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GOVERNANCE
FOR
DEVELOPMENT

**EVIDENCE
PAPER SERIES**

/ FEBRUARY 2018

AN INTEGRATED COUNTRY POLICY FOR BELGIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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Introduction

Belgian development cooperation is undergoing multiple reforms towards more integrated actions intending to improve the effectiveness of its interventions. In line with international debates and engagements, more coherent approaches are promoted that include all different channels and actors and involve those best fitted to reach the objectives of Belgian foreign policy. In this context, the research group “Governance for development” was asked by DGD to study two particular aspects: 1) the trend towards a *Comprehensive Approach* (CA) that optimises cooperation between actors, primarily the different federal departments, engaged in Belgian foreign action at large; and 2) the implementation of an *Integrated Country Policy* (or ICP) for development that optimises collaborations between all actors of Belgian development cooperation around a country intervention strategy.

This paper addresses the issue of the integrated country policy. In the words of the ACROPOLIS call for proposal (1),

“the integrated country policy for development should be based on objectives derived from specific local country contexts and to which the Belgian development cooperation contributes as a whole, whatever the channel or instrument used. It tries to make the efforts of Belgian development actors more coherent, to promote synergies and complementarities between interventions and thus strengthen effectiveness and impact of Belgian public aid. It is also about choosing the implementing actor best fitted to reach the objectives set”.

To succeed in such an ambitious reform, it is essential to clarify its context and meaning, to analyse existing practices and perceptions at Belgian level, as well as to look at international experiences from which lessons could be learned. In tackling all these aspects, this paper provides food for thoughts to Belgian stakeholders and wishes to lay the foundations for the debate and reforms carried out.

The paper consists of two parts. The first part synthesises Belgian and international evidence and answers the following questions: why does integration matter? What is called for ICP? What is covered by it? What are the practices of other donors? The second part presents the results of the survey carried out between June and September 2017 with Belgian actors (public, private, and civil society) involved in Belgian foreign policy. The questions asked concerned their perceptions, practices, and references on either the CA or the ICP, or on both. Only the answers related to ICP are presented here¹.

¹ Answers given for the CA part of the questionnaire are presented in the evidence paper on a comprehensive approach (CA) for Belgian development cooperation, which can be downloaded on G4D website: www.governance4development.org.

Part 1: Evidence on the integrated country policy for development

1. Why does it matter? An international trend towards integration

In the past year, growing interest has been shown within development fora for innovative approaches to international cooperation based on greater collaboration between actors of different kinds (public, private, civil society), coming from different sectors (agriculture, health, justice, etc.) and at different territorial levels (local, national, international). Several engagements have been taken by donors and international organizations to renew partnerships among stakeholders. We synthesise here the main commitments taken, the reasons put forwards and some of the constraints noted so far.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships have been at the core of the aid effectiveness agenda. The search for improved effectiveness of interventions has brought about the need to build more inclusive approaches based on greater collaboration and coordination among development actors. The sector-wide approaches promoted since the late 1990s to implement more holistic and coordinated interventions aligned on country-led strategies were a first step in this direction. A second step was the formalisation of these practices in the *Paris declaration on aid effectiveness* set out in 2005, including harmonisation and mutual responsibilities in its principles (2). These meant *inter alia* for donors to align on country policies and systems; to develop joint mechanisms for planning, funding, and evaluating development interventions; to share knowledge and expertise; to increase division of labour based on respective comparative advantages; and to jointly monitor progress made. These engagements were broadened three year later in Accra, where the focus was strengthened on inclusive ownership and enabling environments for all development actors – including parliaments, local authorities, civil society, academia, media, and the private sector – to participate actively in policy-making related to development and aid interventions (3). In this move, a further step towards more global approaches was reached in December 2011 with the *Fourth High Level Forum on Aid effectiveness*, when the development community gathered in Busan agreed upon the establishment of a *Global partnership for effective development cooperation* (GPEDC)(4). This partnership is based on the recognition that poverty and inequality remain a great challenge, that deep changes have occurred in the development world, and that new actors have emerged, making the architecture for development cooperation more complex and calling for new aid modalities. The GPEDC engages public, private, and civil society actors, from both Northern and Southern countries, around shared principles in order to achieve common goals through differential commitments and complementary actions. Particular attention is given to the contribution that civil society organisations and private actors can make.

Box 1. GPEDC principles and monitoring indicators related to inclusive development partnerships

Inclusive development partnership is one of the principles shared by the GPEDC, together with ownership of development priorities by developing country, focus on results, and transparency and accountability (4).

☞ This principle is based on “*openness, trust, mutual respect and learning*” as well as on the recognition of “*the different and complementary roles of all actors*”.

Two indicators have been specifically designed to monitor progress made by members against the principle of inclusive partnership (5):

☞ **Indicator 2:** Civil society operates within an environment which maximises its engagement in and contribution to development.

☞ **Indicator 3:** Engagement and contribution of the private sector to development.

Monitored at country level, these indicators take into account progress made by all parties involved – partners countries, donors, civil society, and private actors.

Public-private partnerships are promoted to leverage additional finance for development. The economic and financial crisis has resulted in budget cuts to official development assistance (ODA) and

public resources more in general and has thus brought about the need to complement governments' efforts towards development. In July 2015, the United Nations endorsed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), which calls for comprehensive approaches combining different means of implementation (6). Here as well, a wide-range of actors are invited to engage and share their expertise, technology, and financial resources, such as the private sector and civil society, academia and scientific community, philanthropy and foundation, parliaments and local authorities, volunteers. In particular, the agenda identifies the mobilisation of domestic and international private business and finance as one cross-cutting area for action. At this regard, while private investment in sustainable development is welcomed and encouraged, at the same time the agenda also urges public actors to adopt policies and regulatory frameworks necessary to incentivise private actors' social responsibility and align them with public goals.

Box 2. Blending finance as a mean to leverage additional finance for development

Among other instruments, the AAAA identifies blending finance as a key mean to leverage additional finance from the private sector towards development goals (6).

☞ **Blending finance** can be defined as strategically using ODA to mobilise other private or public resources with a commercial motivation for development-related investments and to improve the enabling environment for private investments in developing countries.

Global partnerships are also called for to achieve sustainable development, as agreed upon in September 2015 within the 2030 Agenda (7). In fact, the universality and integrated nature of the agenda and its sustainable development goals (SDGs) have brought about the need to develop multi-sectoral, multi-actors and multi-levels interventions that better integrate the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Actors are thus invited to develop new and more inclusive ways of working together, going beyond development, and mobilising actors from other areas likely to affect and impact development results, such as justice or trade for example. According to the agenda, governments are the first responsible for implementation, follow-up, and review of the SDGs, and are called up to promote greater policy coherence among government agencies. However, other actors – including civil society and the private sector – should also be involved in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of SDGs strategies and plans, as their interventions can also contribute to SDGs achievement. Government, private sector and civil society can actually play at least six roles depending on the context of their involvement: facilitation, financing, enabling, monitoring, communication and advocacy (Kamphof & Spitz, 2016 cited in 8). Participatory mechanisms can also help the different stakeholders share values and build common visions, which are essential to ensure the effective operational translation of policy coherence (8). Moreover, effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships are encouraged to strengthen the means of implementations. It is about “multi-stakeholder initiatives voluntarily undertaken [...] contributing to the implementation of inter-governmentally agreed development goals and commitments” (9).

Box 3. SDGs and targets related to inclusive approaches and partnerships

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

☞ Target 16.7. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

SDG17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

☞ Target 17.3. Mobilise additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.

☞ Target 17.14. Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.

