

# THE WEST WING

## THE JOINT ROAD TO SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

ALIGNING DUTCH-INDONESIAN TRADE POLICY WITH THE SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS

May 2021





# Aligning Dutch-Indonesian Trade Policy with the Sustainable Development Goals

**POLICY ADVICE FOR THE DUTCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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# PREFACE

## **The Hague, May 2021**

Here you find the policy advice *The Joint Road to Sustainable Growth: Aligning Dutch-Indonesian Trade Policy with the Sustainable Development Goals*, written by thirteen students and young professionals from The West Wing, the think tank of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The advice was commissioned by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jakarta and the International Enterprise Department (DIO) and answers the following policy question:

How can Dutch trade policy in Indonesia be better aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

The advice has been written between October 2020 and May 2021. Interviews with entrepreneurs, experts and policy officers and public written sources have been used as the basis of this advice. We would like to thank all the entrepreneurs, experts and policy officers for the inspiring and enlightening conversations we had with them.

We hope that our advice will inspire both the Dutch government and the private sector, to better align Dutch-Indonesian trade with the SDGs.

# ABBREVIATIONS

- ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- DGGF Dutch Good Growth Fund
- DIO International Enterprise Department (Directie Internationaal Ondernemen)
- (I)MVO (International) Corporate Social Responsibility ((Internationaal) Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen)
- OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- PPP Public Private Partnership
- RVO Netherlands Enterprise Agency (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland)
- SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
- SDGP Sustainable Development Goals Partnership
- SME Small- and Medium Enterprises (Midden- en Kleinbedrijf)

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# INTRODUCTION

The goal of this policy advice is to provide recommendations on how Dutch-Indonesian trade can be better aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Dutch governments strives to contribute to the SDGs, while simultaneously ensuring that the Netherlands remains a competitive economy.<sup>1</sup>

To reach this goal, The West Wing reconsidered aspects that shape foreign trade such as trade instruments, subsidies and means of cooperation deployed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Embassy in Jakarta. We also explored new opportunities that resulted in the recommendation of creating new instruments and subsidies including an SDG Guidebook, the Sustainable Compensation Instrument and a Matchmaking Platform.

The policy advice is structured as follows. Firstly, we describe the context regarding Dutch-Indonesian trade. Secondly, we wish to inspire readers with a 'vision article' that describes the vision of The West Wing on how the Netherlands could be a frontrunner in aligning the SDG policy with trade. Thirdly, we share six concrete recommendations in visual and text that meet the wish of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to align international Dutch-Indonesian trade with the SDGs. Lastly, we present a section with 'food for thought'.



# CONTEXT



# CONTEXT

Before diving into recommendations on how Dutch trade policy can be better aligned with the SDGs, we review the current policies the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has on the SDGs and on trade. In addition, we analyse the Indonesian context and the Dutch activities already taking place in Indonesia.

## **SDG Policy**

In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its accompanying seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs portray a universal call to action to eradicate poverty in all its forms, fight climate change and improve the lives of all people everywhere, leaving no one behind. To build a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future for people and planet, participation of all stakeholders is key. Diverse stakeholders can bring different perspectives, challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned to the debate. Only through mobilization of all sectors, at all levels, the implementation and follow up of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs can be reached.

The Netherlands adopted the 2030 Agenda and is attempting to contribute to the SDGs. According to the Dutch government, the SDGs are the ultimate prevention agenda: investing in the goals is an investment in the preservation of peace in

fragile and unstable regions. Progress on the goals can remove the basis for conflict and radicalization, contribute to the restoration of the social contract between citizens and the state, and thus prevent the disintegration of countries and societies. The themes in Dutch development policy are closely related to the SDGs: food security, water, sexual and reproductive health, security and rule of law, women's rights and gender equality, climate, private sector development, humanitarian aid and migration.<sup>2</sup> What the Netherlands wants to achieve on these themes is formulated in thematic results frameworks with indicators and target values. These indicators are closely related to the international SDG targets and indicators. However, on a more practical level, it seems that the Dutch trade policy is more focused on the framework of International Corporate Social Responsibility, and less on the SDGs.

## **Trade policy**

The Netherlands is one of the world's most dynamic and competitive knowledge economies.<sup>3</sup> The Dutch government is committed to maintaining this top position in a world that is changing rapidly. Trade is closely intertwined with the Dutch economy, and a large part of the Dutch GDP is earned abroad.<sup>4</sup> Dutch companies can compete well with other (foreign) companies and to maintain this top



position, they must remain competitive. The Dutch Government tries to stimulate this by investing in top sectors, missions for the future and key technologies, among other things. The top sectors focus on strengthening the economy through innovations, by exploiting international opportunities, solving societal challenges, increasing human capital and by investing in scientific research. The top sectors are: Agri & Food, Chemistry NL, Creative Industry, Energy, Health Holland (Life Sciences & Health), Logistics, Holland High Tech (High Tech Systems & Materials), Horticulture & Starting Materials, Water & Maritime and Dutch Digital Delta (Team ICT). The Netherlands is strongly represented in these sectors internationally.<sup>5</sup>

The Dutch government supports companies with trade and doing business internationally by providing information about international markets and financing. Not only with basic information about countries, but also with information on the market and investment opportunities in those countries. This is amongst others done through the Embassies, trade missions and financial support.

While The West Wing recognizes that international trade agreements are paramount to facilitate trade and foreign investments, we decided not to focus on this aspect because this authority mainly lies with the European Union. Advocating for embedding sustainable development in trade agreements should be a high priority for the Dutch Ministry of

Foreign Affairs. However, this topic is beyond the scope of the recommendations provided in this policy advice.

### **Dutch activities in Indonesia**

There are already several ways in which the Dutch government attempts to align trade with the SDGs. The Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland (Netherlands Enterprise Agency, RVO hereafter) is an executing partner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It tries to strengthen the position of entrepreneurs and make the Netherlands economically stronger and more sustainable. The government, through RVO, provides multiple different funds that can stimulate Dutch companies to work in alignment with the SDGs in Indonesia. Examples of these ‘incentives’ are the Dutch Green Growth Fund (DGGF), the IMVO-voucher and the Fund for Responsible Business (FVO). Next to the RVO, the Dutch FMO (the Entrepreneurial Development Bank) provides financing for development projects worldwide. Also, the Dutch government partakes in multiple public private partnerships (PPP) and provides funding for big projects that are being undertaken together with the Indonesian government.

Currently, the Embassy plays a vital role in introducing and navigating entrepreneurs to the Indonesian market. Trade missions, expertise in the local market and the Embassy's vast economic network are invaluable assets for companies that wish to operate or are active in Indonesia. The relevant expertise is, however, not yet accessible to all entrepreneurs.

