



International

# Enhanced resilience to respond to disasters

Recovery project  
Sint Maarten

The Hague, February 2018

# Inhoudsopgave

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# 1 Introduction

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Following the Hurricane that struck St Maarten, Saba and St Eustatius on September 6 2017, Dutch municipalities contacted their Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) to define a common response to support the islands belonging to the Kingdom of the Netherlands. VNG called upon its members to donate to the fundraising campaign of the Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC) and they agreed to work together in the recovery phase.

NLRC and VNG have agreed that 50% of the funds donated by Dutch municipalities to NLRC will be available for recovery support activities to be developed and implemented by VNG International, the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International), in close collaboration with NLRC to create synergies.

In December 2017, an identification and formulation mission to the Leeward Islands took place. This resulted in a comprehensive overview of the needs of the government of St Maarten and the public entities on St Eustatius and Saba in the aftermath of the crisis.

On the basis of this mission, the present document describes the proposed action that will be implemented by VNG International. As the extend and impact (in terms of affected citizens) of the damage is largest on St Maarten, most of the activities will be implemented on St Maarten. Involvement of St Eustatius and Saba will be sought whenever logical and possible.

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## 2 Background and rationale

This section describes the needs of the stakeholders involved in the project and the rationale and relevance of the proposed action in relation to these needs.

### Hurricane and disaster management

Hurricane Irma, a powerful category 5 hurricane, packing winds more than 295 km/h. acted several eastern Caribbean islands on September 6, 2017. A second and third hurricane, Jose and Maria hit St Maarten with a lesser impact, interrupted and delayed relief efforts.

Irma caused tremendous damages to houses (especially roofs) and infrastructures (roads, airport and port). Power and water supplies, as well as communications were severely affected. (Red Cross carried out a damage assessment St Maarten immediately after the hurricane, see image below).

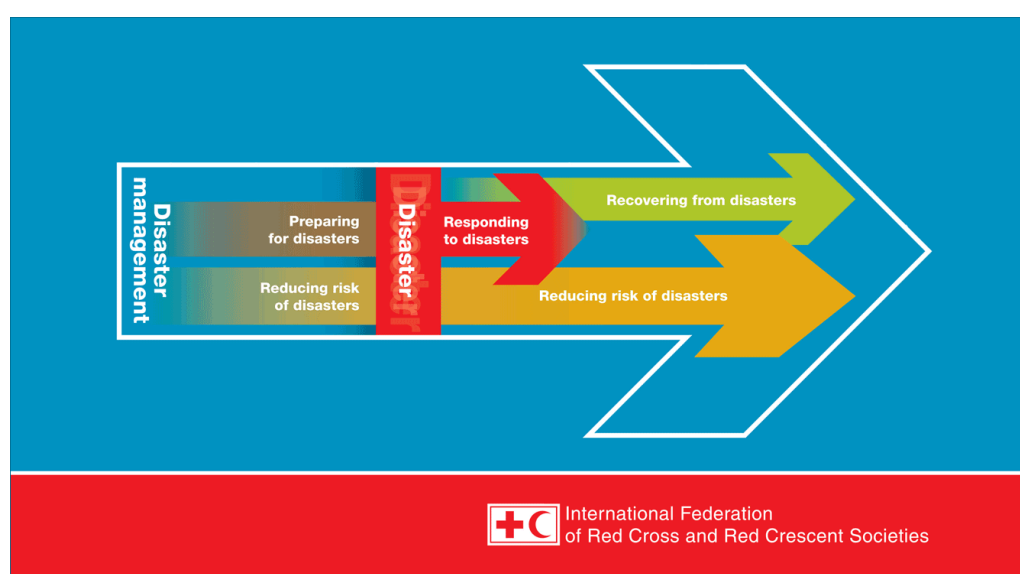


The psychological impact has been very high as well; people suffer from post-traumatic stress symptoms because of the damage and the fear they have had for their lives.

St Eustatius and Saba were affected to a lesser extent, but due to their dependence on supplies from St Maarten, were also faced with big challenges.

Emergency support has been particularly efficient on Saba and, according to the discussions in the first identification mission (see programme in annex 4), seems to have been more challenging on St Maarten. This is why **disaster management** will be a key focus in the present project proposal.

According to the Red Cross and the Red Crescent National Societies, supported by the International Federation (IFRC), disaster management can be defined as the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and recovery in order to lessen the impact of disasters.<sup>1</sup>



It is important to strengthen practice and accountability in disaster management. The present proposal will therefore focus on the improvement of practice and accountability in disaster management by the Government of St Maarten.

It will be important to take the realities of the island sufficiently into account, which is why we will also focus on the community structure which has to play a role in humanitarian assistance services of the GoSM in situation of crisis.

### Disaster prone location

The geographical location of St Maarten, St Eustatius and Saba, belonging to the Lesser Antilles volcanic arc, means the islands are subject to two major natural phenomena: tropical cyclones in the annual hurricane season and earthquakes. It is classed as a level 5 region, which means it has a high level of seismicity. In addition, the low altitude of St Maarten's valleys and coastal areas makes the island particularly sensitive to the risk of flash floods, cyclonic swell and tsunamis. On both other islands the increasing erosion of the cliffs renders the situation extra fragile.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disaster-management/>

The last major Hurricane, a category 4/5, was in 1995 (Luis), though three years ago in 2015 a category 2 Hurricane (Gonzalo) also hit Sint Maarten.

On St Maarten, due to the high demographic pressure urbanization not only continues to progress towards areas that are more exposed to natural hazards, but is at the same time responsible for aggravating the risks of such events through activities such as the filling in of ponds and gullies, the concreting of large surface areas thereby making them impermeable, and cuttings on hillsides.

St Maarten is a small and open island economy. Its economy is vulnerable and to a large extent dependent on worldwide economic developments. Tourism is the core economic activity and accounts for 82.5% of the country's exports. The United States is the largest tourism market. Due to the damage as a result of Irma, there is and will be less touristic activity in the coming years. The economy is suffering greatly.

The French part of the island, Saint Martin, is part of the district of Guadeloupe and is part of France. The prefect is directly responding to the government of France. There is no border control between the two parts of the islands, and the tourists that arrive in Philipsburg by cruise ship almost always visit the French part, but, according to the representatives of the GoSM cooperation between both governments would be very useful both in terms of services as well as in terms of disaster management and would merit more attention.

The speed and scale of population renewal on St Maarten have considerably increased the vulnerability of the island. A particular vulnerable group that has suffered from the consequences of hurricane Irma has been the undocumented population. This population has been estimated at between 10 000 and 15 000 people. The proposal below will detail some issues and actions related to knowing who lives where, safety and the environment, and building regulations. Undocumented (migrant) populations are often vulnerable, try to stay off the official radar, and accept substandard conditions of living. This creates obvious concerns and hampers both civil protection in the case of disasters and planning/designing for sustainable situations.

The physical vulnerability of the population can be partially addressed by implementing existing regulation and adequate territorial planning: some of the regulation is developed and available on paper, but not implemented in practice, whereas in other cases regulation has been drafted but not approved or is absent at all.

It is expected that the risk and intensity of disasters will increase as a result of climate change. An adequate and effective response of the (local) governments of the islands is therefore crucial. Given the high dependency of the islands on touristic activity, a rapid recovery is key to mitigate economic and social impact.

As stated in the Ministry Plan of VROMI: “As an island nation, the effects of climate change are becoming more visible and tangible and will ultimately form a threat to our existence and way of life. The rise of the sea level is eroding the beaches and coastlines which will pose a threat to the island’s ecosystems, economy, and our very existence if no action is taken. The matter of climate change needs to be made a priority also for Sint Maarten. Preparations need to be made and measures undertaken to address and mitigate the effects thereof, especially in the form of preparation for more frequently recurring natural disasters and inundation of lower lying areas, but also in the form of invasive species in indigenous ecosystems. Sustainable development must therefore be the core mission of all our legislation, policies, programs and initiatives.”<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore crucial to have an operational, efficient, effective and widely accepted disaster management strategy, which includes both the physical response and preparedness for disasters, and the compliance with existing regulation to reduce the risks, as well as the attention for the socioeconomic aftermath of such events. See also the section on Disaster Management Strategy below.

Most of the activities described in this project plan will focus on St Maarten only; in a few activities we will include the public entities of St Eustatius and Saba.