☞ Target 17.16. Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

👉 Target 17.17. Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

More coherent approaches are encouraged to better meet the needs of people living in fragile contexts. The failure to guarantee long-lasting results and adequate responses to the multi-dimensional nature of crises has brought about the need to improve linkages between humanitarian and development assistance. As for aid effectiveness, this topic has been debated since the 1990s. Combining fast action with longer-term interventions aiming at ensuring more sustainable and structural results was already one of the *Principle for good international engagement in fragile states and situations* set out in 2007 (10). Besides more predictable aid, this principle required donors to better coordinate and consult each other when planning interventions in fragile contexts. In this regard, a consensus has progressively emerged that coordination and coherence should be built not merely around a time perspective implying a continuum from humanitarian to development initiatives, but rather around a more comprehensive approach aiming to tackle the root causes of the fragility situation, responding to the crisis and specific needs of population on the short-term while supporting stability and development on the long-term. The peace- and state-building principles promoted in Busan with the *New Deal for engagement in fragile states* went in this direction, encouraging a more global focus on strengthening state-society relations (11).

With the growing attention for climate change and environmental disasters, the need for greater coherence between developmental and humanitarian finance was also stressed during the Addis Ababa conference notably in relation to the management and mitigation of environmental disasters (6). Besides the temporal and thematic dimensions of this humanitarian-development nexus, what is today at stake is how actors can move from fragmented interventions to collaborative initiatives towards shared goals. At this regard, the United Nation Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity launched at the *World Humanitarian Summit* in July 2016 urges aid providers to transcend humanitarian development divides and to increase their investments diversifying the resources available and shifting from funding individual projects to financing collective outcomes (12). Donors and aid organisations are not the only concerned, but also national governments, civil society, and the private sector.

Box 4. The Grand Bargain

The Grand Bargain is one of the initiatives launched at the *World Humanitarian Summit* by more than 30 donors and aid providers to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian interventions. In the words of this agreement, enhancing the engagement between humanitarian and development actors “*is not about shifting from development to humanitarian programmes or from humanitarian to development actors. Rather, it is about working collaboratively across institutional boundaries on the basis of comparative advantages*” (13). To this end, changes in the working practices of donors and aid organisations are promoted, including innovative and more collaborative approaches, including with multilateral organisations and the private sector. *Inter alia*, shared and joint context and risk analyses are encouraged to favour a thorough understanding of the context and dynamics underpinning fragility on which to build multi-stakeholders initiatives and better aligned multi-year programs.

All these agreements show an international trend towards more “global” integration, with a clear turning point since broad consensus was achieved for sustainable development, implying the need to go beyond aid co-operation and governmental relationships. By the way, simply looking at how many times the word “integrate”² has been used in official statements over the past 10 years, we can see that references to it have increased in more recent declarations (see Table 1). In particular, a qualitative analyse reveals that while 2 out of 3 references made in the Paris Declaration are actually linked to the integration with partner countries, that is donors’ alignment to partner countries’ policies and systems, the 2030 Agenda mainly refer to the integrated nature of the sustainable development goals (7 out of

² We searched for the stem “integrat” in order to identify all the possible variants used, either as the adjective “integrated”, the noun “integration”, or the verb “to integrate / integrating”.

27 references) and to the corresponding need for integrated approaches³ (10 references), involving more globally all stakeholders concerned by development. Moreover, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda also mention the need for better integrating development and trade policies (2 references).

Table 1. Numbers of references made to the word "integrate" in international agreements over the past decade

International engagements	Use of "integrate" ²
(2005) Paris declaration	3
(2007) Principles good engagement in fragile contexts	0
(2008) Accra Agenda	1
(2011) Busan outcome document	2
(2011) New deal	0
(2015) Addis Ababa Action Agenda	20
(2015) 2030 Agenda for SD	27
(2016) One humanity	12

The ideal of a Whole-of-society approach but significant challenges and constraints remain. In this move towards more global and integrated approaches, broad agreement has recently emerged on the shift needed towards a "*whole-of-society approach*" (WoS), in which "*all sectors of society effectively contribute to and appropriately benefit from national development*" (14). From a donor perspective, a WoS approach allows the mobilisation of multiple actors, outside of government and including civil society organisations and the private sector, both from its own society (15) and from the partner country or internationally (16, 17). This approach is presented as being not only more inclusive, but also more comprehensive, as it offers the possibility of integrating multiple policy choices (16). In turn, this can improve the impact, coherence, and efficiency of development interventions.

If a lot is expected of all these multi-stakeholder approaches in theory, in practice a lot of challenges and constraints still limit its effective implementation. Indeed, the more different actors work together, the more tensions and competitions are likely to arise or grow, as actors' values and practice may differ and be difficult to reconcile, and the risk exists that the more dominant ones may use their power to instrumentalise the others (15). Moreover, resources are needed, as well as instruments better suited to translating mere informal exchange and consultation into operational collaboration and effective joint interventions (18). Finally, institutional culture change is probably the foremost challenge for donors and aid providers, who need to internalise the complexity inherent in building multi-stakeholder approaches and addressing multi-dimensional development issues (17).

2. What's in a name? ICP various labels and broad coverage

Belgium committed to the international engagements mentioned above towards more coherent multi-stakeholder approaches to development and humanitarian assistance. In line with this, the 2013 Law on Belgian cooperation laid the foundations for policy coherence, covered both development and humanitarian assistance, and broadened the support to civil society and the private sector (19). Nevertheless, in 2015, the OECD peer review still noticed fragmentation of Belgian aid and operational challenges in reducing it (20). The Integrated Country Policy is one of the means promoted by current government to address recommendations the OECD made and to enhance coherence and effectiveness of Belgian development cooperation. To better understand what is behind this policy, we analyse in this chapter how the label is used and what content it covers.

Although following an international trend, ICP is definitely a Belgian label. As described in chapter 1, international agreements speak rather about partnerships, coordination, coherence, joint/collaborative initiatives, or even whole-of-society, when referring to multi-stakeholder approaches. Other donors use the label "*integrated approach*" or even "*integrated country approach*", but to name slightly different approaches, which are either more focused on specific topics or limited to specific

³ Besides the more general "integrated approach", references are made to "integrated framework", "integrated planning", "integrated solutions", "integrated management", "integrated support", and "integrated policies and plan".

actors. For example, the European Union has recently introduced an “*Integrated approach to conflicts and crises*” within its strategy for foreign and security policy, with the aim to improve European peacebuilding interventions at all stages of the conflict cycle, from prevention, to crisis management, to stabilisation and disengagement (21). Other donors, like USAID, use “*integrated country approach*” to describe whole-of-government strategies.

Various alternatives labels are used instead of ICP. What strikes first when one starts to analyse more closely Belgian ICP, is the variety of terminologies used to refer to it. In 2016, amendments made to the Belgian law on development cooperation refer to the “*integrated policy*” and define it as “*the overall policy aiming to improve the impact and quality of Belgian development cooperation through strengthening synergies, coordination and complementarities between governmental, non-governmental and multilateral cooperation, as well as the humanitarian assistance, including interventions supporting local private sector*” (art.2,9° in 22). We looked at how other sources refer to the policy, and analysed in particular official documents such as Belgian policy notes presented by Minister De Croo over the past 4 years and the strategic notes published by DGD over this same period (23-28). A first element that appears is that alternative labels are used interchangeably, in which the adjective “integrated” is associated either with “policy”, “program” or “approach”. Also, the terminologies are used either generally or more specifically in association with additional qualifiers like “country” or “development”. Table 2 synthesises the different alternatives labels one can read in the French version of the policy and strategic notes. We have for example “*politique intégrée*” (more general) or “*politique de développement intégrée*” (more specific to development); “*approche intégrée*” (focused on the approach) or “*approche de programme de pays intégré*” (focused on country program).

Table 2. French terminologies used, and number of references made to them, in Belgian cooperation strategies

<i>Terminologies used</i>	Policy note 2014	Policy note 2015	Policy note 2016	Policy note 2017	Note on humanitarian aid (2014)	Note on development results (2015)	Note on food security (2017)
politique intégrée	0	3	6	0	0	0	1
politique pays intégrée (PPI)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
politique de développement intégrée	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
approche intégrée	3	2	2	0	0	0	1
approche programme intégrée	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
approche programmatique intégrée	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
programme intégré	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
programmation pays intégrée	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Similar results can be found in the Dutch version of the same policy and strategic notes, as synthesised in Table 3. Here, we can see that translation might also explain the variety of terminologies currently existing. Indeed, while the French terminologies are usually translated literally and thus for instance “*approche intégrée*” most often corresponds to “*geïntegreerde aanpak*”, in the case of the 2015 policy note it is once translated as “*geïntegreerd benadering*” and once as “*geïntegreerd beleid*”, the latter having a slightly different meaning.

