

**EX-POST EVALUATION OF ACTIONS CO-FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN RETURN FUND UNDER  
THE 2011-2013 ANNUAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE NETHERLANDS**

(Report submitted in accordance with Article 52(2) (b) of Decision No 575/2007/EC)

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In recent years, important progress has been made in return policies. At the same time, a few significant problems remain which seriously hinder the actual departure of rejected asylum seekers and other aliens who may not (any longer) remain in the Netherlands. Governmental policies, like the adjustments to existing return regulations (REAN and HRT travel expenses) for foreign nationals and the obligation to give shelter to families with minor children after their asylum claim has been rejected, contributed to the improvement of the return process from the Netherlands. Also, the objectives and actions within the annual programmes 2011-2013 of the RF, addressed the needs in the field of return. All projects that have been implemented under RF 2011-2013 have an ongoing positive effect. However the shelters to families are still being discussed as they are not necessarily an incentive to return.

By formulating the needs and actions for the RF rather broad, the Dutch government offered a wide range of possibilities for societal partners to design their own project and at the same time contribute to the Dutch needs in the field of return policies. Doing so, the government gives the societal partners freedom to implement projects that fulfil the needs that they signal in their local environment. This creates a mutual understanding between the government and (local) NGO's. Most of the projects terminate after the project period has ended. Most of them cannot continue after the project period has terminated, unless they subscribe for the new call for proposals.

Working with resources from RF, required administrative duties for the responsible authority as well as for the beneficiaries. For the responsible authority this concerns the costs of running the programme, for the beneficiary this concerns primarily accountability costs. These costs have a negative effect on the efficiency which is achieved with the fund.

Probably the greatest added value of the RF, is the contribution of (local) NGO's in the return process and the incentive for all member states to make the same investments in joint EU return management.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

With this ex post evaluation of the RF 2011-2013 actions, the Netherlands gives substance to its obligation in relation to the European Commission. By means of the evaluation the European Commission wants to understand how the funds contribute to the development of area of freedom, security and justice for migrants. Using this ex-post evaluation, the European Commission examines the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, added value and sustainability in providing resources.

The Responsible Authority tendered for the hiring of external evaluation expertise. Van de Bunt Adviseurs won the tender as Van de Bunt has shown to have the necessary expertise and experience for the execution of the requested tasks.

Van de Bunt is a medium-sized consultancy firm for strategy, organisation and management. Van de Bunt has been advising, counselling and assisting companies, institutions and authorities since 1933. Van de Bunt Adviseurs deployed two senior advisers to carry out the work. Both of these

advisers have broad experience in conducting evaluation research and have experience with assignments related to the European Commission.

The evaluation is carried out in the period August-November 2015.

## 2. CONTEXT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RETURN FUND 2011-2013 ANNUAL PROGRAMMES

### *2.1. SUMMARY INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF RETURN MANAGEMENT IN THE PERIOD 2010-2015*

#### **Situation in the field of return management in 2010 (baseline):**

- Focus on voluntary return, in case a person does not obtain a status, the person should return, preferably independently, otherwise forced;
- Focus on strategic approach of Country of Origin;
- Since 2010, migrants that do not obtain a status have 28 days to leave the country. If they cooperate, the migrant can stay for up to 12 weeks and reside in a freedom-limiting location (based on Article 56 of Aliens Act).
- Since 2010, the Improved Asylum Procedure came into force. Between arrival in the registration centre and the actual decision is a period of 8 days. If due to circumstances the decision cannot be made in these 8 days, the Prolonged Procedure starts, which can last up to 6 months.
- Return projects within the framework of development cooperation in COO, organised by the Departure and Repatriation Service (DT&V) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (subsidy NGO's);
- Since 2012, the activities of the IOM in the area of aliens detention were intensified;
- Policy adjustments regarding families with children.

#### **Situation in the field of return management (2011- June 2015):**

Since the baseline in 2010 the situation in the field of return management did not change much. However, the Cabinet Rutte I (2010-2012) partly relied on support from the right wing Freedom Party (PVV), which gave the Cabinet the image of strict but just. In practice, the policy measures regarding return did not change radically. Some of the newly implemented policy measures for the period 2011-30 June 2015 are:

- Due to a court ruling on the 11th of January 2011, the Netherlands are obliged to give shelter to families with minor children even after the asylum claim has been rejected. Formally these families have no legal right to stay in the Netherlands and therefore have to leave the country. Giving these families the possibility and assistance for return and durable reintegration offers a (good) alternative for illegal stay in the Netherlands.
- Carrying out pilot project for alternatives for aliens detention (duration 2012)
- On the 24th of December 2010 the Return Directive came into force. Due to shift of Parliament discussion in Parliament on the Dutch legislation took some extra time.

The Dutch legislation was in accordance with the Return Directive was fully implemented on 31st of December 2011.

- Organising accommodation for foreign nationals who are cooperating in the return procedure
- Various adjustments to existing return regulations (REAN and HRT travel expenses) for foreign nationals. The REAN programme includes payment of travel expenses, any costs relating to obtaining travel documents, as well as financial support. HRT contributes to the foreign nationals costs of reintegration. Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has allocated € 2,5 million in 2013 for projects offering in kind support to voluntary returnees. This so-called Stuurgroep Vrijwillige Terugkeer (SVT) mainly functions as co-financing for projects under RF 2013. SVT cofinancing was also available for the tranches 2011 and 2012.
- On February 1st 2013 the Children Pardon (Kinderpardon) came into force. Children and their families who stayed in the Netherlands for at least five years can be eligible for a residence permit. The prerequisite for is that the request for the Children Pardon must be submitted when the child was below the age of 21, the child must have lived in the Netherlands for at least 5 years before its 18th birthday and the child must have been under government supervision during its stay in the Netherlands. The Children Pardon showed a decrease in the amount of people actually returning, but after a few months the amount of returnees increased again.
- Due to new financial rules starting on January 1st 2013 it is possible to combine in natura support with financial support.

### **Most significant migratory pressures in this period.**

In 2012 the Netherlands faced a higher influx of asylum seekers after a period of low influx which led to the closure of several reception facilities. This continuous higher rise in influx was not foreseen. As the asylum applicants need to be housed among other things, new reception facilities needed to be opened immediately including all the necessary requirements and materials. In 2012 the total number of asylum applications was 9.810. By the end of August 2013 the number of asylum applications had already reached 10.466. The projection was that this number will raise to 17.078 by the end of 2013. This means that compared to 2012, the increase in asylum applications will be more than seven thousand.

