

Terms of Reference

**Dutch Humanitarian Assistance**

Funding and diplomacy 2015-2020

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Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB),  
ministry of Foreign Affairs

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

BHOS	Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking)
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
DAFD	Development Approaches to Forced Displacement (Opvang in de Regio)
DRA	Dutch Relief Alliance
DRF	Dutch Relief Fund
DSH	Stability and Humanitarian Aid Division (Directie Stabiliteit en Humanitaire Hulp)
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department
EU	European Union
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHPSS	Mental Health and Post-Social Support
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODSG	Office of the Deputy Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs
OSDG	OCHA Donor Support Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

## Introduction: why this evaluation?

Humanitarian needs continue to grow over time and continuously demand high levels of funding, while humanitarian crises are more complex than ever before. Humanitarian response therefore has an inherent need to always look for new answers. Policymakers at the Stability and Humanitarian Aid Division (DSH) at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs have expressed a strong interest to learn from past interventions and to further strengthen the targeting of financial and human resources for humanitarian action.

Humanitarian assistance<sup>1</sup> saves lives, alleviates suffering and maintains human dignity following conflict, shocks and natural disasters. The characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of foreign assistance and development aid are that it is intended to be governed by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. It is also intended to be short-term in nature, providing for activities during and in the immediate aftermath of emergencies. Between 2015 and 2020 the Netherlands spent a total of EUR 2.4 billion on humanitarian assistance. This is close to 15% of all ODA expenditures of the Netherlands in the same period.

One of the main challenges of international humanitarian action is that humanitarian needs grow faster than available funding. In the past decade, humanitarian appeals have been underfunded by a steady 40 percent.<sup>2</sup> Since 2007, global needs for global humanitarian assistance have grown more than five-fold. This increase is not only about numbers. The elaboration of what those needs are, has made humanitarian assistance a more comprehensive ambition. It is not only about food, water, shelter and protection. New themes and humanitarian priorities have been taken on board like the development of basic infrastructure, support for livelihoods, MHPSS (Mental Health and Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome), the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The cost of meeting those needs is also growing.<sup>3</sup> Crises have become more complex and more protracted with growing insecurity affecting the delivery of humanitarian aid. Some 2 percent of the global population – i.e. more than 160 million people, depend on international humanitarian assistance to survive. Between 2008 and 2012 more than 25% of all international Humanitarian Assistance came from private donors<sup>4</sup>.

How do governments succeed in maintaining public support for these continuously high expenses? What is the role of private fundraising, and how can local responders best be supported? Do increasing needs merely require more funding, or could available funding be spent in a better way? This policy evaluation intends to contribute to answering these questions. It will explore how the Netherlands has influenced, supported and facilitated humanitarian actors to become better and more timely at targeting help to the neediest. It will specifically look into the question of needs based action: How have funding decisions and diplomatic efforts facilitated needs based interventions and adherence to humanitarian principles by humanitarian organizations and political actors? To answer questions on how to spend more and how to spend better, this policy evaluation will seek the latest insights on innovation and localization of humanitarian assistance. It will examine

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<sup>1</sup> In this evaluation, a distinction is made between humanitarian assistance as humanitarian aid through funding or in-kind assistance, and humanitarian diplomacy as diplomatic efforts to facilitate humanitarian assistance and to influence international humanitarian policy.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Saez, Three key ways to modernize humanitarian finance. Commentary, Centre for Global Development, 10 February 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Lowcock (2020), Opening remarks of the under-secretary for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, Mark Lowcock, at the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week Inter-network Day, Geneva 05 February 2020. Geneva: OCHA.

<sup>4</sup> Chloe Stirk, Humanitarian Assistance from non-state donors. What is it worth?, April 2014, Development Initiatives.

as well if and how humanitarian partners have been able to communicate and connect with the Dutch public.

IOB will look into various levels of humanitarian policy implementation: decision-making about funding, diplomatic efforts, the performance of the Netherlands as a humanitarian donor and political actor, and the added value of various funding channels and humanitarian organizations in the field.

Policymakers at DSH have expressed a strong wish to learn more about the relative strengths and weaknesses of different funding channels and implementing humanitarian organizations. Underlying policy questions that were brought up by DSH are, among others, how can better informed funding decisions lead to more and better results in terms of needs based action? Are current funding mechanisms adequate enough to contribute to localization of humanitarian assistance and to participation of affected communities? Is the current distribution of funds over different humanitarian channels and actors a wise choice given the specific qualities of each of these channels and actors?

IOB will not attempt to answer the value for money question nor compare the efficiency or effectiveness of different channels and organizations. Given the variety of interventions and contexts, this is unfeasible and of limited use. Building on the findings of the 2015 humanitarian policy review,<sup>5</sup> IOB will address the question of relative strengths and weaknesses of different funding channels and implementing organizations by testing the assumptions underlying funding decisions took place, using three case studies for in-depth analysis. Apart from looking at the validity of the assumptions, IOB will explore how different channels and humanitarian partners have delivered results on three policy objectives of Dutch humanitarian assistance since 2015: 1. the ambition to deliver timely, needs-based, effective, principled<sup>6</sup> and high-quality humanitarian assistance, 2. the ambition to be coherent with broader development approaches and crisis responses, and 3. the ambitions to innovate and localize.

IOB will seek to share preliminary results of this Policy Evaluation as they become available, and to maximize the relevance and impact of its work by timely delivery of sub-papers (see 7.2 Planning).

This evaluation will also take into account parallel work done in the framework of a policy evaluation by IOB on stability in fragile contexts. Through the case study on humanitarian work and diplomacy inside Syria, this evaluation is closely related to a parallel IOB study on Dutch support to refugees and host communities in the Syria region. Both studies will analyze the workings of the humanitarian-development nexus in practice, and will provide relevant insights in questions concerning policy coordination in this emerging policy domain.

IOB's last Policy Review of Humanitarian Assistance was published in 2015. This new IOB evaluation will support the minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation to account to Parliament and Dutch society for the financial expenditures between 2015 and 2020. It is one of the building blocks for the Policy Review of article 4 of the budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation – Peace, Security and Sustainable Development – that is scheduled for 2022.

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<sup>5</sup> IOB (2015) *Beleidsdoorlichting van de Nederlandse humanitaire hulp, 2009-2014*. Den Haag: IOB.

<sup>6</sup> Principled humanitarian assistance is based on humanity, and neutral, impartial as well as independent from foreign policy considerations, from economic, military and security interests.

# 1. Principles and Priorities: Humanitarian Policy of the Netherlands

## 1.1 Trends and risks

Climate related disasters and armed conflicts have been the drivers of a significant increase in humanitarian needs during the period this policy evaluation will cover. The conflict in Syria has led to the world's largest refugee crisis, with more than 11 million Syrians living in forced displacement. A persistent high number of chronic crises resulted in mass displacement and a global decline in agricultural food production, resulting in growing levels of hunger. After a prolonged period of decline in levels of hunger between 2010 and 2016, undernourishment now affects up to 820 million people.<sup>7</sup> Between 2015 and 2020 the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased from 76 million to more than 160 million,<sup>8</sup> the highest figure in decades.

The humanitarian impact of armed conflicts and natural disasters has also changed in nature. A few trends of concern have come to light. Aid workers and organizations have increasingly become military targets. The humanitarian space and the adherence to International Humanitarian Law have more than before become under pressure. Climate change has made people in need more vulnerable and has exacerbated the impact of natural disasters. Forcibly displaced people often settle in urban areas as opposed to refugee camps, thereby challenging traditional forms of humanitarian aid delivery and demanding new responses. There is a growing realization that conflict and disaster affect women and girls disproportionately.

## 1.2 Developments in Dutch Humanitarian Policy, 2015-2020

In response to increased complexity of emergencies and to rising humanitarian needs across the world, the Netherlands has maintained a humanitarian policy that is founded on the humanitarian imperative and follows a needs based approach, while pushing for reforms on international fora. The humanitarian imperative is the conviction that action should be taken to prevent or alleviate humanitarian suffering arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this principle<sup>9</sup>. Dutch humanitarian policy is based on the still widely accepted – although by no means universally implemented – principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. The ambition is to deliver humanitarian assistance where it is needed most urgently, and to prevent aid from being used as a political instrument.

### **Policy documents**

The 2011 Dutch humanitarian policy document set out four priority goals: 1. more self-reliance and resilience, 2. more effectiveness through less duplication and more coordination, 3. humanitarian access and neutrality and 4. greater accountability.<sup>10</sup> These priorities were responding to calls for a clearer Dutch policy in the 2006 and 2011 DAC peer reviews. However, the 2015 IOB Review of Humanitarian Policy emphasized the need for adjusting this policy in the face of the increasing

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<sup>7</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2017) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017: Building resilience for peace and food security*. Rome: FAO; FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2019) *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019: Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. Rome: FAO.

<sup>8</sup> OCHA (2015) *Global Humanitarian Overview 2015: A consolidated appeal to support people affected by disaster and conflict*. Geneva: OCHA; OCHA (2020) *Global Humanitarian Overview 2020*. Geneva: OCHA.

