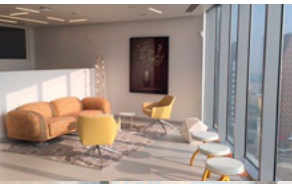




Ministry of Foreign Affairs



# Sustainability report 2023

## Mission Sustainable - Walk our Talk

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## Mission Sustainable - Walk our Talk

### Climate neutrality

We are aiming for climate-neutral operational management and procurement by 2030.

#### Actions in 2023

- Sustainable Travel plan drawn up to promote awareness and behaviour change
- Improvements to our travel and emissions data
- Measures to make our real estate more sustainable
- Level 3 certification on the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder

#### Plans for 2024

- Further improvements to our travel and emissions data
- Facilitate departmental discussions to encourage sustainable travel choices, conduct a BZ-wide awareness campaign on sustainable travel and launch a pilot project to encourage staff to travel economy class
- Gain a better understanding of the different scenarios that BZ can use to reduce its carbon emissions

### Circular economy

We are developing a strategy for operational management, based on the results of pilot projects on circularity.

#### Actions in 2023

- Circular pilot projects on real estate and office furniture (e.g. Ankara, Dublin and Addis Ababa)
- Study into circular operational management for various products
- Lessons learned shared
- Knowledge of circularity further developed within BZ (e.g. establishment of a waste management working group for the missions)

#### Plans for 2024

- Continue ongoing circular pilot projects and start new ones, for both real estate and IT
- Waste management working group to start its work
- Devise a strategy on how BZ will incorporate circular economy in operational management and procurement

For more information about sustainability within BZ, go to [missionsustainable.nl](https://missionsustainable.nl).  
If you have any questions about sustainability, please email the Mission Sustainable team: [missionsustainable@minbuza.nl](mailto:missionsustainable@minbuza.nl)



Our work on sustainable operational management and policy implementation contributes principally to these SDGs:

## Supply chain responsibility

We actively seek to minimise the risks of breaches of human rights and international labour standards in regard to our operational management and procurement.

### Actions in 2023

- Began developing a policy framework to ensure that companies that provide us with facilities services pay their employees a living wage
- Shared lessons learned from successful trials implementing a living wage (e.g. Benin)
- Mapped risks in real estate projects
- Successful pilot project in Ankara with a Supplier Code of Conduct, and with supply chain responsibility included in the selection and award criteria

### Plans for 2024

- Establish and implement a living wage policy in facilities services at the missions
- Enhance supply chain responsibility as a theme in real estate projects
- Advise on the supply chain responsibility as an element of sustainability (e.g. solar panels)

## Building a sustainable organisational culture

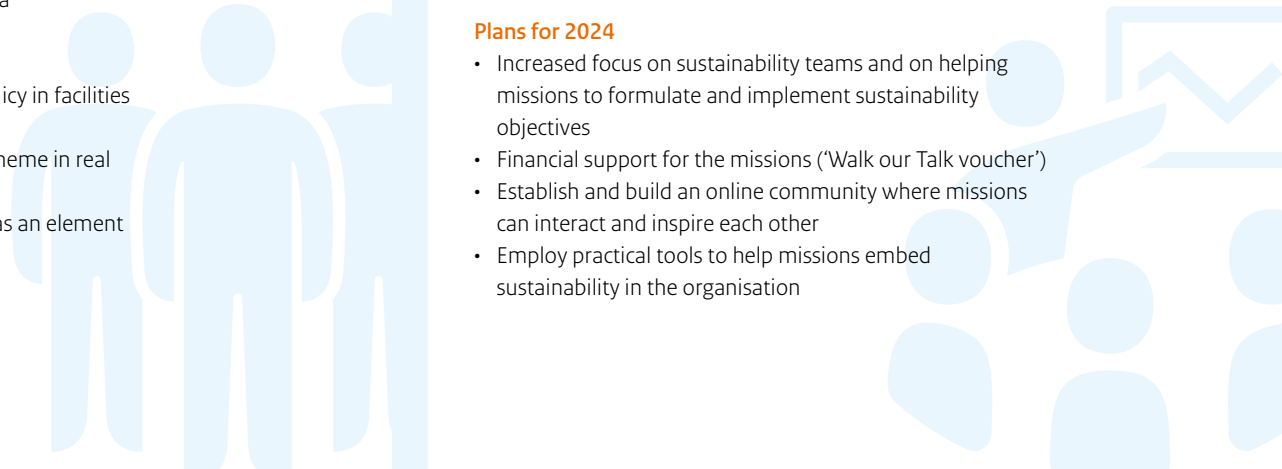
Across the globe, our employees have a crucial role to play in making our operational management more sustainable, which is why we are working to build a sustainable organisational culture.

### Actions in 2023

- Focus on sustainability teams to ensure sustainability is more firmly embedded at the missions
- Training courses, meetings and lunchtime talks (both online and in-person) to disseminate information and facilitate discussion
- Financial support scheme for missions to locally contract external expertise to help them make operational management more sustainable

### Plans for 2024

- Increased focus on sustainability teams and on helping missions to formulate and implement sustainability objectives
- Financial support for the missions ('Walk our Talk voucher')
- Establish and build an online community where missions can interact and inspire each other
- Employ practical tools to help missions embed sustainability in the organisation



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## Foreword

This is the second sustainability report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ). It provides a comprehensive summary of all the different initiatives and measures undertaken in 2023, which are helping us meet our sustainability objectives. Building on what we learned and achieved in 2022, we have been able to make significant progress towards a climate-neutral organisation, circular working practices and supply chain responsibility.

We are not there yet, but we are on the right track. Our aim with this report is to give a realistic indication of our efforts, ambition and impact. Making the organisation more sustainable and changing the culture are complex processes that do not happen overnight. It takes time to change people's behaviour, and we do not always control the contexts in which we operate. But by working together worldwide and taking responsibility for our environmental impact, we can bring about real change. In this regard, the growing enthusiasm evident among colleagues and partners is a hopeful sign, with more and more people feeling inspired to help create a sustainable world.

Our goal with Mission Sustainable is to work together to make our organisation more sustainable. We therefore hope that this sustainability report will be received not only as a factual account but also as an invitation to make new, innovative and ambitious contributions to sustainability.

**Carola van Rijnsoever**  
Deputy Secretary-General



*“By working together worldwide and taking responsibility for our environmental impact, we can bring about real change.”*

Carola van Rijnsoever - Deputy Secretary-General

## Introduction

Together with the other EU member states, the Netherlands has agreed to reduce its carbon emissions by at least 55% by 2030, and to be climate-neutral by 2050. Throughout central government, efforts are focused on achieving these and other sustainability targets.



### Global sustainability

Through the Mission Sustainable programme, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ) is contributing to central government-wide sustainability programmes and objectives, such as the National Climate Agreement and ‘Procurement with Impact’. We do this not only in our policy but more particularly in our operational management. And because our remit is foreign affairs, our efforts span the globe. With more than 150 missions, we make a difference through diplomacy, we open doors for businesses, and we assist and advise Dutch nationals worldwide. Sustainability is always a priority in everything we do.

Mission Sustainable was launched two and a half years ago. Under the slogan ‘Walk our Talk’, we are continuing to set a good example with our operational management, both to each other and to the world.

### Structure of the report

This sustainability report describes the measures and activities we initiated in 2023, often with other parties, to achieve our sustainability objectives. It also highlights the people behind various sustainability projects.

Mission Sustainable focuses on three key themes: climate neutrality, circular economy and supply chain responsibility. Each theme is discussed in a separate section, describing actions taken, progress made and the next steps. (sections 3, 4 and 5)

In section 6 we reflect on our efforts to encourage a more sustainable mindset and behaviour and to entrench this more firmly in our organisational culture.

Effective sustainability policy also requires comprehensive monitoring, honest dialogue and transparent reporting.

Consequently, this report also explains the standards and guiding principles used in our reporting. (section 7)

### Essential, achievable and ambitious

Like the EU climate goals, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ sustainability objectives are essential, achievable and ambitious. Partly because of Mission Sustainable, we are convinced of the importance and potential of a sustainable organisation. There is also growing enthusiasm among colleagues to do their bit. You can read more about this in the short interviews with members of staff.

Mission Sustainable not only gives practical expression to a sustainable organisation, but also inspires people to work together to create a sustainable world for all.

To mark 50 years of Dutch-Vietnamese diplomatic relations, Consul-General Daniel Stork and Deputy Consul-General Eline van der Veen (both wearing NLVN50 ponchos), together with the Vice-Chairman of the People’s Committee of Can Tho City and Blue Dragon team members, planted the first of 1,000 trees in the Mekong Delta on 26 September 2023 to prevent riverbank erosion and support local farmers’ livelihoods.