Conversations with Dutch companies learned that these difficulties are rooted in the culture of clientelism, personal relationships, corruption, and complexity they face in Indonesia. Most, if not all, Dutch companies who have successfully established themselves in the Indonesian market were able to do so because they had an accountable local partner. With limited time and resources, not all companies feel that the Embassy and RVO support them in the most effective way. Considering the policy objectives described in 'Investeren in Perspectief' and its sub goal 'excellente dienstverlening aan MKB', this leaves room for improvement.

### **Indonesian context**


In the context of Indonesia, trade policy has been characterized by the move from aid to trade. Indonesia has experienced steady economic growth since the *reformasi* in the late '90s, settling around 5% annually in the last decade.<sup>6</sup> This economic growth, as well as democratization entailed by the *reformasi*, are the main reasons why diplomatic relationships between the Netherlands and Indonesia have been shifting from aid to trade. In recognizing that the country has moved from developing country to middle-income country, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates that a different approach regarding doing business is warranted. Partly, this means that the role of the private sector should increase. For companies and entrepreneurs, this implies that the set of instruments offered by the government through RVO to support companies in Indonesia will also change.

Indonesia can be a challenging country for foreign companies to enter, but foreign investments play a crucial part in the country's move towards sustainable development. In order to streamline the process of doing business for foreign companies in Indonesia, the government enrolled the Omnibus Law. This large bill offers more possibilities for investors in the country, but also eliminates several social and environmental regulations. As one of the world's major emerging economies, Indonesia is also one of the world's major emitters of greenhouse gas emissions and the world's largest producer of palm oil, putting large pressure on tropical ecosystems. In the pursuance of economic growth and development, the environmental sustainability is under threat.

Other negative trends that can be perceived in Indonesia are the concerns of an 'illiberal turn' in its democracy<sup>7 8</sup> and the major issue of corruption<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, it is important to note that Indonesia has not just signed the Sustainable Development Goals, but was instrumental in formulating them<sup>10</sup>, which means sustainable intentions are in place. This development is reflected in the growing accessibility of education<sup>11</sup>, as well as declining rates of deforestation<sup>12</sup>. In addition, Indonesia also formulated its first ever five-year sustainable development plan to recognise the equal importance of climate action and economic growth.<sup>13</sup>

### **COVID-19**

The sudden COVID-19 pandemic caused the world unprecedented challenges.



COVID-19 caused the first increase in global poverty in decades and affected the well-being of millions; women, children, and youth in particular. In addition, the pandemic has once again shown the importance of global value chains. This policy advice comes at a critical time, as states are recovering from a global pandemic while at the same time strengthening policies and efforts to innovate and mobilize solutions to realize the seventeen SDGs by 2030.

As the global pandemic is putting a hold on sustainable development, there is also great momentum now to ‘build back better’ or ‘build forward better’ through the 2030 Agenda. In June 2020, the Dutch Sustainable Growth Coalition presented a statement called ‘Dutch companies endorse sustainability in COVID-19 recovery’, in which over 250 companies pledge to take sustainability as the cornerstone in their COVID-19 recovery plans. In a world that is characterized by rising geopolitical tension, strategic autonomy and looming economic recession, it is of the utmost importance to provide Dutch companies with guidance and financial support to maintain and improve upon their competitive position and to grow back ‘better’ by integrating the SDGs in their business activities.



## OUR VISION




## SDGS AND THE NETHERLANDS: A LOOK BACK FROM THE FUTURE

‘After ten years we did it’ states the front page of a Dutch newspaper in 2030. ‘Dutch trade policy is the first in the world to be fully aligned with the SDGs.’ The newspaper quotes world leaders that speak with amazement of the successful policies that underly this development, indicated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Only ten years ago the ministry was struggling to align economic development with sustainability; the Netherlands ranked 146th at the Sustainable Development Indicator, well below countries like Indonesia (22th), Brazil (32nd) or India (56th)<sup>14</sup>; while now the Netherlands is on the stage just behind frontrunners Denmark (1st) and Singapore (2nd). The big question is: ‘How did the Netherlands do it?’

The Netherlands committed to the SDGs in 2015. At its core, the goals aim to end extreme poverty, inequality, injustice and climate change. In 2020 it became clear that existing SDG-related policies were not adequate. While performance on SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) was strong, on other goals such as SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) serious action was required.<sup>15</sup> Despite this ‘false start’ the Dutch government was serious about achieving the SDGs and directed towards a policy revolution.

The policy revolution started with advocating for embedding sustainable development in trade agreements on the European level. International Responsible Business Conduct (abbreviated as IMVO in Dutch) and integrating the OECD guidelines, came without a legal obligation for companies in 2020. Thanks to the efforts of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the OECD guidelines, that are linked to the SDGs, were given mandatory interpretation at the European level in 2028 – the legislation was adopted under the applause of fellow EU member states who realized they needed a push in the right direction. The idea followed from the realization that for many companies, the intrinsic motivation of IMVO standards and the OECD guidelines was simply not strong enough. This so-called due diligence legislation at the EU-level, which means that companies must now identify potential and actual risks in their chain, ensures that laggards in ‘the peloton’ of entrepreneurs give at least a basic interpretation of what the international standards in the field of IMVO require of them. The legislation not only resulted in a scheme in line with the SDGs, but it was a starting point for behavioural and cultural change within the Dutch borders.<sup>16</sup>

In the Netherlands, the economic system has always been praised. The economy is



open and internationally oriented, it is easy to start a business and the digital infrastructure is excellent. Therefore, it is no wonder the Netherlands has always been a top performer on rankings related to economic development, education, and happiness. However, as described, the performance on the SDGs was lacking. The judicial branch needed to remind the government of its ambitions by lawsuits – we all remember the Urgenda case – and in 2020 only 1,6 percent of all Dutch companies underlined IMVO and the SDGs.<sup>16</sup> Companies were willing to act but felt alone in navigating these uncharted waters and needed a government that inspired to change the status quo.

The second step towards a revolution was clear. New paths and venues were explored and concrete, intermediate goals were set with the support of an alert and up-to-date Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, new instruments and subsidies were created to encourage companies ‘to do better’. These actions helped companies understand what to expect and encourage them to contribute to achieving the SDGs. Competing interest groups, those who prioritise environmental sustainability, those who prioritise social development and those who prioritise economic development, found a common ground. The unjustified underlying notion that sustainable business practices come at the cost of profitability was tackled.

