

# NETHERLANDS

## 1) QUANTITY OF AID

### 1.1. Current/Recent Quantity Performance:

Net ODA US\$m	6,993
% of GNI	0.80%

Source: OECD/DAC, preliminary 2008 data.

Since 2001, the Netherlands' ODA has more than doubled in absolute amount (up from US\$3172m). However, in 2007, relative to GNI, Dutch ODA was at the same level as 2001. Unlike many other DAC donors a relatively small percentage of Netherlands' ODA (5-6%) in recent years has been debt relief and its ODA exclusive of debt relief increased by 2.5% in 2007 (DAC 2008).

### 1.2. Future Quantity Intent

The Netherlands has committed to give at least 0.8% of GNI as ODA, and this is reserved in the Budget, a commitment it has met in 2005-2007. Based on this commitment, and taking into account lower GNI as a result of the current financial crisis, the DAC projects that the Netherlands' ODA may be \$US 6,647 million by 2010 or 0.8% of GNI (DAC 2009).

## 2) KEY AGENCIES/MECHANISMS

### 2.1 Agencies and Structures

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (See [www.minbuza.nl/en/ministry](http://www.minbuza.nl/en/ministry) for an introduction)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for policy and implementation with respect to Dutch ODA. The Minister for Development Cooperation has overall responsibility, as a Cabinet-level post which runs various sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) is responsible for development cooperation policy, its coordination, implementation, and funding. Embassies play an important part in organising and carrying out development activities. The embassies are primarily responsible for choosing activities that qualify for development funding. They appraise the technical, managerial, and policy-related aspects of these activities, translating them into terms that the Ministry can assess. Once a project gets the go-ahead, the embassy is responsible for monitoring its implementation. The Netherlands were one of the first countries to decentralise competencies to their embassies. This process is ongoing; for example the management of budget support funds has recently been delegated to embassies (DAC, 2006b, p16).

In 2006, around 80% of the Netherlands' aid effort was channelled through minbuza. The remaining 20% includes the contribution of the Ministry of Finance to the

multilateral development banks (1%), the Dutch contribution to the EU (8%), debt relief (6%) and some smaller ministerial contributions (DAC, 2006b, p27).

***The Council for European and International Affairs (CEIA)***

CEIA, which is chaired by the Prime Minister, ensures coordination regarding the 8 main goals of Dutch foreign policy (for a list see [www.minbuza.nl/en/ministry.policy\\_and\\_budget](http://www.minbuza.nl/en/ministry.policy_and_budget)).

***The Netherlands Development Finance Company (FMO)*** was set up in 1970 to encourage Dutch investments in developing countries.

**2.2 Key Policies and Documents**

*Mutual interests, mutual responsibilities: Dutch development cooperation en route to 2015* (Minbuza, 2003a)

This sets out the goals of Dutch ODA. Sustainable poverty reduction is the main objective. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the means of achieving it. The policy also reduced the number of countries which received bilateral ODA from the Netherlands (from 49 to the current level of 36) and identified sectoral priorities in education, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, environment, and water. The document also foresees the establishment of a Stability Fund for activities promoting peace, security and development. A lot of emphasis is put on the importance of policy coherence and integration of different development policy tools and responsible agencies.

Bilateral policy is to focus on “*partner countries’ own poverty reduction strategies (PRS), with the aim to work on a programme basis, where possible through budget support*”. This builds on the fact that the sector-wide approach has been the organising principle of Dutch cooperation since the late nineties (Minbuza, 2006 and DAC, 2006b, p36). The document further focuses on the “*Importance of promoting good governance and respect for human rights, with capacity development and institution building*”.

The new Dutch foreign policy orientations were defined in a memorandum of the Netherlands Government entitled "Herijking" (re-evaluation) which lays broad emphasis on the defence of national interests. The avowed objective is to strengthen the economic position of the Netherlands, without ignoring concerns for human rights and development aid. More recently, the government presented two reports before Parliament, which stressed the need to integrate aid policy in foreign policy and placed strong emphasis on human development, especially on poverty reduction and social sector development.

