

# A survey among publishers of Dutch literature abroad

Carried out by IVA Onderwijs, May – July 2014

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## Introduction

In 2013, the Dutch Foundation for Literature commissioned a user satisfaction survey among Dutch authors and literary translators, publishers and advisors who had, in the years 2009-2012, dealt with grants or subsidies from the Dutch Foundation. The survey was carried out by independent research agency IVA Onderwijs.

In May 2014, IVA Onderwijs followed up its initial survey with a questionnaire in English sent to foreign publishers, and a questionnaire in Dutch sent to translators of Dutch literature.

The survey aimed to establish the degree of familiarity with, and appreciation for, the **communication, subsidies and programmes and activities** of the Dutch Foundation for Literature. In addition, the survey aimed to establish how much value respondents attached to the subsidies and activities and, more in general, how they saw the **role of the Dutch Foundation for Literature** in the **(international) world of literature or the book industry**.

All questions started by asking the respondents if they were familiar with the information channels, subsidies or activities of the Dutch Foundation for Literature. If a respondent indicated to be familiar with a subject, he or she was asked to rate the importance and satisfaction. The rating scores of the three rating systems applied ran from 1 to 5, as follows:

1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=neutral, 4=satisfied, 5=very satisfied.  
1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neutral, 4=important, 5=very important.  
1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

The surveys sent to foreign publishers and to translators of Dutch literature differed, with each being asked specifically about those sources of information, programmes and activities that applied to them. Also, the survey for foreign publishers was kept short in an effort to boost response rates.

**Publishers** were asked about their familiarity with, and views on, the tools used by the Dutch Foundation for Literature to promote Dutch literature and stimulate the publication of translations of Dutch literature. They were asked specifically about the information channels that focus on this group of users, including promotion brochures such as *10 Books from Holland*, *Quality Non-Fiction from Holland* and *Children's Books from Holland*, multi-language *Panorama Holland* brochures compiled for international book fairs like the ones in China and Brazil, presenting Dutch titles that could be interesting for that market, the website in English and Dutch, and the digital *Highlights* newsletter in English. Key financial incentive for foreign publishers are the translation grants, qualifying them for a reimbursement of 70% of the costs for the translation of the first two titles by the same author, or 50% for a third title. Poetry

and translations of classical works qualify for a 100% reimbursement. In addition, the Dutch Foundation for Literature can play a role in the reimbursement of expenses incurred for author visits, for instance when promoting the publication of a translation.

Activities specifically targeting foreign publishers include the representation of the Dutch Foundation for Literature at international book fairs, and the visitor's programme for publishers. The survey for foreign publishers also included questions about the events the Dutch Foundation for Literature organises abroad, the relevance of training and selecting qualified translators, and the dissemination of knowledge about translators and translations from Dutch, via the translations database (Vertalingendatabase.nl) for instance.

### Response

In May 2014, all foreign publishers and editors on the mailing list for the brochures and digital newsletters issued by the Dutch Foundation for Literature (1,159 email addresses) were invited by email to take part in a user satisfaction survey. Where publishers published books in more than one genre, such as literary non-fiction, poetry, children's books or graphic novels, several contact persons for the same publisher were contacted. The survey was received by 879 persons (280 emails bounced).

**197** publishers completed the survey in full, a **response rate of 22%**. This is relatively high for this group, considering that the Dutch Foundation for Literature is in contact with some 150 publishers annually, and that about 175 non-Dutch publishers apply for translation subsidies for some 220 titles each year. Nationalities were distributed evenly over the respondents (Appendix 1 on page 16 presents an overview of regions and countries). In comparison: in 2013 the Dutch Foundation for Literature received 240 applications for a translation subsidy from publishers from 38 different countries.

An impressive 58% of all responding publishers took the opportunity to share a suggestion, comment or compliment. In comparison: just over 50% of all translators from the Netherlands and almost 40% of Dutch publishers elaborated on their views. This report explains the general scores for communications, subsidies, and programmes and activities per subject, followed by [suggestions from individual respondents](#).

Chart 1: Country where publisher is based (n=197)

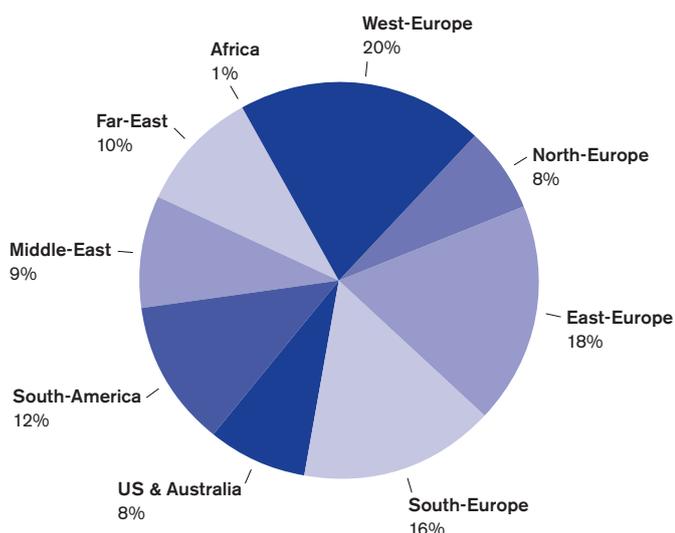
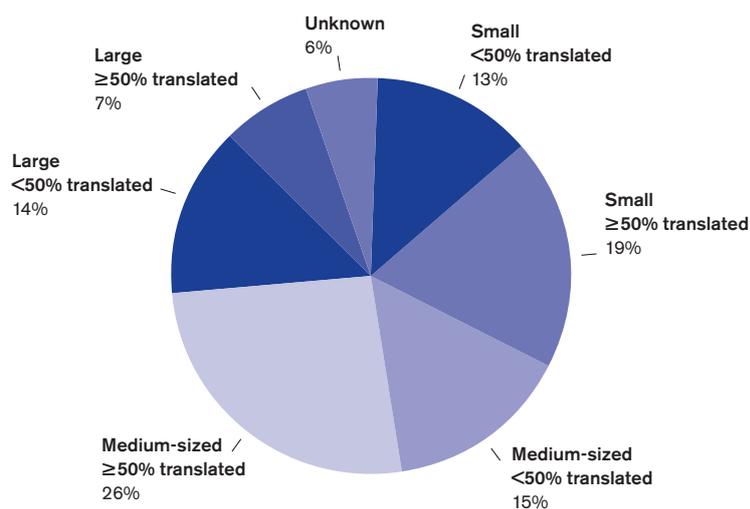


Chart 2: Type of publisher (n=197)\*



\*Small = <25 titles per year  
 Medium-sized = 25-100 titles per year  
 Large =  $\geq 100$  titles per year

### The respondents

To establish the type of literary publishers and find a correlation with their views on the Dutch Foundation for Literature, editors were asked to specify the genres in which they operated, how many (translated) literary titles they had published on average annually between 2010 and 2013, if they had published any Dutch titles during that period, and if so, how many on average annually. They were also asked if they had applied for, or had received a translation grant from the Dutch Foundation for Literature. Publishers were then categorised based on the number of “works of literature” the publisher published on average per year and the percentage of translated literature (chart 2).