Today, the SDGs are seen as essential building blocks of entrepreneurship and

Dutch companies have realized sustainable, ethical, and transparent production chains. ‘To me, entrepreneurship means creating value’, the newspaper quotes a major Dutch player in the hoverboard market, ‘and value is not only expressed in money’. Social and sustainable responsibility and doing business are inseparable in the same way that ice skating and split pea soup simply go together. Dutch sectors such as agriculture, health care, infrastructure, water, and waste management are thriving hand in hand with sustainability.

Revolutions are known to be driven by the collective, leading to lasting political change. The Dutch government took change regarding the SDGs in its own hands, change that was embraced and further developed by the private sector because it received the encouragement it was looking for. ‘The reality was, that in 2020 it was challenging to achieve profitable trade and working towards the SDGs’, says the hoverboard manufacturer. ‘The efforts of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs put us on the first step of the ladder, after which we climbed up towards sustainable business ourselves. That is the power of entrepreneurship.’ It thus seems that the Dutch answer to ‘how did they do it’ is to dare to lead by example and make sure everyone is onboard.

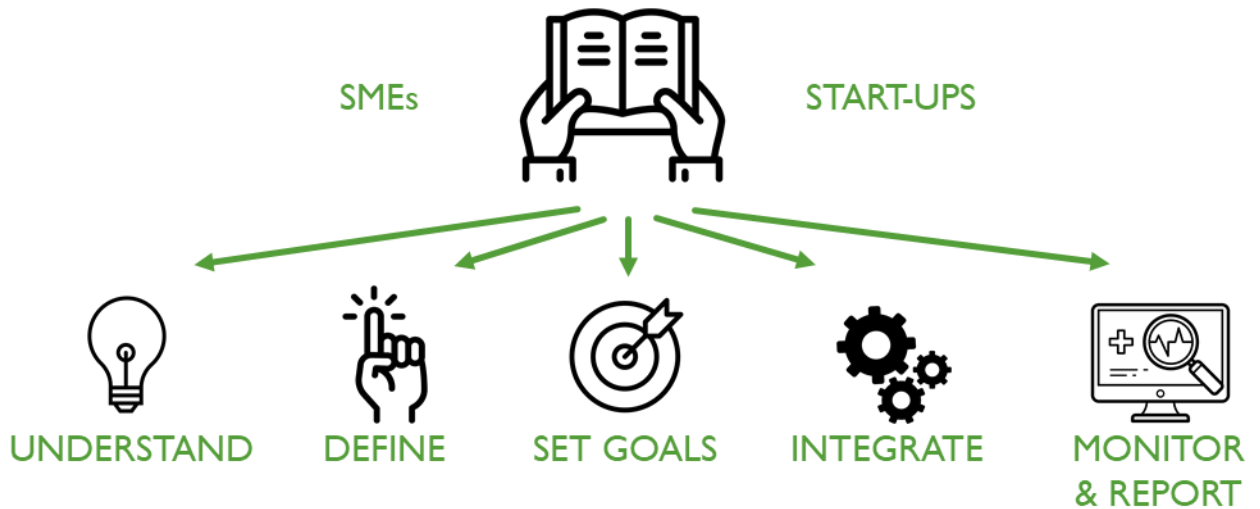
The West Wing presents recommendations that can make this ‘look from the future’ a reality.



## RECOMMENDATIONS



# SDG GUIDEBOOK



## What?

An SDG Guidebook can provide companies with a clear-cut view of the most important local challenges regarding doing business and the SDGs in Indonesia. Although such an SDG Guidebook can serve all types of companies, start-ups should receive a slightly different version. The factors that one should pay attention to are discussed later.

Although our version of the SDG Guidebook is tailored to the situation in Indonesia, the guidebook could theoretically be adopted by different diplomatic posts around the globe. In fact, the Consulate General in Shanghai has written and published a Start-up Playbook on its website, which specifically addresses start-ups.<sup>17</sup>

## Why?

Dutch companies operating abroad or wanting to do so face several challenges. There are challenges in terms of culture and customs, but also business and administration related differences need to be bridged. Embassies play an important role here, as they are the 'eyes and ears' of the Netherlands in the host country and hence have a good understanding of local practices. However, for companies, it can be a big step to approach the Embassy repeatedly with (relatively) small problems related to their everyday operations. In addition to this, as the deadline for the SDGs nears, both governments and companies must face the SDGs increasingly and the proposed guidebook can guide them. For companies, we see two main challenges regarding the SDGs.



First, companies generally find it hard to incorporate the SDGs in their operations. From our interviews, we see that companies acknowledge the goals, but have a limited understanding. For most companies, profit remains the most important factor and contributing to the SDGs or other sustainability goals will almost always come second. Ideally, a contribution to the SDGs goes hand in hand with reaching financial targets. RVO stated in an interview that most companies are willing to act regarding the SDGs, yet do not know how and where to start.

Second, every country experiences its own challenges regarding the SDGs. If a company wants to contribute to the SDGs when doing business abroad, country-specific information is needed. At this point there is an overload of information, which makes it hard to distinguish between what is useful and what is not. The proposed Guidebook can tackle both challenges. Hence, the objective is to better inform companies about business opportunities and the challenges regarding the SDGs in Indonesia by creating an SDG Guidebook.

### **How?**

The guidebooks should be accessible online and in a straightforward manner. [sdgguidebook.nl](http://sdgguidebook.nl) can be the general website and [sdgguidebook.indonesia.nl](http://sdgguidebook.indonesia.nl) can be the Indonesian webpage. In this way, everyone can find country-specific and general information in the same place. This country-specific information can be contributed by diplomatic posts, which have a vast amount

of information and an elaborate understanding of the local situation in every country. The website can be created by RVO in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The landing page of this website could contain 'general' information, which addresses general issues that Dutch companies encounter when they operate abroad, and what tools, mechanisms and instruments the Dutch government has at its disposal to help these companies. In addition, the guidebook should focus on how companies can start implementing the SDGs in their operations. For implementing the SDGs, there is a variety of existing frameworks and many reports have been written about this topic. A step-by-step guide like the GRI SDG Compass is a good example of how this could be done.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, Embassies can create an extension of the general guidebook with several concrete tips about doing business in the country of destination, including local customs and habits, and in what way the company can contribute to the SDG-challenges in that country. This part of the guidebook can have a broader scope than just a description of how a company can contribute to the SDGs, and provide other country-specific information, such as contact details of the local chamber of commerce, and general practices in conducting business. The knowledge of the Embassy regarding local practices is extensive and therefore the Embassy should guide the development of this country-specific extension.

