



**MERCY  
CORPS**



**MERCY CORPS NETHERLANDS**

# **Strategic Policy Plan**

**Fiscal Year 2025 - Fiscal Year 2027**



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Cover Page Photograph: September 2023, Mir Barkat Buledi, Pakistan. Sooun uses one of 70 water pumps that Mercy Corps rehabilitated after the historic flooding of 2022. Photo by Ezra Millstein

Inside cover photograph: May 2024, Faraba, Senegal. Mouhamadou Dabo, 54, at his banana plantation. He has worked on the same farm since he was 12 years old. In 2022, Mercy Corps' Foyré Rewbé program installed a solar powered water pump at the banana farm, replacing the diesel generator with free, renewable energy. Photo by Ezra Millstein.

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The external environment within which Mercy Corps operates is constantly evolving. Geopolitical uncertainty and changing global economics impact the traditional humanitarian and donor landscape. Consequently, the profile of individual donors, philanthropy, and institutional donors' priorities are evolving.

Mercy Corps' ten-year global strategy *Pathway to Possibility* provides a framework for delivering programmatic excellence, and this Strategic Plan sets out how this will be achieved in the Netherlands. Climate change, humanitarian crises and resulting conflict (and the intersectionality between the three) are impacting European policymakers, donors, and the private sector, eager to find new, innovative solutions to these challenges.

Mercy Corps works at the nexus of these challenges and scales across all continents, particularly in fragile contexts affected by climate change and conflict. As such, we are uniquely positioned to share our knowledge and learnings in these areas and be an essential implementation partner that appeals to European audiences. Operating in this context of uncertainty, Mercy Corps' agile strategic approach is adaptive and responsive to these rapidly changing operating environments.

Mercy Corps Netherlands' (MCNL) overarching goal since its creation in 2017 has been to ensure that Mercy Corps effectively adapts to the shifting European landscape by building the foundations for a vital, robust, financially viable European-based part of Mercy Corps that is actively leveraging strategic partnerships across the European landscapes, and in particular with European institutions, complementing and contributing to the strategic objectives of Mercy Corps globally.

This strategy document describes MCNL's strategic objectives for the next three years—from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2027—taking into account the evolving operating context, MCNL's growing capacity, and the potential to increase its programmatic reach and impact through focused fundraising and partnership development.

**MCNL's goal** for these three years is to increase its profile and influence as a strong humanitarian, development, and climate actor and partner in the Netherlands and with the EU institutions in Brussels, and to increase and diversify its revenue to support Mercy Corps' work in countries and regions with the ambitious goal of to not only meet the basic needs of communities affected by conflict and climate change but to achieve lasting, transformational change at scale.

Three strategic objectives will contribute to this goal:

- I. By the end of June 2027, MCNL's funding base in the Netherlands and Brussels will have strengthened and diversified
- II. By the end of June 2027, MCNL's role as a key policy influencer in Dutch and European humanitarian, development, and climate policy will have expanded with MCNL being a trusted thought leadership partner
- III. By the end of June 2027, MCNL's profile in the Netherlands and amongst EU institutions in Brussels will have been raised and our visibility and influence enhanced.

MCNL's programmatic priorities will remain aligned with Mercy Corps' global strategy and focus on the following four outcome areas: food security, water security, economic opportunities, and peace and good governance. These outcome areas are explained in more detail below.

Mercy Corps' experience of working to build the resilience of communities, and the most marginalized within them, impacted by climate change and conflict over the last ten years places us ahead of many of the other partner organizations in Europe that are starting to change their programming to become more climate-focused. As such, we will work to position Mercy Corps in the Netherlands as one of the leading organisations building the long-term resilience of communities facing the compounding effects of conflict, fragility and climate change to be able to cope, adapt and eventually thrive.

Framing our offer in this way for European audiences allows us to differentiate ourselves from well-known European INGOs. Building our profile in this space with relevant audiences in the Dutch and European markets will also enable us to capitalise on opportunities with the private sector. Corporations and Foundations are eager to work with organisations, specifically those with a focus on addressing the climate crisis and can act on a scale. Our focus on building the resilience of communities to conflict and climate change in fragile places sets us up well to become a partner of choice in the Netherlands and in Europe.

# 2. CONTEXT

## Dutch Political and Financial Landscape

The political and financial context in the Netherlands has undergone a significant transformation following the November 2023 parliamentary elections, which saw the inauguration of a coalition government in July 2024. The shift has critical implications for international humanitarian and development cooperation. Budget cuts to Official Development Assistance (ODA) have already been announced, starting with reductions of €0.3 billion in 2025 and escalating to €2.4 billion annually by 2027, reducing ODA spending from 0.64% of GDP in 2023 to 0.46% in 2028, with additional cuts are expected. These cuts place the Netherlands well below the European average for international aid contributions. While long-term development programmes, particularly those supporting the Global South, will likely be disproportionately impacted by these reductions, there is potential for continued support in areas such as humanitarian aid, water and food security, and economic development, which are core capabilities for Mercy Corps.





Dutch government funding to Mercy Corps is mainly through bilateral agreements through Dutch embassies and, therefore, MCNL must ensure close cooperation with embassies and ministry staff to maximise opportunities within the newly restricted funding landscape.

