

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION OF DUTCH HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE 2009-2013

Introduction

The evaluations of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the ministry of Foreign Affairs are an instrument for policy development and internal learning as well as for rendering accountability to parliament. In 2006 IOB published an evaluation of Dutch Humanitarian Assistance (HA) which covered the period 2000-2004. The *Rijksregeling Periodiek Evaluatieonderzoek* (RPE: 2012) requires each policy area to be evaluated periodically (between four and seven years) at the level of budget articles. Consequently, the evaluation of HA has been included in IOB's current evaluation programme.

Part I Background information

1. Context: characteristics of HA and new developments

Trends and new developments in humanitarian assistance

In the past decade humanitarian assistance has been provided to over a thousand natural disasters and complex emergencies around the world. The frequency and intensity of both natural disasters, often due to extreme weather and climate events, as well as violent conflict, have left many internally displaced persons and refugees in need of assistance. The humanitarian system has become a complex industry in which many different actors are active.¹

In recent years various new developments have arisen that are influencing the international humanitarian system. Firstly, humanitarian assistance has become increasingly politicised. Whereas the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence are still upheld, they are becoming less self-evident. This partly has to do with the fact that humanitarian assistance takes place in contested settings in which major donors of humanitarian assistance are also parties that seek to advance certain political or strategic aims in the country. The humanitarian assistance has become part of the broader policy framework of interventions, which include defence or stabilisation efforts.² In many parts of the world where humanitarian assistance is being delivered, the UN or even NGOs are not perceived to be neutral actors.

Another factor influencing the humanitarian system is the rise of 'new' actors, who do not always accept the terms and conditions that cling to the 'classical' concept of humanitarian assistance. Increasingly, recipient states insist on engaging with international aid actors on their own terms. Also, regional cooperation for humanitarian response is growing in regions such as Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia. Furthermore humanitarian NGOs have grown in number and become more diverse. A growing number of Islamic organisations are playing a significant role in countries like Somalia and the Syrian crisis, although in terms of global humanitarian expenditure the humanitarian world is still dominated by NGOs based in the US and Western Europe. The sector these days also includes private-sector engagement, for example as contractors for delivery of services.³

¹ V. Humphries, Improving Humanitarian Coordination: Common Challenges and Lessons Learned from the Cluster Approach, in: The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, 2013.

² G. Taylor et al., The State of the Humanitarian System, 2012 edition, ALNAP, p. 23.

³ Idem, p. 27-34.

At the same time the humanitarian system is facing various challenges. There is increasing concern over the issue of the sustainability of long-term humanitarian assistance to protracted conflicts. Budget cuts on the side of donors, rising food prices, urbanisation, increasing levels of insecurity for aid workers and climate change are all factors that can influence the necessity for assistance and the potential for effective response. Finally, within donor countries there have been debates criticising the humanitarian system for failing to meet the basic requirements of affected populations in a timely manner and for not reaching the most vulnerable people.

HA architecture/Reform Agenda

The strong criticism that followed the humanitarian response to the Darfur crisis in 2004, in which the inability of agencies to mobilise capacity and resources and the lack of coordination and strategic leadership were addressed, and the large-scale interventions for the Asian Tsunami led the international community to undertake a broad review of humanitarian response in 2005.⁴

The humanitarian Reform Process followed, addressing change in four areas:

1. Coordination: Improved coordination through the Cluster Approach.

The Cluster Approach was implemented to increase coordination amongst humanitarian actors and coherence in humanitarian response. Clusters are groups of humanitarian organisations (UN and non-UN) working in the main sectors of humanitarian action. Clusters provide a clear point of contact and are accountable for adequate and appropriate humanitarian assistance, providing partnerships between international humanitarian actors, national and local authorities, and civil society. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provides overall guidance and support to the Humanitarian Coordinators (see below) and facilitates inter-cluster coordination. Some of the main cluster leaders are UNHCR (protection, camp management and emergency shelter), WFP (Logistics and Food Security), UNICEF (education and Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)) and UNDP (Early Recovery).⁵

2. Leadership: Stronger humanitarian leadership through strengthened Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs).

The lack of leadership was seen as one of the major weaknesses of the humanitarian system. Strengthening the leadership includes revising the responsibilities of coordinators, developing a transparent selection system and professional performance appraisal system.

3. Financing: More reliable and predictable funding through pooled funding at the global level - the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and at the country level – the Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF) and the Emergency Response Funds (ERFs) .

The funds are managed by OCHA. The CERF is a global pooled fund that can cover all countries affected by an emergency. It provides funds directly to UN agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), that in turn provide a portion of the funding to NGOs, civil society organisations and host governments for joint implementation. CERF funding is intended to improve rapid response at the onset of a disaster and to contribute to 'forgotten' emergencies.

The two main country-level pooled funding mechanisms for humanitarian financing are the ERFs and the CHF⁶ and currently exist in 18 countries (13 ERFs and 5 CHF). The funds are managed by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), with administrative support from OCHA and sometimes UNDP.

⁴ V. Humphries, Improving Humanitarian Coordination: Common Challenges and Lessons Learned from the Cluster Approach, in: The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, 2013.

⁵ www.unocha.org.

⁶ In some cases ERFs may be known as Humanitarian Response Funds.

ERFs and CHFs usually contribute to the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) which is the result of a joint planning process that presents a need analysis, agreed humanitarian strategy, individual cluster response plans, implementation responsibilities, financial requirements and monitoring reports on the previous years. Each CAP helps inform donor decisions by providing clear evidence for humanitarian needs and funding allocations.⁷

4. Partnership: More effective partnerships among all humanitarian actors

In 2007 the Principles of Partnership, endorsed by UN agencies and NGOs, was set up to strengthen the effective engagement of local, national and international NGOs in the new coordination and financing mechanisms.

Following new challenges in leadership, coordination, accountability and the process-driven nature of the Cluster Approach, further actions were planned to improve the current humanitarian response in the Transformative Agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2011. The IASC is the inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. Under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the IASC develops humanitarian policies, agrees on a clear division of responsibility for the various aspects of humanitarian assistance, identifies and addresses gaps in response, and advocates for effective application of humanitarian principles.

International financing humanitarian assistance

The total amount of international humanitarian response in 2012 is estimated at US\$ 17.9 billion, of which US\$ 5 billion was contributed by private voluntary contributions and the rest by governments (US\$ 11.6 billion by DAC donors and US\$ 1.4 billion by Non-DAC donors). The largest bilateral donors in 2012 were the United States, followed by the EU, United Kingdom and Turkey. Between 2008 and 2012 over half of the assistance was channelled through multilateral organisations and around a quarter through NGOs. In 2012 4.9% of humanitarian assistance was channelled through pooled funds, including the Central Emergency Response Fund (2.4%) and at country level, the common humanitarian funds (CHFs – 2.1%) and emergency response funds (ERFs – 0.5%).

It is estimated that 76 million beneficiaries were targeted by the UN in 2012. However, still many needs were unmet. An extra US\$3.3 billion would have been necessary in 2012 to meet the requirements for the UN Consolidated Appeal Process (making 2012 the year when the smallest proportion of needs were met for over a decade).⁸

Most funding continues to go to a small number of protracted crises: Sudan, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, DR Congo, Afghanistan and the occupied Palestinian Territories, and to high profile natural disasters such as Haiti. Between 2006 and 2011 US\$ 40 billion was directed towards complex emergencies, whilst a quarter of that amount went to crises caused by natural disasters.⁹

There are some 4.400 NGOs worldwide undertaking humanitarian action on an ongoing basis. Yet the system is still dominated in terms of operational presence and resource share, by the UN humanitarian agencies, the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and five international 'mega' NGO's, whose combined humanitarian expenditure in 2010 exceeded US\$ 2.7 billion. In 2010 there was an estimated total of 274,000 humanitarian workers worldwide.¹⁰

⁷ <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/overview>.