#### **10-10-10**

On 10 October 2010, St Maarten became a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands while St Eustatius and Saba became “special municipalities” or “public entities”. St Maarten is self-governing for all internal affairs, with powers relating to defence, foreign affairs and some aspects of judicial functions coming under the purview of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Since that moment, many of the cooperation activities focusing on capacity development of the islands were discontinued.

St Maarten, which had a municipal-like structure before with an island council and governor, became a country with 7 ministries with departments and a minister president. Its government fell in November 2017, when former Prime Minister Marlin refused to accept the conditions that needed to be met by the government in order to receive the relief money from the Dutch government. Elections are expected to take place on February 26, 2018.

It will be crucial in the coming period to improve trust in government, of both civil society and the private sector, which in large part depend on the ability of government to listen and respond to communities’ needs. In the context of relatively small islands where groups of society cannot be separated that easily as a result of the scale, it is important to ensure that values of integrity, common interest and rule of law are strengthened.

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<sup>2</sup> VROMI Ministry Plan 2015-2018, page 15-16

Despite the new constitutional structure, many of the functions and tasks of the GoSM and even the legislation and regulation that is in place is still very similar to those of municipalities in The Netherlands. The same goes, and even more so, for the public entities of Saba and St. Eustatius.

The public entity of St. Eustatius is currently taken over of the Dutch government. The political situation on the public entity of Saba is stable.

### Disaster management strategy

The current status of the disaster management strategies and their implementation on the islands differs greatly. This became very clear when Irma hit the islands. Whereas Saba's response to Irma was well planned, deconcentrated stock locations had sufficient equipment, water and food, the strength and impact of the hurricane on St Maarten was much larger and the response was perceived to be less effective, partially also due to a lack of an updated and internalized strategy. Immediately after the hurricane, a SWOT analysis has been carried out with support of UNCTAD. While an external evaluation on the disaster management response will be carried out in the coming months, the general feeling is that the coordination and (internal and external) communication was less effective than after Luis.

According to the national ordinance for disaster relief (*Landsverordening rampenbestrijding*)<sup>3</sup>, the minister of General Affairs (Prime Minister) has the supreme command in the event of a disaster or serious fear of its occurrence. However, in practice, the Prime Minister set in motion the national ordinance states of emergency (*Landsverordening uitzonderingstoestand*) through which units of armed forces were made available by the Netherlands and set under responsibility of the Governor on St Maarten. In practice, this meant that the Governor played an important role in the disaster management. The Prime Minister tried to reach political consensus within the Council of Ministers on each of the decisions to be taken, which in fact hindered the smooth process of effective and efficient response. At practical level, for example, hurricane passes, which need to be provided to those that need to be able to be on the streets to coordinate relief actions, were not distributed to the right people; shelters were not opened until the evening before the storm, without sufficient supply and equipment.

For the upcoming and future hurricane season(s) it is therefore crucial that disaster management strategies are updated, but most importantly, known and interiorized by all stakeholders involved, with a clear division of labour between government departments and communities. Cooperation and communication between all stakeholders involved is crucial in this regard.

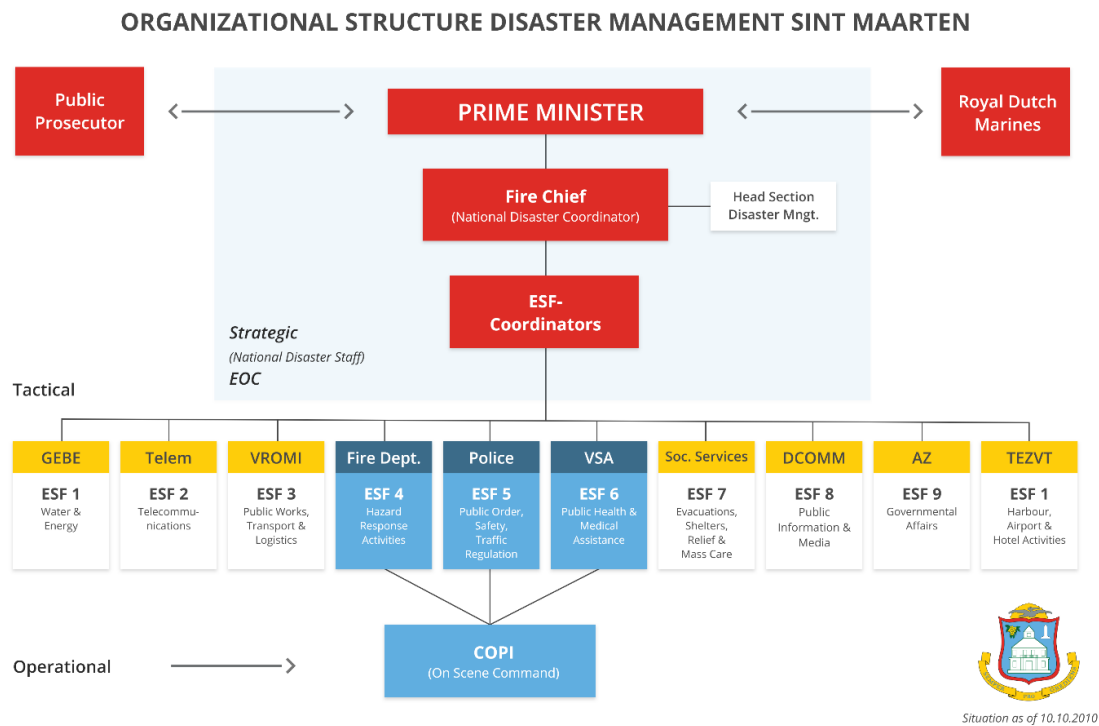
After Hurricane Luis, in 1995, a Disaster Management Strategy and Structure were set up and put in place. Since St Maarten has become a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2010, the structure has been translated and adapted to the new functions that were created, but the legislation and strategy have not been revisited.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://decentrale.regelgeving.overheid.nl/cvdr/xhtmloutput/Historie/Sint%20Maarten/206085/206085\\_1.html](http://decentrale.regelgeving.overheid.nl/cvdr/xhtmloutput/Historie/Sint%20Maarten/206085/206085_1.html)  
(In Dutch)



The Fire Chief Officer, Clive Richardson, is the disaster coordinator and manages the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with the underlying Emergency Support Functions (ESF); a group of ten supporting bodies that operate during emergency situations, as detailed in the organizational chart below.<sup>4</sup>



Each ESF is supposed to have its own operational manuals. So far, only some initial draft plans have been drawn up. Trainings and exercises that take place various times a year are so far not multi-disciplinary nor attended by all stakeholders.

<sup>4</sup> ESF 1 are representatives from GEBE that is a part of the disaster management group and they are responsible for water and energy;  
 ESF 2 are representatives from Bureau Telecommunication & Post Sint Maarten;  
 ESF 3 are representatives from VROMI and they are responsible for public works, transportation and logistics. Among other things this group deals with temporary garbage and debris collection locations and pick-up dates. Also waste and sewage management fall in this group;  
 ESF 4 are representatives from the Fire Department and they are responsible for hazards and response activities;  
 ESF 5 are representatives from the Police Department and they are responsible for public order, safety and traffic regulation. Questions about the curfew and how to obtain a hurricane pass will be answered by ESF 5;  
 ESF 6 are representatives from the Department of Public Health (VSA) and they are responsible for preventive and collective health;  
 ESF 7 are representatives from Social Services (VSA) and they are responsible for evacuation, shelter, relief and mass care including humanitarian affairs, care for the elderly, food and ration distribution for general public, domestic violence and other issues;  
 ESF 8 are representatives from the Department of Communication (DCOMM) and they are responsible for dissemination of public information and media;  
 ESF 9 are representatives from the Ministry of General Affairs and they are responsible for governmental affairs;  
 ESF 10 are representatives from TEATT and they are responsible for the Harbor, Airport and Hotel activities.

An annual Hurricane training (HUREX) takes place, with the three services (ambulance, police and fire brigade), the local Red Cross branch and in which the Dutch marine is also involved. However, this is not an EOC training and involvement of ministries is limited. In addition there are two trainings a year organized by the Ministry of VSA, supported by the Ambulance Service of Brabant in The Netherlands (RAV Brabant) and in which both the ambulance and fire brigade participate.

The need was expressed by various stakeholders to both strengthen the involvement of politicians in the process as well as civil servants in the process and exercises.

RAV Brabant is expected to continue working with the Ministry of VSA and with the bi-annual trainings through a new cooperation agreement as of March 2018, in which there will also be attention for training of “officiëren van dienst” of the ambulance service and fire brigade.