MCNL is based in the Netherlands, an EU Member State, and is therefore eligible for funding from the EU, under both development and humanitarian funding streams. MCNL has been awarded the DG ECHO humanitarian partnership certificate 2021-2027, following a positive assessment of Mercy Corps' compliance with the EU's criteria and minimum standards for delivering humanitarian aid in areas such as financial management, accountability, operational capacity, and adherence to core humanitarian principles such as neutrality, impartiality and independence. The certification makes Mercy Corps eligible to apply for and receive EU funding for humanitarian projects and provides access to a broad range of ECHO-funded initiatives, enabling Mercy Corps to deliver aid efficiently in crisis situations worldwide.

## Mercy Corps' Strategic Response: Pathway to Possibility and European Strategic Plan

Mercy Corps' global 10-year strategy, *Pathway to Possibility*, is centered on achieving lasting, transformative change for communities affected by conflict, fragility, and climate change. While there are immediate challenges in the Netherlands' development cooperation environment, it highlights the importance of Mercy Corps' mission to foster resilience in vulnerable communities. Mercy Corps defines resilience as the ability of people, institutions, and markets to withstand shocks, adapt to changing conditions, and ultimately thrive. This resilience-building approach will be essential as the organisation navigates the volatile political and financial landscape.

The *Pathway to Possibility* strategy revolves around four key outcomes that support communities:

-  **Food Security:** Ensuring people have access to sustainably produced, nutritious food at all times
-  **Water Security:** Guaranteeing equitable and sustained access to clean, safe water
-  **Economic Opportunities:** Enabling people to grow their assets and income sustainably
-  **Peace and Good Governance:** Reducing violence, promoting sustainable peace, and supporting inclusive, responsive governance.

These outcomes directly align with the challenges facing communities globally. To deliver these outcomes, Mercy Corps applies five key commitments across all its interventions:

- **Climate Smart:** Bold actions to meet the climate crisis head-on
- **Evidence Driven:** Using data, evidence, and analytics to drive impact and scale successful interventions
- **Innovative and Creative:** Collaborating with change-makers to co-create and test innovative solutions
- **Locally Led:** Empowering local communities and sharing decision-making power
- **Safe, Diverse, and Inclusive:** Ensuring a culture of inclusion and protection for all community members.

### European Strategic Plan and Mercy Corps Netherlands Strategic Policy Plan

Mercy Corps' European Strategic Plan (2023-2026) outlines how the organisation will implement the global Pathway to Possibility in Europe. The European strategy focuses on increasing Mercy Corps' visibility, influence, and funding across critical markets, including the Netherlands and the EU. By positioning itself as a leading organisation building resilience to conflict, fragility, and climate change, Mercy Corps aims to secure its role as a trusted partner for public and private donors, both in the long-term development and humanitarian space.

To achieve its goals in Europe, Mercy Corps is committed to:

- **Increasing its profile, funding, and influence** in key European markets, including the Netherlands and the EU, as well as within policy fora and events
- **Investing in its people, systems, and structures** to harness the expertise and innovations that drive impactful programming.

## 3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This new Strategic Policy Plan for 2024-2027 builds on MCNL's previous Policy Plan, which expired in June 2024, and aligns with both the global strategy Pathway to Possibility and the European Strategic Plan. By aligning its work with the Pathway to Possibility and the European Strategic Plan, Mercy Corps can continue to deliver transformative impact in the regions, countries and communities it serves. The focus on resilience, partnerships, and innovation will position the organisation to adapt to the constraints of the changed funding landscape while remaining a key player in building long-term resilience for communities affected by conflict and climate change.

The new Strategic Policy Plan for 2024-2027 will also be a crucial tool in ensuring that MCNL remains relevant and impactful in a challenging political and financial context.

With MCNL's capacity and management model established in previous years, this year the organisation has made a shift towards focusing on building out its external relations, raising its profile and increasing and diversifying its revenue streams.

This is reflected in the following strategic objectives for MCNL for the coming two years:

### **Strategic Objective 1 -**

**By the end of June 2027, MCNL's funding base in the Netherlands and Brussels will have strengthened and diversified**

In the next three years, MCNL will focus on strengthening and diversifying its revenue streams to support the implementation of our Pathway to Possibility strategy. Our ambition is to secure sustainable funding from a broad range of sources, from institutional, corporates, and foundations, enhancing our financial resilience and capacity to deliver impactful programmes in the 42 countries where Mercy Corps works. By the end of FY27, MCNL's revenue has increased through a diverse portfolio of funding streams and partnerships, with strategic and sustainable tailored ICR/unrestricted funding.

### **Strategic Objective 2 -**

**By the end of June 2027, MCNL's role as a key influencer in Dutch and European humanitarian, development and climate policy will have expanded with MCNL being a trusted thought leadership partner**

In the next three years, MCNL will further enhance its capacity to influence and advocate for effective policies and practices in the fields of climate resilience and conflict mitigation. Our goal is to position MCNL as a trusted partner for Dutch and EU stakeholders, leveraging our global expertise to shape policy and influence key decisions both in the humanitarian and sustainable development spaces. Our aim is to become a 'Go-To' actor for Dutch stakeholders delivering or financing climate resilience programming in fragile contexts.

Guided by the four outcome areas of the Mercy Corps' Pathway to Possibility global strategy, MCNL will focus its influencing efforts in the areas of climate adaptation, sustainable energy, water security, food security, economic opportunities (including market-system development) and preventing and reducing conflict and violence.