*Homogeneous Group for International Cooperation* (annual report, see [www.minbuza.nl/nl/ontwikkelingssamenwerking/watdoenwe,Beleidsdocumenten-Ontwikkelingssamenwerking.html#top](http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/ontwikkelingssamenwerking/watdoenwe,Beleidsdocumenten-Ontwikkelingssamenwerking.html#top))

The Homogeneous Group for International Cooperation (Dutch acronym HGIS), is a budgetary construction ensuring that all foreign policy priorities funded by the Netherlands are grouped in one planning framework. It summarises all the development-related spending of different Government departments and thus brings together all Dutch ODA in one document (see e.g. HGIS, 2006). In 2004, ODA accounted for 75% of the resources captured through HGIS (DAC, 2006b, p28).

*Africa memorandum* (Minbuza, 2003b)

In its Africa memorandum, the Netherlands indicates it aims to increase assistance to Africa to 50% of its bilateral development budget. A special focus is reserved for the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. A holistic (including not only working with partner governments but also with civil society, the private sector, etc) approach is advocated. The following 5 themes are considered priority:

- promoting peace, security and stability through conflict management and prevention
- promoting good governance and good policy
- investing in people, mainly by improving reproductive health and education and combating HIV/AIDS
- promoting pro-poor growth through support for the private sector in Africa
- sustainable development, focusing on the management of natural resources, environment and water.

*Business Climate Scans* (Minbuza, 2004)

Since 2004, embassies in the 36 partner countries are requested to prepare a Business Climate Scan in order to identify bottlenecks to private investment and potential areas for Dutch development co-operation (DAC, 2006b, p38). Monitoring of the general business climate on an annual basis has become mandatory for all embassies as part of the Track Record (see section 4.2).

**3) RECIPIENT COUNTRIES AND ALLOCATION CRITERIA****3.1. Recipient Countries**

Top ten countries	% of total ODA gross disbursements	% of bilateral ODA gross disbursements	US\$m
Nigeria	4.3%	5.7%	231
Indonesia	3.0%	4.0%	161
Sudan	2.3%	3.1%	125
Tanzania	1.9%	2.5%	102
Ghana	1.6%	2.1%	84
Afghanistan	1.6%	2.1%	83
Uganda	1.5%	2.0%	81
Mali	1.2%	1.6%	66
Bangladesh	1.2%	1.6%	64
Mozambique	1.2%	1.6%	62

Source: OECD/DAC, 2005-2006 data.

NB: Nigeria received uncharacteristically high levels of ODA in 2005-06 due to debt cancellation.

The top ten recipients listed above received 26.3% of bilateral ODA in 2005-06. The Netherlands provides bilateral ODA to 36 countries.

Distribution among different groups of recipients (% country allocated / region specified gross ODA disbursements):

Least Developed Countries	44.1%
Other Low Income Countries	25.0%
Sub-Saharan Africa	54.0%

Source: OECD/DAC, 2005-2006 data.

### 3.2. Allocation Criteria

#### 3.2.1. *Pre-selection criteria*

The Netherlands has no rigid pre-selection criteria for aid partners.

#### 3.2.2. *Allocation criteria:*

The Netherlands has reduced the number of countries to which it gives bilateral ODA to 36, in order to facilitate longer-term partnerships with these countries. As of 2008, the 36 partner countries are:

- Europe: Albânia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, , Macedonia and Moldova
- Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia
- Latin America: Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Suriname
- Asia: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Georgia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and Yemen
- Middle East: Palestinian Administered Areas

The Netherlands makes decisions about which countries to enter into partnership with on the basis of a number of need/performance factors including IDA eligibility and the quality of governance (as measured by the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, or CPIA), takes into account the activities of other donors, and also acknowledges foreign policy concerns in its choice of partner countries (e.g. Middle East). These same factors influence the allocation of aid among partner countries in addition to the country's absorptive capacity and the value added of Dutch comparative advantage (Minbuza, 2003a, p23). This concentration policy concerns only bilateral aid, and excludes humanitarian aid, debt relief, NGO co-financing and private sector development. Hence, the Netherlands still gives ODA to more than 125 countries (DAC, 2006b, p.13).

The Netherlands has also identified three areas where cooperation will be "regionally based" because the regional dimension of the partner countries' problems is considered crucial: the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and the Western Balkans (EC, 2006).

