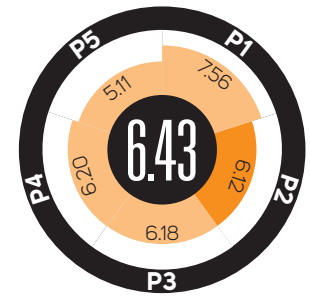


# NETHERLANDS

HRI 2011  
Ranking  
**5th**



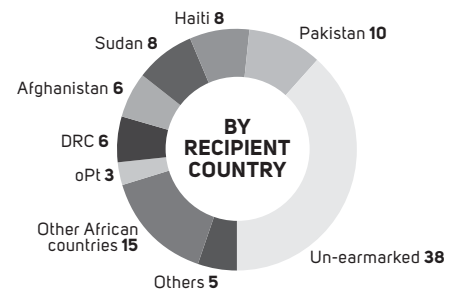
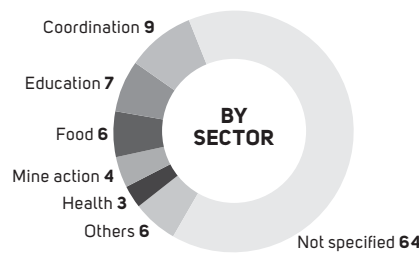
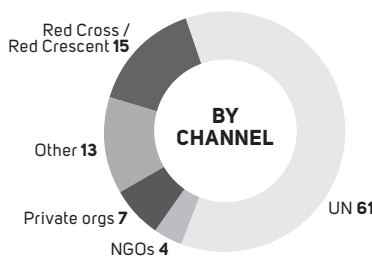
Group **1**  
PRINCIPLED  
PARTNERS

OFFICIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
ASSISTANCE **0.81%**  
of GNI

HUMANITARIAN  
AID **6.8%**  
of ODA

**US \$26**  
Per person

## HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION (%)



## GENDER RATING

POLICY

FUNDING

FIELD PERCEPTION

### STRENGTHS

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% above OECD/DAC average
2	QT	Funding reconstruction and prevention	10.00	+123.1%
3	QT	Un-earmarked funding	10.00	+92.9%
2	QL	Strengthening local capacity	6.95	+20.3%
1	QT	Funding vulnerable and forgotten emergencies	8.23	+19.2%
2	QL	Beneficiary participation	5.62	+17.1%

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% below OECD/DAC average
3	QT	Funding NGOs	1.22	-73.2%
4	QT	International humanitarian law	4.72	-22.9%
5	QT	Funding and commissioning evaluations	3.28	-20.8%
5	QT	Funding accountability initiatives	3.59	-12.8%
1	QT	Timely funding to complex emergencies	7.20	-8.9%

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The Netherlands ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the HRI 2011, improving four positions from 2010. Based on the pattern of its scores, the Netherlands is classified as a Group 1 donor, "Principled Partners". This group is characterised by its commitment to humanitarian principles and strong support for multilateral partners, and generally good overall performance in all areas. Other Group 1 donors include Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

The Netherlands' overall score was above the OECD/DAC average, yet below the Group 1 average. The Netherlands scored above the OECD/DAC average in all pillars, with the exception of Pillar 5 (Learning and accountability), where it was average. Compared to

Group 1 donors, the Netherlands was below average in all pillars, except for Pillar 2 (Prevention, risk reduction and recovery), where it scored above average.

The Netherlands did best compared to its OECD/DAC peers in the indicators on *Funding reconstruction and prevention*, *Un-earmarked funding*, *Strengthening local capacity*, *Funding vulnerable and forgotten emergencies* and *Beneficiary participation*. Its scores were relatively the lowest in the indicators on *Funding NGOs*, *International humanitarian law*, *Funding and commissioning evaluations*, *Funding accountability initiatives* and *Timely funding to complex emergencies*.

# AID DISTRIBUTION

The Netherlands' Official Development Assistance (ODA) comprised 0.81% of its Gross National Income (GNI) in 2010, a slight decrease from 2009. Humanitarian assistance represented 6.8% of the Netherlands' ODA in 2010, or 0.062% of its GNI. Reforms proposed in the Netherlands' new development strategy foresee a reduction of ODA/GNI to 0.7%, with an intermediary step of 0.75% in 2011 (MinBuZa 2011a).