It is therefore requested to VNG International to support the strategy, corresponding legislation and (partial) plans, as well as the trainings and exercises, in which an important emphasis needs to be placed on the internal and external communication and coordination between the various actors.

### State of affairs

St Maarten, St Eustatius and Saba are picking themselves up from the triple shocks of hurricanes Irma, Jose and Maria. People have largely stayed with friends or family and gradually move back to their own houses even when these are not or only partially reconstructed. St Maarten received its first cruise ships again in December 2017 and the other islands have demonstrated great effort in the cleanup of the islands.

In many (particularly touristic activity related) cases, businesses and institutions function at a level that is reduced in relation to pre-hurricane operations – especially in terms of infrastructure. Many people see the opportunity not only to re-build, but actually to improve public services and move towards better functioning, cleaner, and safer environment. This goes by the moniker of *Building Back Better*, which may mean building back according to the international ‘SPHERE’ minimum standards for humanitarian response. SPHERE standards actually have many implications for phases beyond the humanitarian response, in reconstruction and the long term. Likewise, there are international standards for hurricane and earthquake-resistant building design, from ISO and other bodies.

The recovery of the economy, which is heavily dependent on the recovery of the touristic sector, is expected to take a couple of years, which will result in an increased unemployment and need for social services. In addition, many people on the islands suffer from post-traumatic stress. Attention for social care is thus also crucial.

Many of the NGOs who have supported Sint Maarten in the emergency phase are now phasing out or moving into the longer term reconstruction phase. NGO activities have (had) an emphasis on food (voucher) programmes and now focus on shelter repair (see box below). The funds for reconstruction of the Dutch government are being released for large reconstruction works and will be mainly managed by the World Bank. It will be crucial to ensure good information exchange in the coming period with all actors involved, to avoid any overlap or duplication of efforts. This is done through regular contact with the NLRC, who participates in weekly coordination meetings with NGOs, as well as through bilateral contacts with actors. The GoSM has also a very important role to play in connecting the various organizations.

<b>Overview of activities of NGOs and international organizations (not exhaustive)</b>	
<i>Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC)</i>	NLRC has done a damage assessment of the island, a round of 1500 food vouchers and does another round of 500. It works in 9 neighbourhoods. It also distributes breakfast and lunch to 4000 children on primary schools. It will issue vouchers for house repair (scope is 2000 houses).
<i>United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)</i>	UNDP does a clean-up in neighbourhoods and will repair 150 houses through a cash4work project, and will do an evaluation of the disaster management response.
<i>ADRA</i>	ADRA is a Development and Relief Association. It undertakes a damage assessment with tablets that have been made available. They are signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government. ADRA International has provided funds for food vouchers through the ministry of VSA; 2000 families have received at least one voucher that they have applied for them through VSA. ADRA St. Maarten has provided hot meals and Food Baskets. Roof Repair is another activity, for which ADRA provides materials and volunteers. Psychologists and trauma experts have been brought in from Trinidad to train local Red Cross branches. A platform will be set up (supplementary to APAP).
<i>St. Maarten Development Fund (SMDF)</i>	SMDF has given grants to 24-25 NFP Foundations. It gives priority to activities related to youth, elderly, gender, poverty alleviation, district and community improvement. SMDF has started with the repair of 24 houses and will do another 75 in consultation with the ministry of VSA.
<i>White Yellow Cross (WYC)</i>	WYC has repaired 50 houses. They also work on the development of skills of their personnel, youngsters and the elderly through the projects.
<i>Nationaal rampenfonds</i>	As of March a call for proposals will be launched to support projects in the domain of social development and recovery.

**Overview of activities of NGOs and international organizations (not exhaustive)**

<i>World Bank (WB)</i>	The WB has done an assessment on the island and has made an inventory of the projects that need to be implemented in the coming period. The Dutch government has made available 550 million Euro for those projects. The GoSM is working with the World Bank to finalize the list of activities that need to be covered. Possibly, the World Bank also will deploy activities in the support of the disaster management structure.
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With only 4 months to go to the next hurricane season, it is time to reflect on the strategy adopted by the governments and seek improvements in both the management of disasters. This relates to different institutions and “municipal” skills.

**GoSM actors**

The main beneficiary of the present project proposal is the Government of Sint Maarten. A main emphasis will lie on the departments that have a key role in the disaster management structure: General Affairs, VROMI and VSA.

Below a list of actors that will be regularly involved in the project can be found. This list is not exhaustive.

<b>Government of St Maarten</b>	<b>Government of St Maarten is formed by King of the Netherlands, represented by the Governor (Eugene Holiday) and the ministers.</b>
Council of Ministers	The Council of Ministers comprises all ministers and meets every Tuesday. The Prime Minister presides over the Council of Ministers.
Ministry of General Affairs	Responsible for civil registry, kingdom relations, legal affairs and communication. The fire department falls under the Ministry of General Affairs.
Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour (VSA)	The ambulance falls under the Ministry of VSA
Ministry of Public Housing, Physical Planning, Environment and Infrastructure (VROMI)	Responsible for all public works.

On Saba we work with the governor and island secretary. On St Eustatius we work with the interim government.

# 3

## Objectives and Expected Results

The **overall goal** (area of concern) of the present project is:

To contribute to enhanced resilience of the leeward islands to deal with future disasters.

### 3.1 Specific Objectives (area of influence)

1. Government institutions are strengthened in their disaster **preparedness** capacities to anticipate and adapt, provide safety and response to all communities in future disasters.
2. St Maarten institutions are **building back better** towards increased resilience to prevent and mitigate future disaster threats.

### 3.2 Results (area of control)

#### Preparedness

1. A revisited and upgraded disaster management structure, including corresponding legislation, has been developed
2. Politicians and civil servants of line ministries and police, fire brigade and ambulance, as well as community representatives have been trained on the disaster management structure
3. Improved access of government to information for disaster management purposes
4. Improved services related to psychological preparedness

#### Building Back Better

1. More effective and efficient implementation of the recovery programmes on Saba
2. A disaster proof and sustainable building code have been defined and carries the consensus of the government and the community.

## 3.3 Activities

### 3.3.1 Component 1: Preparedness

#### **Preparedness I: Disaster management on paper**

This subcomponent is about the legal and institutional aspects of disaster preparedness. The analytical sections have made clear that communication, coordination and control need to be strengthened in order to be more efficient and effective in a future disaster. Based on the requests from St Maarten expressed at the scoping mission, the following activities will be implemented in the scope of the present project:

I.1 Development and strengthening of a clear division of tasks and responsibilities in an upgraded emergency plan (connection with I.5)

I.2 Putting text proposals in place that will allow the legislative to update the legislation related to disaster management

I.3 Writing an improved communication strategy for disaster management that includes communication aspects prior to, during and after disasters, both internally (government) and externally (communities) (ESF8 and within the several sector plans)

I.4 Support in the development of a number of sector plans through workshops, development of parts of the sector plans, validation sessions (ESF6, ESF7 and ESF8 have been prioritized by the ministries)

I.5 Revision of responsibilities of community representatives, such as management of shelters, distribution: review of the current situation, developing an advice on the most effective structure, selection and training.

This is a subcomponent very susceptible to the pace and direction of reforms in the GoSM's bodies (see section on assumptions and risks below). Activities are likely to be tailored to circumstances and developments a couple of times in the implementation of the project.

#### **Preparedness II: Disaster management in practice**

In order to ensure that plans are being used and internalized, it is important to organize accessible trainings and exchange events, tailor-made for the target group. Different approaches will be needed to persuade politicians, civil servants and representatives of communities. We believe it will be most useful to first enable a simulation game for politicians and in the second year a broader high level event for the Netherlands Caribbean region, to involve politicians from the outset and keep their attention in the years after. Afterwards, more practical follow-up events will be organized with stakeholders such as civil servants and representatives of neighbourhoods that have a role to play in the disaster management (i.e. shelter managers). However, also other stakeholders, such as private sector, will be involved where possible and needed. We also envisage the possibility for some of the key actors to get an exchange to a Dutch municipality in the area of disaster management.

II.1 Training on the sector plans (connected to activity I.4)

II.2 Organization of a simulation game for politicians

II.3 Organization of a VNG Caribbean Congress on Climate Change and Disaster Management for politicians to support exchange and learning. The GoSM wishes to create a center of excellence on disaster management and this activity could tap into that process

II.4 Disaster management training for civil servants

II.5 Organization of 4 Internships in Dutch municipalities (e.g. support of operational leader and other key positions in disaster management)

This is a subcomponent in which the most use can be made of the VNG International colleague-to-colleague approach, from the political level right down to those overseeing operations.

