

What is the HGIS?

Since 1997, the Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation (HGIS) has been a separate construction in the central government budget. It combines the international cooperation budgets of individual ministries, enabling them to be viewed in conjunction with each other. The HGIS thus provides an overview of the principal foreign spending items.

A distinction is made within the HGIS between spending that meets the Official Development Assistance (ODA) criteria and other, non-ODA spending on international cooperation. Total HGIS spending in 2012 will amount to €6 billion, €4.43 billion of which will go to development cooperation. The Dutch ODA budget agreed for 2012 – and the rest of the current government's term in office – has been fixed at 0.7% of gross national product (GNP).

What is the HGIS budget spent on?

This factsheet outlines the plans for HGIS spending in each policy theme in 2012 and the types of activity to be financed. At the end, you will find a summary of HGIS spending by policy theme, indicating the ODA part.

Policy theme 1: Strengthening the international legal order and respect for human rights

In the long term, a strong legal order will make the world safer, freer, more stable and more prosperous. As legal capital of the world, The Hague is home to major international institutions such as Europol, Eurojust and the International Criminal Court. The funds to pay for them come partly from the HGIS.

Respect for human rights still cannot be taken for granted. In fact, around the world, calls for human rights and democracy are growing louder, thanks to the internet and other new media. Dutch human rights policy concentrates on areas where freedom, security and prosperity reinforce one another.

Policy theme 2: Promoting security and stability, effective humanitarian assistance and good governance

The scale and complexity of cross-border threats require an international approach. Examples of such threats include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and violent extremism, international crime (such as piracy and trafficking in drugs, persons and arms) and – increasingly – the threat of cyber attacks. There can be no national security without effective, targeted, international collaboration. We will therefore continue to invest in transatlantic cooperation, an effective European Union and an effective Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in coalition with like-minded countries and in closer collaboration with new security partners.

We will tackle problems at source, especially in fragile states, and help build safe environments where people can build lives for themselves. This requires a special focus on the position of women. And after disasters or conflicts, we will aim to ensure that people receive assistance, and can provide for themselves and start rebuilding as soon as possible. The timely provision of social services and basic and vocational education produces visible results (the 'peace dividend').

Both in countries with the prospect of joining the EU and in the Arab region, the Netherlands will use the Matra (Social Transformation) programme to help build and strengthen the rule of law, respect for human rights and democratisation.

Important HGIS programmes within this policy theme include Dutch participation in crisis management operations, the Stability Fund, the Matra programme and activities to combat piracy.

Policy theme 3: European cooperation

The Netherlands is part of Europe, geographically, historically, culturally and economically. The Netherlands is one of the EU's founding states. Europe is essential for our prosperity, freedom and security. Continuing commitment to the European process is therefore in the immediate interests of Dutch citizens and businesses. In the near future, we will have to find European responses to global challenges for which national solutions can no longer be found. Examples include the global financial and economic crisis and the monetary turbulence facing the eurozone.

Key HGIS programmes within this policy theme include the Dutch contributions to the Council of Europe and the European Development Fund.

Policy theme 4: Increasing wealth and equity and reducing poverty

With sustainable economic growth and governments that facilitate growth and fight poverty effectively, developing countries will eventually become less dependent on assistance. Dutch foreign policy aims to promote self-reliance and long-term poverty reduction policy in developing countries. Our missions in developing countries are also helping globalise our economy.

A significant share of global economic growth is taking place in emerging markets, and the Netherlands wants to profit from this growth through trade and investment. Policy in this area is primarily in the hands of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation.

Policy theme 5: Promoting human and social development

The essence of development lies in the opportunities it gives people – men *and* women – to develop themselves and contribute to the social and economic development of their country. A strong civil society gives a voice to interest groups and provides a necessary counterbalance to government.

Our choice of four policy spearheads (security and the rule of law, food security, water, and sexual and reproductive health and rights) is based on the added value that Dutch expertise can contribute to developing countries in these areas.

Policy theme 6: Sustainable environmental and water management

It is in the Netherlands' interests to promote a safe and sustainable global environment. With the world's population growing and consuming more, the pressure on the environment and natural resources is growing exponentially, and this is being exacerbated by climate change. Unequal access to resources perpetuates poverty and obstructs economic development. Water security and safety are increasingly at risk.

By participating in European and multilateral forums (such as the UN negotiations on climate and biodiversity and the Conference on Sustainable Development) and by contributing to international organisations aimed at building institutional capacity, the Netherlands is working to improve the management and protection of international public goods.

Policy theme 7: Promoting the welfare and safety of Dutch nationals abroad and regulating the movement of persons

The overall goal of this policy theme is to assist Dutch nationals in distress abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also helps Dutch nationals abroad obtain the travel and other documents they require. Regulation of the movement of persons, including asylum policy and visas, is partly funded from the HGIS and falls within this policy theme. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs works closely in this area with the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Ministry of Security and Justice and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service.

Policy theme 8: Raising the Netherlands' cultural profile and creating a positive image in the Netherlands and abroad

The Netherlands' reputation and public image are playing an increasingly important part in our interests abroad. One means of enhancing them is international cultural cooperation, in which the development of Dutch culture goes hand in hand with promoting broader political, social and economic relations with other countries. We also work to ensure that foreign countries have a positive, realistic image of the Netherlands.

Policy theme 9: Other spending

This category covers all spending that cannot be placed within one of the above policy themes. It consists mainly of the Ministry's running costs and resources for attachés. Practically every ministry assigns attachés to the missions to enhance foreign policy with their own expertise.

HGIS spending by policy theme

(Actual spending in 2010; estimates for 2011 and 2012)	2010		2011		2012	
	Total	ODA part	Total	ODA part	Total	ODA part
1. Strengthening the international legal order and respect for human rights	127,442	42,745	139,969	41,323	117,070	39,400
2. Promoting security and stability, effective humanitarian assistance and good governance	1,166,065	656,662	1,083,040	593,709	986,401	618,670
3. European cooperation	548,749	460,595	583,109	494,000	592,275	502,982
4. Increasing wealth and equity and reducing poverty	1,395,223	1,224,675	1,270,129	1,102,546	1,283,946	1,126,342
5. Promoting human and social development	1,571,088	1,552,634	1,357,498	1,344,178	1,156,609	1,143,507
6. Sustainable environmental and water management	405,228	362,621	561,410	415,013	579,444	429,254
7. Promoting the welfare and safety of Dutch nationals abroad and regulating the movement of persons	278,953	258,496	383,789	365,498	325,161	309,147
8. Raising the Netherlands' cultural profile and creating a positive image in the Netherlands and abroad	95,388	42,414	107,017	42,469	88,462	29,109
9. Other spending	843,293	271,500	858,520	220,783	857,392	221,133
Total	6,431,429	4,872,342	6,344,481	4,619,519	5,986,760	4,419,544