According to data reported to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) (2011), the

Netherlands channelled 60.7% of its humanitarian assistance to UN agencies, 15.2% to the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement 7.1% to private organisations and foundations and 4.0% to non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Netherlands supported a total of 26 crises in 2010: 12 in Africa, 10 in Asia and four in the Americas. The top recipient countries in 2010 were Pakistan, Haiti and Sudan. In 2010, the Netherlands focused its sector-specific funding primarily on coordination, education and food.

# POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Netherlands' humanitarian assistance is managed by the Humanitarian Aid Division (DMH/HH), which is part of Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Human Rights, Gender, Good Governance and Humanitarian Aid Department. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 2006 *Grant Regulations*, the Minister for Development Cooperation, recently replaced by the Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation, has the authority to award grants for emergency aid or conflict management (Government of the Netherlands 2008a). The Department for Fragile States and Peace-building (EFV) manages early recovery assistance, although this is not funded through the humanitarian budget, and the Department for United Nations and Financial Institutes (DVF) provides core funding to a number of United Nations (UN) agencies.

The Netherlands has published a number of documents on its humanitarian policy, such as the

*A World of Difference* (1990) and *A World of Dispute* (1993). Further policy objectives are published in the *Grant Policy Frameworks for Humanitarian Aid, 2004 and 2005* and more recently, the 2008 *Humanitarian Aid Policy Rules (and annexes)* (IOB 2006 and OECD DAC 2006). These policy rules also serve as guidelines to organisations applying for funding. In 2011, the Netherlands created a new overarching strategy on foreign policy set out in the *Focus Letter on Development*. It has identified the following priorities for its humanitarian and development assistance until 2015: security and rule of law, sexual and reproductive health, water and food security (MinBuZa 2011a). The Netherlands' humanitarian aid division is expected to publish a new humanitarian policy this year, in which it will further specify the role for its humanitarian assistance (MinBuZa 2011b).

## HOW DOES NETHERLAND'S POLICY ADDRESS GHD CONCEPTS?

### GENDER

The 2008 *Humanitarian Policy Rules* require a focus on gender as one of the general criteria for NGOs to apply for funding (Government of the Netherlands 2008). Further specifics are not provided, however. Previous evaluations have encouraged the Netherlands to consider creating explicit gender-sensitive requirements for partner organisations (IOB 2006).

### PILLAR 1

### RESPONDING TO NEEDS

The Netherlands seeks to provide humanitarian assistance on the basis of needs while adhering to the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence (IOB 2006). Over the years, the Netherlands' policy has become more explicit with regards to identifying vulnerable groups, particularly women and children (IOB 2006 and OECD DAC 2006), and this is reiterated in its most recent policy document. The Netherlands also places emphasis on timeliness, which it aims to achieve by supporting the UN as the central coordinator of humanitarian assistance and through the creation of Channel Financing Agreements (Government of the Netherlands 2008a).

### PILLAR 2

### PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

The Netherlands' humanitarian policy takes a "humanitarian plus" stance to humanitarian action in an effort to integrate relief with development (IOB 2006). However, it is limited in doing so from a funding perspective as humanitarian budgets are only meant for the acute needs and early recovery phases. To overcome this, the Netherlands established a Stability Fund in 2004 to facilitate the transition to rehabilitation and reconstruction (IOB 2006). Other budget lines, while not part of humanitarian aid per se, also provide funding for prevention and preparedness (IOB 2006 and OECD/DAC 2006). The 2008 *Humanitarian Aid Policy Rules* reaffirm the need to address the gap between relief and development. It further mentions capacity building and beneficiary participation as one of its main guiding principles (Government of the Netherlands 2008a).

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## PILLAR 3

# WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

The Netherlands' humanitarian policy stresses the importance of coordination, and recognises the special role of the UN and its various agencies in this regard. The Netherlands intends to strengthen and develop a common, coordinated approach among donors and other relevant actors (OECD DAC 2006). In order to be eligible to receive funding, NGOs must participate in OCHA-led coordination mechanisms (Government of the Netherlands 2008a). In recognition of the need for flexible funding, the Netherlands signed the Channel Financing Agreements in 2003-2004 with several UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), providing them with one large allocation per year, earmarked only at the appeal level (IOB 2006). The 2008 *Humanitarian Aid Policy Rules* relating to NGO funding appear considerably stricter in terms of flexibility and extension (Government of the Netherlands 2008a).

