



Policy direction postcode series Caribbean Netherlands

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Colophon

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Content

Colophon—2

Summary—4

1	Chapter—5
1.1	Reason—5
1.2	Postcodes, usefulness, and necessity—5
1.3	Variants for postcode series—6

Summary

The Caribbean Netherlands do not have a postcode system. This has been perceived as problematic by residents and administrators for years. Also, since 2010, questions have been asked about this issue with some regularity in the House of Representatives. In the administrative agreement of 2022 with the Public Entity of Saba, it was stated that the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations would take a leading role in the development of a number of themes including postcodes. In response, an advisory report was drafted that gives further substance to the elaboration of the "Postcodes for the Caribbean Netherlands" theme. Based on the advice from this report to further elaborate the choice of postcode series 0000AA-0999ZZ, an internet consultation was launched to enable residents, businesses, and organisations to respond to the proposal for this postcode series.

1 Chapter

1.1 Reason

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has drawn up the "Values-Driven Digitalisation Work Agenda"¹. This work agenda includes, under the heading "track 5.1", the topic: "Achieving digital maturity in the Caribbean Netherlands". One of the goals within this is "Public services at the same or equivalent level to the European Netherlands". This goal is in line with the Cabinet policy where, with regard to the Caribbean Netherlands, the focus is on 'comply or explain'. This means that policy in the European Netherlands is carried through to the Caribbean Netherlands unless there is a good reason not to. Equal where possible, and at least equivalent if not equal. One of the topics that has been the subject of regular parliamentary questions² since 2010 is the lack of postcodes in the Caribbean Netherlands. These questions are legitimate in the context of the equivalence of the Caribbean Netherlands to the European Netherlands. In the 2022 administrative agreement with the Public Entity of Saba, it was stated that the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations would take a leading role in elaborating on a number of topics, including postcodes³. An advisory report was prepared, which gives further substance to the elaboration of the "Postcodes for the Caribbean Netherlands" theme.

1.2 Postcodes, usefulness, and necessity

Post, postcodes, and addressing requires coordination locally, nationally, and internationally. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is an international organisation and part of the United Nations. The Universal Postal Union coordinates the international postal policies of member countries. The global postal network is based on decisions taken by the consultative bodies of the UPU. The UPU also has a wealth of knowledge and expertise available on post, postcodes, and addressing. The "Addressing and Postcode Manual"⁴ released by the UPU describes the usefulness and necessity of addresses and postcodes in detail, including an explanation of different address and postcode systems and implementation considerations. The UPU defines a postcode as follows:

- "an identifier for a given delivery point or collection of postal delivery point, normally comprising a string of numerical or alphanumerical characters." Postcodes are a concise way of indicating a specific location (delivery point). Besides the definition of postcode, the concept of granularity is important. Granularity denotes the level of detail. A higher granularity means a more fine-grained postcode system. An example:

- a. A postcode can be allocated to an island.
- b. A postcode can be allocated to a specific street on the island.

¹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2022/11/04/bijlage-1-werkagenda-waardengedreven-digitaliseren>

² <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/ah-tk-20102011-1806.html>

³ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/convenanten/2022/07/01/saba-package-20>

⁴ <https://admin-qa.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/files/postalSolutions/capacityBuilding/addressingAssistanceForCountries/manualAddressingAndPostcodeManualEn.pdf>

A postcode allocated to a specific street has higher granularity than the situation when a postcode is allocated to an island. Full granularity is achieved if each individual delivery point can be identified by one postcode. This situation rarely occurs because of the high complexity to manage postcodes. Postcodes are therefore often combined with one or more address data to identify a specific location.

The manual of the UPU recognised the following benefits of postcodes:

1. Postcodes facilitate routing and sorting of post (letters and parcels) and increase the quality of postal deliveries.
2. Postcodes are a prerequisite for automated mail sorting.
3. Postcodes (whether or not combined with address data) increase the quality of specific addressing to the benefit of both commercial businesses (large and small) and (semi)-government organisations (information campaigns, utilities).
4. Postcodes can be used for statistics and to make comparisons for all kinds of market segmentation.
5. Postcodes facilitate (inter)-national postal traffic in favour of (inter)-national e-commerce activities.
6. The increase in the quality of postal deliveries results in fewer "undeliverable returns" and a reduction in these handling costs across the postal chain.

In summary, postcodes contribute to the efficiency and quality of postal deliveries and have a positive impact on other aspects, including:

- The feeling of having an address in the Netherlands contributes to the feeling of equality.
- Statistics Netherlands (CBS) is better able to produce statistics needed for, for instance, spatial planning policy and overview of socio-economic status per four-digit postal code.
- Being able to open a bank account at a bank in the European Netherlands because a postcode is a mandatory piece of information that residents cannot currently provide.

1.3 Variants for postcode series

The report discusses three variants for a postcode series for the Caribbean Netherlands. The following is an outline of these variants.

Variant 1 assesses the feasibility of the use of the postcode series 9191AA to 9199ZZ within the European Dutch postcode system.

Variant 2 assesses the feasibility of the use of the postcode series 0000AA to 0999ZZ. This variant follows the European Dutch postcode system but uses a series that is not in use in the European Netherlands.

Variant 3 assesses the feasibility of the use of a completely new postcode system for the Caribbean Netherlands.

For the further elaboration of the advantages and disadvantages of each variant, please refer to the report "Postcodes for the Caribbean Netherlands" in the appendix.

In summary, the following can be said; The use of non-compatible postcode structures can pose significant challenges in the linking of systems and the

processing of data in European Dutch systems and is therefore not the preferable choice. Using postcodes and system structures that are compatible with those in the European Netherlands not only simplifies system linking, but also contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of government services and data exchange in the Caribbean Netherlands and will increase the sense of equivalence with the European Netherlands.

1.4 Internet consultation

The report recommends that Variant 2 is elaborated further with stakeholders. In line with that advice, this consultation has been launched to also enable other stakeholders, residents, businesses, and organisations to express their views on the introduction of the postcode series 0000AA-0999ZZ for the Caribbean Netherlands.