<sup>9</sup> SPHERE Standards and *The Humanitarian Charter*: "Sphere Standards are widely known and internationally recognized common principles and universal minimum standards for the delivery of quality humanitarian response. The Humanitarian Charter expresses agencies commitment to promoting humanitarian principles, and to measuring the results of their action. The Humanitarian Charter is in part a statement of established legal rights and obligations, in part a statement of shared belief".

<sup>10</sup> KST 32605-64 (2011) *Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 64. Notitie 'Hulp aan mensen in Nood'*, ingediend door de Staatssecretaris van Buitenlandse Zaken, 23 december 2011.

complexity of many crises as well as the rapidly changing international context. IOB recommended a more realistic policy with a long term focus on specific themes to which the Netherlands could bring added value. The ministry reacted by making additional and more flexible funding available for humanitarian aid and by setting a number of long term priorities: assistance to refugees, innovation, preparedness and security of humanitarian aid workers. The World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 provided a stepping stone for the further development and refinement of Dutch policy on Humanitarian assistance.

### **The Grand Bargain**

The international donor community responded to the unprecedented humanitarian needs since 2015 with new agreements on effectiveness of aid delivery, coordination and humanitarian donorship. The Netherlands has been an active player in the preparation of these international responses. In May 2016 the World Humanitarian Summit appealed to donors to provide more predictable and un-earmarked funding and asked humanitarian organizations to work more closely together and be more transparent about their cost effectiveness.

This Summit resulted in the Grand Bargain, an agreement among the 15 biggest donors of humanitarian aid and the 15 biggest implementing organizations. In practice, the Grand Bargain means that in case of an emergency donors make funding available on the basis of one needs assessment and one joint call for aid, thus lowering overhead and increasing collaboration between humanitarian organizations, while giving local organizations have a bigger say in how aid is being distributed and reducing reporting obligations. The Grand Bargain also promoted the increased use of multi-annual, flexible and un-earmarked funding. The Netherlands pushes for actual implementation of the Grand Bargain by its signatory parties. To contribute to policy development on these pertinent themes, this evaluation will reflect specifically on three priorities of the Grand Bargain: the humanitarian-development Nexus, innovation and localization in humanitarian aid delivery (see 6.1). In 2019 Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development became Grand Bargain Eminent Person, which enabled the Netherlands to play a role as catalyst and driving force behind the realization of the ambitions of the Grand Bargain.

### **Global Compact on refugees**

Parallel to this, the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis triggered a new response to crises of forced displacement. Aiming to offer perspectives to people in extended situations of forced displacement and to ease pressure on host countries while seeking a financially sustainable aid mechanism, a development oriented approach bridging humanitarian needs and development perspectives for both displaced and host communities took shape in the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (September 2016) and its annexed comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.<sup>11</sup>

The declaration identifies four principled objectives for refugee response: Ease pressure on host countries and communities; Enhance Refugee Self-reliance; Expand third country solutions; and Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. The Declaration further invites the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) to take the lead in a multi-stakeholder process of the development of a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), that builds on the principles,

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations (2016) New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. Adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016, A/RES/71/1.

key elements and objectives as identified in the New York Declaration, leading to the Global Compact on Refugees. In December 2018 the GCR was signed. It reiterates these four objectives.

### **Development Approaches to Forced Displacement**

The Netherlands subscribes and supports all four objectives of the GCR and has integrated Forced Displacement Response ('Development Approaches to Forced Displacement' – DAFD<sup>12</sup>) as a distinct pillar in its integrated migration policy. DAFD aims to bring together humanitarian and development aid to crises of forced displacement, striving for reduced aid dependency and increased self-reliance of displaced people. This policy innovation builds on a longer debate about bridging the gap between relief and development,<sup>13</sup> and responds directly to recommendations made by the IOB Review of Humanitarian Policy that humanitarian assistance should not exist in isolation of other policy domains but requires an integrated vision and strategy without losing sight of humanitarian principles.<sup>14</sup>

Initially funding for forced displacement was made available from the humanitarian aid budget and through targeted additional funding in response to the Syria crisis.<sup>15</sup> Since 2018 DAFD is a structural item on the BHOS annual budget, and it is addressed in the Policy Note Global Prospects as a new policy priority.<sup>16</sup> In doing so, humanitarian aid is deliberately kept separate from the increasingly politicized debate about refugee responses and migration, thus preventing the influence of political motives on the humanitarian budget. On the ground, humanitarian and development responses to crises of forced displacement mutually co-exist and are closely interlinked. The issue of policy coherence will be addressed throughout this evaluation, and will be subject to specific analysis in the case study on the Syria crisis.

### **Humanitarian Diplomacy**

Dutch humanitarian policy acknowledges that addressing the needs of the most vulnerable requires more than just funding. In 2019, the new policy framework for humanitarian diplomacy and emergency aid 'Mensen Eerst' ('People First) made humanitarian diplomacy an indispensable element of Dutch humanitarian policy.<sup>17</sup> Diplomatic efforts are essential to ensure access to those in need, to uphold the humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence and to make sure that humanitarian agencies are acting in line with donor policies. This position is not entirely new – in 2015 IOB already found that the Netherlands actively enforced the humanitarian principles and engaged in diplomacy to ensure that victims of conflict had access to assistance. However, the

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<sup>12</sup> In Dutch this pillar is described as "Opvang in de Regio" which translates in English as "Hosting refugees in the region of origin, in the neighboring countries to their countries of origin"

<sup>13</sup> IOB (2013) *Linking Relief and Development: more than old solutions for old problems?* Den Haag: IOB.

<sup>14</sup> IOB (2015) *Beleidsdoorlichting van de Nederlandse humanitaire hulp, 2009-2014*. Den Haag: IOB, pp. 15, 44.

<sup>15</sup> KST 19637-2030 (2015) Vreemdelingenbeleid Nr. 2030. Brief van de Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie en de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, 08 september 2015; KST 32623-163 (2016) Actuele situatie in Noord Afrika en het Midden-Oosten. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 22 februari 2016. KST 32623-166 (2016) Actuele situatie in Noord Afrika en Midden-Oosten. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 21 juni 2016; KST 34485-1 (2016) Voorjaarsnota 2016. Brief van de Minister van Financiën, 27 mei 2016, p. 5; KST 32605 en 19637-182 (2016) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking; Vreemdelingenbeleid. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 02 mei 2016.

<sup>16</sup> KST 34952-1 (2018) Investeren in perspectief – Goed voor de wereld, goed voor Nederland. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 18 mei 2018, pp. 43-44.

<sup>17</sup> KST 32605-62 (2019) Nieuw beleidskader humanitaire hulp en indicatieve planning noodhulp 2019. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 29 maart 2019.



instrument has gained in importance as conflicts have become more protracted and intense, while combatants have shown a growing disregard of international humanitarian law.

Under minister Kaag, the Netherlands feels a strong responsibility to voice the needs of affected populations and to engage in diplomatic efforts to bring about structural long term solutions to complex humanitarian situations. Humanitarian diplomacy is also used to advocate the priorities of the Dutch humanitarian agenda, such as MHPSS (Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support) and innovation. This advocacy takes place in governing and advisory bodies of e.g. UNHCR, WFP, OCHA, and UNICEF (United Nations Children Fund), the General Assembly of the UN, in political capitals, the EU and in direct contacts with state and non-state parties involved in a crisis.

### **Priority themes**

The stronger focus in policy and humanitarian diplomacy found its way in action plans and general instructions on specific themes and priorities. In the five years covering this policy evaluation, the following thematic priorities have been identified for specific action<sup>18</sup>: protection and empowerment of women and girls, enhancing the position and capacity of local aid workers, reform of the international system of humanitarian aid, the importance of innovative ideas and working methods for improved humanitarian action, mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS), sexual exploitation, abuse and intimidation in the humanitarian sector, conflict and hunger, the triple NeXus between humanitarian action, sustainable development and peacebuilding, disabled people, and preventive action.<sup>19</sup> From the perspective of growing humanitarian needs, growing costs of aid delivery and an increasing funding gap IOB will explore the latest insights on innovation and localization of humanitarian assistance.

## 2. Channels and recipient organizations and countries

In 2015 IOB noted that approaches and working methods of the ministry were still strongly geared to managing projects and there was too little time for more focused action on key themes and priorities. A large number of individual activities were supported (300, in fact, between 2009 and 2014) and the work involved in managing this project funding was considerable. IOB recommended reducing the number of activities and concentrating on multi-annual contributions to humanitarian agencies. It also recommended exploring the possibilities for increased support to local organizations and NGOs.

