding by MFA '12-'18
Bangladesh Accord	Improve safety in Bangladeshi textile sector	Brands, retailers, suppliers, government	Not applicable
Clean Clothes Campaign (via the Fair Green Global Alliance)	Improving working conditions and empowering workers in the global garment and sportswear industries.	Consumers, companies and governments.	2016-2020 € 7.5 million for the Alliance
ILO Bangladesh Ready Made Garment Programme	Improve safety and labour inspection in the Bangladeshi textile sector	Bangladeshi Government, producers	2013-2017: US\$ 11 million 2017-2023: US\$ 8 million
RBC Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile	Reducing negative social and environmental impacts in the supply chain by brands active on the Dutch textile market	Companies, industry associations, supported by NGOs and trade unions	2016-2018 € 1.4 million
Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chains	Verify and improve workplace conditions for garment workers, together with Fair Wear Foundation, FNV and CNV	Brands, suppliers, governments	2016-2018: € 32 million
ILO Better Work Programme	To improve working conditions in the garment industry and to make the sector more competitive	Governments, global brands, suppliers	2012-2018: € 17.5 million
EU Flagship Garment Initiative	Initiatives to prevent responsibility of EU based companies for abuses in garment sector	EU based companies	Not applicable
Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT)	Promote cleaner production process in Bangladesh textile sector	Government, suppliers, brands	US\$ 5,5 million
Global Living Wage Coalition	Develop a shared definition of and a common methodology for living wage	Governments, factories, brands	€ 350,000
OECD Due diligence guidance for Garment & Footwear sector*	Develop sectoral guidance for due diligence through a multi-stakeholder process	Brands, retailers, suppliers	€ 400,000
Social & Labor Convergence Project	Implement a converged assessment framework to improve working conditions	Brands, retailers, manufacturers, auditors, standard setters, governments	€ 95,000

* Covered in the earlier chapter on the Dutch contribution to the OECD.

6.2.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

In the aftermath of the Rana Plaza disaster, the Dutch government got actively involved in improving the safety and labour conditions in the Bangladesh textile sector. Via the strategic partnership Fair, Green and Global Alliance, The Netherlands funds the Clean Clothes Campaign³⁴, which is one of the initiators of the Bangladesh Accord. The Dutch government also actively promoted Dutch brands to adhere to the Bangladesh Safety Accord.

³⁴ More information available on the Clean Clothes Campaign website

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The Dutch Embassy in Bangladesh created a staff position to support improvements in the textile sector in Bangladesh. The embassy also played an active role in the start-up phase of the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact³⁵. This is an agreement between the EU, US and Canada, in close collaboration with the ILO. This allows these signatories to use its trade position to press for labour rights in the garment sector.

For the Bangladesh Accord to be effective in the longer term, a strong, independent, local industrial safety inspectorate is required. The inspectorate needs to be equipped to not only inspect, but also to suggest improvement programmes and to monitor the progress. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs also funded the ILO Bangladesh Ready Made Garment Programme³⁶, which strengthens the labour inspectorate and the safety program for all export factories, including those not covered by the Accord or the Alliance.

In 2014, seven trade ministers released a joint statement³⁷ at an OECD meeting to call on companies under their jurisdiction to adhere to the Bangladesh Accord and to provide compensation for the victims of the Rana Plaza collapse. The Netherlands played a convening role for the meeting and the statement.

The five-year Accord ran from 2013 till 2018. In 2018, the Accord signatories decided to prolong the programme and to prepare a transition for handover to the Bangladeshi government. Due to the active lobby of the Bangladeshi manufacturers, at this point in time, the Bangladeshi government does not want to prolong the Bangladesh Accord. The Netherlands is one of the countries actively calling on the Bangladeshi government to continue the Accord. In November 2018, Minister Kaag visited Bangladesh and actively advocated the continuation of the accord during her meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This built on the letter sent by the ambassadors of the EU, US and Canada in Bangladesh to continue the Accord³⁸.

³⁵ More information available on the EU website

³⁶ More information available on the ILO programme website

³⁷ More information available on the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre website

³⁸ The letter is available for download on the Dutch government website

At the time of publication of this report, the status of the Transition Accord is still unsure and is subject to a court case. In December, a judge suspended the case and called on the parties to resolve this outside of court. The court case will be continued late January. In the meantime, efforts are underway to find a mutually acceptable compromise.

In September 2016, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Embassy in Bangladesh staged a conference on responsible sourcing³⁹. The conference convened 380 high-profile participants from over 190 organisations, to discuss sustainable versus unsustainable sourcing and to showcase new sourcing practices that would be beneficial to all stakeholders in the garment value chain. Amongst the representatives were officials from the Government of Bangladesh, NGO's, international organisations, academics, international buyers and brands, as well as suppliers. The conference showed the negative effects of intense price competition on the global textile sector. At the conference, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation made a plea for fair prices and living wages.

6.2.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

In 2017, the ILO published an overview of the activities and results of its Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector Programme⁴⁰. The review makes it clear that while the programme has delivered many results, the process of enhancing workplace safety in the Bangladesh garment industry must continue. The project has been extended until 2023, funded by The Netherlands, Canada and the UK.

The Bangladesh Accord and the associated programmes helped to raise awareness, and the safety of the workers increased in many factories. The labour inspectorate has started to increase its capacity. However, the job is far from done. The labour inspectorate is not yet able to perform its role without donor support from foreign governments. The prices of garments have not yet gone up substantially, which makes it difficult for suppliers to comply with requirements for safety and living wages. Especially the more expensive safety measures are still lacking.

6.3 RBC Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile

After the collapse of Rana Plaza and the signing of the Bangladesh Accord, in many countries, national voluntary initiatives started to improve working conditions in international supply chains in the garment sector.

³⁹ More information available in the conference report: Conference on Sustainable Sourcing in the Garment Sector (2016)

⁴⁰ The full report is available on the ILO website

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In The Netherlands, the voluntary agreement for the textile sector is part of a wider series of such so-called RBC agreements (or covenants). These are covered in a separate track of the evaluation process. The RBC agreement for the Dutch textile sector is also included in this part of the evaluation because of the recently announced partnership with the German *Textilbündnis*.