### **Preparedness III: Information**

This subcomponent is about the information that needs to power the actions of the institutions (both formal and non-governmental). In order to better respond to future disasters and in order to spend relief money well, there is a need to get a clear snapshot of the physical and psychological damage. After Irma, the NLRC developed a damage assessment for the country. However, the government feels it is important that they themselves dispose of a system that can help them assess the damage and needs in future occasions so as to be able to base their policy directions on the findings and to be able to adopt a concrete support and emergency strategy.

We propose that the following expertise be made available under this subcomponent:

III.1 Expertise to make an analysis of the needs for the development of an information system and its administration (possibly with support of community representatives), in consultation with NLRC.

### **Preparedness IV. Psychological preparedness**

As stated in the introduction, the psychological impact of the hurricane has been very high. People are still struggling with the consequences of having had to deal with the hurricane and the subsequent events, such as looting. This subcomponent takes the project from the 'hard' issues concerning land and buildings to the 'soft' issues of looking after vulnerable people in areas to be rebuilt.

Until 2017, the City of Amsterdam had a Memorandum of Understanding with the GoSM with a focus on support to mental health issues. In the framework of the cooperation post-Irma, Amsterdam wishes to build on that cooperation, but related to the post-traumatic stress symptoms that people have experienced.

In consultation with the GoSM and several health organizations, the following activities have been identified.

IV.1 Training of community representatives (responsible for shelter management, or distribution, or damage assessment) that have a role in the disaster management cycle to identify psychological needs in the neighbourhoods.

IV.2 Prior to the hurricane season develop an information campaign on psychological impact. This includes both the development of communication material in various languages that can be spread among the population as well as conversations that can be held with the public in the neighbourhoods (possibly with the community representatives).

### 3.3.2 Component 2: *Building back better*

#### **BBBI: Managing recovery and reconstruction**

This subcomponent is about some aspects of efficiency in recovery and reconstruction. St Maarten (through the World Bank), Saba and St Eustatius will receive funds from the Dutch government to finance investments in infrastructure. However, the governments of all three islands struggle with getting the adequate capacity to manage the projects related to the funds, do the oversight, control, administrative and financial management.

The World Bank will likely waive some but not all of its *safeguard policies* for emergency investment ('homework' as it were, such as environmental or social impact assessments). Normally the World Bank's project implementation unit shall be lodged within the GoSM and help it to satisfy the safeguard policies.

For the reconstruction of Saba and St Eustatius, 67 million Euro have been made available by the Dutch government.

Saba has to rebuild and improve various parts of her infrastructure. This includes works on the airport, harbour, school area and (public) houses and government buildings.

VNG International will provide:

BBBI.1 Project officer (1FTE) who, along with the colleagues of the Planning Bureau will work on these projects, mainly in terms of planning, monitoring and administration. VNG International will make available funds to support a municipal staff member for the duration of 1 year. Saba will co-finance the costs related to the project officer.

BBBI.2 If and when requested, VNG International can provide financial management capacity support for the GoSM.



## BBBII. Building regulation

This subcomponent is about an issue at the heart of great vulnerabilities: non-compliance with spatial plans and building regulations. St Maarten has been at the receiving end of a lot of criticism, but we would caution against this issue being cast in terms of citizens-victims and authorities-perpetrators. After Irma, no-one needs to be reminded why compliance is essential. There is an opportunity for the authorities to legitimately refuse permits or insist on design adaptations, on the basis of well-informed spatial plans and building regulations.

There are already rules in place to build in a responsible manner, but the force of this extraordinary hurricane (> cat. 5) showed that probably more would need to be done to make new and/or existing buildings more resistant against future Hurricanes (or other disasters).

In Sint Maarten a Building Ordinance (*Bouw en Woningverordening, AB 2015, no.9*) as well as a Building Decree (*Bouwbesluit, AB 2013, GT no. 146*) are in place. Both have not been reviewed and/or revised for a long time and have (very) old norms which stem from 1935.

A project was started, in 2014/2015, to modernize most of the ordinances in the field and responsibility of the Ministry of VROMI. In that regard it had been decided to draft one general more procedural ordinance which forms the umbrella for the more specific legislation pertaining to the content (norms) of the several VROMI topics.

In that perspective a new Building Decree was drafted (the so called "National Decree", entailing general measures: Building technical norms). Due to the recent developments, the question has arisen if this draft legislation contains the right norms related to sustainable and resilient building. The same goes for Environmental norms which are now indicated in the "Final report Environmental norms Netherlands Antilles" (*Eindrapport milieunormen Nederlandse Antillen*), but date from 2007. It will be particularly important to get an expert opinion on the norms related to hurricane proof and sustainable building and including environmental norms.

We would like to point out that this process and these planning instruments are much like the ones in Dutch municipalities.

The following activities will be implemented in the scope of the project.

BBBII.1 Guiding a process of checking/inventory with stakeholders which norms are workable for Sint Maarten (workshops with all stakeholders involved, including architects, developers, private sector, emergency services, communities)

BBBII.2 Support the development and approval process of new building code and regulation that are in line with disaster management strategy

BBBII.3 Training(s) for issuance of building permits on the basis of the regulation in place

BBBII.4 Training(s) for the inspection section of the Ministry of VROMI to ensure compliance with the building code (enforcement of issued permits)

BBBII.5 Legal advice on "verordeningen" in relation to the hurricanes for the public entities on Saba and St Eustatius also may be provided.

It will be important to from the outset include the issue of consequences for the undocumented migrant population: a strategy to avoid that this group will be left behind is necessary, and options need to be explored to ensure either slum upgrading or other solutions that will not affect them negatively. Therefore we propose that representatives of these communities and/or parties working in this area are part of the discussions on the building code as well.

### **BBBIII. Housing**

The issue of housing will be one of the top priorities of the coming period. There is a large need for social and affordable housing for low income households. The Sint Maarten Housing and Development Foundation (SMHDF) can play an important role in meeting that need. However, the current waiting list for social housing has increased from 1500 prior to Irma to around 2500 post-Irma. The financial situation of the SMHDF is fragile, resulting in little room for investment while maintenance costs have risen significantly as a result of the damage from Irma. In order to respond to the challenge of sufficient social and affordable housing in the coming period, there is an urgent need to restructuring the current agreement of tasks and responsibilities between the GoSM and SMHDF. There are currently multiple agreements. In order to support the strengthening of the SMHDF, the GoSM has requested VNG to support in updating the mutual rights and responsibilities of SMHDF and GoSM.

The activity that will be implemented is as follows:

BBBIII.1 An expert on social housing policies will support the GoSM in making an inventory, carrying out a consultation of stakeholders and developing a new proposal that defines the tasks and responsibilities, which will be put forward for adoption to the GoSM and the SMHDF.

# 4 Implementation Strategy

The present project will have a duration of 2½ years. The identification and formulation mission took place in December 2017 and the final report will be submitted on August 1 2020.

The implementation of the project will take into account the following factors and principles.

## 4.1 Project approach

### Dutch municipal expertise

VNG International sends Dutch municipal experts to towns and refugee camps in Jordan, to water boards in South Africa, to Turkish cities in need of participatory investment strategies, and to districts in need of territorial development in Myanmar, to name just a few current examples. The professional contributions of these experts is highly regarded.

As stated in the introduction, there are similarities between the islands concerned and Dutch municipalities in terms of their size, legislation and part of the institutional structure. Later on, we identified similarities in planning processes and the way permits are issued. We have also argued that VNG International's colleague-to-colleague approach is likely to work well because of such similarities.

We are confident that we can contribute to St Maarten's recovery and reconstruction with this colleague-to-colleague approach, if we apply expertise that matches real demand, that is context-sensitive and sufficiently flexible. These are the subjects of the remainder of this section.

### Demand driven

The project is designed to answer local demand and need for support, as recognized by a variety of stakeholders, even though their interpretations might be different. The citizens of the Leeward Islands and their elected representatives are the owners of the project and its results.

It is therefore important that the project is approved at the level of the Council of Ministers on St Maarten. The activities that will be implemented on Saba and St Eustatius will be developed jointly with the governors of St Eustatius (a.i.) and Saba. Representatives of the government of St Maarten will also be invited to take part in the Steering Committee of the project.