The majority of all respondents worked for publishers publishing both fiction (77%) and non-fiction (86%) (table 1). Other genres were less well represented. This is not surprising for genres like the graphic novel, which are usually marketed by specialist publishers. France, however, does have a strong tradition in publishing graphic novels and cartoons (table 2). A remarkable

71% of all French publishers operated in this genre, a percentage that differed significantly for other countries.

Just 6% of all German publishers that took part in the survey published children’s books. This is remarkable as the German book market is the largest export market for Dutch literature. The percentage for Chinese publishers was much higher (47%), although they published noticeably less fiction (33%). The majority of publishers from the US published more non-fiction than fiction titles (50% fiction, 86% non-fiction). This gap was not as pronounced for European publishers, except for publishers in Spain.

One reason could be that when a new market is entered (such as China), interest is initially focused on children’s books and young adult literature, and on literary non-fiction. Once these genres have been established successfully, interest shifts to genres that are more difficult to sell, such as novels and poetry. Differences between these genres are smaller in markets where Dutch literature has become more or less established.

Table 1: Type of title as to type of publisher<sup>1</sup>

| Type of title                            | Total | Small <math>< 50\%</math> translated | Small $\geq 50\%</math> translated$ | Medium-sized <math>< 50\%</math> translated | Medium-sized $\geq 50\%</math> translated$ | Large <math>< 50\%</math> translated | Large $\geq 50\%</math> translated$ |
|--|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|  | N=197 | N=26                                 | N=38                                | N=30  | N=51                                       | N=28                                 | N=13                                |
| Fiction                                  | 77%   | 73%                                  | 87%                                 | 70%   | 90%  | 61%                                  | 92%                                 |
| Non-fiction                              | 86%   | 92%                                  | 82%                                 | 80%   | 84%  | 89%                                  | 85%                                 |
| Poetry                                   | 35%   | 35%                                  | 37%                                 | 33%   | 47%  | 32%                                  | 23%                                 |
| Children’s books, young adult literature | 37%   | 35%                                  | 24%                                 | 23%   | 51%  | 36%                                  | 77%                                 |
| Graphic novels, cartoons                 | 23%   | 38%                                  | 16%                                 | 23%   | 20%  | 21%                                  | 38%                                 |
| Crime fiction                            | 36%   | 35%                                  | 32%                                 | 33%   | 45%  | 21%                                  | 77%                                 |

<sup>1</sup> The survey asked publishers which of these genres applied. As they could tick more than one genre, the total percentage adds up to more than 100%. Furthermore, the survey asked publishers to give an estimate of the number of titles, translated titles and Dutch titles published by their publishing house per year (during the period 2010-2013).

**Table 2: Country where publisher is established as to type of title**

| Country      |              | Fiction    | Non-fiction | Poetry     | Children's books, young adult literature | Graphic novels/ cartoons | Crime fiction |
|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| Germany      | N=16         | 75%        | 81%         | 38%        | 6%                                       | 6%                       | 25%           |
| UK           | N=14         | 79%        | 93%         | 21%        | 14%                                      | 0%                       | 50%           |
| Spain        | N=9          | 78%        | 56%         | 11%        | 44%                                      | 33%                      | 67%           |
| France       | N=7          | 86%        | 71%         | 43%        | 43%                                      | 71%                      | 29%           |
| Italy        | N=20         | 80%        | 85%         | 30%        | 35%                                      | 45%                      | 25%           |
| Turkey       | N=10         | 70%        | 100%        | 40%        | 30%                                      | 10%                      | 20%           |
| US           | N=14         | 50%        | 86%         | 43%        | 21%                                      | 14%                      | 0%            |
| China        | N=15         | 33%        | 87%         | 27%        | 47%                                      | 13%                      | 13%           |
| Argentina    | N=11         | 82%        | 91%         | 45%        | 55%                                      | 36%                      | 45%           |
| Brazil       | N=10         | 80%        | 90%         | 30%        | 50%                                      | 30%                      | 40%           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>N=197</b> | <b>77%</b> | <b>86%</b>  | <b>35%</b> | <b>37%</b>                               | <b>23%</b>               | <b>36%</b>    |

**Size of publishing house**

Respondents worked for literary publishing houses of different sizes. Most (44%) were medium-sized and published 25 to 100 literary titles per year. Publishers with smaller catalogues (<25 titles per year) were located mostly in Argentina (73%), followed by France (57%) and Turkey (56%). Chinese publishers (57%) in particular published many titles per year (≥ 100 titles), followed by German (31%).

The percentage of translations in this literary production was spread more or less evenly (32% to 36% on average), with some exceptions in China (43% 25 translations or more) and Spain (67% 25 translations or more). In the US 90% of all publishers published fewer than 25 translations per year. This is in line with historic data that has seen the percentage of translations in total book production in the US level at just 3% for decades.

Of all respondents 73% indicated to have published one or more translated Dutch titles in 2010-2013.

In the group that did not publish any Dutch titles, the French and Argentinian, and to a lesser extent, the Brazilian and Turkish publishers stood out. The promotion of Dutch literature received a boost in Argentina, Brazil and Turkey recently, with new contacts having been established in the market. Despite these publishers not having any Dutch titles in their catalogue (just yet), contacts are such that they took the trouble of completing the survey. Remarkable is also that a quarter of all German publishers indicated that they had not published any Dutch titles in the past four years. Half of all publishers (46%) published one Dutch title per year on average during the years 2010-2013; 12% published three or more Dutch titles per year on average.

**Table 3: Number of titles published, translated titles and titles of Dutch authors per year**

|              |              | Number of titles per year |            |            | Translated titles per year |            |            | Titles of Dutch authors per year |            |            |            |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
|              |              | <25                       | 25-100     | ≥ 100      | <10                        | 10-25      | ≥ 25       | 0                                | 1          | 2          | ≥ 3        |
| Germany      | N=16         | 44%                       | 25%        | 31%        | 31%                        | 38%        | 31%        | 25%                              | 56%        | 13%        | 6%         |
| UK           | N=13         | 31%                       | 54%        | 15%        | 54%                        | 23%        | 23%        | 15%                              | 54%        | 15%        | 15%        |
| Spain        | N=9          | 22%                       | 78%        | 0%         | 11%                        | 22%        | 67%        | 33%                              | 56%        | 11%        | 0%         |
| France       | N=7          | 57%                       | 29%        | 14%        | 57%                        | 14%        | 29%        | 57%                              | 29%        | 0%         | 14%        |
| Italy        | N=20         | 35%                       | 45%        | 20%        | 30%                        | 40%        | 30%        | 35%                              | 45%        | 10%        | 10%        |
| Turkey       | N=9          | 56%                       | 33%        | 11%        | 22%                        | 56%        | 22%        | 44%                              | 33%        | 22%        | 0%         |
| US           | N=10         | 50%                       | 30%        | 20%        | 90%                        | 10%        | 0%         | 40%                              | 40%        | 10%        | 10%        |
| China        | N=14         | 14%                       | 29%        | 57%        | 7%                         | 50%        | 43%        | 7%                               | 21%        | 21%        | 50%        |
| Argentina    | N=11         | 73%                       | 18%        | 9%         | 64%                        | 27%        | 9%         | 55%                              | 27%        | 9%         | 9%         |
| Brazil       | N=7          | 29%                       | 71%        | 0%         | 29%                        | 43%        | 29%        | 43%                              | 43%        | 0%         | 14%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>N=186</b> | <b>34%</b>                | <b>44%</b> | <b>22%</b> | <b>32%</b>                 | <b>32%</b> | <b>36%</b> | <b>27%</b>                       | <b>46%</b> | <b>15%</b> | <b>12%</b> |