In the summer of 2015 the influx of asylum seekers rapidly increased in Europe. In October 2015 the Netherlands accommodates 39.204 asylum seekers in the asylum centres (compared to 15.394 in 2013 and 24.929 in 2014), with the main applicants coming from Syria (48%) and Eritrea (11%)<sup>1</sup>. This high influx heavily affects the whole asylum system, with for example people who are sheltered in temporary housing and people with a status that cannot be housed in a municipality due to a lack of social housing. One could expect that this high influx has an impact on return measures. However, since most of the applicants are expected to receive a residence permit, it might not influence the amount of people that actually return to their Country of Origin.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coa.nl/nl/over-coa/feiten-en-cijfers>

*Please indicate which countries most third-country nationals returned to.*

*Below is indicated to which countries most third-country nationals returned to<sup>2</sup>:*

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Totaal 2010 - june 2015</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	<b>2307</b>
<b>Mongolia</b>	<b>1194</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>1168</b>
<b>Russia</b>	<b>867</b>
<b>China</b>	<b>788</b>
<b>Macedonia</b>	<b>760</b>
<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>702</b>
<b>Ukraini</b>	<b>616</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	<b>604</b>
<b>Armenia</b>	<b>496</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>463</b>
<b>Belorussia</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>Iran</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>Ghanaian</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Bosnia</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Suriname</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>214</b>

In the return management the following national bodies are present:

- The Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V): which is responsible for the return management of third country nationals without a residence permit (e.g. rejected asylum seekers)
- The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar): one of their main tasks in the return management is to execute forced returns
- The Immigration and Naturalisation Service: this service has the overview over asylum seekers in the Netherlands. They inform DT&V and KMar on asylum seekers who have been denied asylum
- International Organization for Migration (IOM): IOM has been assisting aliens in The Netherlands who would like to return to their country of origin or resettle in a third country since 1992. IOM offers this support based on the REAN programme. REAN is an acronym for "Return and Emigration of Aliens from the Netherlands".
- NGO's: NGO's are important partners for the Dutch government as they stand in close connection to the target group in the local community. NGO's do usually not receive direct financial support, but they can apply for a budget of €1.500 per asylum seeker that

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics from Ministry of Safety and Justice

can be spent on material supplies, like educational tools (e.g. books, furniture) or tools to start a business in the country of origin.

## ***2.2. PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE FIELD OF RETURN MANAGEMENT IN THE PERIOD 2011-2015***

Table n° 1: **Context indicators**<sup>34</sup>

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1/1/2015-30/6/2015
Number of voluntary return applications/declarations of intent <sup>5</sup>	4.030	4.520	3.720	3.220	2.980	1.830
Number of voluntary return operations carried out <sup>6</sup>	3.060	3.470	2.910	2.490	2.270	1.290
Number of persons returned voluntarily <sup>7</sup>	3.680	4.100	4.090	3.610	4.050	2.050
Number of persons having benefitted from reintegration support	3.060	3.470	2.910	2.490	2.270	1.290
Number of return decisions issued <sup>8</sup>	29.870	29.500	27.270	32.440	33.740	n/a
Number of national forced return flights performed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of countries to which forced return	140	130	120	120	120	90

<sup>3</sup> The values should reflect the overall situation in the MS in the given year, incl. activities funded by the RF. One case can be counted under several indicators, i.e., for example, a voluntary return can be counted under "Number of persons returned voluntarily", "Number of persons who returned voluntarily as a result of counselling on returns", "Number of assisted vulnerable persons who returned voluntarily" etc.

<sup>4</sup> The numbers are rounded to the nearest ten. Numbers below 5 are presented as <10.

<sup>5</sup> Presented is the inflow of applications to the International Organisation of Migration.

<sup>6</sup> Presented are the voluntarily departures of the International Organisation of Migration.

<sup>7</sup> Presented is the total of assisted voluntarily departures. Source: Netherlands Ministry of Security and Justice (KMI System). Please note:

- Data concerns persons (not cases as double counts are excluded). EU-citizens are excluded.
- Due to technical issues, Dublin returns are included as of 2011 data.
- The destination country is only registered in case of forced return (return to third country) and Dublin return (return to other EU Member State).
- Returns to Belgium and Germany in the context of Mobile Supervision of Aliens, as exists in The Netherlands, are included.
- Data include refusals at the main harbour and the main airport.
- Data will be corrected for previous months as later registration of departures can occur.

<sup>8</sup> Source Eurostat. Presented are the data of Third country nationals ordered to leave. Definition of Eurostat: Third country nationals found to be illegally present who are subject to an administrative or judicial decision or act stating that their stay is illegal and imposing an obligation to leave the territory of the Member State (see Art. 7.1 (a) of the Regulation). These statistics do not include persons who are transferred from one Member State to another under the mechanism established by the Dublin Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 and (EC) No 1560/2003, for these cases see related Dublin Statistics). Each person is counted only once within the reference period, irrespective of the number of notices issued to the same person.



national operations were carried out <sup>9</sup>						
Number of persons returned in unilateral forced return operations <sup>10</sup>	4.380	3.440	3.590	2.840	2.100	990
Number of information activities/campaigns on return policy launched	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of persons counselled on returns <sup>11</sup>	5.610	6.410	5.250	4.390	4.260	2.300
Number of persons who returned voluntarily as a result of counselling on returns	3.060	3.470	2.910	2.490	2.270	1.290
Number of vulnerable persons assisted in relation to return	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of assisted vulnerable persons who returned voluntarily	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of assisted vulnerable persons who were returned forcefully	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of reintegration activities undertaken	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of persons who have returned after or in anticipation of reintegration support	3.060	3.470	2.910	2.490	2.270	1.290
Number of income generating/productive activities undertaken under reintegration support after the return <sup>12</sup>	1.360	2.010	2.600	2.290	2.240	1.550
Number of new return	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

<sup>9</sup> Presented is the number of countries to which the Repatriation and Departure Service has realised forced return from the Netherlands.

<sup>10</sup> Presented is the total number of forced returns organised by the Repatriation and Departure Service, including forced return by joint return operations.

<sup>11</sup> Presented is the number of initial contacts with the International Organisation of Migration.

<sup>12</sup> Presented are the voluntarily departures of the International Organisation of Migration, with the extra cash/ in kind support, including the support for (former) asylum seekers with the Return and Reintegration Regulation (HRT).

management tools/initiatives introduced						
Number of return cases addressed/affected by the use of the new return management tools/initiatives	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of persons actually returned thanks to the new return management tools/initiatives	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of new co-operation partnerships in the field of return management developed with other Member States	European Reintegration Network & European Initiative on Return Management	European Reintegration Network & European Initiative on Return Management	European Reintegration Network & European Initiative on Return Management	European Reintegration Network & European Initiative on Return Management	European Reintegration Network & European Initiative on Return Management	European Reintegration Network & European Initiative on Return Management
Number of joint return operations carried out with other Member States	10	10	10	10	<10	<10
Number of persons returned through joint return operations	60 (from the Netherlands ; total is unknown)	110 (from the Netherlands ; total is unknown)	20 (from the Netherlands ; total is unknown)	30 (from the Netherlands ; in total: 150)	10 (from the Netherlands : in total: 160)	10 (from the Netherlands : in total 50)
Number of new co-operation partnerships in the field of return management developed with third countries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of return cases documented thanks to co-operation with third countries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of persons who were returned forcefully further to co-operation with third countries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of persons who returned voluntarily further to co-operation with third countries	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Number of staff employed (full-time equivalent) by public institutions in the field of return management <sup>13</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	a.RNM: 25FTE b.R&DS: 460FTE c.IOM: n/a
Number of detention centres used in connection to returns	6	4	5	4	4	3
Number of places in the detention centres used in connection to returns	2.380	2.080	2.080	2.080	1.760	1.180