Table 3. Dutch terminologies used, and number of references made to them, in Belgian cooperation strategies

<i>Terminologies used</i>	Policy note 2015	Policy note 2016	Policy note 2017	Note on humanitarian aid (2014)	Note on development results (2015)	Note on food security (2017)
geïntegreerd benadering	0	1	0	0	0	0
geïntegreerd beleid	0	4	6	0	0	1
geïntegreerd landenbeleid (GLB)	0	0	0	0	0	0

<i>Terminologies used</i>	Policy note 2015	Policy note 2016	Policy note 2017	Note on humanitarian aid (2014)	Note on development results (2015)	Note on food security (2017)
geïntegreerd ontwikkelingsbeleid	1	1	0	0	0	0
geïntegreerde aanpak	3	0	2	0	0	1
geïntegreerde programma-aanpak	0	0	0	0	0	1
programmatorische geïntegreerde aanpak	0	0	0	0	1	0
geïntegreerde programma	0	0	0	0	0	1
geïntegreerde landenprogrammatie	0	0	0	1	0	0

ICP label is actually never used as such. A second element that appears looking at how ICP is referred to, is that the label “*integrated country policy*” – as well as “*politique pays intégrée*” in French and “*geïntegreerd landenbeleid*” in Dutch – is never used as such in any of the document analysed. We could not verify if this is linked to a translation issue, as no English version is available for these documents, except for the strategic note on agriculture and food security, which however mentions (amongst others alternative labels) the more general “*integrated policy*”. We thus looked at how the last OECD peer-review classified Belgian strategies towards more coherence, but this didn’t help clarify things. On the contrary, while the review does not make any reference to ICP label, it adds terminologies, using sometimes alternatives like “*integrated programme*”, “*integrated country programme*” or “*integrating country programming*”. Table 4 synthesises the English terminologies found.

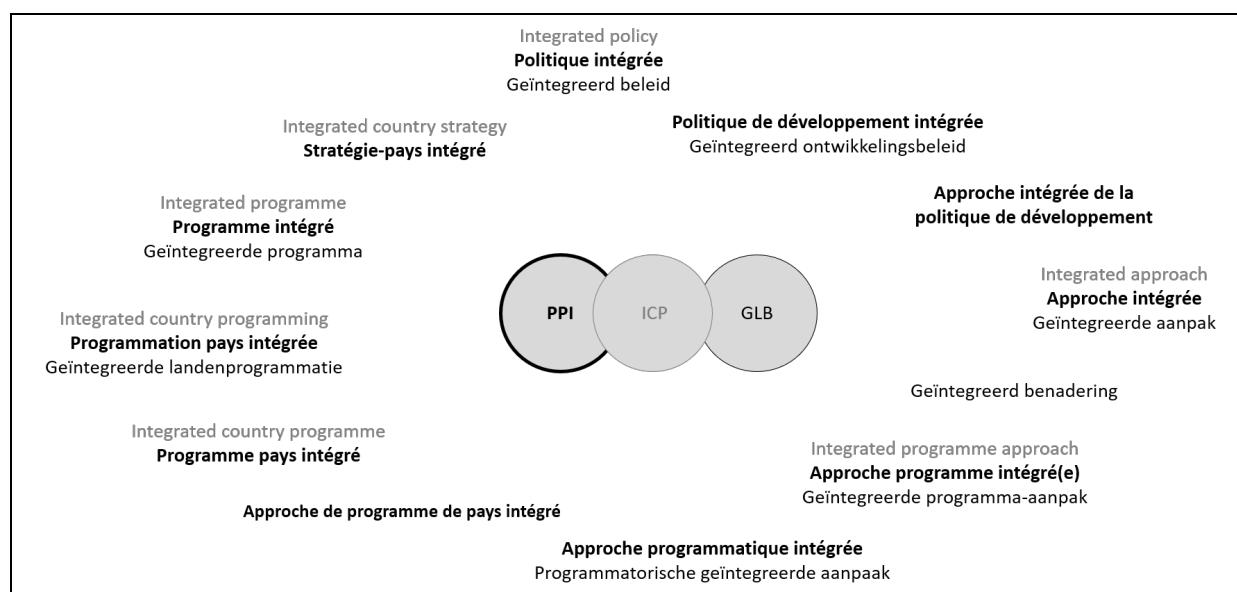
Table 4. English terminologies used, and number of references made to them, in Belgian cooperation strategies

<i>Terminologies used</i>	Food security note (2017)	OECD peer review (2015)
integrated policy	1	0
integrated country policy (ICP)	0	0
integrated approach	1	1
integrated programme approach	1	0
integrated programme	1	2
integrated country programme	0	1
integrated country programming	0	1
integrated country strategy	0	1

ICP label is already old-fashioned and outdated. A third element that emerge from Tables 2 and 3 is that last policy note by Minister De Croo makes no more mention of ICP or any other ICP-alternative labels. A step forward has indeed been taken towards a *Comprehensive approach* according to which the development cooperation is fully part of the Belgian foreign policy (26). We return to this topic later in the chapter.

Clarifications are needed. To sum up, Figure 1 gathers all the labels used alternatively to refer to ICP, including their translation where available. Beyond a mere linguistic debate, the concern here is about the possible confusion that could arise for the stakeholders concerned by the policy. Although the law recently modified gives a broad definition of what an integrated policy should look like, the fact that several labels are used, sometimes as synonyms, sometimes in relation to distinct aspects of the policy, coupled with the recent move to a more global reform in the framework of the *Comprehensive approach*, could lead to misleading interpretations about what is expected, what issues are targeted and what actors are involved and how. At this regard, further details about the content given to these different ICP labels are given hereafter.

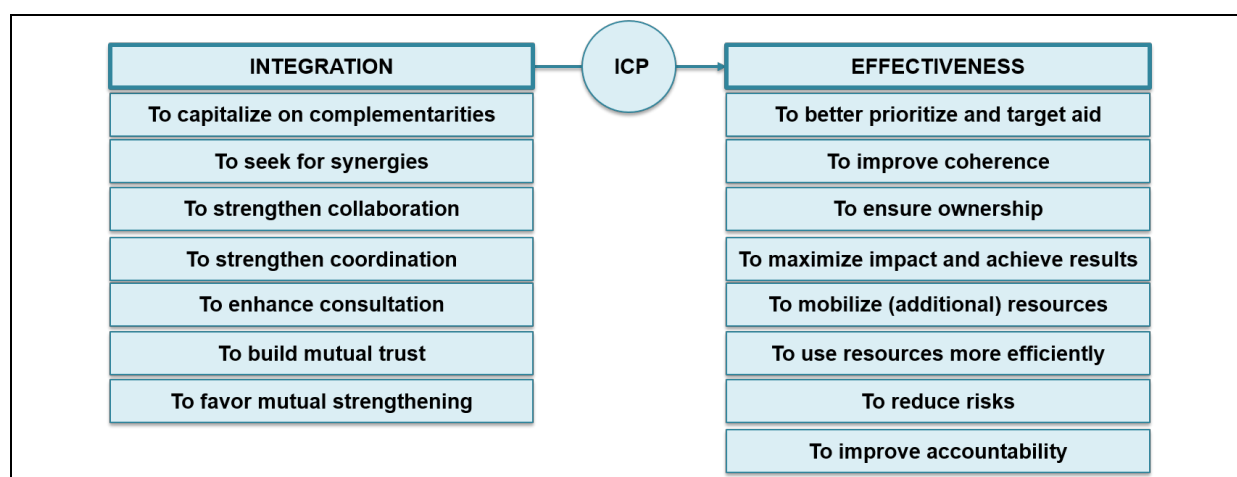
Figure 1. ICP-alternative terminologies



Sources: terminologies found in (20, 23-35).