## 4) AID POLICIES

### 4.1. Concessional

The Netherlands does not disburse loans, as it disburses all of its aid in the form of grants (DAC, 2006b, p39).

### 4.2. Types of Assistance

Breakdown of different types of ODA (disbursements):

	\$USm	% of gross bilateral ODA disbursements
Stand-alone technical cooperation (disbursements)	464	10.8%
General budget support	306	7.1%
Sectoral projects and programmes (including some technical cooperation)	1027	24.0%

	\$USm	% of gross bilateral ODA disbursements
Debt relief	294	6.9%
Developmental food aid	1	0%
Other commodity assistance	-	-
Emergency and distress (disbursements)	397	9.3%

Source: OECD/DAC, 2004 data.

Note: The breakdown into different types of assistance shown in the table is taken from different OECD/DAC data sources. As such, the final column does not add to 100%.

In 2004, the Netherlands launched ‘the Track Record’, whose aim is to select which aid modality is most appropriate to use in a partner country. Based on this annual assessment framework, “*the Track Record determines what level of alignment is feasible in a partner country and what range of aid modalities would be appropriate for the country context*” (DAC, 2006b, p57).

The Netherlands describes its commitment to budget support as ‘high’, and it has been growing as a proportion of total aid. It also strongly supports sectoral approaches (pooled funding using government procedures) and aims to have all aid to its 36 core countries provided on a programme basis (EC, 2006). The Netherlands gave or pledged general budget support in 6 of the 7 recipient countries covered by the DAC-Commissioned Evaluation of General Budget Support (IDD and associates, 2006, p22). The balance between different modalities varies between sectors (figures are for 2004):

%	Education	SRHR <sup>1</sup>	HIV/AIDS	Environment	Water	Governance
GBS	10%	5%	5%	3%	8%	1%
Sectoral financing	45%	39%	34%	17%	23%	17%
Project financing	45%	56%	62%	80%	69%	83%

Source: Minbuza (2007).

<sup>1</sup> Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

According to DAC (2006b, p17), in 2004, 37% of bilateral aid was channelled through Programme-based approaches, with more than half of this in the form of GBS. This is borne out by the 2008 Paris survey: Indicator 9 shows that an average of 63% of Dutch aid is channelled through programme based approaches in surveyed countries with best scores in Cape Verde (94%), Mali (93%) and Tanzania (89%) . The recipient country in the HIPC-CBP survey that receives the highest proportions of programme support is Mozambique. Perhaps surprisingly, given the strong policy commitments, there are still some countries getting only project-type assistance.

The Netherlands contributes to capacity development through sector-wide approaches (DAC, 2006b, p17). It does recognise however, that there is still need for specific support (e.g. for planning, sector management and public financial management, see DAC (2006b, p70).

The Dutch score well only in Guyana in the HIPC-CBP survey, as regards alignment of capacity building with partner country priorities. According to Paris indicator 4, Technical Assistance is best (100%) coordinated with local needs in Bolivia, Egypt, Mongolia and Senegal.

### 4.3. Channels of Assistance

The vast majority of Dutch bilateral aid is on-budget, particularly due to its focus on budget and sector programme support. The HIPC-CBP survey shows that in Bolivia, Ethiopia, Guyana, Mali and Senegal all Dutch aid is delivered through the budget, with 9 out of 15 countries surveyed giving high scores. As a member of the EU, the Netherlands signed up to commitments in Paris in 2005 to channel 50% of government-to-government assistance through country systems.

In 2006 the Netherlands allocated around 28% of its ODA via multilateral organisations. In the last couple of years, there has been a shift in Dutch policy towards multilaterals, in that contributions have become more earmarked, 'based on relevance to Dutch policy objectives' (Minbuza, 2003a). In 2004, 18% of Dutch ODA went via civil society organisations, and 1.7% via the private sector. For an overview of the different channels for private sector support, see the list in DAC (2006b, p89, annex C).