Of the surveyed publishers, 80% stated that in the years 2010-2013 they applied for a translation subsidy from the Dutch Foundation for Literature; 95% actually received a translation grant. As a percentage, Italy, Spain, Turkey and China were best represented among the applicants.

When asked if the information and/or advice given by the Dutch Foundation for Literature influenced the decision to publish a Dutch title, 89% of the respondents who had published at least one Dutch title in recent years, answered 'yes'; in Spain, France and Turkey this percentage was even 100%. The lowest scoring countries were Germany and Brazil, although again 75% of all respondents indicated that the information or advice given by the Dutch Foundation for Literature had influenced their decision to publish.

## Communication

### Website and translations database

Over the past six months, 58% of all respondents visited the website of the Dutch Foundation for Literature, which is published in both English and Dutch. Respondents from Italy (90%), Germany (75%), Argentina (64%) and China (60%) visited the site most often, Spanish publishers the least (11%). In comparison: the percentage of translators of Dutch literature visiting the website was 77%, and of Dutch writers, translators and publishers just over 70%.

Of all publishers who visited the website in the six months prior to the survey, 96% was satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the information and the information provided about subsidies (4.4). Rated slightly lower was the information provided about the activities of the Dutch Foundation for Literature (3.9).

Also, the **translations database** (4.0) and the information provided about Dutch authors and their work (4.3) were rated highly. The Dutch Foundation for Literature is working to make its translations database even more user friendly. Familiarity with this database among foreign publishers (44%) can be improved, particularly among Argentinian and Brazilian publishers (36 and 20% respectively). Improvement should be relatively easy in view of recent contacts and targeted promotion activities in these countries. Remarkably, German publishers in the survey were also relatively unfamiliar with the translations database (38% was familiar with it).

In general, Brazilian and Turkish publishers were most satisfied with the website of the Dutch Foundation for Literature, and the Spanish publishers the least.

### Publications for the promotion of Dutch literature abroad and *Highlights* newsletter

Most publishers (72%) were familiar with the promotion brochures of the Dutch Foundation for Literature, and were very satisfied with how the information is provided: more than 90% indicated to be satisfied to very satisfied (4.3). Turkish publishers even scored 100% and were also satisfied, rating it 4.1. Virtually all publishers from Spain were familiar with the brochures (89%) but rated it the lowest (3.4 on average). Remarkably, French publishers were least aware (29%); publishers who did know the brochures were very satisfied (5.0). The lower rating (in Spain) or familiarity (France) is probably due to limited activity by the Dutch Foundation for Literature in these countries.

43% of all respondents was familiar with the digital *Highlights* newsletter in English, and rated it a high 4.1. Larger publishers in particular proved to be familiar with the digital newsletter.

### Further provision of information: other websites and social media

Specialist websites such as Schwob (an initiative from the Foundation which in 2013 was expanded – with support from the EU - from a Dutch only into a multi-language European platform for discovered and undiscovered classics from world literature) and Poetryinternationalweb.net or Lyrikonline.org (mostly appealing to poetry publishers; the Dutch Foundation for Literature contributes to both websites) scored considerably lower as regards familiarity (17% and 10% respectively). Respondents familiar with these rated them a high 3.9 and 4.1 on average. Familiarity with social media used by the Dutch Foundation for Literature was low among foreign publishers, which is not surprising since they are mostly written in Dutch.

### Provision of information: general

Small publishers with less than 50% translated titles were significantly less familiar with the brochures, the *Highlights* newsletter and the translations database (chart 3).

In general, larger publishers and publishers with a larger share of translations in their publishing catalogue were more familiar with the brochures and other forms of information provided than smaller publishers. This is not surprising, as this information has relatively less importance for smaller publishers. Also, these smaller publishers have less time to explore foreign literature than specialist editors in medium-sized and large publishers. However, smaller publishers that publish many translations were more familiar with, for instance, the translation database. While the size of the publisher and translations shares did not significantly influence satisfaction rates, small publishers with <50% translations were least familiar with the information provided.

### Communications with staff

More than 70% of the respondents spoke to staff of the Dutch Foundation for Literature. They were satisfied to very satisfied with both their oral and written (mail) communications with staff, rating it a 4.6. Communications were rated the lowest by Spanish publishers; however, French and Italian publishers were very satisfied (4.8 and 4.7 respectively).

The foreign publishers surveyed were also satisfied (4.5) with the quality of advice and information provided directly by the Foundation's staff (at international book fairs, for instance). Almost 90% of all respondents had experienced this.

The size of the publisher or number of translations published did not significantly influence satisfaction rates about communications with staff, with ratings of 4.2 or higher throughout. Large publishers focusing primarily on translations ( $\geq 50\%$  translations) were most satisfied (4.8 to 4.9). They are likely to have more communications with the Foundation on average.

The majority (about 60%) of all respondents classified staff of the Dutch Foundation for Literature as efficient, service oriented and professional (4.5 on average).

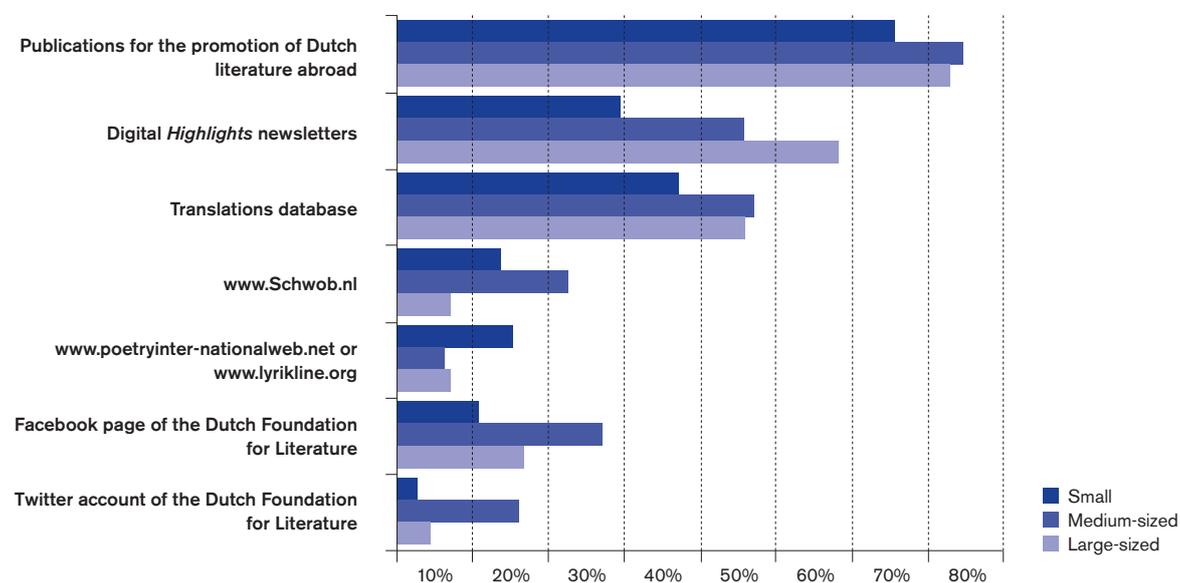
**Table 4: Familiarity and satisfaction per type of information per type of publisher**