ICP is based on the assumption that greater integration results in greater effectiveness. Analysing ICP-related discourse, we can see that, in line with international debates and arguments in favour of more coherent multi-stakeholder approaches, the move towards an ICP is usually explained by the need to improve the effectiveness of Belgian development cooperation. The policy urges actors *inter alia* to capitalise on complementarities, to seek synergies, to strengthen collaboration and coordination, to enhance consultation, to build mutual trust, and favour mutual strengthening. As shown in Figure 2, ICP basic assumption is that these forms of integration can lead in turn to more effective development practices. There are notably expectations for achieving better results and greater impact, mobilising additional resources and in a more efficient way.

Figure 2. Arguments most often used to justify ICP



Looking at the main arguments underlying ICP and synthesised in Figure 2, we can remark that only four out of the five principles of the *Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness* are still mobilised to build integrated approaches. References are indeed made to ownership, results, harmonisation (here more coordination) and accountability. The one which fails to be pursued is alignment on partner country. As already mentioned for international engagements more in general, the change noticed for ICP reflects an important step backwards compared to previous engagements towards more coherent approaches, entailing the risk of disengaging from partner countries alignment focusing more on donor internal

integration. This trend is also shown in ACROPOLIS evidence paper on governance networks for Belgian development cooperation which can be downloaded on G4D website: <http://www.governance4development.org>.

Specific thematic or geographic areas are targeted by the ICP. When looking at the content of ICP-related discourses, we see that the focus of the integration is sometimes put on the thematic or geographic areas concerned by the policy (program or strategy).

On the thematic side, Minister's policy notes for example relate more integrated approaches to food security (24). Taking the same sources cited above, the OECD peer-review links the integrated programs to the possibility of better combining *"poverty reduction and institutional capacity building with efforts on climate change, the environment, peace and security"* (20). CNCD-11.11.1 refers to the integrated nature of the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental), and to the need for integrated cooperation strategy to better take into account issues related to peace, governance, and agriculture (32).

Linkages between development and humanitarian aid are also made. According to the development policy note released in 2015, *"since humanitarian aid is focused in regions where [Belgian] partner countries are [...] a more integrated policy is possible, which allows the connection between humanitarian aid and sustainable development"* (24). Also, Belgian strategic note on humanitarian aid refers to *"integrated country programming"* in the framework of disaster preparedness. However, it should be noticed that most often the humanitarian-development nexus is rather referred to using other terminologies. For example, the OCDE peer-review does not use any ICP-alternative when referring to humanitarian assistance, but rather speaks about a *"holistic socio-economic recovery programming"* to designate the possibility to increase the scope of humanitarian aid to areas like rehabilitation and socio-economic recovery (20).

As stated above, ICP is also related to specific geographic areas, notably fragile contexts (20, 23, 24). Here, an *"integrated development policy involving all instruments and where all actors cooperate"* aims to better adapt aid modalities, working more for example with non-governmental or multilateral organisations depending on context reality (23). References are also made more in general to least developed countries (20) or more in particular to Belgium partner countries in the Great Lakes region (31, 32).

A broad range of actors are involved under the ICP, but to different extents. Going through the content of ICP-related discourses, we can see that what is most discussed relates to the kind of actors concerned by the integration. At this regard, the policy spans a broad range of actors.

As an example, let's compare how *"integrated approach"* and *"integrated policy"* are used in Minister policy notes (23-25). Table 5 synthesises the actors associated to both terminologies, including more in general references to cooperation channels or to reforms involving specific actors.

Table 5. Actors explicitly associated with "integrated approach" and "integrated policy" in Belgian policy notes

Actors associated	Integrated approach	Integrated policy
European cooperation	2	0
multilateral cooperation	2	1
governmental cooperation	4	2
related to 3D-LO approach	1	2
non-governmental cooperation	1	3
related to NGA-reform	1	1
private sector	0	0

Sources: information collected from (23-25).

We can see that both labels are related to all Belgian cooperation channels, either governmental, non-governmental, or multilateral one. This is actually in line with the aim to make Belgian cooperation contribute to development as a whole, whatever the channel or instrument used, as underlined in ACROPOLIS terms of references and suggested in the policy notes themselves, which describe the

“integrated approach” and the *“integrated policy”* as involving respectively *“all actors of Belgian cooperation”* (23) and *“different actors”* (24).

However, the three channels are not explicitly associated with ICP to the same extents. In particular, the multilateral channel is less often linked to the terminologies than the other two channels. At this level, better complementarities are encouraged between governmental and multilateral cooperation (23), but also between multilateral organisations themselves and between them and Belgian actors more in general (24).

Conversely, more references are made to non-governmental actors. In particular, both terminologies are explicitly used when speaking about the non-governmental cooperation and its reform, including the development of Joint Context Analyses (JCA) and Joint Strategic Frameworks (JSF). By the way, the policy note released in 2016 uses *“integrated policy”* exclusively to refer to the non-governmental cooperation. At this regard, we can see that other sources also use this label only in association with the non-governmental actors, as for example the past three editions of the report on Belgian ODA edited by CNCD-11.11.11, which use the term to describe NGA on-going reform (31, 32, 37). It should be said that the reform involving NGAs is so far the most operational effort towards greater integration, primarily among non-governmental actors and, to a lesser extent, between them and the governmental cooperation. See Box 6 below for further details on the reform.

Regarding the governmental actors, more integration is wished not only with other actors but also within the governmental channel itself. At this regard, other sources are even more explicitly. Last OECD peer-review links *“integrated country programmes”* to coordination mechanisms involving federated entities, BIO and BTC (20). If we look beyond the development sector, Table 5 shows that links are also made with the 3D-LO approach. In 2016, Minister’s policy note stated: *“the integrated policy roots development cooperation as an instrument of Belgian foreign policy”*; and at the same time, *“it is an opportunity to develop in the concerned partner countries a 3D-LO strategy which applies the integrated policy principles”* (25). More in general, a whole-of-government approach is addressed. Sources like for example CNCD-11.11.11 reports specifically associate *“integrated approach”* with the ongoing reform of Belgian governmental cooperation towards a whole-of-government approach (31, 32, 37), revealing a possible overlap between the two processes in actors interpretations. Recently, the two processes have actually merged into one. A step forward in this direction has been reached last Summer with the adoption of a new strategic note moving towards a more *“comprehensive approach”* (CA). The note largely defines the CA scope: *“if the comprehensive approach primarily focuses on federal departments, it supports the involvement, at implementation level, of other public services (including federated ones), semi-public services, or non-governmental actors (like NGOs, the private sector, academia, ...)”* (38). As already shown in Table 2 and Table 3 above, the most recent policy note released in October 2017 no more mentions ICP, but refers to the CA only. The latter is further discussed in a second evidence paper⁴. What is important to notice here is that, since the note was published, ICP can now be understood as the operational part of the CA for its related development scope.

Concerning the private sector, we can notice that neither terminology is used in relation to it; other labels are rather mentioned, such as *“public-private partnership”* or *“multi-stakeholders and multi-sectoral partnerships”*. Mentions are also made to the involvement of the private sector for greater policy coherence (24, 25). At this regard, the recently amended Law on development cooperation refers to the linkage between *“integrated policy”* and the private sector speaking about complementarities with *“interventions supporting local private sector”* (22).

Box 5. The Belgian SDG Charter

The *Belgian SDG Charter* was launched in October 2016 on the initiative of Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation, Alexander De Croo, and under the coordination of *the Shift*, the Belgian network of companies, non-profit organisations and public actors aiming to promote sustainability through innovative business models and societal projects. Since then, more than 100 actors signed the *Charter*, from public and private sector, and civil society. The signatories acknowledge their own roles and shared responsibilities in implementing the SDGs; and recognise their interdependence and the

⁴ All evidence papers produced by ACROPOLIS Governance for development can be downloaded on G4D website: www.governance4development.org.

need for multi-stakeholders and multi-sectoral partnerships to achieve results. In particular, the *Charter* defines the role of each group of actors – public and private sector, civil society – in international development towards the following SDG-clusters: peace, people, planet, and prosperity. In the first half of 2017, four *Change Labs* were organised to explore opportunities for further collaborations between the signatories, notably on renewable energy, food and agriculture, sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as sustainable sanitation and drinking water, local training, and reforestation. The implementation of a number of pilot projects will be supported in the coming months.