### **Strategic Objective 3 -**

**By the end of June 2027, MCNL's profile in the Netherlands and in Brussels will have been raised and our visibility and influence enhanced**

In the next three years, MCNL will focus on significantly increasing its brand visibility and influence in the Netherlands and with EU institutions. In line with Mercy Corps' Global Communications Strategy – notably its objective to 'Build Mercy Corps' media profile in priority European media markets' and aligned with the European Strategic Plan – MCNL will work to increase visibility of Mercy Corps' global humanitarian work in Europe, where the organisation is not yet widely known. We will leverage media advocacy to advance key European policy priorities while reframing Mercy Corps as a leading humanitarian and development organisation focused on climate resilience in the most fragile places.

Setting up a distinct and strong European dimension of Mercy Corps communications is crucial in order to make our voice heard in the continent amidst the numerous challenges the European market entails, including the linguistic diversity and limited public awareness of the organisation.

At the same time, Mercy Corps' ability to provide insight on emergency responses and humanitarian issues, global crisis hotspots and climate action is extremely important for the European public and therefore media outreach will rely on these key assets.

## 4. APPROACH

Below we describe the practical approaches that will be taken to achieve these strategic objectives.

### Strategic Objective 1 – Revenue and Fundraising

By the end of June 2027, MCNL’s funding base in the Netherlands and Brussels will have strengthened and diversified

#### 1. Deepen Relationships with Key Institutional Donors

MCNL will continue to invest in building our relationships with institutional donors, primarily the Dutch government and EU institutions. By improving our visibility and demonstrating our impact, we aim to position ourselves not only as a thought partner, but also as a partner of choice, to secure more significant and consistent funding from these key donors. We will also increase our support to Mercy Corps colleagues in countries and regions to build those relationships and access funding.

To maximise our fundraising potential, we will adopt a more integrated approach to EU and NL donor relations. By leveraging the strengths of our teams in Brussels and The Hague, we aim to create synergies that enhance our ability to secure funding and build strong, long-term donor relationships. MCNL will also coordinate its efforts across key functional teams and Country and Regional Offices. This will include having shared priority themes.

Specifically for Dutch Government funding, we will aim to:

- Grow decentralised bilateral accessible via Dutch Embassies in priority countries. We will work closely with regional and country colleagues to build their knowledge and awareness of Dutch funding priorities and ensure engagement strategies are in place.
- Preposition for and access centralised funding available through the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague through an engagement strategy based on key thematic areas in alignment with Pathway to Possibility.
- Strengthen relationships with and explore funding opportunities with the RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency) and FMO (Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank)

Specifically for EU funding, there is certainly potential to grow our current funding levels of humanitarian (ECHO) and development (INTPA) programming. MCNL will take two approaches (laid out in detail in our *EU Engagement Strategy*): Increasing our intel of EU institutions across relevant countries and teams, and donor engagement in Brussels.

#### 2. Develop knowledge about EU institutions

This aims to achieve three outcomes:

- **Enhanced Knowledge:** Individuals and teams will gain a deeper understanding of decision-making mechanisms and timing in business development, as well as of opportunities for funding and further relationship building
- **EU Priorities and Policies:** Improved comprehension of priorities and policies of EU institutions will guide business development and programme implementation
- **Effective Communication:** Mastery of EU terminology will facilitate interactions with EU Delegations and enhance written communications.

Led by Mercy Corps’ Strategic Institutional Partnerships (SIP) team, in conjunction with the Policy & Advocacy (P&A) and country teams, we will periodically review synergies between our own priorities and potential programmes and those of EU institutions, and profile our programmes, research and expertise with EU donors in those key thematic areas.

Special attention will be given to ECHO’s annual HIP cycles (Humanitarian Implementation Plan), including periodic review which draws lessons from previous year’s HIP cycle.

### 3. Donor engagement in Brussels and in-country EU Delegations

Our team will support country leaders to enhance their relationship with EU delegations at country level, in particular those which are seeking opportunities for ECHO HIP funding and EU delegated cooperation funds.

Colleagues in Brussels and The Hague will facilitate connections with EU institutions in Brussels and work to position Mercy Corps for collaboration and funding opportunities. These would include INTPA and ECHO whilst we will further explore collaboration with DGs such as MED, ENLARGE and EEAS on specific thematic areas.

Connections with EU institutions and EU colleagues are also made through our active participation in Brussels-based networks such as VOICE, EPIO and CONCORD.

#### 4. Expand Funding from Corporates, Foundations, and Trusts and Others

Our overall goal is to significantly grow private revenue, diversify our funding base and establish ourselves as a leading organisation focused on building climate resilience in the most fragile places, in alignment with our European Strategic Plan.

Leveraging the insights from our 2024 market analysis, we will concentrate our efforts on expanding our portfolio of private sector partners, including corporates, foundations and trusts. Our focus will be on cultivating high-capacity, strategically aligned partners, ensuring a pathway to sustainable growth. Through these partnerships we aim to secure a diverse mix of restricted grants, flexible funding, impact investments, as well as unrestricted revenue streams.

To raise our profile and attract new partnerships we will elevate our Climate:Possible Campaign positioning Mercy Corps as a thought leader in climate resilience. Key activities will include increasing our presence at strategic conferences and events, disseminating research and thought leadership, and hosting engagement opportunities such as panel discussions and webinars. These efforts will be designed to showcase our expertise and solidify our position within the sector.

Our emergency response efforts also provide opportunities to foster new and deepen existing partnerships. We will build a strong network of humanitarian partners and strengthen our employee engagement offerings for key corporate partners, enhancing our value proposition.

In the longer term we will assess the potential for new fundraising streams, including individual giving, major donor, and legacy programmes. This exploration will be informed by opportunities that may arise from membership eligibility with the Disaster Relief Alliance (DRA) and SHO/Giro555, without committing to specific initiatives at this stage.