# 1 About Mission Sustainable

Mission Sustainable is the sustainability programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ). Our aim with this programme is to contribute to the sustainability objectives that we are also urging companies, organisations and other governments to achieve. Our slogan is therefore 'Walk our Talk'.



## Our objectives

Since the programme's launch in 2021, we have acquired a wealth of knowledge and experience on how to make a difference. Insights gained from studies and pilot projects have resulted in new policy frameworks and operating practices.

Mission Sustainable focuses on three key themes: climate neutrality, circular economy and supply chain responsibility. These have been determined because of the scope for material impact and because they play an important part in BZ policy. Each theme has a specific objective:

1. **Climate neutrality:** BZ aims for climate-neutral operational management and procurement by 2030.
2. **Circular economy:** BZ is developing a strategy for operational management, based on the results of pilot projects on circularity.
3. **Supply chain responsibility:** BZ actively seeks to minimise the risks of breaches of human rights and international labour standards in regard to our operational management and procurement.

Mission Sustainable also provides tailored support to missions in the case of location-specific opportunities and challenges, such as local water shortages, biodiversity loss or air pollution.

## The programme team

The Mission Sustainable programme is run by a dedicated team which comprised 4.5 FTEs in 2023 and covers a wide range of expertise, with each team member allocated a specific role. The programme team reports directly to the director of the Operational Management Branch (HDBV), with the Deputy Secretary-General having ultimate responsibility for the programme. The team works with representatives from the policy departments to consolidate the link between policy and the sustainability programme, reflecting the 'Walk our Talk' slogan.

Progress on Mission Sustainable is reported to the Board of Deputy Directors-General every six months. The annual sustainability report setting out our results is made available to the public.

## Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals to end poverty, inequality, injustice and climate change by 2030. They serve as an important compass for our ministry and form the basis of our sustainability programme. In this way, we contribute to the Netherlands' efforts to achieve the goals both at home and abroad.

Through our operational management and policy implementation, BZ contributes towards four SDGs in particular: clean and affordable energy (SDG 7), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and climate action (SDG 13). The support we provide in the form of solutions to local challenges is relevant to all of the SDGs.

We also consider the potential consequences for other goals, such as inclusion, gender equality and sustainable water management. This is consistent with the interconnected approach that the SDGs advocate.



• Timo van Dun (progress and monitoring), Rosa Peek (transport and mobility), Petra Kesseler (communications), Ziza Wolff (circular economy), Take Padding (BZ coordinator), Naomi Kervel (supply chain responsibility) and Marinda Bosman (missions and community management).

## 2 A climate-neutral organisation by 2030

Climate change is a global issue. Forest fires, floods and hurricanes claim victims and damage ecosystems worldwide. We, too, want to do our bit to limit global warming. This is why BZ is aiming for its operational management and procurement to be climate-neutral by 2030, both in the Netherlands and across all our diplomatic missions abroad. Using the CO2 Performance Ladder, we can map our organisation's carbon emissions, take measures to reduce them and monitor our results.



### Carbon footprint in 2023

BZ uses the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder as a management tool to help reduce our carbon emissions. We first calculated our carbon footprint in 2021. Since then the dataset has become more and more comprehensive and accurate, which also results in a more accurate calculation of our carbon footprint. In 2023, for instance, flights booked by the missions outside the central booking platform were more fully taken into account. Previously, we had less information about this and had to make estimates. We also had more data on the energy consumption of real estate abroad in 2023, making us less dependent on estimates.

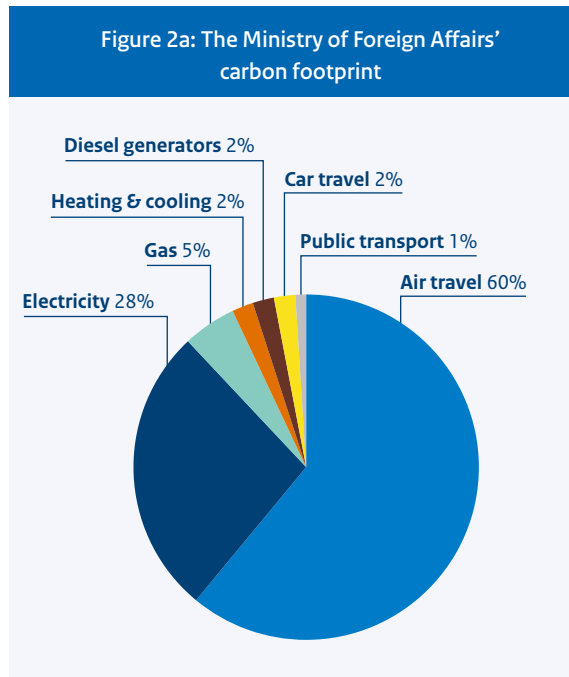
### The composition of our carbon footprint

The ministry's carbon footprint is made up of three types of emissions, in accordance with level 3 of the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder:

1. Direct carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels (scope 1 emissions)
2. Indirect carbon emissions associated with purchased energy (scope 2 emissions)
3. Indirect carbon emissions associated with official travel (part of scope 3 emissions; scope 3 emissions are however not fully included).

The composition of BZ's carbon footprint is illustrated in Figure 2a. Table 2b lists the amount of carbon emissions per category.

*Explanatory note on Table 2b: The carbon emissions associated with products and services procured by BZ (scope 3) are not included in the 2023 footprint. This means, for instance, that the footprint does not include the indirect emissions of BZ's various policy programmes. In 2024 we will examine how we can better determine these scope 3 supply chain emissions and what measures we can take to reduce them.*



**Table 2b: Changes in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' carbon footprint (t CO<sub>2</sub>)**

	2022	2023
<b>Scope 1</b>	<b>4,124</b>	<b>2,985</b>
Gas	2,879	1,603
Diesel generators	724	873
Car travel (diesel and petrol official cars)	520	509
<b>Scope 2</b>	<b>9,434</b>	<b>10,616</b>
Electricity	8,602	9,802
Heating & cooling	832	800
Car travel (electric official cars)		14
<b>Scope 3</b>	<b>16,896</b>	<b>21,154</b>
Air travel	16,657	20,759
Public transport	147	277
Car trips (taxis, hire cars and private cars)	92	118
<b>Grand Total (Scope 1, 2 and 3)</b>	<b>30,454</b>	<b>34,755</b>

### Changes in BZ's carbon footprint

Compared with 2022, our carbon footprint in 2023 increased by about 14% to 34,755 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. This rise is mainly attributable to two key emission flows: air travel and the missions' diesel and electricity consumption worldwide (scope 3 and 2).

First, we flew more in 2023 than in the previous year. Some COVID restrictions were still in place in early 2022, resulting in fewer ministry staff undertaking official travel. These restrictions no longer applied in 2023, which partly accounts for the increase in emissions compared with 2022.

2023 also saw a global rise in diesel and electricity consumption, the main reason being increased use of air conditioning because of hotter weather. The effects of other COVID-19 measures in early 2022 were also a factor. In 2023 more staff worked in the office and more events were organised than in 2022.

Besides the aforementioned increases, direct carbon emissions from burning fossil fuel (scope 1) actually decreased. Several factors explain this change. First, gas consumption fell significantly. Second, we received accurate data in 2023 which also showed that some of our estimates in 2022 had been too high. The warmer weather in 2023 also contributed to the decrease.

Figure 2c shows a breakdown of our energy consumption in 2022 and 2023.

Table 2c: Breakdown of energy consumption in 2022 and 2023

	Unit	2022	2023	Difference
Electricity	mWh	27,155	28,741	6%
Diesel	litres	208,525	251,807	21%
Gas	m3	1,198,464*	770,822	-36%

\* Figure from the 2022 sustainability report adjusted as a result of a data correction.

