

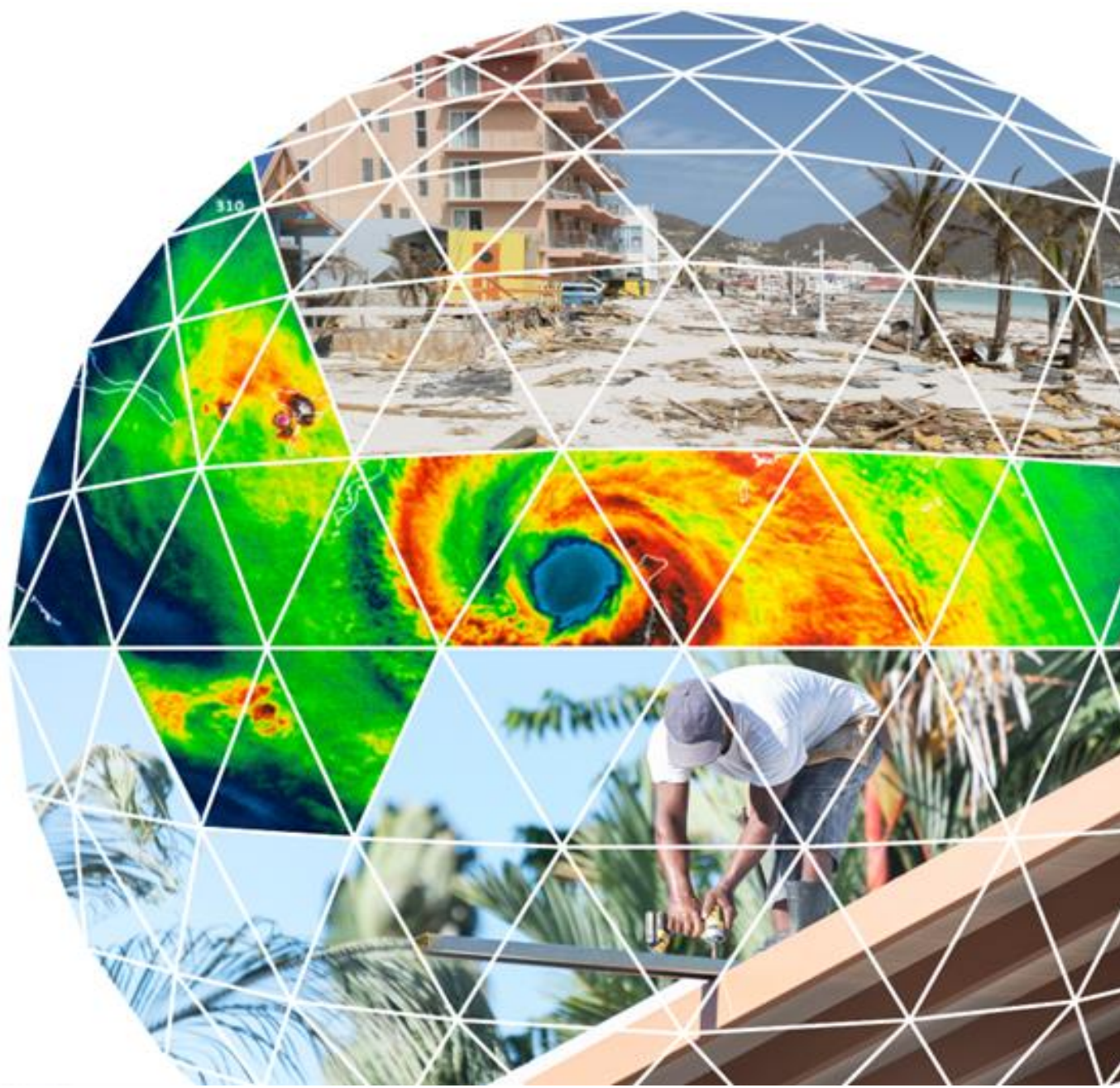
Policy Review of Article 8 of the Budget for Kingdom Relations

Part I: emergency assistance on Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten (including early recovery in Sint Maarten)

Part III: reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius

Client: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK)

Rotterdam, 1 November 2022



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Michel Briene
Elvira Meurs
Simone Snoeijenbos

Rotterdam, 1 November 2022

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluation team. They do not engage the Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) nor other parts of the Government of the Netherlands in any way. While an attempt has been made to take into consideration the views and perspectives of stakeholders consulted in the Netherlands, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten, the interpretation of this type of information, and all findings, conclusions and recommendations in this report are the exclusive responsibility of the authors.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ABB	<i>Algemene Bestedings Belasting</i>
AMFO	<i>Stichting Antilliaanse Medefinancieringsorganisatie</i>
BBB	<i>Building Back Better</i>
BES	<i>Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba</i>
COOC	<i>Crisis Support Consultation Curaçao</i>
CoPI	<i>Commando Plaats Incident</i>
COT	<i>Crisis Onderzoeksteam (Institute for Security and Crisis Management)</i>
CRFF	<i>Children's Rights Film Festival</i>
CZMCARIB	<i>Commandant der Zeemacht in het Caribisch Gebied</i>
DJI	<i>Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen</i>
EBT	<i>Eilandelijk Beleids Team</i>
EOC	<i>Emergency Operation Centre</i>
ESF	<i>Emergency Support Function</i>
GEBE	<i>St. Maarten Water and Energy Service Company</i>
GDP	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
HUREX	<i>Hurricane Exercise</i>
IAO	<i>Interdepartmental Coordination Council</i>
ICCB	<i>Interdepartmental Committee on Crisis Management</i>
IFV	<i>Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid (Institute for Physical Safety)</i>
ISSN	<i>International Standard Serial Number</i>
JUS	<i>Ministry of Justice</i>
KDM	<i>Karel Doorman (a multi-function support ship of the Royal Netherlands Navy)</i>
KMAR	<i>Koninklijke Marechaussee</i>
KNVB	<i>Royal Dutch Football Association</i>
KPSM	<i>Korps Politie Sint Maarten</i>
MCCB	<i>Ministerial Committee on Crisis Management</i>
MP CUR	<i>Prime Minister of Curaçao</i>
NCTV	<i>National Coordinator for the Fight Against Terrorism and for Security (Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid)</i>
NDMP	<i>St. Maarten's National Disaster Management Plan</i>
NGO	<i>Non-Governmental Organisations</i>
NIVRE	<i>Nederlands Instituut Van Register Experts</i>
NL	<i>Netherlands</i>
NRPB	<i>National Recovery Program Bureau</i>
NLRC	<i>Netherlands Red Cross</i>
NRRP	<i>National Recovery and Resilience Plan</i>
OCJS	<i>Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport</i>
PM	<i>Prime Minister</i>
R4CR	<i>Resources for Community Resilience</i>
RCN	<i>Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland</i>
RPE	<i>Regeling periodiek evaluatieonderzoek</i>
RWS	<i>Rijkswaterstaat</i>
SMDF	<i>Sint Maarten Development Foundation</i>
SSCS	<i>Saba, Statia Cable System</i>
STENAPA	<i>Sint Eustatius National Parks Foundation</i>

SXMFF	<i>Sint Maarten Football Federation</i>
SXM	<i>Sint Maarten</i>
TEATT	<i>Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transportation & Telecommunication</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Program</i>
UNICEF	<i>United Nations Children's Fund</i>
USAR	<i>Dutch Urban Search and Rescue Team</i>
VNG	<i>Association of Dutch Municipalities (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten)</i>
VNW	<i>Representation of the Netherlands in Willemstad</i>
VROMI	<i>Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure</i>
VSA	<i>Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour</i>
WB	<i>World Bank</i>
WYCCF	<i>White Yellow Cross Care Foundation</i>

Ministries

BuZa	<i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>
BZK	<i>Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations</i>
Defence	<i>Ministry of Defence</i>
IenW	<i>Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management</i>
JenV	<i>Ministry of Justice and Security</i>
OCW	<i>Ministry of Education, Culture and Science</i>
VWS	<i>Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport</i>

Summary

1 Policy review of Article 8 of the Kingdom Budget

This policy review evaluates the activities for emergency assistance and reconstruction support provided by the Ministry of the Interior to the Windward Islands of Sint Maarten, Saba, and Sint Eustatius after Hurricanes Irma, José and Maria¹. It specifically focuses on the activities funded under Article 8 of the budget for Kingdom Relations. As policy review, it follows the structure and methodology of the Regulation of Periodical Evaluation Research (RPE) of the Government of the Netherlands.

For analytical purposes, the full evaluation has been sub-divided into three parts: a) Part I: emergency assistance on all three islands (including early recovery in Sint Maarten) – Article 8.2.; b) Part II: reconstruction in Sint Maarten (both World Bank Trust Fund projects and direct support activities) – Article 8.1.; c) Part III: reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius – Article 8.1. This report covers parts I and III. Part II (reconstruction in Sint Maarten) has been conducted by an independent evaluator. This evaluator will eventually also be responsible for a synthesis report covering the evaluation results of parts I/III and part II.

2 Context and motivation of Dutch support

The islands of Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius have different constitutional statuses within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, adopted on 10 October 2010 and usually referred to as 10-10-10, granted Sint Maarten the status of an autonomous country within the Kingdom, along with Aruba, Curaçao and the Netherlands. Sint Maarten therefore has full autonomy in most areas, unless explicitly included in the provisions of the Charter of the Kingdom. Saba and Sint Eustatius, along with Bonaire, are public entities of the Netherlands and so the Government of the Netherlands exercises direct authority over these islands. These differences in the status of the three islands (and the resulting different relations with the Government of the Netherlands) resulted in different contexts for the provision of support to the islands under Article 8.

Particularly relevant to a post-disaster scenario is Art. 36 of the Charter of the Kingdom, which stipulates that the countries of the Kingdom provide mutual support and assistance to each other. However, due to the autonomy of the parties within the Kingdom since 10-10-10, the understanding is that this type of support is typically provided upon an explicit request for assistance from the country.

3 Hurricane Irma and the direct aftermath

Hurricane Irma started out as a central Atlantic tropical storm which quickly gained strength as it moved westward. By the time it reached Sint Maarten on 6 September 2017, it had developed into a Category 5 Hurricane. The hurricane devastated the island and overwhelmed a population and

¹ This report regularly refers only to Hurricane Irma, but in some cases this also refers to Hurricanes José and Maria.

local government that, despite being accustomed to an annual hurricane season, could not have foreseen the strength of Irma. Saba and Sint Eustatius were also hit by the hurricane's winds, and the situation worsened when Hurricane Maria followed two weeks later.

The islands all have existing structures for emergency preparedness and disaster relief. However, the strength of the hurricane – and the speed with which it gained strength – went beyond the capabilities of local emergency preparedness and relief capabilities and caused far more damage than expected. Despite the existence of national crisis structures, these were in many cases not 'actionable', without clear responsibility, roles and tasks assigned. Members of the public sector were furthermore affected themselves, having to simultaneously attend to private matters and to the emergency structure. The Netherlands at the time did not have existing 'actionable' procedures or governance structures in place to provide support under the 10-10-10 constitutional arrangements. The reaction to Hurricane Irma's aftermath was therefore marked by a great degree of improvisation across the board.

4 Emergency assistance for the three islands

Several assessments were carried out in the days after Hurricane Irma to understand the severity of damage and losses – by governments, NGOs and the Kingdom Ministry of Defence. Together, those damage assessments formed a picture of the situation on the islands. One calculation estimated the damage on Sint Maarten at US\$2.5 billion. The damage on Saba and Sint Eustatius, while smaller in scale, was also significant, with an initial estimated loss of US\$50 million.

The extent of the damage caused by Irma was described in a Letter to the Parliament of the Netherlands on 8 September 2017, with the aim of providing an initial idea of the scale and scope of resources needed. It made clear that the damage required immediate humanitarian emergency response, in the form of public security, health care, drinking water, etc. The Council of Ministers of the Netherlands made available €55 million for emergency assistance.

In the initial phase of emergency assistance, the Ministry of Defence was particularly active in providing relief to Sint Maarten. Saba and Sint Eustatius had also requested aid early, via an official request for assistance. The Ministry of Defence was well equipped in this regard, owing to its presence in the region with a base of operations in both Curacao and Aruba.

The government of the Netherlands began looking into structures to finance the support. The Ministerial Committee on Crisis Management decided on 7 September that the costs for the provision of emergency aid to Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba would be financed centrally through the budget of the Ministry of BZK. A modified waiver procedure was developed by the Ministry of BZK for emergency aid requests, allowing relevant ministries to diverge from the usual procurement procedures. Instead, they would meet a need when identified, and use a record of the purchase order and simple justification to invoice this amount to the budget made available under the Ministry of BZK. This approach worked well in practice, and was appropriately fast and flexible in the face of urgency.

The Netherlands acts on the premise that support within the Kingdom is provided upon the reception of official requests for assistance. In the case of Sint Maarten, the official request to the Netherlands for needs and relief supplies only arrived on the 12th of September, nearly a week after the Hurricane had hit, and without much detail as to the type of support required. As a result of

the lack of needs assessments, the list of goods and services to be provided was at first developed on the basis of mutual consultation and by proactively matching products to the flagged needs. There was also a need to begin the loading process quickly, as the ship (the Karel Doorman) would take two weeks to arrive in the Caribbean. This exercise resulted in a list containing an inventory to be provided via shipment from the Netherlands, that had been drawn up in response to statements by the various departments on Sint Maarten, and fed into by multiple stakeholders. This improvisation, unfortunately, led to cases of mismatch between what was needed and what was provided.

In the case of Saba and Sint Eustatius, official requests for assistance had arrived earlier, before Hurricane Irma hit. These first requests for assistance related to the provision of military assistance. After Irma made landfall, the focus shifted to requests for assistance for aid aimed at providing acute emergency assistance (including requests for assistance of food and water and the evacuation of patients). The clear and timely requests for assistance ensured that support could be provided in a much more targeted way, particularly just after the hurricanes.

The help and support provided during the emergency response phase was effective in the sense that almost all requests for assistance from the three islands were met. However, persons working on the side of The Hague did not always have the required expertise to gauge whether a request was borne out of the emergency situation or out of a structural problem. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the provided support would have greatly benefited from a more streamlined process, linking clear damage assessments to requests for assistance and ensuring better communication between those witnessing the situation on the island and those doing the processing of requests for assistance, particularly in the case of Sint Maarten. Several of these issues have now been addressed through improved communication. While Sint Maarten and The Hague did not used to have communication on requests for assistance, this is now done prior to each hurricane season.

5 Longer-term needs and diverging approaches

Longer-term reconstruction needs were also already being considered at an early stage, i.e. while emergency assistance was still under way. In the case of Saba and Sint Eustatius, their closer relation to the Ministries (due to their constitutional status) meant that support could be provided in a more direct manner. The case of Sint Maarten, however, followed a different approach – one upon which certain conditions were set.

On 13 October 2017, a letter was addressed from the Ministry of BZK to the Government of Sint Maarten, announcing that a significant financial envelope could be made available for the reconstruction of the island, provided Sint Maarten gave its consent to two conditions, namely, (i) the establishment of an Integrity Chamber; and (ii) the strengthening of border control. Both conditions were stated by the Dutch government as essential for the support provided to benefit the population of Sint Maarten in a sustainable manner.

The then Government of Sint Maarten did not approve these conditions at first, resulting in a collapse of the cabinet. In November 2017 a newly set-up caretaker Government consented to the conditions. The Government of the Netherlands then moved forward with the design of the Article 8-funded reconstruction in Sint Maarten, the bulk of which was to be channelled through a World Bank executed Trust Fund, and a smaller part through direct support, which also included liquidity

support and early recovery projects. The Government of the Netherlands maintained close involvement in decision-making under both procedures, having a role in the Steering Committee and making use of existing procedures to provide funding.

6 Early recovery in Sint Maarten

The emergency assistance period came to an end in December 2017. Knowing that setting up the Trust Fund for Sint Maarten would take time, the Ministry of BZK proceeded to set up additional funding for the early recovery phase to act as a bridging phase between the initial emergency assistance and the longer-term reconstruction activities planned for the coming years. The early recovery phase was designed to be a 6-month period during which the Ministry of BZK funded projects that were meant to be implemented quickly and have a cost-effective, direct positive impact on the situation of vulnerable people on the island, particularly the young and the elderly.

The Ministry of BZK chose to assign established international and local NGOs as implementing parties, particularly those already active on the ground and with ongoing activities that could be built upon. These organisations were thought to be best suited to identify needs and asked to develop targeted project proposals to address these needs. The 11 rolled-out projects covered elements of food provision in school, rebuilding housing and community infrastructure, providing psychosocial support for childing and introducing schemes for labour market (re)integration, with organisations often tackling several of these issues under one programme.

This approach largely paid off and allowed for the funds to be rapidly allocated and implemented. The early recovery projects were implemented relatively effectively; with more than half of the projects meeting their initial or adjusted target output. Projects that were particularly successful often built on existing experience or ongoing initiatives, as in the case of the White Yellow Care Cross Foundation, the Sint Maarten Development Fund and Qredits. The UNDP's Recovering Back Better, the programme with the largest financial contribution from the Ministry of BZK (nearly a third of the total early recovery budget), encountered severe implementation issues as a result of wrong assumptions regarding pricing, availability of information on damages, progress made by individuals on their own houses, and availability of technical skills and materials on the island .

While projects were largely successful, the six month time period for early recovery proved to be too short, leading to a significant standstill of social activities funded by Article 8 over the course of 2018/2019. In this period the Trust Fund was not yet operational, while the early recovery phase was already closed. The relatively small budget assigned to early recovery projects could have been significantly higher and quick wins could have been achieved by granting time extensions to the more successful projects.

7 Reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius

The islands proposed their own reconstruction projects, in consultation with the Ministries of the Netherlands. The projects for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius were implemented and funded by several ministries, depending on the thematic area and responsibilities. The Ministry of BZK therefore only funded a limited portion (focused mainly on house repairs and repairs of public spaces – in line with the focus of BZK) of the reconstruction efforts on these islands, but did remain

in a coordinating role for the activities of other ministries. The division of tasks between the ministries was not always clear during the reconstruction phase.

The projects implemented on Saba and Sint Eustatius targeted damaged beyond those identified in the damage assessments reports post-Irma. Reconstruction was approached from the perspective of building back better and going beyond the repair of hurricane-induced damage by also making the islands more resilient for the future through maintenance and fortification. The erosion of the cliff in Sint Eustatius, for example, had already been discussed with the Ministry of BZK in 2016 – prior to the hurricane – and was taken on board as one of the projects under the reconstruction period.

Sint Eustatius

Sint Eustatius requested assistance for reconstruction efforts on 14 September 2017. The most affected areas were private homes (with over 100 personal homes damaged), businesses (with damaged infrastructure), utility companies (with power lines having been destroyed), island vegetation (with an estimated 80% damaged) and the agricultural sector. The reconstruction budget of BZK Article 8 for Sint Eustatius was €15 million. Just over €2.5 million was reserved for house repairs and rehabilitation of the public space, and nature and environment.

The majority of the budget was spent on the stabilisation of the cliff supporting Fort Oranje (€11.6 million). The project aimed to improve its stability and stop erosion for the next five decades – addressing both hurricane damage and deferred maintenance. The funds from the cliff, under the reconstruction, are part of the total reconstruction funds of the Ministry of BZK, but as a project it was independent and was not placed under the local reconstruction program. The cliff project was completed in May 2020. An inspection was carried out one year post-completion by RoyalHaskoning, which showed that the work carried out at the cliff was functioning as intended but would require upkeep, particularly of the vegetation covering it.

A subsidy of just over €2.5 million was allocated to repair damaged buildings and public space, with a Dutch project manager assigned by the Ministry of BZK to coordinate and execute repairs. The project was successful and all 137 houses in the project were repaired before the end of 2019 and compliant with building procedures. The project manager worked together with a well-informed, equipped team in order to ensure timely implementation with the use of local constructors.

A sum totalling €800,000 was allocated to projects in nature and environment, including agricultural recovery and water supply, coral restoration, recovery buoys and mooring system, restoration of the botanical garden, reforestation and recovery of breeding sea turtles. All projects met the expectations and finished according to the progress reports, which state that the latest projects were expected to be finished by the end of 2021.

Saba

Saba sent an estimation for needs for the reconstruction work and supporting measures to BZK on 17 September. The overview included the airport, roads, buildings and steps for economic development. In total, the estimated funds required amounted to approximately US\$10.8 million. Hurricane Maria caused additional damage on Saba, adding to the damage already caused by hurricane Irma. On 2 October, an additional cost estimation with regard to the damage from Maria was submitted. Project plans were submitted, and the Public Entity Saba received the reconstruction budget from the Ministry of BZK for a total of €3.8 million. The Public Entity delegated the construction works for the houses and public space to the Planning Bureau, which is

responsible for the implementation of civil works projects initiated by the government. The Planning Bureau was in charge of planning the projects, tendering for proposals and evaluating the bids.

All damaged buildings were repaired by local construction companies, and the works were monitored by the Planning Bureau. The process started with the search for a contractor, materials and labour. All of them were difficult to find due to the greatly increased demand throughout the entire Caribbean region, and owing to the limited capacity of local construction workers.

A smaller amount of €200,000 was allocated to rectify the damage caused to nature and the surrounding environment. Most of it went to compensation for fishermen and farmers, and a very small portion to repairing equipment and signs on nature trails.

8 Recommendations

Governance and design

- **Recommendation 1** *The aftermath of Hurricane Irma highlighted the importance of swift action. Work has been done to further optimize the way these structures are implemented in practice and the way they coordinate between each other and with the other actors in the Kingdom. A Handbook on crisis management for the Caribbean parts of the Netherlands has been drawn up as a result of the experiences with Hurricane Irma. Such agreements need to be constantly revisited before each hurricane season to ensure they continue to work as expected.*
- **Recommendation 2** *Requests for assistance are an important instrument in providing mutual assistance between the countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and between the BES islands and the European part of the Netherlands. This instrument could be improved through a more careful discussion of the interpretation of Article 36 of the Statute and clear agreements between the various countries within the Kingdom regarding the preparation and submission of requests for assistance.*
- **Recommendation 3** *This evaluation found shortcomings in the data and document storage systems of the Ministry of BZK. The Ministry's financial management and its document storage system, Digidoc, can be improved, with a view to enhancing accountability for disbursements. Specific guidelines and procedures should be developed in this regard and staff may have to be trained for this purpose.*

Emergency response

- **Recommendation 4** *The aftermath of Hurricane Irma highlighted the importance of coordination in the event of an emergency is crucial. Coordination should be improved through better agreements in advance about the delineation of tasks and responsibilities between the various ministries in the event of a disaster in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. In preparation of hurricanes or other disasters that may occur in the future, the Ministry of BZK should further strengthen its capacities in assisting the islands in strengthening emergency preparedness, drawing up post disaster needs assessments and developing relief and reconstruction plans.*
- **Recommendation 5** *Implementing parties were satisfied with the workability of the adjusted and flexible purchasing policy. Maintaining such adapted procedures in subsequent calamities is advisable/recommended.*

Early recovery

- **Recommendation 6** *There was a significant period of standstill between the article 8-funded social activities in the early recovery phase in Sint Maarten and the longer-term reconstruction activities to be financed from the World Bank Trust Fund. Action in future crises should ensure the continuity of social activities to support the most vulnerable of a population in the transition from emergence assistance to reconstruction activities.*
- **Recommendation 7** *Some of the more successful projects in the early recovery phase were those implemented by local NGOs or organisations with running activities that could be expanded with early recovery funds. Betting on local know-how proved successful, and should be kept in mind in future similar scenarios.*

Reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba

- **Recommendation 8** *The reconstruction projects were managed per ministry, which means that a clear overview is lacking and coordination between the various projects was made more difficult. It may be better to opt for a reconstruction programme for Saba and Sint Eustatius, like in Sint Maarten, with centralised management during the implementation phase. The coordinating role of the Ministry of BZK should be clarified and moved forward.*
- **Recommendation 9** *As the frequency and strength of hurricanes increases, it becomes increasingly important to prevent potential damage in the future by building back better.*

1 Introduction

1.1 Goal policy review

Policy Review of Article 8

1. This policy review is governed by provisions of the Regulation of Periodical Evaluation Research of the Government of the Netherlands of 15 March 2018. The overall review focuses on Article 8 of the budget for Kingdom Relations, describing funds reserved for emergency assistance and reconstruction of the Windward Islands of Sint Maarten, Saba, and Sint Eustatius.
2. Policy reviews of this type follow standard evaluation questions. This particular review takes into account further development of the standard questions in the Letter by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (henceforth referred to as Ministry of BZK) to the House of Representatives of 21 September 2020 concerning the policy review of Article 8.
3. For analytical purposes, the evaluation has been sub-divided into three parts: a) Part I: emergency assistance on all three islands (including early recovery in Sint Maarten) - Article 8.2.; b) Part II: reconstruction in Sint Maarten (both World Bank Trust Fund projects and direct support activities) – Article 8.1.; c) Part III: reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius – Article 8.1.
4. The present report only concerns the financial contributions under Article 8 for emergency assistance in 2017 on the three islands and early recovery activities in 2018 in Sint Maarten, as well as funds provided for reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius in the wake of hurricane Irma, which struck the islands on 6 September 2017 (Part I and III). Reservations made for the reconstruction in Sint Maarten are reviewed in a separate report (Part II). Both reports will eventually feed into a synthesis report (composed by the evaluator of Part II) to be presented to Parliament in the Netherlands (for further details, see section 1.3).

1.2 Context and background

Hurricane Irma hit the islands Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba

5. The islands of Sint Maarten, Saba, and Sint Eustatius (part of the Windward Islands of the Lesser Antilles²) were hit by devastating hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria in 2017. Sint Maarten was hit particularly hard by hurricane Irma, which struck on 6 September 2017.
6. Around 90% of the physical infrastructure of the Dutch part of the island was destroyed, including 50% of the housing stock and the majority of vital infrastructure such as the airport and port facilities. Drinking water supply and waste disposal procedures were disrupted, endangering public health. Emergency assistance was initially hampered by a breakdown of communication lines and information gathering and sharing, and also by a collapse of public order. The Government of the Netherlands provided immediate emergency assistance to Sint Maarten, as well as to the islands of Saba and Sint Eustatius, the latter two having been relatively spared by Hurricane Irma.

² The report follows the tradition in Dutch to describe the islands of the Lesser Antilles north of Dominica as Windward Islands. This is the literal translation of the corresponding term in Dutch "Bovenwindse Eilanden". In English, the islands north of Dominica, including Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius, are usually described as "Leeward Islands", whereas for the Lesser Antilles south of Dominica, the term "Windward Islands" is used. The Dutch linguistic preference is followed as the main audience of the report is in the Netherlands.

The position of the islands in the constitutional structure of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

7. The three islands differ in their position within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, adopted on 10 October 2010 (usually referred to as 10-10-10), established Sint Maarten as one of the autonomous countries within the kingdom, along with Aruba, Curaçao and the Netherlands. Sint Maarten enjoys autonomy in all areas unless limited by provisions of the Charter of the Kingdom.³ By contrast, Saba and Sint Eustatius, along with Bonaire, are public entities of the Netherlands and, as such, the Government of the Netherlands exercises direct authority over these islands. These differences in the status of the three islands affected procedures concerning emergency assistance and support to early recovery, and reconstruction provided by the Government of the Netherlands to the three islands. The early recovery phase, for example, only applied to Sint Maarten. Particularly relevant to a post-disaster scenario is Art. 36 of the Charter of the Kingdom, which stipulates that the countries of the Kingdom are to provide each other with support and assistance.

Role of the Netherlands Ministry of BZK within the Kingdom of the Netherlands

8. The Ministry of BZK maintains the relations within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which consists of the Netherlands and the other countries within the Kingdom (Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten). In addition, the Ministry of BZK coordinates between the national government and the public entities (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba). With due observance of the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the values and procedures contained therein, the countries themselves are autonomous. As part of the Kingdom, the Netherlands attaches great importance to the field of good governance, sound public finances and economic development, and a safe society. All ministries have their own responsibilities on these two islands. For the public entities (Saba and Sint Eustatius), the role of the Ministry of BZK is of a directing, initiating and binding nature in the diversity of activities by the Dutch central government on these islands.

Specific features of the islands

9. The islands share similar levels of development (falling under the World Bank Group's classification of upper income countries⁴) and similar challenges. As small island states, they are similarly dependent on imports for the provision of basic goods, and they struggle to diversify their economy. Before the hurricane, tourism accounted for approximately half of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Sint Maarten and three quarters of foreign exchange earnings.⁵ There are, however, some key differences. Sint Maarten is significantly larger, with an official population of 40,812 in 2020, whereas the public entities of Saba and Sint Eustatius had populations of 1,933 and 3,138 respectively in 2020. GDP *per capita* is also slightly higher in Sint Maarten, with US\$29,200 in 2020, versus US\$27,800 in Saba and Sint Eustatius.⁶ Sint Maarten also shares the island with another country - the Collectivity of Saint Martin in the North, which is part of the French Republic and therefore, the European Union.