### 2.1 Types of funding: Un-earmarked, softly earmarked, and earmarked funding

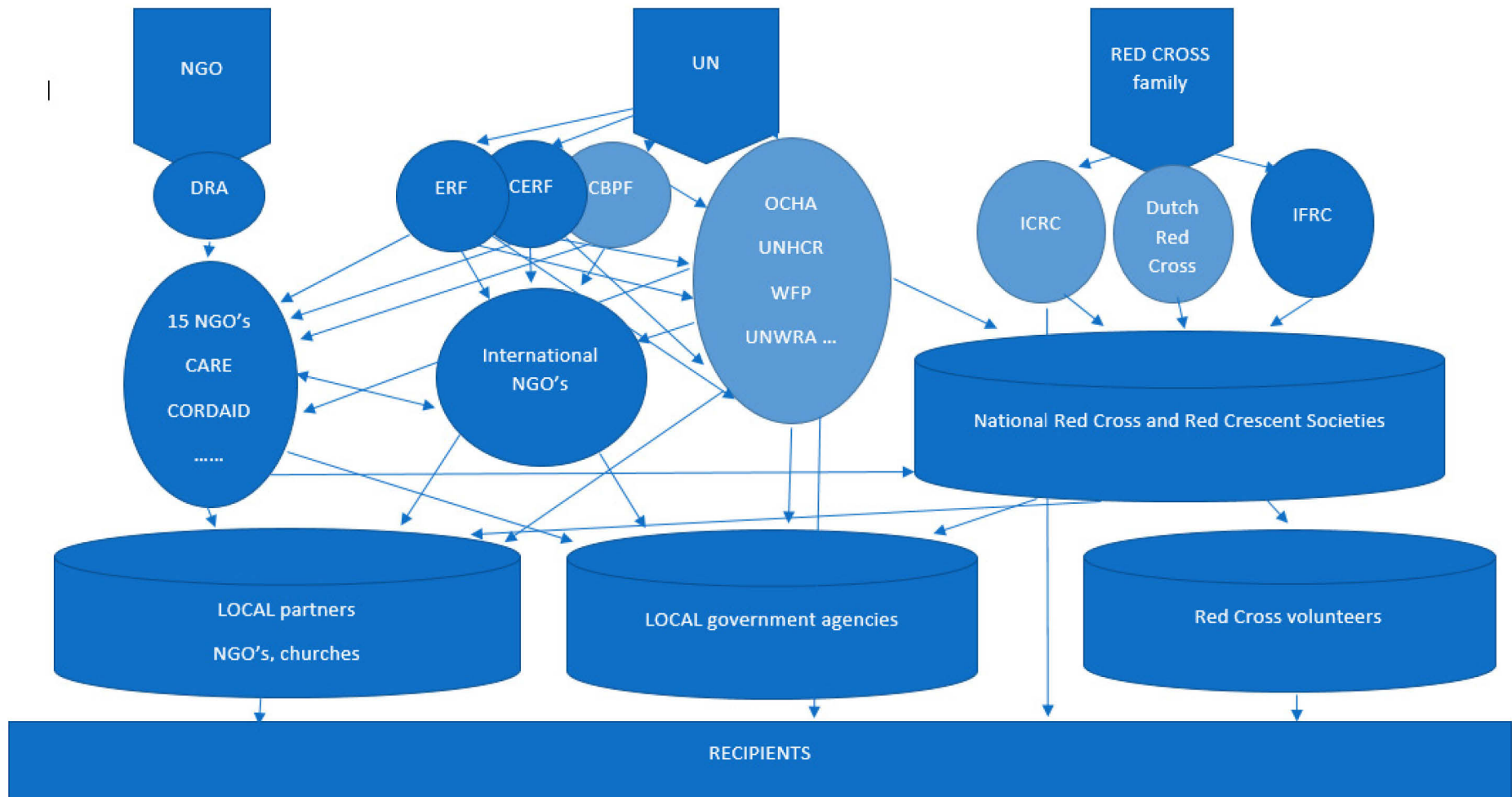
Over the years the Netherlands has become a strong advocate for un-earmarked multi-annual funding mechanisms. The ambition is to make aid more predictable, to allow recipient organizations to better prepare for, and to have quicker access to funding in cases of imminent crises, to

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<sup>18</sup> These thematic priorities have been mentioned in yearly letters to parliament on the spending of Humanitarian Assistance as well as in KST 32605-62 (2019) Nieuw beleidskader humanitaire hulp en indicatieve planning noodhulp 2019. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 29 maart 2019.

<sup>19</sup> KST 32605-164 (2015) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 164 Motie van het Lid van Laar Voorgesteld 29 april 2015; KST 32605-166 (2015) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 166, Brief van de minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 4 juni 2015; KST 32605-170 (2015) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 170, Verslag van een Algemeen Overleg, Vastgesteld 29 juli 2015; KST 32605-183 (2016) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 183, Brief van de minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 12 mei 2016; KST 32605 en 19637-182 (2016) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking; Vreemdelingenbeleid. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 02 mei 2016, pp. 76-8; KST 34952-78, 2019, 34 952 Investeren in Perspectief – Goed voor de Wereld, Goed voor Nederland, Nr. 78 Verslag van een Algemeen Overleg, Vastgesteld 11 juli 2019; p. 11, 17.

Figure 1: Funding channels, implementing organizations Dutch Humanitarian Assistance





immediately start with aid delivery in case of an acute crisis, to deploy funding where it is most needed or where existing means are inadequate, and to respond to humanitarian consequences of violent conflict.<sup>20</sup> Flexible funding also allows the organizations to pay attention to so-called silent disasters, i.e. situations in which humanitarian needs are big while there is insufficient support.<sup>21</sup>

Within a complex web of aid organizations, funding channels, partners and beneficiaries, three types of funding can be distinguished: un-earmarked funding, softly earmarked funding, and earmarked funding (see figure 1):

1. Multi-annual, flexible, and **un-earmarked** contributions consists of core funding to United Nations (UN) Humanitarian organizations (including the Central Emergency Response Fund, CERF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This flexible funding through multi-annual un-earmarked contributions accounted for the largest part of Dutch humanitarian funding with an average of 41% of the total humanitarian aid budget in 2015 and 55% in 2019.
2. **Softly earmarked** funding is funding in the form of annual decisions early in the year to make money available for ongoing chronic humanitarian crises and specific decisions in response to new developments and acute crises during the year. This category contains all contributions to Dutch Relief Alliance and to the Dutch Red Cross (block grant) as well as all Dutch contributions to Country Based Pooled Funds coordinated by UN OCHA. The Netherlands has a say in allocating these funds to specific humanitarian crises, not to specific projects. Softly earmarked contributions accounted for a slowly decreasing part of Dutch humanitarian funding with an average of 57% of the total humanitarian aid budget in 2015 and 37% in 2020.
3. **Earmarked funding** consists of targeted contributions to specific projects promoting priority themes like MHPSS, conflict & hunger, innovation. Since 2015 an average of 3% of the Dutch humanitarian budget is spent this way.

Funding decisions are based on the UN's Consolidated Appeals Process taking into account factors such as: high needs; the number of people affected; the availability of other aid and funding needs on the basis of coverage of emergency appeals of the UN and Red Cross; available Dutch budget; context of the crisis and possibilities to provide aid.<sup>22</sup> In determining the contribution per crisis, use is made of the INFORM index and OCHA's financial tracking service. Earmarked funding is also paid out early in the year, giving organizations timely access to means, allowing them to deploy means as effective as possible and to identify where they have added value. In addition, the Netherlands also contributes to European Emergency Aid through ECHO (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department) via the regular EU budget.

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<sup>20</sup> KST 32605-156 (2015) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 156, Brief van de minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 23 februari 2015; KST 32605-176 (2016) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 176 Brief van de minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 25 januari 2016; KST 32605-194 (2017) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 194 Brief van de minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 25 januari 2017; KST 35000-XVII-2 (2018) Vaststelling van de begrotingsstaat van Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (XVII) voor het jaar 2019 Nr. 2 Memorie van Toelichting, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> The Netherlands also joined the [Start Fund](#) that was set up to provide aid in forgotten humanitarian crises and to react fast to peaks in long-term humanitarian crises. KST 34952-1 (2018) Investeren in perspectief – Goed voor de wereld, goed voor Nederland. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 18 mei 2018, p. 48.

<sup>22</sup> KST 32605-156 (2015) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 156, Brief van de minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 23 februari 2015; KST 32605-194 (2017) Beleid ten aanzien van ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nr. 194 Brief van de minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 25 januari 2017.

In the period covering this policy evaluation an average of 54% of the humanitarian budget is un-earmarked core funding, an average of 43% is softly earmarked to a specific humanitarian crises and only 3% of the budget is earmarked at project level to support specific thematic priorities. As from 2018 the latter percentage has been growing slightly at the cost of the other two categories.

	(1) un-earmarked		(2) softly earmarked		(3) earmarked		Total
	core funding		acute + chronic crises		thematic priorities		
2015	41%	219,0	57%	301,9	2%	10,2	531,1
2016	52%	225,7	45%	195,4	3%	12,9	434,0
2017	64%	258,0	35%	142,0	1%	5	405,0
2018	57%	220,0	40%	155,8	3%	11,7	387,5
2019	57%	222,0	39%	149,8	4%	15,7	387,5
2020 <sup>23</sup>	55%	205,0	37%	135,8	8%	30	370,8
<b>Total</b>	54%	1.349,7	43%	1.080,7	3%	85,5	2.515,9

Table 1: Un-earmarked softly earmarked and earmarked funding to specific crises 2015-2020, source: Yearly Letters to parliament<sup>24</sup>

## 2.2 Recipient organizations

The ten biggest recipients of Dutch humanitarian funding in the period 2015-2019 are shown in table 2. Together, they received around 79,8% of the available budget. It is important to note that these organizations have the status of first receivers. For most of the UN agencies and for Cordaid, Save the Children and the Red Cross, a large part of the funding is channeled through implementing partners, such as Dutch, international or national NGO's, the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies or other UN agencies.