Figure 2d:

% kilometres flown and carbon emissions by cabin class (2023)

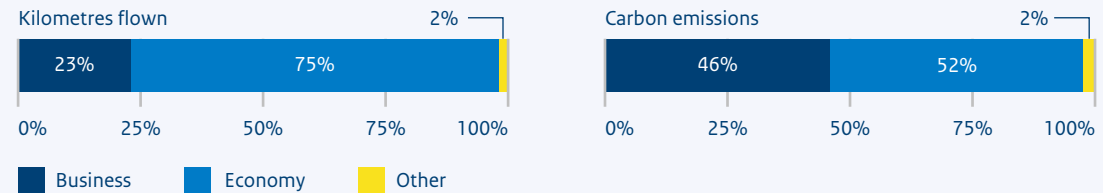
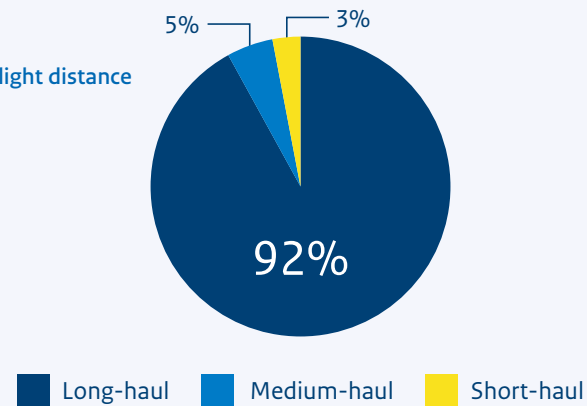


Figure 2e:

Carbon emissions by flight distance





### Sustainable travel

Flying generates significant carbon emissions and accounts for a large part of our footprint. But flying is also an unavoidable part of our work: diplomacy is about building and consolidating relations, and doing this online has its limitations. Flying in business class on long-haul flights is sometimes necessary in order to be able to get to work immediately on arrival. Nevertheless, there is scope for reducing carbon emissions from aviation, and to identify

these options a project group comprising about 20 members drawn from across the organisation developed a Sustainable Travel action plan.

We used available flight data to make the action plan as specific as possible. The data showed that business class travel contributes substantially to our carbon footprint. Business class travel accounted for only 23% of all kilometres flown, but 46% of air travel emissions.

## Working on sustainability with the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder

To reduce our carbon footprint, BZ uses the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder. This emission management tool enables us to keep a handle on our ambitions, reduce emissions and continuously improve our approach, both within the organisation itself and in all our projects. The ladder has five levels of sustainability performance.

We began implementing the tool in 2023 and achieved level 3 certification by the end of the year. This means that we now have even better insight into our carbon emissions, especially with regard to energy and official travel. We are aware that official travel, particularly air travel, and real estate are crucial to achieving our objectives. In 2024 we will also focus on the carbon emissions of our policy programmes (currently not taken into account).

## Mission Sustainable and Dutch climate diplomacy

Mission Sustainable aims to make our diplomatic missions sustainable and create a strong awareness of sustainability issues. But the programme goes further than our own operational management.

With 'Walk our Talk' as our slogan, we are letting the whole world know that we take climate measures seriously. This boosts our credibility, which benefits Dutch climate diplomats.

The Netherlands takes a two-pronged approach to climate diplomacy. We want to persuade countries to do much more to reduce their carbon emissions. We are also lobbying for better implementation, seeking to ensure that plans and intentions are actually put into practice.

By making our missions more sustainable, we are also helping host countries to achieve their climate goals. This puts the Netherlands in a stronger position in talks with foreign governments. It also gives us an opportunity to show what is possible at local level, what the obstacles are and what local solutions may exist that contribute to a sustainable world.

These figures are roughly similar to those for 2022. Besides business class, intercontinental flights (over 2,500 km) make up the bulk of the carbon footprint (92%). These insights enabled us to provide more clarity on what Sustainable Travel entails. Figures 2d and 2e show the relationship between the types of flights and their associated emissions. In 2024 the focus will be on raising awareness of sustainable travel choices. There will be an information campaign about BZ's ambitions in this area and how ministry staff can help achieve them. Long-haul flights contribute most to our footprint, so we will ask colleagues to make smarter, more conscious travel decisions. For example, field visits to different locations in the same regions could be combined and done with a smaller delegation, and meetings could also be held online or in hybrid form. We also facilitate the conversation on sustainable travel choices within teams and help teams make working agreements on sustainable travel choices.

Another effective measure is to reduce business class travel. Many colleagues already choose to fly economy class on long-haul flights. Through our information campaign and pilot projects, we are trying to expedite this trend. Wherever possible – particularly within Europe – we encourage ministry staff to travel by train instead of plane.

In 2024 we will continue improving our data on travel behaviour and carbon emissions. There are already signs of growing awareness of this issue within our organisation: about two-thirds of departments in The Hague and three-quarters of the missions included initiatives for sustainable transport and mobility in their 2024 annual plans, which we see as a positive development. We will regularly monitor and evaluate the progress of these projects, making adjustments where necessary.





### Real estate

Sustainable measures have led to results in regard to the ministry's real estate and several iconic projects have been initiated. The Housing and Real Estate Worldwide Department (DHF) delivered several products in 2023, including Roadmap 2.0, which describes different sustainability strategies and their effects. It sets out that the most appropriate measures must be determined on a building-by-building basis, bearing in mind a building's condition use and the climate zone. Measures designed to make real estate more sustainable have long lead times, making it difficult to support short-term results with figures.

### Looking ahead to 2024

The figures indicate that we fell further behind schedule on the climate neutrality objective in 2023. This has implications for how the programme is implemented in 2024 and beyond. In 2023 we launched many different activities that we expect to bear fruit over the next few years. Raising awareness and changing behaviour will take a little longer.

Finally, improving the quality of our sustainability data remains a challenge but over the past two years we have made significant progress in this area. We now have a clearer picture of the energy consumption of BZ real estate in the Netherlands and abroad, and have more comprehensive flight data. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement and we will continue to focus on data quality in 2024. The energy consumption of real estate outside the Netherlands, for example, is still subject to unexpected fluctuations, and the transition to a new booking platform for international travel will require further analysis of the available flight data.

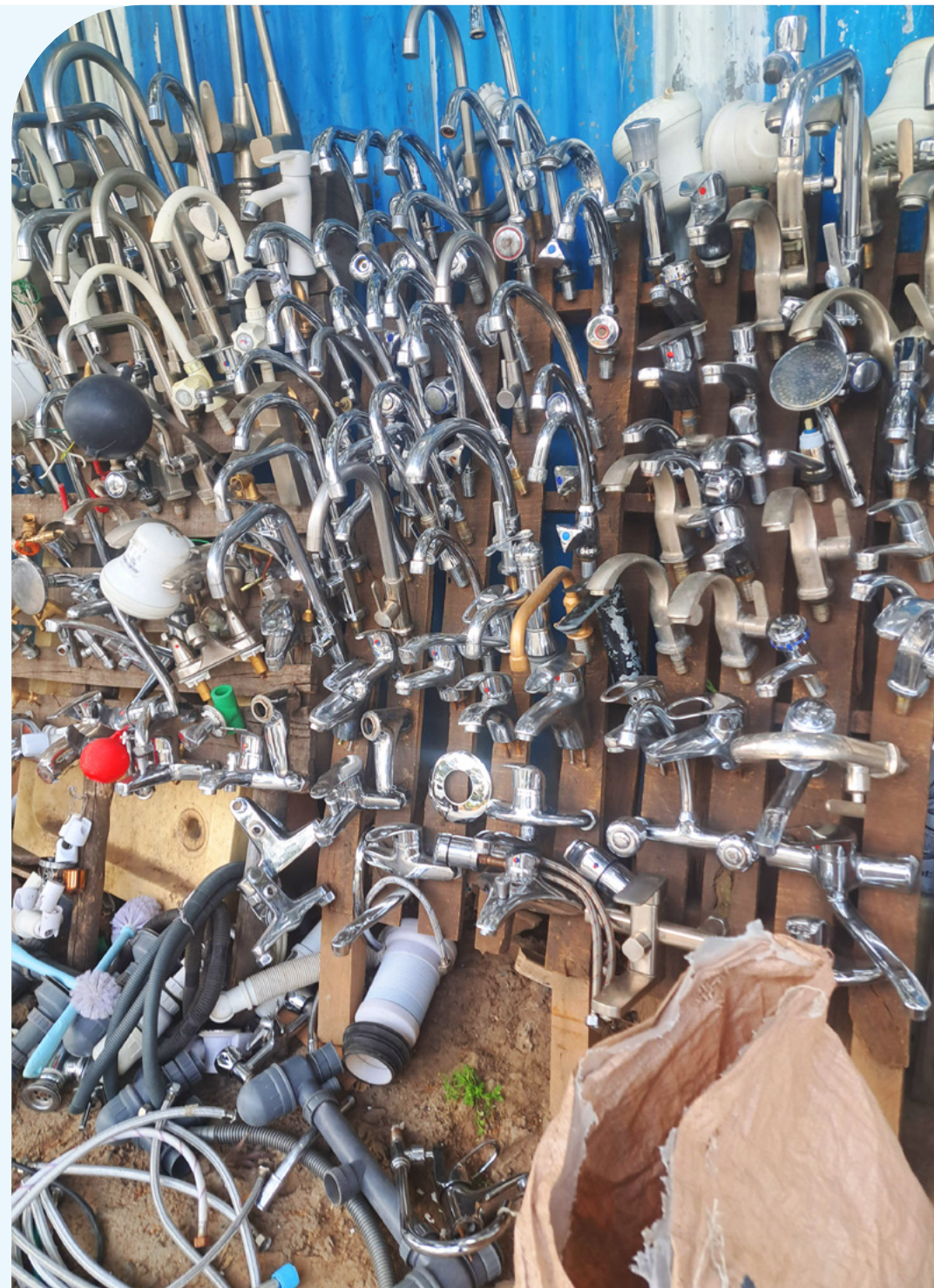


*'Mission Sustainable enables all ministry staff to contribute to really improving the position of the Netherlands in climate diplomacy. Your efforts make you an ambassador for our country. Together, we will create momentum, even beyond our borders.'*