Emergency response, early recovery and reconstruction

10. The Government of the Netherlands provided immediate emergency assistance to the islands after the disaster. The emergency assistance for the three islands, was initially foreseen to amount to €55 million from Article 8, and funds for early recovery in Sint Maarten €7 million, which included

³ 1) the maintenance of the independence and defence of the Kingdom, 2) foreign relations; 3) Dutch citizenship; 4) the arrangement of the orders of chivalry as well as the flag and coat of arms of the Kingdom; 5) the regulation of the nationality of ships and the imposition of requirements with regard to the safety and navigation of sea-going vessels flying the flag of the Kingdom, with the exception of sailing ships; 6) the supervision of the general rules concerning the admission and expulsion of Dutch citizens; 7) setting general conditions for the admission and expulsion of foreign nationals; 8) the extradition.

⁴ The World Bank Group uses an income classification system to group countries based on Gross National Income per capita (Atlas Method).

⁵ Source: World Bank Trust Fund semi-annual report 30 June 2021

⁶ Source: CBS, 2020. Trends in the Caribbean Netherlands

essential projects to be initiated within a short time span and that could be expected to produce quick results in 2018. Towards the end of 2017, plans were made for funds designated for the reconstruction of the islands. Support provided to Saba and Sint Eustatius moved directly from emergency assistance to the financing of reconstruction activities – and did not include the early recovery phase used in Sint Maarten, because there was no need for a Trust Fund on these islands. For Saba and Sint Eustatius, a maximum of €67 million was reserved for reconstruction from the budgets of several departments, €18 million of which came from the budget of Article 8 from the Ministry of BZK and €49 million from the budgets of other ministries. The budget and related activities from other ministries fall outside the scope of this policy review. For Sint Maarten, €550 million was reserved for the reconstruction, the majority of which was channelled through the Trust Fund of the World Bank.⁷

1.3 Policy review of Article 8 of the Budget of Kingdom Relations

Article 8 of the Budget of Kingdom Relations

11. Budgetary provisions under Art. 8 of the Budget of Kingdom Relations comprised a provision of €55 million for emergency assistance in Sint Maarten, Saba, and Sint Eustatius (Art. 8.2.) and a provision of €550 million for reconstruction (including early recovery) in Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius (Art. 8.1). A small portion of this budget (€7 million) was reserved for the early recovery in Sint Maarten. In total, €18 million was allocated from this budget for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. The remaining, and largest part of the budget, was allocated to the reconstruction of Sint Maarten.⁸

The actual disbursements of Article 8 were: €40.4 million for emergency assistance, €18 million for reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius and €6.7 million for early recovery on Sint Maarten. All expenditures of the other Dutch ministries on emergency assistance went through Article 8 of the Budget of Kingdom Relations. For the reconstruction of Saba and St. Eustatius, other ministries also contributed through their own budget (i.e. outside Article 8).

Objectives of the policy review

12. According to the letter from the Minister of BZK to the House of Representatives, this policy review has two objectives: a) to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of Dutch spending under Article 8; and b) to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional arrangements. Guidelines for such policy reviews of the Government of the Netherlands⁹ stipulate that effectiveness relates to the achievement of policy goals with given means (inputs), including human and financial resources, as well as activities and other instruments. The achievement of goals usually distinguishes between outputs (direct results and products), outcomes (higher level effects produced) and impact (ultimate societal effects). The same guidelines define efficiency as the relation between the effects of the policy (benefit) and financial and other resources mobilised for this policy (cost). The review of efficiency considers the question of how the optimum effect is achieved at the lowest possible cost, with the least possible undesirable side effects.

Organisation of the overall review and activities to be evaluated

13. For analytical purposes, the evaluation has been sub-divided into three parts:
 - Part I: emergency assistance on all three islands (including early recovery in Sint Maarten) - Article 8.2.

⁷ See for more detailed information: Policy Review Art. 8 Part II.

⁸ See for more detailed information: Policy Review Art. 8 Part II.

⁹ Handreiking beleidsdoorlichting, <https://www.rijksbegroting.nl/beleidsevaluaties/evaluaties-en-beleidsdoorlichtingen/handreiking>, website consulted on 1 February 2022.

- Part II: reconstruction in Sint Maarten (both World Bank Trust Fund projects and direct support activities) – Article 8.1.
- Part III: reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius – Article 8.1.

14. Part II was reviewed by a separate independent evaluator (Lucien Bäck) and is addressed in a separate report. The present report deals with Part I (the emergency assistance provided to all three islands) and Part III (the reconstruction support to Saba and Sint Eustatius) of the overall policy review. Since reconstruction activities in Saba and Sint Eustatius were to be completed by 31 December 2021, this report will be a final evaluation of respective activities. On the other hand, reconstruction activities financed out of the Trust Fund in Sint Maarten are currently scheduled to be completed by 31 December 2025. For Sint Maarten, this is designed to be a mid-term evaluation. Table 1.1 outlines what is covered under these evaluations, what is not within their scope, as well as the various details handled by the respective teams.

Table 1.1 Delimitation of activities related to emergency assistance /early recovery and reconstruction and scope of reports on parts I/III and II

	Activities falling under Article 8 – Within scope	Activities related to emergency assistance /early recovery and reconstruction – Out of scope
Part I: Emergency assistance to all three islands (including early recovery Sint Maarten) Ecorys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination by the Ministry of BZK. • Funding provided on the budget for Kingdom Relations to NL line Ministry, e.g. the Ministries of OCW, Economic Affairs and Climate (EZK), as well as the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (IenW). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency assistance provided by budgets of other NL line Ministries. • Emergency assistance provided by other external sources (e.g. the Netherlands Red Cross and other NGOs). • Emergency assistance mobilised by local governments and the private sector.
Part II: Reconstruction in Sint Maarten Lucien Bäck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination by the Ministry of BZK. • Direct support – funding provided to Government of Sint Maarten, to UNDP and UNICEF, as well as to non-governmental organisations and private sector in Sint Maarten. • Functioning of the Trust Fund with the World Bank. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction aid provided by budgets of other NL line Ministries. • Reconstruction funded from other external sources. • Reconstruction funded and implemented by the Government of Sint Maarten. • Reconstruction funded and implemented by private sector. • Liquidity and other support to the Government of Sint Maarten (liquidity support under Article 8 and liquidity support outside Art. 8, e.g. related to the COVID-19 pandemic). • The Integrity Chamber set as pre-condition for the funds.
Part III: Reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination by the Ministry of BZK. • Funding provided by BZK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction aid provided by budgets of other NL line Ministries. • Reconstruction aid provided by other external sources.

	Activities falling under Article 8 – Within scope	Activities related to emergency assistance /early recovery and reconstruction – Out of scope
Ecorys		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstruction aid provided by local government and private sector.

The exclusive focus of the evaluation on effectiveness and efficiency of funding provided under Article 8 of the Budget of Kingdom Relations excludes consideration of other sources of funding for emergency assistance and reconstruction activities on the three islands. These include resources mobilized locally by local and national authorities, by the population, by the private sector, including proceeds from insurance coverage, as well as funding provided under other governmental and non-governmental sources in the Kingdom. In methodological terms, this raises the question to what extent results achieved can be attributed to Article 8 funding, and also sheds a different light on the efficiency of inputs and activities. This policy review is therefore at best a contribution analysis, i.e., it can establish a reasonable attribution of results to or credible association with Article 8 funding.

1.4 Reading guide

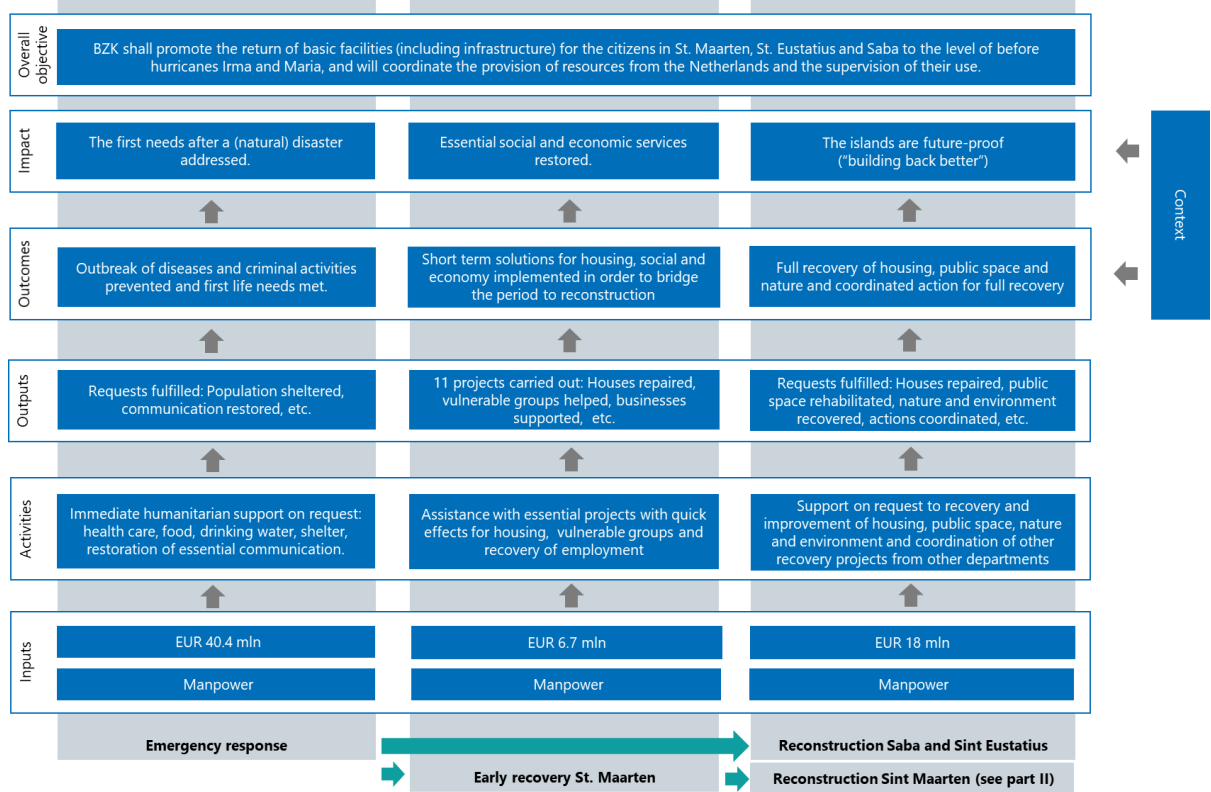
15. **Section 2** provides details on the methodology, the evaluation questions guiding the policy review, and the limitations. **Section 3** explains the process of the design of the emergency response, early recovery and reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. A more detailed presentation of findings and conclusions follows in sections 4 to 6, both in terms of effectiveness (results achieved) and efficiency (costs and benefits). **Section 4** focuses on the emergency response phase, **Section 5** on the early recovery phase and **Section 6** on the reconstruction phase on Sint Eustatius and Saba. **Section 7** presents recommendations.
16. An overview of consulted sources and a list of discussion partners is included in **Annex I**. The terms of reference for this review are to be found in **Annex II**, and the Letter to Parliament guiding the terms of reference in **Annex III**. The complete Evaluation Matrix with the Evaluation Questions (including references to specific sections in the report) is presented in **Annex IV**.

2 Methodology

2.1 Intervention logic

17. The intervention logic represents the thinking of how an intervention will solve the challenge addressed and how it will deliver the expected outcomes. The starting point for the policy review is therefore to reconstruct the intervention logic and to understand the approach that was given to the Article 8-funded activities. This intervention logic conceives the policy as a stream of inputs (manpower and budget), activities, outputs and outcomes, which pave the path towards impact and the overall policy objective of Article 8. It is necessary to mention that the interventions of the Ministry of BZK were not the only interventions on the islands in the aftermath of the hurricanes. The local population, NGOs and other departments also carried out projects that contributed to the outcomes and impacts (context). The intervention logic is presented in Figure 2.1.
18. While no official logic model or theory of change has been explicitly developed for this kind of emergency situation in Sint Maarten, Saba or Sint Eustatius, the interviews showed us that there was a broad understanding that immediate humanitarian emergency response was needed, and that assistance in the reconstruction was necessary on the islands on request.
19. The intervention logic in Figure 2.1 differentiates between three phases: Emergency Response, Early Recovery and longer-term Reconstruction. It is important to note that the activities were implemented in rapidly evolving contexts, often overlapping and requiring improvisation, particularly during the emergency response in the weeks following the disaster.
 - **Emergency response:** Immediate humanitarian emergency response for the three islands on request, in the period after the disaster, consisting of security, health care, drinking water, etc. The goal of this first phase was to meet the immediate needs of the islands' population.
 - **Early recovery of Sint Maarten:** Essential activities in Sint Maarten that could start quickly and could bridge the gap until the Trust Fund of the World Bank was fully operational.
 - **Reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba:** Directly after the Emergency Phase, Sint Eustatius and Saba requested assistance for the reconstruction of their islands, and support was provided by several departments. The Ministry of BZK coordinated the reconstruction phase and was responsible in this phase for the expenses on housing, public space and nature and environment. With the projects selected, the Ministry of BZK not only focused on the recovery of housing, public space and nature (situation as was), but also on 'building back better'. This strategy aims at reducing the risk preparatory of future hurricanes.

Figure 2.1 Intervention logic Budget Article 8



2.2 Evaluation questions

Policy review under the Regulation of Periodical Evaluation (RPE) Research

20. The evaluation questions for this review closely follow the standard questions defined under the Regulation of Periodical Evaluation Research of the Government of the Netherlands of 15 March 2018 and their further development in the Letter to the House of Representatives of 21 September 2020. Annex IV contains all evaluation questions and references to specific sections in this report where they are answered. In some cases, complex questions covering multiple elements were disaggregated into sub-questions.

General and specific evaluation questions RPE

21. The general questions cover the structure of the funding; the motivation of the Government of the Netherlands to provide support; the respective responsibilities of the Governments of the Netherlands and Sint Maarten in the context of the Charter of the Kingdom; the scope of the evaluation; the funding provided and the expenditures that were made; the funding from other sources; and documentary and other evidence (including previous evaluations).
22. More specific questions address the effectiveness of policy support in terms of results achieved, as well as possible positive or negative side-effects. Under effectiveness, the dimension of building back better is explored, namely the rebuilding of physical infrastructure; being better prepared for a crisis or better prepared through crisis management. Another set of questions addresses efficiency, particularly how expenses were justified; if they were reasonable in light of results achieved; and finally what policy options would exist if more or fewer resources (20% approx.) were available.

2.3 Methods and limitation

23. Already before the start of the policy review, it had become clear that the evaluation material, usually underlying a policy review (evaluation reports), was limited. In the inception phase it was therefore expressly stated that the use of other documentation and interviews would be necessary in order to formulate answers on the evaluation questions. Consequently, this policy review does not merely synthesize findings from evaluation reports, but also carries out an evaluation (appreciation) of the policy implementation and its results on the basis of other types of documentation and in-depth interviews. This paragraph provides insight into the methods and limitations of the information used for this policy review.

2.3.1 Documentation

24. The policy review sought to draw on documentation concerning the original design of the Dutch contribution to the emergency assistance, the early recovery and the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. At an earlier stage, it had already been highlighted that document describing the overall goal and specific objectives of the contribution from the Netherlands provided little guidance as to which outputs, outcomes and impact were to be achieved within a given timeframe (see section 2.1 and the section above).
25. Documentation in the form of letters, reports, invoices, tables and emails was provided by the Ministry of BZK. The initial set of shared documents continued to be fed into by the Ministry of BZK over the course of the policy review. This information was then supplemented with available reports from other ministries, NGOs and local authorities. The quality of documentation varied per phase. Due to the *ad-hoc* nature of decision-making during the emergency response, documents concerning its funding and activities were scattered and not readily available. The early recovery phase, on the other hand, is well-documented, due to subsidy obligations. For the reconstruction phase on Saba and Sint Eustatius, official documents were in some cases limited or not readily available at the project level within the Ministry of BZK. There is a lack of available information on the project selection (e.g. the relation between the damage assessment and project selections) and the monitoring of the projects on content. The financial project management (e.g. *subsidie beschikkingen, verzoeken tot uitstel, etc.*) was available to the evaluation team.
26. The evaluation team also relied on financial source documents of the Ministry of BZK concerning expenditure under Article 8, i.e. and payments to parties implementing emergency response and early recovery activities. The objective of the policy review is not to reconstruct financial reporting, but rely to the greatest possible extent on respective overall synthetic financial reporting of the Ministry of BZK. This created some difficulties because the financial data is not always conclusive. Expenditure is included in the administration, but often no link is made to the specific content. Information on the content was scattered among emails, "*subsidie beschikkingen*", project proposals, etc.
27. The following types of documents were used for this policy review:
- Overall policy and legal documents of the Governments of the Netherlands and Sint Maarten, e.g. the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands¹⁰; Article 8 of the Budget for Kingdom Relations; documents prepared by the Ministry of BZK for Parliament (*'kamerstukken'* and *internal documents*); annual reports of the Ministry of BZK; letters and other publications addressed by the Government of Sint Maarten and the public entities of Saba and Sint Eustatius to the Netherlands.

¹⁰ <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0002154/2010-10-10> website consulted on 1 February 2022

- Documentation related to emergency response, early recovery and reconstruction projects and programmes, e.g. if available, project documents; progress and final reports; minutes of meetings, as appropriate.
- Other sources, e.g. scientific publications; archives of news media, as appropriate.¹¹

Available documentation Emergency Response

28. For the assessment of the emergency response phase, we used the (internal) evaluations carried out by the departments involved in the emergency response. Most of the departments involved in the emergency response conducted an (process) evaluation of their own input afterwards. The available (process) evaluations cover an important part of the resources used for emergency response. In addition, more general reviews have also been drawn up by a number of other organisations.
29. The available reviews focused on the learning experiences and on what could be improved in the future; they focus much less on the effectiveness and efficiency of the emergency response provided. During the interviews, an attempt was made to obtain more information on the effectiveness and efficiency of the emergency assistance provided.

Table 2.1 Main documents emergency response

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid (2018), <i>Lessen uit crises en mini-crisis 2017</i>, Arnhem/ Zoetermeer. • COT: Instituut voor Veiligheids- en Crisismanagement (juli 2018), <i>Evaluatie Nationale Crisisorganisatie Orkaan Irma</i>, Rotterdam.
Ministry of BZK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerie van BZK (mei 2018), <i>Sint Maarten, Irma en BZK: evaluatie crisisbeheer ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken</i>, Den Haag. • Ministerie van BZK, Vertegenwoordiging van Nederland Willemstad (juli 2018), Verslag “Lessons learned” van het Crisis Ondersteuningsoverleg Curaçao.
Ministry of I&W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid (april 2018), <i>Orkaan Irma treft Sint Maarten en Caribisch Nederland: een evaluatie van het door het ministerie van IenW geleverde Crisismanagement</i>. Arnhem/ Zoetermeer.
Ministry of Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerie van Defensie (mei 2020), <i>Evaluatie militaire inzet orkaan Irma 2017</i>, Den Haag.
Ministry of VWS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evaluation carried out specifically for VWS’ response.
Ministry of JenV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid/ Inspectie Justitie en Veiligheid (mei 2018), <i>Onderzoek naar het Systeem van rampenbestrijding op de BES-eilanden. Incidentenonderzoek naar aanleiding van de passage van de orkanen Irma, Jose en Maria</i>. Den Haag.
Ministry of OCW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evaluation carried out specifically for OCW’s response.
Ministry of BZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evaluation carried out specifically for BZ’s response.

Available documentation Early Recovery phase

30. Due to the project-based nature of this phase, the activities are relatively well-documented. In addition to internal documents from the Ministry of BZK showing the discussions held in early December 2017, the evaluation team also received access to project proposals, progress reports and final reports for most projects.

¹¹ For example, <https://dossierkoninkrijksrelaties.nl/>, <https://stmaartennews.com/>, <https://www.thedailyherald.sx/> website consulted 30 June 2021, website consulted on 1 February 2022

Table 2.2 Main documents Early Recovery

White Yellow Cross Care Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Yellow Cross Care Foundation (30 September 2018), <i>Final Report Reconstruction Projects</i>, Sint Maarten.
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF Nederland (November 2017), <i>Sint Maarten Post-Hurricane Irma Assessment</i>, Den Haag. • UNICEF Nederland (13 December 2018), <i>Early Recovery Final Report</i>, Den Haag.
Red Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Cross, <i>Final narrative Report NLRC School Meal Project</i>. • Red Cross (October 2018), <i>From Waste to Work Final Report</i>.
UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP (2019), <i>Sint Maarten Recovering Back Better Project Final Report</i>
Qredits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qredits. (20 December 2017), <i>Proposal ‘Ondersteuning MKB op Bovenwindse Eilanden bij Wederopbouw’</i> • Qredits (July 2021), <i>Eindverslag subsidiebeschikking onder nummer 2017-0000662632”</i>
S MDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S MDF (February 2019), <i>Progress Report</i>

Available documentation reconstruction Saba and Sint Eustatius

31. The projects of the reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba have not been previously evaluated. The documentation provided by the Ministry of BZK on the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius is limited and consists mainly of the ‘*dispositions*’ – information about the cliff reinforcement and documentation about projects in Sint Eustatius. In addition, the evaluation team received documentation from the Public Entity of Saba and documents from the Planning Bureau. Regional media has been used in order to provide useful insights. Lastly, field visits and the interviews conducted on the island are used as an important source of information. For most projects, the information is of sufficient quality to judge the effectiveness of the effort. However, as mentioned earlier, the information provided does not address project selection – a well-considered judgement on project selection is therefore impossible. The information on the content of projects in nature and environment is scattered; therefore, the review could only provide minor insights into the effectiveness on this topic.

2.3.2 Interviews

32. The Ministry of BZK provided a list of potential interviewees in the Netherlands, Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius. The evaluation team selected interviewees, and some additional resource persons were added. The Ministry of BZK also sent messages to selected interviewees to introduce the evaluators, but had no further involvement in the actual interviews. It was decided that interviews would be undertaken jointly between the evaluators of parts I / III and part II, so as to avoid the stakeholder fatigue. All interviews in the Netherlands were held by video or audio-conferencing, due to the prevailing Covid-19 related public health situation.
33. Some 50 persons were interviewed in the Netherlands, and interview guides were used. Most resource persons were government staff, having been involved in post-Irma activities within the Ministry of BZK. Based on their consent, their names and roles are mentioned in Annex I. Interviews on Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius took place in person during the field visit (see list of names in Annex I).

34. In advance of the respective appointments, semi-structured interview guides were shared with prospective resource persons. At the start of each interview, the evaluator clearly explained the scope and objectives of the policy review and the purpose of the interview. They also assured the interviewee of the confidentiality of their responses. This also included that any information and viewpoints shared with the evaluation team would not be attributed to individual respondents, both in the report and in general.

2.3.3 *Visit to Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius*

35. Ecorys consultants and Lucien Bäck undertook a joint mission to Sint Maarten between 8 and 20 November 2021. On 15 and 18 November, the Ecorys team was on Saba and Sint Eustatius, respectively. The Office of the Prime Minister of Sint Maarten kindly planned and facilitated meetings based on suggestions communicated in advance. The purpose of these meetings was for the evaluation team to gain information on results and context on the ground, and to hear viewpoints and perspectives of stakeholders in Sint Maarten. On Saba and Sint Eustatius, meetings and project visits were efficiently organised by the public entities, giving the team the opportunity to gather all necessary information in one day.
36. Interviewees in Sint Maarten included technical staff of line ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Education), staff of the National Reconstruction Program Bureau (NRPB), the management team of the Sint Maarten Medical Centre, staff of implementing organisations of Trust Fund projects (e.g. VNG-International / R4CR, Red Cross Netherlands, UNICEF-NL, Qredits) as well as other NGOs. The team did not get to interview Members of Cabinet, despite requests to do so. Interviewees in Saba included the Saba Executive Council and Planning Bureau Department. In Sint Eustatius, a meeting was planned with the members of the crisis team, and reconstruction projects were also visited.

2.3.4 *Triangulation of information*

37. All available information was – to the greatest possible extent – triangulated, i.e. drawn from different sources, critically assessed and compared, with a view to drawing well-founded evidence-based findings and reliable and credible conclusions. The review aimed at the greatest possible impartiality and objectivity, without bias, personal perspectives or viewpoints. Conclusions and recommendations are meant to be constructive and practical, to allow for an improvement of policies in the future.
38. The evidence collected for this review is, by and large, sufficiently robust to allow for some meaningful conclusions and recommendations. However, the level of detail in the information available varied significantly across the phases, with the early recovery phase as a positive exception. Challenges to accessing and receiving the documentary, and other evidence on the emergency assistance and the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Maarten, were mostly overcome; but this did require a huge effort, and took more time than had been originally expected.

2.3.5 *Limitations and causality*

39. **Several limitations need to be mentioned**
- In the first place, this policy review cannot draw on a proper results framework with specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound objectives concerning the Dutch contribution to the emergency assistance, early recovery and reconstruction on the islands.

- There are a number of evaluations carried out by departments and bodies involved in the emergency assistance. However, they provided a scattered and incomplete picture of the whole emergency phase.
 - There are no comprehensive project evaluations and reviews for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. Likewise, there is no information available on the project selection and how this is related to the damage assessments.
 - Financial data is also not completely conclusive. As a result, it required some time to gain an adequate overview of the activities carried out, and to achieve an accurate picture of the expenditure.
40. These shortcomings could only be partially compensated through more in depth desk research, e.g. requests on assistance, interviews and the field visit. Due to high staff turnover in the Ministry of BZK and other Ministries and NGOs, interviewees were often involved in the Article 8-funded activities for short periods of time. As a result, interviewees themselves were often unable to provide comprehensive overviews.

3 Design of the emergency response, early recovery and reconstruction activities

3.1 Timeline

41. This policy review covers the period between 6 September 2017 and the end of 2021, and roughly follows the three phases below:
- The **Emergency Response** phase spans from 7 September 2017 (when the Netherlands first sent emergency relief) to 1 December 2017 (the cut-off date set by the Ministry of BZK for emergency assistance to be invoiced by other departments under this budgetary line).¹²
 - The **Early Recovery** phase spans from 21 December 2017 to mid-2018 and refers to the projects implemented in Sint Maarten as a result of a call for project proposals. The Netherlands began negotiations for the signing of the Trust Fund at an early stage, during a visit to Washington in October 2017 and ultimately signed the administration arrangement with the World Bank on 16 April, 2018. It will be in place until 2025 and is currently undergoing its mid-term review under Part II. An initial budget was earmarked for direct support, i.e. funding to be provided for activities implemented through bilateral cooperation between the Netherlands and Sint Maarten, without involvement of the World Bank.
 - The **Reconstruction for Saba and Sint Eustatius** period ran from 10 November 2017, when the Council of Ministers decided to provide financial support for recovery to the public entities, to 31 December 2021.

3.2 Design of the emergency response

42. In this section, we describe how disaster management and emergency assistance is set up on the different islands. As Sint Maarten is an autonomous country within the Kingdom, it has been responsible for its national response to disasters since the administrative reforms of 2010, supported by the assurance that the four countries of the Kingdom can provide assistance to each other when needed (Article 36 of the Charter). Saba and Sint Eustatius, on the other hand, received the assistance they requested from the Netherlands as a result of their position as public entities of the country.

3.2.1 Emergency response on Sint Maarten

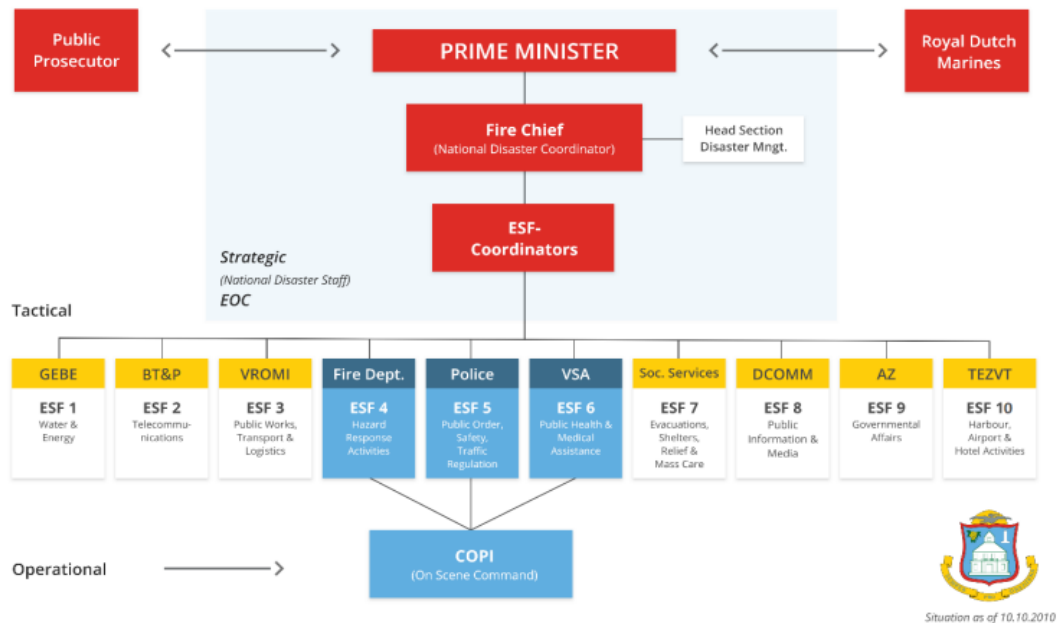
43. The disaster management system of Sint Maarten is laid down in the National Ordinance Disaster Management ("*Landsverordening rampenbestrijding*"¹³). This national ordinance highlights the duties and responsibilities in the event of a disaster. It also includes the obligation to draw up a contingency plan, which stipulates how to effectively act in the event of a disaster.
44. The National Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) plays a central role within the disaster management structure of Sint Maarten (see Figure 3.1). The EOC is activated when a natural disaster approaches. This took place on 1 September 2017, five days before Hurricane Irma reached Sint Maarten. When the EOC is activated, the Prime Minister is elevated to a commanding

¹² As coordinating ministry, the total budget was placed on the budget of BZK (Article 8). Ministries that were requested to help by the Ministry of BZK could then submit their invoices to the Ministry of BZK before 1 December 2017.