6.3.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

On 4 July 2016, a broad coalition of businesses and other organisations signed the Dutch RBC Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (textiles covenant). Its aim is to promote safety and equality for workers and prevent pollution and animal abuse in production countries. The core requirement of the agreement is to carry out due diligence according to the OECD Guidelines. The Secretariat is hosted by the Social and Economic Council of The Netherlands (SER). The SER facilitated the negotiations that led to the agreement.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made funds available to support the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile for two years. The agreement stipulates that the garment and textile sector will cooperate with the government on developing proposals for long-term funding.

In January 2018, the German Partnership for Sustainable Textiles⁴¹ (Textilbündnis.) and the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile signed a cooperation agreement⁴². The core objective of the partnership is to support companies with the implementation of due diligence by harmonizing sustainability requirements, as well as promoting cooperation within the EU and on the ground.

6.3.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

The RBC agreement now covers 48% of the Dutch market and nearly all Dutch brands. The remaining half the Dutch market is supplied by foreign brands. The voluntary agreement has helped to raise awareness of the issues and has led to the development of action plans, policies and guidance, but it is too early to assess whether real improvements have been realized on the ground⁴³.

⁴¹ More information available on the Textilbündnis website

⁴² More information available in the news item on the IRBC agreement website

⁴³ More information available in the 2016-2017 annual report for the textile IRBC agreement



“The sectoral approach used by The Netherlands is unique. It may be difficult to scale up, as in many other countries, stakeholders are unwilling to collaborate in this way. But it is definitely opportune to bring companies together at the sector level and work with them and their stakeholders to identify and work on key sectoral risks.”

Bernedine Bos, CSR Europe

Also, it is unclear how much of an effect the voluntary agreement has on the companies which have not signed the agreement. There is opportunity to increase the outreach to the foreign brands active on the Dutch market. An evaluation of the voluntary sector agreement approach is the subject of another evaluation track. A mid-term review of the textile agreement is foreseen for early 2019.

Most stakeholders in and near the textile sector appreciate the voluntary initiatives supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, some stakeholders feel that such agreements are not sufficient – nor easily scalable enough - to have a significant impact in the global garment and textile value chain.



“The textile sector needs a good kick. A string of national voluntary initiatives isn’t even a soft kick, it’s a time-consuming disturbance. That time would be better spent on international initiatives and partnerships. The sector needs scalable solutions, rather than multiplication of national initiatives, which creates administrative burden without clear added value.”

Baptiste Carriere-Pradal, Sustainable Apparel Coalition

6.4 Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chain Transformation with the Fair Wear Foundation and FNV/CNV

The Fair Wear Foundation⁴⁴ is a non-profit organisation that works with brands, factories, trade unions, NGOs and sometimes governments to verify and improve workplace conditions for garment workers in 11 production countries in Asia, Europe and Africa. Its 80 member companies represent 130 brands sold in 80 countries around the world.

The Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chain Transformation is an innovative programme aimed at improving labour conditions in the garment industry⁴⁵. It is a five-year programme, running from 2016 to 2020. It is a joint effort by Fair Wear Foundation, labour unions FNV and CNV, with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁴ More information is available on the Fair Wear Foundation website

⁴⁵ More information is available on the Fair Wear Foundation website

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Projects are being developed in seven garment-producing countries in Asia and Africa. The strategic partnership focuses on three key labour issues: living wages, gender-based violence prevention and social dialogue.

The strategic partnership has been successful to address topics such as living wage, social dialogue and gender-based violence. Due to the involvement of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the work of the Strategic Partnership is now connected to the implementation of the voluntary RBC agreement for the textile sector.

6.5 Better Work Programme

The Better Work Programme⁴⁶ is a partnership between the UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC, part of the World Bank). It brings diverse groups together (governments, global brands, factory owners, and unions and workers) to improve working conditions in the garment industry and make the sector more competitive.

6.5.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

From the onset, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has supported the Better Work programme both with funding and expertise. This commitment was recently extended for another 4 years at € 2.5 million per year. Other donors include the US, Australian, Swiss, Danish and German governments. The EU will join in the near future.

quote

"As a donor, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is agile. It does not just provide funding. It also really gets involved, bringing expertise into the programme design."

Dan Rees, BetterWork

⁴⁶ More information available on the BetterWork website

6.5.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

To understand the impact of its work, in 2016, the Better Work Programme commissioned Tufts University to conduct an independent impact assessment⁴⁷. The impact assessment demonstrates the causal effect of the Better Work programme on a wide range of working conditions in garment factories, including the prevention of abusive practices, excessive overtime and the gender pay gap.

The initial and continued funding by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Better Work Programme has made it possible to generate this impact. It also made it possible to generate support from other governments.

6.6 EU Flagship Garment Initiative

After the launch of many public and private initiatives in the garment sector, the European Commission started informal consultations with Member States on a so-called EU Flagship Garment Initiative for the garment sector in 2014.

6.6.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

The EU Garment Initiative was taken up by The Netherlands during the EU presidency, but it did not get as much attention and traction as the developments around the EU Conflict Mineral Regulation. Neither the Dutch government nor the EU were striving for binding regulation in the garment sector, although The Netherlands made it clear at the launch of the EU Garment Initiative that regulation would be an option in the future in case voluntary initiatives did not generate sufficient progress. This position of the Dutch government was influenced by the voluntary sectoral approach which had then just started. In the eyes of some of the people interviewed, the voluntary sector approach is a barrier to legislation, which they deem necessary.

quote

"Part of the Dutch textile sector is actively lobbying against EU regulation for the textile sector. They are using the voluntary sector agreement as a weapon against legislation. The expectation had been raised that there would be a legislation proposal for this sector during the Dutch EU presidency, building on the EU flagship garment initiative. Unfortunately, this was not the case."

Judith Sargentini, European Parliament

⁴⁷ BetterWork impact report, How Better Work is improving garment workers' lives and boosting factory competitiveness, Tufts University (2016)

6 International initiatives in the Garment and Textile Sector

The Dutch sectoral approach for the textile sector does not mean that The Netherlands has no interest in collaboration at the EU level. Together with the German government, it promoted the approach of national textile initiatives and scaling these up to the EU level. The underlying assumption for this joint promotion is that the EU will not adopt an active approach without sufficient bottom up pressure from member states. Another assumption is that any mandatory due diligence requirements stemming from such regulation will still require support programs for companies, similar to the Dutch and German sector initiatives.