In 2019 around 60% of the Dutch humanitarian aid budget was channeled through UN organizations, 20% to the NGOs and 17% to the Red Cross (of which 40 million Euros to the ICRC and around 15 million Euros to the Dutch Red Cross)<sup>25</sup>. Up to 2013 humanitarian funding via NGOs was low (around 4% of the total budget) compared to other Nordic donors who scored an average of 19%. In 2014 the government responded to Dutch NGOs' calls for more, and more predictable and rapid funding by introducing the Dutch Relief Fund (DRF). With a budget of €570mIn for the period 2014-2017 the fund was additional to the regular humanitarian budget that largely went to UN agencies. Aiming to allow for flexible funding where it was most needed, the DRF allowed for multi-year planning and mostly un-earmarked or softly earmarked funding. A share of the budget was set aside for the priorities innovation, aid to vulnerable groups, and the improvement of the safety of aid workers. Initially €40mIn per year was set aside for members of the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA).

<sup>23</sup> KST 34952-108 (2020) Investeren in perspectief – Goed voor de wereld. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 03 maart 2020.

<sup>24</sup> In some years in kind assistance and non-ODA are accounted for within thematic priorities and in other years these are accounted for within acute crises.

<sup>25</sup> Figures DSH-HH

Organizations	Amount (in million €)
<b>UN OCHA</b>	423,5
<b>Red Cross Family (ICRC, Federation, NRK)</b>	324,0
<b>UN Central Emergency Response Fund</b>	286,5
<b>WFP</b>	252,8
<b>UNHCR</b>	250,5
<b>UNICEF</b>	115,2
<b>UNDP</b>	102,6
<b>Cordaid (as DRA coordinating body)</b>	100,0
<b>UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East</b>	87,0
<b>Save the Children (as DRA coordinating body)</b>	66,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.008,3</b>

Table 2: Top 10 Recipients of Dutch humanitarian aid, 2015-2019 (Source: MFA administrative system)

The creation of DRA was in line with the 2015 IOB recommendation to reduce the number of activities and to concentrate on a small number of larger contributions. In 2015 IOB noted that the multi-year grant program demonstrated a recognition of the added value NGOs could bring to humanitarian assistance efforts in terms of reach, lobbying, innovation and specific expertise. NGOs could play a broader role than merely implementing UN assistance. According to DSH policymakers the creation of DRA was also meant to offer an alternative to the channeling of funds to NGOs via the UN, a channel that has relatively high overhead costs while challenging funding conditions are applied to NGOs.

### 2.3 Recipient countries

Table 3 gives the 11 biggest recipients of softly earmarked funding targeted to specific humanitarian crises in the period 2014-2019 (in EUR million).

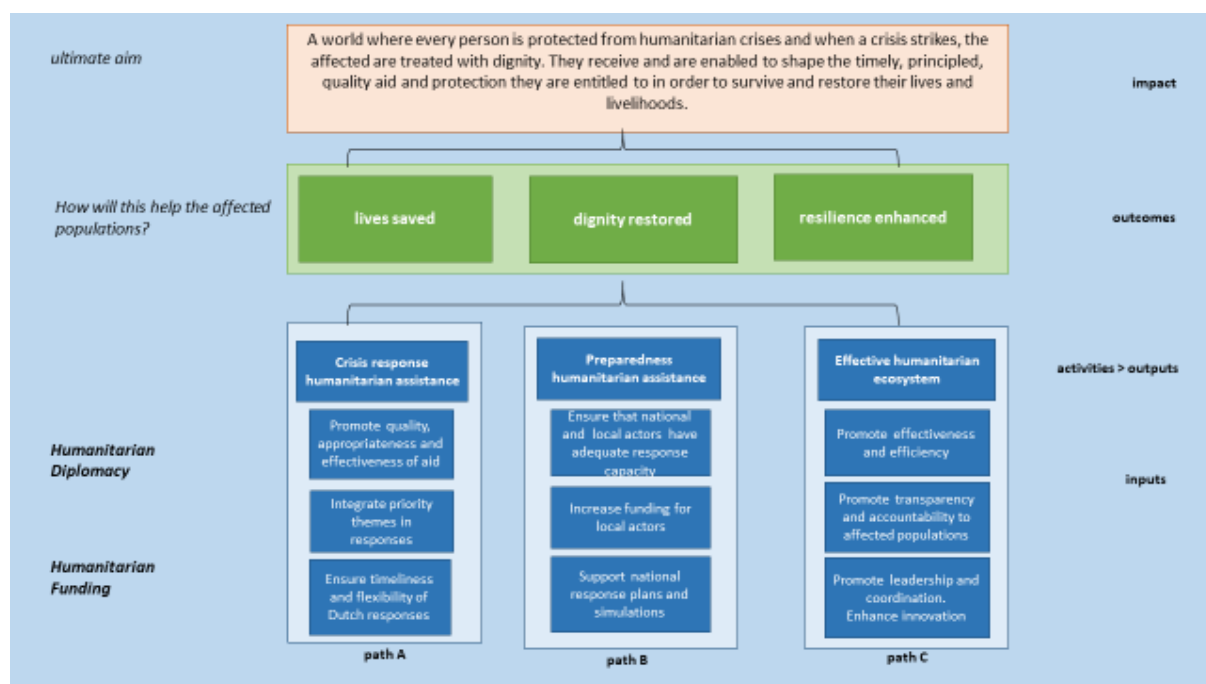
	Country	Amount
<b>1</b>	Syria	239,9
<b>2</b>	Yemen	94,5
<b>3</b>	South Sudan	86,4
<b>4</b>	Iraq	74,4
<b>5</b>	Lebanon	60,9
<b>6</b>	Jordan	53,3
<b>7</b>	Nigeria	49,8
<b>8</b>	Somalia	42,7
<b>9</b>	Central African Republic	34,6
<b>10</b>	Democratic Republic Congo	31,8
<b>11</b>	Afghanistan	27,9

Table 3. Humanitarian Aid Country-allocations 2015-2019 (EUR million). Source: ministry administrative system

### 3. Theory of change, underlying assumptions, and follow-up of IOB evaluation 2015

Figure 2 has been developed as a provisional reconstruction of the Humanitarian Aid Policy of the Netherlands. This exercise is based on the Ministry's latest Policy Documents and the Theory of Change of Humanitarian Assistance of October 2018.<sup>26</sup> It will serve as a basis for discussion with DSH policymakers. The figure shows that the Netherlands builds its humanitarian aid policy on two pillars: humanitarian diplomacy and humanitarian funding. Being a large donor brings responsibility and influence. The challenges in these fields are overwhelming and DSH policymakers see a need for monitoring their diplomatic efforts and clearer priority setting. In 2020 IOB advised on a learning agenda for Diplomatic Diplomacy. This policy evaluation will explore lessons learned and best practices on Humanitarian Diplomacy.

Figure 2 – humanitarian policy of the Netherlands



When analyzing the Humanitarian Policy of the Netherlands a number of key findings come to light on the underlying policy assumptions. Some of these assumptions are made explicit in policy documents, others remain implicit.

#### Priority given to UN channels

The 2015 IOB review of humanitarian policy found that the assumptions behind the priority given to UN channels were not made explicit. Policymakers of DSH assume that working through the UN ensures better coordination with national authorities of recipient countries, which in turn leads to better results in terms of addressing the most urgent needs, and to better cooperation between UN

<sup>26</sup> Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 2018, Theory of Change Migratie en Ontwikkeling, Narratief, Oktober 2018; KST 32605-62 (2019) Nieuw beleidskader humanitaire hulp en indicatieve planning noodhulp 2019. Brief van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 29 maart 2019.

agencies, between the UN and NGO's and between NGO's. Policymakers of DSH have however brought up two dilemmas.

Firstly, international assistance through the UN system is only a fraction of worldwide relief efforts. Policymakers are concerned with the little space the UN coordination system may leave for local leadership and decentral authorities. This seems to conflict with the Grand Bargain commitment to increase local leadership in relief efforts. IOB argued in 2015 that reforms of the humanitarian system needed to allow local government and organizations to play a larger role. In the framework of this policy evaluation IOB will therefore explore how various funding channels and humanitarian organizations have taken up this commitment on localization and to what extent donors and funding mechanisms have facilitated this process. The aim would be to come up with recommendations for future policy.

Secondly, the UN lead coordination may be the only game in town, but may not always be of good quality. In 2015 IOB noted that systematic evidence to back the assumption that UN led coordination leads to more effective assistance was difficult to find. Apart from coordinating their humanitarian efforts under the UN Humanitarian and resident coordinator, UN agencies also have a role as implementing partners. IOB concluded that when armed conflicts suddenly flared up – for example in South Sudan and the Central African Republic – UN agencies struggled to provide adequate assistance to refugees rapidly. IOB also noted that both the reach and quality of aid improved at a later stage. In the reaction to Parliament the minister promised to continue to use her leverage as a large donor to reform the humanitarian system and improve effectiveness, efficiency, leadership and coordination. In this policy evaluation IOB will explore the effectiveness of UN led coordination in relation to needs in three field studies. For the selection of these field studies see **paragraph 6.2** below. IOB will assess the particular qualities of different funding channels and implementing organizations supporting this coordination.