¹³ <https://lokaleregelgeving.overheid.nl/CVDR206085>

position and is responsible for taking final decisions at the strategic level. Within the EOC, the coordinating role is assigned to the chief of the fire department (“Fire Chief”).¹⁴ This organisational structure facilitates and accelerates decision-making, which can increase effectiveness. Another part of the disaster management structure is the Emergency Service Functions (ESF), a group of ten thematic supporting bodies that operate during emergency situations. Inventory of required support of both resources and products is crucial, time sensitive and should be one of the first assessments to be made after a major calamity. Due to the multiple sectors the ESF can be the main provider of this inventory of emergency goods. Local NGOs on Sint Maarten can provide emergency assistance and support in case of emergencies, and are embedded into the ESFs.

Figure 3.1 Organisation structure disaster management Sint Maarten



Source: <http://www.sintmaartengov.org/PressReleases/Pages/The-Sint-Maarten-Disaster-Management-Organization.aspx>

45. Sint Maarten, as an autonomous country within the Kingdom, is responsible for its own disaster management during a crisis. The decision making process at the top (in the hands of the Prime Minister of Sint Maarten) was weak in the aftermath of the crisis, in part due to a largely absent Prime Minister. In addition, there were ambiguities about the division of tasks and responsibilities on the practical level, between the ESFs. As a result, the counterparts of BZK on the island lacked proper guidance and coordination. Due to this lack of coordination, the flow of information was inadequate and prioritisation was difficult on the European part of the Netherlands. Action was therefore carried out in the days following Irma based on estimates on the side of The Hague (push) – rather than being demand-driven from the islands (pull). Although the worst effects of the hurricanes were quickly addressed, it was not due to the proper functioning of the system.¹⁵ A supra-island coordination point or coordination team was not included in supra-island plans, national plans or any other way.

¹⁴ The World Bank. Sint Maarten National Recovery and Resilience Plan, p 12.

¹⁵ Ministerie van JenV (mei 2018), Onderzoek naar het system van de rampenbestrijding op de BES-eilanden.

3.2.2 Emergency response on Saba and Sint Eustatius

46. The system for disaster management on Saba and Sint Eustatius is laid down in the BES Safety Act (*Veiligheidswet BES*).¹⁶ This law came into effect on 10 October 2010 and contains provisions on the police fire service, disaster relief and crisis management in the Caribbean Netherlands. The law stipulates that the Island Governors on Saba and Sint Eustatius play a central role, similarly to the role of a mayor in the municipalities within the Netherlands. The Island Governor has supreme command over his or her territory in the event of a disaster or crisis in that territory. The Island Governor is also charged with maintaining public order and crisis communication, and heads the Island (crisis) Policy Team (*EBT* in Dutch). External officials can also be brought in for this purpose. The role of island disaster coordinator is fulfilled by the Island Secretary. This person is the first point of contact for the provision of information and coordination of communication. When scaling up the crisis or disaster to the higher national level, the supreme command remains with the governor(s). In case of upscaling and assistance, the Kingdom Representative, stationed at Bonaire, acts as a link between the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands.¹⁷

3.2.3 Constitutional differences

47. The disaster management systems on the islands are primarily intended for disasters with a local (island) scope. Due to the magnitude of damage caused by Hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria – and the fact that all three islands were hit – it soon became clear that aid from the Netherlands was desired and necessary. The crisis management structure, therefore, needed to be upscaled.
48. The position of the three islands in the constitutional structure (which defines Sint Maarten as an autonomous country within the Kingdom, and Saba and Sint Eustatius as public entities of the Netherlands) created an unclear situation for the Ministry of BZK. The Ministry is responsible for the coordination of a crisis in the Netherlands, but not for a crisis in an autonomous country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Consequently, an investigation had to be made into the legal grounds upon which the national crisis organisation could support Sint Maarten, which took some time.¹⁸ In the meantime, the Ministry of Defence was in charge of emergency assistance. Defence was already on site and prepared to act in crisis situations.. Within two weeks (formally from 18 September 2017), the Ministry of BZK had taken over operational leadership and the chairmanship of Defence in meetings.¹⁹
49. Official requests for assistance are key for the provision of emergency assistance. Requests for assistance from Sint Maarten are made by invoking the Charter for Kingdom of the Netherlands (Article 36 the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten provide each other with help and assistance). In contrast to Saba and Sint Eustatius, the official requests for needs and relief supplies from Sint Maarten only came later (starting from 12 September). The late submission of requests for assistance by the government of Sint Maarten came as a result of the management of the EOC not working properly in the beginning. In the face of the devastation on Sint Maarten and the threats to public law and order, the Netherlands took immediate action to respond to perceived emergency needs in some instances in a way that went beyond what was formally requested. The Ministry of Defence recognised that the decision to deploy additional military personnel (whereas initially 10 FTEs were requested, more were deployed) on Sint Maarten did not follow conventional

¹⁶ <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0028586/2018-08-01>

¹⁷ Ministry of Justice and Security & Ministry of BZK, *Handboek crisisbeheersing voor de Caribische delen van het Koninkrijk*, Den Haag, June 2020.

¹⁸ COT: *Instituut voor Veiligheids en Crisismanagement (juli 2018)*, *Evaluatie Nationale Crisisorganisatie Orkaan Irma*, Rotterdam (p.9).

¹⁹ *Ministerie van Defensie (mei 2020)*, *Evaluatie militaire inzet orkaan Irma 2017*, Den Haag (p. 16).

legal procedure (due to the lack of an official request) but was instead prompted by moral responsibility.

50. For the BES islands, the task of the Kingdom Representative in the Caribbean Netherlands is to assess a request for assistance made by an island and to forward it to the relevant ministries. All military-related requests for assistance were forwarded to the Ministry of Defence, and all other requests for assistance were forwarded to the Ministry of BZK. In practice, however, the emergency assistance to Saba and Sint Eustatius was organised primarily through existing connections with the various ministries. Formal and informal requests for assistance were directly routed to the different departments and thereafter coordinated with BZK, which led to confusion.²⁰

Shortly after the disaster, most requests for assistance from Saba and Sint Eustatius focused on the provision of drinking water, food and medication. Requests for assistance from the islands directly to the Ministry of BZK mainly concerned the provision of building materials. Chapter 4 contains a detailed overview of the requests for assistance. Due to the existing working relationships between Saba and Sint Eustatius' governments and the various Ministries of the Netherlands, emergency assistance to Sint Eustatius and Saba was often provided in a direct manner. The usual rules were not always applied, usual procedures were waived and people often relied on informal relations to ensure things progressed. While the official process for submitting requests for assistance for the three islands goes through the Kingdom Representative in the Caribbean Netherlands, who is stationed on Bonaire (see also chapter 4), information was not always centralised and a full overview of requests of assistance is lacking.

3.2.4 Coordination between the islands after the hurricanes

51. The Ministry of BZK used the national crisis structure to guarantee administrative support and coordination after the hurricanes. The national crisis structure consists of the Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee (ICCB) and the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCCB). The MCCB is chaired by the Minister of Justice and Security, or the Prime Minister, and decides (by majority vote) on all measures and provisions with a view to a coherent approach in a crisis situation.²¹ The ICCB advises the MCCB and, if necessary and possible, also takes decisions itself. Both are supported and advised by an Interdepartmental Coordination Council (IAO). The key to the structure is its flexibility, where experts can be brought in as required and the structure can be adapted as needed.²² The ICCB met on the morning of 7 September 2017 and was activated in consultation and in support of the Ministry of BZK and J&V. The invited ministries were BZK, AZ, Defence, BuZa and I&W. During this meeting, parties agreed to give priority to the supply of food and water for at least 5 days, and to prepare for Hurricane Jose by expanding the number of operational shelters and restoring the airport and seaport for transport.²³
52. The Ministry of BZK has a coordinating role in relation to the cooperation with the other countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten) and with the public entities in the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba), including in the event of a crisis with regards to the provision of aid and assistance. On the islands, the Representation of the Netherlands acts as an outpost of the Dutch government.

²⁰ Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid/ Inspectie Justitie en Veiligheid (mei 2018), Onderzoek naar het Stelsel van rampenbestrijding op de BES-eilanden. Incidentenonderzoek naar aanleiding van de passage van de orkanen Irma, Jose en Maria. Den Haag (p.37).

²¹ National Crisis Structure, consulted at: <https://www.nctv.nl/onderwerpen/nationale-crisisstructuur>.

²² COT: Instituut voor Veiligheids en Crisismanagement (juli 2018), Evaluatie Nationale Crisisorganisatie Orkaan Irma, Rotterdam (p.5).

²³ COT: Instituut voor Veiligheids en Crisismanagement (juli 2018), Evaluatie Nationale Crisisorganisatie Orkaan Irma, Rotterdam (p.11).

53. In order to give substance to the coordinating role of the Ministry of BZK, a project director general “Reconstruction of the Windward Islands” was appointed two days after the islands were hit. Shortly afterwards, a crisis team was also set up in The Hague with the responsibility of coordinating the emergency assistance, including the matching of supply and demand. This crisis team consisted of the Ministerial Committee on Crisis Management (MCCB) and the Interdepartmental Committee on Crisis Management (ICCB) with representatives from, among others, the ministries of the Interior, Defence, Infrastructure and Water Management, Foreign Affairs and Justice and Security. A few days after the hurricane, a civil mission from BZK was also sent to Sint Maarten. The civil mission addressed urgent needs including waste disposal, water supply, electricity and immediate housing needs. The team also undertook a needs assessment and conveyed this to The Hague.²⁴ The civil mission was active from 2 days after the hurricane until the end of November 2017. Communication between the civil mission in Sint Maarten and the coordinators in The Hague did not go smoothly at the start, in part because of the loss of crucial infrastructure and in part because processes, roles and responsibilities were still being figured out.
54. The Caribbean part of the Kingdom had no existing joint structure or specific administrative plans in the event of a crisis. One exception is the role of the Ministry of Defence, which has a permanent presence in the Caribbean for military tasks – providing military assistance to local authorities, including the provision of emergency assistance. Due to the lack of a specific approach, there was an immediate need for improvisation. To this end, the so-called Crisis Support Consultation Curaçao (COOC) was established on Curacao.²⁵ The cooperation within the COOC was not based on the transfer of powers and mandate, but rather on added value, and was initially coordinated by the Commander NL Forces Caribbean (CZMCARIB). The meetings of the COOC covered a wide variety of topics. This resulted in lengthy meetings, which were neither efficient nor effective for all involved.²⁶ At a later stage, the coordination was taken over by the Representative of the Netherlands, as soon as the Representation of the Netherlands in Willemstad (VNW) was reinforced with personnel.
55. A study carried out on behalf of the Ministry of JenV looked into the functioning of the existing disaster management systems on Saba and Sint Eustatius during the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria in. It concluded that while all separate parts of the disaster management system were operational in 2017, there was a lack of coherence and coordination between these parts.²⁷ The report therefore found that the disaster management system on the BES islands did not yet fully function as intended in the BES Safety Act.
56. Improvements were needed in relation to cooperation and coordination, in particular between the islands and the organisation between the European Netherlands and the Kingdom Representative. In addition to the difficulty of communication, the lack of knowledge of each party’s responsibilities and roles also played its part. For example, parties kept their own lists (of requested and provided assistance) and there was no clear central overview, as the study of the Ministry of JenV concluded. The issue of logistics was also mentioned, as with the exception of gathering an emergency stock, logistics is not included in the planning of Saba and Sint Eustatius in the event of disasters. Because logistic processes were mainly focused on Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius became dependent on the relief goods that were delivered to Sint Maarten.

²⁴ ABD Blad 4, donderdag 14 december 2017.

²⁵ Ministry of Interior, Report “Lessons Learned of the Crisis Ondersteuningsoverleg Curaçao”, July 2018.

²⁶ Verslag COOC.

²⁷ Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid/ Inspectie Justitie en Veiligheid (mei 2018), Onderzoek naar het Systeem van rampenbestrijding op de BES-eilanden. Incidentenonderzoek naar aanleiding van de passage van de orkanen Irma, Jose en Maria. Den Haag (p.5)

Following the conclusions in the evaluation of the Ministry of JenV about the system for the disaster management of hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria, the coordination plan for supra-island disaster relief and crisis management Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba was already adjusted in January 2020. An important adjustment compared to the version of the coordination plan from 2017 was the tightening up and clarification of the roles, tasks and powers of Saba, Sint Eustatius and Bonaire, the Kingdom Representative and the relationship with the European Netherlands.²⁸ A “Crisis Management Handbook for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom” was drawn up in June 2020 as a result of the experiences with Hurricane Irma. This handbook is a joint publication of the Ministry of JenV and the Ministry of BZK. It is meant to be consulted when the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom are hit by a disaster or crisis and assistance from the European part of the Netherlands is required. It contains agreements about the cooperation and the main processes that must be followed during a supra-(island) country disaster or crisis. It is precisely these island-transcending agreements on cooperation and implementation of the main processes that were not properly arranged prior to Hurricane Irma. The handbook does not discuss the preparation phase because this preparation is the responsibility of the individual countries within the Kingdom.

57. An independent evaluation of the BES Safety Act was carried out and finalised in 2022, which found it still lacking.²⁹ The role of the Kingdom Representative does not get sufficient support from public entities, who on their side do not see the value added of the coordinating role of the Kingdom Representative. The evaluation mentions bottlenecks in the coordination with Sint Maarten, because the country is not part of the Safety Act and no formal arrangements exist. It furthermore recommends drawing up a mutual arrangement on the basis of the Charter, clarifying the assistance referred to in Article 36.

3.3 Design of the early recovery

58. Longer-term reconstruction needs were already being considered during the emergency assistance stages. As early as 15 September 2017, a little more than a week after the hurricane, a Ministerial Committee for the Reconstruction of the Windward Islands and an Inter-Departmental Programme Commission were created in the Netherlands. Requests for assistance for reconstruction were received on 17 September 2017 in the case of Saba and on 14 September 2017 in the case of Sint Eustatius.³⁰ On 13 October 2017, the Minister of BZK, Mr. R.H.A. Plasterk, addressed a letter to the Government of Sint Maarten announcing that a significant financial package could be made available for the reconstruction of the island. This letter also contained conditions³¹ to be met for the financial support to be made available. Consent to conditionalities was expected by 31 October 2017. However, the Prime Minister in Sint Maarten at the time, Mr. William Marlin, did not agree to the conditions, which led to two votes of no-confidence in the Parliament of Sint Maarten and an instruction by the Kingdom Council of Ministers (*Rijksministerraad*). Prime Minister Marlin left office in November 2017 and the interim Government consented to the conditions soon after.³²
59. The early recovery phase in Sint Maarten would act as bridging phase between the initial emergency response and the longer-term reconstruction activities. With these longer-term activities requiring more time for their design and set-up, there was an acknowledgement that shorter-term,

²⁸ <https://www.rijksdienstcn.com/over-de-rijksdienst-caribisch-nederland/documenten/publicaties/rv/coördinatieplan-rampenbestrijding/coördinatieplan-rampenbestrijding-en-crisisbeheersing/index>

²⁹ Pro Facto & University of Curacao, Evaluatie Veiligheidswet BES, March 2022. Available at:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2022/04/25/tk-bijlage-1-evaluatie-veiligheidswet-bes-eindrapport>

³⁰ Rijksvertegenwoordiger voor Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba. Brief aan minister Plasterk met het verzoek om bijstand wederopbouw. 14 september 2017. Kenmerk Rv/17u/106.

³¹ Namely, strengthening of border control and the establishment of an Integrity Chamber.

³² Kst-34 773. Interim Prime Minister Rafael Boasma was replaced by Interim Prime Minister Ms. Leona Marlin-Romeo on 15 January 2018.

more practical projects needed to fill this gap. A similar phase was not developed for Saba and Sint Eustatius. Since the damage was not as extensive as in Sint Maarten, emergency assistance addressed many of their immediate needs. This more limited damage – and the position of the islands as public entities – also meant that reconstruction activities did not require the setting up of a Trust Fund as in the case of Sint Maarten, and were therefore able to be rolled out quicker, eliminating the need for a transition phase.

60. Organisations invited to participate in the early recovery projects were seen as being best placed to identify urgent needs; using their own capacity to deliver results for the duration of the early recovery timeline. It emerges from the interviews with these organisations that they were given considerable freedom to develop their proposals, BZK assumed that these organisations understood the urgent needs well due to their local involvement or prior experience in disaster situations. Project proposals were submitted in December 2017 after a general call for proposals. In some cases, organisations were also approached directly by the Hague or the Dutch Civil Mission and asked to submit a proposal.
61. The project proposals themselves were not subject to strict technical or financial requirements, though organisations did require an auditor's report containing historical financial information to qualify. The development of the final project proposals often included rounds of discussion between the organisations and members of the Civil Mission.³³ Final project proposals, which varied significantly in length and level of detail, contained a general description of the aim and the approach, as well as an initial cost estimate and breakdown. In practice, this meant that most of the projects had to further define or adapt their approach in the implementation phase (see Chapter 5), making it difficult to speak of effectiveness vis-à-vis changing targets.

3.4 Design of the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius

62. The damage on Saba and Sint Eustatius after the hurricanes was relatively limited compared to Sint Maarten; concerning mainly houses and public spaces. On 8 September 2017, two days after the hurricane, the Minister of BZK, R.H.A. Plasterk, indicated that Saba and Sint Eustatius would receive assistance in the reconstruction. On 12 September, Prime Minister Rutte again confirmed this. On 14 and 17 September 2017 respectively, Sint Eustatius and Saba requested assistance for the reconstruction of the island.^{34, 35} On 21 September, Minister R.H.A. Plasterk mentioned in “algemeen overleg” that “*Sint Eustatius and Saba shall not be forgotten and are part of the recovery programme*”.³⁶ On 10 November 2017, the Council of Ministers made a formal decision to provide financial support to the public entities of Sint Eustatius and Saba for recovery.³⁷

“In addition, the Council of Ministers has decided that a one-off amount of €67 million will be made available for the reconstruction of the public entities of Saba and Sint Eustatius. This amount is separate from the amount of €550 million destined for Sint Maarten.”³⁸

³³ The evaluators had access to the e-mails containing project proposals submissions, for both selected and not selected projects. From these e-mails it was clear that conversations about the objectives of projects and ideas on how to achieve them had, in many cases, already taken place.

³⁴ Rijksvertegenwoordiger voor Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba. Brief aan minister Plasterk met het verzoek om bijstand wederopbouw. 14 september 2017. Kenmerk Rv/17u/106.

³⁵ Public Entity of Saba. Overview of all measures requested. 15 november 2017.

³⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal. Verslag van een algemeen overleg. 21 september 2017.

³⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal. Brief van de staatssecretaris van binnenlandse zaken en koninkrijksrelaties. Vergaderjaar 2017-2018. Kenmerk: 34 773. 10 november 2017.

³⁸ Kamerbrief van 10 november 2017 (kst-34773-D, ISSN 0921 – 7371, 's-Gravenhage 2017)

63. The budget for the reconstruction was composed of various departmental budgets, depending on their responsibilities on the islands. This was also mentioned in a Letter to the Parliament from 18 December 2017:

“The budget for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius is processed through various departmental budgets according to responsibility, and can be consulted in the overview of the Caribbean Netherlands of the BES Fund”³⁹.

64. While the Ministry of BZK kept an overall coordinating role over the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius, other Ministries were in charge of the implementation and finances of specific projects, depending on their mandate and expertise. The projects themselves were chosen by the islands, in consultation with the Ministries who then relied on their internal budgets to support the projects. Article 8 funded projects were therefore only a part of the projects under the reconstruction phase for the two islands.

3.5 Financial overview Article 8

Emergency response

65. The Dutch government immediately provided a humanitarian emergency response for the three islands, for which a total of €55 million was initially reserved. In the structure that had been established, all parties could declare their costs until the end of 2017, and with special exceptions for the first part of 2018. In total, €40.4 million was declared by the different stakeholders.⁴⁰

Early recovery

66. A budget of €7 million was allocated for the early recovery phase, within the reconstruction budget of €550 million for SXM. The budgetary envelopes for early recovery and reconstruction were developed simultaneously. Interviewed stakeholders described this procedure as somewhat improvised and not based on an explicit cost assessment, but rather on the costs of reconstruction after Hurricane Luis, adjusted for inflation. A small share of this total was then allocated to early recovery. The inter-ministerial committee in charge of establishing the amount, far removed from the situation on the ground, had little insight into the specific needs.⁴¹ At that time, it was not yet clear as to the exact amounts which would eventually become available from insurance pay-outs on the island. The total expenditure came to €6.7 million, though many implementing parties made use of co-financing from other sources to bolster their activities.

Reconstruction

67. The Dutch government made a maximum of €67 million available for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. The projects were implemented by several departments, according to each department's responsibilities. A complete financial overview of all stakeholders is included in chapter 6. The projects under the responsibility of the Ministry of BZK fell under article 8 and had to be implemented by the end of 2021. The Ministry of BZK covered €18 million of this budget from article 8, allocating €15.0 million to Sint Eustatius, €3.9 million to Saba and €1.5 million to the SSCS Sea Cable.

³⁹ kamerbrief van 18 december 2017 (kst-34845-IV-3, ISSN 0921 – 7371, 's-Gravenhage 2017)

⁴⁰ Verslag houdende lijst van Vragen en antwoorden. Wijziging van de begrotingsstaten van Koninkrijksrelaties (IV) en het BES-fonds (H) voor het jaar 2018 (wijziging samenhangende met de Najaarsnota) - 35 095 IV.

⁴¹ From interviewed stakeholders involved in the process.

Table 3.1 Expenditures on emergency response, early recovery and reconstruction on Article 8.2
(in € x 1.000)

	Budgeted	Realisation
Emergency response	55.0	40.4
Early recovery	7.0	6.7 a)
Reconstruction		20.4
<i>Saba</i>	b)	3.9
<i>Sint Eustatius</i>	b)	15.0
<i>Subsidy SSCS Sea cable</i>	b)	1.5
Total	62 + b)	67.5

a) Source: Financieel overzicht WBE SXM 15072021

b) Initial budget not known – not provided in the documentation

Establishment of the budgets

68. In the emergency phase, an inventory was created of what was needed and how much it would cost during implementation. The total amount of estimated costs was the budget for the emergency response. The budget was included in the regular treatment of the 2nd supplementary bill.
69. The establishment of the budget for the early recovery is closely related with the decision to spend a large portion of the envelope of €550 million through a World Bank executed Trust Fund in Sint Maarten. This decision was made rather quickly at political level in the Netherlands in November 2017 (see also Part II of the policy review). The expediency observed by both the Government of the Netherlands and the World Bank in establishing the Trust Fund created the impression that project activities would commence rapidly after signature of the Administration Arrangement, thus responding to the needs of the population on the ground within a short timeframe. The Government of the Netherlands was apparently under this impression as well, as the intended early recovery phase involved only a comparatively small fund of €7 million.
70. After the emergency response phase, all departments assumed their own responsibilities for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. During the interviews, the team heard that the authorities on the islands could propose reconstruction projects themselves, in consultation with the line ministries. The cost estimates of these projects added up to the reconstruction budget. The Ministry of BZK was, among others, responsible for house repairs and repairs in public space (including the stabilisation of the cliff). The budget of this phase was mainly based on damage assessment reports.

Activities with a lower or higher budget

71. A policy review also looks at policy options in the case of a 20% higher or 20% lower budget. In a crisis situation this question poses some challenges. For both the emergency relief and the early recovery phase, the size of the budget was a political decision. One could also have decided that less aid should be granted for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. After all, there is no provision in the Statute of the Kingdom concerning how much assistance must be provided. However, given the nature of the disaster and the suffering it caused, the political decision was made in an early phase to be generous.
72. If there was actually 20% less budget available for support in a similar subsequent disaster, fewer requests for assistance could be approved in the emergency response phase. Good prioritisation is necessary here. In the case of the early recovery phase in Sint Maarten, our findings show that several projects went over budget as a result of underestimations, or requested extensions to continue meetings a segment of the population's needs. Lower budgets would have resulted in shorter projects with less impact. As regards the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius, the

Ministry of BZK did have certain responsibilities. With a lower budget, fewer or lower quality repairs could have been carried out. This would certainly have impacted the islands' resilience for future hurricanes.

73. Had a 20% larger budget been made available, it is unlikely that the emergence assistance phase in Sint Maarten would have gone differently. Requests for assistance were met, and any issues with regards to speed or appropriateness of delivered goods or services that occurred over the course of the period are not generally attributable to a lack of funds. Likewise for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius, were the requested works and support were carried out, and additional funds would not likely have improved the impact of the support in a proportional manner to the increase in funds. While there is no doubt that additional funds could have been put to good use on the islands, the activities carried out during the reconstruction often already went beyond addressing hurricane-related damage, instead building back better and improving resilience. Additional budgets would likely have stretched to other types of maintenance beyond the impact of the 2017 hurricanes.
74. The exception is the early recovery phase in Sint Maarten. An 20% larger budget would have allowed activities within projects to continue. As costs are often made in the setting up of projects, additional budget would also have resulted in efficiency gains, destined to keeping activities going and making better value for money.

3.6 Conclusions on the design

***Conclusion 1** The government of the Netherlands was quick to recognise the scale of the havoc wreaked by Hurricane Irma (shortly followed by Hurricanes Maria and Jose) and the fact that it required immediate action. Therefore, the government in the Netherlands made financial resources available shortly after the disaster occurred. The amount set aside was generous, demonstrating concern for and engagement with the people of the islands.*

75. Hurricane Irma was an extremely powerful hurricane that caused widespread destruction, followed by Maria two weeks later. As a result of the massive damage (particularly on Sint Maarten but also to a lesser degree on Saba and Sint Eustatius) the government of the Netherlands quickly understood that sufficient financial resources would need to be made available to provide the initial emergency assistance – resulting in a total amount of €55 million being made available. This amount was later complemented by more resources destined for the subsequent phases of early recovery and reconstruction.

***Conclusion 2** All three islands had existing structures for disaster relief developed over decades of experience dealing with hurricanes. While these structures had been fit for purpose in years prior, the scale of Hurricane Irma (shortly followed by Hurricanes Jose and Maria) required an entirely different degree of preparation, responsiveness and cooperation. Because of the scale of the disaster per island, the existing structures were insufficiently equipped in advance to swiftly and jointly provide emergency assistance. Logically, improvisation was therefore necessary as full preparedness in the event of a disaster of this scale is almost impossible.*

76. At the time of Hurricane Irma, Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius had their own structures for disaster relief. Sint Maarten, as an autonomous country within the Kingdom, is responsible for its own control and assistance in a crisis scenario, but can rely on the assistance of other countries within the Kingdom, including the Netherlands, on the basis of the Charter.

77. Although the Netherlands had a national crisis structure, it was not specifically prepared to manage a crisis in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, or to organise emergency assistance for an autonomous country inside the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It was therefore initially unclear on the Dutch side as to which ministry was responsible.⁴² In the event of a disaster or crisis in the Netherlands, the Ministry of JenV usually takes responsibility. In the case of Irma, it seemed most obvious that the Ministry of BZK would take on the coordination of the relief effort. The evaluation by the Ministry of BZK of its own role shows that it was underprepared for this role and therefore had to improvise (out of necessity).⁴³
78. The “Crisis Management Handbook for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom” was drawn up in 2020 to provide more clarity about the division of tasks and responsibilities and applies if the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom are hit by a disaster or crisis and assistance is offered from the European Netherlands and addresses the types of agreements on cooperation and implementation that were not clear in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. The manual cannot be viewed in isolation from its practical application. The handbook does not discuss the preparation phase because this preparation is the responsibility of the individual countries within the Kingdom.
79. Although Sint Maarten, as an autonomous country within the Kingdom, is responsible for its own control and assistance in a crisis scenario, it turned out that the management of the EOC by the Prime Minister of Sint Maarten was weak. In addition, there were ambiguities regarding the division of tasks and responsibilities between the ESFs. As a result, the counterpart of BZK on the island was also lacking proper coordination. Consequently, the flow of information was inadequate and prioritisation was difficult on the Dutch side. Action was therefore carried out in the initial days after Irma based on an estimate (push) – not demand-driven from the islands (pull). Although the effects of the hurricanes were quickly combated, it was not due to the proper functioning of the system.⁴⁴ A supra-island coordination point or coordination team is not included in supra-island plans, national plans or arranged in another way.