### Strategic Objective 2 – Influencing and Advocacy

By the end of June 2027, MCNL’s role as a key influencer in Dutch and European humanitarian, development and climate policy will have expanded with MCNL being a trusted thought leadership partner

#### 1. Policy Engagement and Influence in the Netherlands and towards the EU

We will leverage Mercy Corps’ sector-leading approaches to influence Dutch humanitarian and development policies. We will also use these relationships with the Dutch government, as well as our presence in Brussels, to influence the EU’s policy agenda and priorities (as set out below). With the projected decrease in Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the Netherlands, our focus will be on:

- Building support for aid and development and ensuring Dutch funds are effectively utilised to build resilience in the most fragile regions:

MCNL will promote a more positive narrative about development cooperation in Dutch society and understanding of the positive impacts of development action, amongst other by contributing to a public support campaign with peer organisations. We will showcase Mercy Corps’ impactful work in the countries where we have active programming, including by facilitating visits by Mercy Corps experts and local partners, as well as our research, learning and analysis. To do this we will engage directly with the Dutch government as well as actively with other organisations and with networks such as Partos, the Dutch Gender Platform WO=MEN, the Netherlands Water Partnership and the Platform for Humanitarian Action.

- **Influencing Dutch Climate Policy and Practice:**

The Netherlands have long played an important role in climate finance and climate policy, and in particular adaptation. We will inform and influence the Dutch government as it allocates its finance, in particular in fragile contexts, as it makes global commitments, and as it engages in climate negotiations. In particular, we will:

- Work to align Dutch climate action with the needs of vulnerable populations, ensuring that adaptation finance reaches those most in need.
- Advocate with the Dutch government to achieve ambitious, inclusive, and fair climate agreements at the global level, such as at COPs.
- Play a key role within the Dutch civil society coalition on climate (*Internationale Klimaatcoalitie*), including as NGO representative from May 2024 – May 2026.
- Recognising the Netherlands' significant role in EU decision-making, we will engage Dutch policymakers on climate issues. We will use relationships with the Dutch government to influence the EU's policy agenda and priorities for key working groups and committees of the Council of the EU and ahead of key high-level Senior Official Meetings hosted by ECHO or other EU Commissions. By doing so, we will align our advocacy efforts with Mercy Corps' EU engagement strategy, leveraging a two-pronged approach across the Hague and Brussels that strengthens our position as a leading authority on key outcome areas in the European space.

## 2. Direct EU Engagement

We will establish Mercy Corps as a thought leader on Mercy Corps' priority policy issues for Brussels: Humanitarian response, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Peace & Governance. We will influence policies and practices of EU policymakers, including the Commission and, where relevant, the Council of the EU parliamentarians, as well as other stakeholders and experts on these themes. We will continue to engage with key Member States' permanent representatives in Brussels as well as the relevant working parties and committees of the Council of the EU on high-level policy issues, aiming to shape the EU's position. We will also advocate more broadly for both policies and budgets that support humanitarian and development action. This includes closely monitoring the upcoming Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) discussions, which will determine funding allocations for humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives for the 2028-2035 period, joining collective advocacy activities where possible and in alignment with our own strategic goals.

### Influence Focus 1: Humanitarian

We will influence EU policy on our priority humanitarian contexts and broader humanitarian policy areas, including around funding, access, protection and uptake of our evidence-based approaches (including cash). Our current priority contexts are Sudan, Gaza and Ukraine. MCNL will support these efforts and, where relevant or needed, connect with key stakeholders in both the Netherlands and Brussels to raise the profile of our global humanitarian priorities and influence related policy in the relevant working groups and committees of Council of the EU. We will also use our presence in Brussels and the Hague (and other European Capitals, i.e. Paris) to influence high-level humanitarian conferences and Senior Officials Meetings hosted by the EU or European Member States. It will also continue to profile itself to the Dutch government as an important humanitarian actor.

### Influence Focus 2: Climate Adaptation & Resilience

We will lead efforts to influence EU policy on climate adaptation and resilience. This will include:

- EU programming, policies and budgets should support communities and marginalised groups in fragile and conflict-affected states/situations for adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and loss and damage
- EU funding and policy should address the intersection of conflict and climate
- EU should support building climate resilience in humanitarian settings
- EU should support efforts at COP29 and other international climate conferences to ensure the NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goals) has needs-based amounts for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, in particular in the most fragile places.

We will lead efforts to influence EU policy and practice on sub-themes identified by the Peace and Governance Influence Matrix Team and as relevant to the EU. We will advocate that our targets adopt and scale our evidence-based technical approaches on climate peace and security, youth violence prevention (including PVE), responsive and include governance systems, gender peace and security, and the weaponisation of social media. We will push for more effective conflict sensitivity in all humanitarian programming in countries at risk of violent conflict. In addition, MCNL will raise its profile in the Netherlands and position itself as an important actor on Peace and Governance.

## **Strategic Objective 3 – Communications and Visibility**

**By the end of June 2027, MCNL's profile in the Netherlands and in Brussels will have been raised and our visibility and influence enhanced**

### 1. Expand Social Media Presence

We will grow our following on key social media platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn and X, by regularly sharing updates, impact stories, and expert insights. Our goal is to increase engagement of our key audiences and build a strong online community that amplifies our message and mission.