### **The added value of NGOs**

The creation of DRA in 2014 allowed Dutch NGOs to make rapid decisions on expenditure whenever a crisis occurred. Policymakers also assumed that channeling a larger part of the humanitarian budget through NGO's would positively impact public support for humanitarian aid policy in the Netherlands. Increased visibility of humanitarian interventions would help to secure solidarity. The idea was that Dutch NGO's were more able than international partners to connect to public and parliament on humanitarian issues. In the preparation phase of this policy evaluation, DSH policymakers expressed a strong interest in knowing whether NGO's have been better at delivering aid than other actors, and if so why this is the case. They are also keen to know whether the creation of DRA has had a positive impact on the capacity of local NGO's and actors. IOB will explore the added value DRA and its members have brought vis-à-vis that of other humanitarian organizations acting in the same field. IOB will not answer the value for money question nor compare the efficiency or effectiveness of different channels and organizations. IOB will address the added value question by exploring the relative strengths and weaknesses of DRA through testing the assumptions underlying the funding decisions that took place, using three case studies for in-depth analysis. Apart from looking at the validity of the assumptions IOB will specifically explore the contribution of Dutch Relief Alliance to Dutch humanitarian policy priorities with respect to innovation, localization and coherence with broader development strategies.

### **Un-earmarked and flexible funding**



An important assumption behind Dutch humanitarian aid policy is that humanitarian organizations are willing and able to make a neutral assessment of humanitarian needs and will target assistance accordingly. Trust in the international humanitarian system based on a strong track record explains to a large extent why a significant part of Dutch humanitarian funding is un-earmarked and channeled flexibly through the UN, the Red Cross family and NGO's. IOB concluded in 2015 that Dutch funding had enabled UN agencies and the ICRC to provide flexible emergency assistance and to act according to their own priorities. It enabled the agencies in question to plan aid operations at an early stage and to respond flexibly to unexpected events and changes.<sup>27</sup> In this policy evaluation, IOB will explore to what extent local implementing partners enjoy the same advantages of un-earmarked and flexible funding.

In 2015 IOB also concluded that decision making on the choice of channels and modalities requires a more solid basis.<sup>28</sup> This policy evaluation will on the one hand pick up on this recommendation and explore to what extent a more solid basis has been developed by DSH, and on the other hand seek to validate the assumptions under which funding decisions took place in the framework of the three earlier mentioned field studies.

### **Coherence with broader development policy**

A final set of assumptions to be explored further in the framework of this policy evaluation is the one underpinning the ministry's approach towards the triple Nexus of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. It aims to develop humanitarian action that responds more adequately to the long-term needs of those affected by emergencies that are often structural and caused by political factors, by fostering coherence between humanitarian action and development aid and peacebuilding efforts. In protracted crises the humanitarian budget frequently seems to be the securest option for continued funding. Policymakers at DSH work from the assumption that the Netherlands gives humanitarian assistance where it is needed, and focusses on development aid where possible. However, the dilemma is that for many recurrent or protracted long term crises, development aid is simply not available.

In 2015 IOB found that financing for structural causes of humanitarian disasters and crises had diminished, whereas many conflict-related humanitarian crises persisted through lack of political solutions. IOB noted that in many states humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development efforts were intertwined and that continual changes in the situation called for a flexible deployment of aid. IOB concluded that humanitarian assistance should not exist in isolation. It therefore recommended developing a coherent vision and strategy on these activities and their consequences for the humanitarian assistance system, without losing sight of the humanitarian principles. In its policy reaction to parliament the Dutch Cabinet expressed the ambition to work with other countries and the humanitarian system on stronger links between humanitarian and development activities. IOB will therefore assess to what extent a more integrated vision and strategy has been developed and how this is being implemented by humanitarian partners in the field. IOB will address this question more specifically in the case study on Syria.

### **Capacity for Policy implementation versus policy ambitions**

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<sup>27</sup> IOB, *Beleidsdoorlichting humanitaire hulp*, pp. 17-18, 70-71, and 84.

<sup>28</sup> IOB, *Beleidsdoorlichting humanitaire hulp*, pp. 17, 47-49.

In 2015 IOB concluded that neither the organization of, nor the capacity for, policy implementation was in line with policy ambitions. The ministry was not well informed on what happened at operational level and in the field, and relied to a considerable extent on the UN to account for spending. However, the quality of UN accountability left much to be desired. Given the large challenges IOB recommended the ministry to apply more long-term focus in policy and specific themes.<sup>29</sup> In its reaction to parliament the Cabinet agreed with this IOB recommendation. IOB will explore whether the Ministry has taken measures to bring the capacity for policy implementation more in line with policy ambitions. IOB will look into the monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place, the quality of available evaluations and the focus of action. IOB will examine whether the Ministry has adopted a more critical attitude towards the functioning of the agencies receiving its support and the results they achieve.

#### 4. Stakeholder analysis

Key stakeholders for this policy analysis are actors involved in decision making and implementation of humanitarian assistance and diplomacy. Recommendations will address the MFA directly, but may also be relevant for humanitarian organizations and parliamentarians.

People affected by humanitarian crises as well as governments of affected countries will bring in a valuable perspective on the evaluation questions. IOB will seek to bring their voices on board. At the same time an effort will be made to also explore the stake and position of likeminded donor countries, as well as powerful but not like minded states.

Policymakers and implementing organizations are important resource persons for this study. They will also be represented in the Reference group (see below, Ch. 8.1). A brief communication plan will be developed in which intended dissemination activities will be outlined. A sense-making workshop will enable validation and joint reflection on findings, lessons, and recommendations or possible ways forward.

##### **Policy Departments MFA**

DSH, in particular HH, is responsible for humanitarian policy implementation at the MFA. They are key resource persons for this research. In the development phase of these terms of reference, policy questions pertinent for DSH have been extensively discussed and integrated in these terms of reference. To a lesser extent this also holds for other policy directions within DGIS and DGPZ that are directly or indirectly involved in humanitarian policy, such as DSH-MO, DIE, DAM, DAF, DWH, DAO, DVB and DSO. The study aims to provide evidence based insights and recommendations that will answer questions relevant to policy directions and contribute to the improvement of policy and practice.

##### **Embassies and diplomatic missions**

Embassies in crisis areas play a key role in humanitarian diplomacy, funding of humanitarian action, and monitoring of implementation. Diplomatic missions at hubs of international humanitarian coordination (Geneva, New York, Rome), have a bridge function to international platforms and HQs of international humanitarian organizations. The missions are in constant dialogue with these organizations about Dutch humanitarian priorities and are responsible for securing the Dutch positions in international negotiations on resolutions. They have key resource persons for this research on humanitarian diplomacy and assistance.

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<sup>29</sup> IOB, *Beleidsdoorlichting humanitaire hulp*, pp. 16, 45-46.

## **Humanitarian organizations**

UN Agencies (such as OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, Unicef, both HQ and field offices), the Red Cross family (ICRC, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as well as the Netherlands Red Cross society, International NGOs and Dutch NGOs united in Dutch Relief Alliance) are the main implementing partners of Dutch humanitarian policy, either through un-earmarked or directly earmarked funding. They are key resources for this research. While recommendations will not be directed at humanitarian organizations, the findings from this research are expected to be insightful for these organizations as well, and will therefore hopefully contribute to improved practice.

## **Populations and governments affected by humanitarian crises**

Those affected by humanitarian crises have a stake in the way the international community responds. End users can provide good information about effectiveness and relevance. The affected people and governments are therefore considered to be key resources for this research. IOB will find ways to include their views. While recommendations will not be directed at affected populations and governments in war and disaster, the findings from this research are expected to be insightful and will hopefully contribute to an improved humanitarian response.

## **Powerful states**

Non likeminded states may have a big influence yet do not invest as much as traditional donors in the international humanitarian system. They are often the targets of Dutch diplomacy. Their position is relevant and will continue to shape the world in which humanitarian diplomacy and action take place.

## 5. Evaluation questions

The aim of this evaluation is to assess how, and to what extent Dutch humanitarian policy contributes to achieving Dutch humanitarian goals, with special attention for priority themes innovation, localization and policy coherence. The evaluation will focus on the effectiveness of various Dutch funded actors in the humanitarian system, and how their effectiveness has been enabled and supported through their funding relation with the MFA and through Dutch humanitarian diplomatic efforts. There is a direct link between these evaluation questions and the 2015 IOB recommendations as well as the subsequent policy reaction of the Minister (see paragraph 3). The questions aim to address the remaining challenges.

The overall evaluation question is: how and to what extent does Dutch humanitarian policy contribute to achieving humanitarian goals, and given the chosen objectives what policy options are available to meet the challenges of the next 5 years? It is divided into three sub-questions:

### **RQ 1 How effective are Dutch-funded actors in the humanitarian system (UN Agencies, Red Cross family and NGOs) in achieving Dutch humanitarian goals?**

- 1.1 What are relative strengths and weaknesses of various funded humanitarian actors, how can these be explained, and in what way have these delivered added value in the delivery of humanitarian assistance?
- 1.2 Have Dutch funded actors in the humanitarian system delivered timely, needs based and principled humanitarian action? What have been factors of success, or failure?