6.6.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

Since the Dutch EU presidency in 2016, there has been limited activity on the EU Flagship Garment Initiative. The EU has funded several programmes in the textile sector, most prominently through the ILO. In April 2017, the Commission hosted the first High-level Conference on responsible supply chain management in the garment sector, bringing together various stakeholders to discuss such a garment initiative. Through a resolution⁴⁸ the European Parliament called on the EU to strengthen its existing approach, also by going beyond voluntary initiatives. The Parliament considers that voluntary initiatives are not effective enough for addressing human rights and labour rights violations in the sector, a view which is shared by many civil society groups. However, adopting binding legislation on due diligence for EU based companies is currently not a priority for the Commission.

6.7 The Bangladesh Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT)

By addressing high water, energy, and chemical use through the adoption of best practices in the textile sector, the Bangladesh PaCT⁴⁹ drives the long-term competitiveness and environmental sustainability of the textile wet processing sector. These best practices lead to declining resource consumption, increasing profits, and an enhanced image in the global apparel market.

⁴⁸ European Parliament Resolution on the EU Flagship Initiative on the Garment Sector (2017)

⁴⁹ More information available on the PaCT website

PaCT addresses four critical issues in the entire textile supply chain:

- Working with leading global brands to adopt environmentally sustainable buying practices
- Promoting best practices in textile factories
- Addressing sector transformation and regulatory policy gaps, and
- Financing resource efficiency projects in textile factories

Led by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), PaCT works in partnership with NGO Solidaridad, the Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, global apparel brands and technology suppliers, textile factories, and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

To date, PaCT has partnered with 200 textile factories to support them with the implementation of sustainable, resource efficiency projects. These projects have not only led to savings in resources but are also realizing cumulative cost savings of an estimated US\$ 16.3 million per year for these factories.

6.8 Living Wage initiatives

The focus of certification schemes and standards is often on minimum wage, rather than living wage. In part this was caused by the lack of a clear definition of living wage.

6.8.1 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

To further the development of an agreed definition of living wage, The Netherlands co-funded research by the living wage experts Dr. Richard Anker and Ms. Martha Anker to develop a universal method to calculate the cost of living⁵⁰.

Together with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the European conference on living wage⁵¹, which took place in Berlin in November 2013. The resulting Declaration of Intent⁵² called upon all stakeholders to “show their commitment to realizing living wages in international supply chains.”

It also provides a “shared understanding of the concept of a living wage and its importance.”

quote

“The Dutch government is at the forefront of the debate on living wage.”

Baptiste Carriere-Pradal, Sustainable Apparel Coalition

⁵⁰ More information available on the Global Living Wage Coalition website

⁵¹ More information available on the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre website

⁵² More information available in the Declaration of Intent

6 International initiatives in the Garment and Textile Sector

In 2016, Germany and The Netherlands co-organized another conference on living wage⁵³, together with the government of Pakistan. The Asian Living Wage Conference targeted production countries to raise awareness on setting and enforcing minimum wages. And to encourage collaboration across production countries and manufacturers to create more of a level playing field, to avoid a race to the bottom against each other.

quote

"I sometimes wonder about the number of initiatives the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs can support in the field of sustainable garment value chains. Is there enough focus?"

Dan Rees, BetterWork

6.8.2 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

The initial study calculated living wage benchmarks for several textile producing countries. Following this initial study on the definition of living wage, in October 2018, a contract was signed with the ILO to test and accredit this method for further use. This testing and simplification of the methodology is funded by The Netherlands.

The conferences did not generate concrete results in the value chains yet, but they did raise awareness of the topic of living wage among governments of production countries, manufacturers and brands. In countries like Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia and Bangladesh, the conference may have encouraged governments to raise the minimum wage.

Within the context of the voluntary sector agreement, a living wage strategy was agreed in October 2018. A training programme is foreseen for 2019, in collaboration with Fair Wear Foundation and the labour unions FNV/CNV.

⁵³ Conference report of the Asian Living Wage Conference, Realising living wage through social dialogue in the Asian textile sector (2016)

6.9 Supporting other Sector Initiatives

There are various initiatives driving better working conditions in the textile sector. The Netherlands supports several of them financially. A selection of these initiatives is listed below.

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also supported the development of the **OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector**⁵⁴, which is also referenced in the OECD section of this report. This document was released in 2017 and offers detailed guidance for the textile and footwear sector. As it was created through a multi-stakeholder approach, it forms the fundament for due diligence efforts in the sector.

The **Social and Labor Convergence Project**⁵⁵ aims to bring together unique perspectives to create an efficient, scalable and sustainable solution for social audits. It wants to create the first industry-wide framework to assess social and labour conditions, a simple, unified industry-wide descriptive tool and verification methodology. It was granted seed funding by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Netherlands also actively supported the convergence mission, together with other countries in a similar or more active role. The Social & Labour Convergence Project has made a strong start to align global audit systems.

In 2013, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ILO initiated the **Pakistan Buyers' Forum**⁵⁶, which seeks to improve cooperation across stakeholders towards sustainable growth of the textile sector in Pakistan. The mission of the Buyers' Forum is to create a platform to facilitate and promote discussion on Buyers' codes of conducts including national and international law as well as international best practices, and their implementation in Pakistan. The program is currently led by the ILO and IDH. The forum is currently shaping three working groups to support the goals of the platform: a government outreach/public policy working group, an enterprise improvement working group, as well as one to strengthen communications towards different stakeholders.

The Netherlands also supports various international programmes and NGOs which are active across several sectors, including the textile sector, such as Solidaridad and IDH.

⁵⁴ More information available on the OECD website

⁵⁵ More information available on the Social and Labor Convergence Project website

⁵⁶ More information available on the Pakistan Buyers Forum website

6 International initiatives in the Garment and Textile Sector

6.10 Lessons learnt on the involvement with the garment and textile sector

1. The activities of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the garment value chains are quite coherent. The stakeholder map developed in 2017 provides an overview of the role of different instruments and initiatives, each targeting different types of stakeholders in the value chains through different initiatives. However, a central vision with a clear theory of change is lacking.
2. The different instruments and initiatives mostly focus on front-running brands and more mainstream companies which are just starting to work on improving their value chains. In parallel, initiatives are taken (or funded) to engage governments in the garment producing countries, which can - over time - also reach brands and other companies lagging behind.
3. The Netherlands supports many initiatives in the textile sector, all working towards a similar objective, yet in different ways. It is unclear whether The Netherlands therefore adds to an unnecessary proliferation of initiatives or is instead well-placed to influence and align different initiatives and to encourage convergence and partnership between the different initiatives. Through the Social & Labor Convergence Project, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs does support alignment and convergence.
4. There is a clear appreciation for the personal commitment at both the political and staff levels working on driving change in textile value chains.
5. Through the extensive investment in more sustainable textile value chains, awareness of issues has been increased and some initial results have been achieved, yet it is unclear how much the situation has really improved for the workers in the sector.