Source: (38) and <https://theshift.be>

A final remark, “*integrated approach*” is also used in relation to European on-going processes, which go beyond the boundaries of Belgian actors.

Fit-for-purpose approach and joint frameworks characterise ICP implementation. As introduced in the beginning of this paper, ICP “*is also about choosing the implementing actor best fitted to reach the objectives set*” (1). If this principle underpins all forms of complementarities and synergies generally promoted by ICP, its implementation is also associated to the introduction of calls of proposals. These are funded by the governmental cooperation and aim to address specific development issues for which existing expertise is currently missing, as well as to respond in a more rapid and targeted way to contextual changes (24, 35). In 2017, first initiatives funded through this instrument concerned the support to digitalisation and human rights (25). If the idea is to ensure that actors best-fitted intervene on specific issues or contexts, nevertheless the risk also exists for the instrument to be counter-productive as it may increase mistrust (and suspicions of instrumentalisation), as well as negative competition among actors supposed to work together.

Besides the fit-for-purpose approach, other instruments directly associated to ICP are the JCA and JSF on which Belgian non-governmental actors have worked in the past few years in order to ask their agreement and introduce their programs for public funding. These instruments are at the core of the recent reform of the non-governmental cooperation and are further detailed in Box 6. What can already be noticed here is that, if on the one side these joint initiatives aimed to seek complementarities and synergies and to capitalise both on actors’ experience and added-values, their association to funding procedures has somehow mitigated the innovative potential of these exercises, bringing about administrative stress and negative competition for the actors involved. This was even more the case as the two instruments were also linked to budget constraints and rationalisation efforts, which have actually resulted in the reduction of non-governmental actors who effectively obtained the agreement and funds

Rationalisation is also mentioned in relation to multilateral organisation. Minister’s policy notes actually evoke the need for increased complementarities between Belgian and multilateral actors given the necessary reduction in the number of Belgian multilateral partners (23). At this regard however, concrete operationalisation seem for the moment limited to improved exchange of information (24).

Box 6. Joint initiatives as instruments of Belgian non-governmental cooperation reform

Belgian non-governmental cooperation has recently undergone a series of reforms promoting greater integration between actors, primarily within the non-governmental channel, but even beyond it. In the previous legislature, civil society organisations and institutional actors were asked to develop *Joint context analyses* (JCA) on 50 priority developing countries, as well as on education for development in Belgium and few other transversal issues. JCA were formally defined in amendments to the 2013 Law on international cooperation and in a royal decree, both adopted in 2014 (39, 40). The aim was to improve and strengthen synergies and complementarities between non-governmental actors (NGA). To this end, NGA had not only to analyse the context and the actors involved, but also to describe their own past programs and projects, and identify possible relevant partners and partnerships, as well as future areas of intervention. To be funded, NGA were also urged to clarify how their individual programs took into account at least one JCA. A total of 57 JCA were submitted to the administration in December 2015.

Even before the JCA were finished, current legislature moved forwards introducing *Joint strategic frameworks*. The latter relate to a reduced number of 32 priority countries (including the 14 priority countries of the governmental cooperation and Belgium), and in relation to only one transversal issue (decent work). JSF were agreed upon in September 2015 within a framework signed by both the Minister for development cooperation, A. De Croo, and representatives of non-governmental cooperation (35). They were legally introduced by new amendments to the Law on development cooperation and a series of royal decrees, adopted respectively in June and September 2016 (22, 41, 42). JSF aim to promote consultation and strategic coordination between NGA, to implement complementarities and synergies within the non-governmental cooperation, to ensure mutual learning about strategies and risks, and to engage in strategic dialogue with the administration. At this last regard, a formal annual strategic dialogue is planned, to monitor the overall implementation of the strategies pursued, the complementarities, synergies, and collective learning, and to discuss the opportunities to change the strategy, if relevant. More in general, although individual programs remain, to be funded, they had to be linked to the global JSF, be coherent with and contribute to it. Moreover, together with the governmental cooperation program, JSF are presented as the second pillar of the integrated policy. JSF take into account both the JCA previously developed, as well as the governmental strategies. Reciprocally, the administration and Embassies also need to consider both the JSF and the JCA in their own analyses and programming related to governmental and multilateral cooperation, so to improve coherence of the overall Belgian cooperation policy. Thirty-two JSF started in January 2017 for a 5-year period. From 2022 onwards, the number of country and thematic JSF is planned to be reduced to maximum 30.

Lessons can be learned from the implementation process of the reform. This was actually introduced quickly and with little predictability for the actors involved, with the risk of being rather counterproductive. As showed above, JSF were announced when actors were still working on JCA and had already started to develop their own individual programs; they were then submitted in April 2016, before they were legally introduced by law and even before the results were ever known of which NGA had effectively passed the screening for their accreditation and funding by the MFA. The overlap of the initiatives undertaken made actors work on multiple instruments at the same time, with little time and resources to develop deep analyses and quality strategies. *Inter alia*, opportunities to involve local partners were reduced, with the risk of limiting the initiatives to a Belgo-Belgian exercise; and the strategies were developed without a clear view on effective future opportunities for funding. Moreover, the little view on the following steps of the reform and the absence of a legal framework gave rise to misleading understandings of outputs and goals expected, increasing sometimes fear of instrumentalisation by NGA and demotivating actors to perform a quality work. By the way, further frustration was raised as some organisations involved in the JSF could not effectively engage in its implementation as they did not pass the screening. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that behaviour start changing following the reform, dialogue has increased between actors and opportunities for effective collaborations and joint initiatives begin to be implemented. In the future, further attention should be given to the resources needed – from timing to human resources and knowledge, and financial means; as well as to the transparency and predictability of the initiatives undertaken.

Sources: (22, 35, 39-42)

3. What is called for? Dimensions related to ICP

As noted in the previous chapter, the absence of a standard terminology, the broad coverage of ICP, coupled with quickly changing trends, may lead to different (not always consistent) interpretations of what ICP targets. Moreover, ICP has been so far mostly applied to the non-governmental sector, although initiatives emerge involving the private sector and opportunities lay ahead with Enabel reform for the governmental cooperation and the implementation of the CA strategic note. In this changing context, some dimensions can help better define and clarify ICP boundaries – or more generally those of any other integrated approach.

Five dimensions are mainly covered in ICP-related discourses. The different elements addressed when referring to ICP actually correspond to five main dimensions. For the sake of clarity and to build consensus around what the policy is about, making these dimensions more explicit on a case-by-case basis may help clarify the policy boundaries. The first three dimensions are more strategic and help

define the scope of the integration (its underlying goals, the thematic and geographic areas to be targeted); the other two dimensions are more operational and help clarify the actors to be involved and how during its implementation. In particular:

1. the *why-dimension* focuses on the strategy aimed to and the benefits expected from the integration;
2. the *what-dimension* focuses on the thematic area (sector or theme) to be integrated in the interventions or to be approached in an integrated manner.
3. the *where-dimension* focuses on the geographic area to be covered;
4. the *who-dimension* focuses on the actors to be involved in integration processes;
5. the *how-dimension* focuses on processes, resources, and instruments to be integrated.

About the why-dimension, expectations should be refined and balanced. We have seen in the previous chapter how ICP basic assumption entails a linear linkage between greater integration and greater effectiveness.

A first remark at this regard relates to the very necessity of clarifying what specific objectives are being pursued when implementing the ICP, as different operational approaches may be followed. In fact, just limiting to the arguments listed in Figure 2, different specific objectives within the effectiveness general goal, like improving aid targeting or improving accountability, may require different integrated solutions.

Second and even more important, the basic assumption on which the ICP is based deserves further analysis. At short term certainly, but not only, behaviour change towards more collaborative mechanisms needs time and resources, and could not results in reduced costs, to take an example, quite the contrary. Expectations on improved effectiveness should thus be balanced with complementary goals, more related to democratisation for example.