**Stephanie Roels,**  
head of the Climate Diplomacy team

### 3 Moving towards circular operational management

The traditional linear economy approach of 'take, make, waste' is not tenable. Supplies of critical raw materials are being depleted and the amount of waste produced keeps rising. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore wants to make a tangible contribution to the circular economy.



### Triple win

In a circular economy, materials and products are used for as long as possible. Products have a longer lifespan, at the end of which the components and raw materials are kept in circulation. This reduces pressure on new critical raw materials and reduces waste. A circular economy can lead to lower carbon emissions and also enhances transparency in the supply chain. The circular economy objective thus also contributes to the ministry's other two objectives: climate neutrality by 2030 and greater supply chain responsibility.

### Circular pilot projects

In the international context in which BZ operates, the circular economy is a complex issue. How does refurbishing work in a country with little practical experience in this area? How can you apply circular principles across a product's life cycle if the manufacturer is on the other side of the globe? What options for reusing raw materials does each country have? How do you manage waste in a country where waste processing is virtually unknown?

To answer questions like these, we have launched several circular economy pilot projects. Towards the end of 2024, the lessons learned will be used to devise a circular economy strategy for our operational and procurement processes (see 'Lessons we want to learn from our circular pilot projects'). We also conducted a study on the application of circular principles within eight different product groups, such as real estate, office furniture and IT hardware. This gave us insight into the baseline situation for each group and into the measures needed to boost circularity.

Photo Market in Addis Ababa. Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Mark Blankestijn

## Lessons we want to learn from our circular pilot projects



Optimum use of locally sourced raw materials and products



Extending the lifespan of Western products in developing countries



Waste management



Circular design

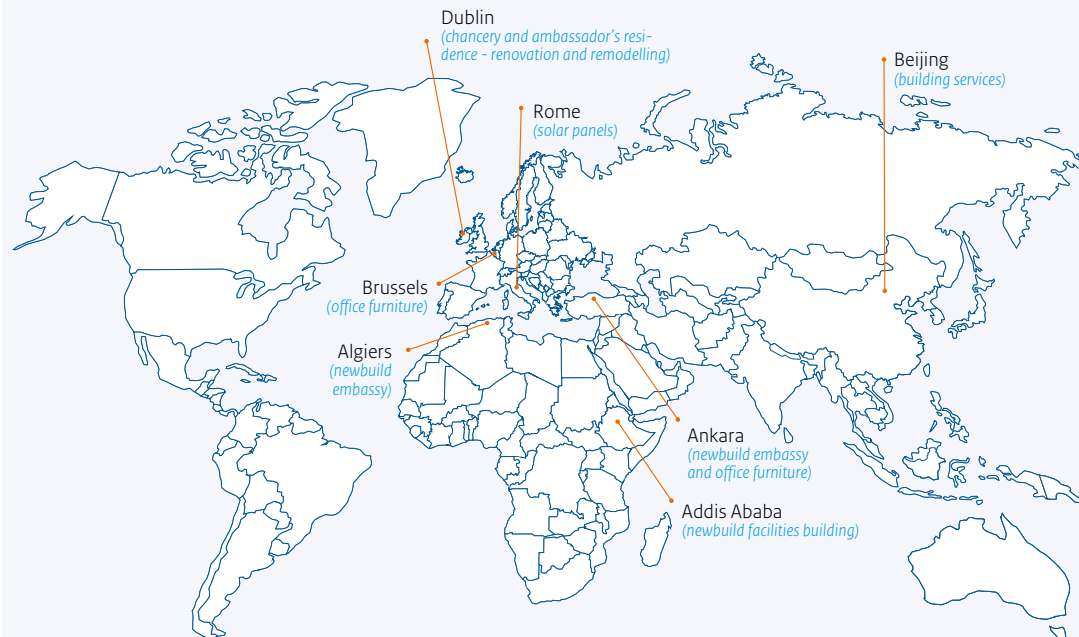


Extending the lifespan of IT products and equipment



Circular procurement

## Circular pilot projects of the Housing and Real Estate Worldwide Department (DHF)



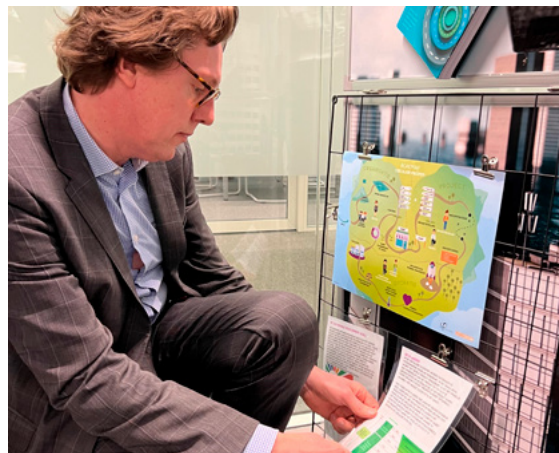
*'The escape room and inspiration session were fun and useful. One reason was that there was a good balance between the challenges we're facing and the solutions that are already out there. We can use that in our day-to-day work. With targeted investments DHF can make a major contribution to Mission Sustainable and the ministry's climate objectives. We managed to get out of the escape room within half an hour. Now we just need to do the rest!'*

Mark Hazebroek,  
DHF sustainability coordinator

Most of the pilots concern real estate and office furnishing. These are aspects on which BZ has the most direct influence, as demonstrated in the material flow analysis we commissioned. The content of the pilots varies. Some focus on real estate, for example exploring scope for circularity by design, while others are about using circular office furniture (see 'Circular pilot projects').

#### Other circular initiatives

In addition to the circular pilot projects, BZ is also working on other ways to improve our understanding of circularity. For example, the Mission Sustainable team periodically meets with procurement advisers involved in the various procurement-related pilots. These meetings are an opportunity to share knowledge, experience and lessons learned from the circular pilot projects. During Circular Economy Week, BZ colleagues could participate in an escape room game to learn more about circular principles.



## Looking ahead to 2024

### Circular pilots: to be continued

The circular pilot projects launched in 2023 will be continued in 2024. We will also be starting several new ones, for instance on IT. In these pilots, too, our aim will be to learn lessons that we can incorporate into our circular strategy.

### Waste management working group

In 2024 we will establish a waste management working group. The missions will share best practices and knowledge in a community of practice (CoP), which will receive support from experts in circular economy and waste management, drawn from both within and outside central government. We will also set up a platform for knowledge-sharing among the missions.



Participants in the circularity escape room  
Angelique van Aarden and Mariete van den Bulck  
Marc van der Linden

## Circular pilot project: Ankara embassy newbuild

The design of the new embassy in Ankara, commissioned DHF, promotes circularity in various ways. For example, we have drawn up a material passport that documents all the materials used, where they have been sourced, the quantity used and how they are assembled. This will make it easier to reuse products and materials at some point in the future. The embassy's cladding is made of natural stone, a common material in Turkey, and can be dismantled stone by stone for easy repair, replacement or subsequent reuse.

The newbuild embassy will also contribute to the objectives of climate-neutrality and supply chain responsibility, making this project a fine example of our ministry's integrated approach to sustainability. For instance, the solar panels will operate at optimum efficiency due to the shape and orientation of the building, and the energy generated will be stored for later use. Clever design is evident in other areas, too: there are fewer windows in parts of the building that get a lot of sun, and more in shady areas. Agreements on safe working practices on the construction site and good working conditions have been set down in a Code of Conduct.