Table n° 2: **Total public expenditure on return management** (*in EUR*)<sup>14</sup>

	2011	2012	2013	2014	1/1/2015 – 30/06/2015
Forced removals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Voluntary return programmes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Counselling	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Support to third parties (i.e. NGOs)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Case management (IT tools)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Staff and management costs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>€0,6 mln.</b>	<b>€0,6 mln.</b>	<b>€0,8 mln.</b>	<b>€0,2 mln.</b>	<b>€0,4 mln.</b>

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE RETURN FUND 2011-2013 ANNUAL PROGRAMMES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

#### *3.1. INTERVENTION LOGIC*

<sup>13</sup> Return management is done by three organisations in the Netherlands: a. Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (RNM), b. Repatriation and Departure Service (R&DS), c. International Organisation of Migration (IOM).

<sup>14</sup> Incl. RF funding.

### 3.2. APPROVED 2011-2013 ANNUAL PROGRAMMES AND THEIR REVISIONS

Table n° 3: Financial plan of the revised 2011 Annual Programme adopted on 11-07-2013

<b>2011 - annual programme adopted on 25 August 2011</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Reference to priority</b>	<b>Programmed EU contribution (EUR)</b>	<b>Programmed total public contribution (EUR)</b>
Action 1.: <i>Capacity building on counselling in the Netherlands</i>	1	€ 174.709	€ 349.418
Action 2: Outreach to the return of vulnerable irregular migrants	1	€ 505.770	€ 1.011.540
Action 3: Assisted voluntary programmes for aliens in detention facilities	1	€ 1.415.802	€ 2.831.604
Action 4: Assisted voluntary return and reintegration of families with minor children.	1	€ 1.729.524	€ 2.306.002
Action 5: Durable reintegration	1	€ 376.723	€ 753.447
Action 6: Government Return Flights	1	€ 400.000	€ 800.000
Action 7: Informed and dignified return	3	€ 100.000	€ 200.000
Action 8: Cooperation with authorities of selected countries of origin	3	€ 182.000	€ 364.000
Action 9: Enhancing ID determination	4	€ 155.000	€ 310.000
Technical Assistance		€ 241.230	€ 241.230
<b>Total</b>		<b>€ 5.280.758</b>	<b>€ 9.167.241</b>

<b>2011 - of the revised financial plan adopted in March 2013</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Reference to priority**</b>	<b>Programmed EU contribution (EUR)</b>	<b>Programmed total public contribution (EUR)</b>
Action 1.: <i>Capacity building on counselling in the Netherlands</i>	1	€ 174.222	€ 350.987
Action 2: Outreach to the return of vulnerable irregular migrants	1	€ 495.000	€ 990.000
Action 3: Assisted voluntary programmes for aliens in detention facilities	1	€ 716.090	€ 1.435.090
Action 4: Assisted voluntary return and reintegration of families with minor children.	1	€ 1.916.000	€ 2.706.000

Action 5: Durable reintegration	1	€ 1.240.216	€ 2.480.432
Action 6: Government Return Flights*	1	€ 0	€ 0
Action 7: Informed and dignified return	3	€ 343.000	€ 686.000
Action 8: Cooperation with authorities of selected countries of origin**	3	€ 0	€ 0
Action 9: Enhancing ID determination	4	€ 155.000	€ 310.000
Technical Assistance		€ 241.230	€ 241.230
<b>Total</b>		<b>€ 5.280.758</b>	<b>€ 9.199.739</b>

\*Action 6 was not implemented because the contract with subcontractor for the flights had expired.

\*\* The project 'The Ambassadors Conference (AMBACON)' had been included in the annual programme RF 2011. However the costs of this projects will not be booked under the Return Fund. The Ambassadors Conference (AMBACON) was carried out but majority of the costs of the conference were not eligible for RF funding. The remaining costs that were eligible, were below the RF threshold. The reason for the non-eligibility of the costs had to do with the rules concerning subcontracting. These rules slightly differ from the internal rules of RD&S. In this case no subcontracting procedure for the location of the conference was followed making the costs ineligible. Therefore RD&S financed the conference from its own means. The allocated funds of this project have been transferred to the other actions of this annual programme.

<b>2012 - as approved on December 18th 2012</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Reference to priority</b>	<b>Programmed EU contribution (EUR)</b>	<b>Programmed total public contribution (EUR)</b>
Action 1: To develop mechanisms within the context of forced return plans, to improve cooperation with the authorities of countries to which return is effected or must be effected	1	€ 920.000	€ 1.840.000
Action 2: Assisted voluntary return and (durable) reintegration	1	€ 2.000.000	€ 4.000.000
Action 3: (ex) UAM reintegration support	1	€ 441.051	€ 588.068
Action 4: Outreach and reintegration support for vulnerable and irregular migrants	1	€ 750.000	€ 1.500.000
Action 5: Measures aimed at increasing awareness and support from countries of origin in the field of return	1	€ 50.000	€ 100.000
Action 6: Dignified return for victims of trafficking and/or migrants with a medical condition	1	€ 395.000	€ 526.667
Action 7: Assisted voluntary return from detention and alternatives for detention	1	€ 500.000	€ 1.000.000

Action 8: Post arrival assistance of non voluntarily returnees	1	€ 250.000	€ 500.000
Action 9: The development of return plans in cooperation with other member states	2	€ 175.000	€ 350.000
Action 10: Support for the development of a strategic approach to return management by the member states	3	€ 1.260.000	€ 2.520.000
Technical Assistance		€ 312.127	€ 312.127
<b>Total</b>		<b>€ 7.053.178</b>	<b>€ 13.236.862</b>

<b>2012 - approved on May 21st 2014</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Reference to priority</b>	<b>Programmed EU contribution (EUR)</b>	<b>Programmed total public contribution (EUR)</b>
Action 1: To develop mechanisms within the context of forced return plans, to improve cooperation with the authorities of countries to which return is effected or must be effected	1	€ 870.000	€ 1.740.000
Action 2: Assisted voluntary return and (durable) reintegration	1	€ 2.261.808	€ 4.523.615
Action 3: (ex) UAM reintegration support	1	€ 159.328	€ 214.328
Action 4: Outreach and reintegration support for vulnerable and irregular migrants	1	€ 750.000	€ 1.500.000
Action 5: Measures aimed at increasing awareness and support from countries of origin in the field of return	1	€ 50.000	€ 100.000
Action 6: Dignified return for victims of trafficking and/or migrants with a medical condition	1	€ 583.651	€ 779.106
Action 7: Assisted voluntary return from detention and alternatives for detention	1	€ 500.000	€ 1.000.000
Action 8: Post arrival assistance of non voluntarily returnees	1	€ 200.000	€ 400.000

Action 8b: Provision of (individual) information concerning return to asylum seekers during or after the asylum procedure or to illegal aliens in a language that they understand 'Post arrival assistance of non voluntarily returnees'*	1	€ 1.168.975	€ 2.337.950
Action 9: The development of return plans in cooperation with other member states	2	€ 100.000	€ 200.000
Action 10: Support for the development of a strategic approach to return management by the member states	3	€ 97.290	€ 194.579
Technical Assistance		€ 312.127	€ 312.127
<b>Total</b>		<b>€ 7.053.178</b>	<b>€ 13.301.706</b>

\*Action 8b was add to the new AP.