To conclude on the why-dimension, in order to clarify it, it may be worth addressing some of the following questions: What underlying goals are pursued? If the aim is to be more effective, are more collaborative approaches really the best solution? If integrated practices are important in their own for their democratic potential, is there space for reducing expectations in terms of efficiency and results? What other criteria may be considered when building an integrated policy?

Once those questions are answered and to better refine the strategy to be pursued, the why-dimension may be complemented by the what- and where-dimensions.

About the what-dimension, specific sector(s) may be integrated in more or less holistic ways.

ICP-alternative terminologies also refer to integrated practices related to sectoral or thematic interventions. These interventions are characterised by actors working together towards a common thematic scope. They may range from interventions focusing on a single sector, or a specific issue within a sector, possibly in the framework of a system-wide approach; to multi-sectoral interventions that tackle the multidimensional aspects of a development problem and make linkages between two (or more) sectors; and interventions that mainstream a specific issue across different sectors.

Depending on how holistic the thematic scope pursued is, the following levels of integration can be distinguished, which are not mutually exclusive and might well coexist within a same integrated program:

- A *sub-sectoral integration level*, when integrated solutions are put in place to tackle a specific issue within a single sector;
- A *sectoral integration level*, when comprehensive interventions are promoted for improving a single sector;
- A *cross-sectoral integration level*, when a specific issue at sectoral level is addressed mobilising expertise and resources from multiple sectors;
- A *transversal integration level*, when a specific issue is addressed within different sectors adapting the interventions depending on the sector targeted.

It should be noticed that extensive experience exists within the Belgian cooperation on the implementation of this particular dimension, and that the more general label “*integrated approach*” has long been used to refer to it, as shown by older Belgium development strategic notes, such as previous notes on agriculture and food security (43, 44) and the series of notes related to health (45-48), to take just a few examples. The definition and implementation of the ICP should not make *tabula rasa* of past experiences, but rather built on them in order to ensure the reform processes “make sense” for the stakeholders concerned, starting from their own view on how more integration should be achieved and the lessons they have learned from past initiatives in this direction.

It should also be noted that holistic practices focused on sectoral and thematic areas may also be implemented by one single organisation, before opening to multiple organisations in the framework of joint initiatives.

In any case, making clearer the what-dimension means for the actors involved to answer questions such as: what issues are concerned by the integration? Is the aim to promote a holistic approach focused on a particular theme or sector? Is it more relevant to broaden the interventions to complementary sectors or themes? Does the integration seek to ensure that a specific issue is addressed within different sectoral contexts?

Box 7. The Belgian Fund for Food Security

The *Belgian Fund for Food Security* (BFFS) is a good example of past Belgian experience with integrated approaches built around a common thematic scope. Created in 2010 on the initiative of the Belgian parliament, the BFFS followed previous initiatives such as the *Belgian Survival Fund* (1999-2009) and the *Survival Fund for the Third World* (1983-1998). Contrary to its predecessor, the BFFS introduced “multisectoral and integrated programmes (**multidimensional**), implemented by various development organisations (**multi-actor**) who cooperate within a single programme (**programme approach**)” (44). In fact, the interventions supported within the country program integrated as much as possible the four dimensions of food security (that is, availability of food, access to it, their stability over time, and a quality consumption), and the three dimensions of poverty reduction (that is, access to basic social services, strengthening resilience and institutional capacities). They were run by stakeholders from the three cooperation channels, thus including BTC, Belgian NGOs, and multilateral organisations such as the FAO and the IFAD. Cooperation and synergies were also encouraged with interventions implemented by other national and international actors, including local authorities and civil society. The focus was on Sub-Saharan Africa, and notably on areas affected by high level of food insecurity. The fund was stopped in 2015 together with other budget lines in the framework of a rationalisation process aiming to improve coherence of development budget.

Sources : (43, 44)

About the where-dimension, the integration may be implemented over specific territories. As described in the previous chapter, ICP is most often related to fragile contexts, where more flexible mechanisms and complementary expertise are needed to better respond to population needs and better adapt to rapidly changing realities.

Based on the context of intervention, and depending on the goals and thematic areas targeted, specific territorial levels may be more suited to promote integrated initiatives. In particular, we can here distinguish between:

- a *local-based integration level*, for local, sub-country initiatives;
- a *country-based integration level* for initiatives with national overall coverage; and
- a *regional-based integration level*, when a cross-country integration is pursued.

Concerning this dimension, it can be noted that territorial approaches have already been developed so far by Belgium cooperation, and they are presented as concrete examples of integrated interventions best suited for fragile contexts (34). As for the what-dimension, ICP can build on past experiences to promote collaborative and joint initiatives between different stakeholders on a given territory.

The basic questions to be answered when making the where-dimension more explicit are: what territorial level is best suited to achieve the goals pursued and tackle the development issues targeted? Where integrated approaches may be more effective, but also feasible?

Once the strategy being defined (including its goals, thematic and geographic areas), its implementation requires to weight alternative options for the who- and how-dimensions.

About the who-dimension, multiple actors may be included. We have seen that ICP refers to a wide range of actors, all Belgian development actors being particularly concerned, from governmental, to non-governmental and multilateral cooperation. It is here clear that, if not specified somehow, who is

concerned by ICP is thus not that straightforward at first sight. When it comes to operationalising it, it can then be useful to better clarify what are its levels of inclusion, what actors are to be involved.

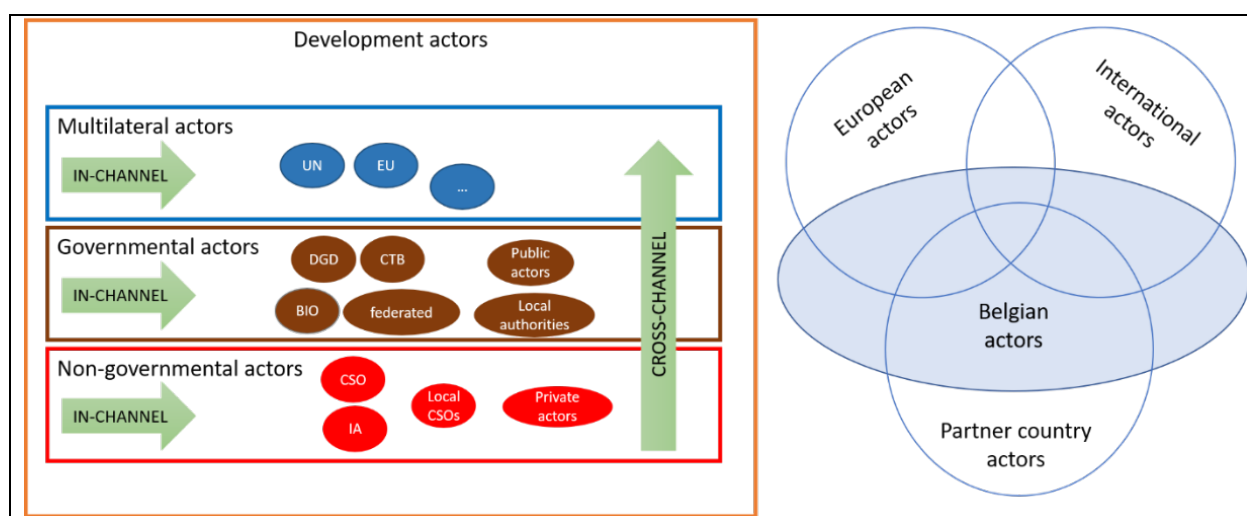
At this regard, a first distinction can be made between:

- an *in-agency integration level*, concerning the integration between separated departments and units within a single actor; and
- a *cross-agency integration level*, concerning multi-actor initiatives.

As shown in Figure 3, the latter can be further specified through a second distinction, namely between:

- an *in-channel integration level*, when different actors from a same development-cooperation channel start work together, at multilateral, governmental or non-governmental level, the latter including civil society and the private sector; and
- a *cross-channel integration level*, when the integrated initiatives concern multiple actors from two or more cooperation channels.

