Evaluation of the Netherlands contribution to stability in fragile contexts

Terms of Reference

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Inhoud

1. Introduction and rationale

These Terms of Reference (ToR) present the outline for an evaluation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) contribution to stability, security and rule of law in fragile contexts between 2015 and 2021. Promoting stability, security and rule of law is a priority in Dutch foreign policy. The MFA aims to contribute to stability in countries that are or have been affected by conflict. In the last ten years, the number of conflicts in the world has grown considerably. These conflicts are increasingly complex and intertwined and include intrastate conflict or the proliferation of non-state armed groups (World Bank, 2020). Conflicts that take place elsewhere also have consequences for the EU and the Netherlands. The MFA not only assumes that stability is a prerequisite for sustainable development, but also that creating stability would effectively address root causes of poverty, irregular migration and extremism.

The evaluation aims to analyse the effects of all instruments that have been used in the field of stability, security and rule of law in fragile contexts, transcending single interventions.[1] Doing so offers an opportunity to take possible synergies into account between diplomatic efforts, projects and programmes, both from delegated funds and from direct financing from the Hague. The evaluation will also look at coherence with policy areas and projects that also address root causes of conflict and instability (e.g. food security, employment). In addition, it will also look at interventions in areas of instability (humanitarian aid) or areas affected by instability (migration). To operationalise the effectiveness of Dutch policy and to make the research manageable, the evaluation includes three country case studies (Mali, Afghanistan and South Sudan).

The ToR are structured as follows: overview of the policy, the stakeholders and the financial means, the objective of the evaluation and the research questions, the approach, the methodology and constraints, the organization and planning of the evaluation.

At the time of writing these ToR, the world has been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The outbreak is and will continue to be a destabilising factor worldwide. It is possible that potential effects may be more severe for states or regions that were already unstable and fragile. This evaluation takes into account these possible effects. At the same time, travel restrictions may seriously impede the evaluation. Section 6 presents different scenario's and discusses the implications for this evaluation. It is important to keep in mind that the remainder of these ToR are based on the most favourable scenario.

Box 1: terminology of main concepts related to stability

Fragile contexts There is no universal definition of fragile and conflict-affected situations and international organisations, think tanks and academia use a variety of terminology.[2] The OECD characterises fragility as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, poverty, inequality, displacement, and environmental and

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[1] Throughout this document, 'interventions' refer to the wide array of diplomatic initiatives, activities, projects and programmes. In the context of this evaluation diplomatic interventions are concrete initiatives with tangible interventions where the Netherlands tries to influence policy on one or more institutional levels: EU-level, multilateral level or bilateral level.

[2] The term fragility is contested in the academic world: it would contain normative assumptions of how states should perform and should develop into a Western model state (see Mcloughlin and Idris, 2016).

political degradation. Fragility is measured on a spectrum of intensity and expressed in different ways across the economic, environmental, political, security and societal dimensions (OECD, 2020). In this framework countries are mapped for these dimensions of fragility, providing a balanced picture of different levels and types of fragility. For this evaluation we use this typology to analyse our case study countries.

Other concepts that are frequently used in these terms of reference are summed up below. For their explanation we stayed as close to the policy documents as possible.

Stability
Stability refers to 'legitimate' stability – a political, socio-economic and cultural situation in which citizens feel represented and safe on the basis of inclusive political processes, trust between them and the state ('social contract') and social cohesion between groups (MFA, 2018).

Human security
The concept of human security emphasizes the physical security, protection against threats and empowerment of individuals (MFA, 2018).

Rule of law
In the context of fragile states rule of law refers to a functioning chain of police-prosecution-prison and inclusive access to justice (TK, 2012 32605, 94).

Political governance
Political governance refers to 'legitimate' political governance, whereby processes of political decision making are inclusive: involving (groups of) citizen and being accountable to them (MFA, 2018).

Peace processes
Peace processes refer to inclusive peace processes, with active involvement of women in the process towards peace, and to peace agreements and their implementation (MFA, 2018).

Integrated approach
A combination of instruments (diplomatic, defense, development cooperation and foreign trade, justice and police) and relevant actors (ministries of BHOS, Defense, Justice and Security, etc.) with the aim to promote raise security and stability in fragile states and conflict areas, on the basis of a shared vision of the situation – the 'whole of government approach.' Other terms are comprehensive approach and 3D-approach (TK, 2014 31787, 11).

2. Policy

An important objective of Dutch foreign policy is to contribute to establishing peace, security, stability and rule of law in fragile countries and regions. The Netherlands has a long history of supporting peace and stability in conflict settings, and the government's active support for international rule of law is stipulated in the Dutch constitution. This section describes the main policy documents and developments that are relevant for Dutch foreign policy on stability, security and rule of law for the period 2015-2021.

During the period **1999-2010**, subsequent governments published policy letters regarding Dutch policy in fragile and conflict settings. During these years and across political coalitions, Dutch policy regarding stability remained relatively unchanged, although certain accents changed slightly. A

recurrent element was – and still is – the focus on the so-called 'integrated approach', which aims at consistency and a whole of government approach.

In **2010**, Security and Rule of Law (SRoL) became one of the four priorities of Dutch development aid policy. The 2012 policy letter '**Policy priority Security and Rule of Law**' presented the policy objectives.[3] In general, the policy aimed to tackle the root causes of conflict, instability and exclusion. A central element in this policy was the 'integrated approach': simultaneously deploying interventions addressing security, rule of law, institution building and socio-economic development. The importance of conflict prevention and long-term involvement was also highlighted (TK 2010-2011, 32605, 2; TK 2011-2012, 32605, 94). Specific target areas were:

- human security (the prevention of violence and securing of peace and stability);
- a functioning rule of law (contributing to the development of rule of law);
- inclusive political processes (involvement of different groups of the population)
- legitimate and capable government (contributing to basis service delivery of the government)
- peace dividend (stimulating employment and improving basic services for visible improvement of living conditions for people).[4]

The target areas are in line with the Peacebuilding and State building Goals (PSGs) that were formulated in the *New Deal* in 2011: legitimate politics; security; justice; economic foundations and; revenues and social services. This New Deal is an agreement between fragile and conflict-affected states, development partners and civil society to improve the development policy and practice in fragile and conflict-affected states.[5]

In **2015**, the responsible policy department at the ministry, the Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH), developed an overall **Theory of Change** for the SRoL policy, with the promotion of 'legitimate' stability as overall policy objective. The five aforementioned target areas were further explicated into sub-goals. The ToC was updated in 2018 and the target areas were clustered around three central themes: human security, strengthening the rule of law and legitimate political governance and peace processes. New in this document was also that it formulated some overarching assumptions for the different themes.[6]

In recent years, Dutch efforts to promote stability and security abroad are increasingly linked to threats to stability in Europe and the Netherlands, such as terrorist threats, transnational crime and irregular migration. The first document to explicitly connect international security and stability to stability in the Netherlands and in the EU is the **International Security Strategy** (IVS) (TK 2012-2013, 33694, 1). It formulated three strategic interests for Dutch foreign security policy: 1. defence of own

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[3] This policy letter is still guiding current interventions in the field of SRoL.

[4] In 2018 this component was shifted from the Department of Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH) to the Department of Sustainable Economic Development. Peace dividend, however, still has to contribute to stability in fragile contexts.

[5] *The new deal for engagement in Fragile States* was adopted at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (Republic of Korea) in December 2011. The Netherlands was co chairman of this process.