⁸ Global Humanitarian Assistance, Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013, 2013.

⁹ G. Taylor et al., The State of the Humanitarian System, 2012 edition, ALNAP, p.37.

¹⁰ Idem, p.9.

Fig. 1.1 Summary of budgets and staffing of humanitarian organisations, 2010¹¹

Humanitarian Organisations	Humanitarian expenditure \$US billion	Humanitarian staff
NGOs	7.4	141,000
UN	9.3	85,681
Red Cross/Crescent Movement	1.2	47,157
Total		273,838

Source: G. Taylor et al., The State of the Humanitarian System, 2012 edition, ALNAP, p.26.

2. Definition of HA¹²

‘Humanitarian assistance’ is aid and action designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies. The characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of foreign assistance and development aid are that:

- a) it is intended to be governed by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence
- b) it is intended to be short-term in nature and provide for activities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. In practice it is often difficult to say where ‘during and in the immediate aftermath of emergencies’ ends and other types of assistance begin, especially in situations of prolonged vulnerability.

Traditional responses to humanitarian crises, and the easiest to categorise as such, are those that fall under the aegis of ‘emergency response’:

- a) material relief assistance and services (shelter, water, medicines etc.)
- b) emergency food aid (short-term distribution and supplementary feeding programmes)
- c) relief coordination, protection and support services (coordination, logistics and communications).

But humanitarian assistance can also include reconstruction and rehabilitation (repairing pre-existing infrastructure as opposed to longer-term activities designed to improve the level of infrastructure) and disaster prevention and preparedness (disaster risk reduction (DRR), early warning systems, contingency stocks and planning). Under the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) reporting criteria, humanitarian assistance has very clear cut-off points – for example, ‘disaster preparedness’ excludes longer-term work such as prevention of floods or conflicts. ‘Reconstruction relief and rehabilitation’ includes repairing pre-existing infrastructure but excludes longer-term activities designed to improve the level of infrastructure.

3. Dutch HA policy

The overall objective of Dutch humanitarian assistance is to contribute to the relief of life-threatening human needs amongst the most vulnerable people, mostly women and children, caused by (chronic) crisis situations and/or natural disasters. In principle, the Netherlands provides humanitarian assistance throughout the world with a focus on chronic crisis areas in the developing world. The basic principles underlying Dutch humanitarian assistance are the humanitarian imperative (assistance is provided wherever the needs are most urgent), neutrality, impartiality and independence.

In 2011 a policy document was drawn up to outline how the Netherlands acts upon lessons learned

¹¹ The expenditure figures cannot be totalled without double counting as large portions of the UN expenditure flow through NGOs as grants.

¹² Website Global Humanitarian Assistance.

in recent years in order to respond to new developments and challenges.¹³ In this policy document the following goals were prioritised:

1. More self-reliance and resilience

In the case of humanitarian aid, prioritising and strengthening the use of local capacity and structures. More attention will be devoted to disaster risk reduction (DRR): preventing disasters, mitigating the impact of disasters, and disaster preparedness.

2. More effectiveness through less duplication and more coordination

Emergency appeals need to become more uniform, so that they are mutually comparable and better coordinated. At present, each aid organisation operates its own system, which is inefficient. More cooperation in needs assessments will ensure more cohesion, less duplication, and fewer gaps in aid provision.

3. Humanitarian access and neutrality

Aid organisations must have free access to the people affected. The humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence must be upheld. This protects humanitarian aid from being equated with politics and from the potential risks this brings for both victims and aid workers. The Netherlands wants to be an active advocate in this area.

4. Greater accountability

The Netherlands will continue to focus on accountability for results in humanitarian aid. Furthermore, the government has a role in ensuring adequate communication towards the Dutch public on the results of the humanitarian assistance provided.

The policy document includes four to six commitments for the realisation of each of the four goals. However, the policy document does not include a logical framework or an overview of (measurable) expected results.

The Netherlands does not implement humanitarian aid directly but, as a donor, enables humanitarian organisations to do so. Dutch policy emphasises the importance of a strong central coordinating role of the UN in humanitarian crisis situations. For reasons of assumed efficiency, the Netherlands in principle prefers the UN channel for humanitarian assistance and only in cases where this is not suitable, channels funding through NGOs.

The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), led by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), guides Dutch humanitarian action in countries and regions characterised by chronic crises. In case of an acute crisis situation, this applies to the Emergency Appeals of the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The Netherlands sees itself as a partner in the global humanitarian system, with a global portfolio – and thus it focuses its attention on improving that global system. The Netherlands provides flexible funding, with the vast majority of its contributions to UN agencies and the ICRC being either wholly, or partially, unearmarked and it is a timely donor, aiming to commit 75% of the annual humanitarian budget before the end of April each year. In return for these good humanitarian donorship practices, the Netherlands asks the humanitarian system to implement the full range of its planned reforms, to further strengthen the capacity of UN leadership, and for all involved agencies to coordinate under the cluster system. All these forms of aid are subject to international agreements and principles, especially the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles, which largely determine Dutch policy choices.

A summary of the policy theory of the Netherlands funding policy of HA is represented in fig 1.2.¹⁴

¹³ Staatssecretaris van Buitenlandse Zaken, Hulp aan Mensen in Nood, 23 december 2011, Kamerstuk 32605 nr. 64.

¹⁴ This figure depicts the overall funding strategy which is represented mainly by the second priority of the policy note (more coordination leads to more effective assistance). The other priorities (self-reliance and resilience; access and neutrality; and, greater accountability) are components within this general logic and therefore not depicted specifically in the figure below.

Figure 1.2 Policy theory of the Netherlands Humanitarian Assistance Policy: more effectiveness through less duplication and more coordination

Impact	Affected people are increasingly able to address the needs/risks brought about by the emergency and are more resilient to future crises				
Expected longer-term results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lifesaving supplies and services provided: protection, shelter, food and health - Access to assistance and availability of basic services - Creation of conditions conducive to durable solutions, increased self-reliance and peaceful co-existence for IDPs and other crisis-affected populations. - Protection of, promotion of and respect for human rights for people in vulnerable situations 				
Expected immediate results (acute needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HA is demand driven and responds to needs of target population - Timeliness of HA - Coverage of population affected - Targeting of vulnerable groups 				
Expected improvements of HA system (capacity to deliver HA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leaves opportunity for the UN system to coordinate and allocate as a central coordinator - Improved leadership of Humanitarian Coordinators and cluster leaders - Partnerships with NGOs strengthened and efficient UN operational and logistical support to NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to timely respond to acute crises: - Initial and bridge funding delivered - Capacity for timely allocation and distribution - Flexibility allows interventions to be adjusted to respond to changing needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity to respond to chronic crises: - Coordinated planning allows for the formulation of strategic objectives, activities and resources mobilisation - Flexibility and predictability of aid - Less fragmentation and more coherence of HA - Efficient allocation of means and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enables hum. UN organisations to deploy means and staff according to their own priorities - Strengthening of ICRC principles and their capacity to respond to humanitarian crises - Access through ICRC to victims where UN cannot intervene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGO's fulfil complementary role/added value in access and coverage of vulnerable population groups
Netherlands' inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby/diplomacy along NL priorities: - strengthening the role of the ERC - improving efficiency of the cluster approach - involving NGOs more effectively - improving coordination between OCHA and UN bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding pooled funds at country level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-earmarked funding to UN humanitarian organisations and ICRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc NGO funding (preferably taking part in coordinated structures)

This policy theory is based on (an adaption of) the policy note of the ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands: Aid for people in need.