|   | Total |     | Small <50 translated |     | Small ≥50 translated |     | Medium-sized <50 translated |     | Medium-sized ≥50 translated |     | Large <50 translated |     | Large ≥50 translated |     |
|---|-------|-----|----------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
|   | %     | S   | %                    | S   | %                    | S   | %                           | S   | %                           | S   | %                    | S   | %                    | S   |
| Publications for the promotion of Dutch literature abroad | 72    | 4.3 | 46                   | 4.3 | 79                   | 4.5 | 63                          | 4.3 | 80                          | 4.3 | 71                   | 4.1 | 77                   | 4.4 |
| Digital <i>Highlights</i> newsletters                     | 43    | 4.1 | 23                   | 3.5 | 34                   | 4.1 | 50                          | 4.0 | 41                          | 4.1 | 57                   | 4.1 | 62                   | 4.5 |
| Translations database                                     | 44    | 4.1 | 19                   | 3.6 | 50                   | 4.3 | 40                          | 3.8 | 51                          | 4.2 | 50                   | 4.1 | 38                   | 3.8 |
| www.Schwob.nl   | 17    | 3.9 | 8                    | 4.5 | 18                   | 4.0 | 33                          | 4.0 | 20                          | 3.9 | 11                   | 3.7 | 0                    | -   |
| www.poetryinter-nationalweb.net or www.lyrikline.org      | 10    | 4.1 | 8                    | 4.5 | 21                   | 4.0 | 10                          | 5.0 | 6                           | 3.7 | 7                    | 4.0 | 8                    | 3.0 |
| Facebook page of the Dutch Foundation for Literature      | 20    | 3.6 | 8                    | 3.5 | 13                   | 3.4 | 30                          | 3.8 | 29                          | 3.6 | 7                    | 3.5 | 38                   | 3.4 |
| Twitter account of the Dutch Foundation for Literature    | 10    | 3.7 | 4                    | 4.0 | 3                    | 5.0 | 17                          | 3.4 | 18                          | 3.6 | 4                    | 4.0 | 8                    | 4.0 |

%=Percentage familiar with information

S=Average satisfaction (scale 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=neutral, 4=satisfied, 5=very satisfied)

**Chart 3: Familiarity with information per size category**



### Comments and suggestions for the communication

In addition to the quality of the information provided ('excellent', 'everything is great'), there were also suggestions for improvement.

A number of editors would like to receive more targeted information, such as 'a concise newsletter for publishers', or up-to-date information about translation grants, or about books by Dutch authors to be published by Dutch publishers. The need for targeted information was also listed by a publisher of non-fiction who would like to receive more information about current Dutch books on Dutch history, architecture and art. Targeted information about new non-fiction publications would also be appreciated. Another editor asked for more information about 'classic authors' from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Suggestions were also made for a broadening of the policy or for more information, with some respondents asking for information in languages other than English. One publisher asked for reviews and other information about how (translated) Dutch books had been received in other countries. Another suggested the promotion of more authors and titles, with more attention for genres other than novels. Furthermore, it was suggested that links to other sources of information that are interesting for foreign publishers could be updated more frequently on the website of the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

"The Dutch Foundation for Literature's staff at international fairs have opened my eyes to so many tremendous authors writing in Dutch and Frisian and their hard work, dedication, and friendliness, willing to go out of their way to help me and my peer publishers find new authors and ways to publish and promote Dutch authors--I seriously couldn't do this without the help of the foundation, and it is because of their help and hard work that I hope to sign my first Dutch author this summer!"

## Subsidies

Most foreign publishers (91%) were familiar with the **translation grants**. This was a high 98% among medium-sized publishers with  $\geq 50\%$  translations. The smaller publishers with  $< 50\%$  translations were significantly less familiar with the translation grants and three other subsidies.

The importance of this facility was rated a high 4.7 on average. Argentinian and Brazilian publishers even found it extremely important (4.9 and 5.0). German and English publishers also rated the importance as very high (4.7 and 4.8 respectively). The size of the publisher did not influence the degree to which the subsidies by the Dutch Foundation for Literature were considered important.

Publishers were also satisfied with the translation grants, rating these 4.3 on average, with Italian, English

and Turkish publishers rating them the highest. Spanish publishers were significantly less satisfied, with an average rating of 3.9.

Almost half (an average of 45%) of all foreign publishers knew about the **travel grants** for Dutch authors to participate in public events abroad; Spanish (67%) and Turkish (60%) publishers were most familiar with this facility, Chinese publishers the least, with only 7%. The importance of this scheme was considered high (4.4 on average) and satisfaction with the scheme also ranked rather high at 4.0.

**Other subsidy schemes** such as grants for the publication of illustrated literature and the Amsterdam Translator's House were generally less well known (31%). The importance of these grants was rated high, however, at 4.2 and 4.4 respectively. However, Spanish publishers stated that the scheme for illustrated literature had little importance – possibly because they publish few books in this genre.