[6] Assumptions:
- *Human security:* citizen, civil society and (in)formal authorities at national and local level are willing and able to cooperate in order to protect citizen and prevent or restrain violent conflict and terror.
- *Strengthening the rule of law:* formal and informal institutions can exist next to each other without undermining each other; access to justice does not always result in equal justice (for example for women); improved rule of law can provide a strong basis for socio-economic development because of predictable rules and enforcement, which are applicable to everyone.
- *Legitimate political governance and peace processes:* this can diminish inequality between (groups of) citizen, provided that they can really participate in decision making and not only symbolically; inclusive peace processes have more success to result in durable peace, especially when women are involved.

and allied territory, 2. a good functioning rule of law and 3. economic security. The IVS stated that growing unrest in adjacent regions of the EU directly and indirectly influences our security. According to the strategy, increased democratisation and stability limits the risk of illegal migration and terrorist threats. Therefore, the strategy focused on instable regions in the vicinity of the EU. Other accents of the IVS were on growing European responsibility, prevention, disarmament and control, cooperation with the private sector and the integrated approach. In relation to the rule of law, the IVS stressed the importance of a flexible multilateral system, a good functioning UN-system and the principle of responsibility to protect. The importance of the integrated approach was stressed in relation to Dutch contributions to UN-peacekeeping operations.

In 2018, the IVS was replaced by the **Integrated Foreign and Security Strategy** (GBVS) for the period 2018-2022 (TK 2017-2018, 33694, 12). The three pillars of the GBVS are to prevent, protect and strengthen. In line with the IVS, the GBVS links existing policies (of foreign affairs, development cooperation and defense) and stresses the importance of the integrated approach. One of the goals of the GBVS is strengthening the international rule of law, with a focus on human security. The strategy also stresses the importance of future Dutch investment in peacekeeping missions and crisis operations, because of the continuing pressure on international rule of law and instability.

Alongside the GBVS, the government presented its updated policy on development aid and foreign trade in '**Investing in Global Prospects**' (2018). The BHOS-policy note presented a geographical shift of development cooperation to the instable regions in the (near) vicinity of the EU: West-Africa/Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle-East and North-Africa, in line with the IVS (TK 2017-2018, 34952, 1). The document stressed that, 'more than in the past, development cooperation is part of a broadly integrated foreign policy' (ibid: 97). The prevention of conflict and the reduction of poverty is one of the main goals.[7] The policy letter '**Shift to focus regions**' (2019) further elaborated on the geographical (and thematic) shifts (TK 2018-2019, 34952, 33). Strengthening security and the rule of law was one of the themes that would be (financially and geographically) expanded.

These policy notes therefore continue to link Dutch efforts to promote stability abroad to security at home. They were presented against the background a large refugee crisis in Europe as a result of the Syrian conflict as well as increasing flows of irregular migration. Europe had also witnessed several terrorist attacks supported or inspired by terrorist groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and Al-Shabab. The policy notes state that war, armed conflict or rising ethnic tensions make countries more insecure and politically unstable. Weak governance and corruption undermine people's trust and feed conflict. Furthermore, fragile and conflict-affected countries form safe havens for extremist and terrorist groups, and criminal activities such as drug and human trafficking. Other factors contributing to instability are poverty, inequality and the effects of climate change. Both the BHOS-policy note and the GBVS therefore stress the importance of addressing "root causes of terrorism, irregular migration, poverty and climate change."

Addressing instability as a root cause has therefore also been included in the government's **Integral Migration Agenda** (TK 2017-2018, 19637, 2375). This cross-departmental policy note identifies six pillars regarding Dutch migration policy. The first pillar focuses on the prevention of irregular migration and addresses root causes of migration.[8] The Migration Agenda identifies different root causes for migration, including economic despair, political conflict, insecurity, repression and climate

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[7] Closely related to the other three main goals: 1. reducing poverty and social inequality; 2. enhancing sustainable inclusive growth and climate: 3. Strengthening the international revenue model.
[8] The other pillars were: regional shelter and protection of refugees and displaced persons; a solid asylum system for the EU and the Netherlands; less illegality and more return; fostering legal migration and; stimulating integration and participation.

change. The assumption is that instruments such as development cooperation, civil-military activities and trade and investments contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law and create perspectives for potential migrants in their own country and, thus, reduce the likeliness of irregular migration. Both the Migration Agenda and the BHOS-policy note consider Dutch efforts to promote stability, poverty reduction and inclusive growth to be a long-term investment for countering irregular migration.

The BHOS-policy note, GBVS and the shift to focus regions should be understood within a political context where migration has become an important theme in Dutch policy. Addressing migration and its root causes is used as an argument to secure finances and support for development cooperation.[9] This results in a shift towards the MENA-focus region, in particular with a large amount of support for development approaches to forced displacement (*Opvang in de Regio*). At the same time, efforts to contribute to stability, limiting the effects of forced displacement and poverty reduction continue in the focus regions Sahel and Horn of Africa.

Besides the above mentioned policy documents, there are also policy areas that indirectly contribute to stability in fragile contexts. These are often country and context specific, for example water management projects in countries with conflicts around water or projects related to humanitarian assistance. All stability policies include gender mainstreaming as cross cutting theme.

The multi annual strategic programmes (MASP's, until 2018) and the multi annual country strategies (MACS's) provide country specific policies and implementation plans for all relevant policies which contribute to stability.

To summarize, addressing instability and conflict is a main goal of Dutch foreign policy. It is interdependent with other goals of Dutch foreign policy, such as poverty reduction and addressing climate change and mitigating the effects of migration. And in the long-term, promoting stability in fragile and conflict-affected countries is expected to support the reduction of poverty, diminish terrorist threats and transnational crime, and reduce irregular migration.

3. Financial means and main channels and instruments

While arguably all development cooperation in fragile and conflict-affected countries can or should contribute to stability, the main focus of the evaluation are efforts directly aimed at stability, security and rule of law. The description below therefore focuses on financial means directly related to these objectives. See section 4 on Delineation for a more detailed explanation of how this evaluation relates to interconnected policy objectives such as poverty reduction, preventing violent extremism and irregular migration.

Table 1 presents the expenditure of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the respective (sub)articles.

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[9] However, there is a different view between the ministry of Justice and Security and the minister for Development Cooperation about the extent to which development cooperation is an instrument for curbing illegal migration.

Table 1.

BZ 2.4 Security and stability	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
UN contr crisis management operations	73,1	137,3	85,8	80,5	95,2
Stability fund	100,9	115,7	98,7	78,4	74,1
OSCE	5,8	5,6	5,6	5,4	5,4
Training foreign diplomats	0,0	1,0	2,5	2,5	2,3
Other	0,0	0,0	0,0	5,3	1,9
Total BZ 2.4	**179,8**	**259,7**	**192,6**	**172,1**	**178,9**
BHOS 4.3 Rule of law, reconstruction, peace building, increased legitimacy of democratic structures and combating corruption					
Legitimate and capable government	18,1	14,6	15,9	17,0	17,5
Incl pol proc, peace dialogue and conflict prev	34,2	31,6	40,0	45,6	59,5
Peace dividend	46,4	44,6	51,6	51,1	22,5
Functioning rule of law	94,0	84,7	104,0	113,7	114,0
Other (approaches to forced displacement, Kunduz)	9,7	178,0	60,7	196,2	0,0
Total BHOS 4.3	**202,4**	**353,6**	**272,2**	**423,6**	**213,5**
Total BHOS 4.3 minus '*Opvang in de Regio*'	**192,7**	**175,6**	**211,5**	**227,4**	**213,5**
Total BZ 2.4 and BHOS 4.3	**382,1**	**613,3**	**464,8**	**595,7**	**392,5**
Total BZ 2.4 and BHOS 4.3 minus '*Opvang in de Regio*'	**372,5**	**435,3**	**404,1**	**399,4**	**392,5**