## Requirements for the guidebooks

General part of the <b>SDG Guidebook</b>	Country-specific part of the <b>SDG Guidebook</b>
<p>Accessible, not too comprehensive. Use of step-by-step explanations. Avoid the use of jargon. Illustrate the recommendations with real cases and best practices.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many consultancy firms and government agencies around the world have written reports and frameworks for companies to integrate the SDGs in their operations. This part of the guidebook could synthesize these reports and revert the reader to these resources.</li> <li>• List the tools and mechanisms that the government provides to companies that operate abroad (e.g., export insurance, subsidies, grants, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use local knowledge from the Embassy to highlight the most important challenges for (1) doing business in Indonesia, and (2) the most important challenges regarding the SDGs in Indonesia.</li> <li>• Highlight the SDGs most relevant to Indonesia related to the Dutch top sectors, e.g. SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and its sub goals, and display business opportunities referring to real cases and best practices.</li> <li>• List the most important points of contact, such as the local Chamber of Commerce, business forums, etc.</li> <li>• For Indonesia, include information about ASEAN powerhouse, the emerging markets, opportunities in the growing middle-class consumption, expanding digitalisation. Also introduce the most important markets, the most relevant pieces of regulation and legislation and tips on making investments.</li> <li>• We have noticed that companies are particularly interested in how infrastructure and intellectual property are situated within the country of destination.</li> </ul>

## **Start-up Perspective: How could the SDG Guidebook be extended for start-ups?**

### **How could the SDG Guidebook be extended for start-ups?**

Start-ups typically have a different approach to doing business: they are more flexible, exploring, and are characterized as more risk taking. Although we believe that the SDG Guidebook could be relevant to start-ups in the first place, we think that several additions could make it better aligned with a start-up's perspective on sustainable business. The launch of an SDG Guidebook, specifically focused on sustainable start-ups, can assist start-ups who wish to accelerate their contribution to the SDGs, and at the same time inspire and incentivize others who do not have a direct link with the SDGs yet. The Embassies role extends beyond informing here, as they can stimulate start-ups to act in a sustainable manner, by providing practical and detailed support to start-ups as they embark upon the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We recommend highlighting at least the following:

- **Start-up ecosystem in Indonesia**

Start-ups typically operate with different business partners and organisations than established companies: incubators, accelerators, venture capitalists, etc. For start-ups, a good extension would be to include a list of the most relevant ones among these parties. Also, if there are relevant start-up programs, or regulations that specifically apply to start-ups, this should be included as well.

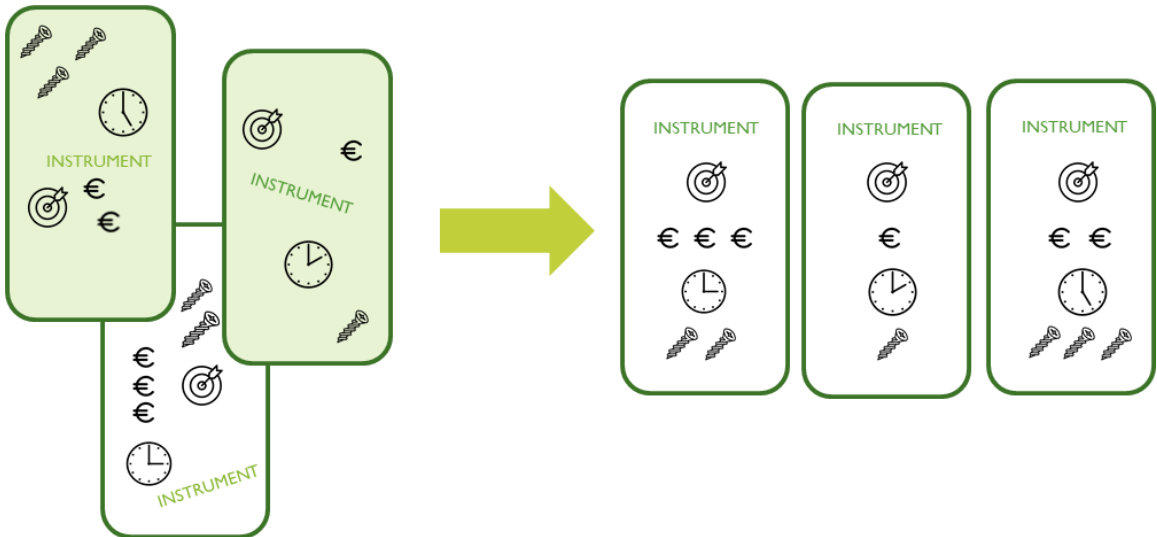
- **Promising sectors for start-ups**

Although start-ups could grasp the most promising sectors from the main SDG Guidebook, start-ups may focus on particular sectors (e.g. digital services). A list of the most promising sectors for start-ups could give start-ups that want to do business in Indonesia insight on what industries have high growth potential.

- **Best practices, main challenges and lessons learned**

For start-ups, it is of immense value to learn what has worked and what has not worked for other businesses in the past, to avoid stepping into the same pitfalls as others have done before them. This is also relevant for other companies, but for start-ups in specific due to their exploring and risk taking character.

# COMPARISON TOOL



## What?

The presentation and comparison of RVO instruments for companies can be improved. We propose a uniform format and comparison tool for RVO instruments, based on conversations with entrepreneurs and representatives from various Dutch companies. Our suggestions add to the toolbox RVO already has and can significantly improve the general experience that companies have when they seek help and support at RVO.

## Why?

In general, businesses and entrepreneurs are satisfied with the support that they obtain from RVO. Some entrepreneurs indicated that RVO really understands what a business needs and were particularly positive about how RVO supports SMEs. On the other hand, within their network they

encounter some aversion against government programmes. It was argued the process of going from an initial business idea, researching possible support programmes and implementation of the idea takes too much time. When an entrepreneur visits the RVO website, an extensive list of subsidies and financing instruments can be found. To work through the variety of instruments and find out which programme fits the entrepreneurs' needs best, is too complicated and time consuming,

Moreover, it was heard that many SMEs that are active in Indonesia find out about suitable instruments through their network. While it is positive and helpful that companies share their experiences about RVO, it was also made clear that several companies would not have found the

support that RVO offers if they had not been made aware of this by their network. To improve findability, comparability and navigation through the support and services that RVO offers, we propose a uniform format and comparison tool for RVO instruments. This will not only support Dutch business in Indonesia, but around the globe.