### 2. Strengthen Content Creation and Media Relations

In FY25 and beyond, Mercy Corps' media outreach will proactively focus on the following countries in line with the FY24-26 European Strategic Plan:

- The Netherlands
- Belgium, including local media and EU-specialised media outlets and reporters based in Brussels

As Mercy Corps has just started to intensify its communications and media outreach in continental Europe, in FY25 we will pursue introductory 1:1 meetings and/or small media briefings, and pitch out relevant stories for:

- Dutch-speaking media in the Netherlands and Belgium
- EU correspondents based in Brussels
- French-speaking media in Belgium

It is important to note that the organisation is not well known in Europe beyond the humanitarian sector and that we have only recently begun investing in raising our profile in the Netherlands. In order to secure media coverage, the communications team will shed light on Mercy Corps' programming expertise in fostering climate resilience in the most fragile, conflict-ridden places, as well as in strengthening market resilience.

### 3. Increase Participation in Key Events and Partnerships

We will actively seek out and secure speaking opportunities at national and local fora, aiming for at least two major events annually. We will also build and strengthen partnerships with academic institutions, NGOs, networks/platforms in which we are active members and other stakeholders to co-host webinars, workshops, and panel discussions, further positioning MCNL as a thought leader in the humanitarian and development space.

## 5. IMPACT

### Mission

Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive, and just communities.

Lasting solutions to the complex and dynamic challenges posed by conflict and climate change require action on multiple fronts. That's why we are a multi-mandate organisation that provides access to humanitarian aid, development, and peace assistance in places heavily impacted by conflict and climate change. Worldwide our operations cover 42 crisis-affected countries. We partner with and support those who are systemically marginalised because of their gender, age, ethnic, religious, or other identities, those living in or at risk of extreme poverty, and those most affected by conflict and climate change.

### Vision

We support communities – and the most marginalised within them – to emerge from crisis and build towards a more inclusive, resilient future.

No matter the context, we believe in the power of human potential and the ability of communities to grow stronger and more resilient. Resilience means people and systems can protect and improve wellbeing – such as food security and income – in the face of shocks and stresses. Inclusion and resilience are foundational characteristics of secure, productive, and just communities in which everyone can thrive. We make it easier for affected communities to access resources, services, and opportunities that support them to cope, adapt, and ultimately thrive. We foster inclusive and resilient communities that positively impact and protect the physical, social, and economic wellbeing of all their members – even in the face of adversity.

MCNL's programmes, partnerships, and influence focus on strengthening sources of resilience, enhancing the capacities of people, communities, markets and institutions to handle shocks, reduce risk, build more equitable and responsive systems, and improve wellbeing. Whether the threat is a sudden shock or a slowly emerging crisis, natural or political, MCNL uses our resilience framework to sequence, layer, and integrate our assistance to ensure relevant, technically sound, and high-quality support. In the most severe crises, we respond rapidly and meet urgent needs while investing early in enhancing resilience. We pivot quickly, working flexibly across humanitarian response, peacebuilding, and long-term development approaches to respond to changing circumstances on the ground.

We work towards four connected and reinforcing outcome areas that determine people's wellbeing: **greater economic opportunities, food security, peace and good governance, and water security**. Within each outcome area, MCNL has defined distinctive areas of focus that we believe lead to the greatest impact for the resilient, inclusive communities we work with. They articulate what people can expect of MCNL and set the programming standards to which we hold ourselves accountable.

### Outcome Areas

#### Food Security

Our pathway to improved food security moves us closer to a world where people are always well nourished, with access to sustainably produced, safe, and nutritious food.

MCNL works through programmes, partnerships, and influence to meet urgent food needs while building more inclusive and resilient food systems to ensure lasting food security for all. We aim to minimise the impacts of food crises on households, prevent the destabilisation of food systems during conflict and natural disasters, and increase the resilience of food systems to climate change. We identify and support individuals and groups with the greatest food security needs – women, adolescent girls, underserved youth, and children – who are living in or at risk of malnutrition and poverty and most affected by shocks. We use cash and voucher assistance to meet urgent food needs, while simultaneously layering market approaches that support food system continuity in times of crisis.

#### Water Security

Our pathway to water security moves us closer to a world where people have equitable and sustained access to clean and safe water to meet their everyday needs.

Inclusive, climate-smart water systems contribute to resilience by improving livelihoods, food security, and social cohesion. Through our programmes, partnerships, and influence, MCNL helps sustain improvements in clean, safe, and equitable water access – even in times of crisis. Whether responding to immediate water and sanitation needs in an emergency or overseeing large-scale water infrastructure projects, our efforts centre on strengthening the ability of water systems to anticipate risk and prevent water issues from fuelling future conflict. Water governance, rather than infrastructure, is at the heart of our resilience approach. We foster inclusive and equitable processes that centre the needs and meaningful participation of marginalised groups – and women in particular – resulting in greater access to and functionality of water systems. This means working with water providers and users at multiple levels to identify sustainable rural and urban water solutions and strengthen water planning, governance, management, and financial capacities of service providers and private sector and market actors.

#### Economic Opportunities

Our pathway to increased economic opportunities envisions a world where economically marginalised people grow and sustain their assets and income.

MCNL works through programmes, partnership, and influence to help marginalised people protect and grow their assets and income in the face of compounding shocks. We help build inclusive and resilient markets that work with and for the economically marginalised and those most affected by conflict and climate change. Our efforts aim to prevent the breakdown of markets in times of crisis, and we intervene early to help rebuild the agriculture sector, labour markets, and financial services so that livelihoods can resume. We help make markets more efficient, profitable, and accessible for systematically marginalised groups and those living in poverty. Simultaneously, we strengthen the capacities of individuals, households, and groups to operate effectively within these market systems. The private sector is our partner of choice because inclusive and resilient markets have the potential to provide sustainable economic opportunities at scale over the long term. We work on both the supply and demand sides to strengthen market system performance and address long-standing power imbalances that affect market participation. And by sequencing, layering, and integrating our peace, humanitarian, and development assistance, we help strengthen communities' capacities to cope, adapt, and thrive so they can secure economic opportunities now and in the future.