In addition, in order to get buy in from the government, a couple of quick wins have been identified that will greatly support the functioning of various departments and that will ensure that their work with VNG International will be able to get a kick start.

### Flexible response

In the immediate response phase after the hurricane, the situation on the islands is not near to being stable:

- On St Maarten, after Irma the government fell and an interim government was formed. Elections took place on February 26, and negotiations are ongoing to form a new government. Changing contacts of both the political representatives and high civil servants due to the political changes, may affect the implementation of the project.
- On all three islands, the drop in number of visitors is enormous. In the coming months, this will result in great losses of income of the touristic branch and will lead to mass dismissals of staff in the hospitality service. This can create instability and a change of priorities for the GoSM, also related to this project.
- New disasters may occur, particularly when the next hurricane season starts in June. This also could mean a shift in priorities that could affect the priorities for this project.

It is clear therefore, that, taking these variable factors into account, it is needed to monitor developments closely and adapt the project activities when needed. Therefore, it is envisaged that every 6 months the Steering Committee and Advisory Board will meet in order to discuss and evaluate progress (see section 6).

### Expert pool

The most (cost)effective way of generating capacity development is through a colleague to colleague approach. On the job coaching and accompaniment by someone that does the same work in another place, creates a basis for exchange on equal footing and trust. The colleague to colleague approach therefore features in many of the programmes and projects implemented by VNG International.

The present proposal depends greatly on the availability of experts from, mainly, municipalities in The Netherlands. Dutch municipalities have made available funds for the project, but have also indicated in some cases that they are able to provide short or long term expertise to support the recovery of the islands.

On the basis of the present project proposal, profiles for expertise will be developed and disseminated among Dutch municipalities. Experience in the Caribbean context or in multicultural and challenging environments will be an important selection criteria. Excellent communication skills, in both Dutch and English will also be a key factor. It will be crucial that Dutch municipalities make available experts who match profiles, because after all it is about who meets a need, not about who wants to go. It is envisaged that experts will be on St Maarten for short time missions, and will follow developments from the Netherlands in between. In that regard we will also prefer to use experts that are available for a longer period, as that will ensure that a real sense of partnership and trust can be created.

In addition to Dutch municipal experts, that will be made available by Dutch municipalities, independent experts or organizations that have a longer relationship with the governments of St Maarten, St Eustatius and Saba will also be added to the pool. This can be useful to build on already existing cooperation or whenever the available experts do not meet all required domains of expertise and qualifications. Mixing and matching municipal experts with other experts also enhances sensitivity to context.

The pool of experts will be selected and managed by VNG International, in close consultation and cooperation with the islands' governments (see for further information in section 6).

### **Internships**

In previous programmes of VNG International with the Caribbean islands, a highly appreciated and effective feature was the study visit or internship in a Dutch municipality. Being away from the day-to-day routine and working on the same topic from a completely different angle has been an inspiration to many Caribbean civil servants. This stimulates the absorption of knowledge and capacity development of civil servants. It also can create new ideas for the own working environment and can stimulate to take concrete action to implement those.

Next to the Dutch experts that will travel to St Maarten, the internship approach is therefore a useful methodology in this project proposal.

## **4.2 Organizing principles**

### **Communication and transparency**

In our project we are promoting good governance, and also seeking to model the types of behaviors and interventions that embody it. We ask of project staff, experts and counterparts that they communicate clearly and act with integrity, openness, and transparency (see our code of conduct in annex 3).

### **Ownership**

The hurricanes destroyed physical infrastructure, and the relief efforts have, particularly in St Maarten, in many cases damaged or undermined governance and institutions, both by creating a shadow NGO governance system, and by pumping money into projects that take place without sufficient consultation of government, coordination, or respect for policies and priorities. Putting the government back in charge also means finding a role for these NGOs that supports them. Process management and consultation are critical throughout.

### Coordination

There are many (international) NGOs active in St Maarten and there is a large reconstruction programme financed by the Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations for St Maarten, St Eustatius and Saba. As detailed in section 2, we actively coordinate our work with the NLRC and make our project visible, transparent, and open to others working on the same areas, and seek synergies wherever possible. The islands' governments themselves have a key role in identifying other initiatives, and in steering both coordination and division of responsibilities.

## 4.3 Phasing

*The project is divided in four phases:*

- The initial phase, referred to as the '**identification phase**' started days after the disaster and has ended in January 2018. During this phase, initial contacts were made with the government of St Maarten at both political and technical level, the governors of the public entities, and other stakeholders. A cooperation agreement was developed between VNG International and NLRC. An identification and formulation mission to the islands took place in December 2017.
- The '**inception phase**' runs from February to March 2018. During this phase, the definitive project plan is agreed upon by all concerned. The phase ends with baselines largely complete, and, ideally if the local absorption capacity is sufficient, will include a number of 'quick fix' activities. At the end of this phase, the main experts and the pool of experts of Dutch municipalities should have been selected and ready to start working as of April 2018.
- The '**implementation phase**' (March 2018 – January 2020) makes up the main body of our project period. During these years, we'll be operating 'full speed'. This phase includes sequenced planning, preparation, implementation, monitoring, and institutionalization. There will be much attention for capacity building in the government institutions. We can identify two "blocks" in the implementation phase:
  1. March – June 2018: preparing for the upcoming hurricane season, implementing activities that have absolute priority. These are some of the concrete manuals and trainings. If the hurricane season would have started later, we would have stick to a more chronological order of activities, but we prefer to give some more intensive support on some of the partial manuals and plans that need to be developed at latest by June
  2. July 2018 – January 2020: in this second phase, we will be able to return to the more "logical" sequence of activities, from legislation, to plans, to workshops, trainings and exercises.

(See annex 1 for a detailed planning)

- The final months of the project (February – July 2020) is referred to as the '**exit phase**'. In this phase, we are scaling down the project activities, and we complete project activities and transfer any remaining operational responsibilities to the authorities and /or to other applicable organizations.

## 4.4 Assumptions and risks

### 4.4.1 Assumptions

Assumptions are defined as external factors (outside the project management's control) that are critical to the project's success. They are the answer to the question: "What external factors may impact on project implementation and the long-term sustainability of benefits, but are outside project management's control?"

Assumptions and our management strategy	
Assumptions	Comments and management issues
<b>Support from elected officials and civil servants for the implementation of the project and their participation in relevant activities</b>	Awareness will be raised at both political and technical levels on the project's scope and activities and on the fact that the project provides an opportunity to strengthen the disaster preparedness and response on the islands to minimize the effects of disasters. It will be emphasized that the activities within the scope of the project are a means to strengthen the capacity of key public officials for ensuring better communication and service delivery towards the inhabitants. Through engagement of a wide range of key elected officials, and keeping a large group of staff up-to-date about the activities, commitment and ownership will be sought.
<b>Cooperation across ministries</b>	In order to be effective and efficient in the implementation and sustainability of the project, cooperation between and across ministries is crucial. The willingness to share information and to cooperate to achieve the best results for the inhabitants is key. The project will ensure timely and clear flow of information to all actors involved; the project proposal will be presented (by the Prime Minister) to the Council of Ministers for approval and to the Secretaries General of the different departments (by the Secretary General of General Affairs) for their comments. Working sessions will be organized in which all relevant departments will be invited to participate, so as to ensure buy in and ownership at all levels.
<b>Availability of experts from Dutch municipalities to participate in activities within the scope of the project</b>	Following the Hurricane, many Dutch municipalities expressed their support to the Leeward islands. Apart from donations, Dutch municipalities expressed the wish to contribute with expertise to the recovery phase. We expect this to materialize through receiving politicians or civil servants from the island on study visits, or through making available experts from Dutch municipalities for an exchange on St Maarten, St Eustatius or Saba. We will develop clear profiles for the expertise needed, so that municipalities can present us their offer. As broker, we will make the best possible match between offer and demand.
<b>Existing structure of community representatives that can be assigned certain tasks in disaster management</b>	There are important tasks in the disaster management structure that could be best addressed at the community level. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the existing structures and possibilities to assigning representatives of communities with specific disaster management related tasks. This needs to be developed with the ministry of VSA, who will be key to ensure longer term sustainability of the involvement of these representatives. At the level of the community, awareness raising needs to be done on the functioning of the disaster management structure and the requirements for involvement of the inhabitants.

#### 4.4.2 Risks

Risk is the probability that an event or action may adversely affect the achievement of project objectives or activities. Risks are composed of **factors internal** and **external** to the project, although the focus is generally given to factors outside project management's direct control.