### **How?**

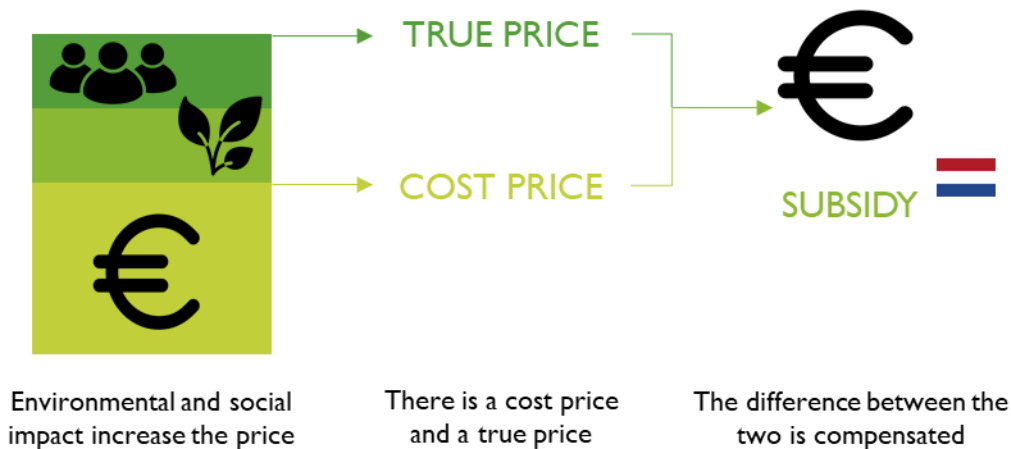
To stay close to the hands-on mentality that many entrepreneurs exhibit, we propose a uniformization of the format of different RVO instruments. At this point, many instruments exhibit different formats, which makes it hard to find similarities and differences between different instruments. When adhering to a uniform format, it becomes easier to navigate through the extensive list of different instruments and find the instrument that rightly fits your intentions. For some instruments, there might inherently be more information because they are more elaborate and contain multiple instruments under one umbrella (e.g. DGGF). As such, we propose to include a summary adhering to the following format at the top of the page for each instrument:

- Main goal: what problem does the instrument try to solve?
- Target group: which type of organisation is targeted with this instrument?
- Amount subsidy (or equivalent)
- Budget and time span of instrument
- Requirements
- Relevant SDGs

The introduction of a uniform format also opens the door for an effective comparison tool. Currently, there are some filters that can be used to guide your search to financing instruments (goal of support, target audience, sector, and country). However, for the sake of transparency, it would help entrepreneurs to be able to compare several instruments and their specifications directly next to each other. Just like when comparing different mobile phones, within a minute, different focus points and characteristics can be found, and a well-considered decision can be made about the instrument that suits the business' activity best.

The comparison tool could also include the SDGs. As stated earlier, and as written in the RVO report 'Verdiene met de SDGs' it is argued that the SDGs are not always concrete enough for entrepreneurs.<sup>19</sup> The sub goals of the SDGs might offer concrete possibilities to link contribution to SDGs to business models.<sup>20</sup> These sub goals make it easy for companies to assess which SDGs they are impacting and preferably, contributing to. The sub goals can be integrated in the comparison tool. Not only does this create a greater awareness about the SDGs in the private sector, but it also opens the possibility of linking the amount of financial support to the contribution that a company makes towards achieving the SDGs.

# SUSTAINABLE COMPENSATION INSTRUMENT



## What?


The Sustainable Compensation Instrument is a new incentive (instrument) that encourages companies to do business in a sustainable way. The instrument encourages entrepreneurs with a long-term vision and can therefore strengthen the position of the Netherlands in Indonesia in the long-term. The instrument should encourage and facilitate companies to implement the OECD guidelines and sustainable development in a broad sense. In addition, the instrument substantiates the government's wish to mobilize the private sector to contribute to the SDGs.<sup>1</sup>

## Why?

Dutch companies (SME's and multinationals) that are active in Indonesia often hold substantive knowledge of top sectors such as agriculture, health care, infrastructure,

water, and waste management.<sup>1</sup> This knowledge gives them a strong position in the Indonesian market, despite facing competition from companies from low-wage countries, or from companies that receive loans at low interest rates and without any sustainability requirements. Particularly in the field of sustainability (in the broad sense), Dutch companies can distinguish themselves from parties that compete only at the cost price of a particular product or service.

This potential is important since in the long run, companies must operate more sustainably if they want to be future proof and stay profitable. However, doing business is fast phased and to stay competitive, companies are more likely to have a short-term focus. The financial factor is decisive in the decision-making process and in



determining how an assignment by a Dutch business in one of the top sectors is carried out, not the most sustainable factor. In other words, profitability determines the degree of sustainability with which a service is provided (excluding social enterprises). The West Wing thinks here lies an opportunity for the Dutch government and the business community in the form of a sustainable compensation instrument.

It is important to not only focus on 'mistakes' that companies make, but on encouraging and incentivizing companies to do better. Conversations with entrepreneurs show that companies are often benevolent when it comes to sustainable implementation of business strategy. However, they are to some extent held back by financial aspects. This is also recognized by an internal research conducted by RVO.<sup>19</sup> Long-term investments can be (too) high, so that the entrepreneur ultimately settles for the less sustainable, cheaper, and short-term option. This is also a result of the study 'Options for enforceable IMVO instruments' of the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Working Group on Appropriate Care and Monitoring.<sup>21</sup>

### **How?**

The proposed instrument works as follows. When a company wants to do business in Indonesia in the form of a product or service, it should make a social and sustainable impact analysis in addition to a price calculation. The analysis provides the company an insight into how a product or

service can be produced or carried out not only as cheaply, but also as sustainably as possible. This way a company can compare both the direct financial cost and the indirect social and environmental costs of a product or service. The cheaper and sustainable options are then compared in monetary costs. The company opts for the more sustainable choice, the 'true price', and is reimbursed for the difference in costs with the cheaper option by the Dutch government. In this fashion, the problem that companies would like to engage in more sustainable projects, but are held back by the short-term financial aspects, is directly addressed.

To realize this instrument, the Dutch government provides a sustainable subsidy through RVO in the form of the Sustainable Compensation Instrument. One could also consider positioning the instrument under the Dutch Good Growth Fund (DGGF), since Indonesia is one of the upcoming markets this fund focuses on.<sup>22</sup> The Investing component of the DGGF aims to support companies in emerging markets in their contribution to economic and social improvements in these countries.<sup>23</sup> The fund could be expanded with the proposed subsidy instrument to include a sustainable aspect. Experience from the past can be used for a successful implementation of this instrument, with a particular focus on the subsidy 'Stimulerend Duurzame Energieproductie en Klimaattransitie' (SDE+(+)).<sup>24</sup> From interviews conducted with entrepreneurs, RVO concludes that

this subsidy has been a tremendous driver for some companies to improve their energy footprint.<sup>19</sup> This provides useful evidence that the private sector can be successfully mobilized to tackle issues concerning sustainability when the right incentives and support are offered.