⁴² Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid (2018), *Lessen uit crises en mini crises 2017*, Arnhem/ Zoetermeer.

⁴³ Ministerie van BZK (mei 2018), *Sint Maarten, Irma en BZK: evaluatie crisisbeheer ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken*

⁴⁴ Ministerie van JenV (mei 2018), *Onderzoek naar het system van de rampenbestrijding op de BES-eilanden*.

4 Emergency response

4.1 Introduction

80. This section discusses the emergency response phase in more detail. This phase commenced shortly before Hurricane Irma hit the islands on 6 September and formally ended on 1 December, 2017. The emergency response was an immediate humanitarian emergency response for the three islands in the period after the disaster – consisting of the provision of security, health care, drinking water, etc. based on requests for assistance. The goal of this first phase was to meet the first needs of the islands' population.
81. Section 4.2 initially discusses the way in which the emergency response phase was implemented in practice, to provide context. Subsequently, sections 4.3 and 4.4 take a closer look at the requests for assistance and the emergency assistance provided, as well as the activities undertaken. Effectiveness and efficiency are discussed in sections 4.5 and 4.6, respectively. The chapter ends with a section on conclusions.

4.2 Damage assessment

Initial damage assessments

82. In the days after Hurricane Irma hit, several damage assessments were carried out by, among others, Defence, the media, NGOs and local people. All these damage assessments together formed a picture of the situation on the islands. In a Letter to the Parliament dated 8 September 2017 (kst-34773-1, ISSN 0921 - 7371, 's-Gravenhage 2017), the extent of the damage caused by Irma was described to the parliament:

83. **Sint Maarten**

“Sint Maarten has seen widespread destruction of infrastructure, houses and businesses. Many residents have become homeless. The provision of emergency aid has encountered challenges, mainly due to the island's limited connectivity. This also makes it difficult to support the local government. Basic supplies are limited. There is no electricity, no petrol, no running water and communication is difficult. There is also talk of looting and other public order disturbances.

The current priorities lie in providing water and food and public order assistance, and in restoring the infrastructure needed to deliver relief supplies. Utmost efforts are being carried out to urgently pick up patients in Sint Maarten who are in critical condition. Defence aircraft and ambulance helicopters have been deployed from Sint Eustatius for this purpose.”

84. **Saba en Sint Eustatius**

“There have been no fatalities or serious injuries on Saba. The Island Governor of Saba, Mr. Johnson, has indicated that the infrastructure (i.e. roads, airport and seaport) appears to be intact, but that there has been material damage to the houses. The soldiers present on the island are currently aiding the people of Saba's first recovery efforts. Information supplied by the acting Island Governor of Sint Eustatius, Mr. Woodley, confirms that there have been no fatalities or serious injuries on Sint Eustatius either. There has however been significant damage to houses and the natural environment. The electricity supply lines that have been affected are currently being rebuilt. The seaport and airport are operational but not operating at full capacity.

For both Saba and Sint Eustatius, the need for emergency aid in the coming period will mainly consist of repair work and replenishment of the water and food supply, for which these two islands typically depend on Sint Maarten. For healthcare, options are being explored to allow for the medical care that normally takes place on Sint Maarten to take place elsewhere.”

85. Based on this damage assessment, the primary needs of the people on Sint Maarten were:
- Provision of food and water;
 - Assistance in maintaining law and order;
 - Restoration of infrastructure required for the delivery of relief supplies;
 - Help to patients in critical condition;
 - Repairs of houses, schools and businesses (although not mentioned as a primary need, this could be inferred from the letter);

In order to prevent different assessments from emerging in the aftermath of a disaster, the Handbook on crisis management for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom also stipulates that joint assessments need to be drawn up in the event of a disaster that affects multiple islands, so that there is more clarity and coordination and importantly, so that assistance requests can be streamlined and similarly interpreted.

86. For Saba and Sint Eustatius, the primary needs were mainly the replenishment of food and water supplies. There was also an urgent need for health care options other than Sint Maarten’s hospital. The first global damage assessments were then refined in the following weeks and used to further elaborate and substantiate the requests for assistance.

4.3 Requests for assistance

87. The island governments on Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius submitted requests for assistance to the national government in the Netherlands. The following tables contain detailed overviews of the requests for assistance submitted from Sint Maarten (table 4.1), Saba (table 4.2) and Sint Eustatius (table 4.3). Some of these requests for assistance from the islands were formulated in very general terms and the crisis organisation in the Netherlands had to make efforts to interpret the expressed needs and identify the best solution – despite sometimes lacking the technical know-how or familiarity with the topics to do so. As a result, there were instances of mismatches, with some of the provided supplies not having the right characteristics or not fitting to the context of the islands. In other requests for assistance, however, the requested goods were described very precisely, such as the request of 21 September, for assistance for extra help in the form of ambulance care.

Saba and Sint Eustatius

88. On Saba and Sint Eustatius, official requests for assistance were submitted some days before Irma hit the islands. These requests for assistance initially related to military assistance. After Irma reached the islands, the focus initially shifted to requests for acute emergency assistance (including requests for food and water and the evacuation of patients). From late September to early October, the focus shifted more towards requests for assistance to clean up and repair the worst damage on both islands. Compared to Sint Eustatius, the number of requests for assistance on Saba was higher and more specific. The official process for submitting requests for assistance for the three islands goes through the Kingdom Representative for the Caribbean Netherlands. However, Saba also submitted direct requests for assistance to the national government in the Netherlands (however with a copy to the Kingdom Representative), which was not according to the usual way of rules, and sometimes led to confusion.

89. On both islands, the majority of requests for assistance were honoured. The rejected requests for assistance were mostly rejected on the basis of their nature falling outside the stated definition of emergency response, being more related to reconstruction. At a later stage, these requests of assistance were honoured as part of the reconstruction phase.

Sint Maarten

90. The Governor of Sint Maarten addressed a formal request for assistance to the Netherlands Ministry of Defence on 4 September 2017, when it became clear that the island would be impacted by Hurricane Irma. The Ministry of Defence was best prepared to offer immediate emergency support and also had the advantage of being present in the region. Initial assistance was to comprise setting up shelters, damage assessments and maintaining public law and order. Military staff and equipment were expedited from Curaçao on 3 September and arrived in Sint Maarten on 5 September 2017. The initial mandate was to expire on 10 September, but it was extended until further order by another request emanating from the Governor on 8 September 2017⁴⁵. Because timely assessments of needs from Sint Maarten were not initially forthcoming, the request for needs on 12 Sept were decided on the basis of mutual consultation and logical reasoning. The so-called "Navy Ship List of needs Government Sint Maarten" played an important role in the response. This list contained an inventory that was drawn up in response to statements by the various departments on Sint Maarten. Because the departments on Sint Maarten could not agree on a definitive list, the Netherlands made its own choices on emergency relief supplies based on a judgement of urgency. These choices were necessary because of the limited available cargo space on the Karel Doorman, the ship that departed from the Netherlands with relief supplies and because the two-week sailing time from the Netherlands to Sint Maarten meant the goods had to be shipped out as soon as possible. Cargo space on the Karel Doorman was also reserved for UK emergency relief supplies destined to Dominica.

Table 4.1 Overview requests for assistance Sint Maarten

Date	Sint Maarten request	Details	Department	Response
4 Sept	The Governor of Sint Maarten addressed a formal request for assistance to the Netherlands Ministry of Defence	Initial assistance was to comprise setting up shelters, damage assessments and maintaining public law and order.	Defence	Yes
12 Sept.	Technical assistance for the reception and transit of evacuees to their home country. -Prioritization for the evaluation of people in Sint Maarten (not being permanent residents). -Financial resources needed for the reception and transit of these people.	Evacuation according to the following order of priorities: 1. Due to medical necessity (applying to all nationalities); 2. Families of military personnel, aid workers and other personnel involved in providing emergency aid; 3. Tourists (applies to all nationalities); and 4. Temporary residents (such as interns, consultants, etc. of all nationalities).	MP CUR	Via Curacao.
16 Sept	Navy Ship List of Needs of the Government of Sint Maarten, later also referred to as the "Wishlist".	TEATT-MET/Civil aviation office, JUS, VSA, VROMI, TelEm en OCJS	BZK/ I&M	Requested goods partly delivered.
21 Sept.	Extra support for ambulance services.	Ambulance service: 5 drivers, 5 nurses and 5 dispatchers.	VWS	3 teams supported during 3 weeks.
21 Sept.	Material and support to set up a "waste train".	The "waste train" required: • 3 Bob Cats for picking up the waste; • 1 garbage truck for processing and covering the waste; • 1 "suction spray lance car"; • Sufficient overalls, gloves, shovels and brooms; • Sufficient chloride and quicklime. The request also asked for an advisor to guide the process and train the staff to run the train.	BZK	No information.
25 Sept.	Temporary transfer of detainees from Sint Maarten to the Netherlands.	Transfer of 9 detainees.	V&J	Yes
1 Oct.	Police assistance.	Caribbean police assistance to KPSM (from 1-10 to 1-11 /30 fte) (1-11 to 5-1 /10 fte) +59 fte from NL (concerning extension)	BZK/ V&J	Yes

⁴⁵ The respective correspondence was made available to the evaluators by the Ministry of Defence.

Date	Sint Maarten request	Details	Department	Response
5 Oct.	Temporary transfer of detainees from Sint Maarten.	Transfer 23 detainees to the Netherlands and 30 detainees to Curacao. Total costs for this estimated at €665,000.	V&J	Yes
11 Oct.	Embossed Stamp	Stamp (a tool used to create colourless raised impressions for official documents)	BZK/ VNW	Yes
12 Oct.	Teacher assistance	Assistance for 6-10 teachers to return from the Netherlands and immediate assistance for a minimum of 10-20 interim teachers in both primary and secondary education.	BZK/ OCW	No information found.
13 Oct.	Prison support.	Expert from the Judicial Institutions Service (DJI) to support the prison system in the field of prisoner registration. A construction engineer from the Government Real Estate Department of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to draw up a report on the structural condition of the prison.	BZK/ V&J	No information found.
17 Oct.	Extension of help and assistance provided by the National Police of the Netherlands.	Extension of the aid and assistance provided by the National Police of the Netherlands to the Sint Maarten Police Force (KPSM), under the same conditions as is currently the case until at least the end of January 2018.	V&J	No information found.

Table 4.2 Overview of requests for assistance/assistance requests Saba

Date	Saba request	Details	Department	Response
3 Sept.	Military support.	In accordance with article 7 paragraph 1 BES Security Act assistance by the armed forces (6 military personnel and 1 liaison of Defence).	Defence	Yes
7 Sept.	Logistical supply of drinking water and food.	Water and food for about 2100 people.	BZK	Yes
		Support new supply routes through contacts on other islands so that local companies can design and implement new supply routes.	BZK	Yes
	Medicines	List of requested medicines supplied.	BZK	Yes
7 Sept.	Extension military support.	Extension order of the current military support already on Saba.	Defence	Yes
7 Sept.	Support to medical evacuations.	Scope of the request: a) Organise a new medical evacuation facility for Saba; b) Indicate the procedure that Saba must follow if a medical evacuation is requested; c) Indicate which telecommunications lines can be used based on the limited means available.	BZK	No information found.
10 Sept.	Point Of Contact for Defence.	A point of contact of Defence to facilitate communication with Defence and to advise on the possibilities of Defence within the Caribbean to support the response operation on Saba.	BZK	Yes
10 Sept.	Restarting the economy and new, temporary sources of income.	Setting up new temporary sources of income for residents, for example through cash for work programs.	BZK	No, not considered emergency assistance.
	New supply routes for money transport.	New supply routes for money transport.	BZK	Yes
	Temporary increase in social assistance.	Temporary increase in social assistance to meet the expected price increases of primary necessities.	BZK	No, not considered emergency assistance.
	Temporarily lifting ABB (General Expenditure Tax) and other import duties.	Temporarily lifting ABB (General Expenditure Tax) and other import duties	BZK	No, not considered emergency assistance.
10 Sept.	Repayment for the Public Works Department.	Repayment for the public works service with the qualifications -Experience in the tasks of public works; -Experience in managing employees; -Experience with post-hurricane reconstruction.	BZK	No
	Relief/support for garbage dump employees.	Relief and support for the employees of the garbage dump.	BZK	No
	Relief and support for people in need of assistance with the restoration of public and private buildings.	Support for the employees involved in supporting the needy with repairs to public and private buildings.	BZK	Nee
	Extra relief for operational police and fire services.	Extra relief for the operational services, namely the basic care police team via KPCN and the fire service team via BKN.	BZK	Yes
	Relief and support to the crisis management advisor	Relief and support of the crisis management consultant/information manager with a number of specific qualifications.	BZK	Yes
10 Sept.	Extension defence support.	Extension of the military assistance already provided in the form of the Defence liaison	Defence	No
13 Sept.	Border control.		Defence/ Kmar	Yes
17 Sept.	Military support.	It was agreed on September 12 (until further notice) to deploy units from CZMCARIB during and after the passage of hurricanes Irma and Jose. It is requested that this support also be used for Maria.	Defence	Yes

Date	Saba request	Details	Department	Response
19 Sept.	Support UNICEF though psychosocial support in schools.	Request to UNICEF on support staff to: 1. Support schools, out-of-school care and childcare. Pedagogically trained with knowledge of the region. 2. Support social work. 3. Support activities for the youth on Saba.	BZK	Yes
21 Sept.	Logistical supply of drinking water and food.	Water and food for approximately 2200 people.	BZK	Yes
	New supply routes/contacts islands.	New supply routes through contacts on other islands.	BZK	Yes
22 Sept.	Personnel support logistics	One medical logistics coordinator.	BZK	No information found.
27 Sept.	Supplement building materials.	Requests for: - 1000 pieces of 2" x 4" - 16' - 200 sheets of 3/4" plywood - 180 sheets of T1 - 11; Thickness of 5/8" - 256 pieces of 2" x 6" - 16' - 80 pieces of 3" x 6" - 16'	BZK	Yes
2 Oct.	Improving the accessibility of Saba, in particular the transport options for people and goods by air and/or by sea.	Increase the accessibility of Saba by air in addition to increasing the accessibility of Saba by sea.	BZK	Yes
		Set up temporary flight routes between the islands	I&M	Yes
13 Oct.	Additional machinery.	- Chainsaws; - Small car with elevator function (to repair street lights); - Extra truck with open body and tail lift; - A motor-driven concrete mixer with wheels; - A wood chipper (€ 77,000) for processing tree stumps.	BZK	Yes
17 Oct.	Contribution to disaster relief costs.	According to Saba, hurricanes Irma and Maria fall under the definition of a disaster according to the BES Safety Act. Request for all costs incurred through a contribution based on Article 70 of the BES Safety Act in conjunction with art. 4 to reimburse the costs of the BES Safety Act. Total costs incurred: \$894,768.92. In view of the limited financial resources of all organisations involved, request for a quick decision. The Executive Council is the recipient of the contribution;	BZK/ VenJ	Yes
19 Oct.	Funding for the Disaster Recovery of the Landfill and Recycling Plant	Damage to landfill and recycling factory. Financial assistance for the emergency repair of garbage disposal \$ 969,600 (Facade walls, roll up doors, ramps, inspection (replacement and repair of damaged equipment)).	BZK	No, not considered emergency aid.
26 Oct.	Financial coverage for emergency aid measures	Total amount \$1,285,863 - Excl. deployment of extra staff - Building material \$135,863 - Debris removal weighing \$190,000 - Road repairs \$70,000 - Temporary Housing \$180,000, Port Relief \$500,000, Water Plants \$200,000, Primary Necessities \$10,000	BZK	Yes.
6 Nov.	Financial resources labour costs	Financial assistance for labour costs amounting to \$2,500,000 for the repair of the buildings.	BZK	Yes, partly.

Table 4.3 Overview requests Sint Eustatius

Date	Saba request	Details	Department	Response
1 Sept.	Military support.	Assistance by the armed forces, including the LNO team, pursuant to Article 7, paragraph 1 of the BES Security Act. 8 soldiers for the duration of 14 days	Defence	Yes
10 Sept.	Extension liaison defence.		Defence	Yes
10 Sept.	Logistical supply of drinking water and food.	Full list attached to the request.	BZK	Yes
10 Sept.	Stabilisation cliff.	List of cliff reinforcement supplies.	BZK	Yes
14 Sept.	Support in the medium and long term in the reconstruction of Sint Eustatius.	Full list included with the request.	BZK	To be supplied from Curacao.
17 Sept.	Military assistance Sint Eustatius	On September 12 (reference: BS2017028076) the deployment of units of the CZMCARIB was approved (until further notice) during and after the passage of hurricanes Irma and Jose. It is requested that this support on Saba also be used for Maria. It is also requested to deploy comparable support on St. Eustatius until further notice.	Defence	Yes
18 Sept.	Crisis management / additional building material.	Full list in dossier folder.	BZK	Yes, purchasing through Curacao.
29 Sept.	Expert staff for cliff fencing.	Placing these fences requires specific expertise, which the island does not have. Costs amount to €112.500 excluding VAT.	BZK	Yes
17 Oct.	Shelter 12 families, with Station background from Sint Maarten	12 container homes, 1 mobile kitchen, 2 manual Jack Forklifts, 15 first aid tool kits	BZK	Yes

Date	Saba request	Details	Department	Response
10 Nov.	Replacement of an operational seaport boat.	Operational seaport boat from Rijkswaterstaat (RWS) that can serve as a replacement for the current boat, the Waterman. Replacement costs have yet to be requested. Cost of repair is estimated at \$83,500 (excluding ABB and transport costs) (€ 71,000). Request for a patrol/workboat from Rijkswaterstaat that can serve as a replacement for the Waterman. In the case of no available boat, funding was requested for the repair work for the Waterman.	BZK	Yes

4.4 Results achieved

91. This section examines which projects and activities were carried out to meet the primary needs of the people on Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius by the various ministries and other parties.

Ministry of Defence

92. During the emergency response phase, personnel from the navy, army, air force and military police (the Royal Marechaussee) were engaged in the provision of emergency assistance on the Windward Islands. Based on data from the Ministry of Defence, a total of approximately 1,000 military personnel were involved in the support from 5 September to 28 November 2017. At its peak, more than 600 military personnel were sent to the islands, with a further 400 military personnel supporting from ships.
93. Prior to Irma's arrival, 100 military personnel stationed in Aruba went to the Windward Islands to assist the population with the preparations against the incoming hurricane. Shortly after the hurricane hit, navy ships Zr. Ms Zeeland and Zr. Ms Pelican were sent from Curacao to Sint Maarten with extra soldiers, vehicles and relief supplies. The air force deployed cargo planes from the Netherlands to bring food and water to the affected areas. Patients and tourist were evacuated from Sint Maarten to Curacao through flights. In mid-September, the largest naval vessel (Zr. MS. Karel Doorman) left Den Helder with one million kilos of relief supplies for Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius. In the Caribbean, the Karel Doorman also functioned as a pumping station by supplying various naval ships with fuel.
94. Military personnel, already present on Sint Maarten, provided assistance from September until November 2017 by reopening the roads, enabling access to water and electricity supply, and repairing other damage.⁴⁶

The total costs for the emergency response charged by the Ministry of Defence amounted to approximately €16.8 million. A significant amount of this related to the deployment of the

95. aforementioned ships and the hiring of additional aircraft. Other relatively large items included the purchase of food, water and building materials for emergency repairs. The Ministry of Defence carried out the activities almost entirely with their own personnel, and the corresponding wage costs of these personnel were not invoiced to the Ministry of BZK.
96. It should be noted that in the initial phase of emergency response, transport costs of materials and resources were paid for by the Ministry of Defence. Since formal involvement of this ministry in

⁴⁶ Source <https://www.defensie.nl/onderwerpen/historische-missies/missie-overzicht/2017/orkaan-irma>

emergency assistance ended on 29 October,⁴⁷ the Ministry of BZK then took over this responsibility.

Table 4.4 Projects emergency response (Ministry of Defence)

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Hire air transport	3.834	More than 4,000 people were evacuated from Sint Maarten, of which 1,608 by the Dutch armed forces.	Help to inhabitants in critical condition.
Airline tickets	446		
Use of your own aircraft	3.639		
Deployment ships	3.405	Supply and deployment of ships Pelikaan and Zeeland from Curaçao. The Karel Doorman was primarily used for sea transport (from the Netherlands) of equipment and relief supplies.	Distribution of food, care products and other emergency supplies on the island
Communication and connections	815	Assistance with repair and clean-up work	Restored communication lines, clean-up activities and make infrastructure usable again
Hire vehicles	160		
Construction materials	457		
Food and water	1.119	Transport from Curaçao of food, water and medical material to Sint Maarten.	Provision of food and water and medical articles to inhabitants in critical condition
Medical articles	100		
Personnel care/aftercare	245	Dutch soldiers support the local authorities, for example in maintaining public order and safety, but also in the distribution of food and water. The soldiers were also deployed for recovery and clean-up work	Assistance in maintaining law and order
Ammunition	56		
Clothing and personal equipment	344		
Other	2.216		
Total	16.836		

Source: Submitted invoices (dd. 11 October, 24 November and 13 December of 2017) of the Ministry of Defence

a) The sum of the amounts on the 3 invoices does not match the total amount. Therefore, a residual item has been included in the table.

97. An evaluation⁴⁸ carried out on the military effort during Hurricane Irma concluded that the Ministry of Defence can provide added value in the field of emergency assistance and humanitarian aid. The

⁴⁷ Ministerie van Defensie (mei 2020), Evaluatie militaire inzet orkaan Irma 2017, Den Haag (p. 7).

⁴⁸ Ministerie van Defensie (mei 2020), Evaluatie militaire inzet orkaan Irma 2017, Den Haag (p. 30).

Ministry of Defence is able to provide a wide range of support and aid in a short period of time, although the capabilities of Defence can be used more effectively by tailoring the activities to local needs. The evaluation mentioned the following points of attention: addressing safety at an earlier stage; ensuring a faster and broader distribution of emergency goods; and improving the dissemination of information regarding emergency assistance and military presence. The evaluation indicates that the primary responsibility for this lies within the crisis response of Sint Maarten, but in this regard, the Ministry of Defence can offer support.

Contributions to (inter)national organisations

98. During the emergency response phase, the Ministry of BZK provided financial support to national and international organisations. The Netherlands Red Cross provided food and water on Sint Maarten following Hurricane Irma. The hurricane shelter on Sint Eustatius, which played a pivotal role in the Emergency Response operations, is operated by the Red Cross. This shelter was operational during the storms and was visited by some 25 persons.⁴⁹ Another organisation that made significant contributions during the emergency response was USAR, which in case of Irma were paid by BZK. A USAR team (40 members) departed from the Netherlands to Curacao on a civilian flight on 9 September. The team arrived on Sint Maarten on 13 September. These organisations, together with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team (UNDAC) and local aid workers, identified the initial priorities for emergency assistance. In total, these organisations received €1.7 million (almost €1 million for USAR) during the emergency response phase.

Table 4.5 Projects emergency response - Contributions to (inter)national organisations

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Contribution to (inter) national organisations for emergency response	1.716	Handing out food and water to the local population and delivery of other first aid.	Help to inhabitants in critical condition

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (IenW)

99. A significant amount (approximately €6.35 million) of the total costs for the emergency response (€40.4 million) were spent on the account of the Ministry of IenW. The role of this Ministry at the time was focused on the restoration of primary infrastructural facilities, i.e. seaport, airport, drinking water. These contributions were key in the swift and smooth running of the emergency response, and in laying the foundation for further recovery. The projects in table 4.3 were carried out in response to submitted requests for assistance. The costs for the execution of the work were charged by means of partial invoices, with less detail and information than what would be typically required. The invoices submitted are accompanied by an annex in which the expenses are further specified.

Table 4.6 Projects emergency response (Ministry of IenW)

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Transport relief supplies	130	Transport emergency and relief goods	
Drinking water supply and distribution	1.018	Restore production and supply of drinking water	

⁴⁹ Request for support, Sint. Eustatius.

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Waste Disposal	1.288	Waste disposal contribution	Restoration of critical infrastructure required for the delivery of relief supplies;
St Maarten Airport Access	1.900	Restore infrastructure and make islands accessible again	
Mateo package and personnel deployment	333		
Dredging and making harbour Saba breakbeat accessible	900		
St Eustatius repair seawall dams	700	Better coordination and consultation	
Communication tools	89		
Total	6.350		

Source: Inventarisatie kosten noodhulp Ministry of IenW (17 November 2017)

100. Commissioned by the Ministry of IenW, IFV (Institute for Physical Safety) carried out an evaluation of IenW's performance in 2018.⁵⁰ This evaluation showed that the Ministry of IenW was more focused on Saba and Sint Eustatius, as it was more familiar with working with overseas public entities. The Ministry of IenW had less of a track record working in and with Sint Maarten and had not previously considered that it may have to act in an autonomous country within the Kingdom in the case of a crisis. It therefore needed to improvise when it came to its procedures for taking action in Sint Maarten, and it took several days before they got a clear picture of the damage done through a proper damage assessment. Based on this, the Ministry of IenW then set to work and the airport, seaport and later, drinking water supply, were given priority.
101. In the execution, the distance and time difference between the Netherlands and the islands were challenging. The evaluation also points to problems with the delivery of the necessary miscellaneous goods and materials needed to carry out the emergency repairs. Finally, there was some ambiguity – and discussions took place between the party responsible for the submission of the request for assistance and the responsible department– about the definition of emergency assistance and reconstruction.

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS)

102. The evacuation of medical emergency patients from Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba was completed shortly after Hurricane Irma hit. This included patients who required kidney dialysis, and people who just had an operation. On 8 September 2017, 35 kidney dialysis patients were transported from Sint Maarten to Aruba and Bonaire. The remaining 28 kidney dialysis patients and wounded were evacuated to Curacao and Aruba on 9 September 2017.⁵¹ The total expenditure on emergency assistance for VWS amounted to €1.68 million. This amount is specified in the following table.

Table 4.7 Projects emergency response (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport)

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Transport patients	270		

⁵⁰ Institute for Physical Safety (April 2018), Hurricane Irma affects Sint Maarten and the Caribbean Netherlands: an evaluation of the Crisis Management provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Arnhem/ Zoetermeer.

⁵¹ COT: Instituut voor Veiligheids en Crisismanagement (juli 2018), Evaluatie Nationale Crisisorganisatie Orkaan Irma, Rotterdam (p. 24).

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Stay of patients	506	Transport, stay and care of 63 kidney dialysis and wounded patients	Successful evacuation of people with a medical emergency from Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba to Curacao, Aruba and Bonaire
Care patients	495		
Medicines and transport	411		
Total	1.682		

Although there was considerable material damage caused by Irma, the number of casualties was limited. An initial inventory of the Ministry of Defence (dated 7 September) shows that there was one death (natural death during the passage of the storm), one injured and four injured while in hospital. A few days later the number of fatalities on Sint Maarten was adjusted to four.⁵²

The evaluation⁵³ conducted by the COT states that additional concerns did exist as there were initially no agreements regarding the care of patients in the region. For example, there was no suitable transport available. There were also logistical problems, such as limited flying capacity. Ultimately, the Bonaire health insurance office played an important role in the coordination of the evacuation. Lessons learned include making better agreements in advance on medical evacuations in the event of a disaster. In this context, the evaluation⁵⁴ also emphasised the need to make an inventory of the options available for emergency patients in the vicinity of the islands.

Ministry of Justice and Security (JenV)

103. Hurricane Irma caused extensive damage to the Point Blanche prison on Sint Maarten, rendering parts of the complex unusable. The Ministry of JenV provided assistance by setting up a temporary detention facility and swiftly transferring detainees to prisons in the Netherlands and Curaçao.⁵⁵ In addition, a total of 34 detainees were transferred and resettled to the Netherlands and 30 detainees to Curacao. The Ministry of Justice and Security offered also assistance through the deployment of extra police and personnel for the fire brigades on each of the islands.

Table 4.8 Projects emergency response (Ministry of JenV)

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Cost of temporary detention facility	1.230	Transfer and resettlement of 34 detainees to the Netherlands and 30 detainees to Curacao.	Temporary resettlement of detainees in the Netherlands and Curacao
Temporary detention SXM detainees in the Netherlands and Curacao	665		
Temporary detention SXM detainees in the Netherlands and Curacao	54		

⁵² COT: Instituut voor Veiligheids en Crisismanagement (juli 2018), Evaluatie Nationale Crisisorganisatie Orkaan Irma, Rotterdam (p. 22 and p. 25).