**Table 5: Familiarity, importance and satisfaction per subsidy**

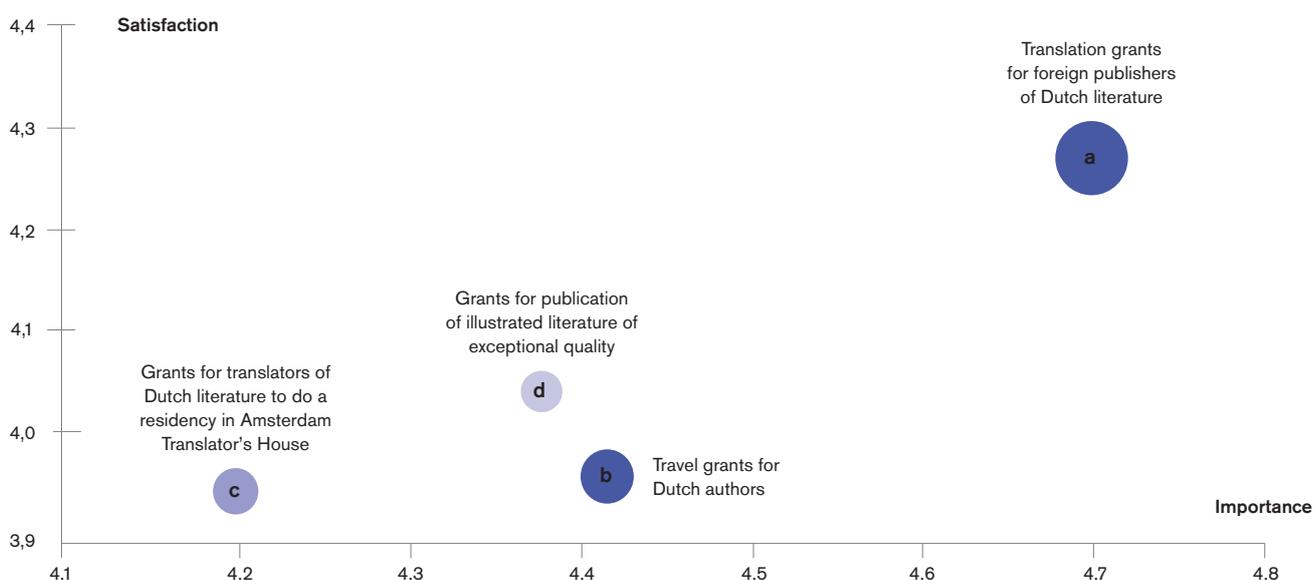
|   |  | %  | I   | S   |
|---|--|----|-----|-----|
| a | Translation grants for foreign publishers of Dutch literature  | 91 | 4.7 | 4.3 |
| b | Travel grants for Dutch authors to participate in public events abroad   | 45 | 4.4 | 4.0 |
| c | Grants for translators of Dutch literature to do a residency in Amsterdam Translator's House   | 31 | 4.2 | 4.0 |
| d | Grants for the publication of illustrated literature of exceptional quality, including children's and young adult literature, graphic novels and illustrated non-fiction | 31 | 4.4 | 4.0 |

%=Percentage familiar with subsidy

I=Average degree of importance (scale 1=very unimportant ... 5=very important,

S=Average satisfaction (scale 1=very dissatisfied ... 5=very satisfied)

**Chart 4: Familiarity, importance and satisfaction per subsidy scheme\***



\*A larger 'bubble' means greater familiarity with the subsidy scheme

### **Suggestions and points for improvement for subsidies**

One of the publisher named the translation grants as 'a great help' and 'generous'. It was regarded as an improvement that it is now possible to apply for subsidies for three titles by the same author, although one respondent suggested subsidies are to be granted for even more titles, for instance for the translation and publication of non-commercial or expensive books (size, difficulty of translation).

One respondent asked for more information about the 'timelines' for the application of translation grants. (The procedure provides for a continuous application possibility; decisions are generally taken within six weeks.)

A number of publishers made suggestions to improve the implementation of translation grants; these suggestions related to the cost of translation based on the number of words / pages and the differences in size of a text in Dutch or the target language. In some countries, or for very small and independent publishers, full compensation of all translation costs would be welcomed to enable publications. One Spanish publisher found the standards imposed for a reasonable translation fee very high; without a substantial subsidy (of at least 80%) publications for the Spanish market would not be possible.

Other respondents stated that they missed production funding or that they would like more help to promote a translated Dutch title than offered under the Travel Costs scheme, such as compensation for accommodation costs, or a modest accommodation grant.

A number of publishers also suggested subsidies for co-productions, with Dutch and foreign publishers exchanging copyrights to enable publication of books on, for instance, the history of the two countries involved.

One publisher would welcome help editing the translation.

"I hope that the Dutch Foundation for Literature will receive sufficient funding from the Dutch government in the future, too. It plays an absolutely essential role in promoting Dutch culture abroad, and its team is highly efficient and helpful. Its work is very often quoted on an international scale as a model for how promotion of a national literature should be done. The Dutch publishing market goes through serious difficulties, but the Dutch literature is still vivid and of great quality. It deserves to be translated into many languages all over the world, and the work done by the Dutch Foundation for Literature is a major element in this process. For me as a French publisher it is perfectly clear that without the help of the Foundation I would not have been in a situation to publish as many Dutch writers in the past as we have done (Nescio, Hermans, Abdolah, Bakker, Van den Brink, Brouwers etc etc) and I hope that I will be able to do so even more in the future, with the help of the Dutch Foundation for Literature."

## Activities and programmes abroad

Almost half of all respondents (46%) were aware of the **events abroad** organised by the Dutch Foundation for Literature. Familiarity with these activities and programmes was considerably larger among foreign publishers who focus primarily on translations ( $\geq 50\%$  translations; familiarity 55% versus 36% for  $< 50\%$  translations).

There are regional differences too: large-scale events such as Café Amsterdam are organised by the Dutch Foundation for Literature annually in a limited number of

priority countries. It is not surprising, therefore that familiarity is much greater in countries where large events have taken place fairly recently, such as in China (67%), Turkey (60%) and Argentina (64%).

The importance of such foreign events was considered high: 4.4 on average. German, as well as Argentinian and Brazilian publishers, also qualified these events as very important. The size of the publisher and the share of translations did not very much influence views on importance.

Almost 80% of foreign publishers were familiar with the **representation** of the Dutch Foundation for Literature at all main **international book fairs** (Frankfurt, London Bookfair, Bologna etc). Of old, these are the places

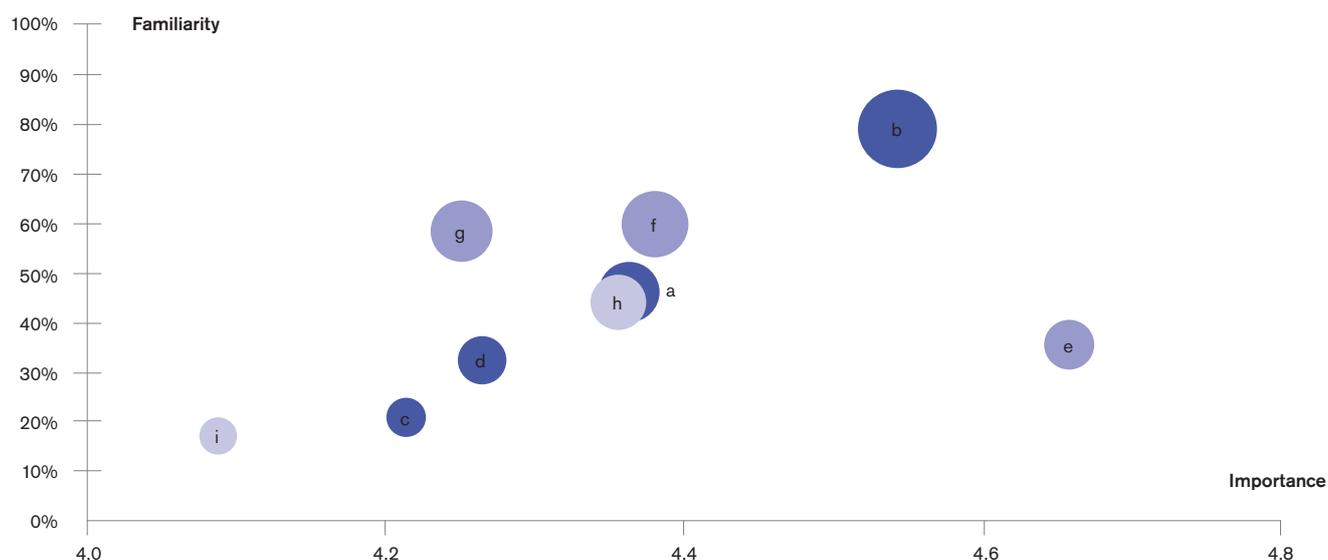
**Table 6: Familiarity and importance per activity / programme\***