1.3 What has been the contribution of Dutch-funded actors to the objective of innovation, localization and the coordination with broader development goals? What best practices are identifiable and what has been the added value for the realization of humanitarian goals?

**RQ 2 What kind of funding relation does the MFA have with its various partners, and how does this relation enable or hamper their effectiveness in the delivery of humanitarian aid?**

2.1 How are funding decisions made within the MFA?

2.2 What different types of relations between MFA and recipient organizations emerge from these decisions, and how do these relations enable or hamper the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance?

2.3 In what way have priority themes innovation and localization been promoted within these relations?

2.4 How have policy changes in response to the IOB Policy Review of 2015 been implemented, and to what extent have these changes contributed to achieving Dutch humanitarian goals?

**RQ 3 To what extent do Dutch humanitarian diplomatic efforts influence the effectiveness of humanitarian actors and how do these contribute to concrete results on Dutch humanitarian priority themes?**

3.1 How is humanitarian diplomacy practiced within the MFA? Can concrete results and/or best practices be identified?

3.2 How have these efforts facilitated and strengthened humanitarian action of Dutch funded humanitarian organizations? What concrete results are identifiable?

3.3 How have Dutch diplomatic efforts contributed to innovation and localization within the humanitarian system?

## 6. Research design

The research for this evaluation consists of a combination of qualitative desk research and field research in selected countries, commencing with an in-depth analysis of Dutch Humanitarian Policy, the ToC and underlying assumptions that will form the basis for further research. Following the three main research questions and their distinct scope, the research is divided in four sub-studies.

1. Combined field and desk research on effectiveness of Dutch funded actors in the humanitarian system in three selected case studies (RQ 1).
2. Combined field and desk research on funding relations and their impact on the effectiveness of humanitarian action (RQ 2).
3. Combined field and desk research on humanitarian diplomacy, with specific attention to the three case studies (RQ 3)
4. Literature study on cross-cutting themes of 1) localization and 2) innovation

A synthesis report combining the four sub-studies will answer the main research question.

The research is deliberately divided over 10 work packages for IOB researchers and consultants, to enable the publication of sub-reports during the implementation phase while maintaining maximum

flexibility in the face of insecurity due to Covid-19 (see below 'risks'). This section outlines the work packages and their interrelation, the methods applied per work package, the case study selection, risks and their mitigation.

## **Methodology**

Research questions, OESO-DAC criteria and indicators are outlined in the Evaluation Matrix in the Annex. To draw conclusions about what worked and why with respect to RQ1 (Dutch funded actors) to RQ 2 (funding relations) and RQ 3(humanitarian diplomacy) IOB will use a combination of methods to map out the plausibility of causal links between interventions and impact. These methods will focus on testing the theory of change, exploring plausible paths of change, causal links as well as unintended negative and positive effects. This will be done through a combination of document research, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, focus groups, existing surveys on the views of affected populations on effectiveness, quality and relevance of aid and diplomacy (Ground Truth, CDAC), fit for purpose reviews and process tracing. Literature studies on innovation and localization will inform this research and feed the case studies. During the research IOB will organize sense making workshops with stakeholders to crosscheck and validate preliminary findings.

Research methodologies may be adapted to accommodate for unexpected shortcomings.

## **Standards and indicators**

As described earlier, IOB will address the question of relative strengths and weaknesses of different funding channels and implementing organizations by testing the assumptions underlying funding decisions took place, using three case studies for in-depth analysis. Apart from looking at the validity of the assumptions, IOB will explore how different channels and humanitarian partners have delivered results on three policy objectives of Dutch humanitarian assistance since 2015: 1. the ambition to deliver timely, needs-based, effective, principled and high-quality humanitarian assistance, 2. the ambition to be coherent with broader development approaches and crisis responses, and 3. the ambition to innovate and localize. SPHERE indicators as well as compliance to the Core Humanitarian Standards, Grand Bargain commitments and DAC recommendations are leading for this part of the study.

Humanitarian Diplomacy will be explored from the perspective of process quality using a combination of frameworks that identify the main enabling factors for effectiveness. Recently developed ICRC methods will be used to study connective impact, ambient impact, normative/legal impact and operational impact.

During the research IOB will explore additional methods relevant to qualitative narrative reporting on effectiveness and find a way to include additional indicators to accommodate for unexpected shortcomings.

## 6.1 Work packages

### **Work package 1 – In-depth Analysis of Humanitarian Policy, Theory of Change and Assumptions**

The first step in the evaluation will be a desk research that will focus more in-depth on Dutch humanitarian policy, its practice and the ToC, as well as underlying assumptions that guide decision making processes about humanitarian funding and diplomacy. Particular attention will be paid to priority themes of innovation, localization and coherence with other policy areas. How the current Covid-19 crisis affected policy implementation and decision making about policy implementation will

also be addressed. Based on interviews at DSH, a few focus groups and document analysis, this desk research will deliver fundamental insights for the further steps in this research. The report of the desk research will not be published as such, but elements will be integrated in the four sub-studies, as well as the synthesis report.

Timing: 2020 Q4, three months

Work load: Team leader (0,25fte) assisted by researcher (1fte).

### **Work package 2 – Desk study on effectiveness and funding relations**

Desk research, based on interviews and document analysis on effectiveness of humanitarian actors and relations between MFA and funding recipients. The desk-research is complemented with field research in order to answer RQ1 and RQ2 adequately. However, for practical purposes the two are kept as distinct working packages while opportunities for field research remain insecure because of Covid-19. The desk research will include a sampling exercise to select a relevant and representative selection of partner relations (UN Agencies, Red Cross Family and NGOs) and projects to investigate for each case study. Exact sampling criteria are to be determined, but will include relative importance with respect to assumed added value, monetary value of contribution, specific attention to Dutch policy priorities innovation, coherence and localization, and a spread of different types of implementing organizations.

Timing: 2021 Q1 and 2021 Q2

Work load: 3 months

### **Work package 3 – Humanitarian diplomacy**

RQ3 aims to provide insight in how Dutch humanitarian diplomacy has strengthened the effectiveness of humanitarian actors in delivering humanitarian goals, as well as contributed to the realisation of concrete results on humanitarian priority themes of innovation, coherence and localization. The research will focus on the three country case studies central in this evaluation (see below 6.2). Research will take place in The Hague, combining document analysis (political reporting from Embassies, missions and The Hague, relevant policy notes, instructions and action plans, and where available relevant documents from partner organizations as ICRC, OCHA, likeminded countries, ECHO, unusual allies as well as less supportive actors) with semi-structured interviews with DSH-HH policy advisors, staff at missions in Geneva, New York and Rome as well as Dutch embassy staff in selected countries. In addition, semi-structured interviews will be held with embassy staff from likeminded countries, and where possible with representatives of less supportive actors. If possible, part of the research will be conducted in Geneva and/or New York as a considerable part of Dutch humanitarian diplomacy has taken place in multilateral fora in Geneva and New York. Because of the nature of the subject matter, the research will be conducted by the IOB team itself.

Timing: Q1 and Q2 2021

Work load: 2 months research, 1 month report writing, total 3 months (Johanneke de Hoogh and Meike de Goede/IOB researcher both for 0,5 fte).

### **Work packages 4 - 6 – Field study South Sudan, Yemen and Syria**

The desk research on effectiveness and funding relations (work packages 2) will be complemented with field research conducted by small teams of international and/or local consultants (2 per case study), resulting in a report on Effectiveness (RQ 1) and a report on Funding relations (RQ 2). The research will consist primarily of conducting interviews with selected organisations (work package 2) and other selected stakeholders. Local consultants will be supervised by IOB staff, that will be present in country to kick-start and supervise field research.

The field studies will deliver one country report each: 1,5 months preparation, 0,5 months field research and 1,5 months report writing (4 months for 2 consultants per case study). Supervision by IOB staff, that will be present in country to kick start field work.

For the foreseeable future access to Yemen and Syria for this evaluation will be either impossible or too problematic. The fieldwork for these case studies will therefore focus on interviews with stakeholders in Amman and Riyadh from where large part of the humanitarian coordination for Yemen and Syria takes place.

The field research in Syria will take into account work done by a parallel IOB study on Development Approaches to Forced Displacement (DAFD), a policy area that is closely related to humanitarian aid. Both studies will address the practice of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus.

Timing is to be determined, pending Covid-19 measures, provisionally scheduled for Q3 of 2021.

#### **Work package 7 – Literature study on Innovation in humanitarian assistance**

Writing of a brief thematic paper, mapping existing evidence on innovation in humanitarian assistance and its impact on achieving humanitarian objectives. The literature study will specifically address questions of efficiency and value for money. Where available and relevant existing evidence on innovative solutions of humanitarian assistance in Syria, Yemen and south Sudan will be taken into account. The paper will be based on desk study, consisting of literature study (academic literature, research reports, project reports and other relevant documentation). Paper to be published at the latest in April 2021 when minister Kaag's term as eminent person of the Grand Bargain ends. The paper will be presented at a sense making workshop within DSH.