### **Calculation & Costs**

To gain a fair understanding of the true costs involved in a product or service, the 'true price' must be calculated. True prices consist of the market price of a certain product and all external costs such as carbon emissions, depletion of raw materials, and health consequences. In this way, societal and environmental costs can be mapped, and a comparison can be made between sustainable and less sustainable products and services. Project costs and benefits can be evaluated in a similar fashion to true prices of products and services. The idea behind this is that the true price of a project, product or service will be associated with a more sustainable solution. In other words, true prices open the door for making a monetary estimation of the total impact that a business decision has.

Even though measuring impact and expressing the true price in monetary terms is a complex endeavour, the field is rapidly evolving, and some organisations have already successfully implemented true pricing mechanisms. For example, the Dutch Impact Institute has developed a Global Impact Database that translates non-financial impact to monetary terms using 63 impact indicators for 26 sectors.<sup>25</sup> The

Dutch Impact Institute is linked with True Price, a Dutch NGO that is already active in Indonesia in the coffee and palm oil sector. For example, palm oil production in Indonesia has environmental and social hidden costs, such as land use change (environmental) and underpayment (social). These costs are included in the true price calculated by True Price.<sup>26</sup> We envision a fruitful cooperation between the Impact Institute, True Price and RVO or DGGF. The true pricing mechanisms will form the basis for the subsidy that RVO or DGGF makes available to a company. For companies that are less intrinsically motivated to improve their social and environmental impact, financial incentives in the form of compensation can induce them to actively rethink their strategy. The reduction in true price can serve as a guideline for RVO or DGGF to determine the amount of subsidy that a business receives.

An important precondition is that it must be made clear by a business how the 'true price' is established. Two scenarios need to be considered here. 1) A company has an incentive to make the 'true price' (or cost price) of the unsustainable option as low (or high) as possible if this leads to a higher subsidy. 2) A company has an incentive to make the 'true price' (or cost price) of the sustainable option as high (or low) as possible if this leads to a higher subsidy. If we assume that companies want to maximize the subsidy to be received, these incentive structures can be optimized to achieve sustainable business operations. As such, it is of the utmost importance to make



the true price assessment criteria as clear and transparent as possible. Additionally, companies must use a uniform method to conduct the social and sustainable impact analysis.

Because the Sustainable Compensation Instrument is a proposed and new to be implemented instrument, some questions remain. Some questions are practical, other questions depend on which political considerations the cabinet wishes to make:

- How much subsidy is the ministry willing to make available? Policy determines the subsidy amount.
- How can the ministry (or RVO) check that the indicated 'true price' truly is the sustainable price and how can we make sure that the subsidy is used for the proposed objective?
- How can the ministry (or RVO) ensure a minimum of administrative tasks related to calculating the true price for entrepreneurs (in conversations with entrepreneurs and blogs from RVO it became clear that SMEs are 'doers' and prefer not to spend too much time on administrative tasks)?

### **Export credit insurance integrated with Sustainable Compensation Instrument**

The export credit insurance (part of the DGGF and an important instrument for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) could integrate the 'true pricing' mechanism. Instead of ensuring the lowest price of a product or service, an entrepreneur will be allowed to insure the 'true price'. This will

result in a lower risk and premium for the entrepreneur that wishes to do business in a sustainable way. Taking out insurance is an essential part of exporting products and services abroad and this way companies that want to 'do good' will be encouraged instead of punished when taking out insurance. Premiums on export insurance can entail high costs. With a significant discount through true pricing, this can have a positive effect on the net result that a company posts.

# MATCHMAKING PLATFORM



## What?

A matchmaking platform for companies should be developed with the purpose of facilitating the development of partnerships or cooperation that is simultaneously offering sustainable business solutions in line with the SDGs. The matchmaking platform will link companies to each other, for example a Dutch SME with an Indonesian start-up. Their cooperation can increase the Dutch-Indonesian trade and can help them improve the sustainability of their businesses. We therefore suggest to give the SDGs a central part in the matchmaking platform leading to an output of sustainable business developments.

## Why?

A variety of companies and organisations that are active in Indonesia stated that cooperation with local parties is necessary

in order to do business successfully. For new-comers in the Indonesian market it can be difficult to build up a local network. In order to ease up this process the Embassy in Jakarta could facilitate a Matchmaking Platform in which Dutch and Indonesian parties can be matched in order to do business together. A vast majority of the Dutch entrepreneurs we interviewed emphasized the highly personal nature of business relations as well as the difficulty navigating in the Indonesian market. A matchmaking platform could help to establish these first relations.

## How?

In India, a matchmaking platform with regards to sustainable entrepreneurship and the SDGs already exists, which is facilitated by MVO Nederland (Future Proof Community). Within the Future Proof

Community, a subcommunity has been created for sustainable entrepreneurship in India, [the INDUS Forum](#). In the INDUS Forum a large variety of organisations participate, ranging from private Dutch companies, to Indian start-ups and educational institutes. The INDUS Forum is designed in such a manner that organisations post challenges on the platform, to which other participants can react. Moreover, organisations must fill out which SDGs are positively impacted by the challenge. A similar platform could be developed for Indonesia.

### **Form, engagement and launch of the platform**

We advise the matchmaking platform to be digital. Digital literacy is high in Indonesia and growing, yet still divided along regional and gender lines. Furthermore, most Indonesians access the internet through smartphones instead of computers. Thus, we recommend the platform to be digital and to be accessible from smartphones.<sup>27</sup>

The success of a platform lies in its network effect: the number of active users. In order to keep users engaged they should receive updates on a regular basis, about new projects on the platform and business updates related to Indonesia (e.g. new legislation). This could take the form of a monthly update or newsletter. In addition, it is important that there is a value for users in the platform in order to motivate them to use the platform.

The platform could be launched with an

event that generates publicity. A suitable form could be a (digital) trade mission or other large event, wherein many Dutch companies already participate to easily reach the target group.

### **Role of the Embassy in Jakarta**

First, the Embassy should promote the matchmaking platform among its network of local companies. Second, the Embassy should create an event to launch the matchmaking platform and to generate attention for the platform. Third, the facilitation of a matchmaking platform is costly. The Embassy has to be willing to subsidize it via MVO Nederland or a local Indonesian partner. Fourth, the Embassy needs to prioritize and guarantee the continuity of the matchmaking platform.

### **Integrating SDGs in the platform**

SDGs can be integrated in the platform by performing an SDG check or monitoring outputs.

- **SDG check**

A practical way to ensure commitment to the SDGs from all members is to make members outline their own SDG contribution. A digital questionnaire listing the 'requirements' to apply or participate can be filled out as a first check.

- **Monitoring outputs**

Ideally, results could be compared along the lines of the SDGs and their indicators, to reveal the contribution each project has towards the SDGs.