Source: MIBZ

When not taking funding for development approaches to forced displacement ('*Opvang in de Regio*') into account, expenditure on stability and rule of law related activities has remained relatively stable in recent years and has averaged around EUR 400 mln per annum. Activities with a large financial burden on both policy articles include:

- Contributions to various UN Peace Keeping Operations (EUR 482 mln. between 2015 and 2019);
- Contributions to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), a multi-donor trust fund managed by the World Bank since 2002. The ARTF is the Bank's largest single-country trust fund and supports, inter alia, activities in agriculture, health, education and infrastructure (EUR 100 mln. between 2015 and 2019);
- Contribution to Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF), which provides support on concessional terms to middle income countries affected by refugee crises (EUR 50 mln. between 2015 and 2019);
- Contribution to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), a multi-donor trust fund managed by UNDP. LOTFA is a financing mechanism for the international community to support the Afghan police. (EUR 40 mln. between 2015 and 2019);
- Contribution to the Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFIS) in Iraq. This UNDP programme implements stabilisation projects, ranging from infrastructure rehabilitation to income generating activities, in areas formerly under the command of ISIL. (EUR 40 mln. between 2015 and 2019);
- Contributions to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (EUR 27.7 mln. between 2015 and 2019);
- Contribution to the multi-donor Global Programme for Justice and Security of UNDP. The programme aims to strengthen the rule of law in crisis-affected and fragile situations and is active in more than 40 countries (EUR 26 mln. between 2015 and 2019).

Main channels and instruments

To realise its aims regarding the promotion of stability in fragile contexts, the Netherlands deploys a range of instruments and channels, depending on the country specific situation and the specific policy goal. In general terms, the main instruments and channels are:

- Financial instruments delegated to the Netherlands embassies – spent either bilaterally (through governments, ngo's, or other (non-profit) organisations) or multilaterally (through UN, WB, etc. and earmarked on project basis or via multi donor funds);
- Financial instruments spent centrally at the MFA through centrally coordinated instruments like the Stability fund, ARC, Dialogue and Dissent – implementation through different channels, including multilateral and ngo's;
- Central contribution to strategic partnerships;
- Central core contribution to specific non-profit organisations;
- Central contribution to multilateral organisations like UN, WB, NATO;
- Diplomatic interventions aiming to contribute to stability – ranging from country specific diplomatic initiatives (for example EU-sanctions for South-Sudan) to thematic diplomatic interventions with a (possible) effect in the case study countries (for example enhancing the role of women in peace processes, UN resolution 1325);
- Dutch contribution to UN-peacekeeping operations, to EU- and NATO-(training) missions and in kind expertise of diplomats or Dutch experts, or other staff in missions or training programmes.

Figure 1. Geographic distribution 2015 – 2019, allocated per country
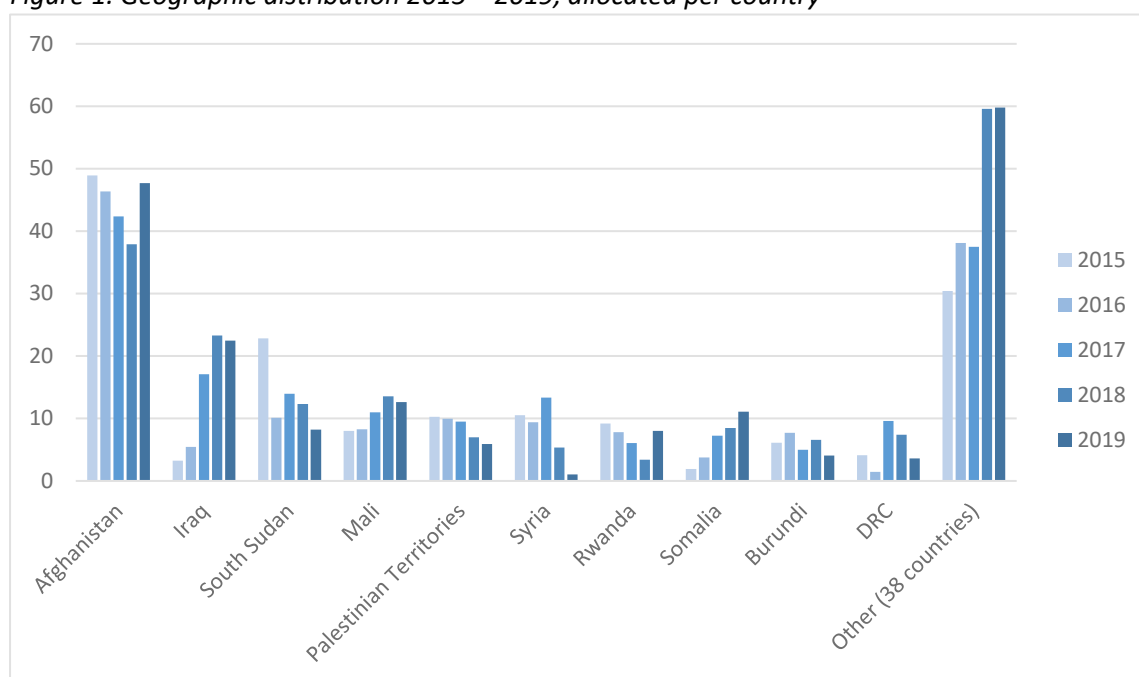
Source: MIBZ

4. Delineation

Addressing conflict and instability has been an important policy objective in itself for several decades. Point of departure for the delineation of this evaluation is therefore to concentrate on policies and programmes that directly focus on stability, security and rule of law. In recent years,

instability is also increasingly being considered as a root cause of poverty, terrorist threats and irregular migration (pillar 1 of the Integrated Migration Agenda). The evaluation therefore also looks at coherence with interconnected policy objectives that aim to address these root causes. However, the evaluation does not take wider efforts to tackle terrorism, extremism or irregular migration flows as a point of departure, because the policy on stability, security and rule of law is not primarily shaped by the integrated migration policy.

In terms of **policy**, the evaluation focuses on article 2.4 of the budget for Foreign Affairs (BZ): Security and Stability (mainly the Stability Fund) and article 4.3 of the budget for Foreign Trade and Development (BHOS): rule of law, reconstruction, peace building, increased legitimacy of democratic structures and combating corruption – see table 1. This means that these subjects (projects, programmes and diplomatic initiatives and staff expertise) also form the basis for the policy reconstruction and formulation of the overarching theory of change (see chapter 6). The evaluation will also investigate the assumptions underlying Dutch SSRoL policy. The case studies will also look at coherence with policies and activities that focus on counter-terrorism, humanitarian aid and migration.

Other evaluations currently being conducted or planned by IOB do address these issues however: they respectively focus on the MFA policy on counter-terrorism, humanitarian aid, and on development approaches to forced displacement ('*Opvang in de Regio*'), and migration cooperation. The evaluation on forced displacement will consider the possibility to take into account projects related to stability. Furthermore, IOB recently published a post mission assessment of the Kunduz police training mission.

Moreover, this evaluation will not assess the effectiveness of Dutch contributions to UN Peace Keeping Operations, EU- and NATO-operations. Rather, it will assess whether the supported operations are coherent with the (objectives of) other Dutch support in the field of stability, security and rule of law. The evaluation also does not include the Dutch contribution to the OSCE, because the organisation focusses on different geographic regions. A separate evaluation on the Dutch contribution to the OCSE is being considered. Training of foreign diplomats, BZ 2.4 – see table 1, will only be taken into account for diplomats from the three selected case studies (Afghanistan, Mali or South Sudan).