⁵³ COT: Instituut voor Veiligheids en Crisismanagement (juli 2018), Evaluatie Nationale Crisisorganisatie Orkaan Irma, Rotterdam (p. 22 and p. 25).

⁵⁴ Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid/ Inspectie Justitie en Veiligheid (mei 2018), Onderzoek naar het Systeem van rampenbestrijding op de BES-eilanden. Incidentenonderzoek naar aanleiding van de passage van de orkanen Irma, Jose en Maria. Den Haag (p.8).

⁵⁵ <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/mensonterende-gevangenis-op-sint-maarten-wordt-geholpen-met-nederland-containercellen-b5c24823/>

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
<i>Kostenbesluit Veiligheidswet BES</i> (including extra staff and hiring private staff)	761	Deployment of extra staff	Assist emergency services on the islands
Police deployment	2.614		
Deployment of fire brigade	129		
Total	5.453		

The evaluation of the Ministry of BZK⁵⁶ states that the prison of Sint Maarten had been seriously damaged because of Irma. However, the evacuation of 64 prisoners did not take place until after the emergency response phase, when the request for assistance came through.

104. Commissioned by the Ministry of JenV, the Justice and Security Inspectorate evaluated whether the system of disaster management on the BES islands was adequate. However, the aforementioned evaluation does not explicitly address the specific activities from the table above, which were performed by the Ministry of JenV, in the context of emergency assistance. In a more general sense, the evaluation noted the vulnerability of the logistic system and the dependence on logistics facilities on Sint Maarten. This also made it difficult to organise the evacuation of prisoners.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW)

105. Hurricane Irma also damaged school buildings and the first request from Sint Maarten focused on receiving support to reopen the schools. Temporary buildings and facilities were needed. The Ministry of OCW immediately bought large pavilion tents with air-conditioning and sent them via the Karel Doorman. A total of 36 school classes fit in the three pavilion tents.⁵⁷ However, the two-week period of shipment meant that once the tents arrived and could get set up, needs on the island had shifted. The military police helped with setting up the tents. The first schools were already reopening on Monday 3 October⁵⁸ and the tents were in the end not used as school tents.

No evaluation was carried out specifically for OCW's response.

Table 4.9 Projects emergency response (Ministry of OCW)

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Purchase pavilion tents	642	3 Pavilion tents	Setting up of temporary airconditioned spaces and purchase of educational materials to restart education for students as soon as possible
Coordination installation tents	73	Installation tents	
Air-conditioning units	25	Aircon units for the 3 pavilion tents	
Educational materials	96	Supply of school materials (exercises, scissors, ballpoint pens, pencils, etc.), classroom furnishings (clocks, whiteboard erasers, brooms, etc.), other	

⁵⁶ Ministerie van BZK (mei 2018), Sint Maarten, Irma en BZK: Evaluatie crisisbeheer ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, Den Haag (p. 9).

⁵⁷ https://www.noordhollandsdagblad.nl/cnt/dmf20180921_56435137?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic

⁵⁸ <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/425366/scholen-op-sint-maarten-weer-open>

		necessities (backpacks, cups, stirrers, etc.)	
Total	836		

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BuZa⁵⁹)

106. The Ministry of BuZa, which has substantial experience in emergency assistance during and after crises and disasters, could only play a limited role as Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – where other departments hold the responsibility of handling emergency assistance. The Ministry of BuZa was mainly involved with the evacuations of stranded tourists and other visitors from the Netherlands and other countries on the islands. Formally, the Ministry of BuZa had no role here, as it this is not considered evacuation from abroad. We deduce, from e-mail exchanges, that the Ministry of BZK requested the Ministry of BuZa to support the evacuation process, since the Ministry of BZK does not have that knowledge and expertise. The transport for the evacuations was mainly provided by the Ministry of Defence. BuZa mostly arranged the administrative handling of the evacuations, but it did however, hire – on 16 September – a KLM Boeing 747 to evacuate a number of remaining people from Sint Maarten to Aruba. The aircraft offered seats for 268 passengers and made a stopover in Curaçao to bring personnel and relief supplies to Sint Maarten. The majority of the costs made by BuZa are related to the rental of the KLM Boeing 747.

Table 4.10 Projects emergency response (Ministry of BuZa)

Projects	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Results
Deployment of aircraft for evacuation visitors and foreigners + other costs for evacuation and support	318	Arranging transport and handling evacuations of visitors and other foreigners	Administrative handling of evacuations Evacuation of 268 visitors and other foreigners on Sint Maarten

Source: Ministry of BuZa invoice for emergency response, including Annex with overview (dated 8 December 2017)

Ministry of BZK

107. Various requests for assistance were issued from the islands to the Ministry of BZK to provide assistance and support during the emergency response phase. Many of the costs related to the rental of transport and provision of necessary resources. The following table provides an overview of the assignments issued.

108. Emails containing the invoices show that there was some confusion in the aftermath of the hurricanes regarding the coverage of costs. However, over time, the ministry of BZK paid almost all invoices, even when it was unclear if the ministry had formally ordered the service.

Table 4.11 Support emergency response

Project	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Activities
Fliteline Antonov – cargo aircraft	772	Curacao – Sint Maarten 16 trips, 25 days	Transport of people and light materials.
Emergency housing	32	52 Better Shelter houses	Housing for homeless families

⁵⁹ Formally shortened to BZ, but kept as BuZa to avoid confusion with BZK.

Project	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Activities
Rhenus air transport emergency supplies	180	Transport of 15 sea containers (40 ft) 3 containers for heavy material (20 ft) 1 container for office supplies (40 ft) From Rotterdam to Phillipsburg	Transport of heavy materials.
Heavy material KDM.	1.769	Heavy-duty rolling stock for rehabilitation of vital infrastructure (dump trucks, water tank trucks for water distribution, bulldozers and excavators to clean up debris).	Rehabilitation of vital infrastructure.
Transport costs ship November 20th	139	Cargo space ship RDAM > SXM.	Transport of heavy materials.
Ambulance costs RAV	71	Ambulance services: 5 amb. drivers, 5 amb. nurses, 5 amb. dispatchers	Support to ambulance services.
Deployment of VRU information managers	294	1.185 hour front office (BZK) 1.185 hour back office (veiligheidsinformatiecentrum VRU) Overhead (coordination, travel and parking costs)	Unknown.
Costs Saba	901	Repair work roads, harbour, buildings, water works	Repairs to public space
Costs Statia	443	Repair work	Unknown
Wood chipper Saba	77	Wood chipper for Saba, ordered in the USA.	Repairs to public space
Return of evacuees Sint Maarten.	100	Charter Insel Air (diabetes patients) 20k	Evacuees returned to safer places
Repair Cliff Statia	136	Fence to prevent further erosion of the cliff.	Fencing off of cliff
Labour costs Saba	235	Labour costs for house repairs (6 houses)	House repairs
Waterman Statia	84	Transport emergency supplies with the Waterman	
Children's rights UNICEF	33	Child Protection programme specialist, hotel costs, tickets and expenses expert	Identification of the needs of children
Customs service vehicles signalling	8	Three custom services vehicles signalling sets	Unknown
Costs OM PPG repair work	47	Repair work	Unknown
Transport office furniture OM	57	Surplus office furniture collected, transported within	Unknown

Project	Expenses (x € 1000)	Output	Activities
		the Netherlands and shipped to the Sint Maarten rehabilitation centre	
Cost RST	92	Port handling	Unknown
Outbreak prevention	50	Reduce insect nuisance on St Maarten by using pesticides and equipment and hiring an expert to make them work.	Preventing against disease outbreaks
Expansion community helpdesks	204	Information provision	Unknown
NIVRE	297	Measure uninsured damage to government property	Unknown
Costs 3W	300	Other	Unknown
Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid (use of USAR and goods from stock)	1.028	The reconnaissance team, together with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team (UNDAC) and the local government, establish the key priorities. Purchase of 350 field beds, 220 medical blankets and a jerry can.	Identification damage and first aid
Total	7.348		

4.5 Effectiveness

Basic needs had already been addressed on 13 September on Saba and Sint Eustatius

109. On 13 September, His Majesty the King visited Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius. The report on his visit⁶⁰ proves the effectiveness of the emergency assistance to Saba and Sint Eustatius.

“For Saba and Sint Eustatius, daily life has resumed after the rapid recovery of primary infrastructure such as roads, water distribution, electricity supply, airports and port.”

110. The above section is a first indication that the emergency response to Saba and Sint Eustatius was likely to be effective.

The emergency situation lasted longer on Sint Maarten

111. In the same report, on the visit of His Majesty the King on 18 September, the first steps in the emergency response for Sint Maarten were described:

“Over the past few days, the focus of emergency response for the three affected islands has been on the initial restoration of vital infrastructure, including air traffic, port accessibility, road rehabilitation and water distribution.”

⁶⁰ Kamerbrief van 18 september 2017. Verslag bezoek Zijne Majesteit de Koning aan Sint Maarten, Saba en Sint Eustatius en stand van zaken Nederlandse bijdrage aan noodhulp aan de Bovenwindse eilanden. 2017-0000455128.

112. This letter also outlined the next steps in the emergency response process:

“For the coming period, the priority for Sint Maarten will be the further restoration of the vital infrastructure (airport, seaport, prison), water pipes, houses, hospital, GP practices, pharmacies, schools and improving the functioning of the distribution points, so that the population is enabled to resume their daily life as soon as possible.”

113. The assessment of the Damage Assessment Team⁶¹, from 20 September 2017 (after Hurricane Maria), showed that the main roads, the airport and the harbour were partly functioning again, but still needed further repairs. The situation was the same regarding water supply, electricity supply, gas stations, public services (hospital, police station, fire station and ambulance station) and schools.

114. Most public services were operational approximately one month later, in the first week of October. The majority of aid workers had left the country. On 10 October 2017, Princess Juliana International Airport (SXM) reopened to commercial services. Prior to this, the airport had only been operating military and relief flights. Although the terminal hall was not operational, all airlines were set to resume operations.

115. The Netherlands provided emergency assistance for the period until 30 November 2017, after which it began contributing to the reconstruction of St Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius.

4.6 Efficiency

116. A key question in a policy review concerns the efficiency of the implemented policy. Policy efficiency is defined as the degree to which the optimal effect is achieved – at the least possible cost and with the least possible undesirable side effects. In contrast to many other policy fields, efficiency is not the main priority in case of emergency assistance and crisis situations; only timely action and the right support is essential.

In the case of Irma, this was done by assessing primary needs and by prioritising what needed to be done at an early stage. The roles of each respective ministry were then determined, and asked to make financial resources available. This approach meant that the financing of the emergency response was quickly arranged and secured.

117. In order to ensure that the funds were spent efficiently, it was agreed in the MCCB of Thursday, 7 September that the costs for the provision of emergency assistance to Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba would be financed centrally from the budget of the Ministry of BZK. The following definition was used for direct emergency assistance: "direct emergency assistance is aimed at keeping the stricken population safe, keeping dangerous situations directly related to the disaster under control and maintaining public order and safety". The activities consist of rescuing and temporarily sheltering victims, setting up and organising an adequately functioning vital infrastructure, organising food, setting up adequate facilities and countering looting.⁶²

118. In view of the need to act quickly, a modified waiver procedure was developed by the Ministry of BZK for emergency assistance requests. In this modified procedure, the usual procurement procedures are waived for emergency assistance, and only a record of the purchase order and

⁶¹ Koninklijke Luchtmacht, 20 september 2017. Schadebeeld Sint Maarten na orkanen IRMA en MARIA 2017.

⁶² See Ministerie van BZK (14 september 2017), Nota Waiver procedure- inzake noodhulp orkaan Irma Sint Maarten.

grounds for exception are required. In case of disagreement on topics between the Ministry of BZK and other departments, the decision will still be submitted to the Director of “Concnerondersteuning”.

119. Despite the commitment that the Ministry of BZK covered the emergency assistance costs incurred by other departments, it was determined in advance that the relevant departments themselves were responsible for the lawful application of the procurement law⁶³. After all, it was not the Ministry of BZK, but rather the departments themselves which were responsible for the purchases of goods and services used for emergency assistance.

Given the need to act quickly, however, it can be assumed that the lowest cost was not the most important selection criterion, but rather the timely availability of the necessary goods. During the interviews, examples of this were mentioned such as the purchase of bottled drinking water in the supermarkets on Curacao. This method, while not cheap, was the only (and therefore effective and efficient) option for quickly supplying necessary drinking water. Better water storage at local level could have saved significant costs. The lack of adequate air transport capacity should also be noted⁶⁴, which forced Defence (and later the Ministry of BZK) to hire additional capacity.

4.7 Improvements to the emergency response after Irma

120. Since 2018, the Government of the Netherlands has reviewed its role and capacity to respond to large scale crises in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom. Fundamental considerations have been the autonomous status of Curaçao, Aruba and Sint Maarten and the responsibilities for emergency preparedness and immediate disaster response accruing from this autonomous status. Furthermore, The Netherlands Ministry of Justice and Security is the National Coordinator of the Fight against Terrorism and of Security (NCTV) for crisis management both in the European Netherlands and in the Caribbean Netherlands. As was the case in 2017, the Ministry of BZK is likely to be called upon to assume a major role in disaster responses in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom. In 2019, it was concluded on the basis of lessons learned from post-Irma experiences that the Ministry of BZK needed to be strengthened to be better prepared for this role. A dedicated crisis team was created in the Ministry of BZK in 2019⁶⁵ comprising professional staff in the Netherlands and in the Caribbean. The structure is supposed to provide leadership and cooperate closely with all relevant partners in the Netherlands and in the Caribbean.
121. In June 2020, the Netherlands Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of BZK published a handbook⁶⁶ on crisis management for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom. The handbook draws lessons from the post-hurricane experiences in 2017 and seeks to clarify roles and procedures of different ministries in the Netherlands and other partners in case the European Netherlands is requested to intervene in disaster management in the Caribbean. The handbook does not discuss disaster preparedness and response on the islands, as this is considered part of local responsibilities in Sint Eustatius and Saba and a national responsibility in the case of Sint Maarten. It is understood that procedures defined in the handbook need to be tested and disseminated in practice. Since 2020, this has been done in joint disaster drills (Hurricane Experience, HUREX), during which different parties to be called upon can familiarize themselves with what is expected

⁶³ See Ministerie van BZK (14 september 2017), Nota Waiver procedure- inzake noodhulp orkaan Irma Sint Maarten.

⁶⁴ Ministerie van BZK, Vertegenwoordiging van Nederland Willemstad (Juli 2018), Verslag “Lessons learned” van het Crisis Ondersteuningsoverleg Curaçao (p. 11)

⁶⁵ See Ministry of Finance, Voorjaarsnota 2019

https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2019Z10306&did=2019D21200.

⁶⁶ Ministerie van Justitie & Veiligheid & Ministerie van BZK (juni 2020), Handboek Crisisbeheersing voor de Caribische delen van het Koninkrijk, Den Haag.

from them. In addition, various ministries in the Netherlands have further elaborated their roles and relevant procedures in concrete internal instructions and handbooks since 2018. Of particular interest have been arrangements under the Regional Platform for Crisis Cooperation.

4.8 Conclusions on emergency response

Conclusion 3 *In the initial phase, global assessments were carried out by various parties to determine the damage. For assistance, the “requests for assistance” are the most important instrument. Due to the coordination problems mentioned, the requests for assistance from Sint Maarten only got underway late (from 12 September 2017) and could have benefitted from a greater level of detail. The system worked better on Saba and Sint Eustatius, and requests for assistance were made to the Netherlands before Irma came ashore.*

122. When a disaster occurs, it is crucial – especially in the beginning – to identify both the extent of the damage, and what is most-needed at an early stage. In the days following Hurricane Irma, several such damage assessments were distributed; by Defence, the media, NGOs and local people, among others. The sum of these damage assessments together formed a picture of the situation on the islands. In a Letter to the Parliament, dated 8 September 2017 (kst-34773-1, ISSN 0921 - 7371, 's-Gravenhage 2017), the extent of damage caused by Irma was described. These assessments were intended to get an initial idea of the scale of the disaster and to determine the level of resources to be reserved.

Requests for assistance in the emergency assistance system are of great importance for the actual implementation of emergency assistance, and for the delivery of relief goods and services. Due to the coordination problems previously mentioned, the requests for further assistance for needs and relief supplies from Sint Maarten to the Netherlands only began late. Furthermore, as requests for assistance were in some cases not formulated in a detailed manner they left room for interpretation, at times leading to supplies being sent that were not best suited to meet the demands.

In addition, decisions were sometimes made because of time pressure. In the case of the Karel Doorman, for example, it was important to load the ship quickly, because the sailing time between the Netherlands and the Caribbean meant that the goods would only arrive 2 weeks after send-off. Because the departments on Sint Maarten could not agree on a definitive list, the Netherlands made its own choices on emergency relief supplies.

123. In the case of Saba and Sint Eustatius, requests for assistance were made to the Netherlands before Irma came ashore. Here the system worked faster and better, so that help could be provided in a much more targeted way, especially in the first period after Irma.

Conclusion 4 *The Ministry of Defence was well equipped to provide the initial emergency assistance shortly before, and in the first weeks after, Irma's passage. After that, the Ministry of BZK took over the coordinating role. According to the evaluations carried out, this transfer was not smooth.*

124. In the initial phase of emergency assistance, the Ministry of Defence was particularly active in providing relief. Saba and Sint Eustatius had also requested aid early, via an official request for help. The Ministry of Defence was well equipped in this regard, owing to its presence in the region with a base of operations in both Curacao and Aruba. On 18 September, the Ministry of Defence officially transferred the directing role to the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The Ministry of Defence evaluation shows that the transfer was difficult in the beginning. At the time of

Irma, the Ministry of the Interior was not well prepared or equipped for such tasks, and had no experience in them. These conclusions are confirmed in the evaluation carried out by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. After these start-up problems, coordination from the Ministry of the Interior gradually improved.

Conclusion 5 *In view of the need to act quickly, a modified waiver procedure was developed by the Ministry of BZK for emergency assistance requests. This worked well in practice and ensured an appropriately fast and flexible approach in the fact of urgency.*

125. The Government of the Netherlands undertook rapid action and made financial resources available for Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten very shortly after the hurricane(s) hit. To ensure adequate and efficient spending, it was agreed – in the Ministerial Committee and Crisis Management (MCCB) of 7 September 2017 – that the costs for the provision of emergency assistance to Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten would be financed centrally from the budget of the Ministry of BZK.
126. In view of the need to act quickly, a modified waiver procedure was developed by the Ministry of BZK for emergency assistance requests. In this modified procedure, the usual procurement procedures for emergency assistance were waived, and only a record of the purchase order and grounds for the exception were required. The modified waiver procedure made it possible for Ministries to identify needs and act quickly, without being hampered by lengthy procedures.

Conclusion 6 *The help and support provided during the emergency response phase was effective in the sense that almost all requests for assistance were met. However, the effectiveness of the provided support would have greatly benefited from a more streamlined process, linking clear damage assessments to requests for assistance and ensuring better communication between those witnessing the situation on the island and those doing the processing of requests for assistance.*

127. It can be deduced from the requests for assistance – those which were made available – that almost all requests for assistance could be met. Because the emergency assistance phase formally lasted until 1 December, some assistance requests that were less urgent were moved to the reconstruction phase. The evaluation team cautiously concludes that the emergency assistance provided was effective, as the requests for assistance from the Netherlands could be met. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the damage was mostly physical, there were no outbreaks of diseases despite the damage to crucial facilities, and food shortages and other calamities did not occur after the disaster. Moreover, shortly after the emergency assistance phase, preparation could begin for further repair and reconstruction work on all three islands.
128. There are however caveats to this conclusion. The emergency assistance provided through Art. 8 was 'bound' by requests for assistance, which creates some distance between those identifying needs, those describing them, those interpreting them, those procuring supplies and finally, those in charge of sending them back. The communication between these persons needs to be clear and timely, particularly when dealing with shipments requiring weeks to arrive, to ensure effectiveness. The assistance might have more effectively addressed the real needs if the requests for assistance had been timelier and more detailed, and if those matching requests to procurement had more technical expertise. Timelier requests for assistance would have allowed those processing the request to ask for clarifications or the specificities of the requests for assistance, or to reach out to the right type of expertise to do so.

Conclusion 7 *The extent to which the emergency goods were procured at the best possible price cannot be determined. This is an important caveat in assessing cost-effectiveness..*

129. The goods and services offered during the emergency assistance phase were diverse. Requests for assistance were often accompanied by an exhaustive, detailed list of requested articles. From the available documentation, a request for medicines included quantities, brands, etc. A request for building materials included the requested number of screws, nails, m2 of wood, etc. Due to this highly-detailed level, it cannot be verified whether the most efficient method of purchase or acquisition was chosen for the requested goods. Certainly in the initial phase, there was little or insufficient time for this, as speed of action was necessary. This does not alter the fact that, in a number of cases, (certainly for the larger expenditure items) quotations were requested from several parties during the emergency assistance phase. In the available documentation, there are emails in which an employee asks his superior for approval of a certain purchase. However, it is not clear from the available sources on which basis a choice was ultimately made for one of the providers.

Conclusion 8 *The coordinating role of the Ministry of BZK and the modified waver procedure for procurement gave ministries sufficient flexibility to act with the desired speed, but also resulted in highly fragmented documentation regarding the decision-making process and the choices made.*

130. The experience with Article 8 shows that activities funded under emergency response are poorly documented. Because various ministries and other parties were involved in the implementation, the available documentation is also difficult to access. Financial documentation of the Ministry of BZK is not always well-labelled, and adjustments due to exchange rate fluctuations are often not related to specific disbursements. Even more importantly, implementing partners report on activities in highly generic terms. For this policy review, an inordinate amount of time (more than nine months) was spent tracing documents in financial archives and in Digidoc. This is due to shortcomings in the institutional memory of the Ministry.

Conclusion 9 *On the basis of lessons learned during the post-Irma crisis, the Government of the Netherlands has reviewed its role and capacity to respond to large scale crises in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom and took a variety of measures. Fundamental considerations have been the autonomous status of Curaçao, Aruba and Sint Maarten and the responsibilities for emergency preparedness and immediate disaster response accruing from this autonomous status.*

131. As from 2018, the Government of the Netherlands took a variety of measures to improve on its disaster response capacity on the basis of lessons learned during the post-Irma crisis. In June 2020, the Netherlands Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of BZK published a handbook on crisis management for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom. The Handbook on crisis management for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom published in June 2020 draws lessons from the post-hurricane experiences in 2017 and seeks to clarify roles and procedures of different ministries in the Netherlands and other partners in case the European Netherlands is requested to intervene in disaster management in the Caribbean. The handbook does not discuss disaster preparedness and response on the islands, as this is considered part of local responsibilities in Sint Eustatius and Saba and a national responsibility in the case of Sint Maarten. It is understood that procedures defined in the handbook need to be tested and disseminated in practice. Since 2020, this has been done in joint disaster drills (HUREX), during which different parties to be called upon can familiarize themselves with what is expected from them.

5 Support for Early Recovery of Sint Maarten

5.1 Introduction

Bridging emergency response and reconstruction

132. As the emergency response phase came to an end in December 2017, the Ministry of BZK continued providing support to Sint Maarten. Three months into the aftermath of the Hurricane, the perception was that many immediate needs had been addressed to but that a large part of the population was still vulnerable. In this so-called 'early recovery' period, the Ministry of BZK therefore focused on funding projects meant to be implemented quickly and to have a cost-effective, direct impact on the situation of vulnerable people on the island, particularly the young and the elderly. These early recovery projects would furthermore act as a bridging phase between the initial emergency response described in the previous chapter and the longer-term reconstruction activities planned for the coming years.⁶⁷ With these longer-term activities requiring more time for their design and set-up, there was an acknowledgement that shorter-term, more practical projects needed to fill this gap and prepare the ground for reconstruction.

“Although the talks with the World Bank are at an advanced stage, I estimate that it will take a few weeks before the Trust Fund is operational because a number of steps still have to be completed. That is why I foresee a bridging phase, the so-called early recovery, in which visible and noticeable results are achieved to alleviate the most urgent needs of the population and to prevent a standstill and a deterioration of the starting position for reconstruction. A budget of €7 million will be made available for this from the resources for the reconstruction of Sint Maarten that are reserved at the Supplementary Post. With this I will finance projects that can start quickly and have a direct effect on the population. The basic principle is that the projects have a maximum duration of 6 months. In order to guarantee the lawful and efficient use of these funds, a contribution is made to renowned international and local non-governmental organizations (such as the UN, the Red Cross and the White Yellow Cross Care Foundation) and links are made to existing initiatives. In the expenditure of the €7 million, the focus is on meeting the basic needs of the inhabitants of Sint Maarten, with special attention being paid to the most vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

133. The early recovery projects were therefore meant to fulfil a dual purpose: address the most urgent needs of the population and achieve visible results, and prevent a standstill and/or a deterioration of the starting position for reconstruction activities.⁶⁸ In this case, deterioration was understood as a worsening of the post-hurricane situation with regards to income and employment, the economy, social well-being and public safety.⁶⁹ It is important to keep in mind that the early recovery phase was meant to be limited in size, scope and duration by design.⁷⁰ As described in the Letter to Parliament (see above), the starting points assumed a maximum duration of six months. The support for early recovery was intended to be a minor part of the overall reconstruction phase, with the bulk of the resources to be channelled through the World Bank Trust Fund.

Working with trusted parties

134. As a way of ensuring a responsible and efficient use of the funds destined for these projects, the Ministry of BZK chose to assign, as implementing parties, established international organisations

⁶⁷ Letter from the State Secretary for Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations to the President of the House of Representative of General States, The Hague, 21 December 2017.

⁶⁸ Briefing Wereldbank & Early Recovery, DGWBE, 6th of December of 2017.

⁶⁹ Spending plan “Bestedingsplan” for Early Recovery, 7th of December of 2017.

⁷⁰ Spending plan “Bestedingsplan” for Early Recovery, 7th of December of 2017.

and local NGOs. Preference was given to those already active on the ground and those with existing links to ongoing activities under the emergency response. These organisations were thought to be best suited to identify needs and develop project proposals to address these needs.

135. The rolled-out projects (see Section 5.2) can be grouped under the components of food provision (*school meals*), housing (*construction projects, voucher programme and rebuilding small community infrastructure*), psychosocial support (*psychosocial assistance*) and labour market (re)integration (*retraining courses, life skills education, waste to work, island clean up*), with organisations often tackling several of these issues under one programme.

Table 5.1 Budget of the early recovery projects on Article 8.1 (in € x 1.000)

	Total
White Yellow Cross Care Foundation	980
<i>Construction project</i>	851
<i>Retraining courses</i>	129
UNICEF Netherlands	453
<i>Psychosocial assistance</i>	102
<i>Life skills education</i>	259
<i>Project management and other costs</i>	92
Netherlands Red Cross	1.225
<i>Waste to work</i>	225
<i>School meals</i>	1.000
UNDP	2.242
<i>Voucher programme 500 houses</i>	1.645
<i>Rebuilding small community infrastructure</i>	-
<i>Island clean up</i>	597
Qredits	555
<i>Soft loans</i>	555
S MDF	1.280
<i>Elderly home repair project</i>	1.293
Total Early Recovery (in €)	6.735

Source: Financieel overzicht WBE SXM 15072021

5.2 Effectiveness and efficiency

136. The activities carried out under the early recovery phase are presented below, organised by implementing organisation. The activities have not undergone independent evaluations – implementing parties self-reported results and progress under the obligatory reporting procedure of the Ministry of BZK.

White Yellow Cross Care Foundation (WYCCF)

137. The White Yellow Cross Care Foundation is a local foundation that provides professional care services such as hospice, elderly care, nursing home care and general nursing care to the elderly in Sint Maarten. Their long history providing these services on the island⁷¹, and their work during the emergency response phase, made them a natural partner for activities under the early recovery

⁷¹ The White Yellow Cross Care Foundation having been founded in 1970 and the White Yellow Cross Care Foundation in 2003.

phase. The WYCCF is furthermore embedded into Sint Maarten's ESFs and is well-connected with the Government of Sint Maarten and other NGOs.⁷²

Table 5.2 White Yellow Cross Care Foundation projects in the early recovery phase

Projects and timeline	Expenses (US\$)	Target and results
Construction Project 'Beter Bouwen' January 2018 – August 2018	\$ 941,116	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 45 households. Output: 48 households received construction support. Outcome: 48 households repaired
Retraining Project Construction Assistant 'Nieuwe Kansen' January 2018 – June 2018	\$ 138,516	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 20 graduates. Output: 24 participants and 17 graduates. Outcome: 80% of graduates found a job within 3 months after graduation.
Retraining Project Care Assistant 'Zorgen voor Elkaar' January 2018 – June 2018	\$ 138,786	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 20 graduates. Output: 25 participants and 20 graduates. Outcome: 90% of graduates found a job within 3 months after graduation.