6.11 Assessment against the evaluation criteria of the initiatives (supported) in the garment and textile sector

The various initiatives supported, and the actions taken by the Dutch government to drive responsible business conduct in the textile sector have a *consistent* focus on the working conditions in production countries. And while The Netherlands does not rule out legislation to drive more responsible business behaviour, all initiatives supported in the textile sector are voluntary measures.

These initiatives are very *relevant* within the current context of the textile sector. They drive awareness of issues among different parties in the sector. Yet for most initiatives, it is too early to assess whether the support to these initiatives was either *effective* or *efficient* to improve the impacts in international textile and garment value chains.

As the Dutch government was often (among) the first to provide financial support to these initiatives and organisations, the support has been described as *critical (or additional)*. Early support by the Dutch government also helped secure funding from others as well. By spreading the funds and efforts across so many organisations and initiatives, a question could be raised on the *effectiveness*. It is unclear whether this adds to the proliferation of sector initiatives, or instead that this puts the Dutch government in the ideal position to drive connection and alignment across these initiatives.

Lastly, while the international responsible business contact initiatives taken and supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs seem *consistent* with each other, there is opportunity to streamline policies with other ministries and the EU.

7 Extending the Dutch policy approach

7.1 Context

Internationally, The Netherlands is quite visible in the field of responsible business conduct. Because of its active stance, it is often seen as one of the leading countries in this field. Besides working on specific frameworks (like the OECD Guidelines) and sectors (like extractives and textile) in the international arena, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs also invests in sharing insights about its approach. The underlying objective for this approach is the creation of a more level playing field.

quote

"The Dutch government is progressive and proactive with regards to sustainability. This is recognized not just in Europe but globally. It wants to leverage global ideas and make them scale."

Baptiste Carriere-Pradal, Sustainable Apparel Coalition

7.2 Inputs & activities by the Dutch government

In December 2015, just prior to the EU presidency by The Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised an international **conference on the EU and sustainability in global value chains**⁵⁷. At this conference, Dutch policy makers shared the Dutch consensus model with other countries and the EU.

This focus on making global supply chains more sustainable continued during the **2016 EU presidency by The Netherlands**. This was a positive agenda focus area for the presidency. In May 2016, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs partnered with several NGOs to stage a conference on Business and Human Rights. In the conclusions⁵⁸, the conference hosts call on the EU and member states to promote human rights due diligence

quote

"The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is active in different areas of CSR, Business and Human Rights or responsible business conduct, with an international outlook. This is visible in the EU, UN and OECD context."

Genevieve Jean van Rossum, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁵⁷ More information is available on the EU and Global Value Chains conference website

⁵⁸ EU Conference on Business and Human Rights, Conclusions of the hosts (2016)

by the private sector through different instruments such as multi-stakeholder agreements and company law. Their conclusions also call for the strengthening of the OECD National Contact Points and stress the importance of the UNGPs.



"The Netherlands has taken a lot of initiative. It has made good use of the convening power generated through its EU presidency, thereby creating momentum that still continues today."

Alette van Leur, ILO

At the World Trade Organisation, in 2017, the Dutch Permanent Representation initiated the **Strategic Dialogue on Responsible Business Conduct in Global Value Chains**. It brings together leaders from relevant Geneva-based organisations like the World Trade Organisation, (WTO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Trade Centre (ITC), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and some country representatives. The initial meeting was hosted by The Netherlands. Follow-up meetings have been hosted by the WTO and WBCSD.

Purpose of the strategic dialogue is to create shared ownership across organisations at the leadership level, in order to stimulate a more integrated approach across organisations. It focuses on:

- The opportunities offered by the SDGs for further (inter-agency) collaboration;
- Better linking and scaling up national and international, public and private approaches;
- Fostering awareness and outreach around such approaches.

Prior to this strategic dialogue, the Permanent Representation in Geneva already started to build bridges across different initiatives and organisations. This included encouraging the WTO and UN organisations to connect and integrate each other's programs and content more.

Over the past two years, the Dutch approach, including the voluntary sector agreements, has been presented at the **UN Forum on Business and Human Rights** in Geneva. A relatively large delegation from The Netherlands joins this forum every year, including representatives from companies, NGOs, the National Contact Point and the Socio-Economic Council. Meetings have been held at WTO and WBCSD.



"The Netherlands has a strong, unequivocal voice that trade must incorporate responsible business conduct. Even though it is not part of the G7, or even the G20, it is able to influence other governments by forming partnerships."

Dan Rees, BetterWork

7 Extending the Dutch policy approach

On October 30, 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, the European Economic and Social Council (EESC) and the Social and Economic Council of The Netherlands (SER) co-organized the conference **Sustainable Development Goals and Initiatives for Sustainable Value Chains**⁵⁹. The main goal of the conference was to raise awareness on how varying types of initiatives, actions, policies, and laws can encourage and ensure responsible business conduct and thereby contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, and to develop follow-up actions for upscaling these to EU-level.

The event attracted 250 people, from different countries and different stakeholder constituencies. The plenary sessions included high level keynote speakers from the European Commission, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations. The afternoon workshops focused on four sectors: textile, banking, extractives and agro-food. The Dutch organizers wanted to raise awareness of Dutch initiatives, but also gain insight on other developments and find ways to collaborate across the various initiatives to jointly create a level playing field.

Another objective was to connect the OECD Guidelines and the UNGPs to the Sustainable Development Goals, which have become increasingly important both for the Dutch government and Dutch business. The event explicitly positioned responsible business conduct / CSR as a key way to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

7.3 The resulting output, outcomes and impacts

The strong efforts by the Dutch government to extend its approach to other (EU) countries receives mostly positive reactions.

Yet at the same time, because it is so visible, it also places The Netherlands' own policies and practices under closer scrutiny. An example is the perceived resistance of The Netherlands to join EITI as a full member, rather than telling developing countries what to do as a supporter of the initiative.