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## PILLAR 4

# PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The Netherlands affirms that its humanitarian assistance is guided by both the humanitarian imperative and international humanitarian law. In its previous humanitarian policy documents, the Netherlands has vowed to actively promote these principles, along with human rights and refugee law (IOB 2006). With regards to protection, the Netherlands has commissioned evaluations on these issues in an effort to improve their performance. The Netherlands' undertakes diplomatic action when necessary to facilitate humanitarian access and the safety of aid workers (IOB 2006 and OECD/DAC 2006). However, the 2008 *Humanitarian Aid Policy Rules* declare that the responsibility of aid worker security lies with the NGOs (Government of the Netherlands 2008a).

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## PILLAR 5

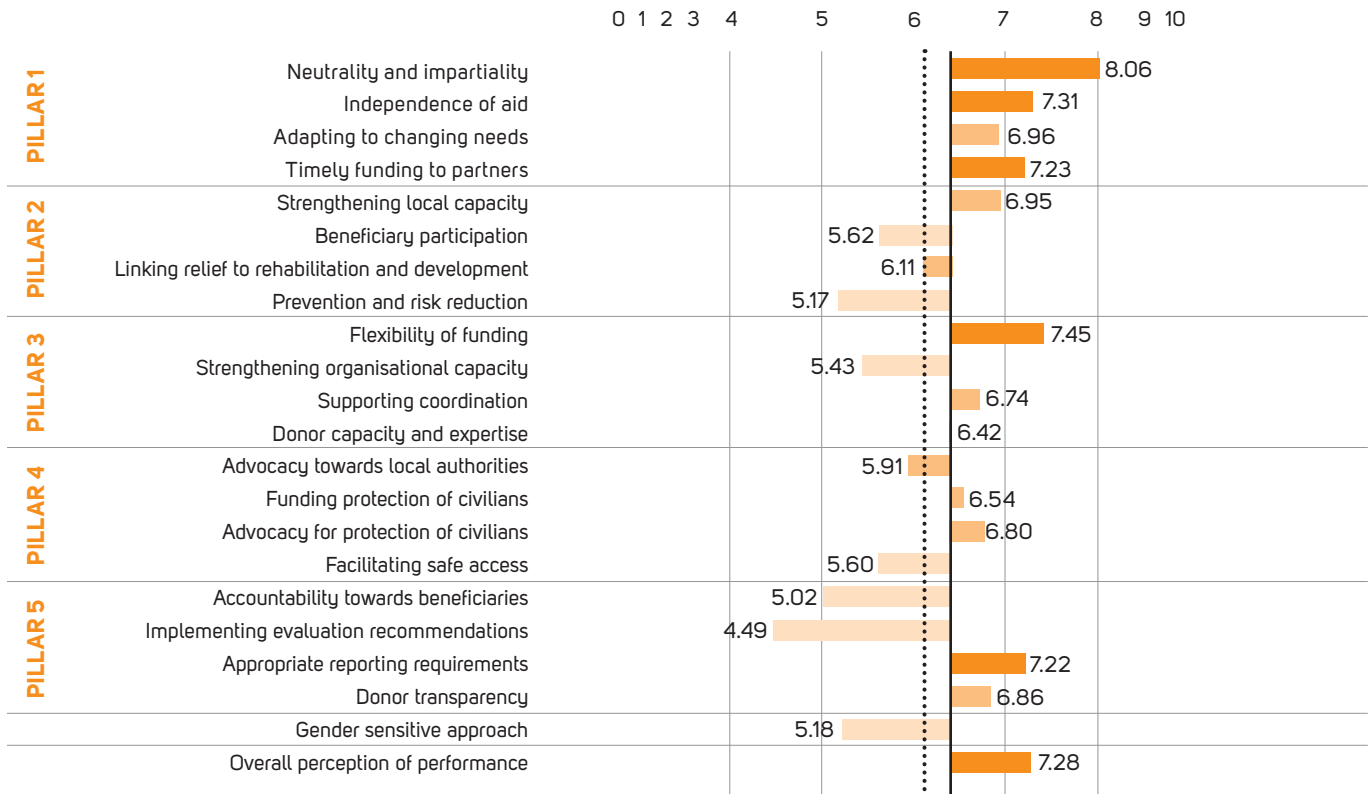
# LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The use and implementation of quality and accountability standards have been actively promoted by the Netherlands. It has financially supported accountability initiatives such as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International and Sphere. The ICRC and UN agencies benefit from more flexible reporting requirements, as they are funding through the Channel Financing Agreements, while reporting requirements for NGOs are relatively stricter (IOB 2006 and OECD/DAC 2006).