Timing: Q4 2020 – Q1 2021

Workload: Consultant (60 days), supervised by Team leader/IOB Researcher

#### **Work package 8 – Literature study on Localization of humanitarian aid**

Writing of a brief thematic paper, mapping existing evidence on localization and its impact on humanitarian aid. The literature study will specifically address questions of risk sharing, accountability and value for money. Where available and relevant existing evidence on localization of humanitarian assistance in Syria, Yemen and south Sudan will be taken into account. The paper will be based on desk study, consisting of literature study (academic literature, research reports, project reports and other relevant documentation). Paper to be published at the latest in April 2021 when minister Kaag's term as eminent person of the Grand Bargain ends. The paper will be presented at a sense making workshop within DSH.

Timing: Q4 2020 – Q1 2021

Workload: Consultant (60 days), supervised by Team leader/IOB Researcher

#### **Work package 9 – Synthesis report writing**

Synthesis report writing, based on underlying sub-studies by Johanneke de Hoogh (team leader), assisted by IOB team members. The synthesis report is based on the five underlying studies. Because of insecurity about delivery of underlying studies because of travel restrictions due to Covid-19, timing of the synthesis report writing is currently also insecure. A period of 4 months, 1 fte is foreseen.

### **Work package 10 – Overall coordination**

Johanneke de Hoogh is team leader of this evaluation research, and will be responsible for the overall coordination and management of research projects, supervision of consultants and research team. Preparation of Reference Group meetings and KBG meetings. Communication, dissemination and outreach. This excludes dedicated time to supervise in-country consultants for the field research (work packages 4-6), and the supervision of consultants for the studies on innovation and localization (work packages 8 and 9).

Workload: 0,25 fte, September 2020 – December 2021

## 6.2 Case study selection

Three case studies have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Severity of crisis (number of people in need, INFORM index)
- Spread and diverse nature of humanitarian crises
- Relevance in terms of policy, budget and humanitarian diplomacy
- Diversity of implementing organizations supported by the Netherlands
- Presence of UN led coordination (UNOCHA or UNHCR)
- Active involvement of at least 2 UN agencies in implementation
- Active presence of either the ICRC, IFRC or Dutch Red Cross
- Presence of Joint Response of Dutch Relief Alliance
- Presence of Dutch NGOs
- Relevance in terms of funding mechanisms like CERF and CBPF
- Relevance in terms of localization agenda
- Relevance in terms of innovation
- relevance in terms of linking humanitarian response to development
- Feasibility (access for IOB researchers and (local) consultants)

One case study concerns the Syria crisis and focusses on humanitarian assistance and diplomacy in Syria. The Syria region represents a large scale complex refugee crisis linked to continued high levels of war, insecurity and political instability. It fulfills all of the above mentioned criteria and is expected to provide answers to the three research questions on 1. the effectiveness of Dutch funded actors in the humanitarian system, 2. funding relations and their impact on the effectiveness of humanitarian action and 3. Dutch humanitarian diplomatic efforts and their impact on the effectiveness of humanitarian actors and on Dutch humanitarian priority themes. Given the scale and complexity of this crisis as well as its geographic proximity to Europe this case is expected to give insights into coherence of policy, into how humanitarian action has been able to link to development approaches to forced displacement, and to what extent humanitarian action, humanitarian diplomacy and stabilization efforts have mutually reinforced each other. This study will be closely coordinated with the parallel IOB study on Development Approaches to Forced Displacement that will focus on the Syria region (Lebanon, Jordan and Northern Iraq).



A second case study will take place in South Sudan. South Sudan represents a relatively large share of the humanitarian aid budget and fulfills all of the above criteria. This case study is expected to provide comparable insights to the case study on Syria into coherence of policy, links between humanitarian action, diplomacy and stabilization efforts, yet this time in a different humanitarian and political context and further away from Europe. This case study will take into account parallel work done in South Sudan in the framework of the IOB policy evaluation on stability in fragile contexts. Where relevant and feasible the two research teams will join forces. The South Sudan civil war formally ended. A peace agreement improved the security situation although there are still sporadic reports of fighting between armed groups. 80% of the population lives below the absolute poverty line. The climate is characterized by extreme droughts, rains and flooding. Humanitarian action has not only responded to humanitarian consequences of an enduring complex emergency but at times also to natural disasters.

A third case study focusses on Yemen. Yemen represents a relatively large share of the humanitarian aid budget and is expected to provide valuable insights into humanitarian diplomacy efforts and their impact on the effectiveness of humanitarian action. It fulfills all of the above criteria and the Netherlands has been a relatively active actor on promoting humanitarian access both in multilateral for a and bilateral settings.

IOB decided not to select a case study on natural or sudden onset disasters. It was found that the international emergency response to natural disasters has professionalized considerably during the last decades and therefore asked less time, budget and political attention of DSH.

IOB will as much as possible make use of existing evidence, collaborate and coordinate its activities in case study countries with the evaluation departments of other countries and the United Nations. This will be achieved through the DAC Evaluation Network, the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) of the OECD, as well as through direct contacts with partner evaluation departments.

### 6.3 Scope and limitations

#### **Scope**

The evaluation covers the period from January 2015 to December 2019. The evaluation focuses on activities funded under Government Budget article 4.1 Humanitarian Assistance and Government Budget article 4.4. Emergency Relief fund (active from 2015 to 2019). The evaluation builds on the IOB policy review of 2015.

Non-ODA emergency aid and humanitarian aid provided by ECHO will be beyond the scope of this evaluation. Dutch efforts to influence ECHO as a donor will however be part of this evaluation where this is relevant to humanitarian diplomacy efforts. This evaluation takes in-kind assistance only into account when it is part of the Dutch humanitarian response in one of the selected country cases.

#### **Limitations**

The following limitations apply to this evaluation:

- For reasons of feasibility, the number of country case studies selected for in-depth study is limited to three. The conclusions about effectiveness, funding relations and the impact of diplomatic efforts are related to the specific humanitarian crises of the case study concerned and do not necessarily speak for every humanitarian intervention. The applicability of case study

conclusions to the broader field of humanitarian action and diplomacy will be addressed in the synthesis report.

- The target audience of this evaluation is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and parliamentarians; the recommendations that IOB will formulate are primarily addressed to DSH, the department responsible for Humanitarian Policy. Draft recommendations will, however, be discussed with other stakeholders, in order to increase their validity.
- A final limitation relates to the Covid-19 pandemic. The consequences thereof have affected the work of IOB since the spring of 2020. They may also affect the research planned after finalising of these terms of reference, in particular the (physical) interviews planned and the fieldwork required. For reasons of unpredictability, it is not possible to anticipate the exact effects at the moment of writing. The actual humanitarian response to COVID-19 is too recent and very much ongoing. It will therefore not be part of this evaluation. Effects of COVID-19 on decision making processes within the ministry will however be explored within the remit of this policy evaluation.

## 7. Organisation, planning and budget

### 7.1 Organisation

#### **IOB Research team**

The evaluation team consists of IOB staff members Johanneke de Hoogh and Meike de Goede. Additional expertise will be sought from outside IOB. IOB will hold final responsibility for conducting this evaluation, for the quality control of the reports and the thematic papers, and for implementing the communication strategy, for the thematic report on humanitarian diplomacy and for the synthesis report. Overall coordinator is Johanneke de Hoogh.

The IOB team will invest in regularly updating DSH with information about the process and if possible also about draft results. Sense making workshops will be organised where relevant and helpful.

Johanneke de Hoogh is the contact person for the overall research process.

#### **Consultants and academic researchers**

The IOB team will also be responsible for contracting and managing the consultants that are invited to implement the individual country case studies and write separate reports on each case study papers.

#### **IOB peer review team**

The principal task of the IOB peer review team is to advise the evaluation team and its chair on methodological challenges and potential risks, with the purpose of enhancing the quality of the investigation. Members of the IOB peer review team are Rens Willems, Meie Kiel and Jelmer Kamstra. The peer review team is chaired by Rob van Poelje, head of the IOB Development Cooperation research section.

#### **Reference Group**

The principal task of the external members of the so-called Reference Group is to advise the project team in assuring the quality and independence of the investigation. There will be a core group of 4 experts.

Core group

1. Fadi Hallisso, Development Consultant
2. Hans van den Hoogen, Consultant
3. Dr. Hugo Slim, Senior Research Fellow Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford
4. Marriet Schuurman, Director Stability and Humanitarian Aid, MFA the Netherlands
5. Waldo Serno, Senior Humanitarian Advisor, MFA the Netherlands.
6. Dr. Wendy Asbeek Brusse, Director IOB
7. Johanneke de Hoogh, (evaluation team IOB)
8. Dr. Meike de Goede, (evaluation team IOB)

The reference group is chaired by IOB Director Wendy Asbeek Brusse.

### **Director IOB**

The Director of IOB will approve the thematic report on humanitarian diplomacy and the synthesis report of this Policy Evaluation.

### 7.2 Planning

This policy evaluation will be performed from Q3 in 2020 to Q1 in 2022. The table provides a provisional planning based on the ten work packages (the lighter shade of green reflects ‘work in progress’, whereas the darker shade of green indicates a deadline).

The planning takes several relevant deadlines into consideration. In April 2021 Minister Kaag’s term as eminent person for the Grand Bargain comes to an end. Two sub-studies are foreseen to be published for April 2021. They will give the latest insights into innovation and localization of humanitarian assistance.