Expenditure

The Humanitarian Assistance budget of the ministry consists of three categories:

- a) Core funding of UN organisations and coordinated funds: UNHCR, WFP, UNWRA, OCHA, Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). These contributions represent around 75% of the total HA budget on average.
- b) Contributions to humanitarian assistance in protracted chronic crises.
- c) Contributions to humanitarian assistance in acute crises.

A major part of the contributions in these last two categories is channelled through pooled funding mechanisms. The rest is spent through NGO or Red Cross project funding.

2009-2012: Total contribution¹⁵

In the period 2009-2012 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spent a total of EUR 1.1 billion on humanitarian assistance¹⁶. Since 2009 the annual expenditure has slowly decreased from EUR 293 million to EUR 258 million in 2012.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Netherlands funded EU humanitarian assistance through its ODA contribution to the EU institutions. The *Global Humanitarian Assistance* report estimates the contribution to have been EUR 71 million in 2012, thus adding a substantial amount to the humanitarian assistance funded through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁸

Recipient countries

Between 2009 and 2012 the majority of the Dutch humanitarian assistance was not geographically earmarked, but allocated to 'world-wide activities'. Such activities consist of both core funding to multilateral organisations and activities without a national or regional focus. The geographically earmarked expenditure targeted 39 different countries and regions¹⁹. Over half of this funding was spent on the five countries that received most aid; the top fifteen recipient countries accounted for 87% of these resources. However, further assistance was scattered: 26 countries and regions²⁰ received less than 1% of the earmarked funding each. The largest recipient countries that received geographically earmarked humanitarian assistance were the Palestinian Authorities, Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. More recently the Netherlands contribution to humanitarian assistance in the Syrian crisis increased rapidly.

Distribution per channel

Dutch humanitarian assistance may be provided through a variety of implementing agencies. As was the case in previous periods, the bulk (81%) of the humanitarian assistance between 2009 and 2012 was provided through the UN (earmarked and unearmarked). The main UN agencies involved were UNHCR, WFP and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund.

Fig. 1.3 The ten most important multilateral implementing organisations 2009-2012

The ten most important multilateral implementing organisations		Expenditure 2009-2012 (in mil.)	Total expenditure (%)
1	UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees)	214	19,8
2	WFP (WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME)	205	18,9

¹⁵ At the time of preparation of the ToR the precise expenditure of 2013 was not yet completely known. In the following section an estimate is given for the total contribution, but further calculations regarding recipient countries and organisations have not yet been made. This will be updated in the evaluation report.

¹⁶ This is spending allocated through the six budget articles for humanitarian aid, namely: UNHCR, UNRWA, WFP, emergency aid to developing countries, emergency aid to non-OECD/DAC countries, disaster risk reduction.

¹⁷ For 2013 the total indicative budget was set at 215 million.

¹⁸ Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013; correspondence with authors.

¹⁹ Next to country allocations, the budget also allows allocation to certain regions when the aid is intended to be 'cross-boundary': Regional aid to Latin America; Regional aid to Asia; and, Regional aid to Africa. Furthermore, a category 'not applicable' exists.

²⁰ Excluding the category 'not applicable'.

3	UN CENTRAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (CERF)	120	11,1
4	UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)	100	9,2
5	UNOCHA (OFFICE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFF)	99	9,1
6	UNRWA (UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY)	78	7,2
7	UNICEF (UN Children Fund)	31	2,9
8	UN AGENCIES, FUNDS AND COMMISSIONS GROUP	20.	1,8
9	IOM - INT. ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION.	7	0,7
10	FAO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION	5	0,5

Source: Piramide

The Netherlands is a significant donor to the major UN organisations working in the field of humanitarian assistance. In 2012 the ranking of the Netherlands on the list of major HA donors to UN organisations was as follows.

Fig 1.4 Major donors of UN organisations and funds in million dollars (2012)

Organization	Major donors	Ranking the Netherlands: Position and contribution
WFP	US 1,460	12th 75
	EU 386	
	Canada 367	
UNHCR	US 712	5 th 103
	Japan 143	
	EU 118	
UNRWA	US 234	7 25
	EU 202	
	UK 69	
OCHA	UK 38	8 th 7
	Sweden 34	
	USA 28	
CERF	UK 111	4 th 52
	Sweden 71	
	Norway 68	

Source: Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Besteding van het budget van noodhulp, 6 februari 2014, TK 32 605, nr. 135.

About 17% of the assistance was channelled through 28 international and national NGOs. International NGOs, of which the ICRC received by far the largest share of the funding, channelled some 13% of the assistance. Dutch NGOs, of which SHO²¹, ZOA Vluchtelingen zorg, the Netherlands Red Cross and Stichting Vluchteling, are the largest recipients, received 4% of funding. Local NGOs received less than 0.1% of total expenditure (see Fig. 1.5).

Fig. 1.5 The fifteen most important recipients humanitarian NGOs that received government funding, 2009-2012

The ten Dutch humanitarian NGOs		Expenditure 2009-2012 (in EUR mil.)	Total HA expenditure (%)
1	RED CROSS / CROIX ROUGE / RODE KRUIS	129	11,9
2	SHO -SAMENWERKENDE HULPORGANISATIES	14	1,3
3	CARE INTERNATIONAL	9	0,9
4	ZOA VLUCHTELINGENZORG	8	0,7
5	HET NEDERLANDSE RODE KRUIS	6	0,5
6	STICHTING VLUCHTELING	5	0,5
7	TEARFUND	4	0,4
8	OXFAM NOVIB	3	0,3
9	WORLD VISION	3	0,3

²¹ SHO stands for *Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties*. This is a conglomerate of Dutch NGOs.

10	PSO	2	0,2
11	ICCO - INTERCHURCH ORGANIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION	2	0,2
12	CORDAID	2	0,1
13	SAVE THE CHILDREN	1	0,1
14	AVSI (ASSOCIAZIONE VOLONTARI PER IL SERVIZIO INTER	1	0,1
15	GOAL	1	0,1

Source: Piramide

Recent developments: expenditure 2013-2014

While until recently NGO funding took place on an ad hoc basis, from 2014 onwards Dutch NGOs can participate in a tender procedure which will allow them to receive unearmarked funding for a period of three years. This 'strategic partnership for chronic crises' allows for a maximum investment of EUR 30 million for the period 2014-2016. Furthermore, a subsidy framework of EUR 7 million has been launched for cross border aid by Dutch NGOs in the Syrian crisis.

4. The 2006 IOB evaluation

The 2006 IOB evaluation assessed Dutch humanitarian aid provided in the period 2000-2004. It focused on complex emergencies. The main issues identified for future policy were as follows:

-Policy

Current humanitarian aid policy and strategies are documented in a variety of policy documents, notes and memoranda. It is worth considering the consolidation of these documents into one policy note that should include references to adjacent policy fields.