Model of the Ankara embassy newbuild



L to R: Pelin Isik, Eray Ergec, Celine Abeln and Mehmet Ugur

*'This project shows that sustainability is not a tiresome obligation, but actually offers a lot of added benefits in terms of a pleasant, healthy and more enjoyable working environment.'*

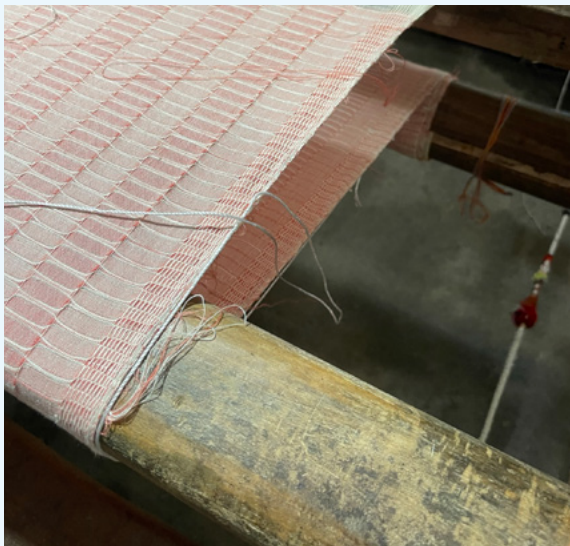
**Nils van Merrienboer,**  
DHF project manager

*'We can't wait to move into the new embassy. It's really something to look forward to. This is the way we should build, live and work. It will be a stunning sustainable showcase for the Netherlands.'*

**Joep Wijnands,**  
Dutch ambassador in Ankara



● Ishara Fernando (Selyn Textiles) and Nicole van der Velden



## Sustainable procurement takes courage and enthusiasm:

### Colombo project

Sustainable procurement sometimes calls for an original and surprising approach. That was the case when it came time to replace the furniture at the embassy in Colombo. A local supplier was able to provide not only high-quality fabrics but also top-quality supply chain data. Thanks to the enthusiasm of the entire embassy team, a unique collaboration came about. Interior designer Nicole van der Velden even talked about it during Dutch Design Week. ‘You have to have the courage to do it!’ she said.

‘The Housing and Real Estate Worldwide Department (DHF) was already working on a project to renovate the chancery and replace the office furniture. After 16 years of use the furniture was worn out. A plan had been made and the new furniture had already been ordered when the new ambassador, Bonnie Horbach, said that she wanted to work with a local firm and had heard about a really good one: Selyn Textiles. They not only make good products but also really support the wellbeing, employment and income of local artisans.’

#### Hi-tech supply chain data

‘One particular quality of Selyn is the way they bring together all the supply chain data and link it to the fabrics. Everything you might want to know about the origin of

materials, the use of chemicals, and the working conditions and income of the people making the fabrics – it’s all in the final products. Literally in an NFC tag attached to the fabrics, which can be scanned with an app.<sup>1</sup> The information itself is stored using blockchain technology, which makes it completely tamper-proof.’

#### Change of plan

‘This seemed like an excellent opportunity to give fresh impetus to our commitment to local sourcing: the products and materials were local, sustainable and socially responsible, and so was the supply chain. Everyone was enthusiastic about the idea: the ambassador, the embassy team and myself. But the new furniture for the embassy was already ready for shipment, so if we wanted to do something, we had to act quickly and be creative.

‘At that point, we decided to tweak our original plan. We went ahead and replaced the old office furniture with new, ergonomic tables and chairs. But there was a great opportunity to do something different with the meeting room furniture, so we renovated it and upholstered it with Selyn fabrics. Thanks to the inventive tag, anyone who sits on those chairs in Colombo can immediately find out where the upholstery comes from, who made it and all sorts of other information.

‘We gave the furniture we had left over to the consulate in Bangalore. They were happy to get it, as it meant they didn’t have to wait months for their own order to be delivered!’



### Special project

'This project with Selyn was really special. It's not unusual for Dutch designers to work with local manufacturers, but it's usually the Dutch contingent that contributes knowledge and ideas to set up a local initiative. In this case, it was the other way round: the products and the innovative way of providing supply chain data were already available in Sri Lanka. In the end, re-upholstering the furniture was relatively inexpensive, which meant we were even able to remain within the original budget. Altogether, it took a lot of time and improvisational skill for us to pull it off. But thanks to the enthusiastic drive and commitment of the entire embassy team and the DHF team, we achieved a wonderful outcome.'

### Courage

'The founder of Selyn Textiles, Selyna Peiris, Ambassador Horbach and I presented the results of our Colombo project during Dutch Design Week. That was pretty special too! I talked about courage during my presentation. A project like this shows what's possible if you go off the beaten track, but that takes courage, because there are so many unknown factors. To make sustainable choices, we need to delve deeper, looking for new, smart and original solutions. We need to be bold enough to ask different questions. The project in Colombo shows that the quest pays off! Because with the chairs we have now, we're also telling the story of an alternative and successful approach.'

*'Sustainable procurement led to an innovative joint venture in Colombo, with Selyn Textiles supplying not only fabrics but also detailed supply chain data via a scannable tag.'*

*'The entire embassy team was enthusiastic about it and that's how a unique collaboration came about. We replaced the old office furniture as planned, but we refurbished the meeting room furniture and upholstered it with Selyn fabrics.'*

*'Thanks to the inventive tag, anyone who sits on those chairs in Colombo can immediately find out where the upholstery comes from, who made it and all sorts of other information.'*

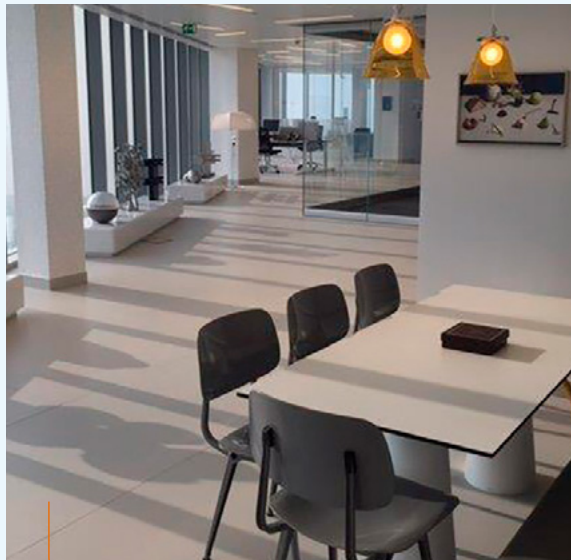
**Nicole van der Velden**

*Interior designer, talking about the Colombo project*

<sup>1</sup> The app is from PaperTale, which aims to make supply chain data accessible in real time.

# Sustainable procurement of office furniture

Applying the principles of sustainable commissioning and procurement (SCP) in our work helps us achieve our sustainability objectives. Heleen van der Gugten, interior designer at DHF, explains what sustainable procurement of office furniture involves. ‘There really are a lot of benefits!’



Interior of the Abu Dhabi chancery

‘Previously, when we needed office furniture, we would stipulate pretty basic requirements and otherwise mainly focus on getting value for money. A table had to have four legs, a chair had to be height-adjustable but apart from that the price tag shouldn’t be too high – I’m oversimplifying, of course. Now that we’re increasingly embracing sustainable procurement practices, we ask completely different questions in our contract award procedure. Many different factors need to be considered when making conscious, sustainable choices. This makes the tendering process more complex but greatly increases the impact we can have with our procurement policy.’

## Reuse

‘Consider the scope for reuse, for instance. What makes reuse possible? Colour for one thing. Furniture in the same colour can easily be swapped and reused elsewhere. Modular furniture is also a good solution. Quite a few parts on our office chairs are replaceable: the back, castors and even the gas spring. This means the whole chair doesn’t have to be immediately scrapped. That’s a much more circular strategy.’

## Long lifespan

‘Another way to boost sustainable performance is to consider the lifespan of furniture. Office furniture is usually used for about 10 years. We keep ours for 16 years and we’re aiming for 20. The production process accounts for most carbon emissions. By using office furniture for longer, less needs to be made and you’ll reduce your carbon

footprint. If you want your furniture to last years and years, you have to make smart choices. For ergonomic reasons, we wanted electrically adjustable desks, for example, but their motors often break down after just six years because of an unstable power supply locally and then have to be replaced. That wasn’t sustainable enough for us, so in many cases we opted for mechanically adjustable desks, which don’t need maintenance.’

## Sustainable materials

‘Sustainable procurement can be a complex process, as is apparent when it comes to choosing materials, for example. Naturally, we’d like our suppliers to use circular materials as much as possible. For instance, cardboard desk tops are more sustainably produced than high-pressure laminate (Volkern) tops made of compressed carbon. Cardboard can’t be used in all climates, however, as it acts like a sponge in a humid environment. So we have to weigh up the various factors to determine the most sustainable option. Then, in this particular case, you end up with a less sustainable desk top, but one that lasts longer.’