|   |   | %  | I   |
|---|---|----|-----|
| a | Events abroad organised by the Dutch Foundation for Literature  | 46 | 4.4 |
| b | Representation of the Dutch Foundation for Literature at international book fairs   | 79 | 4.5 |
| c | Writer's programme abroad (authors visits to events and book fairs abroad)  | 21 | 4.2 |
| d | Translation awards for literary translators from Dutch (e.g. Else Otten Übersetzerpreis, Prix des Phares du Nord, Vondel Translation Prize, Brockway Prize) | 32 | 4.3 |
| e | Visitor's programme for foreign publishers/editors  | 36 | 4.7 |
| f | Finding and selecting translators working from Dutch  | 60 | 4.4 |
| g | Providing foreign publishers with the Foundation's List of Approved Translators into various languages  | 58 | 4.3 |
| h | Translations database (overview of translations of Dutch literature)  | 44 | 4.4 |
| i | Residency for writers in Amsterdam  | 17 | 4.1 |

%=Percentage familiar with activity / programme

I=Average importance rating (scale 1=very unimportant ... 5=very important)

**Chart 5: Familiarity and importance per activity / programme\*\***



\*Questions did not relate to satisfaction about the activity / programme

\*\*A larger 'bubble' means greater familiarity with the activity / programme

where publishers meet. Again familiarity among priority countries was pronounced (China, Argentina). Turkish publishers were also very familiar with it (90%).<sup>2</sup> Familiarity in France was just 43%; the last events by the Dutch Foundation for Literature targeting France date back to 2007 (Haut les Pays-Bas in Paris) and 2003 (Phares du Nord at Salon du Livre). This underlines the statement that promotion of Dutch literature is a case of constant attention. Over the past few years, promotional activities in France have been reduced. There seems to be a direct link between the efforts of the Dutch Foundation for Literature and the familiarity and satisfaction with Dutch literature and the activities by the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

Familiarity with activities such as **translation awards** for translators of Dutch literature and the **visitor's programme** was considerably lower (32 and 36% respectively). For the translation awards this is fairly easy to explain since the Foundation awards (only) three language specific translation prizes (Germany, UK, and France). The visitor's programme targets priority countries and selected publishers. This explains the relative unfamiliarity with this programme. Publishers that do know the visitor's programme (and who may have taken part) referred to it as (very) important and ranked it a 4.7.

60% of foreign publishers were familiar with the **selection and training of literary translators** and with *The Dutch Foundation for Literature's List of Approved Translators*. Familiarity with the translations database, which could play a role in finding translators, was lower (44%), although publishers that were familiar with it, rated its importance as high (4.4).

The **Residency for writers in Amsterdam** is least known among foreign publishers (17% familiarity). Generally speaking, only foreign authors are selected whose work has been published or will be published in Dutch. Proposals for residency are mostly made by Dutch publishers. In comparison: 81% of Dutch publishers were familiar with the Amsterdam residency.

The importance of the various activities was rated high (subject to familiarity), ranging from important to very important. The activities of the Dutch Foundation for Literature at international book fairs and the visitor's programme in particular scored very high indeed.

<sup>2</sup> In 2011 the Dutch Foundation for Literature organised the very successful host country presentation 'Open landscape – open book' at the Beijing International Book Fair. In 2012 it organised major events in Istanbul, where it worked with the Tanpinar Literature Festival and the International Book Fair to focus on eleven Dutch authors and introduce them to Turkish readers and press. In 2013 there was a large presentation in Buenos Aires, Argentina (Café Amsterdam), a manifestation at the Non-Fiction Book Fair in Moscow, and promotional trips to Brazil to prepare for a large-scale manifestation in 2015.

## Comments and suggestions to the programmes and activities

Respondents would welcome targeted information about qualified translators in specific language areas.

For specific areas (in this case Mexico), a very good understanding of the local publisher's perspective was said to be necessary to improve opportunities for publication of Dutch literature. Also, generating attention among the public and media was said to be important.

Many publishers are interested in the fellow and visitor's programme for editors/publishers and would like more specific information. A better follow-up of these programmes was also proposed to create a broad network.

Publishers do not actively visit the website of the Dutch Foundation for Literature or other sources to look for information about specific subjects such as the Translation Awards; personal emails or newsletters would be welcomed.

A number of respondents asked for opportunities to develop programmes like Café Amsterdam in less developed countries or in smaller language areas, 'outside the global capitals', possibly in collaboration with embassies or consulates.

A Turkish editor would be interested in having Dutch and Turkish authors meet to discuss a particular theme, such as middleclass life in Amsterdam and Istanbul or changes between 1980 and 2000. This publisher also recommended the organisation of manifestations for the publication of Dutch translations of Turkish books (both in Turkey and in Amsterdam).

## The Dutch Foundation for Literature in the international world of literature

Virtually all respondents (96%) rated the importance of the Dutch Foundation for Literature promoting Dutch literature abroad as (very) high. When asked if the Dutch Foundation for Literature actually plays an important role in this, 68% 'strongly agreed'. Subsidy options for translations were also regarded as a very important instrument.

Promoting and funding Dutch translations of foreign work was considered important to very important (4.5) by more than 90% of all foreign publishers

Training or promoting the expertise of translators scored a little lower, but again 85% of all publishers was of the opinion that the Dutch Foundation for Literature plays or should play a very important role in this (4.3).

The size of the publisher played no significant role in the answers. However, publishers with a translation catalogue  $\geq 50\%$  agreed more with the statements than publishers  $< 50\%$ . The importance of funding and promoting foreign literature in Dutch translations was supported equally by all publishers.

## General comments and suggestions for improvement

Publishers made various suggestions for further improvements to the communication, for instance by means of specific / targeted newsletters.

Suggestions were also made for the promotion of non-fiction.

Several publishers (mostly from the smaller countries) would like to see the translation subsidies increased to 100%, rather than be capped at 70%, taking into account the number of words in the target language. Also, several publishers would welcome a contribution towards the production costs of the translation.

Some editors emphasized the key role of translation subsidies in deciding whether or not to publish a particular book. The same applied to the promotion activities and advice by staff of the Dutch Foundation for Literature at international book fairs ("The Dutch Foundation for Literature's staff at international fairs have opened my eyes to many tremendous authors in Dutch and Frisian (...)")