Risk in projects is inevitable since projects are enablers of change and change introduces uncertainty, hence risks. Risk can be positive (an opportunity) or negative (threats). We have chosen to focus on the negative risks which we have assessed for their probability and level of impact. The consequences of some of the risks identified can be significant and pose a potentially serious threat to the overall success of the project. As part of our project management approach we will also monitor the risks identified and conduct reviews during the inception phase and throughout the project. We have outlined our risk mitigation strategy for the risks to which we should pay careful attention.

Risk	Risk level	Impact	Management/Mitigation strategy
<b>Political changes and high staff turnover, making it difficult to achieve sustainable results</b>	High	Medium	This risk is evident when working with public institutions. Working exclusively in public administration, we are well aware of staff turnover at the institutions, particularly following elections. Therefore, we will take necessary measures in involving a wider group of senior and junior experts. Also, we will inform the high-level management of the necessary human resources to successfully implement the project activities and hold regular coordination meetings, information meetings and steering committee meetings.
<b>Shifting priorities due to the worsening economic situation on the island</b>	High	Medium	The economic situation will likely get worse in the coming period; mass dismissals will take place and as long as the tourist sector is not recovered, the group of vulnerable citizens will increase. This will be a main concern for the government, which might lose attention for the longer term objective of getting more resilient towards the future. The strategy that we will employ to overcome this, is to see where our expertise can support the government in the challenges it is facing, and including the more longer term strategy in those activities to ensure that the longer term perspective is respected.
<b>Lack of interest, motivation and commitment by the elected officials to participate to the project activities</b>	Medium	High	In the past years, St Maarten has been reluctant to receiving capacity building support from the Dutch government. Given its status as a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, interference from The Hague has been seen as an intrusion on the own sovereignty. However, in the current situation, where recovery is crucial for the future of St Maarten, there is a bit more of openness to involvement from the Netherlands. But more importantly, Dutch municipalities are seen, due to the scale and their powers and responsibilities and their own relation towards the Dutch government, as equal partners. Their offer for expertise is therefore more easily accepted. The scope of the project is to strengthen the government in order to be more efficient and effective towards the citizens. Therefore, our first priority will be maximising ownership and commitment of the government and community councils participating in the project. The project team, through intensive training, mentoring, guidance and facilitating will demonstrate how commitment to the project in the long term will be helpful for ensuring better response in future disasters.



Risk	Risk level	Impact	Management/Mitigation strategy
<b>Difficulties in selecting representative persons in neighbourhoods to take on functions within the disaster management structure</b>	Medium	Medium	It will be important to assess what is already there in terms of community representatives and their relation to the disaster management structure, such as shelter management and distribution, also linked to the work of the Red Cross branch. If it is not possible to select people within neighbourhoods, there needs to be found another way through which government can ensure implementation of certain tasks of the disaster management structure, for example through deconcentrated government structures (which are already planned for by VSA).
<b>Overlap with funding and activities from other donors (e.g. UNDP, NLRC, and others)</b>	Medium	Medium	VNG International's activities will be presented to all other actors that implement recovery projects to avoid overlap or duplication. We already have a picture of what others are doing and will ensure good consultation throughout the project, amongst others through good cooperation with NLRC who participates in the NGO coordination table and can identify possible overlap. In addition, the government will be able to inform us of what others are doing with them, to ensure that we can find synergies and complementarities.

# 5 Reporting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

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## 5.1 Reporting

Reports will be delivered on the basis of the schedule below. All reports will be written in English. The specific format and outline of the narrative reports (interim and final) will be prepared in the inception period and presented to NLRC for approval.

### 5.1.1 Interim Reports

Interim reports will be provided every six months:

- Report January – June 2018; deadline 15 August 2018
- Report July – December 2018; deadline 15 February 2019
- Report January – June 2019: deadline 15 August 2019
- Report July – December 2019: deadline 15 February 2020
- Report January – June 2020: deadline 1 August 2020 (as part of final report, see below)

#### **Narrative report**

- A detailed report on progress in all the result areas (including the utilized resources and possible difficulties);
- An updated activity schedule, including a description of all activities carried out during the reporting period and a description of activities planned for the next reporting period;
- A report on the constraints encountered and their proposed solutions;
- An analysis of variations with respect to timing and budgets, including proposals for revised time schedule and budget;
- Significant reports and outputs produced during the reporting period will be attached as annexes.

#### **A standard financial report**

- The provision of expenditure verification;
- Incidental expenditure;
- Corresponding invoice and an expenditure verification report;
- Time inputs of the experts.

### 5.1.2 Final report

A final report will be submitted 1 August 2020. This report will include:

#### A narrative report

- An outline of the achievements of the project against the requirements set out in the project proposal;
- An evaluation of the project's results;
- A critical analysis of any major problems that may have arisen during the performance of the contract;
- Recommendations for future actions and lessons learned;

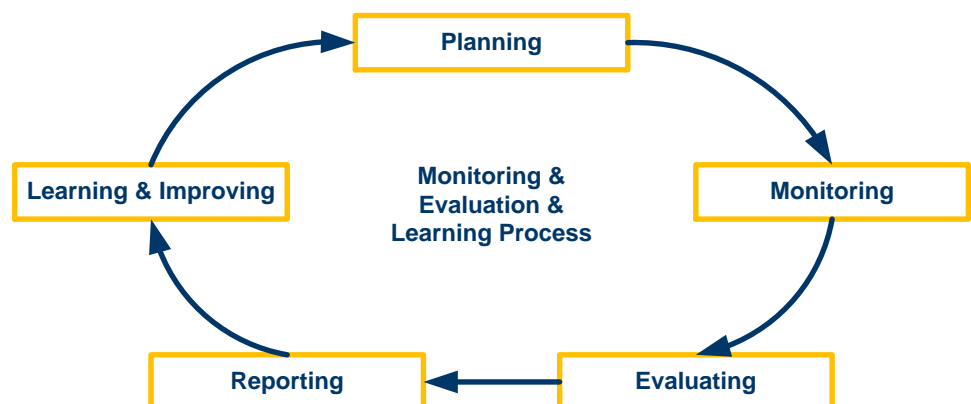
#### A financial report

- The financial section will contain details of the time inputs of experts, the incidental expenditure and expenditure verification;
- A financial analysis and approved financial statement;
- An external audit.

## 5.2 Planning, monitoring and evaluation

The cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluating (PM&E) is crucial to ensure a continuous flow of information on project's performance, allowing the team to make timely adjustments when necessary as well as to incorporate the lessons learned in future planning.

The planning, monitoring and evaluation approach is a 5 step process and is described in the figure below:



Since most activities will be undertaken by or with the support of a number of experts, their systematic briefing and debriefing will be an important element in the PM&E cycle, in order to ensure continuity and a coherent approach, taking in to account progress achieved, obstacles met, and possible changes in the environment.

### Planning

The **logical framework** is the main tool in our PM&E system. It will facilitate a quality control on achieved outputs and outcomes (“results” par. 3.2) on the basis of the objectively verifiable indicators. Planning will be done for periods of 6 months, based on this project document, but of course taking into account the results achieved so far, possible obstacles, new developments, etc.

In terms of M&E information needs (indicators), we distinguish:

- **Quantitative data**, related to project management, budget and beneficiaries;
- As well as **qualitative data** related to satisfaction, capacity development, contextual matters, adaptability, relevance and sustainability.

Quantitative data will be obtained primarily from own sources, while qualitative data will be obtained primarily from sources in the intervention zones. Both political and staff level will be addressed for this data collection.,

### Monitoring

The monitoring is a permanent process, based on the logframe. It is important to distinguish between **project monitoring** and **results-based monitoring**. Project monitoring looks at the quality of processes and **outputs** (e.g. the timeliness of project implementation or number of people trained), whereas results-based monitoring focuses one level higher in the results chain and analyses the attainment of the project’s **outcomes**. Our M&E approach includes both types of monitoring.

Several **data collection tools** will be used, such as questionnaires, self-assessment surveys and interviews for the objectively verifiable indicators, and surveys like “end of course evaluations” for the perception indicators. But also additional sources of information will be consulted, like project documents (expert mission reports, participation lists, activity and training programmes, reports, minutes from meetings) and policy documents from respective authorities involved. An important point of attention will be the ‘status’ of the output achieved. When for instance ESF documents like operational manuals, or legal documents like the Building Code, etc. have been developed under the project, we will closely follow the stage of approval/adoption of those documents at the relevant staff or political level, and if necessary adjust our activities to support the process.