### 4.4. Sectors and Projects

Sector	% of bilateral ODA (commitments)
Social and Administrative Infrastructure	35.7%
Of which: Education	17.5%
Health	5.3%
Population	1.8%
Water supply and sanitation	4.3%
Government and civil society	6.0%
Economic Infrastructure	6.2%
Of which: Transport and communications	0.2%
Energy	1.0%
Production	1.9%
Of which: Agriculture	1.2%
Industry, mining, construction	0.0%
Trade and tourism	0.6%
Multi-sector	3.3%
Programme Assistance	2.9%
Action relating to debt	13.9%
Emergency aid	3.5%
Administrative expenses	0.1%
Unspecified	32.5%

Source: OECD/DAC, 2006 data.

The Netherlands' priority sectors are education, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, environment, and water. Good governance and human rights are identified as overall thematic priorities. It has set itself a number of quantitative targets in various sectors including 0.1% of overall GNP going towards the environment and water and 15% of the development budget going to education; AIDS prevention and reproductive health care are also a priority (Minbuza, 2003a, p4). As a member of the Nordic+ group of donors and in line with a strong policy of agreeing better division of labour among donors to reduce transaction costs for developing countries, the Netherlands aims to be active in no more than 2 or 3 sectors in each country (Nordic+, 2005).

Recipient countries (HIPC-CBP) indicate a very high willingness to align the choice of sectors in which the Dutch cooperation is working with partner countries' priorities. The average for this indicator is second only to the UK's score. Top scores are given by Ethiopia, Gambia, Rwanda, Senegal and Guyana.

#### **4.5. Flexibility**

The Netherlands is one of the donors with the highest level of flexibility. Apart from a strong focus on budget support, it keeps considerable contingency allowances in programmes which can be allocated during the year in response to natural or economic shocks. It has also established a Stability Fund, run jointly by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Development Cooperation, to allow rapid disbursements to promote peace, security and development (Minbuza, 2003a).

The high commitment to disbursing aid flexibly has so far not translated into high scores on the relevant HIPC-CBP indicator, perhaps reflecting lack of dissemination of information about contingency planning.

#### **4.6. Predictability**

All Dutch aid to its 36 partner countries is intended to be programmed on a multiannual long-term basis over more than 3 years. Country programming is now done for 4-year periods (see also section 5.1). Disbursements generally have a planned calendar during the year and all efforts are made to respect this (very often with success).

Paris indicator 7 shows that at least 90% of aid as scheduled by donors is recorded as disbursed by recipient governments in Tanzania (90%), Cape Verde (98%) and Senegal (99%). According to the HIPC-CBP survey, more than 75% of Dutch aid is through multi-year programmes in Bolivia, Ethiopia, Mali and Uganda. Dutch aid also scores well on pledges matching disbursements, especially in Ethiopia and Guyana.

#### **4.7. Conditionality**

The Dutch position is to have the minimum of conditionality, even on budget support. Recently, there has been a shift from ex ante conditionality (certain number of conditions must be satisfied) to ex post conditionality (performance driven).

The three key conditions for budget support to be considered in a partner country, are (Minbuza, 2003a, p26):

- a PRSP process which allows for partnerships, the involvement of civil society and the translation of the MDGs into local policy.
- an effective policy dialogue with the Dutch government on improving governance, including the political dimension (with a particular focus on human rights and the business environment), and on policies to reduce poverty.
- measurement or progress by results in clearly defined progress indicators for institutional and policy reforms.'

The Netherlands will consider sanctions only if these underlying principles are no longer being met.

The Netherlands is also working closely with the Nordic+ group to try to finalise a joint position on conditionality. However, its participation in MDBS arrangements can sometimes lead to long lists of conditions.

The HIPC-CBP survey indicates that Dutch conditionalities are not seen as heavily constraining, especially in countries without MDBS arrangements (such as Guyana and Ethiopia). Dutch conditionality policy therefore also causes only minimal disbursement delays.

#### **4.8. Policy Dialogue**

Dutch aid is not directly linked with execution of a programme with the IMF or World Bank, and the government makes independent decisions on disbursements. It also aims to participate actively in the policy dialogue and to take an independent position, though the application of this depends somewhat on the strength of Dutch representation in-country.