## Local Partners

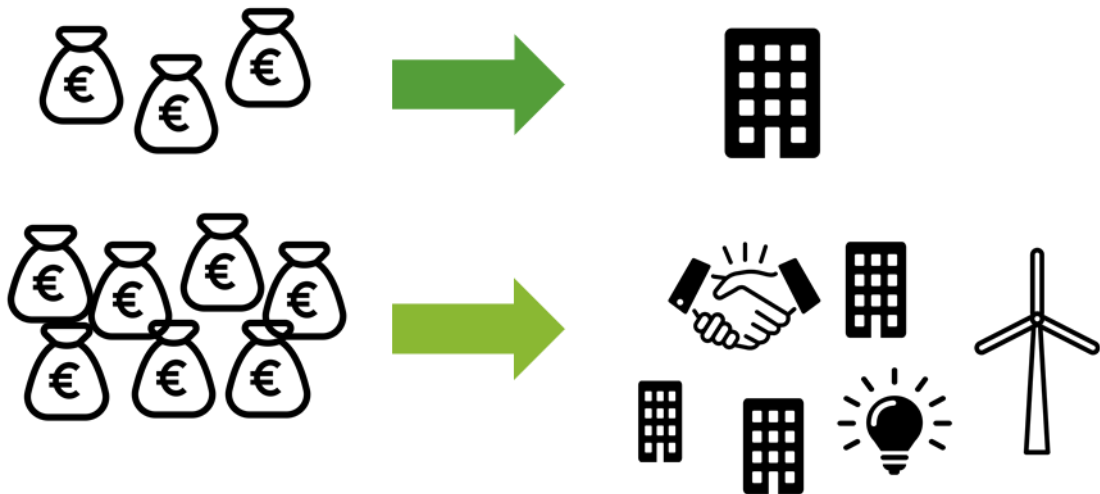
Local actors or parties do not only bring the necessary knowledge and connections, but also the commitment to make this platform a success. More specifically, a strong partner or network of partners is needed to take ownership of the platform and ensure engagement with regard to the different parties. We recommend a number of local partners for the matchmaking platform:

Potential partner	Explanation
<u>Solidaridad Indonesia</u>	The international civil society organisation Solidaridad has opened a new office in Indonesia in 2017. The organisation selects potential partners for local projects carefully and is researching options to improve access to sustainable finance. With this expertise, Solidaridad is able to offer a broad range of insights on sustainability for the matchmaking platform, as well as connecting partners with civil society organisations in a possible subcommunity.
<u>IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative</u>	The IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative is a social enterprise that focuses on partnerships and coalitions with different parties to promote the realisation of the SDGs. Moreover, IDH is already actively promoting and supporting green business and sustainable trade initiatives in Indonesia.
<u>KADIN Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</u>	As the Chamber of Commerce, KADIN internationally connects entrepreneurs and investors to potential business partners. Since KADIN also specialises in promotion and advertisement, it could possibly be a suitable partner to locally promote the platform.
<u>The Indonesia Business Council for Sustainable Development (IBCSD)</u>	The IBCSD forms an association of companies that operate in Indonesia with a common commitment to promote sustainable development and economic growth. In doing so, they offer a platform for companies to share and promote best practices concerning sustainable development.

### Role of start-ups in the matchmaking platform

Start-ups often rely on new ideas and innovations that can change unsustainable practices and improve them. Therefore, cooperation with start-ups can give new insights and can be the key to change for established companies. Start-ups can bring sustainable innovations through a bottom-up approach. Dutch companies that are interested in doing business in Indonesia possibly lack experience and knowledge on doing business in the country or could improve this. A local Indonesian start-up as a partner can be an interesting introduction to local practices, local partners, and local (sustainability) challenges.

# SDG PARTNERSHIP FACILITY



## What?

The SDG Partnership Facility (SDGP) is a policy instrument set in place by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>28</sup> This subsidy is specifically aimed at supporting PPPs contributing to the SDGs in emerging economies financially. However, the current requirements and financial restrictions to the SDGP lead to untapped potential for small- and medium enterprises (SMEs) seeking to become active in diverse projects relating to sustainable development. Therefore, we suggest to extend the use of the SDGP to a more diverse group of PPPs.

## Why?

Public private partnerships (PPPs) enable businesses, governments and societal organisations to combine resources and

expertise to realise concrete projects in the field of sustainable development.<sup>29</sup> The role of the public sector should be to pay attention to the scarcity of resources and protecting natural capital, while the private sector also focuses on generating revenue. Because of these complementary strengths, PPPs are widely recognised as an effective means of cooperation to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth. The Dutch government has a positive attitude towards using PPPs in emerging economies to achieve sustainable development.

As of now, many requirements apply to PPPs seeking to receive funding from the SDGP. The scope of the instrument is thus quite narrow, and the threshold to apply is high for projects that do not fit directly within the specific SDGs, the focus countries for development aid, or the

timeframes set by the opening rotations of this facility. According to an RVO-official, the minimum amount of €500.000 for a subsidy makes the SDGP unattractive for SMEs and gives large corporations an advantage in engaging in sustainable development projects. This might lead to inefficiencies and a lack of innovation.

### **How?**

The policy objective is to utilise the SDGP more broadly and reduce the barriers to apply. If this goal is reached, the facility would be open to a more diverse group of PPPs, give SMEs a chance to expand their businesses and expertise, and diverge in the magnitude of its operations. This is set to improve the knowledge of the facility in the public and private sector as well. Additionally, more competition for the SDGP budget may lead to innovative PPPs focused on untapped potential in emerging economies.

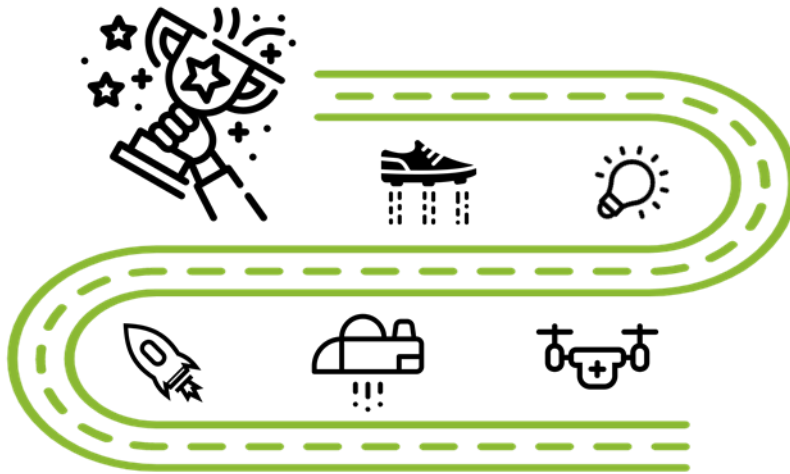
The following recommendations are proposed to reach the policy objective as explained:

- Reduce the minimum amount of currently €500.000 for a subsidy for applying;
- Transfer development aid funds to the SDGP total budget where possible in line with the 'From Aid to Trade' policy objective, thus expanding the current €30 million available;
- Drop the SDG specification or expand the three focus SDGs to at least six;
- Market the SDGP possibilities through the SDG platform and through easy-to-

understand communicative channels in RVO services;

- Expand the SDGP services from solely funding to also include training and advise;
- Allow for a maximum in FTE spent on a PPP rather than a maximum of 6 organisations to ensure the primacy of knowledge sharing and specialisation over the formality of having enough participants.