One editor signalled differences between the US and the Netherlands in the market for 'serious non-fiction books'. Serious Dutch non-fiction was said to be somewhat too academic for the average Anglo-Saxon reader and that it therefore often ends up with university presses.

**Table 7: Statements about the Dutch Foundation for Literature as to type of publisher**

|   | Total | Small <50% translated | Small $\geq 50\%$ translated | Medium-sized <50% translated | Medium-sized $\geq 50\%$ translated | Large <50% translated | Large $\geq 50\%$ translated |
|---|-------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| The Dutch Foundation for Literature plays an important role in promoting Dutch literature abroad  | 4.6   | 4.4                   | 4.8                          | 4.6                          | 4.7                                 | 4.5                   | 4.7                          |
| It is important that the Dutch Foundation for Literature promotes Dutch literature abroad   | 4.6   | 4.3                   | 4.8                          | 4.6                          | 4.8                                 | 4.5                   | 4.7                          |
| It is important that the Dutch Foundation for Literature provides foreign publishers with subsidies for the translation of Dutch literature | 4.7   | 4.6                   | 4.9                          | 4.7                          | 4.8                                 | 4.6                   | 4.8                          |
| It is important that the Dutch Foundation for Literature organises literary events abroad and supports international exchanges              | 4.4   | 4.3                   | 4.6                          | 4.4                          | 4.5                                 | 4.5                   | 4.2                          |
| It is important that the Dutch Foundation for Literature subsidises and promotes Dutch translations of foreign literature                   | 4.5   | 4.4                   | 4.6                          | 4.6                          | 4.6                                 | 4.4                   | 4.7                          |
| It is important that the Dutch Foundation for Literature organises courses and other types of education for translators working from Dutch  | 4.3   | 4.2                   | 4.5                          | 4.2                          | 4.5                                 | 4.1                   | 4.5                          |

## Summary

The Dutch Foundation For Literature has the task of supporting writers and translators, and of promoting Dutch literature abroad. It invests in the quality and diversity of literature through grants for writers, translators, publishers and festivals, and contributes to the production and distribution of Dutch and Frisian literature at home and abroad. With the support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, it aims to promote a thriving literary climate, embedded in literary history and attuned to the latest developments in the publishing industry.

In May 2014 the Dutch Foundation for Literature commissioned a user satisfaction survey among foreign publishers and approved translators of Dutch literature. The survey was carried out by independent research agency IVA Onderwijs. The survey aimed to establish the degree of familiarity with, and appreciation for, the **communication, subsidies and programmes and activities** of the Dutch Foundation for Literature. In addition, the survey aimed to establish how much value respondents attached to the subsidies and activities and, more in general, how they saw the role of **the Dutch Foundation for Literature in the world of (international) literature** and the book industry.

The surveys for foreign publishers and translators differed, with each being asked about those sources of information, subsidies and activities that targeted them specifically or that affected them directly or indirectly.

This report presents the outcome of the survey among foreign publishers. The outcome of the survey among translators of Dutch literature is published in Dutch, with a summary in English. (The results of a prior survey among Dutch authors and literary translators, publishers and advisors who had, in the years 2009-2012, dealt with grants or subsidies from the Dutch Foundation, was published in Dutch on the website of the Foundation as *Gebruikersonderzoek 2009-2012*.)

**Publishers** were asked about their familiarity with, and views on, the tools used by the Dutch Foundation for Literature to promote Dutch literature and stimulate the publication of translations of Dutch literature. They were asked specifically about the information channels that focus on this group of users, including promotion brochures. Activities specifically targeting foreign publishers include the representation of the Dutch Foundation at international book fairs, and the visitor's programme for publishers.

All questions started by asking the respondents if they were familiar with the information channels, subsidies or activities of the Dutch Foundation for Literature. If a respondent indicated familiarity with a subject, he or she was asked to rate its relevance and satisfaction. The rating scores applied ran from 1 to 5.

The questionnaire was sent by email to 879 persons. 197 publishers completed the survey in full, a **response rate of 22%**. This is relatively high for this group, considering that the Dutch Foundation for Literature is in contact with some 150 publishers annually, and that about 175 non-Dutch publishers apply for translation subsidies for some 220 titles each year.

Foreign publishers rated as satisfactory all key sources of information, including *10 Books* (4.3 out of five), and the advice and information provided by the Dutch Foundation for Literature (4.6). Staff was considered efficient, professional and service-oriented (4.5). The key subsidy scheme for foreign publishers (translation grants) was considered very important, and was rated a high 4.7 for importance and 4.3 for satisfaction. As regards the (promotion) activities and programmes for foreign publishers and translators of Dutch literature, the importance was rated high (4.0 and upwards), with the foreign events, the presence of the Dutch Foundation for Literature at international book fairs and visitor's programmes for foreign publishers considered to be the most important (4.4 and higher). Familiarity with the various sources of information, programmes and activities of the Dutch Foundation for Literature was greatest among medium-sized publishers with a large share of translations in their publication programme. Publishers were most familiar with sources of information, subsidies, programmes and activities that related directly to, or were relevant to them. This applied to the promotion brochures, attendance by the Dutch Foundation for Literature of international book fairs and translation subsidies.

In conclusion – appreciation for and the translation of Dutch literature require constant attention and information targeting a specific language area. A positive relationship was found to exist between familiarity and satisfaction and the recent promotion policy of the Dutch Foundation for Literature in priority countries like China and Argentina, and those countries where the Dutch Foundation for Literature was clearly present through author visits and events (Russian and Turkey).

Respondents agreed (very much so) with the importance of the role of the subsidy policy and activities of the Dutch Foundation for Literature for foreign publishers of Dutch literature. They agreed with the statement that the promotion activities (such as events, presence at fairs, etc.) by the Dutch Foundation for Literature are important abroad, and found the support of foreign publishers important to the realisation of translations of Dutch literature into other languages. Also, activities developed by the Dutch Foundation for Literature in the field of training and selecting qualified translators were regarded as important.

With regard to the second major task of the Dutch Foundation, foreign publishers largely agreed with the statement that it is important that the Dutch Foundation for Literature funds and promotes translations of foreign literary work in the Netherlands.

## Samenvatting

Begin 2013 heeft onderzoeksbureau IVA Onderwijs in opdracht van het Nederlands Letterenfonds een onderzoek uitgevoerd naar de tevredenheid van gebruikers van het Nederlands Letterenfonds. De enquête richtte zich op de 'gebruikers' binnenland: schrijvers en literair vertalers in het Nederlands, de Nederlandse uitgevers en de adviseurs betrokken bij de 'binnenlandse' subsidieregelingen. De resultaten van dit onderzoek zijn gepubliceerd op de website van het Letterenfonds, in de publicatie *Gebruikersonderzoek 2009-2012*.

In aanvulling hierop is mei 2014 een enquête uitgegaan naar de buitenlandse uitgevers (Engelstalig) en naar de 'goedgekeurde' vertalers van Nederlandse literatuur in andere talen. De uitvoering lag wederom bij het onafhankelijke onderzoeksbureau IVA Onderwijs.