### Evaluating

The information collected throughout the project on the basis of the intervention logic and output and outcome indicators formulated, will be evaluated on specifically scheduled moments so as to assess the progress made and see if and which adjustments are needed. The Advisory Board and the Steering Committee have an important role in this respect. Towards the end of the project, a final evaluation will be undertaken with the aim of:

- Drawing lessons for possible follow-up activities in Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius;
- Drawing lessons for possible similar projects elsewhere in the future;
- Accountability towards the Dutch municipalities who have contributed financial and/or human resources.

A number of **evaluation criteria** will be considered, of which the most important are listed below:

Evaluation	Example of evaluation questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are project results relevant?</li> <li>• Are the project objectives complementary to other interventions in the area?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have project results been achieved?</li> <li>• What are the reasons for the achievement and non-achievement of project results?</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did actual results justify the costs incurred?</li> <li>• Did project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it likely that project activities will be sustained after the withdrawal of current support?</li> <li>• What is the degree of ownership of the beneficiaries and stakeholders?</li> </ul>

### Reporting

Reports provide a basis for monitoring, not only at project level, but also at organisational level. They will provide an overview of progress made, challenges encountered during project implementation and (the sustainability of) results achieved.

### Communication

Communication on the results of the project will be very important. It will be important on the Leeward islands to get broader support from within and outside the authorities for our work. And it will be important in the Netherlands to show Dutch municipalities what has been done with the support that has been provided financially mainly through NLRC, or in terms of human resources directly through VNG International by them to NLRC. Communication about the project in the Netherlands will be done in consultation with the NLRC.

# 6 Management

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## 6.1 Project management and implementation team

### 6.1.1 Expert pool and management

The various teams involved in the project work mainly from the Netherlands, with occasional travel to St Maarten and possibly Saba and St Eustatius.

- Expert pool: within the expert pool various clusters of expertise will be identified: disaster management, legal affairs, communication, etc. Within the expert pool sharing of knowledge and experience will be organized for continuity and integrality, through an online forum. All relevant information can be posted online and be accessed from any location.
- VNG International project management team is led by senior project manager Ms. Renske Steenbergen. She is supported by Ms. Eline Vermeer, junior project manager.
- Saba: for the project management support on Saba a longer term placement will be co-financed through this project.
- Regular contact will take place between NLRC and VNG International on developments that take place and information that needs to be shared for the good implementation of the project.

### 6.1.2 Government of Sint Maarten

- The Ministry of General Affairs coordinates the involvement of the GoSM, through the department of legal affairs and legislation. This means that the VNG International project managers will keep the department of legal affairs and legislation informed of planned activities and will ensure finetuning of both calendar and content of activities. The department of legal affairs and legislation will possibly play a role in the coordination with other departments whenever missions of experts take place (approximately 4 visits per 6 months on various topics).
- It is expected that the involved departments make available staff to participate in the activities as laid down in section 3.3. As all activities have been developed on the explicit request of the departments involved, we count on participation of the relevant staff in the activities that we organize, and we require commitment to react to draft-deliverables from experts. The calendar of activities will be set for 6 months, in agreement with all parties involved. Prior to the implementation of the activities, the expected time investment will be communicated by the VNG International project managers to the Secretary General of the Ministry concerned, so as to seek approval and finetuning of agendas as much as possible
- The Secretaries General of the Ministries of General Affairs, VROMI and VSA have been asked to participate in the biannual Steering Committee meetings.

- If possible, the GoSM will offer a desk for experts involved in the project in the government building.

## 6.2 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee will meet twice a year in St Maarten to discuss the progress of the project and seek advice on ways forward.

Both the composition and the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee will still be further developed in consultation with GoSM and NLRC. It is proposed that it consists of:

1. Government representative(s) (Secretaries General of General Affairs, VROMI, VSA)
2. Civil society representative
3. Private sector representative
4. NLRC representative
5. World Bank representative
6. VNG International representative

## 6.3 Advisory Board

An Advisory Board will meet twice a year in the Netherlands to give advice to the VNG International project team and to help assure the support of Dutch municipalities for the project implementation.

The Advisory Board will consist of:

1. Representative of the VNG Committee on European and International Affairs
2. Representative of the City of Amsterdam (Office of international relations)
3. Representatives of three other Dutch municipalities
4. Representative of the Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations
5. Project manager VNG International

NLRC will be invited as observer to the advisory board meetings.

# 7

## VNG International's experience

### 7.1 Linking relief, rehabilitation and development

The link between short-term humanitarian relief efforts and medium to long-term rehabilitation and development interventions is a complex one, but a crucial topic to address. Many international organizations and national governments, including the European Union, have stressed the importance of this humanitarian-development nexus, dubbed Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development. The needed approach to resilience aims to reduce humanitarian needs and achieving more sustainable and equitable development gains. This requires more effective collaboration between a wide range of parties, bringing synergy to humanitarian assistance, long-term development cooperation and ongoing political engagement.

VNG International believes that increasing the synergy between short-term relief and long-term interventions, and increased coordination and cooperation among the myriad of actors involved, is essential to bring important and tangible benefits. From its local government perspective, VNG International's work touches upon this theme both in working on resilience and in recovery after crises. Strengthening local governments in their efforts in crisis management, and increasing the synergy between local authorities and actors in humanitarian response, are objectives that VNG is committed to contribute to.

In the field of long-term recovery, an example is the peer-to-peer assistance VNG has provided in municipal reconstruction in places like Sri Lanka after the tsunami (2004) and Haïti after the Earthquake (2010) (see below). On the preparedness side, it has developed innovative tools to train local governments in crisis management and relating to humanitarian stakeholders. An example is a simulation game that places local governments in the situation right after a disaster (see below).

In addition to strengthening and preparing local government, there is also much to gain from bringing the valuable municipal angle to humanitarian response. For example, local communities in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey are dealing with an immense influx of Syrian refugees- and not for the first time. It is imperative that the emergency relief funds that are spent during the humanitarian emergency also work for the longer term. Under the pressure of a massive influx of refugees, cities and towns grow and expand, against immense competition for space. There is a significant risk that this refugee crisis instigates the wrong sort of urbanisation. Bringing the municipal angle to the management of such humanitarian crises can make a real difference in achieving this longer term value, an example of which can be seen in VNG International's Local Government Resilience Programme in Jordan and Lebanon (see below).

In order to share lessons learnt and contribute to the incorporation of long-term perspectives in short-term relief efforts based on its roots in local government, VNG International contributed to the 2017 revision of the SPHERE Handbook, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.



### Characteristics of VNG International's approach

- Recognition of existing structures, and investing in the capacity of existing local government institutions to fulfil their responsibilities. This includes the interaction with other stakeholders and sometimes the creation or strengthening of the structures for that interaction;
- Focus, in principle, on both political and technical staff level and on their collaboration; depending also on the 'qualities' of each level, and taking into account that often also the local governments (have) face(d) severe loss of lives due to the disaster;
- Promoting an integrated approach to local development, even if focus areas (like water management, sanitation, waste, redevelopment of economic activities) are chosen;
- Recognition of the fact that capacity support in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills, is often more effective in combination with the availability of basic technical/electronic tools and equipment. As a result of the disaster, often these are lost or damaged as well and need to be replaced;
- Recognition of the need for basic registries (e.g. civil registry, land registry); and possibly support for their reconstruction when these are damaged or lost;
- Support for the realisation of concrete and visible 'mini-projects', in order to help restore hope, trust and cooperation between stakeholders;
- Inclusion of longer term sustainability aspects, in terms of ownership and finances (maintenance, who will benefit most, etc.), environmental consequences, employment, etc.
- Seeking coordination with other support programmes, in order to create synergy and maximize impact.

## 7.2 Examples of local government reconstruction after disasters

In various instances VNG International has provided support at the local level in recovery after large-scale disasters. Combining municipal expertise from the Netherlands in a colleague-to-colleague approach with local and international experts, VNG International contributed to sustainable recovery with a long-term perspective.