# START-UP COMPETITION



## What?

The organisation of a competition for start-ups and a more active role for the Embassy in existing start-up competitions.

## Why?

Start-up competitions could lead to new Dutch start-ups in Indonesia and vice versa. Additionally, it could incentivize start-ups that are already operating in Indonesia to expand their business towards a new purpose.

Even though there are several existing start-up competitions, none of these competitions has a specific focus on sustainability or the SDGs. Therefore, the goal of the new competition should be to create innovative solutions for Indonesian problems related to one or more of the SDGs.

In the existing competitions, the Embassy can have an active role in steering towards sustainable topics. This could lead to the creation of extra work and trade for Dutch companies in the sustainability field. In addition, the instrument substantiates the government's wish to mobilize the private sector to contribute to the SDGs.<sup>1</sup>

## How?

### Existing competitions

There are several existing start-up competitions, of which the most well-known are the Get in the Ring competitions. Jakarta has been part of the Global Get in the Ring competition in both 2018 and 2019.<sup>30</sup> The role of the Embassy in this Global Get in the Ring competition could be to promote the challenge among Dutch start-ups active in Indonesia but also among Indonesian start-ups working in a field

relevant to the Netherlands.

One could also directly target Dutch and/or Indonesian start-ups through challenges. There are two examples of challenges, hosted by Get in the Ring, that can be interesting for the Embassy:

- **Scale to Indonesia**

The challenge should focus on Dutch start-ups and on helping them with a 'soft landing' in Indonesia. Scale to Singapore is an existing challenge organized by RVO in the beginning of 2021 for Singapore. For this challenge, there is a focus on workplace safety.<sup>31</sup> A similar challenge could be organized in Indonesia. A recommendation would be to choose a topic related to one or more of the SDGs that are connected to the Dutch top sectors or that are specifically important for Indonesia (e.g. SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 15 Life on Land) and to add SDG requirements for applicants.

- **Scale to the Netherlands with the Go Beyond program**

This challenge focuses on Indonesian start-ups that have the ambition to expand their business towards Europe via the Netherlands. In the beginning of 2021, this program has been organized with a focus on Singapore SMEs by Enterprise Singapore. Goal of the program is to explore the Dutch market, refine a go-to-market strategy, establish connections with support organisations and investor networks, and forge first collaborations with leading European corporate partners.<sup>32</sup> A similar

challenge could be organized for Indonesian start-ups or SMEs. The Embassy could connect the right parties to make sure the program will be successful.

### **A new competition**

Instead of promoting an existing competition or creating a challenge within the Get in the Ring contests, the Embassy could also choose to launch its own competition. One potential, existing instrument that could be used to help start-ups in the form of a competition is the Small Business Innovation Research instrument (SBIR) of RVO.<sup>33</sup> A local problem is identified and presented to Dutch start-ups, who must then come up with innovative and sustainable solutions.

The process is divided in three phases: the entrepreneurs with the most promising feasibility studies (phase 1) are instructed to further develop their product (phase 2). Then the entrepreneur can bring the innovation to the market (phase 3), or the government can be the first customer ('launching customer') to purchase the innovation. Since this is an existing instrument, it would be relatively easy for the Embassy to implement. For start-ups joining the competition, this is a great way to explore the Indonesian market and increase trade. When choosing a local problem, it would be highly recommended to choose a problem related to one or more of the SDGs, since it will then contribute towards bridging the gap between trade policy and the SDGs.





# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Throughout our research we heard and came up with ideas that we did not integrate in the final policy advice. Either because we were not able to fit them into the report or because we were not able to completely work out the ideas. However, we do not want to discard this information and therefore include these ideas as ‘food for thought’, which might be investigated further at a later stage by the Embassy, DIO, RVO or another related party. We have four ideas that we want to propose.

From the interviews held with Dutch entrepreneurs, various perspectives on and ideas about the work of the Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came forth. We think these four ideas can be especially interesting and viable.

## **Increased ‘fieldwork’ by the Embassy**

From our interviews we found that it might be beneficial for the Dutch Embassy to interact more with local people in places where Dutch companies operate. We received feedback that the Embassy may not be visible enough ‘on the ground’ and could travel more locally. This can improve the relationship between the Embassy and local Indonesian people, which in turn can improve the relationship between Dutch companies and local people. It can also increase the acceptance of Dutch companies in the region, increase mutual

understanding and might improve willingness to work together. So, more contact between the Dutch Embassy and local people might improve the business opportunities and will sustain a long-term relationship.

## **List of sustainable companies**

From one of the interviews the idea arose to establish a list of sustainable companies in Indonesia that want to export goods to the Netherlands. In this way Dutch companies that rely on these goods for imports have a clear overview of companies with which they can trade in order to make their production/supply chain more sustainable. Although the Embassy might not be able to officially prefer or recommend companies above others, there might be ways to initiate a list of sustainable companies. Also, one could say that this is a necessary step to make Dutch trade with Indonesia more sustainable, and ranking companies is objective and therefore justifiable. In addition to this, it can stimulate (Indonesian) exporting companies to assess their production chain and become more sustainable.

## **Start-up hub**

As suggested in the ‘Connecting Indonesian start-ups and Dutch Companies’ report, a Dutch start-up hub in Indonesia can strengthen cooperation between Dutch and



Indonesian start-ups.<sup>34</sup> This ‘hub’ can possibly be part of the NL In Business Hub Indonesia.<sup>35</sup> The Dutch start-up hubs in Singapore serve as an example. We suggest creating an SDG start-up hub, where start-ups that contribute to the SDGs are highlighted and portrayed as good practices. Within this hub, the aim is to connect likeminded start-ups, to create a cooperative ecosystem of key players in the start-up scene, and ultimately accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

### **‘SDG vouchers’ complementing the IMVO vouchers**

The current IMVO vouchers are mainly aimed at preventing risks and are only available for 40 companies per year. These vouchers could be complemented with ‘SDG vouchers’ that aim at sustainable business practices and achieving the SDGs. This idea might be something for RVO to elaborate on and to implement.



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