Note: Results taken from the WYCCF Final Report produced, three months after training graduation.

138. The WYCCF proposed two training projects and one home repair project, targeting those left unemployed or inadequately sheltered after the hurricane. The work skills training projects (*'Nieuwe kansen'* en *'Zorgen voor Elkaar'*) focused on equipping those previously employed in the tourism and hospitality sectors with the necessary skills to find employment in other sectors with higher demand in a post-hurricane context.⁷³ The construction project (*'Beter Bouwen'*) targeted the housing of existing clients of the WYCCF's community-care and day-care services, which includes persons that are chronically ill, elderly and physically or mentally handicapped.⁷⁴

Home repairs of the vulnerable clients of the WYCCF

139. The home repair project got off the ground quickly. District nurses at the WYCCF used a form to collect information on the type of help that was needed at different addresses in their registry. This form had already been developed by the WYCCF in the aftermath of the disaster to proactively begin collecting information. Interviewees at the foundation noted that being able to quickly identify needs was crucial — it allowed them to start construction activities before other organisations, which also meant that they had access to construction workers and materials before these became scarce on the island. The WYCCF carried out 200 social assessments in total, verifying whether the households met the social and financial criteria for support. The hired construction firm carried out 85 technical assessments to gauge the level of damage.
140. The home repair project surpassed its target of 45 homes, with construction and repair activities carried out in 48 homes. The foundation requested additional financial support which was approved by the Ministry of BZK. This was required to cover higher costs than those originally budgeted for and to restore the additional homes.⁷⁵ The average costs per house was US\$18,850.00, which is

⁷² As expressed by multiple interviewees during the field mission.

⁷³ https://www.soualiganewsday.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=18753:white-yellow-cross-on-track-with-clients%E2%80%99-home-repair&Itemid=450

⁷⁴ Early Recovery Projecten Wederopbouw Sint Maarten, January 25th 2018. Available [here](#).

⁷⁵ During the early phases the costs appeared to be lower than initially expected, so that the target was moved to 50 homes. Costs afterwards proved to be higher. The additional budget, provided by the Ministry of BZK on top of the original value

largely comparable to similar efforts. It is important to note that the scale of work varied significantly between houses, with some repairs costing less than US\$1,000 and the most expensive one being nearly US\$30,000. The WYCCF self-reported that they benefited from dealing with a regular clientele and the fact that, as a private foundation, they could appoint a contractor directly and thus were not dependent on public tenders.

Developing employable skills in the population

141. The care training projects rapidly received 115 registrations, primarily from women who worked in hospitality, most of whom were reached through social media channels. Men, who tend to be less active on these channels, proved to be harder to reach at the beginning, requiring the WYCCF to proactively search for candidates. Trainees received a stipend as well as theoretical and practical training. Trainees in the care programme participated in rotating 4-day internship programs within the WYCCF facilities, SMMC and external contractors.⁷⁶ A total of 37 trainees graduated and five got certificates for finished modules. The average expense per trainee was approximately US\$5,659. The programme had a low drop-out rate and a high workforce integration rate, with approximately 80% of construction graduates and 90% of healthcare trainees having found a job three months after graduation.⁷⁷
142. The three projects implemented by the WYCCF either met or came close to meeting their initial targets. The projects were implemented within the expected timeframe and largely within the expected budget. The designed interventions were highly relevant, as a result of the WYCCF's understanding of the context and existing relations on the ground. The project benefitted from the implementing party's knowledge of its clients — which allowed for a quick and accurate mapping of housing needs — and from the project's design — which allowed some of the trained personnel to take up jobs within the WYCCF shortly after graduation. The established relationship between the WYCCF and the main contracted construction company⁷⁸ also allowed for easy contracting and smooth collaboration.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF NL)

143. UNICEF is the United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children. UNICEF Netherlands is a National Committee with the primary task of fund raising for the UNICEF organisation, which does advocacy and humanitarian work in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. UNICEF NL had a small office staffed with volunteers in Sint Maarten before the hurricane. In the aftermath of the hurricane, UNICEF NL was formally invited by the Government of Sint Maarten to conduct a post-disaster needs assessments in the areas of child protection and education.⁷⁹ This assessment found that the hurricane had worsened existing vulnerabilities,⁸⁰ and informed UNICEF NL's proposal for two projects designed to provide life skills education for adolescents and psychosocial support to children.

Table 5.3 UNICEF NL projects in the early recovery phase

Project and timeline	Expenses	Target and results
Life skills education through sports for adolescents January 2018 – September 2018	€259,145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 25-30 trained local football coaches.

and by re-allocating some excess funds from the training projects, was of \$65,000. Source: White Yellow Cross Care Foundation, Final Report Reconstruction Projects, September 30th 2018.

⁷⁶ White Yellow Cross Care Foundation, 3rd Report, 5 June 2018.

⁷⁷ White Yellow Cross Care Foundation, 3rd Report, 5 June 2018

⁷⁸ Leeward Island Construction Company, LICCOM)

⁷⁹ UNICEF Nederland, Sint Maarten Post-Hurricane Irma Assessment, November 2017

⁸⁰ UNICEF Nederland, Early Recovery Final Report, 13 December 2018

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output: 17 coaches and 9 physical education teachers have completed the programme. • Output: 650 children participated in the activities organised by the World Coaches programme. • Output: 14 after-school sport and activities organisations supplied with materials
<p>Psychosocial assistance for children affected by Hurricane Irma</p> <p>January 2018 – June 2018, with extension up to 30 September 2018</p>	€101,995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial target: 120 professionals trained to implement the Return to Happiness (RTH) programme. • Output: 98 professionals trained and 55 received an abridged version of the training. • Output: 200 children participated in the Child Rights Film Festival (CRFF). • Output: 5 films prepared for the Children's Rights Film Festival.

Note: While the implementation period ran until the end of September, several activities concluded in October and November.

Note II: The Netherlands Red Cross provided funds obtained through a national fundraising activity in the Netherlands. These funds allowed UNICEF to request a no-cost extension⁸¹ and to use the funds to continue the work.

Note III: Expenses excluding project management and other costs

Improving the self-confidence and emotional wellbeing of youth

144. The goal of the Life Skills Education project was to engage children and adolescents through sports and messages to improve their self-confidence and emotional wellbeing.⁸² UNICEF involved the World Coaches programme of the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB), several institutions of the Government of Sint Maarten⁸³, and the Sint Maarten Football Federation (SXMFF) as implementing partners. The project consisted of carrying out a gap analysis of the services available to adolescents, supplying recreational kits to schools and after-school programmes, organising football clinics and tournaments, and training football coaches and physical education teachers to integrate life skills into coaching.
145. The UNICEF Netherlands Community Mobiliser joined the team in April and completed a mapping exercise by compiling a list of existing after-school programmes and services for children – reviewing their needs after the hurricane. Recreation kits, initially planned to be distributed in a standardised manner, were distributed by demand. The timeline allowed for organisations to submit a list of needs, and for UNICEF to supply 104 recreation kits. In all, 26 people completed the programme and a total of 650 children participated in the World Coaches activities. The programme cost €63,293⁸⁴, resulting in roughly €2,434 per person trained.
146. The final report highlighted the efforts made to ensure the local ownership and sustainability of the initiatives by engaging local organisations, namely the SXMFF. In fact, the World Coaches programme continued beyond the early recovery funding, with a KNVB World Coach taking over the technical directorship of the SXMFF and another providing support to take the programme into

⁸¹ Granted until 31 March 2019.

⁸² Project Plan UNICEF Sint Maarten BZK

⁸³ Specifically, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport (MECYS), Department of Sport, the National Sport Institute (NSI).

⁸⁴ The KNVB World Coaches Programme includes the participation of children in the various tournaments. The €63,292 represents personnel costs for both the training, coaching and overall project management and does not include sports clothing and equipment for participating children nor travel costs for personnel.

the following year. The programme continued into 2019 with implementation by the SXMFF and regular funding from the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA).⁸⁵

Support training to address emotional stress after a disaster

147. The goal of the Psychosocial Assistance project was to reduce the incidence of children showing signs of emotional stress after the hurricane.⁸⁶ The project was planned around two components, namely, the provision of psychosocial support training and materials⁸⁷ and the organisation of a Children's Rights Film Festival (CRFF).⁸⁸ The support training was based on the existing UNICEF Return to Happiness (RtH) programme, designed for children who have experienced trauma, and adapted to the Caribbean context. The programme had a train-the-trainers approach, where individuals having completed the training were expected to be able to pass on the training to peers in the future. The programme therefore had two tranches, with initial training in April and a follow-up RtH peer-to-peer training in May.
148. The peer-to-peer component did not roll out as envisioned, as teachers were busy with other training and often struggled to find time away from the classroom. There was also a slight change in training focus. The RtH programme was intended to address the needs of children living in adverse circumstances after the hurricane. Due to delays in the implementation — attributed to the hectic calendars of the teachers — the training shifted to preparing those to implement the RtH programme after a (future) disaster, and not for dealing with the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Irma.⁸⁹
149. The film components involved the training of 18 teachers and youth leaders, and resulted in five films premiering at an event attended by close to 250 people. Six children who had participated in the projects travelled to Curacao to participate in the film festival. UNICEF had initially intended for the children to reflect on experiences related to the hurricane in their drawings and the resulting film scripts. However, this was not the case, with the children largely focusing their projects on other topics. The final report for the project attributes this to the teachers receiving insufficient training on the subject matter, and therefore, being more comfortable with other topics on children's rights (e.g. protection from drugs or the right to education).

The Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC)

150. The Red Cross was present in Sint Maarten prior to the hurricane, with a local chapter made up mostly of volunteers. This chapter came into action quickly and received €19 million through the fundraising campaign '*Nationale Actie Nederland Helpt Sint Maarten*' – immediately following the hurricane – in the Netherlands. These funds were used for food assistance and for roof and housing repairs, including technical assessments of physical damage provided on request.⁹⁰
151. The NLRC team on the island needed reinforcements to be able to disburse the amounts of funding coming in, so volunteers and personnel were brought in from the Netherlands. In the first months there was a high turnover of Heads of Mission, which affected the Red Cross' efforts internally and the potential collaboration with other groups active on the ground. This situation, however, was stabilised in 2018. The NLRC proposed two projects to the Ministry of BZK, to complement their ongoing activities.

Table 5.4 Netherlands Red Cross projects in the early recovery phase

⁸⁵ UNICEF Nederland, Early Recovery Final Report, 13 December 2018.

⁸⁶ UNICEF Nederland, Project Proposal, December 2017.

⁸⁷ The distribution of RtH materials was funded by the Red Cross.

⁸⁸ Based on the existing UNICEF Film Festival in the Netherlands and similar events organised by UNICEF worldwide, the Festival is employed as a tool to broaden knowledge about children's rights within society and to express the perspectives of children also after disaster.

⁸⁹ UNICEF Nederland, Early Recovery Final Report, 13 December 2018.

⁹⁰ Red Cross, Terugkoppeling 2017-2021 Nationale Actie 'Nederland Helpt Sint Maarten', September 2021

Project	Expenses	Target and results
School Meals Programme January 2018 — July 2018	€1,000,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output: 875,782 meals distributed among 18 elementary schools and 5 secondary schools. • Outcome: 3116 children were part of the project and received meals over the course of the entire programme. •
Waste to Work Initiative January 2018 – May 2018	€225,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output: Assessment carried out on waste-related opportunities. • Output: Makerspace identified and set up. • Outcome: Project network established and international entrepreneur portfolio set up. Website shows evidence of some longer-term projects and results.

Note: The School Meals Programme ran from October 2017 to July 2018. Contributions from the Ministry of BZK came in on January 2018. The School Meal Project's total expenditure between January and July was of €1,044,187, with the additional expenses funded by the NLRC's Irma fundraising campaign.

Providing meals to children in public schools

152. The School Meals Programme was set up to alleviate (financial) pressure on the parents, and to encourage children to go back to school by supplying breakfast and one hot meal per day.⁹¹ The programme set up a kitchen and prepared meals that were distributed through 18 elementary and five secondary schools, with 3116 children having been consistently part of the programme. The average cost per meal was approximately €1.19. A survey rolled out in March 2018, among the parents of the children, found that 62% did indeed experience “some financial relief”⁹² through the project and 94% wished for it to continue. The Red Cross did identify as one of the lessons learned that parents could have been better engaged through the project, provided with better information and given more ownership.

Turning debris and waste into innovative initiatives

153. Waste to Work was envisioned as a longer-term project to “create an ecosystem in which entrepreneurship and innovation thrive and stimulate the circular economy and employment on Sint Maarten”.⁹³ The project proposal put forward two outcomes, (i) an established physical location where entrepreneurs could collect waste material, create, collaborate with other entrepreneurs and receive training, and (ii) participation of Dutch start-ups in Sint Maarten in the field of waste.

154. Due to the longer nature of such an initiative, the plans were for the early recovery funds to allow the NLRC to set up the preconditions for this ecosystem. NLRC funds were then to be used to continue the initiative. The priority for the first months of the project was therefore setting up a ‘makerspace’, a (semi-)permanent location that offered space to entrepreneurs to develop their waste to work concept. The project's vision, on the other hand, was developed over the course of its implementation, with discussions on narrowing the project's vision still ongoing in May 2018.⁹⁴ The team succeeded in setting up a physical, community-operated workspace and creating links with Dutch start-ups.⁹⁵ The initiative continued its activities up to at least early 2021,⁹⁶ so that the

⁹¹ Red Cross, Final narrative Report NLRC School Meal Project.

⁹² Red Cross, 3rd Progress Report, June 2018.

⁹³ Red Cross, Waste to Work Project Proposal, 17 December 2017.

⁹⁴ As seen in email correspondence.

⁹⁵ Red Cross Project Site: From Waste to Work – Startup Solutions for Sint Maarten. Available at:

<https://www.rodekruis.nl/nieuwsbericht/jati/from-waste-to-work-startup-solutions-for-sint-maarten/>

⁹⁶ Based on last posts on Waste2WorkSXM website.

project can be said to have been effective in establishing the necessary pre-conditions required for this initiative.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

155. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a UN organisation tasked with eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities through the sustainable development of nations. At the time of the hurricane UNDP had a regional presence and a running programme with the Government of Sint Maarten. The organisation arrived in Sint Maarten shortly after the hurricane and was active during the emergency response period.⁹⁷
156. The UNDP proposed a comprehensive programme titled Recovering Back Better, consisting of three activities: the clearance of debris with a cash-for-work scheme, an emergency employment scheme for vulnerable local people, and the repairs of roofs belonging to disadvantaged homeowners or families otherwise in need of help.⁹⁸ The programme was phased to start with a stronger focus on the debris removal and the employment scheme, and to later have a stronger focus on the housing programme.

Table 5.5 UNDP projects in the early recovery phase

Project	Expenses	Target and results
Housing Voucher programme '500 Huizen' January 2018 – January 2019	\$2,604,976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 500 dwellings to be repaired. Adjusted target: 75 dwellings to be repaired. Output/outcome: 76 dwellings repaired.
Island Clean up	\$706,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 500 people benefit from an emergency employment scheme through clean-up activities. Adjusted target: 300 people. Output: 204 people participated. Outcome: 16 000m³ of hurricane debris removed and 87 backyards and public spaces cleaned up.
Rebuilding small community infrastructure n.a.	\$572,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 50 community infrastructures rehabilitated. Output/outcome: none.

Note: The total contribution of the Ministry of BZK was of €2,242,000. UNDP contributed €664,000 to the projects. The completion of the Housing Voucher project required a re-allocation of funds from the Small Community Infrastructure project.

Repairing 500 houses in Sint Maarten

157. The Housing programme aimed to support the reconstruction and repair of 500 houses (of the island's most vulnerable). As with most of the house repair projects after the hurricane, the focus was primarily on roof repair. The activities were to be implemented through the training and hiring of ten local teams, in line with the employment-intensive approach planned for the UNDP's intervention.

⁹⁷ In particular, the UNDP brought in an expert from the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) to provide coordination support. The coordination activities carried out were regarded favourably by other NGOs, as reported by stakeholders.

⁹⁸ UNDP, Sint Maarten Recovering Back Better Project Final Report, 2019.

158. The original (cost) plan was based on assumptions developed on the basis of the UNDP's experience in the region, assumptions which were later found not to always hold in the case of Sint Maarten.⁹⁹ The UNDP had assumed that there would be multiple houses with minimal damage, meaning that a small cash contribution could effectively support building back better.¹⁰⁰ It furthermore assumed that households and families would themselves be busy re-constructing houses, so that the UNDP's support could be a co-contribution to ongoing repair works. The original goal of using the unemployed and homeowners for the repairs was found to be unrealistic once the project started, with most lacking the required technical capacity. Finally, the organisation assumed that local authorities would have created a preliminary list of potential beneficiaries that organisations such as the UNDP could make use of.
159. The assumptions resulted in a serious underestimation of the costs, which became evident once the activities started, and which caused a delay in the activities. The UNDP requested a no-cost extension of the project from the Ministry of BZK, which was granted after a comprehensive internal project review was carried out by the UNDP.¹⁰¹ The target was readjusted from 500 to 75 houses, and a Project Revision Document was drafted between the UNDP and the Ministry of BZK. The UNDP furthermore made a direct contribution of over US\$600,000 to meet the new target.
160. The project encountered other challenges in implementation related to the way it was managed. Important controls and procedures were missing, including e.g. quality control of finalised works or procedures for feedback management. The Ministry of BZK lodged formal complaints with the UNDP and the government of Sint Maarten expressed its concerns as well.¹⁰² The project review therefore also focused on improving procedures and correcting the management of the project.
161. The final average cost of roof repairs was US\$24,767 per roof, tenfold the initial estimate of US\$1,800 to US\$2,100 per house. It must be noted that an Ombudsman report, investigating construction activities carried out after Hurricane Irma, reported multiple complaints about the quality of the roof repairs carried out under this project.¹⁰³

Compensating people to remove debris across the island

162. The Island Clean Up project was meant to simultaneously clear hurricane debris and provide 300 people with a source of income, through a cash-for-work scheme. UNDP rolled out a process to identify, select and recruit vulnerable people. The cleaning activities focused on backyards and public spaces and were carried out over 20 clean-up days, for which 204 participants received a daily remuneration. One achievement worth highlighting was the inclusion of women in these activities. While the work of removing debris is usually heavily male-dominated, 40% of the cash-for-work scheme beneficiaries were women.¹⁰⁴

Rehabilitating community infrastructure

The project made initial progress in identifying potential sites for rehabilitation activities, but ran into difficulties at the tendering stage. The UNDP divided expected activities into lots, according to the type of infrastructure being targeting. Two lots did not receive bids, and the sole bids in the other three lots were three to four times more than the initial costs.¹⁰⁵ Additional resources from the failed community structure component were allocated towards housing.

⁹⁹ Idem.

¹⁰⁰ Idem.

¹⁰¹ Idem.

¹⁰² Idem.

¹⁰³ Ombudsman Sint Maarten, Home Repair: A Revelation of a Social Crisis, 2019.

¹⁰⁴ Idem.

¹⁰⁵ UNDP, Sint Maarten Recovering and Building Back Better 3rd Progress Report, June 2018.

163. Target indicators were significantly re-adjusted during the timeline, as was the approach to meeting them. The UNDP-implemented projects can therefore not be considered to have been implemented effectively or efficiently. While the roof repair project surpassed the adjusted target (76 out of 75), the employment scheme project did not (204 out of 300) and the community infrastructure project was not implemented. Costs significantly increased and required a contribution from the UNDP for project continuation.

Qredits

164. Qredits is a Dutch, non-profit microfinance institution¹⁰⁶ that assists entrepreneurs with loans and mentoring, particularly those that are typically excluded from accessing credit through regular channels. Qredits was already active in the region prior to the hurricane and had recently set up an office in Sint Maarten.¹⁰⁷

Table 5.6 Qredits projects in the early recovery phase

Project and timeline	Expenses	Target and results
90 Soft loans 1 December 2017 to 30 June 2018	€555,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 90 loans granted under soft loan conditions. Output: 90 loans granted.

Note: A total of 96 loans were granted under soft loan conditions, of which 6 were financed by Qredits.

165. Qredits' proposal to the Ministry of BZK was to set up new microloans (of up to US\$25,000) at an interest rate of 2% – compared to their usual rate of 9% – and with a grace period of one year for 90 entrepreneurs. The project budget was used to offer credit access to Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and entrepreneurs against these new rates. The project proposal requested €550,000 to cover the difference between the usual rate of 9.75% and the proposed temporary 'Early Recovery' rate of 2%, as well as cover personnel costs and project costs associated with the expected increase of applications. The default risks of these loans were taken on by Qredits.¹⁰⁸

166. Qredits received 218 requests during the period of December 2017 to June 2018 and granted 96 loans for a total value of US\$2.3 million. The project was well received and found to support existing businesses in investing in the recovery (or expansion) of their business, as well as supporting entrepreneurs to set up new businesses. The high rate of applications — more than double the monthly applications received in, for example, Aruba¹⁰⁹ — showed that the loans were responding to a real need amongst the population in a post-hurricane setting. The selection process also proved successful, with only four fully defaulting on their loans, and ten falling behind on payment.

167. As of the end of the early recovery period, Qredits still had 64 open requests for loans to process. In May 2018, the organisation sent a formal request to the Ministry of BZK to fund a second tranche of 100 loans. This request was rejected, under the reasoning that the early recovery phase was coming to an end and that further financing should be funded by the Trust Fund.¹¹⁰ Qredits expressed its disappointment at the lack of continuation of a successful intervention in the Final Report.¹¹¹ The organisation continued offering its "standard" loan package after the early recovery

¹⁰⁶ Qredits is established as a non-profit with ANBI status (*Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling*) which translates to a Public Benefit Organisation

¹⁰⁷ The office was set up in August 2017 and also services Saba and Sint Eustatius. Source: Proposal 'Ondersteuning MKB op Bovenwindse Eilanden bij Wederopbouw', Qredits. December 20th 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Final Report "Eindverslag subsidiebeschikking onder nummer 2017-0000662632", Qredits, July 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Final Report "Eindverslag subsidiebeschikking onder nummer 2017-0000662632", Qredits, July 2021.

¹¹⁰ Final Report "Eindverslag subsidiebeschikking onder nummer 2017-0000662632", Qredits, July 2021.

¹¹¹ Final Report "Eindverslag subsidiebeschikking onder nummer 2017-0000662632", Qredits, July 2021.

phase. It also covered the six additional loans that had already been approved under soft loan conditions.¹¹²

Sint Maarten Development Fund (SMDF)

168. The Sint Maarten Development Fund Foundation was created in 2013 and acts as a development agency on the island to focus on the development and financing of programmes and projects geared towards poverty reduction and sustainable social development.¹¹³ It was set up by the government of Sint Maarten to fill the gap left in the financing of social development with the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles and the subsequent closing of AMFO.¹¹⁴

Table 5.7 SMDF projects in the early recovery phase

Project	Expenses and Timeline	Target and results
Elderly Home Repair Project	€1,280,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial target: 75 senior homes repaired. Output: 76 senior homes repaired and 16 homes made of concrete built.

169. The Elderly Home Repair project was an extension of a running project, financed with leftover AMFO funds. Prior to the hurricane, SMDF had already secured financing from the Ministry of BZK for the reparation of 75 senior citizen homes. Due to the extensive damage these homes experienced during the hurricane, SMDF requested and received additional funding to strengthen efforts on these same houses during the early recovery phase.¹¹⁵
170. The SMDF was able to build 16 concrete homes that had been entirely destroyed, and repair a total of 76 senior citizens' houses,¹¹⁶ surpassing the target of 75 houses. The estimated cost was €13,913 per home.¹¹⁷ The project was completed within budget and within the timeline, and surpassed its target indicators.

5.3 Conclusions on early recovery

Conclusion 10 *The Ministry of BZK opted for a project-based approach for the early recovery phase, granting established and experienced organisations the freedom to propose and design their own interventions. This project approach largely paid off, and allowed for the funds to be rapidly allocated and implemented. The most successful cases were those implemented by local organisations or as extensions of running programmes.*

171. The decision to maintain a flexible process for the selection of procedures resulted in a fast procedure, with organisations able to kick off activities within a month of the design of the early recovery phase. The choice by the Ministry of BZK to work with established, familiar organisations like (WYCCF, UNICEF, UNDP) yielded positive results. Thanks to their experience, organisations were able to put together — and adjust — proposals quickly, sometimes in the span of hours.

¹¹² More information available on the National Recovery Programme Bureau project website: <https://nrpbxsm.org/esp/>.

¹¹³ From SMDF website, available at: <https://smdf.sx/history/>.

¹¹⁴ AMFO, or the *Stichting Antillean Medefinancierings Organisatie*, used to serve a similar purpose throughout the former Netherlands Antilles.

¹¹⁵ Sint Maarten OM Special Report Outreach 2019 on Home Repair.

¹¹⁶ As reported in the Progress Report of February 2019.

¹¹⁷ Including the homes that were built.

Most of the projects met the goal of getting to a quick start and directly impacting affected populations, though effectiveness and efficiency varied across projects. Most projects did at some stage have to adjust their scope and/or targets, as a result of changing costs or initial costs having been based on assumptions that did not hold. Regardless, most projects can be judged to have been moderately to strongly effective and efficient, with the main exception being those under the UNDP programme, which were neither effective nor efficient.

Qredits' soft loans, and the SMDF's housing project, built on ongoing activities and allowed organisations to establish realistic goals and meet these within the time period. Similarly, the WYCCF embedded the training and construction activities into their structure, allowing them to make use of existing relations and networks. The UNDP, an organisation with less experience on the island, had to significantly adjust its project targets across the programme, after finding out that several of the assumptions made at proposal stage did not hold, as well as encountering tendering issues. The NLRC had a mixed experience. Their school meals programme can be deemed a success, but their roofing repair project (not funded by Article 8) encountered some challenges. Other projects (such as UNICEF's psychosocial assistance to children and the NLRC's Waste2Work initiative) required some adaptation during implementation to be able to meet their output targets.

Conclusion 11 *The overarching objective of the early recovery phase, to act as a bridging phase and to prevent a standstill of reconstruction efforts between the initial emergency response on Sint Maarten and the Trust Fund becoming operational, was not achieved. Several of the early recovery funded projects were well-suited to continue for longer periods of time, beyond the defined 6-month period. Additional budget would have allowed these projects to continue and to effectively contribute to filling the gap in reconstruction efforts that ensued.*

172. The Trust Fund, through which the larger part of reconstruction activities were channelled, became operational⁹¹ in March 2019,¹¹⁸ while most of the early recovery activities wrapped up in June 2018. The overall instrument of Direct Support¹¹⁹ funded reconstruction activities which were not considered appropriate for the Trust Fund and included direct support and liquidity support in addition to early recovery projects. However, the Direct Support rolled out in 2018 and 2019 mainly supported activities for border control, police and detention, which, while certainly important, did in no way build on or match the initiatives of the early recovery part of the instrument. Sint Maarten can therefore be said to have experienced a significant gap in Article 8-funded social activities over the course of 2019.
173. This 'standstill period' was mentioned by multiple interviewees on the ground, who furthermore explained that there was a loss of confidence in the Article 8-funded reconstruction efforts when activities ceased. Most of the progress – related to the planning and set-up of the Trust Fund – happened behind the scenes, giving the impression that activities had halted.¹²⁰ The activities meanwhile being funded under Direct Support were not targeting the population. Furthermore, the total budget for reconstruction (€550 million) had been largely publicised, and generated expectations in the population about the types of activities that would be rolled out in late 2018 or early 2019. Some stakeholders explained that locals began to feel sceptical about the Dutch-funded reconstruction activities when these expectations were not met.

¹¹⁸ The Emergency Recovery Project under the Trust Fund was approved in July 2018 and started disbursements on March 2019. See also the Report on Part II of the Policy Review of Article 8.

¹¹⁹ See Report on Part II of the Policy Review of Article 8.

¹²⁰ As expressed by interviewees.

174. Finally, there was no clear bridging between the phases from a reconstruction point of view.

Projects in the early recovery phase were completed and, in most cases, did not explicitly link to activities under the Trust Fund. Those that were able to continue activities under the Trust Fund (such as Qredits) filled the space between the two phases with their own activities and funding. In addition the Dutch Disaster Fund (Nationaal Rampenfonds) and the Samenwerkende Fondsen Cariben (SFC) have contributed in bridging this gap. It is difficult to say whether this was due to faulty design – overlooking the need for social activities during this period; or miscalculations – underestimating the time it would take for the Trust Fund to become operational.