## Transparent chain

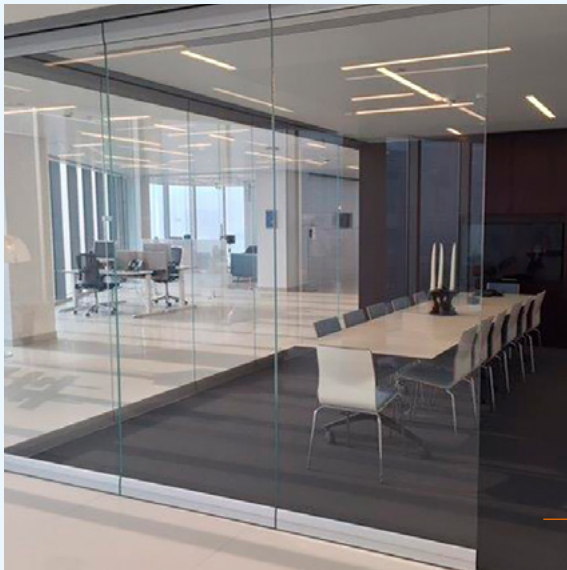
‘If you consider supply chain responsibility, other factors come into play. We naturally set store by sustainable and socially responsible practices in the supply chain. In the office furniture market, requesting a material passport is common practice and could be included in invitations to tender.’



You could ask suppliers to demonstrate the extent to which materials and components are sustainable and circular, and have been made under decent working conditions. You could also ask them to submit their plans for the future. This is how you encourage other parties to work together on circularity, sustainability and supply chain responsibility.'

#### **Making a real difference**

'All in all, sustainable procurement adds a complex set of considerations to the tendering process. Factors like choice of materials, functionality, transport, innovation and recyclability all have to be considered together in order to find the most sustainable solution. When it comes to buying office furniture, we've shown that smart choices can make a real difference. And that really makes what we do more rewarding. We can see that people enjoy their job a lot more if they can actively contribute to sustainability.'



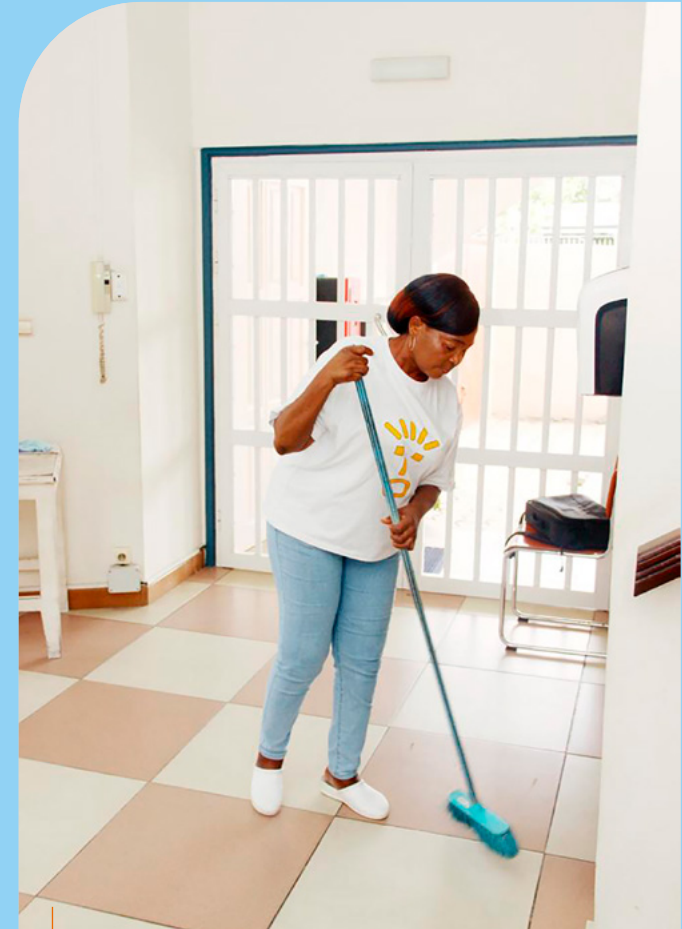
📍 Interior of the Abu Dhabi chancery

*'Previously, when we needed office furniture, we would stipulate pretty basic requirements and otherwise mainly focus on getting value for money. Now that we're increasingly embracing sustainable procurement practices, we ask completely different questions in our contract award procedure. Many different factors need to be considered when making conscious, sustainable choices, like choice of materials, functionality, transport, innovation and recyclability. All have to be considered together in order to find the most sustainable solution. When it comes to buying office furniture, we've shown that smart choices can make a real difference. And that makes our work much more rewarding.'*

**Heleen van der Gugten,**  
interior designer at DHF

## 4 Progress in supply chain responsibility

In 2023 we continued to standardise the activities that increase our supply chain responsibility and to organise them on a more professional basis. We use the term 'supply chain responsibility' to refer to our efforts to minimise the risk of breaches of human rights and poor working conditions in our supply chains, for example in facilities services and real estate projects.



*facilities services staff on the posts deserve fair working conditions.*



**Policy framework for a living wage for facilities services staff**

A living wage for external personnel is one of the key goals in relation to the theme of supply chain responsibility. We regard this as a basic human right, a way of alleviating poverty and a prerequisite to prevent other abuses such as child labour, environmental damage and deforestation. This is why we began developing a policy framework in 2023 to ensure that companies contracted by the missions for facilities services pay their employees a living wage. Our aim is to finalise the framework in 2024.

**Support in implementing living wage policy**

To prepare for the implementation of the living wage policy, procurement advisers and operational managers have done a training course on how BZ’s living wage objectives can be achieved. We have also gleaned useful insights and success stories from a number of pilot projects, such as the one in Benin (see ‘A living wage in Benin’). We used these insights and practical examples in developing the policy framework and presented them at several lunchtime talks. These were also an opportunity to share experiences. For example, the ambassador in Doha, winner of the BZ sustainability award in 2023 for

the best example of sustainable operational management, spoke about efforts to protect human rights in relation to policy and operational management.

### Supply chain responsibility in real estate projects

In 2023 we identified the risks associated with real estate projects, describing them for each project phase and working on appropriate risk management measures. Safety and good working conditions on construction sites were addressed. When procuring natural stone and solar panel systems, we took extra care to ensure respect for human rights. We also carried out a successful pilot project involving a Supplier Code of Conduct, and we included supply chain responsibility in the selection and award criteria for the tender for the newbuild of the Ankara embassy.

### Looking ahead to 2024

Our aim in 2024 is to put the insights and results mentioned above to practical use. We want to implement the living wage policy for facilities services at the missions as simply and efficiently as possible. This will require effective communication and practical support for everyone involved in implementing the new policy, including clear contract management instructions for operational managers. Building a community and facilitating knowledge-sharing on supply chain responsibility will be useful in this respect.

Real estate projects in 2024 will focus particularly on the Supplier Code of Conduct and the supply chain responsibility in the procurement of solar panels. In addition, risks and mitigating measures will be included in DHF's work and decision-making processes.

Finally, we will also seek opportunities to enhance supply chain responsibility in other product and service groups, such as IT.

## A living wage in Benin

Paying a living wage to the employees of local service providers sounds logical, but how do you determine what constitutes a living wage in another culture and in another economy with different market forces? Operational manager Andrea Velema explains how she applies this principle in the Benin mission's operational management.

'Our external staff have to earn a living wage. But it wasn't easy determining how much that should be. We couldn't simply decide for ourselves what figure we thought was acceptable. We had to keep the local situation in mind, as otherwise our cleaners and guards would suddenly earn as much as the director of a sizeable company. That would disrupt the market.'

The definition of a living wage comes from the International Labour Organization (ILO). With help from her colleagues in The Hague, Andrea went looking for reliable data. She found it at WageIndicator, a non-profit organisation that campaigns worldwide for a transparent market and decent wages. 'This gave us a good idea of what constitutes a reasonable salary for a family with two children in Benin. A salary that would enable our colleagues to live a normal, decent, comfortable life.' Andrea had also found out that the US embassy paid much more than other countries represented in Benin, and this provided another pointer.

Once the amount of pay had been determined, the next hurdle was how to implement it. In the case of the cleaners, it could easily be done through the agencies that contract them. The security guards, however, were employed by a company with a fixed pay structure, based on experience and other factors. 'We had to think of a way of raising their wage to an acceptable level. We looked at how the Americans did it and talked to the company that supplied the guards. We now pay them an allowance, supplementing their pay to bring it up to a living wage.'