Accordingly, the HIPC-CBP survey finds quite a high level of Dutch engagement with country authorities, with top scores given by Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana and Mali. Links with BWIs are often noted, depending on varying Dutch in-country independent capacity to analyse partner country policies.

### **5) AID PROCEDURES**

#### **5.1 Conditions Precedent**

Since 2001, a major new system of Multi Annual Strategic Plans (MASPs) has been rolled-out across the 36 development co-operation partner countries (DAC, 2006b, p55). Embassies have financial responsibility for aspects of ODA classified as delegated bilateral cooperation (around EURO 481m for priority sectors in 2004), and receive 4-year financial envelopes for this.

As a general rule, the Dutch cooperation's funding agreements become effective once the "Sharing arrangement" is signed. No special formalities are needed for that purpose.

Sometimes, especially with private sector support, counterpart funds are demanded. According to the HIPC-CBP survey, no counterpart funds are demanded in Guyana, Gambia or Sierra Leone. Still according to the HIPC-CBP survey, delays linked to 'conditions precedent' are normally kept within reason.

The Dutch have a very good track record regarding the limited use of Project Implementation Units (PIUs). According to Paris indicator 6, there are only 14 PIUs in the 30 partner countries surveyed, with 23 countries without a PIU.

#### **5.2 Disbursement Methods**

Information on Dutch disbursement methods is still being assembled

According to the HIPC-CBP survey, no country gets all of its Dutch ODA as cash-in-advance. 4 countries out of 9 (Gambia, Honduras, Nicaragua and Uganda) report getting 'approximately 2/3 through cash-in-advance disbursements. On the indicator measuring delays linked to the use of certain disbursement methods, 2 countries get the top score, namely Ghana and Guyana.

### 5.3 Disbursement Procedures

Information on Dutch disbursement methods is still being assembled.

According to Paris Indicator 5a, all of Dutch aid is being channelled through partner country Public Financial Management systems in Ethiopia and Kenya. Overall, 11 out of 30 countries surveyed through the Paris survey report more than 50% of Dutch making use of local PFM systems. The HIPC-CBP survey shows the smallest number of disbursement procedures is reported by the Gambia, with no other country (out of 8 surveyed) giving one of the two top scores.

### 5.4 Procurement Procedures

According to the DAC all of Netherlands' ODA is now untied, following the successful introduction of a number of schemes to reduce the level of tied ODA in recent years (DAC 2007a).

Dutch cooperation uses local procurement systems for all its aid in 4 countries: Cape Verde, Colombia, Ghana and Kenya followed closely by Mali (98%) and Nicaragua (97%). The majority of countries (18 out of 30) report more than 50% of Dutch aid being channelled through local procurement systems (Paris indicator 5b). Delays related to procurement issues are usually relatively short, with top scores found in Gambia, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua and Sierra Leone.

### 5.5 Coordination

As a member of the EU, the Netherlands committed in 2005 in Paris to reduce the number of uncoordinated missions and analytical reports by 50%, and is already making strenuous efforts to achieve this. The Netherlands has entered into 'silent partnerships' in a number of recipient countries, whereby its funds are administered via another donor or vice versa. For example, the UK's DFID administered Dutch funds in the education sector in Malawi in July 2002, while in January 2002, Sweden's SIDA was a silent partner with the Netherlands in the education sector in Mali (Koopman, 2005). To reach its commitment on education-related spending, the Dutch are aiming to set up silent partnerships in a further 11 partner countries (DAC, 2006b). These examples are applications of the principles agreed by the Nordic+ group of donors, of which Norway is a member. With this group of countries, the Netherlands have agreed on many harmonisation documents such as guidelines on delegated cooperation, and on division of labour (Nordic+, 2005, 2006).

The Netherlands are also working closely with the new members of the EU to enhance the effectiveness of their aid.

The Netherlands is increasingly coordinating its missions with other donors (Paris indicator 10a), with all missions joint in 8 countries including Afghanistan, Zambia and Mozambique. Analytical work (Paris indicator 10b) is 100% coordinated with other donors in Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Yemen. In Colombia, all missions and all analytical work are done jointly with other donors. There is however quite a lot of variability between countries, as is confirmed by the HIPC-CBP survey, where half of the countries give the Netherlands low scores.

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