<b>2013 - as approved on July 18th 2013</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Reference to priority</b>	<b>Programmed EU contribution (EUR)</b>	<b>Programmed total public contribution (EUR)</b>
Action 1: Assisted voluntary return and (durable) reintegration	1	€ 2.500.000	€ 5.000.000
Action 2: This action is aimed at improving the national return procedures and increasing the cooperation between different actors in the filed of return	1	€ 2.500.000	€ 5.000.000
Action 3: Forced return operations	1	€ 250.000	€ 500.000
Action 4: National charters (NC)	1	€ 600.000	€ 1.200.000
Action 5: Post arrival assistance 2013	1	€ 350.000	€ 700.000
Action 6: The development of programmes that offer innovative methods for providing innovative incentive measures to increase the number of (voluntary) returnees, which are based on the respect and dignity of the persons concerned	3	€ 2.263.488	€ 4.526.975
Technical Assistance		€ 383.895	€ 383.895
<b>Total</b>		<b>€ 8.847.383</b>	<b>€ 17.310.871</b>

<b>2013 - as approved June 26th 2015</b>
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Action	Reference to priority	Programmed EU contribution (EUR)	Programmed total public contribution (EUR)
Action 1: Assisted voluntary return and (durable) reintegration	1	€ 3.347.659	€ 6.695.319
Action 2: This action is aimed at improving the national return procedures and increasing the cooperation between different actors in the field of return	1	€ 253.007	€ 506.014
Action 3: Forced return operations	1	€ 0	€ 0
Action 3a: Pre Departure Facilitation (PDF): Provision of (individual) information concerning return to asylum seekers during or after the asylum procedure or to illegal aliens in a language that they understand.	1	€ 663.400	€ 1.326.800
Action 4: National charters (NC)	1	€ 0	€ 0
Action 5: Post arrival assistance 2013	1	€ 357.000	€ 714.000
Action 6: The development of programmes that offer innovative methods for providing innovative incentive measures to increase the number of (voluntary) returnees, which are based on the respect and dignity of the persons concerned	3	€ 1.229.271	€ 2.458.542
Action 7: Cooperation with other Member States (IRES)	2	€ 2.613.150	€ 5.226.300
Technical Assistance		€ 383.895	€ 383.895

### ***3.3.MANAGEMENT OF THE 2011-2013 ANNUAL PROGRAMMES***

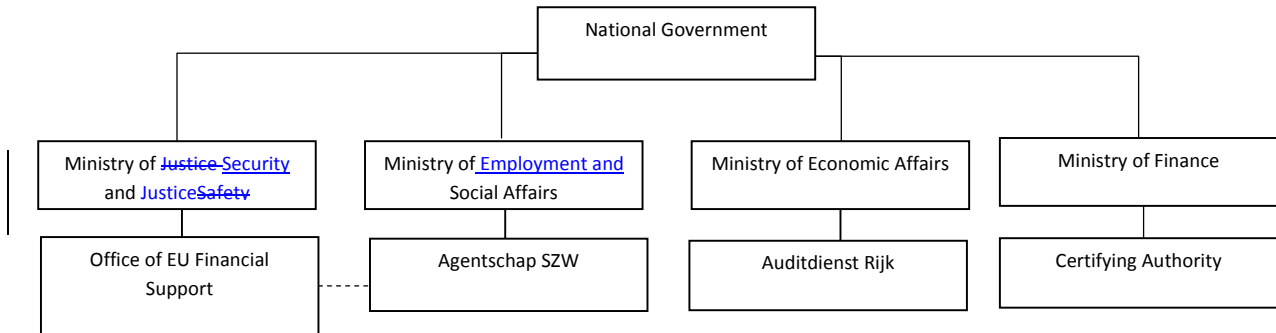
Work is still being done in accordance with the management and control system, as approved by the Commission on 13 February 2015 (version 7). However, in the description, the Responsible Authority in its functions is supported by the Directie Regie i.o. (in formation) within the Ministry of Security and Justice. Per 1 January 2015, the Directie Regie was established and the addition i.o. expired.

The Ministry of Security and Justice, Migration Policy Department, acts as Responsible Authority (RA) for the EBF. Agentschap SZW, acting as Delegated Authority (DA), has management, financial and project supervision tasks in relation to the EBF. The Certifying Authority (CA) is part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The CA has its own mandate which allows it to certify independently. The Audit Authority (AA) is the internal audit service of the Dutch Government and part of the Ministry of Finance. It performs audits at the end of an EBF-funded project and system audits.

Changes in the 2011-2015 period: On 1 January 2011, both the Responsible Authority and the Delegated Authority moved from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom relations.



Thereby these authorities were separated from the Audit authority. This was the situation till 4 November 2012. With the installation of the new cabinet, the Responsible Authority and the Delegated Authority moved to the Ministry of Security and Justice. With the Audit Authority as part of the Ministry of Finance, the independence was guaranteed. From 1 January 2014, the Agentschap SZW was designated as Delegated Authority.



Monitoring of project implementation takes place via on-going communication with the beneficiaries. The DA is responsible for monitoring and administration of the projects. The DA also provides regular assistance to beneficiaries in the course of project implementation.

Since 2011 the DA has visited every awarded project three times: at the beginning of the project ('kick-off'), at the occasion of a monitoring visit and at the end of the project period. On the spot visits are carried out by at least three persons: financial expert, content-based expert and practical expert. These visits improve the quality of the projects, but cost a lot in terms of manpower.

Financial administration of the awarded projects is to be ensured by the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries can download information on project management, financial management and the outline of the reports to be produced from the DA's website. The financial reporting by the beneficiaries consists of a specification of the total costs, hourly administration and submission of proof of expenditures (invoices etc.). The verification of expenditure is done by the Financial project supervisor at the DA (100% check of project expenditure).

Work is still being done in accordance with the management and control system, as approved by the Commission on 13 February 2015 (version 7). However, in the description, the Responsible Authority in its functions is supported by the Directie Regie i.o. (in formation) within the Ministry of Security and Justice. As off 1st January 2015, the Directie Regie was established and the addition i.o. expired.