Case	Description
Haiti	<p>After the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, VNG International supported the redevelopment of the <i>Les Palmes</i> region of the country, re-establishing functioning governance, institutions and urban services. In this €4,6M project VNG International provided technical and financial support and capacity development to four municipalities in the fields of integrated water resources management, supply and management of drinking water, sanitation and waste management. Support to the development of inter-municipal cooperation between the four municipalities, by setting up a shared technical agency, was an important element of the approach.</p> <p>In addition, VNG International worked with the two national associations of municipalities and the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Communities, providing institutional strengthening.</p> <p>The main strategy employed was to support the development of capacities at the local level and of institutions to allow them to play a significant role in the reconstruction of their territories, regions and country. At local level this included governance aspects (interaction with citizen groups and other local stakeholders), planning aspects (where to develop which type of activities, taking into account physical and environmental qualities and risks), as well as physical infrastructure aspects (building of temporary municipal offices to replace destroyed ones, provision of equipment).</p> <p>In the area of integrated water resource management (IWRM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• water specialists were appointed and trained, in IWRM, but also in developing terms of reference for small-scale infrastructure projects, managing the related contracts, and monitoring the progress and quality of the works;</li> <li>• new IWRM plans were drawn up for the main catchment areas the region;</li> <li>• an integrated view on the behaviour of rivers during dry, wet and stormy periods (including the set up of monitoring systems) in relationship to environmental management and socio-economic aspects of the surroundings was developed;</li> <li>• small-scale infrastructure projects (strengthening river banks; rehabilitation of drainage canals; construction of a footbridge) were realised.</li> </ul> <p>The focus for drinking water management and sanitation lied on:</p>

Case	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a cleaning program for drainage canals, improving management of human excreta, grey and black water, leading to a reduction of water-borne diseases, particularly cholera;</li> <li>• the development of standard operating procedures on water and spatial planning, drinking water and sanitation, and communication of these with stakeholders, such as CSOs;</li> <li>• cooperation between all stakeholders (municipalities, central government and other organizations) to ensure a clear division of tasks and responsibilities for the potable water systems;</li> <li>• small-scale infrastructure projects (rehabilitation of a public bathing facility).</li> </ul> <p>Regarding waste management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• training and appointment of waste specialists at the municipalities;</li> <li>• development of a modernized, affordable and user friendly system of waste collection in city centers, and implementation of pilot projects in each of the four municipalities;</li> <li>• development of systems for recycling of solid waste;</li> <li>• operational and developed provisional municipal solid waste collection/disposal sites;</li> <li>• design and preparation of an environmentally acceptable solid waste disposal site at regional level.</li> </ul>
Sri Lanka	<p>After the tsunami of 2004, VNG International supported the reconstruction at municipal level in Sri Lanka. A combination of Dutch local government employees and international experts worked to support the creation of a new local government training institute, support the improvement of communication between local authorities and citizens, and provide assistance in the field of waste management. With much of the municipal institutions having to be rebuilt from the ground, VNG International contributed to 'building back better' in an institutional sense.</p>
Simulation Game	<p>When disaster has struck, municipalities (particularly those who are poorly organized) run the risk of losing oversight, overwhelmed as they are by the impact and scale of the chaos. Not seldom, they relinquish control. While they understand the need for national government and UN / NGO involvement, local leaders in the affected municipalities often voice their discontent with these actors 'marching in and deciding for themselves'.</p>

Case	Description
	<p>UN organizations and NGOs need local level information, decision making and support to further their own work. This often brings affected local governments into a 'reactive mode'. That is understandable given the circumstances, but it is usually not in the medium- and long-term interest of the local community. All in all, this has a negative impact on the capacity of local leaders to keep managing their towns and cities properly. The consequences can be wastage of money and human capital, degradation of trust and frustration.</p> <p>VNG International has developed a serious game to address these issues in an innovative way. This game lets participants experience the chaotic situation after a disaster, challenging them to stay in the driver's seat and maintain coordination. This day of training and experiencing contributes to disaster preparedness at the municipal level, improving the synergy between the international humanitarian system and local governments.</p> <p>Participants will have a better understanding of the dynamics of disaster response under high pressure, when their own community has been hit by a large disaster and international aid comes in and the local government(s) involved will be better prepared to stay in the driver's seat when disaster strikes.</p>

<p>Local government resilience towards migration and refugee crises</p>	<p>The Syrian and Iraqi wars and subsequent refugee crises are at the heart of the current humanitarian and development agendas in Europe. The displacement of millions of refugees has triggered large migration streams and great strains on the countries surrounding Syria. The mitigation of the effects of these movements and the containment of the movements themselves is a number one priority for most European governments and as a consequence ever increasing budgets are made available for support of regional refugee response with a focus on host communities in countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq.</p> <p>In response to these challenges VNG International developed a local government resilience approach, focused on both refugee camps/presence and the communities that host them. Our current LOGOReP program is the most tangible example (<a href="http://www.logorep.nl">www.logorep.nl</a>). A crucial aspect in our approach is that we connect direct interventions/investments in the realm of humanitarian assistance to longer term development goals, involving the communities where these interventions take place. The two worlds are often disconnected and under humanitarian assistance local, regional and even national players are often bypassed through parallel structures (in order for HA agencies like UNHCR to be effective). As a consequence these interventions often have little to no long term effect once these parallel structures are no longer funded. We strongly believe that with increased effort to actively engage local actors, humanitarian assistance can have meaningful impact for both refugees and host communities on the longer term in a sustainable way. VNG International engages local and regional actors in host communities response activities and capacitates them to influence these process and enlarge ownership and local accountability at host community level. This contributes to a great extent to long term local and regional stability and sustainability.</p> <p><b>Instrument: VNG International's multi-scenario planning approach</b></p> <p>One of the main instruments we developed in response to the above mentioned challenges is our multi-scenario planning instrument. This planning exercise, implemented at beneficiary level, gives direction to development on the basis of a long term vision, directing large and small scale external investments related to the refugee presence at the local and regional level. The approach considers multiple scenarios as the future is unpredictable and includes both the development of existing infrastructure as well as opportunities related to the refugee presence (including camps, ITS etc.) We have assisted in the successful development of these strategies and their implementation in border regions in Lebanon and Jordan and are currently expanding to North Iraq and the Turkish border as well. All have their own dynamics, but the general idea to think more strategically about the use of humanitarian assistance support and including local stakeholders resonates very well in the donor community. Please check our movie about multi-scenario strategic planning in the Al Zaatari camp</p>
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Case	Description
	<p>in the north of Jordan (<a href="http://www.logorep.nl/projects/">http://www.logorep.nl/projects/</a> - under Economic Sustainability). A similar approach has been used in the West-Beqaa but on a regional level where 4 Unions had developed a long term LED plan which currently (partly) steers UNDP host community investments in the region. In our approach we infuse best practices out of the Netherlands municipal world and facilitate the successful “landing” of these practices in the target regions realities.</p>

## 8

## Budget

As agreed with NLRC, 50% of the donations of Dutch municipalities will be made available for a project of VNG International. This amounts to € 779.730,50.

### 8.1 Budget (see annex 2)

### 8.2 List of donations Dutch municipalities through NLRC

Municipality	Donation
Aalten	€ 13.550,00
Amsterdam	€ 850.000,00
Appingendam	€ 12.000,00
Bedum	€ 10.470,00
Binnenmaas	€ 29.000,00
Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	€ 33.745,00
Bunnik	€ 15.211,00
Dronten	€ 40.711,00
Geertruideberg	€ 10.000,00
Hillegom	€ 21.316,00
Krimpenerwaard	€ 10.000,00
Leek	€ 5.000,00
Lelystad	€ 40.000,00
Leusden	€ 7.000,00
Maastricht	€ 50.000,00
Margraten	€ 2.500,00
Middelburg	€ 48.293,00
Oisterwijk	€ 10.000,00
Opsterland	€ 10.000,00
Oud Beijerland	€ 24.000,00

Municipality	Donation
Overbetuwe	€ 50.000,00
Reimerswaal	€ 10.000,00
Rheden	€ 43.500,00
Roermond	€ 57.000,00
Simpelveld	€ 10.571,00
Stadskanaal	€ 16.200,00
Steenwijkerland	€ 10.000,00
Ten Boer	€ 7.500,00
Terneuzen	€ 10.000,00
Tholen	€ 25.000,00
Vlissingen	€ 4.000,00
Wadden-eilanden	€ 10.000,00
Zeist	€ 62.894,00
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 1.559.461,00</b>
<b>Total project VNG International</b>	<b>€ 779.730,50</b>

### 8.3 List of donations Dutch municipalities through VNG

Municipality	Donation
Culemborg	€ 10.000,00
Kerkrade	€ 20.000,00
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 30.000,00</b>