⁵⁹ More information is available on the conference website: SDGs and Initiatives for Sustainable Global Value Chains



"The Netherlands has really made a difference in the field of responsible business conduct, perhaps more so than they realise or get credit for. At the same time, Dutch policy makers should not become too self-centred and keep a close watch on interesting developments elsewhere."

Alette van Leur, ILO

The 2015 **conference on the EU and sustainability in global value chains** resulted in declarations on palm oil⁶⁰ and agro-commodities⁶¹, as well as a set of conclusions drawn by The Netherlands as the conference host⁶². These conclusions focus on the role of the EU in making global value chains more sustainable, the multi-stakeholder approach, and the crucial link between aid and trade. As the conference also brought together the different EU ministers for development and trade, it made a clear statement about the need for a more integrated approach.

At the 2018 **Sustainable Development Goals and Initiatives for Sustainable Value Chains** conference, there was general agreement on the need for a more harmonized European approach, and there was a repeated call for an EU Action plan on responsible business conduct. The participants did not have a unified idea on the optimal balance between legal and voluntary measures.

In general, other countries are interested to learn about the **Dutch multi-stakeholder approach**. The Netherlands is appreciated for its leadership, its convening power and its continuous drive for international collaboration and the use of international, harmonized frameworks and tools.



"For Germany, The Netherlands is an important ally to drive the responsible business and human rights agenda at the international level. We see and frame issues quite similarly, yet we may take different approaches in our policies. For example, the comprehensive covenant approach is not (yet) as relevant in the German setting."

Holger Dreiseitl, German Federal Foreign Office

⁶⁰ The Amsterdam Declaration in Support of a Fully Sustainable Palm Oil Supply Chain by 2020 (2015)

⁶¹ The Amsterdam Declaration 'Towards Eliminating Deforestation from Agricultural Commodity Chains with European Countries' (2015)

⁶² EU and Global Value Chains Conference: Conclusions by the host (2015)

7 Extending the Dutch policy approach

However, the multi-stakeholder approach so common in the Dutch processes (*polderen*) cannot easily be copied in all EU countries. Some of the people interviewed felt that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs was somewhat insensitive to the fact that this approach is less applicable in Mediterranean and Eastern European member states. In these countries, it is unlikely that labour unions, NGOs and companies will take place at the same table. Also, for smaller economies, the national sectoral approach may not work in all key sectors, as certain sectors may not have a significant number of headquarters in these countries. In larger countries, the physical distances between key players will limit the ability/willingness to meet regularly, which is needed to build trust and a shared vision. And as the multi-stakeholder approach is not easily implemented in all member states, the voluntary approach is not easy to implement for the EU.

Despite repeated calls by The Netherlands, other governments and other parties for an updated **EU action plan on CSR**, this has not yet been created.

7.4 Lessons learnt

1. The Netherlands is perceived as a country stimulating the multi-stakeholder approach, with power to connect and convene different types of parties and partners.
2. While multi-stakeholder approaches are applicable everywhere, the Dutch approach with voluntary RBC agreements (covenants) is not seen as relevant or possible in all other countries.
3. The Dutch government is perceived to focus mostly on voluntary measures and soft law, compared to countries like France which implemented a law obliging large companies to have a due diligence plan in place and to report on progress.

7.5 Assessment against the evaluation criteria

While there is certain interest from other countries to learn more about the voluntary sectoral initiatives in The Netherlands and cross border partnerships have been established with Germany (textiles) and Belgium (natural stone), it is not yet clear whether the efforts to extend the Dutch responsible business conduct approach are *effective*.

Many of the people interviewed were concerned that the Dutch multi-stakeholder sectoral approach may not be relevant in many countries (yet), hence questioning the *relevance* and *efficiency* of the efforts to extend the Dutch approach to responsible business conduct.

And while the promotion of the Dutch approach and activities by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs are coherent, they may not always be fully *consistent* with other elements of government policy visible to others, such as its international tax policies.



“The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs consistently supports and levers the OECD MNE Guidelines. There are many initiatives in the garment sector, bringing this together in an OECD forum is very useful.”

Dan Rees, BetterWork



8.1 Glossary of terms and abbreviations

- 3TG: tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold or their derivatives, the minerals in scope of the EU Conflict Mineral Regulation
- B&HR: Business and Human Rights
- Covenant: voluntary sector agreement
- CSO: Civil Society Organisation
- CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility (MVO)
- EEAS: European External Action Service, European Union's diplomatic service
- EITI: Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
- EPRM: European Partnership for Responsible Minerals
- EU: European Union
- ICSR: International Corporate Social Responsibility (IMVO in Dutch)
- IDH: the sustainable trade initiative (Instituut Duurzame Handel)
- ILO: International Labour Organisation
- IOB: Policy and Operations Evaluation Department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- MFA: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- MNE: Multinational Enterprise
- NAP: National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
- OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- OECD MNE Guidelines: OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, also referred to as the OECD Guidelines
- RBC: Responsible Business Conduct
- RVO: Netherlands Enterprise Agency, a government agency stimulating entrepreneurs in sustainable, agricultural, innovative and international business
- SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
- SME: Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
- UN: United Nations
- UNGPs: United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- VPs: Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights
- WBCSD: World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- WTO: World Trade Organisation

8.2 Contributors to this evaluation project

This project would not have been possible without the support of the IOB team at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nor without the many people listed below who generously shared their time, insights and further documentation.