### ***3.4. OUTPUTS AND RESULTS OF THE 2011-2013 ANNUAL PROGRAMMES***

Table n° X: **Output and result indicators**<sup>15</sup>

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>1/1 – 30/6/2015<sup>16</sup></b>	<b>Total 2011-2015</b>
Number of voluntary return applications/declarations of intent under the 2011-2013 RF annual	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

<sup>15</sup> One case can be counted under several indicators, i.e., for example, a voluntary return can be counted under "Number of persons returned voluntarily", "Number of persons who returned voluntarily as a result of counselling on returns", "Number of assisted vulnerable persons who returned voluntarily" etc.

<sup>16</sup> Projects under the RF have been financed for a period of 1,5 years. The impact/results up to 30/6/2015 have therefore yet been included in the results/impact of 2014.

programmes						
Number of voluntary return operations carried out under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	8	12	11	4		35
Number of persons who returned voluntarily under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	1267	1698	1371	420		7.719
Number of persons having benefitted from reintegration support under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	417	962	1236	430		3.045
Number of national forced return flights performed under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	0	0	0		0
Number of countries to which forced return national operations were carried out under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	6	3	2	1		12
Number of persons returned in unilateral forced return operations under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	244	307	93		644
Number of information activities/campaigns on return policy organised under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	41	61	82	31		215
Number of persons counselled on returns under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	3.934	32.412	23.620	4.197		64.163
Number of persons who returned voluntarily as a result of counselling on returns under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	587	1299	1882	690		4.458
Number of vulnerable persons <sup>17</sup> assisted in relation to return under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	687	878	515	214		2.294
Number of assisted vulnerable persons who returned voluntarily under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	687	802	485	124		2.098
Number of assisted vulnerable persons who were returned forcefully under the 2011-2013 RF	0	0	0	0		0

<sup>17</sup> Such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.

annual programmes						
Number of reintegration activities undertaken under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	5	7	6	2		20
Number of persons assisted in their reintegration under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	417	994	1646	626		3.683
Number of persons who have returned after or in anticipation of reintegration support under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	422	868	1545	608		3.443
Number of income generating/productive activities undertaken under reintegration support under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	3	1	37	18		59
Number of new return management tools/initiatives introduced under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	4	2	1	1		8
Number of return cases addressed/affected by the use of the new return management tools/initiatives under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	389	195	55	27		666
Number of persons actually returned thanks to the new return management tools/initiatives under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	218	109	19	10		356
Number of new co-operation initiatives in the field of return management developed with relevant stakeholders in other Member States under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	13	10	2		25
Number of joint return operations carried out with other Member States under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	0	0	0		0
Number of persons returned through joint return operations under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	0	0	0		0
Number of new co-operation initiatives in the field of return management developed with relevant stakeholders in third countries under the 2011-2013 RF	10	27	23	6		66

annual programmes						
Number of return cases documented thanks to co-operation with third countries under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	168	250	567	242		1.227
Number of persons who were returned forcefully further to co-operation with third countries under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	0	0	0		0
Number of persons who returned voluntarily further to co-operation with third countries under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	11	5	0	0		16
Number of staff employed (full-time equivalent) by public institutions who acquired returns related knowledge under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	63	85	27	0		175
Number of staff employed (full-time equivalent) by non-governmental organisations / international organisations who acquired returns related knowledge under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	141	95	103	45		384
Number of detention centres constructed, renovated or upgraded under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	0	0	0		0
Number of places in detention centres constructed, renovated or upgraded under the 2011-2013 RF annual programmes	0	0	0	0		0

### ***3.5.FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2011-2013 ANNUAL PROGRAMMES***

Table n° X: Financial implementation of the 2011 Annual Programme

<b>Action</b>	<b>Reference to priority</b>	<b>Programmed EU contribution (EUR)</b>	<b>Final EU contribution[2] (EUR)</b>	<b>Implementation rate (%) ( c ) = (b)/(a)x100</b>
Action 1.: <i>Capacity building on counselling in the Netherlands</i>	1	€ 174.222	€ 166.745	96%
Action 2: Outreach to the return of vulnerable irregular migrants	1	€ 495.000	€ 473.217	96%

Action 3: Assisted voluntary programmes for aliens in detention facilities	1	€716.090	€535.129	75%
Action 4: Assisted voluntary return and reintegration of families with minor children.	1	€1.916.000	€1.470.189	77%
Action 5: Durable reintegration	1	€1.240.216	€781.012	63%
Action 6: Government Return Flights	1	€0	€0	not applicable
Action 7: Informed and dignified return	3	€343.000	€142.951	42%
Action 8: Cooperation with authorities of selected countries of origin	3	€0	€0	not applicable
Action 9: Enhancing ID determination	4	€155.000	€98.446	64%
Technical Assistance		€241.230	€239.380	99%
Total		€5.280.758	€3.907.070	74%

Table n° X: Financial implementation of the 2012 Annual Programme

2012				
Action	Reference to priority	Programmed EU contribution (EUR)	Final EU contribution[2] (EUR)	Implementation rate (%) ( c ) = (b)/(a)x100
Action 1: To develop mechanisms within the context of forced return plans, to improve cooperation with the authorities of countries to which return is effected or must be effected	1	€870.000	€655.426	75%
Action 2: Assisted voluntary return and (durable) reintegration	1	€2.261.808	€1.816.486	80%
Action 3: (ex) UAM reintegration support	1	€159.328	€99.296	62%
Action 4: Outreach and reintegration support for vulnerable and irregular migrants	1	€750.000	€670.125	89%
Action 5: Measures aimed at increasing awareness and support from countries of origin in the field of return	1	€50.000	€43.722	87%
Action 6: Dignified return for victims of trafficking and/or migrants with a medical condition	1	€583.651	€462.140	79%
Action 7: Assisted voluntary return from detention and alternatives for detention	1	€500.000	€426.029	85%

Action 8: Post arrival assistance of non voluntarily returnees	1	€ 200.000	€ 145.647	73%
Action 8b: Provision of (individual) information concerning return to asylum seekers during or after the asylum procedure or to illegal aliens in a language that they understand 'Post arrival assistance of non voluntarily returnees'	1	€ 1.168.975	€ 1.155.432	99%
Action 9: The development of return plans in cooperation with other member states	2	€ 100.000	€ 37.213	37%
Action 10: Support for the development of a strategic approach to return management by the member states	3	€ 97.290	€ 87.202	90%
<b>Technical Assistance</b>		<b>312127,12</b>	<b>312127,12</b>	<b>1</b>
Total		€ 7.053.178	€ 5.910.845	84%

Table n° X: Financial implementation of the 2013 Annual Programme<sup>18</sup>

2013				
Action	Reference to priority	Programmed EU contribution (EUR)	Final EU contribution[2] (EUR)	Implementation rate (%) ( c ) = (b)/(a)x100
Action 1: Assisted voluntary return and (durable) reintegration	1	€ 3.347.659	€ 3.169.438	95%
Action 2: This action is aimed at improving the national return procedures and increasing the cooperation between different actors in the field of return	1	€ 253.007	€ 569.359	225%
Action 3: Forced return operations	1	€ 0	€ 0	NA
Action 3a: Pre Departure Facilitation (PDF): Provision of (individual) information concerning return to asylum seekers during or after the asylum procedure or to illegal aliens in a language that they understand.	1	€ 663.400	€ 557.491	84%
Action 4: National charters (NC)	1	€ 0	€ 0	NA
Action 5: Post arrival assistance 2013	1	€ 357.000	€ 227.833	64%

<sup>18</sup> By the time of writing, the monitoring and evaluation cycle for the projects under RF 2013 has not been finalised. Therefore, the numbers are based on the project reports of the beneficiaries. Since these reports have not been approved yet, the numbers are not the final numbers.