Facilities service workers in Benin now receive a living wage thanks to the efforts of Andrea Velema

'Paying the rent for my home is not a problem now. And I can spend more money on things that benefit my whole family, such as the children's education.'

Adeniyi Moboladj,  
security guard at the Dutch  
embassy in Benin



## 5 Building a sustainable organisational culture

We are striving to create a sustainable organisational culture in which everyone actively engages in making our organisation more sustainable. The context in which different parts of the organisation operate varies, so sustainable solutions often need to be tailored to individual circumstances. The Mission Sustainable programme team helps by pooling and sharing knowledge, ideas and initiatives. This results in a network in which we can benefit from everyone's insights and inspire each other to undertake new sustainable activities.



## Walk our Talk figures

In 2023 ...

23

... missions used the Walk our Talk voucher



... missions started a baseline measurement

22

... training courses were organised



... missions launched a project that will be completed in 2024

### Making a sustainable and fair approach the norm

Action to promote sustainability is being taken across the organisation. These are not isolated activities, but joint efforts that make a significant difference. One good example is the sustainability teams, whose role at the missions has become increasingly important since 2023. This puts sustainability right at the heart of our organisation.

Photo Presentation on circularity by Iván Téllez Zamora

We also encourage various sustainability initiatives, for example by sharing information and insight, facilitating learning and experimentation, and fostering ambition. This is how sustainable and fair practices will become the norm for everyone. Because after all, sustainability is a team effort.

### Information and insight

We encourage the missions to contribute to Mission Sustainable in a targeted way. We organise training sessions, meetings and lunchtime talks (both online and in person) to disseminate information and encourage discussions on opportunities and challenges. We also provide practical support and advice. As for the missions

themselves, they play a vital role in collecting data and improving tools to measure their impact. In this way, we create an environment in which everyone is not only kept informed but also encouraged to actively contribute to our sustainability mission.

### Learning and experimenting

Wherever possible, we link our sustainability objectives to those of a mission's host community. This promotes sharing of knowledge, best practices and success stories.

To actively contribute to a greener and more responsible future, we introduced Walk our Talk vouchers in 2023, each worth €5,000.



## Sustainability teams worldwide

Sustainability teams are committed to making the mission's operational management more sustainable. They foster awareness, ensure continuity and deliver concrete results.

ABJ <b>Nigeria</b>	BAG <b>Iraq</b>	DAK <b>Senegal</b>	JBA <b>South Sudan</b>	LUX <b>Luxemburg</b>	OUA <b>Burkina Faso</b>	SAR <b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	TOR <b>Canada</b>
ABU <b>United Arab Emirates</b>	BAK <b>Azerbaijan</b>	DHA <b>Bangladesh</b>	KAI <b>Egypt</b>	MAN <b>Philippines</b>	PEK <b>China</b>	SHA <b>China</b>	TUN <b>Tunisia</b>
ACC <b>Ghana</b>	BAN <b>Thailand</b>	GNZ <b>China</b>	KAM <b>Uganda</b>	MAP <b>Mozambique</b>	PRA <b>Czechia</b>	SIN <b>Singapore</b>	WAS <b>United States</b>
ALG <b>Algeria</b>	BKR <b>Romania</b>	HAR <b>Zimbabwe</b>	KIE <b>Ukraine</b>	MEX <b>Mexico</b>	PRE <b>South Africa</b>	SJO <b>Costa Rica</b>	WEL <b>New Zealand</b>
AMM <b>Jordan</b>	BLN <b>Germany</b>	HAV <b>Cuba</b>	KUA <b>Malaysia</b>	MIA <b>United States</b>	PRM <b>Suriname</b>	SOF <b>Bulgaria</b>	ZAG <b>Croatia</b>
ANK <b>Turkey</b>	BOG <b>Colombia</b>	HON <b>China</b>	KWE <b>Kuwait</b>	MIL <b>Italy</b>	RAM <b>Palestine</b>	RIG <b>Latvia</b>	TBL <b>Georgia</b>
AST <b>Kazakhstan</b>	BTL <b>Slovakia</b>	ISL <b>Pakistan</b>	LAG <b>Nigeria</b>	MOS <b>Russia</b>	RIG <b>Latvia</b>	TLV <b>Israel</b>	TOK <b>Japan</b>
ATH <b>Greece</b>	BUJ <b>Burundi</b>	IST <b>Turkey</b>	LIS <b>Portugal</b>	NYV <b>United States</b>	ROF <b>Italy</b>		
	CHI <b>United States</b>	JAK <b>Indonesia</b>	LJU <b>Slovenia</b>	OSL <b>Norway</b>	ROM <b>Italy</b>		

The missions can use these to seek advice from local experts on how to make their operational management more sustainable. This stimulates and facilitates the development of sustainable ideas and initiatives in a local context, with minimal bureaucracy. Many missions have used the voucher for a baseline measurement and impact scan, so that they can develop a more systematic results-oriented approach, and subsequently measure their progress. In this way the vouchers help the missions take positive steps towards a fully-fledged sustainability strategy. The voucher scheme will be continued in 2024 to support the missions and encourage them to hire local sustainability expertise.

### Fostering ambition

We use the annual plan cycle and the annual report to communicate and monitor the ministry's basic sustainability measures. In turn, each of the missions and the departments in The Hague report on their results. We understand the importance of customised solutions, and therefore take the local context into account. Where necessary, we provide additional support or make exceptions.

Integrated deployment of these strategies makes it possible to accumulate knowledge, share experiences, offer financial incentives and actively foster ambition. This is the best way to work towards a sustainable organisational culture and make a lasting difference to the world around us.

### Walk our Talk awards

More and more of BZ colleagues are committed to building a just and sustainable world, be it in the departments or at the missions, through large projects or small initiatives. So many wonderful things are happening and together we are making a huge difference. With the Walk our Talk awards,



• Jury and winners of the Walk our Talk awards. L to R: Carola van Rijnsoever, Barbara van Hellemond, Danielle van Mulukom, Michiel Smeets and Gerard Steeghs.

we put the spotlight on some inspiring examples.

In 2023 we organised the Walk our Talk award competition for the second time and once again it was a great success. The number of entries indicates just how important Mission Sustainable is to all of us. No fewer than 90 entries were carefully selected and assessed, resulting in two prize-winning initiatives.

- The **2023 Walk our Talk award for Sustainable Travel** went to the International Enterprise Department (DIO) and the Directorate-General for Foreign Economic Relations (DGBEB). Using input from colleagues, DIO compiled a list of

options and incentives for reducing official travel and using a different mode of transport. This developed into a Sustainable Travel action plan that could also be applied outside DIO. It has now been scaled up and adopted throughout DGBEB.

- The 2023 **Walk our Talk award for Inspirational Leadership** went to the Mission Sustainable Team in Abu Dhabi. The team acquired a huge amount of knowledge about sustainability within a short time and actively shared it with their colleagues, which raised awareness and led to many concrete actions (see also 'How the team in Abu Dhabi used the Walk our Talk voucher')

## How teams used the Walk our Talk voucher



Abu Dhabi

The team from the Abu Dhabi embassy used the Walk our Talk voucher for a study, collaborative ventures and awareness-raising. The study revealed how sustainable the embassy is, both on its own and compared with other embassies, and what it can do to become even more sustainable. The team conducted the study jointly with local businesses, which meant many insights could be immediately put into practice.



Riga

The team from the Riga embassy used the Walk our Talk voucher to raise awareness and take a series of small but effective sustainability measures. They discovered that small changes can make a big difference, such as slight adjustments to the amount of water used by the toilets, LED lighting and extra window insulation. The team also compiled a sustainability checklist for caterers and is currently considering ending the use of bottled water, as the quality of tap water has improved.



## Havanna

The team from the Havana embassy used the Walk our Talk voucher for training and consultation on waste sorting, and sustainable work practices and procurement. They also got together with several other missions in the region, local providers of environmental services and a Cuban sustainability expert to think about sustainable solutions.

*'Besides sharing knowledge and information, we also showed them all the sustainable measures that we've taken in our embassy: a water filter, energy-efficient LED lights, good procedures for sorting and recycling waste and used paper, and our use of solar energy. This is unique in Cuba: we're the only embassy here that has such facilities.*

*We've made pretty good progress in implementing sustainability measures, in part thanks to the expertise of our local staff. Other embassies have been inspired by our approach, and particularly the local team's commitment to our Mission Sustainable philosophy.'*

Joëlla van Rijn  
embassy secretary in Havana

# Sustainable tendering opportunities

There are several different ways of factoring sustainability into your contract award procedure, such as getting to know the market, asking the right questions and making sure you have the requisite sustainability expertise. Lucienne Vermeer and Alexander Kofman from 3W|WorldWide Working gained useful experience in this area in 2023.