In terms of evaluation **period**, the starting point of the evaluation is 2015, the year that DSH formulated the first ToC for SRoL. The evaluation covers the period 2015-2021. To some extent, the evaluation follows up on the IOB policy review of Dutch policy in fragile states, covering seven countries in the period 2005-2011 (IOB, 2013).[10] There is minor overlap at the project level between this evaluation and the evaluation of the Reconstruction (2012-2015) and SPCC (2014-2016) programmes (IOB, 2019).

Regarding the **geographical focus** of the study, the evaluation covers Mali, South Sudan and Afghanistan. These countries represent a considerable part of the entire budget spent and a variety of approaches, channels and instruments employed. Also the duration of the Dutch support in these countries is considerable and there is a clear geographic focus of the interventions for a robust case-in-case selection. This makes it possible to formulate conclusions on effects, coherence and/or sustainability of the Dutch commitment to stability and security and rule of law - and therefore also to (root causes of) migration. This would not be possible in the relatively 'new' focus countries in the

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[10] The policy review included seven case studies (Afghanistan, the regional programme from the Great Lakes, Burundi, DRC, South Sudan, Somalia and Chad).

ring of instability around Europe like Tunisia or Lebanon. The budgets for stability, security and rule of law in these countries are relatively small and of a recent date.

For more information about the country choices see chapter 6 and annex II for the country selection matrix.

In addition, the evaluation includes a desk review of the largest projects from the Stability Fund. See chapter 6 for more information.

The evaluation will also take into account gender mainstreaming as cross cutting theme.

5. Objectives and research questions

The evaluation has the following objectives:
1. To assess the effectiveness and coherence of multiple types of interventions and to formulate lessons for future policymaking and implementation in the field of stability in fragile contexts.
2. To enable the Ministry to be accountable to Parliament and Dutch society for the expenditures incurred;
3. To contribute to the two broader IOB policy evaluations (BZ art.2 and BHOS art.4), scheduled for 2022.

The main question this evaluation aims to answer is:

To what extent has the Netherlands contributed to stability and security and rule of law in fragile contexts between 2015 and 2020 and what lessons can be learned for future policy formulation and implementation?

To answer this question, the following sub-questions[11] will guide the evaluation:

Descriptive
(1)   How did the Netherlands policy related to security, stability and rule of law develop in the period 2015-2020?
(2)   What instruments, financing modalities and channels did the Netherlands use to realize its goals and what explains the choices made over the years?
    a.   What was the influence of the Integrated Agenda on Migration on these choices?
(3)   What were the most important diplomatic interventions of the Netherlands in South-Sudan, Mali and Afghanistan?

Relevance
(4)   Are the Theories of Change underlying the policies and interventions regarding security, stability and rule of law based on valid assumptions?
(5)   What does the available evidence tell us about what works and what does not work in interventions contributing to stability in fragile contexts?
(6)   What was the added value of Dutch interventions vis-à-vis other actors and stakeholders?

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[11] The sub-questions are structured according to the OECD evaluation criteria that were revised in 2019. The questions relate to the period 2015-2020.

(7)   Were the interventions (co-) financed by the Netherlands based on a valid context analysis and did they respond to changes in the context? Do interventions effectively address driving factors of conflict?

(8)   What lessons can be learned from the Netherlands' response to Covid-19 in its policy and programmes related to security, stability and rule of law?

Effectiveness

(9)   What are the results (output, outcome, impact) of the interventions contributing to stability executed, financed or co-financed by the Netherlands in selected regions in South-Sudan, Mali and Afghanistan and for the Stability fund?

(10)   Did the interventions achieve different results for women and men and boys and girls?

(11)   Did the interventions cause unintended (positive and negative) effects and, if so, what were these effects?

(12)   To what extent were the diplomatic interventions aligned with the project/programme interventions and what can be said about the effects?

Efficiency

(13)   To what extent was efficiency a point of discussion between implementing organisations and the MoFa/Netherlands embassies in the preparation and implementation of the interventions?

(14)   Was the planning of the interventions realistic, adaptive and well-thought of and when was it most successful? Wat can be learned from this?

(15)   Were interventions adequately resourced in terms of policy staff and budget to enable the desired results?

Coherence

(16)   To what extent did the MASP's and MACS's contribute to coherence of the stability policy?

(17)   Was the 'integrated approach' as a key concept understood by all relevant stakeholders and operationalised in practice?

(18)   What mechanisms and funding modalities were in place to ensure (internal, vertical and horizontal[12]) coherence among stability interventions? Did these mechanisms contribute to coherence among stability interventions?

(19)   What mechanisms and funding modalities were in place to ensure coherence between interventions related to stability, poverty reduction, migration and humanitarian interventions?

(20)   Were gender issues effectively mainstreamed in the design and implementation of stability interventions?

Sustainability

(21)   Were meaningful exit-strategies developed? Did the strategies take into account local ownership of target groups and stakeholders, capacity building and political commitment?

(22)   Have the results achieved by completed Dutch (co-)financed stability interventions resulted in sustainable results?

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[12] Internal coherence refers to coherence within the MFA between policy departments and the embassies, vertical coherence refers to coherence within the Netherlands between different ministries, and horizontal coherence refers to coherence with other donors and host countries within a specific context.

6. Case selection, methodology and constraints

This section presents the overall methodological approach for the evaluation, based on the most favourable scenario with regards to Covid-19 – see chapter 7 Organisation and planning. We will draw up specific ToRs for the country case studies, which will fine-tune the research methodology and make it context specific and more tangible.

The evaluation includes the following activities:

1. **Reconstruction of an overall Theory of Change** (ToC) for Dutch efforts promoting stability, security and rule of law. While a ToC exists for the security and rule of law policy, there is no overarching ToC that combines broader efforts to promote stability, including diplomatic efforts. Reconstructing the overall ToC will contribute to a better a understanding of how various channels and instruments are interrelated. Assumptions underlying the ToC are then tested both using literature research and case studies. Case studies will particularly focus on testing the contribution of Dutch efforts to promote stability (outcome/impact) and address root causes in selected geographical areas. Literature research will be used to verify assumptions regarding longer-term impact, such as curbing irregular migration.
2. To guide the field analysis, we will **reconstruct country-specific theories of change**. This will enable us to relate general policies and instruments to specific dynamic contexts. Notably, the case studies will also look at multilateral policies and activities that are relevant for the specific case study, e.g. diplomatic efforts regarding EU and UN interventions in the case study context.
3. Given the size and scope of Dutch efforts promoting stability, security and rule of law, the evaluation will **conduct three case studies including field research** to investigate the effectiveness and coherence of Dutch efforts. Within these cases, the evaluation looks at coherence with other Dutch interventions aimed at addressing root causes and their contribution to stability, security and rule of law – such as for instance foods security and employment – and coherence with other interventions aimed at dealing with the consequences of instability – such as irregular migration and humanitarian aid. In each country the case study will focus on a specific geographical region, taking into account all interventions in this region. The selection of geographical regions will be based upon the desk study of step 4.
4. A key element feeding the analysis and the field research for the case studies is **a desk study of the projects implemented in the case study countries**. This consists of a review of the documentation (project proposals, project appraisals, progress reports, MTRs, end reports and, if available, end evaluations) for all projects and programmes implemented in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Mali in the evaluation period. The desk review will draw on the updated 3IE evidence gap map for peacebuilding (Sonnenveld et al., 2020). This map builds on the earlier 3IE evidence gap map and scoping paper published in 2015 (Cameron et al., 2015) and presents the evidence for specific interventions typologies.[13] These intervention typologies closely align with Dutch efforts to contribute to stability, security and rule of law. The desk study will render a systematic classification of the various interventions according to these intervention typologies

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[13] An evidence gap map is a thematic collection of information about impact evaluations and systematic reviews. It presents a visual overview of existing and ongoing studies or reviews in a sector in terms of the types of programmes evaluated and the outcomes measured. The evidence is mapped in a table, graphically highlighting the gaps, where few or no impact evaluations or systematic reviews exist and where there is a concentration of impact evaluations but no recent high-quality systematic review. The evidence gap map for peacebuilding identifies the following six categories: 1) strengthening social well-being, empathy and conflict resolution; 2) supporting peace processes, oversight and post-conflict justice; 3) ending violence and building a safe and secure environment; 4) building a strong and inclusive civil society; 5) building inclusive and accountable state institutions at national, sub national and local levels; 6) building sustainable economic foundations and livelihoods. Each intervention category distinguishes different interventions.

and the geographical areas in which they were implemented. In addition, the study collects all available evidence on the achieved results of the implemented programmes and projects. It is important to critically review the quality of the documentation of projects and programmes, especially beyond the output level. The desk study will also render an overview of the geographical locations of all interventions, on the basis of which the research team will select specific areas for the field study.