Onderzocht werd de mate van bekendheid met en waardering voor de **communicatie**, de verschillende **subsidiereregelingen** en de **programma's en activiteiten** van het Letterenfonds. Daarnaast is onderzocht in hoeverre de respondenten belang hechten aan de regelingen en de activiteiten en, meer in het algemeen, hoe men de **rol van het Fonds** ziet **binnen het (internationale) literair bedrijf**.

De uitgeversenquête en de vertalersenquête waren verschillend van aard; beide groepen zijn alleen bevraagd op informatiebronnen, regelingen en activiteiten die daadwerkelijk op hen gericht zijn of waarbij zij een (in) direct belang hebben. Bij de buitenlandse uitgevers ging het primair om hun bekendheid met en mening over de instrumenten die het Letterenfonds inzet voor de promotie van de Nederlandse literatuur en het stimuleren van de publicatie van vertalingen van Nederlandse literatuur. Deze Engelstalige publicatie bevat de uitkomsten van de enquête onder buitenlandse uitgevers. De uitkomsten van het onderzoek onder vertalers van Nederlandse literatuur in andere talen zijn tegelijkertijd gepubliceerd in het Nederlands.

Van de 879 aangeschreven buitenlandse uitgevers (per uitgeverij kunnen er meerdere contactpersonen zijn met ieder hun eigen specialisme: literaire non-fictie, poëzie, jeugdboeken, graphic novel etc.) vulden **197** uitgevers de enquête volledig in, een **respons van 22%**. Dat is voor deze groep relatief hoog. Er is onder de respondenten een goede spreiding qua nationaliteiten.

Bij de vragen over informatiekanalen, regelingen of activiteiten van het Fonds werd eerst gevraagd naar de bekendheid. Alleen als een respondent aangaf bekend te zijn met een onderdeel, is gevraagd naar waardering voor het belang en de tevredenheid. Bij de gemiddelde waarderingsscores gaat het steeds om een waardering op een schaal van 1 tot 5.

Buitenlandse uitgevers zijn tevreden over de belangrijkste informatiebronnen als *10 Books* (4,3 op een schaal van vijf) en de adviezen en informatie die het fonds verstrekt (4,6). Medewerkers zijn efficiënt, professioneel en servicegericht (4,5). De belangrijkste subsidieregeling voor buitenlandse uitgevers (translation grants) wordt door uitgevers zeer belangrijk geacht en goed gewaardeerd (belang 4,7; tevredenheid 4,3). Voor wat betreft de (promotie)activiteiten en programma's voor buitenlandse uitgevers en vertalers van Nederlandse literatuur wordt het belang hoog geacht (4,0 en hoger), waarbij de buitenlandse manifestaties, de aanwezigheid van het fonds op boekenbeurzen en de bezoekersprogramma's voor buitenlandse uitgevers het belangrijkste gevonden worden (4,4 en hoger). De bekendheid met de verschillende informatiebronnen, regelingen en activiteiten van het Letterenfonds is het grootst bij middelgrote uitgeverijen met een belangrijk aandeel aan vertalingen in hun publicatieprogramma. Informatiebronnen, regelingen en activiteiten die een directe relatie hebben met c.q. belang hebben voor de uitgeverij zijn het meest bekend. Dat geldt voor de buitenlandbrochures, de aanwezigheid van het Letterenfonds op boekenbeurzen en de translation grants.

Geconcludeerd kan worden dat waardering voor en vertaling van de Nederlandse literatuur een permanente doeltaalgerichte informatievoorziening en aandacht vereisen. Er is een duidelijk positief verband tussen bekendheid en tevredenheid en het recente promotiebeleid van het fonds in prioriteitslanden als China en Argentinië, als ook in landen waar het fonds recent met auteursbezoeken en manifestaties nadrukkelijk aanwezig is geweest (Rusland, Turkije).

Het belang van de rol van het subsidiebeleid en activiteiten van het Nederlands Letterenfonds voor buitenlandse uitgevers van Nederlandse literatuur worden in (zeer) grote mate onderschreven door de respondenten. Zij zijn het eens met de stelling dat de promotieactiviteiten (zoals evenementen, aanwezigheid op beurzen e.d.) van het Letterenfonds in het buitenland van belang zijn, en vinden de ondersteuning van buitenlandse uitgevers belangrijk voor het tot stand komen van vertalingen van Nederlandse literatuur in andere talen. Ook de activiteiten die het fonds ontplooit op het terrein van opleiden en selecteren van gekwalificeerde vertalers worden als belangrijk gezien.

Tot slot werd de mening van de buitenlandse uitgevers gevraagd over de tweede kerntaak van het fonds, die hen niet direct aanbelangt: het investeren in de creatie van nieuwe literatuur in de Nederlandse taal. Ook de buitenlandse uitgevers zijn het in zeer grote mate eens met de stelling dat het belangrijk is dat het fonds vertaling van buitenlands literair werk in Nederland subsidieert en promoot.

## Appendix 1: Overview of country of establishment of publisher

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| <b>Western Europa</b>   | <b>N</b>   |
| Germany                 | 16         |
| UK                      | 14         |
| France                  | 7          |
| Austria                 | 1          |
| Switzerland             | 1          |
| <b>Northern Europe</b>  |            |
| Norway                  | 5          |
| Sweden                  | 4          |
| Denmark                 | 2          |
| Finland                 | 2          |
| Iceland                 | 2          |
| <b>Eastern Europe</b>   |            |
| Russia                  | 6          |
| Czech Republic          | 6          |
| Hungary                 | 5          |
| Croatia                 | 3          |
| Poland                  | 3          |
| Estonia                 | 2          |
| Rumania                 | 2          |
| Slovakia                | 2          |
| Albania                 | 1          |
| Bosnia                  | 1          |
| Bulgaria                | 1          |
| Macedonia               | 1          |
| Serbia                  | 1          |
| Slovenia                | 1          |
| <b>Southern Europe</b>  |            |
| Italy                   | 20         |
| Spain                   | 9          |
| Greece                  | 1          |
| Portugal                | 1          |
| <b>US Australia</b>     |            |
| US                      | 14         |
| Australia               | 2          |
| <b>Southern America</b> |            |
| Argentina               | 11         |
| Brazil                  | 10         |
| Mexico                  | 2          |
| <b>Middle East</b>      |            |
| Turkey                  | 10         |
| Egypt                   | 4          |
| Israel                  | 2          |
| Lebanon                 | 1          |
| <b>Far East</b>         |            |
| China                   | 15         |
| Japan                   | 2          |
| India                   | 1          |
| Indonesia               | 1          |
| South Korea             | 1          |
| <b>Africa</b>           |            |
| South Africa            | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>197</b> |

**N**ederlands  
letterenfonds  
dutch foundation  
for literature

niederländische stiftung für literatur  
fondation néerlandaise des lettres  
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#### Colofon

A survey among publishers of  
Dutch literature abroad

Carried out by  
IVA Onderwijs, Tilburg



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