Action 6: The development of programmes that offer innovative methods for providing innovative incentive measures to increase the number of (voluntary) returnees, which are based on the respect and dignity of the persons concerned	3	€ 1.229.271	€ 1.008.926	82%
Action 7: Cooperation with other Member States (IRES)	2	€ 2.613.150	€ 782.141	30%
Technical Assistance		€ 383.895	€ 383.895	100%
Total		€ 8.847.383	€ 6.699.084	76%

Table n° X: Expenditure under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes on the different types of activities under the return management (in EUR)<sup>19</sup>

	2011	2012	2013	2014	1/1/2015 – 30/06/2015 <sup>20</sup>
Forced removals	€0	€706.200	€2.515.854	€1.018.337	NA
Voluntary return programmes	€2.523.497	€3.396.433	€3.983.489	€1.458.073	NA
Counselling	€2.266.904	€3.050.426	€5.326.198	€2.183.856	NA
Support to third parties (i.e. NGOs)	€2.961.538	€4.285.310	€4.485.402	€1.541.566	NA
Case management (IT tools)	€148.715	€74.358	€0	€0	NA
Staff and management costs <sup>21</sup>	€159.212	€285.610	€356.373	€126.685	NA
Other	-	-	-	-	NA
Total	€8.059.866	€11.798.336	€16.667.315	€6.391.557	NA

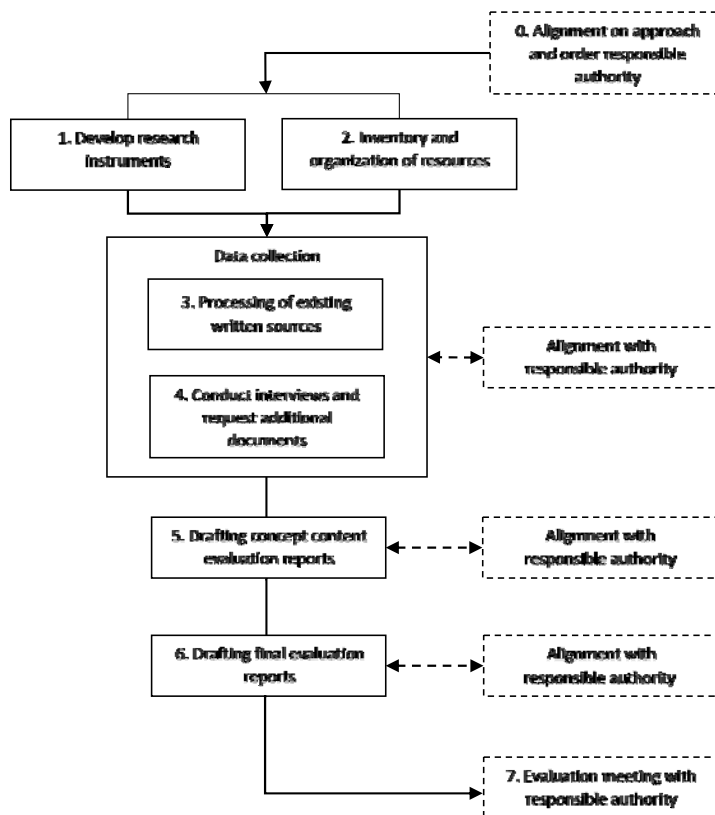
<sup>19</sup> There is overlap between the different types of activities mentioned in the table. For example, some project contain counselling and voluntary return and are carried out by an NGO. In that case, the amount of RF-funding is three times mentioned. Therefore, the total amount for each year is more than the actual EU funding in that particular year.

<sup>20</sup> Funding has been awarded for projects with a time span of 1,5 years. The calculation on the expenditure is made as follows: 2/3 of the fund in the year the fund was rewarded, 1/3 in the year that second year of the funding. Under RF 2010-2013 the latest funding is awarded in 2013, it is therefore not possible to calculate the expenditure in 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Expenditure on technical assistance is mentioned here.

#### 4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The following process approach has been followed:



First the EU format for the evaluation was reworked to a simple database and an inventory was made of the available sources. The requested information is largely distilled from the multiannual programme 2007-2013, the annual programmes 2011, 2012 and 2013, the decisions of the European Commission on the annual programmes 2011, 2012 and 2013, the final reports on implementation of the annual programmes 2011 and 2012, and the settlement reports by the beneficiaries of the projects of the annual programme 2013. The reason for using that last source is that the final report on implementation of the annual programme 2013 was not yet available. It has to be taken into account that there will be a verification on the settlement reports by the Responsible Authority and Audit Authority, which can lead to corrections. With regard to the limitations of the study, there has been no independent investigation by the evaluation expertise to the accuracy of the written sources. Because these documents, with the exception of the settlement reports of the projects of the annual programme 2013, have already been accepted by the European Commission, this is acceptable.

Many of the required quantitative and qualitative data could be extracted from the above mentioned written sources. On the basis of preliminary analysis additional information, backgrounds and explanations were obtained through interviews with representatives of the Responsible Authority and the Delegated Authority. In addition, missing necessary



information was requested from various agencies from inside the Ministry of Security and Justice as from the organizations of the beneficiaries.

Based on these sources, the evaluation expertise made a final analysis and filled out the evaluation format.

## 5. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### *5.1. RELEVANCE*

Evaluation Question 1: **To what extent did the objectives of the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands correspond to the needs of The Netherlands in the field of return management?**

In recent years, important progress has been made in return policies. At the same time, a few significant problems remain which seriously hinder the actual departure of rejected asylum seekers and other aliens who may not (any longer) remain in the Netherlands. Ultimately, the aim of the government is to increase the number of aliens that actually return.

In the MAP 2008-2013, one of the most significant needs in that context is cooperation with countries of origin. Good cooperation with representations of the countries of origin is essential in order to achieve the departure of those aliens (e.g. obtainment of travel documentation). In 2011-2013 period a total of 63 initiatives (over 15 projects) have been developed with relevant stakeholders in the country of origin. These initiatives vary in content and scale, some initiatives entail a field visit from reintegration officers from third countries to the Netherlands<sup>22</sup> (IOM – AVVR, 2011) to information meetings with employees of partner organisations in the country of origin (MbT – Step Forward, 2013). This need has been covered by the fund.

A second need that is mentioned in the MAP 2008-2013 is to invest in efforts to remove obstacles which cause aliens not to cooperate in their (voluntary) return. In the projects under RF 2011-2013 approximately 13.479 individual counselling sessions<sup>23</sup> have been organised in which potential returnees are consulted on possibilities for voluntary return. Also reintegration support is offered to those who return voluntarily (3.046 persons). This implies that the second need has been covered by the fund.