## What were you awarding a contract for?

*Alexander:* 'Last year we put out a new call for tenders for diplomatic post and freight services. Diplomatic work spans the globe, so secure communications are vital. This means that the services we ask potential partners to provide have to meet specific requirements, for example in terms of speed of delivery, discretion and cost – and of course sustainability.'

## What's involved in a sustainable tendering procedure?

*Lucienne:* 'Formulating good sustainability criteria requires certain knowledge, and we were a bit lacking in that area. If you don't have this expertise, you don't know what you can ask of companies. You can't even articulate how far you want to go with your sustainability ambitions, because you don't know enough about the possibilities.'

## How do you acquire the knowledge for an invitation to tender that's both ambitious and achievable?

*Alexander:* 'To gain that knowledge, we launched a preliminary market consultation. We asked potential suppliers what they have to offer, not least in terms of sustainability. What are the possibilities? That taught us a lot about the sustainable options available. Of course, to be able to ask the right questions at that point, we first had to familiarise ourselves with the delivery process. "Imagine you're an envelope!" What route do the items we want delivered take? What do they encounter in transit? If you know all that, you're in a much better position to evaluate the answers and explanations companies give you.'

## Can you give us an example?

'Some might emphasise the transport route in the Netherlands, with electric buses and so on. That all sounds great, of course, but it's transportation by air or sea that accounts for the bulk of carbon emissions. When you know the options in a process, one thing you could ask about is smart use of logistic hubs, as there are also savings to be made there. Consulting the market is also an opportunity to exchange ideas, and by providing the questions in advance, you'll ensure that the consultation itself is more productive. You'll quickly find out what is and isn't possible, backed up by good arguments.'

## As the contracting authority, what else can you do?

'You also need to have an honest conversation in-house about requirements and options. Speed, cost, sustainability... in the end, you have to weigh up everything. As part of this, it's also useful to look at your own processes.'

'Speed is often a standard criterion, but for some items, a few days' delay or planning the logistics differently isn't a problem. Less focus on speed, opting for a more sustainable mode of transport or combining shipments, for instance, can mean fewer emissions. Adjusting your own processes can have many sustainable benefits.'

'What's more, you shouldn't always ask for the impossible, as that could actually force a service provider to be less sustainable, because it's cheaper. Sometimes you have to be prepared to pay a bit more for the sustainable option. It's always about balancing sustainability, cost and efficiency.'

## How does such a complex trade-off affect the assessment of bids?

*Lucienne:* 'You need to have expertise of things like the various measuring instruments, certifications, etc. Otherwise, how would you know that the information you're presented with isn't just hot air? There are many measuring instruments available to measure climate impact, but they're not all the same. There are many international organisations that issue certifications relating to supply chain responsibility, circularity or climate impact. How do you know which quality mark is good enough? What does the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder do exactly? What is EcoVadis and do you know what it means when companies say they're a member?'

*'Nobody needs to reinvent the wheel.  
Nobody has to make it on their own.'*



**How did you acquire this knowledge?**

'We received a lot of support, not only from the Mission Sustainable programme team and the sustainable commissioning and procurement (SCP) board but also from the Central Government Procurement Service (RIS). They all have a lot of expertise in-house and we made good use of it. That was invaluable. The Mission Sustainable team know all about measuring instruments and certifications, for instance. RIS has templates for drafting sustainability criteria. When you're formulating requirements upfront, you also need

weighting factors, which you can subsequently use at the assessment stage. The templates helped enormously with that and meant we didn't have to start from scratch. Another advantage was that the SCP board read the sustainability section of the invitation to tender. They examined the opportunities and options for all six themes.'

**What advice would you give colleagues dealing with sustainability criteria in tenders?**

*Alexander:* 'Make use of the expertise available. There are

more opportunities for incorporating sustainability into the tendering procedure than you think.'

*Lucienne:* 'Get expert advice to help you make a better assessment. Nobody needs to reinvent the wheel. Nobody has to make it on their own.'

## 6 About this report

This is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' second sustainability report. It describes the activities we undertook in 2023 that have contributed to a climate-neutral, circular and fair operational management process and organisational culture, as well as our collaborations with our stakeholders. The report will also serve as a yardstick to measure our annual progress towards achieving our sustainability objectives. This report covers the ministry as a whole, including diplomatic missions abroad.



### Standards and guiding principles used

This report is structured around the three themes of Mission Sustainable: climate neutrality, circular economy and supply chain responsibility. We use the annual cycle of the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder and the sustainability report to monitor our progress and ensure that measures are implemented and adapted accordingly. Our carbon footprint is determined based on the requirements of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and the guidelines for

quantifying and reporting GHG emissions and removals at organisation level (ISO 14064-1). In doing so, we adhere to the approach laid down in the CO<sub>2</sub> Performance Ladder Handbook version 3.1.

This footprint comprises all emissions in scope 1 and 2, plus 'business travel' which is an element of scope 3. Emissions have been calculated using the basic factors provided on CO<sub>2</sub>emissiefactoren.nl. For the energy consumption of

mission buildings located abroad, we use each country's basic factors (available from [ourworldindata.org/grapher/carbon-intensity-electricity](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/carbon-intensity-electricity)). Looking ahead, as part of our growth model, we plan to draft our sustainability report using international reporting guidelines for sustainability information.

The missions themselves are responsible for providing accurate consumption data. This data is collected at one central point, checked for any major discrepancies and processed to produce a complete carbon footprint for the ministry as a whole. Flight data is managed and collated centrally. If any consumption data is lacking, assumptions are made based on historical data and/or average values per m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area or per FTE. In 2023 the ratio of measured to estimated data for the energy consumption of the missions was approximately 90:10.

### Continuous improvement

To ensure data reliability, both internal and external audits are carried out annually, and independent verification of the emissions inventory is done periodically. Over the next few years we will continue to improve our reporting in various ways, including by consistently following the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle and finetuning our sustainability strategy. It will take time to fully integrate the process of collecting data from the missions into our activities, and we will be giving this matter ample attention in the years ahead.



1,000 trees planted on the riverbanks of the Mekong Delta

# Annexe 1 Central government objectives and Mission Sustainable

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ) is part of central government. We work closely with our colleagues in other ministries and our objectives are a translation of central government-wide agreements and objectives. The table below provides an overview of the five main goals for making central government's operational management more sustainable (source: denkdoeduurzaam.nl). These are set out in, for example, the National Climate Agreement, the coalition agreement and the agreements made pursuant to the Jobs and Job Quota (Work Disabled Persons) Act. We indicate how we are pursuing each objective under the Mission Sustainable programme.

Central government-wide objective	BZ implementation
Climate-neutral operational management by 2030 (climate change, energy and transport & mobility themes)	See objective 1: climate-neutral operational management and procurement across BZ by 2030. (Section 2)
Halve use of primary raw materials by 2030 and be <a href="#">fully circular</a> by 2050 (circular economy theme)	See objective 2: at least 12 BZ pilot projects on circularity to be launched in 2022 and 2023. Based on the results of the pilots, we will devise a strategy in 2024. (Section 3)
Stimulate <a href="#">employment</a> , e.g. by creating 5,000 work experience jobs for long-term benefit recipients	Encouraging the creation of work experience jobs is outside the scope of Mission Sustainable and is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department (HDPO).
Make <a href="#">international production chains</a> more sustainable by preventing or tackling breaches related to labour rights, human rights and the environment (social conditions in global supply chains theme)	See objective 3: BZ actively seeks to minimise the risks of breaches of human rights and international labour standards in regard to operational management and procurement. (Section 4)
Encourage innovations, e.g. by acting as a launching customer (innovation theme)	Innovation is a supporting theme in all of the above objectives. In the years ahead the role of innovation will become increasingly important, as will the market's ability to offer innovative solutions to achieve our goals.



On 8 April 2023 more than 800 keen cyclists gathered in front of the historic Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) Opera House for a bike ride aimed at highlighting sustainable transport and mobility, led by Consul-General Daniel Stork and organised by the HCMC Consulate-General, together with the Dutch Business Association, the HCMC Department of Transport, the Dutch Cycling Embassy and the Vietnam-Netherlands Friendship Association. The event marked 50 years of Dutch-Vietnamese diplomatic relations.

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