Figure 3. Levels of inclusion in ICP-related initiatives



Furthermore, actors involved in ICP-related initiatives may not only belong to different channels but may also have different origins. An additional distinction can thus be made between integrated processes:

- at *Belgian partner level*, which involve actors of Belgian development cooperation only;
- at *European partner level*, involving European actors;
- at *country partner level*, concerning integration among and with country partners; and
- at *international partner level*, concerning initiatives taken by international organisations or international actors more in general.

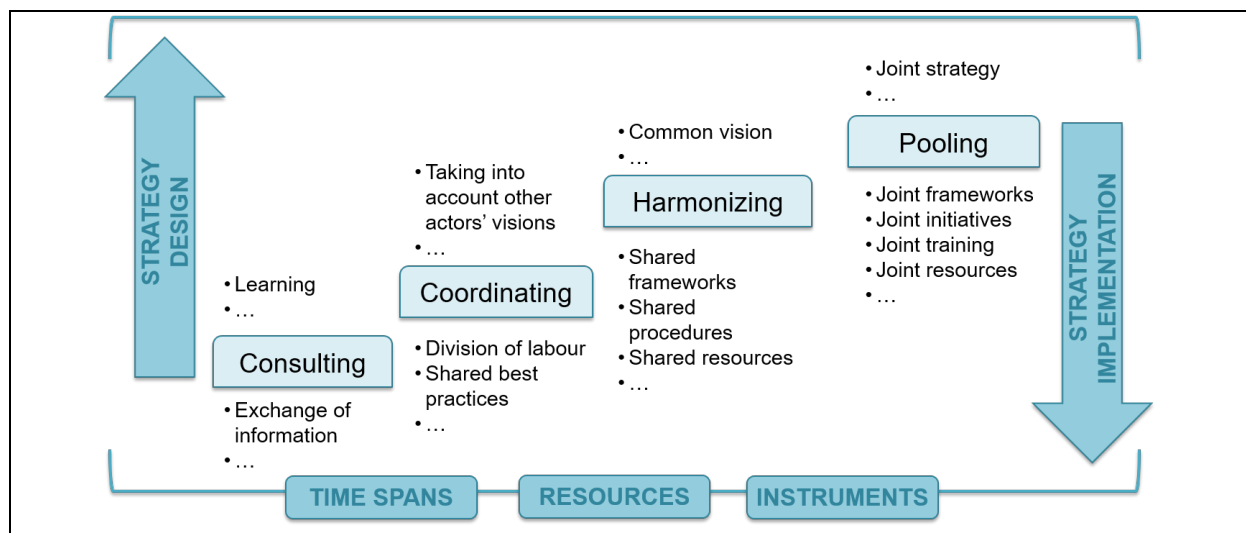
From a Belgian perspective, if a first step towards greater coherence starts from the Belgian level, actors delivering Belgian aid may also be involved at any of the other levels. Moreover, it is also clear that integrated processes can involve actors from European, international or partner country level on their own, without engaging Belgian stakeholders, and that several combinations are in fact possible (cf. Figure 3).

Defining the who-dimension clearly means choosing what actors would be involved, who fits best the intervention planned. At this regard, a range of dilemma need to be solved. In fact, in an integrated approach, who should align with who? Who should lead the integration and how responsibilities should be shared? At this regard, how to avoid instrumentalisation, for instance of non-governmental actors by governmental ones? How to select actors and how to avoid differential treatment from one actor to another? Are actors ready to integrate each other and is there any base already existing of shared values and interests on which to build upon?

About the how-dimension, the integration promoted may be carried out more or less deeply. This dimension relates to the concrete processes chosen for ICP implementation and reflects different levels of integration intensity. As shown in Figure 4, these processes may go:

- from more simple *consultation*, based for example on exchange of information and individual learning; to
- *coordination* mechanisms, encouraging actors *inter alia* to take into account what other do, and to avoid double-work; to
- *harmonisation*, including for example the sharing of a common vision and the use of shared frameworks and procedures; until
- *pooling*, where the greatest intensity of integration is achieved through the definition of joint strategies, the implementation of joint interventions, the use of pooled resources, etc.

Figure 4. Different levels of integration intensity, its processes and means



Although these processes imply an increased intensity of integration, from consultation to pooling, they should not be seen in a linear way, nor as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, different processes at different levels may be in place at the same time. Moreover, these processes may be put in place either to define the integrated strategy or to implement it.

Depending on the processes chosen and the context of their implementation, the how-dimension should be further clarified in terms of means available and to be mobilised:

- what kind of *resources* are needed, either human, financial, technical, knowledge, etc.;
- what *instruments* are best suited for the implementation. These could go from the organisation of meetings, to more or less formal working groups and task forces, to the launch of call of proposals, the establishment of delegated cooperation agreements, etc.;
- what *time spans* should be covered, from short-, to mid- and long-term, according to the urgency and ambition of the strategy concerned.

The key question here is how deep should the integration go? Should any stepwise approach be considered? What activities may be prioritised to foster successful integration? Are there appropriate resources and instruments available? What should be planned at this regard? And what timelines are more realistic and feasible?

4. International experiences: what are the practice of other donors?

As said above, ICP is a Belgian label. An international comparison on the basis of this very terminology was thus not possible, as the evidence found covered slightly different practices. We rather focused on donor experiences with multi-stakeholder partnerships, involving the public, private and civil society actors and focused on development action, including its links with humanitarian assistance. We examine two cases in particular: that of Denmark, one of the country suggested by the OECD peer-review as being a relevant example for Belgium (20); and the case of The Netherlands, a donor amongst the most engaged in multi-stakeholders partnerships. For the two cases we use the framework described in the previous chapter and focus on the five dimensions proposed above: why to integrate, on what and

where, with who and how. For the who-dimension, we focus on the initiatives taken to improve partnerships with three groups of actors: civil society, the private sector, and multilateral organisations. For each group, we present the specific arguments advanced for partnering with them, who is targeted in particular, and how. Before exploring these two cases, we present an overview of lessons learned from international experiences with multi-stakeholder partnerships.

4.1. An overview of lessons learned from international experience

The progress report of the *Global partnership for effective development cooperation* provide with relevant lessons about implementing effective inclusive partnerships at national and international level (18). Mainly focused on partner country-level mechanisms, the lessons are actually valuable for any initiative aiming at strengthening collaborations between multiple actors. In particular, the report identifies the following conditions as essential to make mechanisms for multi-stakeholder dialogue succeed:

- the right political, legal, and regulatory environment, making sure that changes in government, laws and regulations provide effective opportunities for partnerships and do not weaken existing or initial joint processes;
- a clear, well-guided and institutionalised process, providing with clear roles and responsibilities for each of the stakeholders involved, a leading coordinator, and an appropriate timeframe;
- involving individuals and organisations that are legitimate and representative, and based on mutual trust;
- adequate resources both to initiate the dialogue and to sustain it in achieving the purposes fixed by the stakeholders;
- finally, acknowledgement of mutual benefit for all actors involved is key to the quality and sustainability of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

These conclusions reflect the results of the peer learning exercise performed by OECD in 2015 and 2016 to identify good practices and lessons in DAC members' partnerships with the private sector. In this framework, 27 donors participated to a survey exploring their priorities and practice, and four of them volunteered for a more in-depth peer review – Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United States (49). The preliminary findings provide insights about aid providers' experiences and best practice in engaging with the private sector, mostly in the framework of multi-stakeholder public-private partnerships, involving civil society, as well as international organisations. The main practice and lessons learned are synthesised in Table 6.

Table 6. Overview of DAC members experience in partnerships with the private sector

Why	- Leveraging private sector funds towards development-oriented investments	- Promoting collaboration between domestic and partner country private sector actors	- Enabling private sector development in partner countries
How - Processes	- Encouraging direct investment - Using development funds and mechanisms which target the private sector to address development challenges	- Supporting direct collaborations and joint ventures - Supporting partner country private sector while boosting domestic entrepreneurial activity - Focusing on corporate social responsibility	- Promoting a sound business environment - Addressing barriers to trade and market failures - Supporting small and medium enterprises
What	- Interventions mostly concentrate in the sector of economic infrastructure and services, notably energy generation and supply, as well as other infrastructure - Productive (mainly agriculture) and social sectors (health and education) are also targeted.		
Where	- Instruments are either open to all ODA-eligible countries or targeted at priority countries. - The trend is in prioritising African countries. - In some cases, least developed countries, low-income countries and fragile states are targeted.		
Who	- Mostly a mix of private sector actors from both DAC members and developing countries, and including multinational firms.		