5. **Review of selected diplomatic interventions** in the three countries. For each case study country, two to four key diplomatic policy interventions are selected and assessed. Diplomatic policy interventions that are included should contribute to the broader objectives on stability, security and rule of law. The selection of diplomatic initiatives relevant to the case studies is determined based on a desk review of policy documents and interviews with policy officers. Selected interventions will include both diplomatic efforts targeted solely within the countries of the selected case studies as well as multilateral diplomatic efforts which aim to have impact in the selected countries. The review aims to reconstruct the diplomatic interventions, assess the choices made and the coherence with other stability interventions. Field research for the case studies will also contribute to the reconstruction and assessment of these diplomatic interventions.

6. **A desk study of a selection of projects funded through the Stability Fund.** Given the significant size of the Fund, a desk study will include a selection of projects for a (weighted) sample of projects and programmes financed through the Stability Fund (SF). The Fund consists of a diverse portfolio of, inter alia, de-mining programmes, large contributions to international trust funds, core funding to international organisations and many small and tangible projects financed through NGOs. Between 2015 and 2019, the SF financed 299 individual projects in 41 countries and regions, with a total expenditure of about EUR 468 mln. A considerable part of the projects was implemented in the three case study countries, but there were also projects in non-case study countries like Iraq or Lebanon. The desk study will include projects implemented in both case study countries as well as non-case study countries. No additional field research will be conducted in these countries. Given its diverse portfolio, it will not be possible to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the Fund as a whole. However, desk and field research (in the case study countries) might reveal some important insights on the impact of the projects and their coherence with the integrated approach on stability. In addition, the findings of the desk study will feed into the broader analysis at the policy level. For this desk study, it will be crucial to conduct a proper quality assessment for all documentation, such as MTRs, progress reports and end evaluations. Only documentation of sufficient quality will be taken into account.[14]

The remainder of this section will present:

- Further explanation of the approach and the selection of the three case study countries.
- A detailed explanation of the methodology used to guide the evaluation and the research activities listed above.
- Constraints.

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[14] Annex 1 provides IOB's quality assessment for evaluation reports

Relevance	The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.
Coherence	The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Includes internal coherence and external coherence.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
Efficiency	The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.
Impact	The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.
Sustainability	The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.
Outcome	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes
Activity	Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilised to produce specific outputs.
Inputs	The financial, human, and material resources used for the development intervention.
Results	The output, outcome, or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.

Box 2. Evaluation terminology
Source: revised evaluation criteria OECD/DAC (2019) and OECD 2002

6.1 Approach and selection of cases

The circumstances in conflict and post-conflict settings may pose serious challenges for rigorous monitoring and evaluation. It is not possible to conduct an empirical impact analysis for this evaluation. At the same time, it will also not be feasible to rely entirely on secondary data, such as end evaluations or progress reports. The quality of monitoring and evaluation reports is often sub-par and many peacebuilding and reconstruction projects continue to build on untested assumptions (Autesserre, 2017; IOB, 2019). As such, aggregating the results of individual project evaluations will not yield valid findings. Moreover, even if the existing secondary data would allow for aggregation, doing so would disregard possible synergies and coherence between supported UN peacekeeping operations, diplomatic initiatives, migration and development interventions or simply between multiple interventions. In other words, the total effect of Dutch efforts regarding stability, security and rule of law could be more than the sum of its parts.

Thus, to validly answer the research questions and the main question of this evaluation, we foresee that additional research is necessary. We will focus the scope of the evaluation by making a selection of countries and, more specifically, a selection of in-country regions for field work.

As described in section 3, the expenditures of Dutch efforts in the fields of stability, security and rule of law between 2015 and 2019 amounted roughly to EUR 2000 mln. and projects and programmes were implemented in 54 countries and regions. We propose to include all interventions (including diplomatic) aiming to address security, stability and rule of law within a confined geographic region in a specific country. For selecting the countries, we adopted the following criteria:

- the absolute volume of Dutch expenditure on SSRoL;
- policy relevance for addressing root causes of instability, poverty and migration;
- the presence of specific diplomatic interventions;
- countries having an integrated mix of policy areas and SDGs within specific geographic regions;
- Dutch contribution to UN-peacekeeping operations and/or EU- and NATO-(training) missions;
- duration of significant Dutch support – with efforts to contribute to stability being considered a long-term investment, preference is given to cases where The Netherlands has provided significant support for at least the period of 2015-2021 as covered by the evaluation.
- logistics and possibilities to travel for IOB staff and (local) consultants.

After careful consideration of the above criteria, we selected Afghanistan, Mali and South Sudan as case studies. In the case selection process, the IOB team explicitly took into account the interests and preferences of the respective MFA staff from both HQ and embassies. Annex III provides an overview of the different countries that were assessed as possible case study country, related to the criteria. The rationale for the selection of the case study countries pertained to the following arguments:

- Afghanistan: By far the largest beneficiary of Dutch support focussing on stability, security and rule of law, including contribution to the NATO Resolute Support Mission It is therefore included from an accountability perspective and because the financial weight signifies the political importance of the case. There are a lot of large multi-donor projects and it is therefore a useful case to consider Dutch diplomatic efforts in relation to the development budget allocated to the country. Additionally, Afghanistan provides a good case for the integrated approach as well as for the relation with migration and forced displacement.
- Mali: The Netherlands has a long history of development cooperation in Mali and has provided a significant contribution to MINUSMA. With a deteriorating context and increased radicalisation in the Sahel, it is a case highly relevant to policy.[15] There are also links with efforts focused on irregular migration.
- South Sudan: The Netherlands has supported stability, security and rule of law since and before its independence in 2011. The Netherlands is one of the larger donors in the country for this sector, and has contributed to UNMISS. There is a link with humanitarian aid and it is relevant to analyse the new approach regarding 'hubs of stability'.

In the three countries, the ministry roughly spent EUR 344 mln. on stability, security and rule of law between 2015 and 2019 (see figure 2).

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[15] See the interim report of the Integrated Foreign and Security Strategy (GBVS), TK 2019-2020, 33694-57.