#### Peace and Good Governance

Our pathway to peace and good governance moves us closer to a world where people reduce or prevent violence, contribute to advancing sustainable peace, and participate meaningfully in inclusive and responsive governance systems.

Resilience to conflict and climate shocks depends on peaceful, locally led action and meaningful participation by everyone in responsive governance processes. MCNL works through programmes, partnership, and influence to support communities to prevent, manage, and transform violent conflict over time. Our efforts aim to reduce violence and address drivers of conflict so development outcomes make lasting impact. Even while addressing immediate needs, we lay the foundation for long-term stability and sustained peace. Advancing sustainable peace starts with supporting local efforts to reduce violence and create more inclusive governance systems. We elevate locally led collective action among civil society, government, community members, and formal and informal leaders. Specifically, we focus on groups and organisations led by or serving women, youth, or other systemically marginalised populations. We help people access and influence processes and decisions within formal and informal governance institutions to address grievances and to contribute to meaningful change. And we support local peacebuilders in their efforts to resolve conflicts and lay foundations for longer-term change. Within ecological systems, we connect communities to the processes, decisions, and skills essential for effective natural resource management and climate adaptation. We help identify or create opportunities for greater participation in decision-making processes around natural resources – a widespread driver of conflict. In practice, this means working with community members as well as decision-makers, service providers, and other power-holders to build skills in negotiation and mediation, civic engagement, advocacy and social accountability, social cohesion, and inclusive planning community mobilisation.

By sequencing, layering, and integrating our peace, humanitarian, and development assistance, we help advance peace and promote inclusive, responsive governance processes, that enable communities – and the most marginalised within them – to cope, adapt, and thrive.

## Humanitarian Support

Driven by a humanitarian imperative, MCNL responds rapidly to meet the immediate needs of those most impacted by conflict and climate change. We prioritise the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian assistance during times of acute need – even as we look for ways to help communities prevent, mitigate, or adapt to future shocks and stresses. We are agile and nimble, with the operational readiness and the adaptive management capacities, skills, and structures to pivot our approaches as the context requires. We partner with communities to anticipate and respond to urgent needs as they arise – enhancing resilience even in the most extreme humanitarian contexts.

## Measurement

Mercy Corps Netherlands believe that strong monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) contributes to improved programme quality, performance, results and impact; advances Mercy Corps’ mission; and increases accountability to programme stakeholders. The organisation’s MEL Policy outlines the elements (referred to as “Minimum Standards” below) necessary to promote a culture of learning and innovation within the scope of every programme and across the agency, based on credible evidence derived from programme implementation. With adherence to the MEL Policy, our programmes are better positioned to define and measure success, identify challenges for improvement and learning, generate higher quality programmatic evidence, and use that evidence to drive greater lasting impact in the world.

- As part of good programme management, the MEL Minimum Standards help all programmes to:
- Ensure that strong MEL is adequately planned and resourced
- Establish an effective MEL system to monitor and evaluate programme implementation
- Generate credible evidence to understand and substantiate impact
- Use evidence generated through programme monitoring and evaluation to learn about and improve current and future programming
- Leverage technology for data quality and timely decision making
- Support accountability, meet donor expectations, and mitigate data quality risks, including passing data quality assessments (DQAs); and
- Improve and maintain Mercy Corps’ reputation as a thought leader internally and externally through reporting programme results to stakeholders.

MCNL’s Programme, Compliance, Partnership and Finance Officers, working closely with country teams, are responsible for the monitoring and oversight of programme implementation in countries and regions, including spending and compliance with donor rules and procedures. This includes internal reporting from country offices to Mercy Corps Netherlands, regular video/tele conferences with the team in country and in-country visits. Mercy Corps works with country teams to set up internal reporting for programmes, including monitoring Tola Data, so that the Regional Programme Team can review progress and support programme needs. This ensures technical teams, and where appropriate, donors can be made aware of relevant delays and issues.

At the country level, our MEL team helps programme teams to make data-driven decisions and ensures that teams have the ability to capture data, effectively measure change, and learn from programme outcomes. Our Evidence and Learning Unit, globally and with dedicated team members regionally and in country, supports and enables strong evidence generation, championing an evidence-based practice to strengthen programme performance, and leading multi-departmental processes to improve programme management and quality across the agency.

# 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

## FUNDRAISING

Mercy Corps Netherlands will raise funds for the purpose of the implementation of its intended activities and the achievement of stated organisational objectives from the following sources:

- **Grants and Contracts** from institutional, government and private donors for specific projects
- **Donations and Legacies** from individuals, for a specific intervention, appeal or for general support of Mercy Corps’ objectives and operations.