-Organisational aspects

Sufficient and adequately skilled staff are needed in order to manage the participation of the Netherlands in costly and complicated humanitarian aid interventions, to safeguard the coherence between the use of political, military, humanitarian and development instruments, and to ensure realistic political analyses of the local contexts. Given the current staffing levels of the Humanitarian Aid Division, the Netherlands Permanent Representations and the embassies in countries in chronic emergencies, it is worth considering the prioritisation of tasks and the strengthening of staffing levels.

-Monitoring and reporting

The embassies' field-level monitoring of the results of aid implementation has been weak. In addition, the financing agreements with a number of agencies resulted in reporting at a very aggregated level. This in turn, reduced donor overview of the results of individual aid activities. It is worth reconsidering the role of the embassies' field-level monitoring of the implementation of activities funded by the Netherlands. Such monitoring should also help to determine the quality of reporting by agencies under Channel Financing Agreements.

-Management chains

The international humanitarian aid system is characterised by UN agencies operating through implementing partners. International NGOs also deliver part of the aid through partners. This results in long aid management chains and sub-contracting, which may lead to cumulative overhead costs. The evaluation did not investigate this issue, nor did it come across any study that tackled this phenomenon.

It would be worth considering whether the Netherlands could call upon humanitarian agencies and other donors to commission an investigation of this aspect of aid management.

5. Preliminary study: the preparation of the ToR

IOB initiated a preliminary study in the first three months of 2014. This study consisted of six types of activities:

- a) Context-analysis: overview study of the new trends and developments in HA and defining data sources.
- b) Stakeholders-analysis: interviews and meetings with ministry staff, some NGOs and the Humanitarian Platform of humanitarian NGOs. In order to establish the main issues of political interest an inventory was made of the interventions in Parliament on HA.
- c) Policy analysis: inventory of policy documents and papers and analysis of allocation of Dutch HA disbursements-analysis to establish a reconstruction of policy theory and intervention logic.
- d) A quick scan was made of six different types of evaluations:
 - System-wide evaluations of the response by the whole system to a particular disaster event or complex emergency;
 - General reviews, evaluations and development effectiveness reports of three UN-organisations: UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR;
 - Country evaluations: specifically on possible case study countries;
 - Thematic evaluations: specifically on protection, cash transfers and food aid;
 - Programme and project evaluations: impact evaluations etc.;
 - Donor evaluations (CIDA, SIDA and BRD).
- f) Definition of the evaluation object, design of approach and methodology of the study and the selection of country studies.
- g) Orientation on possible modalities of implementation of the evaluation and contacting external experts.

Conclusions on the use of current literature and evaluation reports as a main source for this evaluation

The quick scan of evaluation reports undertaken in the preparatory study made it possible to get a better insight into the possibilities and limitations of using existing literature and evaluation reports as an information source for this evaluation:

- Available studies at the system wide level (OCHA, CERF and UN evaluation capacity) allow for collecting evidence (however, not always systematic) on the quality of HA delivery capacity and the extent to which progress has been made on the HA reform agenda.
- Only at output level can evidence be found (for particular cases or issues) for a causal relation between improvement of coordination and leadership and (better conditions) for effectiveness of HA.
- Evaluations provide some, but not necessarily systematic, insights into the effectiveness and sometimes impact of HA, but attribution remains a major limitation. In general evaluations of effectiveness include an assessment of coverage and access to the population and mostly quantitative data on services and goods delivered. The ALNAP overview study (2012) observes that recently the importance of impact evaluations has become more accepted. Approximately 25% of the reviewed evaluations in the sample make some reference to 'impact'. There is no standard treatment of the criterion however, and in a significant number of cases the concept is conflated with that of effectiveness. There are a few examples (including by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP)) of randomised controlled trials. In many other cases, evaluation of impact is mostly undertaken by perception and focus group studies which frequently show serious limitations in coverage/representation and lack a more systematic approach. Most high quality studies of HA are in the area of health, nutrition and peace-building.

6. Main findings of the preliminary study and considerations on the evaluability of HA

The preliminary study as discussed in Part I resulted in some key findings which provide the starting points and assumptions for the approach and design of this evaluation:

- a) The evaluation will focus on the role of the Netherlands as a donor in the field of humanitarian assistance. As the largest portion of humanitarian assistance is provided through multilateral channels and is not earmarked for specific objectives or countries, it will not be possible to directly attribute outputs or outcomes to the Netherlands contribution.
- b) The policy reconstruction that was elaborated in the preparatory study shows that the Netherlands' HA policy is rather vague on the mechanisms through which different levels of the policy theory are linked to each other. This is particularly the case for the question how improved coordination and the implementation of the HA reform agenda contribute to effectiveness of HA.
- c) Both the magnitude and complexity of HA make it necessary to strictly delimitate focus and areas of research.
- d) Thematic and regional systematic reviews of literature and evaluation reports will form the most important resource to gain insight into progress made in the UN HA delivery processes and progress made on the reform agenda.
- e) In the context of this evaluation, the possibilities to conduct impact evaluation at the level of the population are limited because of two reasons a) Legitimacy: in most UN HA interventions, the Netherlands' contribution represents only a limited share of total funding. Consequently, a single donor evaluation of the programme concerned would not be in line with the efforts to promote donor coordination; b) Representativeness: conducting impact evaluation research would only cover a very small part of the target population of a particular UN HA intervention and at its best contribute only some anecdotal evidence which would not allow for generalisation.
- f) Only when this can provide information and evidence on specific themes, field research will be considered as a means to complement existing literature and evaluations (fill the gaps).

Part II Evaluation Research proposal

1. Evaluation objectives

The evaluation offers an opportunity to render account for the policy by providing insight into the Netherlands' HA policy development, its implementation and whether the envisaged results were achieved. It also aims to provide lessons learned from experiences of the implementation of HA, particularly with regard to adaption of the Netherlands' policy to the rapidly changing contexts in which HA is provided.

2. Evaluation questions

The central evaluation question is: to what extent has the central objective of the Netherlands' humanitarian assistance policy, i.e. to provide humanitarian assistance in an effective way, been realised?

The following evaluation questions have been formulated:

1. **Policy relevance:** *What assessment can be made of the Netherlands HA policy?*
 - 1.1. How does Dutch policy respond to new developments in HA (innovation, new/emerging donors, politicisation of HA etc.)?
 - 1.2. Have the principles for Good Humanitarian Donorship and other international HA standards (Sphere/EU consensus on HA) been complied with?
 - 1.3. What assessment can be made of the contributions (together with other like-minded donors) made to promote coordination and the UN's central role in HA?
 - 1.4. What assessment can be made of the contributions (together with other like-minded donors) made to promote more self-reliance and resilience in HA (strengthening local capacity, transition, exit strategies, disaster risk reduction and reconstruction after conflicts)?
2. **Efficiency:** *To what extent did the Netherlands' (funding) policy contribute to increased delivery capacity of HA?*
 - 2.1 To what extent did the Netherlands non-earmarked funding of UN HA-organisations allow for reliable funding and flexible planning of their interventions?
 - 2.2 Does the option to channel most of Dutch HA through UN-organisations meet the underlying expectations as regards to:
 - efficiency gains as a consequence of less fragmentation?
 - leadership and coordination of HA?
 - demand driven HA?
3. **Effectiveness:** *What can be learned from available evaluation reports and international literature on specific themes and cases about the effectiveness of HA and what explanations can be given for the main findings?*
 - 3.1. What assessment can be made of the support to HA interventions in acute crises in terms of timeliness, coverage and responding to immediate needs?
 - 3.2 What assessment can be made of the effectiveness of supported HA interventions in chronic crises especially in terms of protection, shelter and income?
 - 3.3. What assessment can be made of HA contributions to self-reliance and durable solutions for the victims of natural and political crises?