# FIELD PARTNERS' PERCEPTIONS

## NETHERLANDS' FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES

Collected questionnaires: 31



SOURCE: DARA

OECD/DAC average score 6.05 ← Netherlands' average score 6.39

Colours represent performance compared to donor's average performance rating:

■ Good 
 ■ Mid-range 
 ■ Could improve

## HOW IS NETHERLANDS PERCEIVED BY ITS PARTNERS?

### GENDER

The Netherlands' field partners seem to indicate the need for a greater focus on gender. Some organisations reported that gender is “part of the proposal design” for the Netherlands, but “they don’t emphasise it anymore.”

### PILLAR 1

## RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Most of the Netherlands’ partners consider its aid neutral, impartial and independent, although a few held dissenting opinions: “The Netherlands pays lip service to humanitarian principles, but are beholden to decisions in their capital driven by the domestic political agenda.” Another organisation criticised that the Netherlands, “should be more interested in meeting gaps [of needs] and saving lives. If they are not, you wonder why they started funding in the first place.” On the other hand, an organisation felt that “the Netherlands has a lot of field presence,” which helped to ensure programmes adapt to changing needs.

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## PILLAR 2

# PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Compared to other donors, the Netherlands does well in Pillar 2 indicators, particularly for its support of local capacity. However, partner organisations gave lower scores for *Beneficiary participation*, *Linking relief to rehabilitation and development* and *Prevention and risk reduction*. Regarding the latter, one organisation noted that they were requirements “on paper, but there’s no follow-up.”

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## PILLAR 3

# WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Partner organisations were mostly positive regarding the flexibility of Dutch funding. Some organisations praised the Netherlands, stating that “the Dutch have very good flexibility and high capacity to adapt to needs.” Similarly, another organisation affirmed: “the Netherlands are more flexible on funding.” On the other hand, a few organisations commented that “the Dutch have heavy procedures to do cost extensions.” Most organisations felt that the Netherlands was supportive of their organisational capacity, one noting that they “ask for the training of national staff.”

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## PILLAR 4

# PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The response from the field in relation to the Netherlands’ government’s commitment to protection and international law is particularly positive. One organisation stated that “the Netherlands is the only one offering funding for advocacy positions on protection of civilians”, while another organisation, in relation to facilitating safe humanitarian access, commented that “the Dutch government has been particularly engaged, in fact, their engagement has been extraordinary.”

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## PILLAR 5

# LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Compared to its donor peers, the Netherlands’ received one of the highest scores for *Accountability towards beneficiaries*, though notably below its qualitative average, as this is a common weakness among donors. One organisation reported that “they [the Netherlands] consider accountability key and have the commitment to manage.” Regarding the implementation of evaluation recommendations, an interviewee claimed that “the Netherlands does not closely follow the implementation of the project. Their participation is merely through funding.” In relation to transparency, one of the recipient agencies commented that the “decision-making process stays at the headquarters level in the case of the Dutch ministry for foreign affairs, so we really do not get that much information.”

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ● LOOK FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS TO CHANNEL MORE FUNDING TO NGOS

The Netherlands provides a large portion of its funding through multilateral channels, but has one of the lowest scores for its funding to NGOs. In 2010, the Netherlands channelled 4.0% to NGOs, while the Group 1 average is 15.3%. Staff cut-backs will likely make it difficult for the Netherlands to manage a large number of grants to NGO partners, but it may be able to increase its support to NGOs and reduce somewhat the administrative burden by creating flexible working models, such as shared management arrangements with other donors, supporting NGO umbrella organisations or consortia.

## ● FORMALISE COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

In Pillar 4, the Netherlands could improve its commitment to *International humanitarian law*, which measures signature and ratification of treaties, funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and establishment of a national committee to ensure respect of ratified treaties. The Netherlands has signed 49 of 50 treaties on international humanitarian law. However, it provided 0.005% of its GDP to the ICRC, below the Group 1 average of 0.01%. Furthermore, the Netherlands is one of only four OECD/DAC donor countries

without a national committee.

The Netherlands is encouraged to establish a national committee to ensure respect of ratified humanitarian treaties and to consider increasing its support of the ICRC.

## ● RENEW SUPPORT OF LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVES

The Netherlands' partners consider it one of the better donors for ensuring accountability toward beneficiaries. It could improve, however, its funding for humanitarian learning and accountability initiatives. The Netherlands provided 0.31% of its humanitarian funding for these initiatives,<sup>2</sup> compared to the OECD/DAC average of 0.43% and the Group 1 average of 0.69%.



Please see [www.daraint.org](http://www.daraint.org) for a complete list of references.