## MERCY CORPS NETHERLANDS

### BUDGET FORECAST (in thousands €)

	Fiscal Year		
	FY25	FY26	FY27
<b>Income</b>			
EU Grants	33,271	40,411	46,571
European Government Grants	7,552	10,005	15,008
Private Grants & Other Fundraising	6,104	9,410	11,426
Other Grants	-	626	752
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>46,927</b>	<b>60,453</b>	<b>73,756</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Programme (Objectives) Expenditures	43,619	55,102	67,172
Public Health, Water and Environment	8,724	12,122	15,450
Civil Society	8,288	9,918	12,763
Economic Development	7,851	11,020	14,106
Disaster Management	18,756	22,041	24,854
Fundraising	182	279	292
Management and Administration	4,220	5,051	5,697
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>48,022</b>	<b>60,432</b>	<b>73,161</b>
<b>Net Operations</b>	<b>(1,095)</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>595</b>



## 7. GOVERNANCE

This Policy Plan is formally approved by the Management Board no less than once every three years. MCNL intends to maintain the guiding principles stated in this document, operating as a not-for-profit association eligible for an extended Dutch ANBI status. The Management Board will ensure that all ANBI requirements are met and that the resources made available to MCNL are spent on the furthering of its organisational objectives.

### Registration

The organisation's registration details are as follows:

- Chamber of Commerce (KvK) Identification Number: 70333564
- RSIN: 858269235
- Legal form: Association (Vereniging) with full legal capacity
- Statutory name: Mercy Corps Netherlands
- Statutory seat: The Hague
- Visiting address: The Hague Humanity Hub, Fluwelen Burghwal 58, 2511 CJ Den Haag
- Email address: mcn-info@mercy Corps.org
- Telephone number: +31 70 217 1080
- First entry in the trade register: 19-12-2017
- Date of the deed of incorporation: 19-12-2017
- Activities SBI code: 94996.

### Governance Structure

Mercy Corps Netherlands (MCNL) was established in December 2017, registered as an Association under the Dutch Trade number 70333564. Mercy Corps Netherlands is an independent entity with a separate Board, registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, and maintains operational decision making in relation to those programs for which it is directly responsible.

Mercy Corp Netherlands shares the same mission, vision, core values, and charitable objects, as well as operational resources for the implementation of programme activities with the two other headquarter entities, Mercy Corps Global (MCG) and Mercy Corps Europe (MCE).

The relationship between MCNL, MCG and MCE is governed by a Governance Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which covers matters relating to oversight of programmes, cost sharing and funding, governance and intellectual property. The MOU was updated in January 2021 to reflect MCNL's updated structure and capacity to manage programmes, finances and operations.

MCNL's Management Board of Directors is responsible for the oversight of the organisation's overall performance and development, internal risk management and control systems, as well as the efficient management of financial resources. The Management Board of Directors meets independently twice per year to review MCNL's overall performance, risk reports, and the efficient management of financial resources. All powers which are not vested in the Management Board pursuant to the law or the Articles of Association are vested in the General Meeting.

MCE, MCG, and MCNL function as an integrated global organisation with a unified governance structure. The three headquarter entities have the same strategy and charitable objectives and operationally share managerial and support services, financial resources, functions, and common policies across the organisation's global operations. MCNL's Management Board of Directors also convenes as a "Joint Board" together with Board Directors of the other two entities, and the Joint Board delegates Board responsibilities to Joint Board Committees.

There are seven standing Board Committees made up of Board Directors of MCE, MCNL and MCG with relevant experience, under specific terms of reference approved, in the case of MCNL, by the Management Board. Each Committee reports to the MCE, MCNL and MCG Boards at the quarterly Joint Board meetings, and to the MCNL Board directly where appropriate.

The Joint Committees are chartered to provide assistance to Mercy Corps management and the Board of Directors in fulfilling their oversight responsibilities on the various matters under each Committees' remit. Further information related to the governance and management of MCNL can be found in the Articles of Association and Mercy Corps Netherlands' Annual Report and Financial Statements available on Mercy Corps Netherlands website.

### Governance and Oversight of Country Office Operations

The MCNL Board of Directors fulfils its governance and oversight responsibilities of MC country office operations through controls, governance and reporting arrangements. The responsibility for Mercy Corps country offices, which implement the grants and contracts signed by MCNL, is established in the organisational Memorandum of Understanding, that describes the roles and responsibilities of each entity in the different aspects of programme implementation and operations. MCNL team members provide programmatic and financial monitoring, support and oversight for implementation and are responsible for the review and submission of all reports to donors. The financial and management systems under which MCNL programmes operate are subject to external review by auditors acting on behalf of funding partners/donors, and internal reviews and audits by the MC Internal Audit team. All internal and external audit reports are shared with MCNL, as well as all reports produced by the global Ethics and Compliance Department impacting on European donors and on MCNL. The Mercy Corps Internal Audit and the Ethics and Compliance departments report to the Joint Audit and Risk Committee at least three times per year.

### Human Resources and Remuneration

The members of the Management Board of Directors are volunteers and receive no remuneration from MCNL. Board-related business expenses may be reimbursed to the Board members as the case arises and on production of the necessary supporting documentation.

Staff members employed by Mercy Corps Netherlands to perform duties in the Netherlands office and for the implementation of programme activities are compensated according to a salary scale developed for this office and managed in line with the Dutch Labour Law and the Mercy Corps internal personnel policies and procedures. Mercy Corps periodically evaluates the external market and internal organisation context to ensure that compensation packages are equitable, compliant with local law, and competitive within our sector and similarly situated organisations. Mercy Corps Netherlands seeks to create a positive workplace environment for its employees that values their contributions and engagement.