The third need, is to increase the support from local authorities, social organisations and other affected parties for the return policy pursued. In the period 2011-2013 not many projects on this specific need have been initiated. However, some projects work with volunteers from the local communities and others involve the local NGO's . The involvement of different stakeholders in society could enhance the support for the return policy.

Overall, with the objectives and actions within the annual programmes 2011-2013 of RF, the needs in the field of return management were certainly met. By formulating the needs and actions for the RF rather broad, the Dutch government offered a wide range of possibilities

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<sup>22</sup> A visit of 3 officers count here as 3 initiatives.

<sup>23</sup> Excluding project of DT&V in which translation services are provided.

for societal partners to design their own project and at the same time contribute to the Dutch needs in the field of return policies. Doing so, the government gives the societal partners freedom to implement projects that fulfil the needs that they signal in their local environment. This creates a mutual understanding between the government and (local) NGO's.

## ***5.2.EFFECTIVENESS***

**Evaluation Question 2: To what extent did the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands contribute to the development of an integrated return management and in particular to the balance between forced and voluntary return and to the setting up of a return procedure based on the assessment of the situation of the potential returnees?**

The policies of the Dutch government in the field of return management aim to contribute to an integrated return management and the RF 2011-2013 contributed to this aim. The Dutch government mainly focusses on voluntary return, which is also reflected in the actions and results of the RF 2011-2013. Under RF 2011-2013 4.758 migrants returned voluntarily whereas 644 returned forcefully. Forced return operations are always carried out by government organisations.

Most of the actions and projects in the Netherlands relate to Priority 1 (Support for the development of a strategic approach to return management by Member States). The main non-governmental partner for the Dutch government when it comes to projects on this priority, and return in general, is the IOM. In the period 2011-2013 IOM initiated 12 projects, which were both successful in terms of the quantity of migrants that returned as in terms of project administration. With an average of 319 returnees per project, IOM is by far the most effective partner when it comes to voluntary return.

**Evaluation Question 3: To what extent did the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands contribute to the co-operation between Member States in return management?**

In the Netherlands in the period 2011-2013 only two projects fall under Priority 2. The project IRES of the DTenV aimed at increasing the co-operation with European and Schengen countries in order to address common issues, such as identification of best practices in the area of identification, obtaining emergency travel documents, strategic co-operation with Third Country authorities and the development of European projects within the EU as well as within Third Countries.

Additionally, DT&V leads two common European projects (EURINT and ERIN<sup>24</sup>) that optimise cooperation between Member States on policy development with regards to return and reintegration. The travel costs of the EURIN and EURIN are subsidised by the project IRES 2. Doing so, the RF contributes to other projects that focus on reintegration and return. This is an example of how the RF and other European programmes can supplement each other.

Even though only two projects are carried out under Priority 2, the contribution of the projects will be valuable because it contributes to further cooperation in the area of forced return among European countries. The Netherlands is a strong supporter of increased strategic

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/actueel/2015/01/index.aspx?cp=66&cs=17113>

and operational cooperation with other Member States and the IRES-projects contributed to reaching this goal.

**Evaluation Question 4: To what extent did the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands contribute to specific innovative (inter)national tools for return management?**

The Netherlands funded 4 projects under Priority 3. Useful innovations that emerge with the support of the Return Fund can ultimately be incorporated into national policy.

Moreover, other projects that do not fall under Priority 3 can have an innovative character. For the Netherlands, the information meetings on voluntary return in alien detention were rather innovative (IOM 2011, IOM - Assisted Voluntary Return to Migrants in Detention III). Also, the focus on specific target groups is considered innovative, for example the focus on asylum seekers with medical needs (IOM - Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants with a medical condition (AVRR MC)). Additionally, projects that were innovative and successful in the beginning of the fund continued. E.g., the projects carried out by Stichting Wereldwijd support migrants in their return by letting them fill up a box with tools they need in order to start a business in their country of origin. In the beginning the project was innovative. After a few years of implementing and improving the same concept, the project is no longer innovative but it is still considered successful. In September 2015 Stichting Wereldwijd won the award for best return project in Europe under the RF voted for by the Commission and the Responsible Authorities of the Member States.

**Evaluation Question 5: To what extent did the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands contribute to the implementation of the EU standards and best practices in return management?**

Under Priority 4, the Netherlands formulated one Action which focusses on the improvement of national capabilities through cooperation with other Member States. Only one project has been executed under Priority 4. This project in 2011 by the DT&V tries to improve the process of identification of newly arrived migrants. In order to do so 94 employees of DT&V were trained. Even though the project does not fully comply with Priority 4, the project touches upon a very important topic and has been successful in its implementation.

Overall, this symbolises the tension between the projects and the categorisation by the EC. The beneficiaries are often NGO's who stand in close connection to society and target groups. They can signal what goes well and what needs attention among irregular migrants. Therefore, the Dutch government formulated the goals and objectives rather broad, so the project of beneficiaries could still fit in one of the actions. Consequently, beneficiaries can come up with necessary projects that cannot exactly be categorised along the categorisation as proposed by the commission.

Moreover, in other respects the Dutch government does contribute to the implementation of EU standards and best practices. The Dutch Repatriation and Departure Service (R&DS) of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations continues to seek European partnerships for the development of international voluntary return activities. The R&DS is for instance involved in the implementation of European Reintegration Instrument (ERI) and European Return Platform for Unaccompanied Minors (ERPUM) projects and in the MAGNET project.

### ***5.3. EFFICIENCY***

Evaluation Question 6: **To what extent were the effects of the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed?**

When we compare all the projects under RF 2011-2013 and we compare their output with the costs, we can see that there is a difference between different kind of organisations. NGO's that run their business with a limited amount of employed staff, are able to reach their own target at relatively low costs. For example, Stichting ROS in Rotterdam works with less than 5 full time employed staff and managed to have 29 people returned and counselled 59 people on return. On the other hand, because this type of organisation is small and heavily relying on volunteers, their output is lower than the output of more professional NGO's or governmental organisations. For example, IOM is the main governmental partner on voluntary return and managed to let 3.828 people return. IOM is an international organisation with offices all over the world and some 5.400 staff working in over 100 countries worldwide. So the costs for IOM are higher, but so is the output.

### ***5.4. UTILITY***

Evaluation Question 7: **To what extent did the results and impacts of the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands correspond to the needs of The Netherlands in the field of return management?**

The Dutch government formulated its needs very broad. As mentioned in Q. 1, the first need to cooperate with the country of origin is clearly met, because of the 63 initiatives that were accomplished. Also the second need, to remove obstacles that cause aliens not to cooperate in their (voluntary) return was met, since approximately 13.479 individual counselling sessions had taken place. The third need however, which aims at increasing support from local authorities, social organisations and other affected parties has not been met, since not many projects on this topic have been initiated.