These evaluation questions also cover the research questions included in the Dutch government regulation for periodic evaluation (RPE).²²

A simplified framework for the application of the evaluation criteria is represented in the following figure.

Fig. 2.1 Evaluation framework: evaluation criteria and sub-questions and sources

Criteria	Indicators/sub questions	Sources of information
1. Policy Relevance		
	Findings of analyses on changing context for HA	Scientific Literature, Working documents OXFORD Migration Research Centre, the Humanitarian Futures Program of King's College, ALNAP: The State of the Humanitarian System.
	International Standards on HA: alignment of Dutch humanitarian policy to European Consensus on HA and the Principles and Practices of Good Humanitarian Donorship	Website GHD, Sphere and the European Consensus Evaluation.
	Compliance with the commitments as established in policy note	Policy Note and internal documentation of the ministry: activity appraisal documents, instructions for board meetings etc.
	Benchmarking other donors	Evaluations of other donors, European Consensus Evaluation, Development Initiatives Data Bank
	Policy commitments and leverage regarding UN's central role	Internal policy documents and funding documents (activity appraisal documents and project reports), instructions for and feedback reporting of international board meetings
	Policy commitments regarding LRRD achieved	Internal policy documents and funding documents (activity appraisal documents and project reports)
2. Efficiency		
Coordination and leadership		a) Evaluation CERF b) Evaluation CAP's c) Progress reports OCHA and IASC d) Evaluation reports on cluster approach e) Development Effectiveness reports and peer reviews UN Humanitarian organisations
	The indicators included in the logical framework of CERF,	
	Progress criteria for the cluster approach	
	The indicators for progress as established in the ISAC transformative agenda	
	Role of Emergency Relief Coordinator and of Humanitarian Coordinator	
Increased capacity to deliver		In case studies: programme documents, progress reports and evaluations
	Quality of needs assessments: more demand driven HA	
	Targeting and filling critical gaps	
	Quality of funding policy and support for NGOs (quality criteria for decision-making on allocation and monitoring)	
	Funding secured and efficient allocation mechanisms in place	
	Efficiency gains: less fragmentation	
3. Effectiveness		
a. HA delivery	Achievement of objectives as defined in programme documents for:	In case studies: programme documents, progress reports and evaluations
	Timeliness	

²² Regulation Periodic Evaluation, 31 August 2012. The Dutch government regulation for periodic evaluation (RPE) proposes 13 research questions organised around five topics for policy evaluation. The questions on the policy motivation and implementation are covered under the first evaluation question on policy relevance; the questions 8 to 10 on evaluations already conducted will be dealt with in the systematic reviews as explained in 5: Approach and methodology. The questions on efficiency and effectiveness are covered by evaluation questions 2 and 3.

	Coverage	
	Targeting vulnerable groups	
b Thematic		
Shelter	UNHCR quantitative and qualitative standard criteria for assessment of HA for shelter	a) Programme and country evaluations b) Thematic evaluations
Food	-WFP quantitative and qualitative standard criteria for food aid: has food assistance met life saving-needs?	c) Field reports and interviews with field staff and local stakeholders d) Academic literature
Income	-UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP standardised assessment criteria for voucher and non-cash programmes	
Protection	-UNHCR and UNICEF assessment criteria for protection of specific groups: children, women.	
Contributions to longer term self-reliance	Long term perspectives refugees protracted crises: increased capacity to recover from /adapt to crises: increasing own efforts in relation to HA	
LRRD/withdrawal scenarios	LRRD/withdrawal scenarios in place?	
	Promoting self-help and capacity building as an important component of HA	
	Inclusion of longer term development perspective in HA	
	Mobilisation of local resources	
	Withdrawal scenarios were included in HA strategies?	

The definition and application of the evaluation criteria will be in line with the OECD-DAC criteria and more in particular with the document *'Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria, as well as with 'an ALNAP Guide for humanitarian agencies'*.

For effectiveness it is important to distinguish between different types of crises and stages of transition. In acute crises effectiveness tries to establish/analyse to what extent HA contributes to alleviating direct and lifesaving needs and risks, with special attention to the most vulnerable groups and particularly women. Effectiveness in chronic crises refers to the effects on the medium and longer term: the extent to which affected people are increasingly able to address the needs/risks brought about by the emergency and are more resilient to future crises.

It is clear that the link between improved coordination of HA and effectiveness is complex; as mentioned earlier, the policy theory does not include an elaborated explanation of the underlying assumptions and mechanisms which are supposed to contribute to increased HA effectiveness. The Netherlands' contribution is part of a much broader international effort influencing the humanitarian system. As discussed, the evaluation will not be able to directly attribute results to Dutch inputs, however, it can reflect on the results achieved within the humanitarian system that are in line with Dutch priorities. Attribution to improved HA delivery might also be possible for some specific issues as for example the link between Dutch funding modalities, predictability and quick response/timeliness of HA.

3. Approach and methodology

In order to respond to the three evaluation questions the following activities will be carried out. Question 1 on policy relevance will be answered through undertaking a policy reconstruction and assessment. Questions 2 and 3 on efficiency and effectiveness will be answered through a systematic review and three country studies.

1. *Policy reconstruction and assessment*

- a. Review of the implementation of the main commitments and activities as included in the policy framework.
- b. Analysis of decision-making and monitoring in Dutch funding policy, including for the case of the Philippines: a) justification for choice of channel and prioritisation of crises in terms of funding b) monitoring and evaluation of funded programmes and organisations.
- c. Analysis of alignment of Dutch humanitarian policy to European Consensus on HA and the Principles and Practices of Good Humanitarian Donorship.
- d. Analysis of compliance of commitments to promote more self-reliance and resilience (strengthening local capacity, transition, exit strategies and DRR).
- e. Comparison of the Netherlands HA policy with like-minded EU donors.
- f. Assessment (engagement and results) of Dutch interventions in the boards of UNHCR WFP, UNICEF and OCHA, the OCHA Donor Support Group and ICRC, with special attention to Dutch policy priorities (linking relief and development, accountability).
- g. Assessment (engagement and results) of Dutch interventions in the EU Council's working group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) with special attention to Dutch policy priorities (linking relief and development, accountability).

The main sources are: internal documentation in the ministry and the Permanent Representations in Geneva, New York and Rome: instruction notes, meeting minutes and written interventions by representatives of the Netherlands. Furthermore use can be made of evaluation reports of other donors, the evaluation of the EU consensus on HA as well as data on HA funding from Global Development Initiatives. For a comparison of the Netherlands' HA policy with that of like-minded EU donors an assessment will be made of available donor evaluations, including those conducted by the UK, Sweden, Germany and Denmark, as well as of the evaluation of the European Consensus on HA. Also interviews will be held with relevant key informants and staff of UN-organisations and ICRC.