Figure 2. Case selection based on total expenditure (2015-2019) per country, in EUR mln.
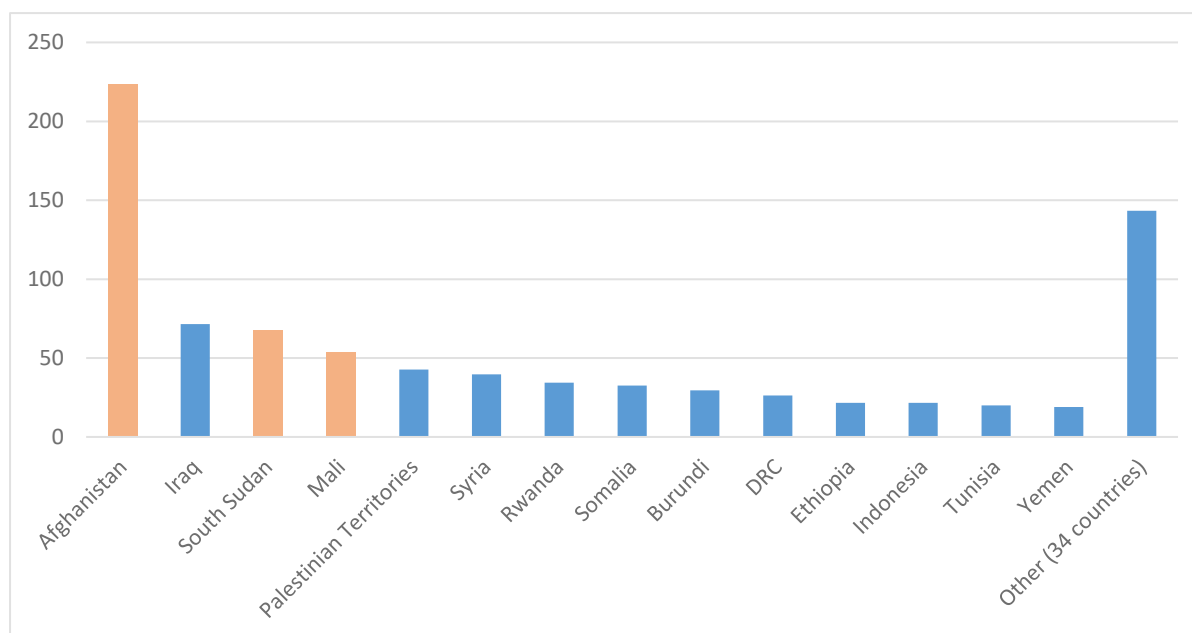
NB. Expenditure for stability, security and rule of law related interventions. Graph excludes expenditure not allocated to specific countries and all expenditure related to migration.
Source: MIBZ

In addition to the relatively large portfolios on stability, security and rule of law, the Netherlands also contributed about USD 134 mln. to UNMISS (South Sudan) and USD 71 mln. to MINUSMA (Mali). Combined these allocations represent about 44% of all Dutch contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. Annex III (in separate documents) presents country profiles of the three selected cases.

IOB will conduct field research in the three selected countries. Due to the decent financial coverage of the three cases, their geographical distribution across continents and the broad array of interventions of Dutch policy, we are confident that it will be possible to generalise our findings to the broader policy level. The overall security situation in all three countries is volatile, and we take this into account by measuring the effects of Dutch policy within its proper sphere of influence. It is unrealistic to expect that projects and programmes funded by the Netherlands by themselves can address all factors that contribute to conflict and fragility. At the same time, we take the counterfactual situation into account as well as possible; it could be possible that the situation would have been worse in the absence of Dutch programmes and projects.

6.2 Methodology

We propose a theory-based approach for this evaluation.[16] The basis for our methodology is the integrated approach for small-n analyses, as formulated by White and Phillips (2012). Theory-based methods specify a theory of change and formulate a number of alternative hypotheses. The methods aim to establish causation by collecting all the possible evidence to validate, invalidate or revise the hypothesized explanations. Also the analysis takes into account possible other routes to a certain change ('alternative pathways') and systematically considers all the evidence for these alternative pathways.

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[16] Theory-based evaluation makes it possible to assess whether and how a programme works, and provides a framework for assessing complex programmes in volatile contexts that are unsuitable for experimental or quasi-experimental designs (Bamberger et al., 2016).

This is especially important because the evaluation aims to move beyond the programme level and present findings and formulate lessons at the policy level. It is therefore important to outline that the proposed approach is not a linear, but rather an iterative process; processes of data collection and analysis may go back and forth as it will be necessary to find new evidence for alternative assumptions or routes to certain change.

Our approach consists of the following five evaluative steps:

1. Formulating theories of change
2. Setting out attribution questions
3. Formulating the evaluation plan
4. Identifying alternative causal hypotheses
5. Verifying the causal chain.

1. Formulating the Theories of Change.

This step is intertwined with the subsequent step. Figure 3 presents a schematic overview of our intended approach for reconstructing the ToCs.

Figure 3 – Approach for reconstructing the Theories of Change
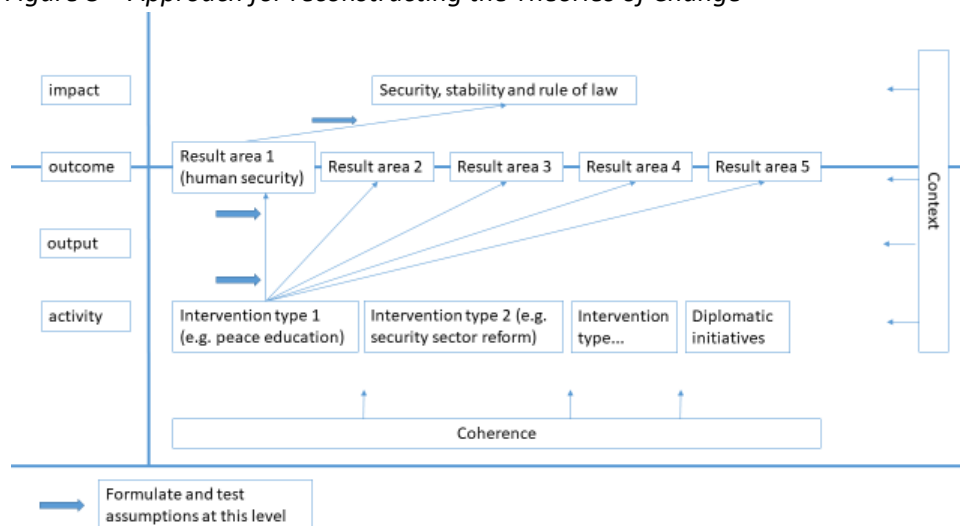
ToC at policy level. The evaluation starts with the reconstruction of the ToC at the highest level of aggregation: the Dutch policy on stability, security and rule of law. We realise that some of the policies already have existing ToC's (like for SRoI), while other policies are of a more general nature and only described in policy letters (like the GBVS), but we think it is valuable to compose a ToC which includes development cooperation policy goals as well as foreign/diplomatic policy goals. The ToC seeks to establish the links between all Dutch efforts, including development programmes, migration projects, diplomatic initiatives and UN, EU and NATO (peacekeeping) operations and missions, and their wider contexts and outcomes. We will reconstruct the ToC in a consultative process with the relevant departments within the Ministry. The ToC will include, amongst others, the following assumptions: 1) that interventions in fragile contexts require a certain level of risk appetite and 2) that promoting stability will in the long-term reduce terrorist threats and irregular migration.

ToC at country level. We will also reconstruct a theory of change for the three case study countries and for the selected programme/project levels, in cooperation with the respective embassies and implementing organisations and based upon existing document like the Multi Annual Country Strategies (MACS's). In the process, we will take context into account, look into alternative pathways

and incorporate other relevant developments that might have affected stability, security and rule of law, such as political national and international developments and the development programmes of other donors.

ToC at intervention level. For the result areas in Dutch policy on stability, security and rule of law and the corresponding (groups of) interventions, we aim to reconstruct the overall causal chains and formulate assumptions for the individual result areas of the interventions. In this step, we will consider possible synergies and coherence between development interventions, diplomatic initiatives, migration and UN, EU and NATO (peacekeeping) operations and missions. As a starting point, we will use the earlier mentioned updated 3IE evidence gap map for peacebuilding (Sonnenveld et al., 2020).