Overall, the Dutch government aims to increase the number of migrants that actually return. If we only take that goal into account we can conclude that the Netherlands has been successful in this regard. Under the RF a mix of different organisations with different target groups and different approaches were funded in order to reach this overall goal. The Netherlands highly values the opinions from societal partners and non-governmental organisations that work closely with the target group. Because the Dutch government defined the needs and actions rather broad, the societal partners had the freedom to develop a project that meets the needs of the target group.

### ***5.5. SUSTAINABILITY***

Evaluation Question 8: **To what extent have the positive effects of the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands lasted after the interventions were terminated?**

Most of the projects terminate after the project period has ended. Most of them cannot continue after the project period has terminated, unless they subscribe for the new call for proposals.

However, when a project appears successful the method or approach can become part of general governmental policies or be contracted at non-governmental organisations. For

example, the project of IOM which focussed on voluntary return measures for aliens in detention was funded by RF. Since the pilot was a success, this project will be included in the standard contract on subsidies that IOM has with the Dutch government.

Also, one of the main beneficiaries of the RF (Foundation Tailormade Return (Maatwerk Bij Terugkeer, MBT)) had to terminate their activities due to the fact that their own ambitions reached too high and the fact that their administration did not meet the standards of the DA. In the period of 2011-2013 6 projects of MBT were funded under the RF, which resulted in the return of 252 people in 2011, and 21 information activities or conferences in 2012. Unfortunately, MBT could not fulfil its own ambitions and they were focussing on too many other side activities related to return, instead of focussing on their core business which is actually letting people return. Consequently, MBT terminated its activities and closed its office as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. Since the projects of MBT were in principal highly valuable, Vluchtelingen Werk Nederland took over the activities and the network of MBT. This is an example of how, via incorporating activities from one organisation in the other, sustainability of the projects under the RF is guaranteed.

When it comes to the sustainability of the reintegration support, beneficiaries could monitor the returnees after their arrival in the country of origin. Beneficiaries, like IOM and Stichting Wereldwijd, monitor the impact of the reintegration support three months after their arrival. They stay in touch either via mail or via phone. However, the core business of these organisations is to stimulate people in the Netherlands to return, so after a certain period (mostly 3 months) the monitoring of the returnees ends.

### ***5.6. COHERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY***

Evaluation Question 9: **To what extent was the implementation of the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands coherent with and complementary to actions in the field of return management financed from other EU financial instruments or from national resources?**

In the execution of the projects within the framework of the RF there are no instances of any relations or interrelations with other European funds other than the migration funds.

When it comes to financial instruments from national resources, there are several options.

In addition to the long running Return and Emigration of Aliens from the Netherlands (REAN) programme and the Return and Reintegration Arrangement, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs collaborated in 2011 a new policy framework for grants in the field of voluntary return of rejected asylum seekers. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has allocated €2,5 million in 2013 for projects offering in kind support to voluntary returnees (Subsidiebesluit Vrijwillige Terugkeer, SVT). The framework was launched on 16 December 2011, allowing IGO's and Netherlands-based NGO's to submit proposals as long as funds are available. In the course of 2012, six projects received grants under this framework, offering a wide range of return and reintegration activities, from pre-departure counselling to post-arrival assistance. The framework was prolonged with a similar budget for 2013.

In 2015 the submitting period of SVT coincides with the submitting period of the new AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Funds), allowing NGO's to use the SVT as co-financing for their AMIF project.

Also in 2012, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has made funds available for grants to local or national NGO's for pilot projects concerning alternatives to aliens detention. The pilot projects were aimed at offering in kind return support to aliens with or without an asylum background who are willing to return voluntarily to their country of origin. Several projects ran throughout 2012, allowing an evaluation in 2013 to determine whether return and reintegration support of voluntary returnees by local or national NGO's can be a sustainable alternative to aliens detention.

### ***5.7.EU ADDED VALUE***

Evaluation Question 10: **What is the likelihood that the positive effects of the actions under the Return Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes in The Netherlands would have occurred without the EU support?**

Projects of local NGO's with a positive effect of the actions, could not have occurred without EU support. These projects manage with relatively low costs and with the support of volunteers from the local community, to create great impact. ROS managed to let 29 people return and counselled 59 people on return in the urban area of Rotterdam, Stichting Wereldwijd provided practical support and made 133 people return voluntarily.

The grant SVT (as mentioned under Q. 9) provides grants for projects offering in kind support to voluntary returnees. However, the SVT only serves as co-financing and since there are no other Dutch grants related to return, the local NGO's heavily depend on European funding. Without the Return Funds these projects would have less opportunities to accomplish projects on voluntary return.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

In recent years, important progress has been made in return policies. At the same time, a few significant problems remain which seriously hinder the actual departure of rejected asylum seekers and other aliens who may not (any longer) remain in the Netherlands. Ultimately, the aim of the government is to increase the number of aliens that actually return.

Overall it can be concluded that the targets under the RF 2011-2013 have been achieved, since the Dutch annual programmes and its underlying actions coincide with the needs that were mentioned in the MAP. If we compare more specifically the influx with the people that actually return to the country of origin, the people that return is rather low. However, this cannot be related to the impact of the fund. As a whole, the funds have definitely had its advantage.

First of all, return is one of the main objectives of the Dutch government, and especially with the high influx the Netherlands currently faces, it will gain more interest. At the same time, the RF is one of the few funds in the Netherlands that actually focusses on return. By formulating the needs and actions for the RF rather broad, the Dutch government offered a

wide range of possibilities for societal partners to design their own project and at the same time contribute to the Dutch needs in the field of return policies. Doing so, the government gives the societal partners freedom to implement projects that fulfil the needs that they signal in their local environment. This creates a mutual understanding between the government and (local) NGO's. In that sense the RF and its successor AMIF are important tools in reaching the governmental goals.

Also, RF gives beneficiaries the possibility to try new approaches and to engage civil society partners. These partners would not have a chance to contribute to the Dutch return policy without the RF.

Currently, European countries face a historically high influx of asylum seekers. This will increase the (political) need for more focus on increased and effective return procedures in a European context. The RF is one of the tools to achieve a more integrated European return policies.

## **ANNEXES: INFORMATION SOURCES AND EVALUATION TOOLS**

- RF Multiannual programme 2007-2013 the Netherlands
- Decision on the Multiannual programme 2007-2013 the Netherlands, 12.03.2009
- RF Annual programme 2011 the Netherlands
- Decision on RF Annual programme 2011 the Netherlands, 25.8.2011
- Final report on the implementation of the RF Annual programme 2011
- RF Annual programme 2012 the Netherlands
- Decision on RF Annual programme 2012 the Netherlands, 18.12.2012
- Final report on the implementation of the RF Annual programme 2012
- RF Annual programme 2013 the Netherlands
- Approval of RF Annual programme 2013 the Netherlands, 18.07.2013
- Individual project descriptions on RF 2013
- The context data for chapter 2 were requested from various departments.

In addition, several policy makers have been interviewed for a better understanding of the situation and deepening the analysis.