2. *Systematic review*

To gain more insight into the extent to which the expected improvements in HA delivery have been realised and in particular what progress has been made on the implementation of the HA reform agenda (see Part I of the ToR), a systematic review will be made of available literature and evaluation reports. This comprises the following activities:

- a. Selection (and quality assessment) of relevant literature and evaluations on the basis of the first inventory made in the preparatory study.
- b. Development and elaboration of the review framework for the assessment.
- c. Analysis of the main findings.

The IOB framework for assessment of evaluations will be used to qualify and select reports. The main sources for the review are: evaluation and progress reports on CERF, OCHA, the Cluster approach, the HA reform agenda, thematic and country studies on the performance of Humanitarian UN agencies and available development effectiveness reports. For the assessment of accountability of the funded organisations use can be made of several assessments, such as the EVALNET and the UN Office Internal Oversight Services reviews of the evaluation capacity of WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and others.

The assessment of the progress made in coordination of HA can be done on the basis of available recurring issues as identified for the OCHA Evaluation (2010), the logical framework for the CERF evaluation, the indicators for progress as established in the IASC transformative agenda and progress criteria for the cluster approach.

The evaluation will have to focus on specific cases/crises to which the Netherlands has contributed. Where possible the evaluation should provide evidence for the link in some specific areas between improved HA delivery and effectiveness. This will be specified in the ToR for the country studies.

3. *Three country studies for a more in-depth study about the expected improvements in HA delivery at country-level and its effectiveness.*

Three country studies will be conducted to investigate:

- a. To what extent HA strategy responded to the main characteristics and challenges of the context?
- b. Whether the expected improvements of HA delivery were achieved?
- c. Whether and how improvements in aid delivery contributed to (better conditions for) effective HA?
- d. What assessment can be made of the effectiveness of supported HA interventions (protection, responding to immediate needs, improvement of living conditions of target population, especially of vulnerable groups (women and children)?
- e. What assessment can be made of Dutch support: funding, monitoring and other activities?

The following considerations were applied to the selection of the country studies:

- a. Volume of Dutch (direct and indirect) disbursements and significant involvement in other humanitarian assistance and reconstruction/development programmes.
- b. Availability and quality of monitoring and evaluation reports.
- c. Illustrative for efforts to reach better coordination and leadership.
- d. At least one natural disaster related HA case.

Following from this, the three case-studies selected are: a) Common Humanitarian Fund/Sudan, b) Netherlands contributions to UNHCR via Syria Regional Response (SRP) and Dutch NGO’s active in the Syrian crisis and c) the Response Fund to the Drought crisis in Ethiopia (Horn of Africa).

For the selection of Sudan, the ongoing transition from emergency to reconstruction aid and HA in an ongoing political conflict were other important considerations.

The Syria crisis is already three years old, which makes it possible to make a first assessment of the aid provided to refugees. The case has high political priority in Dutch foreign policy as well as in parliament. Furthermore it is illustrative for the influence of emerging HA donors.

The Horn of Africa case is very illustrative for new modalities of food aid and the relation between emergency and more structural problems of food-security.

Additionally, use will be made of the results of the IOB evaluation of Dutch cooperating Aid Agencies (SHO) support to Haiti in 2010 and the report ‘Verantwoording van de hulpgelden 2012 voor Haiti’ by the Netherlands Court of Audit. The findings of both reports will be updated with findings from recently published meta studies on HA to Haiti.

The three case-studies together cover roughly 25% of the Netherlands’ geographically earmarked funding for HA. Figure 2.2 provides an overview of the case-studies.

Fig. 2.2 Overview of country studies in three countries

Case-study	Direct contributions	Main actors	Specific issues
Horn of Africa: Human Response Fund/ drought crisis 2011-2012 and NGO funding	EUR 7,8	WFP and NGOs	Dependency on food aid and link between livelihood strategies and food aid.

Sudan: Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF)	EUR 48,5 (2009-2012)	OCHA	Achievements of CHF objectives: thematic and regional areas to be determined after desk study
Syria: Netherlands contributions to UNHCR via Syria Regional Response (SRP)	(2012-2014) EUR 85 (15 to assistance in Syria) and EUR 7 million via NGO	UNHCR, IFRC, Dutch NGOs for cross border assistance	Protection, shelter and income/vouchers

In the case of Sudan, the Netherlands is one of the largest contributors of the CHF (between 2nd and 4th donor). Regarding the other two countries, the Dutch contribution compared to the total humanitarian assistance is harder to assess; however, the Netherlands remains a significant player in both cases.

Country study approach

Country studies activities are as follows:

a) Context analysis

A context analysis will be elaborated in order to better assess findings which will deal with the following issues:

- The political and humanitarian context of the crisis
- Dutch/EU foreign policy in relation to the crisis: diplomatic and other efforts/contributions to conflict resolution
- The role of local governments and other stakeholders
- The conditions and dilemmas for HA (political, access and others) and how HA organisations responded.
- Quality of needs assessments: How do the underlying analysis of the needs assessments relate to the findings on the causes and character of the crisis in current (scientific) literature on the crisis?

Main Sources: The context analysis will be conducted through a comparative analysis of academic and other current literature/information on the region/crisis concerned and the HA strategy. To broaden the perspective of the analysis a regional/thematic specialist will participate in each of the country studies.

b) Desk study of HA delivery and results of projects and programmes funded by the Netherlands.

Insofar as possible the evaluation will establish to what extent HA provided access to basic services (shelter, food and income, non-food items) and protection for victims of humanitarian crises.

Next to the general criteria for efficiency and effectiveness as represented in figure 2.4 more specific criteria and verification activities/resources are elaborated for each country study on the basis of the specific programmes on which the country study will focus.

Because of the need to limit the focus of the country studies, the provision of basic services including WASH, education and health will not form part of the country studies.

c) Field study

Only after completing the desk review a decision on an additional field visit will be made dependent on if useful complementary information and research on specific issues can be collected. In the case of Syria field studies will be conducted in one or two neighbouring countries (Jordan and/or Lebanon) in order to gather more extensive field-evidence for a limited number of areas and/or supported

categories. The methodology and further specification of the field study will only be possible after completing the desk study (see annexes).

4. Scope and demarcation

In Dutch HA policy the distinction between emergency aid, relief and reconstruction is not always clear. This evaluation will focus on disbursements as included in budget article 2.6²³, which covers assistance for emergency response in both acute and chronic crises, as well as disaster risk reduction (DRR) and laying the foundations for longer-term reconstruction. However, the evaluation will not cover stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in a broader sense as this falls under separate budget articles.

Time period

The evaluation research and country studies will focus on the last five years (2009-2013) and will be updated for the first half of 2014 when relevant.

HA to the United Nations Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNWRA)

Although UNWRA is a major recipient of Dutch HA, support to this organisation will not be included in the evaluation. This is due in part to the fact that the aid to the Palestinian refugees takes place in a particular political setting which makes it difficult to compare to other HA-crisis situations. In this case it might be useful to consider a multi-donor evaluation in the near future.

5. Risks

Although a general assessment of the feasibility of the proposed approach was made in the preparatory study, a major risk of the evaluation remains the lack of systematic information and evidence necessary to answer all the questions. Furthermore the observed limitations to link delivery and effectiveness will make it necessary to focus on the link between modalities of delivery and direct outputs. It is to be expected that attribution can only be established for some specific mechanisms and instruments. Also, access during field visits remains a risk in unstable areas.