6 Reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba

6.1 Introduction

175. On 14 September 2017 Sint Eustatius requested assistance for the reconstruction of the island.¹²¹ The damages extended to: private homes (over 100 homes damaged), small businesses and hotels, utility poles and powerlines, the vegetation (80% of the vegetation was damaged) and the agricultural sector, with entire farm lands flattened and fruit trees uprooted.
176. The crisis organisation on Saba scaled down on 13 September. An estimation for reconstruction work and supporting measures after hurricane Irma was sent to BZK on 17 September. In total, the estimated funds required were approximately US\$10.8 million and included works on the airport, roads, buildings and support for economic development. Hurricane Maria caused additional damage on Saba, adding to the destruction already caused by hurricane Irma. On 2 October an additional cost estimation with regard to the damage resulting from Maria was submitted. This estimation focused on the reconstruction and reparation costs of the harbour, waste management system, roads, economy and disaster management. In total, these estimated funds amounted to US\$16.3 million.
177. On 10 November the Council of Ministers agreed to provide financial support to the public entities of Sint Eustatius and Saba. The total available envelope for the reconstruction amounted to €67 million. For Sint Eustatius, roughly €43 million was made available; for Saba, about €23.8 million. These amounts covered nearly the entirety of the costs of estimated damages. The total amount was placed on the general budget line of the Ministry of Finance.
178. The islands proposed reconstruction projects in consultation with line ministries and under the coordination of the Ministry of BZK. BZK was therefore not financially accountable for projects managed by other departments and implemented their own set of projects, including house repairs and repairs in the public space (including the stabilisation of the cliff). The amount for these projects was transferred from the general post to Article 8 of the Ministry of BZK. Table 6.1 shows all reconstruction projects, including those of other ministries focused on e.g. the airport, roads, harbour and education.

Table 6.1 Financial budget of the reconstruction on Sint Eustatius and Saba after Irma (all ministries) (in EUR x 1.000)

Part	Sint Eustatius (EUR x 1 000)	Saba (EUR x 1 000)
Ministry of IenW	28.737	18.069
<i>Airport</i>	<i>4.825</i>	<i>675</i>
<i>Erosion Airport</i>	<i>10.000</i>	
<i>Harbour</i>	<i>12.000</i>	<i>15.000</i>
<i>Roads</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>300</i>
<i>Garbage</i>	<i>1.312</i>	<i>1.894</i>
<i>Water</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>200</i>
Ministry of OCW	273	170
<i>Education</i>	<i>273</i>	<i>170</i>

¹²¹ Letter to minister Plasterk with request for assistance for reconstruction.

Part	Sint Eustatius (EUR x 1 000)	Saba (EUR x 1 000)
Ministry of BZK	12.631	3.861
<i>Cliff (incl. exchange rate differences)</i>	9.279	
<i>Housing & public space</i>	2.552	3.661
<i>Nature and environment</i>	800	200
Ministry of EZK	955	1.659
<i>Touristic sector</i>	955	1.659
Total in EUR	42.596	23.759
Subsidy SSCS sea cable	1.538	
Total in EUR	67.893	

Source: Documentation received from BZK regarding all ministries and Article 8 overview.xls for BZK data

179. When the projects carried out on Saba and Sint Eustatius are compared to the damage assessments carried out after the hurricanes, it is clear that the objective of the projects went beyond damage repair. There was a distinct focus on building back better and making the islands more resilient for the future. The precarious situation of the cliff in Sint Eustatius had, for example, already been discussed with BZK in 2016, prior to the hurricane. The criteria for choosing the implemented projects is not clear, and no documentation was shared detailing the selection process.
180. The overarching coordinating role of the Ministry of BZK over the projects was not always clear. While BZK was understood to be in a coordinating position, what this meant in practice within a project structure caused some confusion. One example provided in the interviews, expressed that no one is responsible for the totality of the project and that while 6-monthly meetings are held, a representative from BZK joins occasionally, yet does not have a clear role.
181. This chapter covers the reconstruction projects on Sint Eustatius and Saba financed by the Ministry of BZK after Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Irma.

6.2 Effectiveness and efficiency of the reconstruction of Sint Eustatius

182. The reconstruction budget of BZK Article 8 in Sint Eustatius totalled €15.0 million, most of which was reserved for the restoration of the cliff (€11.6 million). Just over €2.5 million was reserved for house repairs and rehabilitation of the public space and €800.000 was reserved for projects in nature and environment.

Table 6.2 Financial contributions Article 8 for the reconstruction on Sint Eustatius after Irma (in € x 1.000)

Part	Amount (€)
Cliff (incl. exchange rate differences)	11.640
Housing & public space; of which:	2.552
- <i>House repairs</i>	430
- <i>Repair NH Church</i>	109
- <i>Repair of monuments</i>	26
- <i>Repair Ruin</i>	26
- <i>Unpaved roads</i>	1.118

Part	Amount (€)
- <i>Water storage</i>	129
- <i>Public graveyards</i>	405
- <i>Fence old administrative building</i>	23
Nature and environment; of which:	800
- <i>Repair agriculture and fishery</i>	118
- <i>Water catchment agricultural businesses</i>	129
- <i>Coral recovery</i>	91
- <i>Repair buoys and mooring system marine park</i>	37
- <i>Recovery botanical garden</i>	36
- <i>Reforest</i>	331
- <i>Recovery breeding of sea turtles</i>	26
- <i>Iguana population</i>	5
- <i>Conservation fence behind Stenapa</i>	26
Total in €	14.992

183. Communication between Sint Eustatius and the Ministry of BZK was clear during the reconstruction phase, which started immediately after the emergency assistance. Effective relations resulted in short lines and quick action. The budgets were allocated in a timely manner and the projects started rapidly thereafter. Some of the projects were delayed due to shortage of materials and labour, however, extensions were provided by the Ministry of BZK in order to overcome these issues.

Stabilisation of the cliff

184. The majority of the budget was spent on the stabilisation of the cliff. The project aimed to increase stability and stop the erosion of the cliff for the next five decades. The project addressed a combination of hurricane damage and deferred maintenance. The project had already been discussed with BZK in 2016, due to severe safety issues. The hurricane worsened the situation; however, the structure was already in a precarious state and required attention before the hurricane. The funds from the cliff, under the reconstruction, are part of the total reconstruction funds of the Ministry of BZK, but as a project it was independent and was not placed under the local reconstruction program.

185. The allocation of the budget was done in 5 tranches, and the project was tendered internationally. The project was too complex, too specialised and too large to tender locally. Only a few selected parties responded to the tender, and one was selected. A contract was signed in January between the public entity, Sint Eustatius, and contractor, Acrobat X Caraïbes St. Martin/Acrobat X France, concerning the re-stabilisation of the cliff surrounding Fort Oranje.¹²² The project was monitored by RoyalHaskoning, who advised the Ministry of BZK before the next tranche was allocated to the project.¹²³

186. In total, 2,800 anchors, 7,400 square metres of canvas and just under 16,000 m³ of mesh were placed¹²⁴ since 2019. The construction works ended in May 2020. However, some additional funds were required in order to complete the works. On 24 September 2021, a request was made by the Government Commissioner of Sint Eustatius for the expansion of the budget within the reconstruction funds for the stabilisation of the cliff. The additional works consisted of the building of

¹²² <https://www.thedailyherald.sx/islands/statia-cliff-protection-project-in-full-swing>

¹²³ Beschikking bijzondere uitkering eerste tranche wederopbouwmiddelen stabilisering klif Sint Eustatius. 11 december 2018. Kenmerk: 2018-0000948301.

¹²⁴ <https://www.statiagovernment.com/news-and-tenders/news/2020/05/06/cliff-stabilization-project-fort-oranje-nears-completion>

a fence to restrict public access to the cliff, and a cascade to channel drainage to the sea. The additional costs are estimated to have been up to US\$1.1 million.¹²⁵

187. RoyalHaskoning carried out an inspection of the cliff works one year after its completion.¹²⁶ The inspection found that the work done on the cliff met its purpose, but that in order to prevent it from deteriorating it needed to be quickly covered in vegetation. On a large part of the cliff, the vegetation had already taken root but had not yet grown as much as was needed to anchor the upper layer of the cliff. At that time, the expectation was that with the rainy season, the vegetation would increase in size and this would not be a problem.

House repairs and public space

188. A subsidy of just over €2.5 million was allocated to repair damaged buildings and public space. Directly after the hurricane, the Royal Netherlands Navy conducted an inventory of the house damage. A Dutch project manager was assigned by the Ministry of BZK to coordinate and execute those repairs. In 2017, the program was not supported by the island administrators of that time (council and deputies). The project manager, however, had access to a well-informed, equipped team in order to ensure timely implementation with the use of local constructors.¹²⁷ The provision of goods and building materials, including building materials for houses, businesses and public buildings, commenced two months after Hurricane Irma. The team ensured prioritisation, tendering, proper supervision and enforcement. Due to the damage throughout the whole region, prices for building materials increased, and the quality of the building materials decreased. The costs of construction work before the hurricanes were known to the reconstruction team; this knowledge was used to prevent the price development from rising exponentially, and to make mutual price agreements that would artificially inflate prices. The contractors agreed to certain price margins, because work was guaranteed for a longer period of time under uncompetitive conditions. However, due to the higher prices on materials, the project could not complete all activities within the available budget. For the last houses, the project team decided to provide the materials and forego the provision of labour to repair the houses. People were also asked to return any unused materials to a central location in order for them to be reused. Finally, all 137 houses in the project were repaired before the end of 2019.^{128, 129} This made Sint Eustatius the first island in the region to have the damaged houses repaired. The use of local constructors not only boosted the economy, but also ensured effective compliance with building procedures (BES Bouwbesluit¹³⁰).
189. The initial focus was on house repairs. The expansion of the focus to the public space occurred in phases after 7 February 2018¹³¹. The reason was that the Government of the Netherlands had an unfulfilled responsibility in this field after the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles (10-10-10). The repair in the public space included the repair of monuments, the NH Church, public graveyards, the fence of the old administration building, a ruin and unpaved roads. A number of monuments were already in poor condition before the hurricanes struck. The arrival of the hurricanes worsened the situation and caused even more safety issues. These projects were selected in order to ensure

¹²⁵ Brief van de staatssecretaris van binnenlandse zaken en koninkrijksrelaties. Herstel van de voorzieningen in het bestuur van het openbaar lichaam Sint Eustatius (Wet herstel voorzieningen Sint Eustatius). Den Haag 31 mei 2021.

¹²⁶ RoyalHaskoningDHV, 10 juni 2021. Afronding en overdracht Klif Stabilisatie Project. Sint Eustatius.

¹²⁷ Vierde Uitvoeringsrapport Sint Eustatius. Available at:
https://www.jhtm.nl/stationews/bibliotheek/begrotingsuitvoering_2019_nr4.pdf

¹²⁸ Brief aan de Tweede Kamer, Betreft Septemberbrief Sint Eustatius. Kenmerk: 2019-0000489161

¹²⁹ 3e uitvoeringsrapportage Statia.

¹³⁰ Building decree, available at: <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0036000/2017-07-01>. The Building Decree as well as the underlying BES code, were only available in the Dutch language. These have been translated into English, because the official language on St. Eustatius is English and the highly technically described regulations were therefore unclear to many in Dutch. In addition, the local contractors have adapted the BES code in specially set up working groups based on years of local expertise, which suggestions have been tested, praised and implemented by TU Delft.

¹³¹ Before 7 February 2018, the program fell under the responsibility of acting Lieutenant Governor Julian Woodley and after the Dutch political-administrative intervention under government commissioner Marcolino Franco.

safety and were almost all locally tendered. Due to the busy schedule of local contractors, these projects were pushed back slightly, as priority was given to repairing houses. At the time of writing, all projects have been completed.

Nature and environment

190. The environmental damage affected the flora and fauna on the island. Projects established to restore the natural environment included, amongst others, projects focused on agricultural recovery, agricultural water supply, coral restoration, recovery buoys and mooring system, restoration of the botanical garden, reforestation and recovery of breeding sea turtles. STENAPA (Sint Eustatius National Parks Foundation) was the implementing party for the majority of the nature and environment projects. STENAPA is dedicated to managing, conserving and restoring Sint Eustatius' natural resources and educating the community of its values.¹³² The projects aligned largely with their mission and vision. All projects met the expectations and have been finalised according to the progress reports, which state that the latest projects were expected to be finished at the end of 2021.

Concluding remarks on the reconstruction in Sint Eustatius

191. Reconstruction on Sint Eustatius was carried out effectively and efficiently and furthermore, made the island more resilient and future-proof. The largest project, the stabilisation of the cliff, was finalised in time and without any major issues. Upon the team's mission in 2021 the team was informed that it was still holding up and that the much needed vegetation had grown in well. The housing repairs carried out on the island were similarly effective and, despite some issues with rising costs of material, carried out efficiently. A highly dedicated team ensured all targeted houses got repaired, and that this was done according to the building decree.

6.3 Effectiveness and efficiency of the reconstruction of Saba

192. The budget from Article 8 for Saba totals €3.9 million, the majority of which was reserved for housing and public space (€3.7 million). €200.000 was reserved for projects in nature and environment. The Public Entity Saba received the reconstruction budget from the Ministry of BZK.

Table 6.3 Financial contributions of Article 8 of the reconstruction on Saba after Irma (in € x 1.000)

Part	Amount (€)
Housing & public space; of which:	3.661
- <i>Personnel and materials non-governmental buildings</i>	2.300
- <i>Furniture</i>	200
- <i>Governmental buildings</i>	800
- <i>Demolishing inhabitable buildings</i>	300
- <i>Playgrounds</i>	61
Nature and environment	200
Total in €	3.861

¹³² Website STENAPA: <https://www.statiapark.org/about-us/>

Housing and public space

193. The inhabitants of Saba started their preparations a week before hurricane Irma hit, based on previous experiences and following advice from the media. They cleaned up their gardens and surroundings and strengthened their homes.¹³³ It is important to note, however, that preparations could only achieve so much and could not prevent damage to the island's buildings. The island's capital, The Bottom, and nearby village St. Johns, suffered the most damaged homes.¹³⁴ The damage assessment report for over 100 houses, churches, governmental buildings and businesses was finished by the Planning Bureau on 4 October 2017. The total damage amounted to US\$1.9 million¹³⁵, although the exact extent of the damage can only be determined during the execution of the work. This estimation was based on the reconstruction of the houses 'as is' – without extra investments for building back better and keeping in mind the insurance settlements being paid out.
194. The Public Entity of Saba sent a request for assistance to BZK, to help with the reconstruction. Project plans were submitted, and the Public Entity Saba received the reconstruction budget from the Ministry of BZK. The Public Entity delegated the construction works for the houses and public space to the Planning Bureau, which is responsible for the implementation of civil works projects initiated by the government. The Planning Bureau planned the projects, tendered for proposals and evaluated the bids. They supervised the contractors to ensure that the projects were executed to the outlined specifications. The Planning Bureau is the competent authority on the island and, therefore, the designated party to conduct these works.
195. Homeowners who were (partly) covered by their insurance policies also got supplied materials by Public Entity of Saba.¹³⁶ However, few people were (and are) insured, due to high insurance costs.¹³⁷ In the reconstruction phase, extra attention was paid to reinforcements to better withstand future hurricanes. For example, roofs have since been reinforced with concrete, and safe spaces have been built in the houses. In order to reduce the costs, materials were bought in large numbers. However, given the damage on the other islands and in Florida, orders were unfortunately delayed.^{138, 139} Furthermore, given the island's small structure, the lack of availability of labour caused some delays in repairs.¹⁴⁰
196. All damaged buildings were repaired by local construction companies, and the works were monitored by the Planning Bureau.¹⁴¹ The process started with the search for a contractor, materials and labour. All of them were difficult to find due to the greatly increased demand throughout the entire Caribbean region, and owing to the limited capacity of local construction workers. The construction works lasted until June/July 2020 (the COVID-19 lockdown also slowed down the process). The focus was on the homes, with governmental buildings the last to be repaired.

Nature and environment

197. An amount of €200.000 was allocated to rectify the damage caused to nature and the surrounding environment. Most of it went to compensation for fishermen and farmers, and a very small portion to repairing equipment and signs on nature trails.

¹³³ Interviews on Saba.

¹³⁴ <https://caribbeannetwerk.ntr.nl/2017/12/27/local-contractors-start-with-renovation-of-homes-on-saba-after-irma/>

¹³⁵ Planning Bureau of the Public Entity Saba, 4 October 2017.

¹³⁶ <https://caribbeannetwerk.ntr.nl/2017/12/27/local-contractors-start-with-renovation-of-homes-on-saba-after-irma/>

¹³⁷ Interview on Saba.

¹³⁸ <https://antillaansdagblad.com/bonaire/18679-herstel-huizen-saba-bijna-klaar>

¹³⁹ <https://www.sxm-talks.com/the-daily-herald/damaged-roof-repairs-get-underway-in-saba/>

¹⁴⁰ Interview on Saba.

¹⁴¹ Interviews on Saba.

Concluding remarks on the reconstruction in Saba

198. The reconstruction activities in Saba were carried out effectively and efficiently as all projects were delivered, despite the challenges faced in findings supplies and labour on the island and across the region in the aftermath of the hurricane and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reconstruction of houses and public spaces was furthermore done according to good practices for more resilient buildings. The island also benefited from its population's discipline in cleaning up debris and storing away loose items in anticipation of the hurricane, which mitigated the damage caused by the hurricane(s).

6.4 Other activities

Repair of the SSCS sea cable

199. Around €1.5 million was allocated to a subsidy to repair the SSCS sea cable.

Table 6.4 Financial contributions Article 8 for the repair of the SSCS sea cable after Irma (in € x 1.000)

Part	Amount (€)
Subsidy SSCS sea cable	1.538

200. The islands of Saba and Sint Eustatius have been connected via a submarine network to the international sea cable network of St. Kitts, Sint Maarten and St. Bart's since 2013. However, the hurricanes damaged the cable protection and landing constructions. SSCS set up a tender procedure and commissioned Walhout Civil to design a new cable landing structure in Saba. Works were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions¹⁴² and were therefore only conducted later in 2020 and during 2021, but have now been finalised.^{143, 144} The system was constructed more robustly than prior to Hurricane Irma ('build back better').¹⁴⁵ EY Curacao was hired to conduct a final report on the works and to complete an audit at the end of the project.¹⁴⁶

Relation with other relevant policies

201. The goal of the reconstruction phase fits the ambition to change the socio-economic perspective to improve the Caribbean Netherlands – which has been the central focus point of the Government of the Netherlands' policy in recent years. The objective of the support from the government is to reduce poverty on the islands.¹⁴⁷ On Sint Eustatius, 'gross neglect of duty', by the island commissioners and the island council prior to 2018, had a harmful effect on the island's people and businesses.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the delays in projects to improve the island's roads, water supply, housing and waste processing had a direct impact on people's lives. The recovery budget was used to accelerate measures, which boosted the economy and raised the quality of life. For Saba, the Saba Package was signed in 2019. This administrative agreement is aimed at anchoring and further developing the positive cooperation between the Government of the Netherlands and the public entity Saba. The Saba Package provides a more focused approach to the challenges and opportunities that exist on Saba, and on which the Central Government and the Public Entity of Saba are working together.¹⁴⁹ Some of the projects that were started in the emergency phase and

¹⁴² Document: Overzicht bepsreken voortgang SSCS B.V. herstelreparatie orkaanschade. 27 augustus 2021.

¹⁴³ Brief betreffende vertraging resterende werkzaamheden zeekabel. D.d. 1 april 2021.

¹⁴⁴ Website Walhout Civil. Available at: <https://www.walhoutcivil.com/en/projects/design-cofferdam-and-breakwater-submarine-cable-landing-saba>

¹⁴⁵ Document: Toelichting herstelwerkzaamheden aan de SSCS zeekabel.

¹⁴⁶ SSCS B.V. Tussenrapportage subsidie reparatieve cable system. 14 januari 2020.

¹⁴⁷ Ministry of Interior. BZK introductiedossier 2021 deel I. 2021.

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-the-interior-and-kingdom-relations/documents/questions-and-answers/questions-and-answers-about-the-intervention-in-statia/index>

¹⁴⁹ Rijksdiensten. Saba Package regelt gerichte samenwerking tussen Rijk en Saba. 27 June 2019. Available at: <https://www.rijksdienstcn.com/actueel/nieuws/2019/juni/27/saba-package-regelt-gerichte-samenwerking-tussen-rijk-en-saba>

the reconstruction phase (e.g. the harbour and renovation of the airport), were included in the Saba Package.¹⁵⁰

6.5 Conclusions on the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius

Conclusion 12 *The projects for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius were implemented by several departments, depending on the responsibilities of the department. A very limited amount (24%) of the reconstruction budget fell under article 8 of the Ministry of BZK. The choice to place the responsibility of the reconstruction projects on different ministries is logical due to the administration relationships and governance of the islands. The disadvantage is that a total overview is missing and accountability afterwards is difficult.*

202. The Government of the Netherlands made €67 million available for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. The projects that fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of BZK under article 8 had to be implemented by the end of 2021. The Ministry of BZK covered €18 million of this from article 8, allocating €12.6 million for Sint Eustatius, €3.9 million for Saba and €1.5 million for the SSCS Sea Cable. The remaining €48 million was allocated for projects under the responsibility of other ministries, including I&W.

The choice to place the responsibilities of the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius with the various ministries is logical due to the existing administrative relationships and the professional knowledge of the relevant ministries. It was formally agreed that each ministry is individually responsible for the introduction and implementation of policy of the respective ministry. In this policy review, we only look at projects that have been carried out by the Ministry of BZK under Article 8..

Conclusion 13 *Information obtained during the interviews and the field visit about the state of affairs and implementation practice showed that the reconstruction activities were effectively implemented as houses and public space were repaired, nature was restored and the cliff was stabilised. Targets were therefore met. However the considerations for the selection of reconstruction projects on Saba and Sint Eustatius are unclear because they do not completely relate to the damage assessments.*

203. Assessments were carried out for both Saba and Sint Eustatius to map out the damage. The assessments performed do not completely relate to the projects that were selected, or the costs that were made for the repairs. A number of the implemented projects were, however, also reflected in the requests for assistance, and therefore reflect the island's stated needs. The final choice of reconstruction projects (and related costs) carried out under the responsibility of the Ministry of BZK, and the relation with the damage assessments, remains unclear to the evaluation team. As a result, it is not easy to make statements about the effectiveness and efficiency of the BZK effort without additional information.
204. Additional information was obtained for some major components and projects that were carried out under the responsibility of the Ministry of BZK. The information provided in the interviews, field visits and related documents showed that targets were met, as houses and public space were repaired, nature was restored and the cliff was stabilised. While some activities ran into problems with planning and budget, affecting their efficiency, most of issues were circumstantial and can be

¹⁵⁰ Openbaar lichaam Saba. Saba Package Uitvoeringsagenda januari-december 2019. Available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/jaarplannen/2019/06/03/saba-package-uitvoeringsagenda-januari-december-2019>

attributed to e.g. a lack of construction supplies in the region or a small workforce on the island(s). Some major conclusions are:

- a. All houses that were part of the damage assessment were repaired. On Sint Eustatius, the cost of the damage and the duration of the **house repairs** were estimated to be lower than finally realised for several reasons. Materials and manpower became scarce, which drove up prices and delayed the process. In addition, on Saba the impression of the evaluation team is that more expensive improvements to the structures of the buildings were made – as part of building back better to withstand future hurricanes – than initially included in the damage assessment. The team noted that measures were taken during the implementation to carry out the projects as efficiently as possible.
- b. The majority of the budget for reconstruction on Sint Eustatius was spent on the **stabilisation of the cliff**. The project is currently finished. The project addressed a combination of hurricane damage and deferred maintenance. While the hurricane significantly worsened the situation, the structures had already been in a precarious state and required attention before the hurricane.
- c. This also applies to a number of **public spaces** on Sint Eustatius (graveyards, NH church).

Although all projects were implemented, the selection of projects on Saba and Sint Eustatius shows that the focus from BZK and other ministries was broader than solely damage repair after the hurricane. The focus was definitely on building back better and making the islands resilient for the future.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Governance and design

Recommendation 1 *The aftermath of Hurricane Irma highlighted the importance of swift action. Work has been done to further optimize the way these structures are implemented in practice and the way they coordinate between each other and with the other actors in the Kingdom. A Handbook on crisis management for the Caribbean parts of the Netherlands has been drawn up as a result of the experiences with Hurricane Irma. Such agreements need to be constantly revisited before each hurricane season to ensure they continue to work as expected.*

205. The disaster structure of Sint Maarten proved to be insufficiently prepared for a hurricane the scale of Irma. While the ESFs appoint responsible and supporting parties across thematic areas, the parties were unclear on what their responsibilities were. Furthermore, familiarity with the disaster structure was low, partly due to staff turnover within government, coupled with the fact that a long time had passed since the previous disaster. An improved structure would benefit from wider divulgation of its functioning within the government and emergency services, so that once it would need to be activated roles and responsibilities would be clearer. However, tightening up the disaster structure on Sint Maarten is not the responsibility of the Netherlands, but of the country itself.
206. The disaster structures of Saba and Sint Eustatius were better able to deal with the disaster but are still reliant on regional cooperation, particularly for supplies. To reduce such dependency in the event of subsequent calamities, it is desirable to map out what the role of other islands could be in optimizing disaster management.
207. Overall, the multiple disaster structures need more practical experience with the approach and mutual cooperation in the event of a calamity. Parties must be further familiarised with each other's roles by conducting joint disaster drills (e.g. in the HUREX). To ensure (improved) involvement in a future crisis, frequent drills should be carried out for the public entities Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius (and their staff), the national crisis structure, and the Ministry of Defence.

Recommendation 2 *Requests for assistance are an important instrument in providing mutual assistance between the countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and between the BES islands and the Netherlands. This instrument could be improved through a more careful discussion of the interpretation of Article 36 of the Statute and clear agreements between the various countries within the Kingdom regarding the preparation and submission of requests for assistance.*

208. An important basis for cooperation within the Kingdom of the Netherlands is the Statute for the Kingdom. This statute regulates the legal order in the Kingdom of the Netherlands between the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. The basic principles of the Charter are one common Dutch nationality for all residents of the Kingdom, one head of state, one common foreign policy and one common defence. The statute offers opportunities for cooperation, but the countries of the Kingdom are, to a large extent, autonomous in arranging their own internal affairs.
209. The underlying articles of the statute have been formulated in general terms for political administrative reasons. This offers freedom of action, but also leaves room for one's own interpretations and therefore to ambiguities in implementation. This also applies to Article 36 "The Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten provide each other with help and assistance", which in the case of Irma formed the basis for the provision of emergency assistance and support from

the Netherlands to Sint Maarten. As concluded earlier, the vague wording of this article also caused uncertainties and delays in practice, because Article 36 does not specify the nature of such help and assistance.

210. To be better prepared in the future – and to allow for quicker action in a potential crisis – the meaning and interpretation of Article 36 of the Statute should be carefully discussed within the Kingdom. It would also be beneficial to make better agreements between the various countries within the Kingdom regarding the preparation and submission of requests for assistance. This will result in quicker action being taken in emergency situations.
211. In the case of Saba and Sint Eustatius, requests for assistance must be formally submitted via the Kingdom Representative, the administrative link between the Caribbean Netherlands and the European Netherlands. This was particularly difficult in the initial days of Irma, due to both communication issues and also to the distance to Bonaire (the location of the Kingdom Representative). In order to promote speed of action in emergency situations, it is desirable to consider how the process of requesting assistance in times of emergency can be optimized. As noted earlier, as a result of the evaluation of the Ministry of JenV on the system for the disaster management of hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria, the coordination plan for supra-island disaster relief and crisis management on Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba was already adjusted in January 2020. This mainly concerned sharpening and clarifying the roles, tasks and powers of the Saba, Sint Eustatius and Bonaire, the Kingdom Representative and the relationship with the European Netherlands.

Recommendation 3 *This evaluation found shortcomings in the data and document storage systems of the Ministry of BZK. The Ministry's financial management and its document storage system, Digidoc, can be improved, with a view to enhancing accountability for disbursements. Specific guidelines and procedures should be developed in this regard and staff may have to be trained for this purpose.*

212. There is room for improvement in both financial and administrative documentation of disbursements made by the Ministry of BZK under Article 8. In financial overviews, labelling of disbursements needs to be more consistent and systematic, and ex-post corrections (due to exchange rate calculations or corrections of mistakes) need to be more systematically related to the respective budget lines. One would also expect that specific disbursements can be more easily linked to underlying administrative decisions/contractual agreements with implementing organisations, as well as narrative reporting related to the agreements.

7.2 Emergency response

Recommendation 4 *The aftermath of Hurricane Irma highlighted the importance of coordination in the event of an emergency is crucial. Coordination should be improved, through better agreements in advance about the delineation of tasks and responsibilities between the various ministries in the event of a disaster in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. In preparation of hurricanes or other disasters that may occur in the future, the Ministry of BZK should further strengthen its capacities in assisting the islands in strengthening emergency preparedness, drawing up post disaster needs assessments and developing relief and reconstruction plans*

213. The Ministry of Defence plays a key role here, especially at the start of a calamity, due to the representation of Defence on Curacao and Aruba and the availability of manpower and material that can be deployed quickly. Over time, this responsibility is transferred to another ministry. In

relation to the Caribbean Netherlands, the role of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is clear. However, the experiences with Irma show that this transition needs to be smoother.