When formulating the causal chains, we aim to estimate the effects of the interventions within their own sphere of influence. Also, we will consider the existing evidence base for the different assumptions. The results of the evidence gap map will feed into our causal chains and assumptions and will help us identify the most interesting areas for further research (next step).

The analysis will be an iterative process between theory, data collection and testing. Once new insights are developed or alternative causal hypotheses are formulated, additional primary research should be built in for testing; the ToCs will thus be living documents. This process is fed by field research in the case studies, the different desk studies as well as broader consultations with policy makers and other stakeholders.

2. Setting out the attribution questions and state how the evaluation will address them.

In this step, we aim to formulate the specific evaluation questions for each of the case studies in Afghanistan, Mali and South Sudan. These questions aim to test or falsify crucial implicit or explicit assumptions underlying the formulated ToCs. We will draft these questions while taking the local contexts and respective portfolio of all development interventions, diplomatic initiatives, migration and UN, EU and NATO (peacekeeping) operations and missions into account. We will pay specific attention to identifying gaps in the existing body of knowledge, both from specific intervention evaluations and from systematic reviews. Doing so allows us to direct most of our time and resources at testing the assumptions with less existing evidence. We will also formulate questions related to efficiency and coherence.

The second step involves a desk study (analysing evaluation and systematic reviews) and interviews with stakeholders.

3. Formulating an evaluation plan for data collection and analysis.

Starting point for this step is the desk study on projects that is currently being performed: a review of all documentation (project proposals, project appraisals, progress reports, MTRs, end reports and, if available, end evaluations) for all projects and programmes implemented in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Mali in the evaluation period. This desk study will render a systematic classification of the various interventions according to the intervention and outcome typologies used by 3IE (mentioned above) and the geographical areas in which they were implemented. In addition, the study collects all available evidence on the achieved results of the implemented programmes and projects. It is important to critically review the quality of the documentation of projects and programmes, especially beyond the output level.

We will also conduct a review of diplomatic interventions that aim to contribute to the objectives of stability, security and rule of law in these three countries. This analysis will use available internal documentation and consult with relevant policy officers at the ministry and the embassies. The aim

is to include a few diplomatic initiatives per country. Preferably, these interventions contribute to one of the six result areas.

The findings from both studies will allow us to select regions, provinces or states within the selected countries. We aim to select the geographic areas with the largest number and types of interventions. Selecting specific areas within the three countries allows us to place the local context at the heart of the analysis. In these geographically confined areas, the ambition is to include all implemented programmes, projects and diplomatic interventions aiming to directly or indirectly contribute to stability, security and rule of law. Doing so allows us to examine the effects of and interaction between interventions and diplomatic efforts at the local level and the results among affected communities.

After having selected the geographical areas for the fieldwork, we aim to hire local researchers (hereafter: consultants) for data collection in the field. By working with local consultants we aim to minimise the risk of respondent bias and, equally important, local consultants offer valuable knowledge about the contexts in which the interventions have been implemented. Prior to the start of the fieldwork, two IOB researchers will travel to each of the selected locations. There, the local consultants and IOB staff will translate and tweak the ToCs for the local context. In this process, we will formulate the most important assumptions in the causal chain that need to be tested by the consultants. On location, the IOB researchers will focus on the possible effects of diplomatic interventions and delve deeper into effects, coordination, coherence and synergies of interventions. This will done by conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders (bilateral donors, multilateral organisations, EU, NGOs, etc.). For all fieldwork, we aim to use similar templates and tools for data collection and analysis. This allows us to compare the findings from the different case studies.

4. Identifying alternative causal hypotheses.

It is important to identify hypothetical causal explanations for the observed outcomes. As mentioned before, we aim at an iterative, rather than a linear process of data collection and analysis. It is our intention to formulate possible alternative hypotheses from emerging observations. To anchor this process in our data collection, we anticipate splitting up the fieldwork in two cycles. After having completed the first phase, the local consultants and IOB researchers will jointly reflect on the initially collected evidence for the assumptions formulated and, where relevant, subsequently formulate alternative causal hypotheses. During the second round of data collection, the local consultants can dive deeper into the newly formulated premises and assumptions.

5. Verifying the causal chain.

Triangulation is key in this final step, that brings together all existing evidence (from the desk study on all interventions in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Mali, from the desk study on the Stability Fund, but also from systematic reviews, evidence gap maps and interviews with stakeholders) with the newly collected data from the field. This process starts by describing the observed changes in stability, security and rule of law in the three countries and considers all the gathered and existing evidence for each of the causal links in the respective ToCs and for the alternative causal hypotheses. The goal is to reconstruct the actual causal chain (including changes in context and possible adaptations of interventions) and to relate the observed changes in stability, security and rule of law to the complex web of all Dutch efforts – support to UN, EU and NATO (peace keeping) operations and missions, diplomatic initiatives and development programmes and migration projects.

6.3 Constraints and contingency

The research team identified several limitations for this evaluation. Partly these are internal limitations related to the portfolio of the projects, programmes and diplomatic interventions. Partly they are external factors, related to the instable context of the interventions. Below the most important limitations are mentioned.

Fragmentation of interventions and outputs: the projects and programmes funded in the field of stability, security and rule of law are very diverse in terms of implemented country, aims, size, implementing partner and activities. This goes for the bilateral funding, but even more for the 'worldwide' interventions and those funded through the Stability fund. Often, interventions are also relatively small in relation to the challenges countries face, which complicates impact measurement. With the case selection and approach described above, we aim to mitigate this constraint as well as possible, although we contend that measuring impact will still be a challenge.

Quality of progress reports and underlying project evaluations: The internal IOB-review of the Stability Fund and the IOB evaluation of the Reconstruction and SPCC programme concluded that the availability and the quality of the project proposals and the underlying evaluations greatly varied. In most cases a baseline was lacking, indicators were not operationalised validly and there was risk of selection bias. We expect that this will also be the case for this evaluation, which will limit the extent to which we can use these underlying evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the projects. Measuring progress in fragile context is not always easy and typical results frameworks are sometimes inappropriate. This evaluation will assess both intended and unintended consequences (positive and negative) of interventions.

Covid-19: since February 2020 the world is engulfed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 is a hugely destabilizing factor worldwide. In contexts that are already fragile, the impact may be even greater; this applies both to the direct health effects and to the indirect effects with regard to socio-economic development, service delivery and the capacity of government institutions. These indirect effects can have an undermining effect on stability and security. It is also possible that the rule of law development process will be affected by government intervention in fragile contexts. We have included a research question related to the response to Covid-19 in the relevant projects and programmes.

Covid-19 also has a large impact on travel possibilities. Therefore we included in the planning different scenario's and go/no go moments, depending on the situation.

7. Organization and planning

The team and quality control

The evaluation is conducted by IOB researchers Meie Kiel, Caspar Lobbrecht and Rens Willems. The desk research is undertaken by an external researcher.

For the field studies IOB will work with external consultants, preferably local consultants from the case study countries. The IOB researchers will extensively prepare them and they will do this - depending on the developments with Covid-19 - either in the field or through video-contact. The

external consultants will be responsible for most of the field research, which will take up to 8 weeks. The IOB researchers will ensure coherence between the case studies.

An internal IOB-peer review group will be updated every six week on the progress of the research. They will give advice and provide feedback on the terms of reference, research process and draft reports. The group consists of: Arjan Schuthof (chair), Rob van Poelje, Paul de Nooijer, Marieke van Egmond, Sam Streefkerk, Johanneke de Hoogh and Meike de Goede.