### Code of Conduct

Mercy Corps' Code of Conduct policy framework applies to all global teams, inclusive of Mercy Corps Netherlands, to the Board, management, and team members, as well as partners. Mercy Corps has twelve Code of Conduct policies, available in four languages, comprising the below policies which are publicly available on our website:

- Global Code of Ethics
- Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Programme Participants and Community Members Policy
- Safeguarding Core Standards Policy
- Speak Out! Policy
- Ethics Complaints and Whistleblower Policy
- Anti-Human Trafficking and Exploitation Policy
- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Preventing Support for and Transactions with Prohibited Parties Policy.

The Code of Conduct policies clearly identify the types of prohibited conduct and state that team members must refrain from any acts of misconduct and include the consequences of engaging in conduct that breaches the Code of Conduct policies. Mercy Corps has a zero-tolerance approach for abuse, harassment or exploitation and is committed to ensuring physical and psychological safety within our teams and our programmes. Team members receive high quality mandatory training annually on the code of conduct. Mercy Corps encourages a culture of openness where team members, partners, programme participants, and community members can safely raise their concerns, ask questions—including those of a legal and ethical nature—and report unethical behaviour. Mercy Corps has multiple methods available to report concerns of unethical behaviour or seek advice, including through our confidential ‘Integrity Hotline’ (available as an email, phone number or through a web portal). It is also possible to submit a report through an Ethics team member or trusted leader. Mercy Corps’ dedicated Ethics Investigations team reviews all reports received and investigates reports in accordance with our investigative protocols (including notifying donors as required). Further information around Mercy Corps’ approach to Safeguarding is included in the MCNL Annual Report and in Mercy Corps Global Annual Safeguarding Report (both available on our website).

### Core Behaviours

The Core Behaviours are specific actions and behaviours that all team members, at all levels of the organisation, must demonstrate to realise our values and our shared vision of more inclusive and resilient teams and communities.

- Cultivate Inclusion: We are at our best when we bring the full diversity of our identities, experiences, and perspectives together to tackle the world’s most complex challenges
- Collaborate: We believe in showing up for ourselves and our team members each day with collaboration and mutual respect
- Act with Integrity: We hold ourselves and each other accountable to our values and ethical principles
- Be Curious: We embrace the knowledge and experience of the people with whom we work, using these perspectives to reflect, learn, grow, and adapt

### Management of Assets

All acquired funds will be used solely for the benefit of the work of the organisation and will be managed in compliance with the organisational financial management policies, donor rules and regulations and the applicable laws in the Netherlands.

Mercy Corps Netherlands will not retain more assets than in the opinion of the Board is reasonably necessary to guarantee the continuity of the organisation’s work, in pursuit of its objectives. MCNL has robust internal controls to ensure the sound and prudent management of its financial resources and assets. No single (legal) person has the ability to access and manage the foundation’s assets as if they were their personal assets.

### Disolution and Liquidation of Assets

The organisation may be dissolved pursuant to a resolution by the General Meeting. Following dissolution of the organisation, its assets will be liquidated by the Management Board. The Management Board may resolve to appoint other persons as liquidators.

A positive liquidation balance of the dissolved organisation shall be spent for the benefit of an organisation with ANBI status with similar objects as the objectives of the Association or for the benefit of a foreign organisation with a public utility focus and which has similar objectives as the objectives of the organisation.

Following the liquidation, the books, documents and other data carriers of the dissolved organisation will remain in the custody of the person designated for this purpose by the liquidators for the period prescribed by law.

In all other respects, the provisions of Title 1 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code will apply to the liquidation.

## 8. COMMUNICATION WITH INTERESTED PARTIES

Over the years, MCNL has built positive relationships with a multitude of stakeholders, including donors, government and other institutional agencies, NGOs, networks and other agencies. Through our connections and participation in networks, MCNL has become more embedded in Dutch society. In the past year MCNL has begun to broaden its focus on building partnerships and connections to increasingly cover non-institutional partners, including corporates, foundations and others. Deliberate efforts are being made to raise the profile of MCNL in the Netherlands and Brussels, for instance to more actively engage in networks such as Partos, ‘Platform Humanitaire Actie’ (PAH) and Brussels-based networks such as VOICE, EPLO (European Peacebuilding Liaison Office) and Philea and through contributing to a new public support campaign (‘Draagvlakcampagne’) Ontwikkeling Werkt (Development Works), an initiative of approximately 17 development organisations aimed at changing the current negative and politicised narrative around development cooperation in the Netherlands.

MCNL monitors and fulfils its contractual reporting obligations to all donors based on well-established programme management procedures applied throughout its operations. Relationships with donors and other stakeholders are managed collaboratively by MCNL together with colleagues from other support offices and the country programme teams. Effective systems are in place for regular reporting on activities for all donor funded activities. Information about our activities is shared through our website, social media, and through organisation of and participation in thematic events, contributing to public awareness of our activities and impact. Our past annual reports and financial statements, integrity policies, strategy and governance information are available on our website. The website includes links to our integrity hotline (for reports of any ethics complaints) as well as general contact information for suggestions, remarks or complaints.

Our information is also available on the designated CBF page and through links on the websites of membership organisations such as Partos, Netherlands Water Partnership, VOICE and EPLO. MCNL’s team in the Netherlands engages with peer agencies and other stakeholders by participating in and hosting targeted events showcasing our programme activities, research and analysis.

Back page photograph: March 2023, Degehabur, Ethiopia. Laden Da’ar Omer, 37, holding one of her goats. She is a pastoralist and livestock owner, and participant in Mercy Corps’ RIPA (Resilience in Pastoral Areas) program, which develops market resilience and supports agro-pastoralists living in drought-affected areas to expand their business and improve their income. Photo by Ezra Millstein.



**MERCY CORPS NETHERLANDS**

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