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Screening criteria for the broad phase										Background about the initiatives				Intended outcomes			Role NL		Key sources
Initiative short name	Focus on ICSR/RBC	Multilateral or international	Role of the Netherlands	Important developments from 2012-2018	Full name & explanation	Type of initiative (Streur typeology)	Regulatory or agenda-setting	Key target group	Intended outcomes	Development dates	Launch date	Partial overview of ministries involved	Key sources						
EUROPEAN UNION																			
EU Directive on Non-Financial Reporting & on non-binding guidelines	Yes	International	provided input to national law in the last in EU)	launched in 2014, effective 2018 (guidelines for regulation in 2016)	Directive 2014/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2014 (EU No 2014/95/EU) as regards disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups	Legal instrument to improve disclosure and transparency	Regulatory	Large companies with over 500 employees	Companies to annually publish a non-financial statement on environmental, social and employee matters, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery matters.	At EU level: 2011-2014	Applies from 5 December 2014. EU countries must implement their national law by 6 December 2016. Companies have to report as of the 2017 reporting cycle.	EZK in the lead	https://ec.europa.eu						
EU Conflict Minerals Regulation	Yes	International	Strong support during NL EU Presidency	proposed 2014, effective 2021	Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas	Legal instrument to foster due diligence in the supply chain to report on these practices and to have the report audited by a third party	Regulatory	EU companies importing tin, tantalum and tungsten and gold (certain thresholds apply)	To curtail opportunities for armed groups to finance conflict, their own, and gold. This Regulation is designed to provide transparency and certainty as regards the supply practices of Union importers, and of smelters and refiners sourcing from conflict-affected and high-risk areas	Effective January 1 2021	MFA-IMH	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/							
EU Timber Regulation & FLEGT	Yes	international	adopted in 2010, came into force in 2013	EU Timber Regulation (EUTR – Regulation (EU) No 995/2010)	Legal instrument to foster due diligence, improve awareness and raise awareness and capabilities.	Regulatory	Operators and traders in Europe that place timber or timber products (including wood and pulp) in the EU market	Combat illegal logging and improve forest governance. Operators and trader are obliged to exercise due diligence. It is prohibited to place illegally harvested timber (Products) on the EU market and products need to be traceable.	National transposition: 2015-2016	Effective March 2013	MFA-IGG, LNG	http://ec.europa.eu/ http://ec.europa.eu/							
EU Garment Initiative	yes	International		new study launched in 2016 to assess impact of EU consumption on deforestation	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities	agenda setting	EU based companies in the garment industry	Encourage responsible management and enhance sustainability in the garment industry. Avoid human rights abuses such as child labour and industrial accidents.	2011/12 to 2017		DDE in the lead	http://www.europart.europa.eu/							
EU Action Plan on CSR	Yes	International	Request an initiative in other EU states in 2016	Started in 2014, conference & Staff working document in 2017, European Parliament asks Commission to go beyond voluntary measures in April 2017	part of the Forest Law Enforcement and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, which also includes Voluntary Partnership Agreements	Hybrid instrument including guidance on many themes	agenda setting	EU Member States and EU companies	Part of the strategy to fight illegal logging defined in 2003	October 2011.		https://ec.europa.eu/							
Trade and sustainable development chapters in trade agreements	potentially	both		Action plan for 2011-2014 was launched in 2011. No update was created after 2014.	EU Flagship initiative for the garment sector	Economic instrument to raise awareness and potentially improve transparency	agenda setting	companies & governments	Joint vision and action to drive responsible business conduct	Started in 2014									
Country by Country Reporting	yes	international		2015-2016	A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility	Legal instrument to improve disclosure and transparency	Regulatory	Multinational (MNE) Groups located in the EU or with operations in the EU, with consolidated revenue equal or higher than €750,000,000	The objective is to remedy non-transparent practices such as corporate tax avoidance and aggressive tax-planning, which result in an erosion of the taxpayer's tax base and thus the loss of resources for countries. The objective is to remedy non-transparent practices such as base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS).	Adopted in 2017		https://ec.europa.eu/							
European Partnership for Responsible Minerals	yes	international	RVO in charge of day-10-day initiatives, MFA one of the founding partners. Dirk Jan Koch (MFA) was chair until early 2018	2015-2016	Hybrid instrument (mostly informational and partly raising awareness and build capacities)	agenda setting	Mines in conflict and high risk areas	Encourage sourcing channels for responsible minerals that will enable suppliers to	CRAFT code launched July 2018 (financed by EPRM)			https://europeanpartnershipforresponsibleresources.eu/ http://www.responsibleminerals.org/							
Netherlands EU Project focus on Global Value Chains	yes	international	EU Presidency	set up in 2016, the new EU regulation.	COJUNCIL DIRECTIVE (EU) 2016/681 of 25 May 2016 amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards of information in the field of taxation. Companies are required to disclose to authorities, not to the public.	Hybrid instrument	agenda setting	EU member states, EU companies	Identify and mitigate risks. Furthermore, the EPRM motivates supply chain actors and other	Developed 2015-2016		https://www.government.nl/							

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ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT													
Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	Yes	International		development of sector-specific guidelines and due diligence guidance	OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities	Agenda setting	Multinational enterprises (and indirectly their key suppliers)	Multinational enterprises (and indirectly their key suppliers)	2009-2011	May 2011		http://www.oecd.org/
Due diligence guidance	Yes	International	Public consultation input via NCP, Herman Mulder and Hans Groden, but not from MFA	development in 2017-2018	OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities		Multinational enterprises (and indirectly their key suppliers)	Multinational enterprises (and indirectly their key suppliers)	2017-2018	May 2018		http://mme.oecd.org/
Guidance documents for specific sectors/supply chains (6 versions)													
* Minerals	yes	International			OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities	Agenda setting	Any company potentially sourcing minerals or metals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas	Companies to apply due diligences as a basis for responsible supply chain management of minerals, including tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, as well as other mineral sources.	2013-2016	April 2016		https://mme.oecd.org/
* Extractives	Yes	International			OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities		Practitioners in the mining, oil and gas industries	Companies to identify and manage risks with regard to stakeholder engagement activities to ensure they play a role in avoiding and addressing adverse impacts	2013-2017	Feb 2017		http://www.oecd.org/
* Garment and Footwear	Yes	International			OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities		All companies – large and small – operating in garment and footwear supply chains	Establish a common understanding of due diligence in the sector, to help companies meet the due diligence expectations laid out in the OECD MINE Guidelines	2015-2017	2017		http://mme.oecd.org/
* Agriculture	yes	international	Marlen van den Berg (Director General for Foreign Relations at MFA) spoke at the launch		OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities	Agenda setting	Domestic and international, small, medium and large farms across the entire agricultural supply chain, from the farm to the consumer.	Help enterprises observe standards of responsible business conduct to ensure that their operations do not lead to adverse impacts and contribute to sustainable development.	2013-2015	March 2016		https://mme.oecd.org/
* Institutional investors	yes	international			Responsible business conduct in the financial sector	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities		Institutional investors	Institutional investors implement the due diligence recommendations of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises in order to prevent or address adverse impacts related to human and labour rights, the environment, and corruption in their investment portfolios.	2013-2017	March 2017		https://mme.oecd.org/
* Child labour	yes	international			Practical actions for companies to identify and address the worst forms of child labour in mineral supply chains	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities		Companies active in mineral supply chains	Support companies to identify the worst forms of child labour as a serious human rights abuse associated with the extraction, transport or trade of minerals. Ensure that companies do not tolerate profit from, contribute to, assist with or facilitate in the course of doing business	2016-2017	May 2017		https://mme.oecd.org/
Common Initiatives for Export/Credit Agencies	yes	International			OECD Recommendation of the Organisation for Officially Supported Export Credits and Environmental and Social Due Diligence	Informational instrument to raise awareness and build capacities	Agenda setting	Export credit agencies	Coherence between ECA policies creates their international environmental, climate change, social and human rights policies, and their commitments under relevant international agreements and conventions, thereby contributing towards sustainable development.	2012-2016	Revised version published in April 2016	DIO and FIN are in the lead	http://www.oecd.org/
Anti-bribery compliance working group	Yes	International	Signatory		OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions, monitoring system for OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions	Hybrid instrument to raise awareness and build capacities	Monitoring - related - legally binding standards	Governments and companies	Responsible for monitoring the implementation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, the 2009 Recommendation and related instruments.	1997 Convention, 2009 additional recommendations			http://www.oecd.org/