An external reference group, composed of people from relevant different backgrounds with demonstrable knowledge in the field of stability, security and/or rule of law, will advise on the quality and relevance of the terms of reference and the draft report and other relevant matters. This reference group consists of:

- Arjan Schuthof (chair) - IOB
- Jolle Demmers – professor Conflict Studies Utrecht University
- Geert Geut – former ambassador to South-Sudan
- Cindy Chungong – regional director Africa, International Alert
- Marriët Schuurman – DSH
- Gerard Steeghs – DMM
- Stella Kloth – DVB

Planning and output

The planning for this evaluation is presented in the table below. The evaluation formally starts when the ToR are approved, therefore that is the start of the planning.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent to national and international travel restrictions, our original planning of conducting the first country study to South-Sudan in Q4 is already under pressure. Our new planning foresees in three scenario's:

Green scenario: international travel possible in 2021. This is the scenario set out in the schedule below, which is the most ideal scenario. This scenario assumes that travel will be possible again mid-2021 and that the evaluation can continue as planned.

The underlying table presents a preliminary schedule based on the green scenario.

Activity	2020				2021												2022	
	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2
reference group established and meeting on ToR	█																	
approval ToR (director IOB)	█																	
desk study project interventions	█	█	█	█														
desk study and interviews diplomatic interventions		█	█	█														
desk study selection of projects from Stability Fund				█	█	█	█											
reconstructing policy and policy ToC	█	█	█	█														
establishing ToC's for groups of interventions	█	█	█	█														
(temporary) decision moment for scenario's:				█	█													
contracting local consultants							█	█										
writing ToR for South-Sudan					█	█												
field research South-Sudan										█	█	█						
writing ToR for Afghanistan					█	█												
field research Afghanistan											█	█	█					
writing ToR for Mali					█	█												

Activity	2020								2021								2022	
field research Mali											🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩				
Writing synthesis report													🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	

Orange scenario: local travelling possible - distance-managing of local consultants combined with virtual interviews by IOB. This scenario assumes that the IOB team cannot travel outside of Europe but travelling within the selected countries is possible. In this scenario local consultants could be contracted and supervised from a distance, and additional interviews are conducted by IOB via videoconferencing and telephone. Research methods and planning will follow the green scenario as closely as possible. This is not the preferred option of the research team, but has to be taken into consideration when the green scenario becomes unrealistic.

Red scenario: no travelling possible. This scenario assumes that the crisis will continue globally throughout 2021, and that travelling will not be possible next year. There are two options when the red scenario becomes reality:

1. Postpone the (remainder) of the evaluation until field research is feasible. Consider publishing findings on relevance For these findings, the research team can primarily draw on available policy documents, desk review of project documents, available evaluative and academic literature, and interviews in the Netherlands and at a distance.
2. Cancel the remainder of the evaluation and consider publishing findings on relevance. Research Questions about the effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of policy and interventions cannot be validly answered without field research.

Output

The results of the evaluation will be presented in different ways, to different stakeholders and at different moments:

During the process of the evaluation we work in consultation with the different (internal and external) stakeholders when formulating the ToC. The final ToC will be presented in an interactive (online or if possible live) session. We will align this process as much as possible with relevant policy review moments of the different internal stakeholders (like reviewing ToC's and result frameworks).

Depending on the quality and relevance of the findings we consider to internally share the results of the desk study of the project portfolio in the case study countries with the embassies and the relevant departments.

The case studies will result in country reports which we will present internally. This is also the case for the results from the desk study of the Stability Fund.

The final result of the evaluation (based on the different building blocks) will be presented in a written digital report in English, with a separate summary of the key findings and recommendations. The report will be sent to Parliament and made available online. Before the publication of the report the main findings will be presented to the main internal and external stakeholders.

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Annexes

I.   Quality assessment criteria for evaluation reports

Validity

1. The report gives an overview of policy backgrounds and starting points and of the institutional setting and force field in which the evaluation object finds itself.
2. The report reflects and explains the policy theory that underlies the investigated intervention, including the assumptions about causal and final relationships, and about the means-ends hierarchy that is used together with the different result levels.
3. The problem statement concisely formulates the main objective of the evaluation. Together the research questions operationalize this problem statement.
4. The research questions provide a practical/unambiguous elaboration of the way in which evaluation criteria such as effectiveness and efficiency are operationalized (using indicators).
5. The methodological justification gives:
    a. a description and limitation of the collection of the research units (by type, target group, location, period, institution, financial size, etc.) to which the research results relate.
    b. a description and justification of the research methods and techniques used;
    c. the extent to which the indicators defined at the different result levels can be considered specific, measurable and time-bound.
    d. provides an explanation of the care with which the data sources used were selected, and the accuracy and transparency with which data from those sources were processed and analysed
    e. information about the extent to which the conclusions from the sample that was examined or the case studies that were carried out apply to the entire study population.
    f. states (possible) shortcomings of the research and limitations to the generalizability of the findings and conclusions.
6. The report indicates how the quality control was carried out (internal quality control, guidance or steering group, involvement of independent external experts).
7. The conclusions are actually covered by the research findings.

Reliability

8. Independence of the evaluators, in particular their independence from the stakeholders of the research such as donor, clients, implementers and target audience.
9. The methodological justification provides information about the extent to which (i) data were checked and (ii) different sources/methods were used to collect information about the same characteristics and phenomena (including triangulation) and (iii) the course of the evaluation and any adjustments made in comparison with the original research design.
10. The report indicates the extent to which selection and content of data sources that were used, especially documentation and respondents, were independent of stakeholders in the evaluation such as donor, clients, implementers and target audience.

Effectiveness

11. The evaluation report gives a clear explanation of how effectiveness has been investigated and has used a valid approach for measuring effectiveness.

12. Were the changes in effect variables measured in relation to (a) the initial situation? and (b) a control group?
13. Can the observed changes in effect variables be attributed to the activity?
14. Are these observed changes and attributed changes in line with programme, project and/or policy objectives?

Efficiency

15. The report provides a clear explanation of the way in which efficiency was investigated and the evaluation has used a valid approach to the measurement.
16. The conclusions on efficiency answers questions such as: Were inputs used at the lowest possible costs? Were activities carried out in a simple manner? Were overhead costs kept as low as possible? Was duplication avoided? Were conflicts during implementation resolved / prevented in time? Was the program efficient compared to other interventions with the same goal?
17. These conclusions are supported by the findings.

Usability

18. Clarity of the specification of the (external) purpose of the evaluation for which the research results will be or have been used.
19. Clarity and comprehensiveness with which the evaluation report and its summary reflect the essence of the research, in particular the main findings.
20. Completeness with which all research questions are answered by the conclusions.
21. Practical feasibility of recommendations (that are clearly distinguished from conclusions) and the extent to which these recommendations are within the reach of the responsible policy makers.

II. Country selection matrix

criteria country	volume of Dutch expenditure	broad SGD-relation	policy relevance	Dutch contribution to peace keeping operations	length of support	Logistics and travel possibilities
Mali	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	
South-Sudan	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Afghanistan	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	
Rwanda		activities primarily focused on justice sector	exit country		🟩	🟩
Burundi	🟩	mainly Security Sector Reform, which was ended			🟩	🟩
Somalia			🟩		🟩	
Ethiopia		Support for promoting stability is limited compared to support for other sectors in de country.			🟩	🟩
Tunisia			Relevant as relatively new country in MENA focus region focusing on stability, but small portfolio and too early to be able to measure results.			🟩
Iraq	🟩		Relevant in relation to coherence between forced displacement, humanitarian assistance and development, but on SSRoL mainly reconstruction of basic services.			
Syria			Relevant in relation to coherence with development approaches to			

criteria country	volume of Dutch expenditure	broad SGD-relation	policy relevance	Dutch contribution to peace keeping operations	length of support	Logistics and travel possibilities
			forced displacement, but no SSRoL interventions.			
Lebanon		activities primarily focused on regional displacement				