This policy evaluation will make use of existing evidence from studies on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace NeXus by the DAC Evaluation Network as well as the International Network on Conflict and Fragility INCAF of the OECD and intends to adapt its planning according to activities by other evaluation departments.

In July 2021, the Netherlands takes on the chairmanship of the OCHA Donor Support Group (OSDG). Chairing this advisory group of 29 donor countries give the Netherlands larger influence on the humanitarian agenda and policies of OCHA, the ODSG (Office of the Deputy Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs) and the international humanitarian community. Sub-studies on humanitarian diplomacy, localization and innovation are expected to be published before July 2021. The desk research on effectiveness and funding relations will be completed, but Covid-19 related travel restrictions are expected to prevent the field research to be conducted in time to complete these sub-papers before July 2021.

Current arrangements with Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA, an alliance that unites Dutch NGOs active in the humanitarian sector) will end in December 2021. In the running up to that moment findings on the strengths and weaknesses of this funding mechanism and the collaborative impact of DRA will support decision-making on new arrangements. Sub-studies on humanitarian diplomacy, localization and innovation are expected to be published before July 2021. The desk research on effectiveness and funding relations will be completed, but Covid-19 related travel restrictions are expected to prevent the field research to be conducted in time to complete these sub-papers before July 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a factor makes planning for field research in the foreseeable future insecure. The research has been organised in such a way that most steps of the research can be conducted while travel restrictions are in place. However, to answer the overall research question

adequately, field research is essential to complement desk research and fill in remaining gaps. The timing of the completion of this study therefore remains insecure at this stage. To mitigate the effects on the feasibility of this evaluation research, if and when they arise, the team will be flexible and adapt the methodology and outputs to what is possible in the given context. If travel remains impossible for extended periods of time, the decision may be taken to replace the intended field research for desk research and digital meetings and interviews. This is, however, the least preferred option as data collected on site is highly valued for the quality of this study.

	Sept '20	Oct '20	Nov '20	Dec '20	Jan '21	Feb '21	Mrch '21	Apr '21	May '21	Jun '21	Jul '21	Aug '21	Sept '21	Oct '21	Nov '21	Dec '21	Jan '22	Feb '22	Mrch '22	
Policy & ToC		Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green															
Desk top RQ 1 & 2					Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green												
Hum diplomacy					Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green												
Field research									Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green								
Innovation					Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green													
Localization					Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green													
Synthesis															Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green	
Coordination	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green

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## 9. Annexe 1 – Evaluation Matrix and Core Humanitarian Standard

	<b>Evaluation question</b>	<b>OESO-DAC Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources and methods</b>
1.1	Have Dutch funded actors in the humanitarian system delivered timely, needs based and principled humanitarian action? What were factors of success or failure?	Effectiveness Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance to SPHERE<sup>30</sup> and Core Humanitarian Standard with 9 commitments, with a focus on timely, need based and principled humanitarian action.</li> <li>- Lead time aid delivery</li> <li>- Participation in independent joint needs assessment;</li> <li>- Adherence to humanitarian principles in aid delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Document analysis; diplomatic cables, monitoring reports, project and program evaluations and reviews</li> <li>- Semi-structured interviews with Humanitarian partners, DSH staff, Embassy staff</li> <li>- Surveys and/or focus group interviews with beneficiaries</li> </ul>
1.2	What are relative strengths and weaknesses of various funded humanitarian actors, how can these be explained, and in what way have these delivered added value in the delivery of humanitarian assistance?	Impact Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance to SPHERE and Core Humanitarian Standard with 9 commitments.<sup>31</sup></li> <li>- Collaboration with other actors, both international and national;</li> <li>- Relation with local stakeholders, national, local and beneficiaries of aid;</li> <li>- Beneficiaries' appreciation of implementing actors strengths and weaknesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Document analysis; diplomatic cables, monitoring reports, project and program evaluations and reviews</li> <li>- Semi-structured interviews with Humanitarian partners, DSH staff, Embassy staff</li> <li>- Survey's and/or focus group interviews with beneficiaries</li> </ul>
1.3	What has been the contribution of Dutch-funded actors to the	Impact Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance to Grand Bargain commitments on innovation and localization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Document analysis; existing evidence in the form of studies, evaluations, literature reviews, build on</li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> SPHERE stands for Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. The Sphere Project was initiated in 1997 by a group of NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to develop a set of universal minimum standards in core areas of humanitarian response: the Sphere Handbook. The aim of the Handbook is to improve the quality of humanitarian response in situations of disaster and conflict, and to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system to disaster-affected people. The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response are the product of the collective experience of many people and agencies.

<sup>31</sup> Compliance to SPHERE indicators on the 6 Core Standards means: 1. people-centered humanitarian response: such as explicit efforts to listen to, consult and engage with affected people at an early stage; 2. coordination and cooperation: such as humanitarian activities of other agencies in the same geographical or sectoral areas are not duplicated; 3. assessments: such as assessed needs have been explicitly linked to the capacity of the affected people and state to respond; 4. design & response: such as a design and response that is based on an analysis of the specific needs and risks faced by different groups of people; 5. Performance, transparency and Learning: such as programs are adapted in response to Monitoring Evaluation and Learning; 6. Aid worker performance: such as staff and volunteers performance reviews indicate adequate competency levels, aid workers who breach codes of conduct are formally disciplined. These 6 core standards (SPHERE 2011 handbook) have been replaced in the SPHERE 2018 handbook by the Core Humanitarian Standard with 9 commitments (annex on page 33)

	<b>Evaluation question</b>	<b>OESO-DAC Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources and methods</b>
	objective of innovation, localization and the coordination with broader development goals? What best practices are identifiable and what has been the added value for the realization of humanitarian goals?	Efficiency Relevance Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance with DAC recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development and Peace NeXus</li> <li>- % of funding to national and local organizations</li> <li>- Number of innovation projects funded</li> <li>- Better coordination of aid;</li> <li>- Beneficiaries' appreciation of innovation, localization and nexus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work done by OECD, by Development Initiatives and Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation.</li> <li>- Semi-structured interviews with DSH staff, Embassy staff, and humanitarian organizations</li> <li>- Existing surveys Ground Truth/CDAC and/or focus group interviews with beneficiaries</li> </ul>
2.1	How are funding decisions made within the MFA?	Relevance Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead time decision making processes; within MFA and where feasible from affected populations perspective</li> <li>- Application of criteria and argumentation of decision making;</li> <li>- Transparency and objectivity of decision making process</li> <li>- omission choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Document analysis; BEMO's, diplomatic cables, reports of staff meetings, reports of meetings with humanitarian partners</li> <li>- Semi-structured interviews with DSH staff, embassy staff and staff of missions in Geneva and New York</li> </ul>
2.2	What different types of funding relations emerge from these decisions, and how do these relations affect the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance?	Effectiveness Impact Relevance Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead time decision making to implementation;</li> <li>- Funding conditions in terms of flexibility and predictability</li> <li>- Funding quality in terms of covering real costs, in terms of transaction costs, in terms of creating the right incentives<sup>32</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Document analysis; BeMo's, contracts, reports of policy dialogue with humanitarian partners, Global Humanitarian assistance reports, Grand Bargain annual independent reports</li> <li>- Semi-structured interviews with DSH staff, embassies and implementing organizations</li> <li>- Fit for purpose review</li> <li>- Process tracing</li> </ul>
2.3	In what way have priority themes innovation and localization been addressed within these relations?	Impact Relevance Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of local partners in decision making;</li> <li>- Priority given to of innovation and localization within program design and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Telephone interviews implementing organizations, DSH and embassies.</li> <li>- Document analysis; monitoring reports, project evaluations, program reviews, reports of meetings</li> <li>- crosschecked with literature studies on localization and innovation</li> </ul>

<sup>32</sup> The right incentives in terms of timely, needs based, principled humanitarian action that takes into account priority themes as innovation, localization and coordination with broader development goals.



	<b>Evaluation question</b>	<b>OESO-DAC Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources and methods</b>
3.1	How is humanitarian diplomacy practiced within the MFA?	Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead time decision making processes;</li> <li>- Application of criteria and argumentation of decision making;</li> <li>- Coordination with other policy domains</li> <li>- check against enabling factors for effectiveness (Harvard method, Elbers&amp;Kamstra)</li> <li>- assess connective impact, ambient impact, normative impact and operational impact (recently developed ICRC tool)</li> </ul>	<p>Semi-structured interviews DSH, Regional Departments, DVB, DMM, embassies and permanent missions</p> <p>Document analysis; diplomatic cables, reports of meetings, e-mails</p> <p>Fit for purpose review</p> <p>Process tracing</p>
3.2	How have these efforts facilitated and strengthened humanitarian action of Dutch funded humanitarian organizations?	Effectiveness Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of diplomatic strategies developed and in use</li> <li>- Level of exchange between Permanent Missions, embassies and DSH</li> <li>- Partners' and stakeholder countries' appreciation of diplomatic efforts</li> </ul>	Semi-structured interviews with embassy staff, DSH, implementing organizations and representatives of host countries, other donors and humanitarian players as well as not like minded countries
3.3	How have Dutch diplomatic efforts contributed to innovation and localization within the humanitarian system?	Impact Sustainability Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress made on Grand Bargain Agreements</li> </ul>	Semi-structured interviews with embassy staff, DSH, Document analysis