6. Report

- Summary policy review of 60 pages
- Research report (100 pages) including country study chapters

7. Planning

- ToR approved 23rd of April
- Sub-study UN Reform Agenda: November
- Desk studies and country studies: June-September
- Additional country visits: October
- Completion of all desk- and literature studies: December
- Presentation draft report: April 2015.

8. Organisation of the evaluation

A reference group will be established to ensure the quality of the evaluation. Its main task will be to provide advice to the director of IOB regarding the quality and relevance of the ToR, the inception

²³ Since 2014 this has become budget article 4.1 of the budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

report, the in-depth study reports and the draft evaluation report. The reference group consists of the external experts professor Dennis Dijkzeul (University of Bochum), René Grotenhuis (former director CORDAID currently president of *Samenwerkende Hulp Organisaties* (SHO)) and Mathijs van Leeuwen (Radboud University Nijmegen) and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Joost Andriessen (Director of the Department for Stability and Humanitarian Assistance) and Jelte van Wieren (Head of the Humanitarian Assistance Division of the Department for Stability and Humanitarian Assistance). The reference group is chaired by the deputy-director of IOB.

The IOB internal peer-review team consists of IOB evaluators Margret Verwijk and Paul de Nooijer and is chaired by IOB deputy-director Geert Geut. The peer-review team will review interim products such as the inception reports and the reports of the in-depth studies and be available for advice.

IOB's responsibilities for the evaluation will be taken on by a core team composed of IOB evaluator Nico van Niekerk and researcher Julia McCall. Case-study research will be assigned to consultants.

1. Sudan country study of the Common Humanitarian Fund

Context

Conflict has raged intermittently in Sudan for the last fifty years between the government in Khartoum and various fractions in Southern Sudan, costing an estimated two million lives and leaving over 4 million people displaced. In 2005 a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed. Recent developments in South Sudan, that gained its independence in 2011, demonstrate that the region is still highly unstable. South Sudan remains one of the poorest countries in the world with very little access to basic services for the general population. Also in Darfur, the West of Sudan, a longstanding conflict between (militias supported by) the Khartoum government and rebel forces has raged since 2003. Estimations are that the conflict has left at least 300.000 dead and 2 million displaced. The crisis in Darfur is aggravated by natural hazards such as drought which has led to severe hunger several times in the last three decades. It was poor performance of humanitarian assistance in Darfur that provided the final push for the Humanitarian Reform process.

The Common Humanitarian Fund

The CHF is a pooled fund that is committed to the timely allocation and disbursement of funds to Sudan's most critical humanitarian needs. The CHF provides grants to UN humanitarian agencies and, via UNDP, to international and national NGOs. The administration is shared between UNDP and OCHA. The CHF is used for projects included in the Sudan Humanitarian Work Plan (HWP), which respond to sudden-onset and unforeseen humanitarian needs. This includes projects classified as 'Humanitarian' and 'Early Recovery' categories in the HWP. For example, the Work Plan for Sudan 2012 called for US \$1.05 billion. By the end of the year US\$ 556 million (53%) of total funding requirements had been met. The CHF had provided US\$ 75.6 million (14%) and the CERF 17.6 million (3%) to this total. The Work Plan defines various clusters²⁴ and within these clusters CHF funds those with the most urgent humanitarian needs. In 2012 the largest portion of CHF funding went to the following categories: Food Security Livelihoods (15%); Health (15%); Coordination and common services (14%); Education (10%); WASH (10%); Nutrition; Non-food items and emergency shelter; Protection; Return and Early Reintegration.

The Netherlands' humanitarian Assistance

The total earmarked humanitarian assistance to Sudan by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands came to EUR 57 million for the period 2009 to 2012. The Netherlands primarily contributed towards humanitarian assistance through the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) for Sudan, and after independence also through the CHF for South Sudan. Between 2009 and 2012 the total contribution towards the CHFs was EUR 48.5 million, thus covering 85% of the total humanitarian assistance to Sudan. Annual donations ranged between EUR 7 and 16 million. Between 2006-2007, the Netherlands was the second largest donor contributing 21% of total CHF funding. (UK first; Sweden third)

Next to supporting CHF, the Netherlands also supported various other programmes and projects (15% of earmarked allocations). Important executors of this assistance were Care Netherlands and

²⁴ In 2013 the clusters were: Basic Infrastructure; Coordination and Common Services; Education; Food Security and Livelihoods; Governance, Infrastructure and Economic Recovery; Health; Logistics and Emergency telecommunications; Mine Action; Non-food Items / Emergency Shelter; Nutrition; Protection; Refugee Multi-sector; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene [WASH]; Return and Early Reintegration.

UNDP. Furthermore, the Netherlands funded humanitarian assistance through its regular unearmarked contributions to ECHO and CERF.

Approach

The principal objective of the Netherlands policy is to improve the coordinated humanitarian response by all assisting parties in Sudan. The focus of the country study will be on the Common Humanitarian Fund.

Main research issues:

CHF:

- 1) The extent to which HA strategy responded to the main characteristics and challenges of the context and crisis.
- 2) The extent to which the aim of the common fund mechanism, to give the Humanitarian Coordinator greater ability to target funds at the most critical needs and allow rapid response to unforeseen needs, were achieved.
- 3) The extent to which the CHF achieved its goal to support the timely allocation and disbursement of donor resources to the most critical humanitarian needs of Sudan.
- 4) The extent to which the CHF objective to improve preparedness and strengthened capacities of national and local actors, as well as of international humanitarian actors, to respond effectively and efficiently to existing and foreseen humanitarian needs in Sudan has been met.
- 5) The extent to which the objective to promote greater access to assistance and availability of basic services with an emphasis on improved protection of, promotion of and respect for human rights for people in vulnerable situations, was achieved.

Dutch support to CHF:

- 1) The assessment that can be made of Dutch support to the CHF: funding, monitoring and other support for linking HA with the Netherlands development programme.
- 2) The extent to which there is an additional value for the Netherlands in directly financing programmes or projects outside of CHF (15% of funding).

Verification/approach

Through a systematic review of

- a) Current scientific literature on the context and humanitarian crisis in Sudan by a regional expertise. In this review it will be attempted to analyse to what extent the CHF responded to the needs of the population.
- b) Current evaluation reports of the HA to Sudan and of the CHF in particular. A main source of information will be evaluation of the CHF that was conducted in 2011. This evaluation focuses on the coordination of the fund and the process of allocation of funds. Unfortunately, there is but scarce information on the effectiveness of the programmes. Annual reports of the CHF and Work Plan provide insights in processes and to a certain extent in outputs and outcomes within the various sectors of the Work Plan. Evaluations of implementing organisations will be used to gather further insights in the effectiveness of certain projects and programmes funded by CHF.
- c) Field-monitoring reports

For a more in depth study of the effectiveness of the CHF a selection will be made of a limited number of areas and/or supported categories. Only after completing the desk review a decision on a complementary field visit will be made dependent on if useful complementary information and research on specific issues can be collected.

2. Country study: WFP and the Food crisis in Ethiopia

Crisis:

More than 80 per cent of the population in Ethiopia live in rural areas and rely on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihood. Their vulnerability is frequently exacerbated by natural and man-made hazards, including drought, flooding, disease outbreaks, inter-communal conflict and refugee influxes from neighbouring states. The Horn of Africa drought crisis in 2011-2012 had a big impact on the food security situation in Ethiopia, particularly in southern and south-eastern parts. According to a multi-agency assessment, 3.2 million people required relief food assistance from January to June 2012. Pastoralist areas in South-Eastern Ethiopia were most severely affected by the drought. Already existing chronic livelihoods were even more affected by the crisis which was putting extreme pressure on food prices, livestock survival, and water and food availability.

