

**Grand Bargain in 2018:**  
**Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

**Name of Institution: Belgium**

- **FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation**
- **DG Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid**
- **Humanitarian Aid unit**

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**Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2018?**

**1. 2018, a Year for Innovation**

As a humanitarian donor, Belgium has worked to foster a culture of innovation for the last few years, particularly in 2018. This engagement - financial and strategic - for humanitarian innovation was designed to help progress towards achieving the commitments made within the Grand Bargain.

Through the launch of a 20 million euro project appeal, we have provided support to projects developing technologies and approaches in order to scale-up efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action. As a result, 12 high-potential projects have been selected and are currently in the course of implementation. Key projects linked to Grand Bargain commitments are highlighted in our detailed report.

Our push for innovation has also been materialized through strategic support. Together with Mozambique, Belgium organized an event on humanitarian innovation in New York, with the participation of UNICEF, WFP, ICRC and DFID and high-level presence by USG Lowcock and Minister De Croo. The event highlighted concrete examples of new technologies improving aid delivery.

Belgium has also funded and collaborated with VOICE, aiming at fostering NGOs and frontline responder engagement in the Grand Bargain, thereby contributing to an inclusive and more contextualized implementation of the Grand Bargain.

Several other initiatives are worth mentioning. Together with NRC, Belgium hosted a series of trainings on cash-based transfers, fostering knowledge on cash-based transfers within humanitarian NGOs. With the ICRC we have organized two seminars on the "Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action". We have participated in four "Innovation lunches" organized by Médecins du Monde and Humanity and Inclusion and participated in a panel on digital solutions at the Aidex conference in Brussels.

In 2018 we have started preparing the organization of a 'Humanitarian Hackaton' (held at the start of 2019), aiming at exploring new solutions for key obstacles in humanitarian action, including new partnerships.

**2. A flexible, principled donor (more than ever)**

Following WHS and Grand Bargain commitments, the proportion of our flexible, unearmarked funding has further increased. In 2018 Belgium has raised its core funding from 20 to 30 million euro and has kept a stable funding level for flexible funds (60 million euro). This brings the proportion of flexible, unearmarked funding to a record high of 53%, compared to 49,7% in 2017 – largely exceeding the Grand Bargain target of 30%.

For the first time ever, less than half of our funding (47%) was heavily earmarked. Belgium has clearly taken the next step towards the ambitious target it has set: reaching 60% of flexible, unearmarked funding by 2020.

Belgium has continued to implement its humanitarian strategy and has further positioned itself as a modern, principled donor. The strategic use of a diverse range of funding instruments has enabled us to respond adequately to the challenges of an ever more diversified, rapidly evolving humanitarian ecosystem.

2018 budget detail per funding instrument

| <b>Funding instruments</b> | <b>Budget expenditure</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Core funding               | 30.000.000                |
| Flexible funds             | 60.000.000                |
| Programs                   | 32.000.000                |
| Projects                   | 48.000.000                |
| <b>Total (euro)</b>        | <b>170.000.000</b>        |

As we believe in coordinated and principled assistance, we have continued our advocacy and flexible support to pooled funds such as CERF and CBPF. In December 2018 we have announced our annual contribution to CERF will in 2019 grow from 12.5 to 17 million euro per year, no less than a 36% increase. We are proud to hold 5<sup>th</sup> place in the donor list for CBPF, with a 2018 contribution of 38.9 million euro to eleven CBPF.

**Question 2: Please explain how the outcomes/results will lead to long-term institutional changes in policy and/or practice.**

Profiling Belgium as a modern and principled donor starts with building knowledge and capacity within our own institutions. This work has been going on for many years, but enjoyed a strong impetus in 2014, with the launch of a new humanitarian strategy, and in 2016 with the Grand Bargain and the WHS. We believe 2018 has been fruitful in further deepening the relevance of our humanitarian aid policy. These results are therefore in continuity with our previous commitments, ensuring long-term practice and engagement. Our targeted effort for innovation continues by mainstreaming this dimension and the lessons learnt in our general policy and approach.

As a donor working with a clear set of rules and regulation, we encounter two key challenges regarding our Grand Bargain commitments, i.e. localization and participation revolution. Both workstreams are key 'game changers' in order to change current practice of the humanitarian community. They may also expose donors to new or greater risks. In order to make substantial progress on these issues in the coming years, collective work will be needed to further refine policy and practices.

**Question 3: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment<sup>1</sup> in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard?**

Our commitment to the empowerment of women and girls is best reflected by the importance we attach to protection in extremely challenging contexts such as Yemen, CAR, South Sudan and DRC. A large part of our support for women and girls, largely channeled through ICRC, UNHCR and UNICEF, aims at ensuring they are protected from grave violations of their rights and their integrity.

Gender equality is an integrated criterion when selecting funding proposals. As a result, more than half of our earmarked funding foresees gender mainstreaming throughout project implementation. A focal point has been designated in 2018 in the humanitarian aid unit in order to deepen our work on gender in emergencies, mostly on SGBV. We aim to strengthen mainstreaming of gender equality and women’s empowerment in policy and funding practice.

**Question 4: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?**

Our unit for Transitional Development, created in 2017, has gathered the expertise on fragile situations and protracted crises. This has allowed the efficient management of focused interventions and active policy dialogue on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In terms of funding for transitional development, a budget of 9 million euro has been allocated to various projects in Burundi, the DRC and the Lake Chad Basin in 2018. Belgium has also made a new contribution of 3 million euro to the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, aiming to bridge the humanitarian-development divide.

The Belgian humanitarian legal framework allows to support a large panel of activities, ranging from disaster risk reduction and early warning/early action to recovery and rehabilitation. We have also included a Crisis Modifier mechanism in our funding with the National Red Cross. Belgium has multiple contributions running for long-term DRR programs of NGOs, including strong capacity building components for implementing local actors. A clear result of our engagement for multi-year DRR programs, is the significant increase of sustainable capacity of national red cross societies and their local branches, acting as first responders whenever disaster strikes.

A specific paragraph was added to the funding agreements regulating multi-year (2018-2020) core funding to international organizations, on the value Belgium attaches to the implementation of the Grand Bargain by its stakeholders. It is specifically mentioned that *“the effective translation of these commitments into concrete action will be taken into account when Belgium will decide on its new financing cycle for core contributions (2021-2023)”*.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).