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UNITED NATIONS															
Sustainable Development Goals	Yes	international	SDG charter, SDG ambassador?	Launched in 2015	Known by several names: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDGs, Global Goals	Hybrid instrument, focus on partnering and informational to align developments	agenda setting	initially governments, MNC business, NGOs, others as well	To eradicate poverty and to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. They address the global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity and peace and justice	2013-2015	September 2015		https://www.un.org/		
Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights	Yes	International		Launched in 2011	The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are a set of guidelines for States and companies to prevent, address and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations.	Hybrid instrument to raise awareness and improve transparency	agenda setting	Governments and companies	to prevent, address and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations	2005-2011	launched in 2011		https://www.business-human-rights.org/		
National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights	Yes	National plan	Drive uptake of UNGPs in Netherlands and by Dutch companies	Launched in 2014	National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights	Informational instrument to raise awareness	agenda setting	companies	The government expects businesses to take concrete action to respect human rights in their own operations and elsewhere in their production chains. In addition, they expect industry organisations and other stakeholders to have a responsibility to support such actions.	2011-2013	2013		https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/		
Global Compact	yes	international	local, global compact chapter	Launched in 2000, clear linkage to SDGs developed in 2015-2018	United Nations Global Compact	Partnership instrument to build capacities	agenda setting	companies	encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies, and to report on their implementation		launched in 2000		https://www.unglobalcompact.org/		
Global Compact on stakeholder participation	Yes	national				Informational instrument to raise awareness	agenda setting	companies					http://www.governanceland.nl/		
SDG Charter	yes	National organization	MFA provides main funding for the SDG charter	started in 2013, foundation set up in 2016	SDG Charter	partnership instrument to raise awareness and build capacity	agenda setting	companies, NGOs, governments	The Dutch SDG Charter convenes diverse actors, catalyzes joint action and creates synergy towards the SDGs.	started in 2013, foundation set up in 2016		MFA	https://www.sdgcharter.nl/		
Human Cities Coalition	yes	Dutch public private partnership	Carola van Rinsoer is permanent representative	Founded in 2016, unclear whether it will continue beyond 2018	Human Cities Coalition	Partnership instrument to raise awareness and build capacity	agenda setting	Companies, cities, governments	Shape the future development of cities to make them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG 11). Channel the energy of the public to create economic and social development that benefits everyone.	2016	2016		https://www.humanitiescities.co/		
Dutch SDG Investing Agenda	yes	Partnership within Dutch financial sector	Facilitated by SDG Charter, which is funded by MFA	started in 2016	Dutch SDG Investing Agenda	partnership instrument to raise awareness and build capacity	agenda setting	financial institutions, public sector	To help establish "highways for SDG Investing" - at home and abroad.	2016	December 2016	DDE is in the lead	https://www.sdgi-nl.org/		
UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights	yes	international		started in 2014, zero draft launched in 2019	Legally binding instrument to regulate the international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises.	Legal instrument to raise awareness and improve disclosure	regulatory	transnational corporations and business enterprises	To strengthen the respect, promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights in the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises. To ensure effective access to justice and remedy to victims of human rights violations in the context of business activities of transnational character, and to prevent the occurrence of such violations.	Started in 2014	Zero draft launched in 2018		https://www.business-human-rights.org/		
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION															
International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development	yes	international	One of the main donors		International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, set up to act as a bridge between NGOs, developing countries and the World Trade Organization.	Hybrid, not-for-profit organisation aiming to influence the international trade system and related policy developments	Agenda setting for policy	Governments	To advance sustainable development through trade-related policymaking.	Founded in 1996			https://www.ictsd.org/		