WFP Assistance

WFP's guiding principle in Ethiopia is to support government programmes addressing hunger by using food assistance where it adds value, and by enhancing the capacity to implement hunger solutions. In order to address chronic food insecurity, WFP is a major partner in Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and assists 1.3 million rural dwellers in generating community assets. Launched in 2005, PSNP provides transfers of food or cash, or a combination of both, to help bridge food deficit periods and to ensure people do not sell off their assets in order to meet basic food needs. In exchange, they participate in public works such as natural resource management and development of basic social infrastructures (e.g. rural feeder roads, schools, clinics, etc.). WFP covers the needs of 2.6 million through its Relief Programme while the other 800,000 people in need receive food assistance from the NGO consortium, the Joint Emergency Operation Programme (JEOP).

The UN and HA coordination in Ethiopia

The Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) for Ethiopia leads humanitarian coordination and liaison with the Government of Ethiopia and is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that an appropriate level of preparedness exists within the humanitarian response system. The head of the OCHA office acts as the principal advisor of the RC/HC on humanitarian issues. There are 24 resident UN funds, programmes and agencies in Ethiopia. More than 100 UN agencies and NGOs, as well as the Red Cross Movement, participate in the coordinated humanitarian response in Ethiopia. WFP is cluster leader for food security. Between 2006 and 2012 CERF contributed \$US 145 million. It has been observed that although the 2011 drought affected Ethiopia significantly, the response was more effective and timely than in other cases due to the firm foundation of government systems which could be used for early warning and to scale up responses (Independent Review of the value added of CERF in Ethiopia 2012).

The Netherlands' contributions

The Netherlands directly contributed to WFP food aid programmes (in total US\$ 10.8 million) and some smaller NGO-funding. Furthermore, the Netherlands contributed through its unearmarked contributions to WFP, CERF, ICRC and ECHO.

Research-issues

In this country study the following issues will be addressed:

1. Context: what are the main causes of Ethiopian food crises and what relation can be established with food security and the vulnerability of rural livelihood strategies?
2. To what extent the PSNP took into account the specific characteristics and conditions of the target population?
3. To what extent the Human Response strategy included measures/activities to link the response to a more structural development oriented solution?

4. To what extent the Human Response Programme achieved its goal to support the timely and coordinated allocation and disbursement of donor resources to the population?
5. WFP's role as cluster leader.
6. Effectiveness of the Response.
7. What assessment can be made of Dutch support to the Human Response Fund, monitoring and other support for linking HA with the Netherlands development programme?

Research activities

Systematic review of a) current scientific literature on livelihood strategies and rural development/food security and b) evaluation reports of the HA to the drought crisis (2011/2012) in Ethiopia

Only after completing the desk review a decision on a complementary field visit will be made dependent on if useful complementary information and research on specific issues can be collected.

3. Country study of Syria

Context/crisis

As the conflict in Syria enters its fourth year, insecurity, violence, and specific persecution continue to force the people of Syria to seek safety and protection elsewhere. The result of the on-going crisis is further massive population displacement and growing humanitarian needs. The UN estimates that 6.5 million people are internally displaced and a total of 9.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, 46% of whom are children. These figures include at least 270,000 of the 540,000 registered Palestine refugees who have also been displaced within Syria. The Syrian refugee population has grown from 200,000 in 2012 to over 2.5 million in February 2014. Most of them are hosted in Lebanon (944,000), Turkey (619,000), Jordan (577,000) and Iraq (230,000).

Humanitarian Assistance

Total humanitarian funding through UN organisations amounted to \$US 3 billion. For the response in Syria the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (SHARP) received \$US 1 billion, for the assistance to neighbouring countries the Syria Regional Response Plan (SRP) received \$US 2 billion. Major donors are the USA (\$US 1.16 billion), the EU (\$US 732 million) the UK (\$US 381 million), Kuwait (\$US 344 million) and Germany (\$US 312 million). Funding requirements as pledged in the Kuwait Pledging Conference totaled \$US 6.5 billion: \$US 2,27 billion inside Syria through SHARP and \$US 4,2 billion for the regional response through SRP.

Dutch contributions

Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011 the Netherlands contributed EUR 61 million mainly through SHARP (EUR 15 million) and SRP (EUR 31.5 million) In November and December 2013 additional contributions were made to UNHCR (EUR 17 million) and the WFP (EUR 2 million). The Netherlands committed EUR 6 million at the Kuwait Pledging Conference. By far the largest contributions are channeled through UNHCR which is cluster leader for protection, cash & non-food items, and shelter. Other contributions have been made to UNWRA, WFP and ICRC. Furthermore a subsidy framework has been launched for cross border aid by Dutch NGOs (EUR 7 million).

Main research issues:

- a) Assessment of Dutch/EU diplomatic and other efforts to contribute to conflict resolution and effective HA to the victims of the crisis in Syria and neighbouring countries.
- b) To what extent SHARP and SRP responded to the main characteristics and challenges of the context/crisis in Syria and neighbouring countries.

- c) What are the conditions and dilemmas for HA (political, access and others) and how Dutch supported HA organisations responded?
- d) What assessment can be made of the coordination arrangements: are concerns about coordination, overlap / duplication problems in aid delivery as well as access addressed by relying on multilateral aid via UN organizations (UNOs)? To what extent SHARP and SRP achieved their goals to support the timely allocation and disbursement of donor resources to the most critical humanitarian needs of Syrian victims of the crisis?
- e) What are the benefits and drawbacks of reliance on multilateral aid for access to the most vulnerable population? UN willingness / ability to take necessary risks, its need to weigh considerations of access with concerns of sustaining working relations with Syrian regime (or UN as larger actor more negotiating leverage vis-à-vis regime?)
- f) What assessment can be made of the provision of refugees in the neighbouring countries with basic services: protection shelter and income?
- g) What assessment can be made of the decision to channel cross border aid through Dutch NGOs: are these organizations capable to deliver cross border aid, how do their capabilities compare to other, international, regional and Syrian aid providers? Do their activities complement Humanitarian organizations efforts?
- h) What assessment can be made of broader Dutch/EU political efforts and HA activities to assist the population/victims of the conflict?
- i) What assessment can be made of Dutch HA funding policy regarding the Syria crisis: what considerations determined the distribution of funds and the choice of channels and how well was assistance monitored?

Approach

The country study will be conducted through:

1. *Desk study* of
 - a) Current scientific literature and local information sources (think tanks, press etc.) on the context and humanitarian crisis in Syria by a regional expertise. In this review it will be attempted to analyse to what extent the CHF responded to the needs of the population.
 - b) Review of current evaluation reports of UNHCR and other Humanitarian UN organizations, ICRC as well as of NGO's involved.
 - c) Field-monitoring reports
2. *Field study* in one or two of the neighbouring countries to collect complementary and recent information focussing on some specific UNHCR activities at sub-regional level and NGO cross-border aid.

UNHCR is undertaking an independent evaluation of UNHCR's response to the refugee influx in Lebanon and Jordan between March – July 2014. Therefore, a final design of the approach and methodology will be completed, once the results of this evaluation are available.