214. This can be achieved by making better agreements in advance about the delineation of tasks and responsibilities between the various ministries and between the ministries and the Red Cross (who by royal decree has a role in disaster response) in the event of a disaster in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. It would also be appropriate to set up a crisis organisation within BZK in advance with associated tasks and responsibilities. In the case of Irma, it became apparent that the Ministry of BZK was insufficiently prepared for its tasks as coordinator and had to improvise. Knowledge sharing between such an organisation and e.g. the humanitarian aid department of the Ministry of BuZa should be encouraged.
215. In preparation of hurricanes or other disasters that may occur in the future the Ministry of BZK should further strengthen its capacities in assisting the islands in strengthening emergency preparedness, drawing up post disaster needs assessments and developing relief and reconstruction plans. If requested, the Ministry of BZK should provide capacity development in this regard to the islands well before future disasters. Within the Ministry of BZK this may involve staff (re-) training and / or attracting more staff with these competencies.

Recommendation 5 *Implementing parties were satisfied with the workability of the adjusted and flexible purchasing policy. Maintaining such adapted procedures in subsequent calamities is advisable/recommended.*

216. Under normal circumstances, governments in the Netherlands must adhere to the rules of the Public Procurement Act when tendering. One of the aims of the Procurement Act is to stimulate competition between companies and to ensure that entrepreneurs have a fair chance to win a government contract. Application of the procurement rules takes time both to give entrepreneurs sufficient opportunity to react, and also because of the administrative procedures involved.
217. In the event of a disaster, reaction time is crucial. Regular application of the procurement rules would have meant a delay in providing necessary emergency assistance. This was avoided due to the (temporary) adjustment of the tendering procedures. Executing parties were satisfied with the workability of the adjusted and flexible purchasing policy, which means that action could be taken faster and more flexibly. The use of such modified procedures in subsequent calamities is advisable.
218. In addition, to facilitate accountability afterwards, it is desirable to tighten up the administrative processes (see also recommendation 5).

7.3 Early recovery

Recommendation 6: *There was a significant period of standstill between the article 8-funded social activities in the early recovery phase in Sint Maarten and the longer-term reconstruction activities to be financed from the World Bank Trust Fund. Action in future crises should ensure the continuity of social activities to support the most vulnerable of a population in the transition from emergence assistance to reconstruction activities.*

219. The Ministry of BZK identified the need for a bridging phase between the initial emergency response and the longer-term reconstruction activities, to avoid a standstill. Unfortunately, the

relatively small share of budget allocated to the early recovery projects, combined with the short timeline of six months, and the long set-up period of the Trust Fund resulted in a significant gap. A longer, more comprehensive early recovery phase would have been useful to further solidify social activities, especially considering the success of some projects and the effectiveness and value-for-money of continuing running activities. A longer period might have also allowed a closer handover between early recovery projects and those later channelled through the Trust Fund.

Recommendation 7: *Some of the more successful projects in the early recovery phase were those implemented by local NGOs or organisations with running activities that could be expanded with early recovery funds. Betting on local know-how proved successful, and should be kept in mind in future similar scenarios.*

220. The projects in the early recovery phase were carried out by different types of organisations with different levels of presence and experience in Sint Maarten. Broadly speaking, the more successful interventions were those that built on ongoing activities and allowed organisations to establish realistic goals and meet these within the time period. Others were able to embed early recovery activities into their existing structure, allowing them to make use of their local relations and networks. Organisations with less experience on the island, had to significantly adjust its project targets across the programme, after finding out that several of the assumptions made at proposal stage did not hold. Local know-how, feet on the ground and established networks proved to be key elements for successful in the quick-win set-up of the early recovery phase, focused on smaller projects with shorter timelines.

7.4 Reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba

Recommendation 8 *The reconstruction projects were managed per ministry, which means that a clear overview is lacking and coordination between the various projects was made more difficult. It may be better to opt for a reconstruction programme for Saba and Sint Eustatius, like in Sint Maarten, with centralised management during the implementation phase. The coordinating role of the Ministry of BZK should be clarified and moved forward.*

221. For the BES islands, the relevant line ministries are responsible for the implementation of their own policy, just like in the Netherlands. In the event of a disaster such as Irma, it may be better to opt for a reconstruction programme for Saba and Sint Eustatius, like in Sint Maarten, with centralised management during the implementation phase. This could also include arranging financing from a budget item in the event of subsequent calamities. Funding for the reconstruction projects can now go partly through the budget of Article 8, but also through the budgets of the other ministries involved. This makes the reconstruction process more transparent and it is expected that the choices made can be better justified afterwards. The Ministry of BZK already takes the lead in centralised management in the event of a disaster on the BES islands.

Recommendation 9 *As the frequency and strength of hurricanes increases, it remains important to prevent potential damage in the future by using the principles of 'building back better'.*

222. The Building Back Better principle is emphatically central to the reconstruction of Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten. The approach integrates disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure, social systems and shelter, and the revitalization of livelihoods, economies and the environment.¹⁵¹ Examples of the principle include underground cables, panic rooms, concrete roofs and the relocation of essential infrastructure if possible.

¹⁵¹ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

223. For this reason, it is recommended to apply the principle of Building Back Better in a broad sense in reconstruction projects, but also in other (future) projects on the islands. This approach now requires additional investment, but contributes to limiting future damage as much as possible.

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Interviewed persons and institutions

Table 1a Interviews Netherlands

Organisation	Person	Function ¹⁵²
Ministry of BZK	Gerard Schulting	Advisor Relations with France
Koninklijke Marechaussee	Yor Burlet	Persoonlijk adviseur Commandant Koninklijke Marechaussee
Ministry of BZK	Erwin Arkenbout	Vertegenwoordiger NI voor Curaçao, Aruba en Sint Maarten;.
Ministry of BZK	Henk Brons	Directeur-Generaal Koninkrijksrelaties
Ministry of BZK	Stella Dagelet	DGKR/TWO Sint Maarten; adviseur landen
Ministry of BZK	Merel van Hoeve	Beleidsmedewerker wederopbouw SXM
Ministry of BZK	Sarah van der Horn - Plante	Beleidsmedewerker Bestuurlijke Ontwikkeling (DGKR)

¹⁵² Note: the function of the interviewed person can refer to either the function held during the implementation of Article 8 activities or the one currently held, depending on the relevance to the conversation.

Organisation	Person	Function ¹⁵²
Ministry of BZK	Chris Johnson	Vertegenwoordiger Nederland Sint Maarten
Ministry of BZK	Sanne Kouwenhoven	Programmamanager Sint Maarten
Ministry of BZK	Sjoerd van Wetten	Liaison Officer bij de Permanente Vertegenwoordiging van Nederland op Sint Maarten
Ministry of BZK	Lenneke Joosen-Parie	Manager afdeling Veiligheid DGKR
Ministry of BZK	Celine Wijsman	Manager afdeling Veiligheid DGKR
Ministry of BZK	Reza Tabatabaie	Manager afdeling Economie en Financiën DGKR
Ministry of BZK	Saskia de Reuver	Directeur Landen Koninkrijksrelaties DGKR
Ministry of BZK	Dirk Jan Bonnet	Directeur Caribisch Nederland DGKR
Ministry of BZK	Frans Weekers	Speciaal gezant BZK wederopbouw
Ministry of BZK	Hans Leijten	Project-directeur-generaal Wederopbouw Bovenwindse Eilanden
Ministry of BZK	Hans van der Stelt	Voormalig programmadirecteur wederopbouw
Ministry of BZK	Mirte Coppelman-De Vries	NL vertegenwoordiging SXM
Ministry of BZK	Wim Bekker	Beleidsmedewerker SXM bij DGKR
Ministry of BZK	Sjoerd van Meulen	Senior Advisor Financial Economic Affairs
Ministry of BZK	Joris Knops	BZK
Ministry of BZK	Erik van Borkulo	BZK
Ministry of Defence	Bas Beijvoort	Noodhulp
Ministry of Defence	Roos Wagemaker	Beleidsmedewerker wederopbouw SXM; noodhulp en early recovery
Ministry of Finance	Thijs Slippens	Tijdelijk detachering naar Programma-organisatie Wederopbouw Bovenwindse Eilanden
Ministry of Justice and Security	Wouter Brand	Nationaal Crisiscentrum (NCTV)
Ministry of Justice and Security	Koen Gerritse	Crisis Coordination Advisor
Ministry of Justice and Security	Willy Steenbakkers	Crisis Coordinator NCTV
Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management	Anneke Tjalma	Senior Advisor Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment
NOS	Matthijs van der Wiel	Noodhulp
Ministry of OWC	Mirjam De Rijke	Programmamanager onderwijshuisvesting Caribisch Nederland
Qredits	Elwin Groeneveld	CEO Qredits
Dutch Representation SXM	Robert Jan de Wilde	NL vertegenwoordiging SXM

Organisation	Person	Function ¹⁵²
Red Cross NL	Yvonne Wilmers	Partnership and portfolio coördinator (prior)
Red Cross NL	Carla Jonkers	Head of International Disaster Response Unit & Caribbean Branches
Red Cross NL	Fanny de Swarte	Head of Mission
Schiphol Group	Kjell Kloosterziel	Director Schiphol International
Ministry of BZK	Cecile Pluijmaekers	
	Wendele van der Wiele	Voormalig senior beleidsmedewerker wederopbouw bovenwindse eilanden.
	Wilfred Muller	Senior adviseur crisisbeheersing
	Geert Jansen	

Table 1b Interviews Sint Maarten

Organisation	Gesprekspersoon	Function
Airport Project (tour)	Damien Schmidt	Project Coordinator
Airport Project (tour)	Mirto Breel	Project Director
Cabinet of the Prime Minister/ Minister of General Affairs	Nerissa Ellis-Cornelia	Legal Policy Advisor
Fire Brigade	Clive Richardson	Chief Fire Brigade / Disaster Coordinator
K1 Britannia Foundation	Alan Schet	Program Manager
Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure VROMI	Miklos Giterson	Former Minister
Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor – Public Health	Fenna Arnell	Public Health <i>Department</i> Head / ESF 6 Coordinator
Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor - Community Outreach (VSA)	Chantale George-Groeneveldt	Dept Head of Community Development / ESF Coordinator
National Recovery Programme Bureau	Claret Connor	Director
	Abel Knotnerus	Deputy Director / Legal Officer
	Marcel Gumbs	Steering Committee Member
NRPB – Emergency Recovery Project - 1	Olivia lake	Program Manager
	Paul Sijssens	Project Manager
	Alfonoso Carazo	Project Coordinator
NRPB – Emergency Debris Management	Thijn Laurensse	Program Manager EDMP
	Rueben Thomsson	Head Safeguards Team
NRPB - Enterprise Support Project	Anisa Dijkhoffz	Project Manager
	Elozona Ochu	Senior Advisor
R4CR programme and the NPOwer project under Foresee Foundation	Jose Sommers	Foundation Founder / Managing Director
Qcredits	Edsel Gumbs	Senior Business Advisor
Sint Maarten Development Foundation	Makhicia Brooks	Managing Director
	Keith Franca	Former Managing Director

Organisation	Gesprekspersoon	Function
Sint Maarten Medical Centre (Hospital Resiliency & Preparedness Project)	Ingeborg Verwoerd	Project Manager
	Felix Holiday	Medical Director
	Project Management Unit	n.a.
Stichting Katholiek Onderwijs	M. Halley	President
	Tanja Frederiks	Project Manager
VNG International	Rolf Hunink	Team Leader R4CR
VNP - Dutch Representation Office in Sint Maarten	Chris Johnson	Head of the Representation
	Erwin Arkenbout	Representative of the Netherlands
White Yellow Cross Care Foundation	Bregje Boetekees	Operations Manager

Table 1c Interviews Saba

Organisation	Gesprekspersoon	Function
Fort Bay Harbour Project	Ton van der Plas	Project Manager
Planning Bureau Department	Bobby Zagers	Head of Planning Bureau
Saba Executive Council	Tim Muller	Island Secretary
Saba Executive Council	Piet Gerritsen	Policy Advisor

Table 1d Interviews St Eustatius

Organisation	Gesprekspersoon	Function
Public Entity St. Eustatius	Joury Ranzijn	Program Project Office – Project Manager
Public Entity St. Eustatius	Mel Raboen dé Sánchez Pacheco	Change Manager Cabinet Government Commissioner
Crisis team	Multiple persons	Full list of members to be included in Final Report upon confirmation by contact persons in Sint Eustatius.

Annex II: Evaluation matrix

Table 0.1 Evaluation matrix for Part I – Emergency assistance across the three islands and early recovery Sint Maarten

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	Find
1	Which parts of policies of the Government of the Netherlands aiming at emergency assistance, early recovery and reconstruction in the wake of 2017 hurricanes in the Leeward Islands (Article 8 of the Budget for Kingdom Relations) are covered by the present policy reviews?	<p>Three phases are included in this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response • Early Recovery of St. Maarten • Reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba 	§ 1.3
2	How are other relevant parts of policies mentioned in Evaluation Question 1 addressed by the current policy reviews?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reconstruction of Sint Maarten is included in a separate report evaluated by Lucien Bäck (Part II). 	§ 1.3
3	What was the motivation behind the policy of the Government of the Netherlands for the emergency assistance of the three islands under Article 8 Part I? What is its current relevance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intervention logic is included. • Sint Maarten is an autonomous country within the Kingdom and has had its own responsibility in the event of calamities and disasters since the administrative reforms of 2010. However, under the Statute for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Article 36) the four countries provide aid and assistance to each other when needed. • Saba and Sint Eustatius have both been a special municipality since 2010. The Ministry of BZK also has this coordinating role in the event of a crisis or calamity for the provision of aid and assistance to the islands. • The structure of the Emergency Response is still relevant. 	§ 2.1 and § 3.2
4.a	What is the responsibility of the Government of the Netherlands for emergency assistance in the three islands in the context of the Statute of Kingdom Relations?	See above.	§ 2.1 and § 3.2
4.b	Which have been the responsibilities of the Governments of the three islands for providing emergency assistance, in the context of the Statute of Kingdom Relations?	See above.	§ 2.1 and § 3.2

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	Find
5	How coherent were the instruments used in the emergency response activities in relation to each other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sint Maarten, as an autonomous country within the Kingdom, is responsible for control and assistance in case of a crisis. For that reason Sint Maarten has its own crisis structure to act. The Government of the Netherlands did not have administrative plans for acting in crisis situations in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom (p. 4). In the beginning it was unclear on the Dutch side which Ministry was responsible. The evaluation by the Ministry of BZK of its own role shows that the Ministry was hardly prepared for this role and therefore had to improvise (of necessity). 	§ 3.2
6	What was the expenditure in emergency assistance provided to Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten under Article 8.2 and how do these relate to overall expenditure for the early recovery and reconstruction provided under Article 8 as whole, as well as other funding mobilised from public and private sources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For emergency assistance, € 55 million was been made available from general resources, of which ultimately € 40.4 million has been declared by the different stakeholders. A budget of € 7 million was allocated for the Early Recovery phase. The total expenditure came to € 6.8 million, though many implementing parties made use of co-financing from other sources to bolster their activities. The Government of the Netherlands has made € 67 million available for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius. The Ministry of BZK covered € 20.4 million of this budget, allocating € 15.0 million for Sint Eustatius, € 3.9 million for Saba and € 1.5 million for the SSCS Sea Cable. 	§ 3.5
7	To what extent has the emergency response provided Article 8.2 been evaluated thus far? Which evaluations have been conducted, how were they carried out and with what purpose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most organisations involved in the emergency response conducted an evaluation of their own input afterwards. These evaluations looked at the learning experiences and what could be done better in the future. For further detailed information, we used the available correspondence, email exchanges, chamber letters, etc.. 	§ 2.3
8	Which parts of the emergency response provided under Article 8.2 I have not been evaluated (yet)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, what is missing in the evaluations performed is a reflection on the entire process. The interviews were mainly intended to obtain this overall picture. 	§ 2.3

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	Find
9	To what extent is there sufficient documentary evidence to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the emergency assistance provided under Article 8 Part I?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluations performed mainly provide a qualitative picture based on (internal) interviews. Hard statements about effectiveness and efficiency are usually lacking in the evaluations carried out. 	§ 2.3
10.a	How effective has the emergency support provided by the Government of the Netherlands in Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten under Article 8.2 been in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact? Have there been positive or negative side-effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency response is provided immediately after a (natural) disaster, crisis or violent conflict and aims to save lives and protect those directly affected and provide them with basic necessities. In the case of Irma, the emergency assistance was largely based on damage assessments and the many and specified requests for assistance from the local authorities. The help and support provided during the emergency response phase was effective in the sense that almost all requests for help assistance were met. However, the effectiveness of the provided support would have greatly benefited from a more streamlined process, linking clear damage assessments to requests for assistance and ensuring better communication between those witnessing the situation on the island and those doing the processing of requests for assistance. 	§ 4.1 – 4.6
10.b.	On what basis were the projects undertaken during the early recovery phase under Article 8 Part I chosen? Were these decisions based on the actual needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure a responsible and efficient use of the funds destined for these projects, the Ministry of BZK chose to assign as implementing parties International organizations (e.g. UNDP) and NGOs. particularly those already active on the ground and with existing links to ongoing activities under the emergency response. Invited organisations were seen as being best placed to identify urgent needs and their own capacity to deliver results for the duration of the Early Recovery timeline. 	§ 5.1
11	What was the justification for expenditure under Article 8 in terms of volume / use and standards / prices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In view of the need to act quickly, a modified (and more efficient) waiver procedure has been developed by the Ministry of BZK for emergency assistance requests. Despite the commitment that the Ministry of BZK covered the emergency assistance costs incurred by other departments, it was determined in advance that the relevant departments themselves were responsible for the lawful application of the procurement law . 	§ 3.5

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	Find
		<p>Because of this atypical procedure, it is harder to determine the efficiency in retrospect. After all, it was not the Ministry of the Interior, but rather the departments themselves that were responsible for the purchases of goods and services used for emergency assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the need to act quickly, however, it can be assumed that the lowest cost was not chosen in all cases, but rather the timely availability of the necessary goods was considered. 	
12.a.	How efficient have policies of the Government of the Netherlands to provide emergency response been?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of Irma, this was done by assessing primary needs and by prioritising what needed to be done at an early stage. The roles of each respective ministry were then determined, and asked to make financial resources available. This approach meant that the financing of the emergency response was quickly arranged and secured. In view of the need to act quickly, a modified waiver procedure was developed by the Ministry of BZK for emergency assistance requests Given the need to act quickly, it can be assumed that the lowest cost was not the most important selection criterion, but rather the timely availability of the necessary goods. 	§ 4.6
12.b	Did the existing crisis structure allow for an efficient provision of the emergency support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above. 	§ 4.6
13	Which policy options exist in case there were significantly more or fewer means available (20 % more or less than budgeted)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For both the emergency relief and the early recovery phase, the size of the budget was a political decision. One could also have decided that less aid should be granted for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. After all, there is no provision in the Statute of the Kingdom concerning how much assistance must be provided. However, given the nature of the disaster and the suffering it caused, the political decision was made in an early phase to be generous. 	§ 3.5
14	Did the projects chosen in the early recovery phase contribute to building the necessary conditions under which the goals of the rebuilding efforts could be achieved? Has this been achieved in an effective manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The projects chosen in the early recovery phase were carried out effectively and addressed pressing needs of the population. The projects can therefore be said to have contributed to building necessary conditions. The duration and scope of the phase was, 	§ 5.3

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	Find
		<p>however, not sufficient to lay the necessary conditions for reconstruction efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The significant standstill of social activities between the early recovery project and reconstruction activities created a risk of further deterioration of conditions. 	
15	Which lessons can be learnt for similar future crisis situations caused by hurricanes?	<p>Governance and design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation 1 <i>The aftermath of Hurricane Irma highlighted the importance of swift action. Although the three islands have an existing disaster structure, it is desirable to further optimize the way these structures are implemented in practice and the way they coordinate between each other and with the other actors in the Kingdom.</i> Recommendation 2 <i>Requests for assistance are an important instrument in providing mutual assistance between the countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and between the BES islands and the European part of the Netherlands. This instrument could be improved through a more careful discussion of the interpretation of Article 36 of the Statute and clear agreements between the various countries within the Kingdom regarding the preparation and submission of requests for assistance.</i> Recommendation 3 <i>This evaluation found shortcomings in the data and document storage systems of the Ministry of BZK. The Ministry's financial management and its document storage system, Digidoc, can be improved, with a view to enhancing accountability for disbursements.</i> 	Chapter 7

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	Find
		<p>Emergency response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 4 <i>Coordination should be improved through better agreements in advance about the delineation of tasks and responsibilities between the various ministries in the event of a disaster in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. It would also be appropriate to set up a crisis organisation within BZK in advance with associated tasks and responsibilities</i> • Recommendation 5 <i>Implementing parties were satisfied with the workability of the adjusted and flexible purchasing policy. Maintaining such adapted procedures in subsequent calamities is advisable/recommended.</i> <p>Early recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 6 <i>There was a significant period of standstill between the article 8-funded social activities in the early recovery phase in Sint Maarten and the longer-term reconstruction activities to be financed from the World Bank Trust Fund. Action in future crises should ensure the continuity of social activities to support the most vulnerable of a population in the transition from emergence assistance to reconstruction activities.</i> • Recommendation 7 <i>Some of the more successful projects in the early recovery phase were those implemented by local NGOs or organisations with running activities that could be expanded with early recovery funds. Betting on local know-how proved successful, and should be kept in mind in future similar scenarios.</i> 	

Table 0.2 Evaluation matrix for Part III - Reconstruction Efforts in Saba and Sint Eustatius.

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	St. Eustatius	Saba
General questions				
1	Which parts of policies of the Government of the Netherlands aiming at emergency assistance, early recovery and reconstruction in the wake of 2017 hurricanes in the Leeward Islands (Article 8 of the Budget for Kingdom Relations) are covered by the present policy reviews?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination by Ministry of the Interior • Funding provided by the Ministry of BZK from Article 8 to Saba and Sint Eustatius • Additional funding provided by other departments 	§ 2.1 & § 3.4	§ 2.1 & § 3.4
2	How are other relevant parts of policies mentioned in Evaluation Question 1 addressed by the current policy reviews?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals are in line with other policies • The reconstruction of Sint Maarten is included in a separate report evaluated by Lucien Bäck (Part II). 	§ 1.3 & § 2.1	§ 1.3 & § 2.1
3	What was the motivation behind the policy of the Government of the Netherlands for the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius under Article 8 Part III? What is its current relevance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligations for the Netherlands arising from the Statute of Kingdom Relations. • Request for assistance were sent from Saba and Sint Eustatius. • Disposals (<i>beschikkingen</i>) were sent to the islands. • Positions expressed in statements and letters by the NL Parliament (<i>kamerstukken</i>) since 2017. 	§ 3.4	§ 3.4
4	What is the responsibility of the Government of the Netherlands for reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius in the context of the Statute of Kingdom Relations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius is coordinated by the Minister of BZK. In addition to the Ministry of BZK, the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Economic Affairs and Climate (EZK) and Infrastructure and Water Management (IenW) are also involved in the reconstruction. The resources for these projects are included in the budgets of the Ministries of BZK, OCW, EZK and IenW. 	§ 3.4 and § 3.5	§ 3.4 and § 3.5

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	St. Eustatius	Saba
4.a	How has the Minister of BZK fulfilled the coordinating role (<i>regisseursrol</i>) in the area of the reconstruction of Saba and Sint Eustatius?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Minister had delated this task to the State Secretary. The State Secretary informs the second chamber on a general level about the projects; Coordination of the activities and the division of responsibilities is sometimes difficult, given the financing from different departments 	§ 6.2	§ 6.3
4.b	Which have been the responsibilities and obligations of the Governments of Saba and Sint Eustatius for reconstruction in the context of the Statute of Kingdom Relations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sint Eustatius and Saba are Public entities within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Public Entities of both islands are responsible for the execution of the projects. The different departments have all their own responsibilities on the island. 	§ 3.4	§ 3.4
5	How coherent were the instruments used in the recovery and reconstruction activities in relation to each other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the activities implemented with funding through direct support were coherent between each other, based on a full inventory and analysis. 	§ 6.1	§ 6.1
6	What have the expenses been for reconstruction efforts in Saba and Sint Eustatius under Article 8 Part III and how do these relate to overall expenditure for the emergency, early recovery and reconstruction under Article 8 and other funding mobilised from public and private sources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total expenditure by the Government of the Netherlands for reconstruction on Sint Eustatius and Saba is € 42.6 million and € 23.8 million respectively. The total expenditure by the Government of the Netherlands for reconstruction in Sint Eustatius and Saba inside of Article 8 is € 12.6 million and € 3.9 million respectively. Private funds are not monetarized in the available documents. 	§ 6.1	§ 6.1
7	To what extent has the reconstruction policy under Article 8 Part III been evaluated in the past? Which evaluations have been	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No earlier evaluations took place. 	§ 2.3	§ 2.3

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	St. Eustatius	Saba
	conducted, how has the policy been evaluated and for which reasons?			
8	Which parts of the reconstruction policy under Article 8 Part III have not been evaluated (yet)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No earlier evaluations took place. 	§ 2.3	§ 2.3
9	To what extent is there sufficient documentary evidence to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the reconstruction policy under Article 8 Part II?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The documentation provided by the ministry of BZK on the reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba is limited Assessment was done based on other documentation, interviews and field visits. 	§ 2.3	§ 2.3
Effectiveness				
10.a	To what extent have projects undertaken during the reconstruction activities in Saba and Sint Eustatius? How effective was this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All projects that were initiated under Article 8 are finished; Projects were assessed as being effective by the evaluator. 	§ 6.2	§ 6.3
10.b	To what extent have the objectives of the reconstruction policy of the Government of the Netherlands aiming at reconstruction in Saba and Sint Eustatius been realized? Have there been positive or negative side-effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All projects that were initiated under Article 8 are finished; Projects were assessed as being effective by the evaluator. No negative side effects have been found 	§ 6.2	§ 6.3
Building back better				
11.a.	How has “building back better” been realized in terms of improved physical infrastructure?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage assessments have been made. Structures are improved in comparison with the situation before Irma and Maria. “Building back better” is been realized 	§ 6.2	§ 6.3
11.b	How has “building back better” been realized in terms of crisis and disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No projects were aiming at this point from Article 8. 		

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	St. Eustatius	Saba
	management, including preparedness for future natural disasters?			
11.c	How has “building back better” been realized in terms of diversification of the economy, strengthening of good governance and civil society, including psychosocial care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relatively smaller projects were locally tendered and favoured the local economy; • The reconstruction of houses, schools and public space unfavoured increase of quality of life; • No projects were been carried out on the topic of psychosocial care. 	§ 6.2	§ 6.3
Efficiency				
12	What was the justification for expenditure under Article 8 in terms of volume / use and prices / standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The larger projects (including cliff and SSCS) were tendered internationally and expenses were audited; • The smaller projects were tendered locally by well-known organisations; • No justification for the expenditure under Article 8 has been made in terms of volume/ use and prices / standards. • Given the procedures followed and parties involved, the evaluator assesses the expenses as efficient. 	§ 6.2	§ 6.3
13	How efficient have policies of the Government of the Netherlands aiming at recovery of Saba and Sint Eustatius been?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The larger projects (including cliff and SSCS) were tendered internationally and expenses were audited; • The smaller projects were tendered locally by well-known organisations; • No justification for the expenditure under Article 8 has been made in terms of volume/ use and prices / standards. • Given the procedures followed and parties involved, the evaluator assesses the expenses as efficient. 	§ 6.2	§ 6.3
14	Which policy options exist in case there were significantly more or fewer means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the situation that would have prevailed with 20 % less funding 	§ 3.5	§ 3.5

EQ #	Evaluation question	Short description	St. Eustatius	Saba
	available (20 % more or less than budgeted)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the situation that would have prevailed with 20 % more funding 		
Looking forward				
15	Which measures can be taken to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of reconstruction policies in Saba and Sint Eustatius?	<p>Reconstruction of Sint Eustatius and Saba</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation 8 <i>The reconstruction projects were managed per ministry, which means that a clear overview is lacking and coordination between the various projects was made more difficult. It may be better to opt for a reconstruction programme for Saba and Sint Eustatius, like in Sint Maarten, with centralised management during the implementation phase. The coordinating role of the Ministry of BZK should be clarified.</i> Recommendation 9 <i>As the frequency and strength of hurricanes increases, it becomes increasingly important to prevent potential damage in the future by building back better.</i> 	§ 7.4	§ 7.4

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P.O. Box 4175
3006 AD Rotterdam
The Netherlands

Watermanweg 44
3067 GG Rotterdam
The Netherlands

T +31 (0)10 453 88 00
F +31 (0)10 453 07 68
E netherlands@ecorys.com
Registration no. 24316726

W www.ecorys.nl

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