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INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION												
ILO Core Conventions and Declaration on Fundamental Rights at Work	Yes	international	Input? Ratification	The Netherlands received several observations and recommendations from the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (COA) in 2012. The ratification of P029, C170, C148, C139, Maritime Labour Convention amendments	ILO International Labour Standards (which can be either conventions or recommendations) identified eight conventions as 'fundamental', covering subjects that are considered as fundamental principles and rights at work: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. These principles are also covered in the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998).	The conventions are legally binding international treaties. The recommendations are instruments to raise awareness and build capacity for CSR.	Conventions are regulatory. The recommendations are agenda setting.	Governments, employers and workers.	social justice, through which every working man and woman can claim freely and on the basis of equality of the wealth which they have helped to generate	Ongoing since 1919	Differs per convention	DDE in the lead, SZW in the lead thematically for ILO
ILO Conference activities regarding country resolutions					International Labour Conference, held annually in June to bring together governments, employers and employer delegates of the ILO Member states							DDE in the lead, SZW in the lead thematically for ILO
Better Work Program	Yes	Currently in 7 countries	financial support		The Better Work Programme is a partnership between the ILO and IFC. Launched in August 2006 in order to improve labour standards and competitiveness in global supply chains.	Partnering to raise awareness and build capacity	agenda setting	Garment industry	bringing together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and respect of labour rights for workers, and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses	launched in 2006, new strategy launched 2018-2022		DDE in the lead, SZW in the lead thematically for ILO
Decent Work Agenda	yes	international			ILO Decent Work Agenda	Agenda setting	Agenda setting	Business	productive employment and decent work for all, job creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue, with gender equality as a crosscutting objective.	Integrated into the SDGs in 2015		DDE in the lead, SZW in the lead thematically for ILO
OTHER INITIATIVES												
System Initiatives Working Group Economic Forum	yes	international			World Economic System Initiatives (4 topics: consumption, environment and natural resource security, financial and monetary systems, food, health and nutrition, and digital technology, trade and investment, long-term investing, infrastructure and development, mobility, and production.)	Partnering instrument to raise awareness and build capacity	agenda setting	WEF Constituents	To enable our constituents (leading global companies) to make sustained positive change	all on different timelines		https://www.welorum.org/
Amsterdam Declaration on Sustainable Supply Chain Palm Oil	yes	??	co-signatory		The Amsterdam Declaration in Support of a Fully Sustainable Palm Oil Supply Chain by 2020	Hybrid instrument to support, including capacity building and transparency	supporting	Support for companies in the sector by governments	Support and mobilize support for the private	initiated and designed in 2015	2015	DDE in the lead
Land Governance Multi Stakeholder Dialogue	yes	Dutch partnership	MFA is one of the organizers	signed in 2015	The Dutch Land Governance Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Land Governance for Equitable Growth (LUG) is one of the five-year programs designed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen the role of knowledge and research in sustainable development, innovation, alleviation and international cooperation	Partnering instrument to improve disclosure	agenda setting	Dutch private government, knowledge institutes and NGOs	invest time and energy to effectively contribute from the Netherlands to the improvements of Land governance in countries in which the Netherlands is active.			ICG in the lead
Roundtable for sustainable soy	yes	international		launched in 2010	Round Table for Responsible Soy (RTS)	Hybrid instrument (informal), partnering to raise awareness, build capacity and improve disclosure	agenda setting	Companies in the soy supply chain and related NGOs	Encourage current and future soybean is produced in a responsible manner to reduce social and environmental impacts while maintaining or improving the economic status for the producer.			DDE in the lead

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OTHER INITIATIVES (continued)																		
Roundtable for sustainable palm oil	yes	international		Org started in 2006, standards launched in 2010, updated in 2012.	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)	Hybrid instrument, partnership			transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm	Initiated in 2001, formally launched in 2004, supply chain certification systems introduced in 2009.		DDE in the lead	https://rspo.org/					
Sustainable Apparel Coalition	yes	international	location of HQ		Sustainable Apparel Coalition	Hybrid instrument (informational and partnership) across themes of a wariness, building capacity and improving disclosure and transparency	agenda setting, standard setting	companies in the apparel industry	A set of standardized supply chain measurement tools for all industry participants. Addresses inefficiencies, drive performance improvement and works to achieve environmental and social transparency	Higg Index: 2010-2012 in December 2013	1.0 launched in July 2012, 2.0 launched in December 2013		https://www.apparelcoalition.org/					
Dutch and German Initiative on Living Wage in Textiles in Asia	yes	multilateral	NL, Germany and Pakistan are partners to the ALWC	Conference in 2016	Asian Living Wage Conference	Partnering instrument to raise awareness and build capacity	agenda setting	companies in the apparel industry	Living wage paid to workers within the apparel industry (and ultimately other industries as well)	Event in May 2016			https://www.business-human-rights.org/ https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/					
Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative	yes	international	Supporting country EITI NL, against is part of RVO	In 2018, the Netherlands applied for EITI membership as an EITI country. In 2013, EITI standard launched	The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is designed specifically to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources.	Hybrid instrument (informational and partnership) to improve disclosure and transparency	agenda setting	Companies in the extractive industry as well as governments	An open and accountable management of extractive resources (oil, gas, mineral resources). The initiative is an open government and company systems inform public debate and promote understanding/trust	Announced in 2002, 2009, 2010, 2013	2013 launch of EITI standards		https://eiti.org/					
Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights for extractive sector companies	yes	international	NL is participant		The Voluntary Principles are the industry guidelines designed specifically to raise awareness, build capacity and improve transparency	Hybrid instrument (informational and partnership) to raise awareness, build capacity and improve transparency	agenda setting	Companies, NGOs and NCOs focused on extractive industries	a set of principles designed to guide the security of their operations within an operating framework that encourages respect for human rights.	established in 2000			http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/					
Social and Labor Convergence Project	yes	international	Seedfunding	initiated in 2015, launched in 2016	Social and Labor Convergence Project	Hybrid instrument to drive awareness and transparency	agenda setting	companies in the apparel industry	A simple, unified and effective industrywide descriptive tool and verification methodology. Increases transparency, eliminates audit fatigue, improves standards and encourages measures and understands working conditions.	2015 till now								
Amsterdam Declaration on zero deforestation	yes	??	co-signatory	launched in 2015	Amsterdam Declaration "Towards Eliminating Deforestation from Agricultural Commodity Chains with European Countries"	Hybrid instrument to support industry change, including capacity building and transparency	supporting	Support for companies in the sector by governments	zero net deforestation and, in particular, underlying the global importance to preserve primary forests and high conservation value areas a.o. through responsible supply chain management.	initiated and signed in 2015	2015		https://www.euandgvc.nl/					
Natural stone Belgium and Netherlands	yes	NL and BE parties	Convening parties through SER		IRRC Agreements: Natural Stone Pilots	Partnering instrument to build awareness and build capacity	agenda setting	companies in the stone industry	To avoid risks in terms of human rights, environmental impacts and about the way natural stone is quarried and traded.	Pilots will be implemented in 2017-2020			https://www.ivoconvenanten.nl/					
Kimberley Process	yes	international	NL is a member through the EU membership		The Kimberley Process is a binding agreement that imposes extensive requirements on every participant. The visible evidence of this commitment is the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme that both safeguards the shipment of 'rough diamonds' and certifies them as conflict free.	Partnership instrument to improve transparency	agenda setting, standard setting	Industry	Eradicating rough diamonds used to finance wars against governments around the world	Established in 2000, UN support in 2003			https://www.kimberleyprocess.com/					
G20 anti-corruption	yes	international	NL is a member through the EU membership	Annual meetings at G20 summits	United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) Anti-Corruption Working Group initiated in 2010 by G20	Hybrid instrument (illegal, informational and partnership) to build awareness and improve transparency	agenda setting and potentially regulatory	Contries, in collaboration with business and civil society	Establish legal and policy frameworks that promote a clean business environment and encourage to assist countries in their capacity building efforts to combat corruption.				https://www.g20.org/					

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