	- Multi-stakeholder partnerships are most often mobilised, involving also governmental institutions in DAC members and developing countries; international organisations; non-profit organisations; research institutions		
How – Instruments	- Loans - Guarantees - Equity positions - Funds, including innovation or challenge funds working on a competitive basis and inviting applicants to identify solutions to particular development challenges - Blended concessional and non-concessional finance - Grants	- Business-to-business initiatives - Match-making initiatives <i>Involving</i> - Grants - Loans - Equity participation <i>Complemented by</i> - Support to feasibility studies, often prior to project funding	- Technical assistance - Financial assistance - Capacity development
Best practices	- <u>Key role of governmental cooperation in building the enabling environment</u>, for example making clear links between private sector engagement and private sector development, or between interventions supported in training and education and partnerships with private sector actors. - <u>Key role of governmental cooperation in facilitating dialogue</u> across sectors in order to identify shared solutions between different stakeholders, promote sustainable business practice, and to develop (multi-stakeholder) partnerships. - <u>Importance of combining financial and non-financial tools</u> (technical assistance, capacity development, knowledge sharing). - <u>Importance of flexibility</u> in the way the different tools may be engaged. - <u>Importance of setting development objectives first</u> and then identifying the partners best-fitted to achieve them, respecting the principle of untied aid. - <u>Considering resource requirements</u>, as more complex engagement mechanisms require greater human resources, in terms of staff numbers but also of skills and capacities needed to develop policy and manage its implementation - <u>Considering time requirements</u>, as organisational culture change takes time (i.e. developing shared languages, building trust between actors, etc.) - <u>Considering financial requirements</u>, as it may be useful to back up dialogue with financial resources to ensure concrete action, in particular if involving international organisations, research institutions and civil society organisations. - <u>Being transparent</u> about results expected and entry points for engagements. - <u>Visibility and clarity</u> of instruments available, including effective communication so that all partners understand the opportunities that exist and shared a common understanding of the strategy pursued. - <u>In fragile contexts: need for differentiated approaches</u> including specific mechanisms, incentives, and criteria to attract private sector partners + willingness to accept greater risks.		

Source: Synthesis made by the authors from (49).

4.2. The case of Denmark

Denmark's partnerships are built in the framework of a whole-of-society approach to development. If we look at the main rationale behind the promotion of inclusive partnerships, the new Denmark's strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action recently adopted beginning of this year, clearly anchors Danish development and humanitarian cooperation in a *whole-of-society approach* where partnerships emerge as the only possible response to the new global challenges of world development. As the strategy states from its introduction:

"Looking at Denmark in the international community, our strength is what Denmark contributes as a whole country. We will increasingly draw on all the assets of our society – knowledge, principles, values, competencies and strengths, public and private funding – in cooperation with authorities, civil society, businesses, cities, private foundations, pension funds, the financial sector and research institutions" (50).

And it is this spirit that the strategy itself was developed with inputs from all relevant development actors: the Danish civil society, interest groups, Danish businesses, and international partners. If this strategy is in line with recent international engagements, notably the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action and the SDGs – the strategy titles “*The world 2030*”, it actually represents a straight continuation of past Danish development strategies. Denmark has long been involved in building mutually binding partnerships with partner countries and has been strongly advocating for policy dialogue with other donors and implementation of the aid effectiveness principles (51). Moreover, its past strategy *The right to a better life* (2012) already supported inclusive partnerships in the framework of a human rights-based approach (52). By distinguishing between state actors “right-bearers” and non-state actors “right-holders”, the strategy provided support to the first through instruments aligned on country systems and budgets, while foreseeing the possibility of implementing programs through partnerships with the second, be they civil society or private sector actors. Also, Denmark’s commitment to partnership falls within its own social experience. The human rights-based approach promoted in 2012 laid on experience of social partners actively participating into Danish labour market (52). The new strategy aims to mobilise the competencies of different Danish actors in cooperation with partners in developing country and at international level (50).

Partnerships contribute to development priorities in line with Danish foreign and security policy.

Contrary to the past strategy, where policy coherence was encouraged, and efforts announced towards greater collaboration between development cooperation and other policies, namely foreign affair, security, and trade; the new strategy for development and humanitarian assistance is fully integrated within foreign and security policy. This is reflected in the thematic priorities set, which although remaining in line with Denmark’s cooperation tradition in favour of human rights and sustainable growth, integrate new concerns related to security and foreign affairs. Four strategic objectives are now defined: safety, peace and protection; prevention of irregular immigration; inclusive, sustainable growth; freedom, democracy, human rights and gender equality. A focus is also put on youth.

Denmark focuses on fragile contexts, where greater coherence is promoted between humanitarian and development assistance. In terms of geographic concentration, Denmark focuses on fragile contexts, notably in African countries with respect to its governmental cooperation (53). At this regard, Denmark has long been working towards greater coherence between development and humanitarian action. At policy level, today the new strategy goes a step further proposing the first joint strategy covering both streams. More operationally, different efforts have been made to favour coherence implementation. For example, staff from both streams share a common terminology, and priority is given to state-building in stabilisation processes implemented in fragile contexts (51). The new strategy provides different instruments (50), among which inter alia the following four:

- joint analysis and programming in countries where humanitarian assistance is also needed, in order to better align development and humanitarian interventions and to seek synergies;
- flexible long-term partnerships with Danish and international actors, based on effectiveness, quality and accountability to the beneficiaries;
- innovative solutions with multiple actors, including civil society, private sector, research institutions, multilateral organisations, etc.
- a regional approach to the interventions.

Despite the innovative approaches, last peer-review conducted by OCDE-DAC in 2016 warned Denmark’s from recent budget cuts to development assistance, even in the context of maintained, or even increased humanitarian budget. Budget cuts may reduce the capacity to address the long-term roots of fragility, as well as the capacity to coordinate and harmonise the two streams, amongst others because of the following reduction of human resources (including thematic/technical expertise) within the Ministry. The review also acknowledged the challenge to combine different funding instruments given that the implementation agencies at country level follow different programming cycles (51).

Multiple civil society actors are engaged through different and flexible mechanisms. Concerning the civil society organisations, they represent “*strategic high-priority partners in Denmark’s development cooperation and humanitarian action*” (50). As mentioned above, their engagement has been so far supported because of their role as rights-holders in improving both democratic governance and socio-economic development, as well as of their contribution in development education (52, 54). The new strategy also mentions, with respect to Danish CSOs in particular, their valuable rights-based work in the field of development and humanitarian cooperation, their growing engagement with business

towards more sustainable private investments, as well as their participation in international networks giving them the possibility to influence global development debates (50).

A broad range of CSOs are concerned, from small to large, from local to international organisations, both in partner countries and in Denmark. Among the criteria used to select them figure their mandate, legitimacy, accountability, their human rights approach and their capacity to achieve results (52). The new strategy seems to strengthen the focus on complementarities, requiring for example the organisations to prove their added-value. Innovation and new forms of inclusive partnerships are also sought, including with the private sector (50).

The variety of actors targeted correspond to a variety of instruments: joint mechanisms, specific funds, pooled funds, strategic partnership framework agreements, governance budget lines in country programs (54). Partnerships modalities are designed to ensure flexibility, predictability, and reduced transaction costs. Examples are multi-year partnerships involving multiple NGOs, receiving 2/3 of the annual budget at the beginning of each year and who are asked to report on results they achieve for the overall project and not merely for the specific Danish contribution (51). Today, the focus is also put on results. As a tool to ensure greater coherence between humanitarian and development assistance, a unique partnership agreement will be now established with each organisation working in both streams (50).

Multiple and flexible instruments exist for the private sector as well, but results are sometimes mixed. The worth of mobilising the private sector has been linked to its capacity to bring additional resources and provide with solutions fostering growth and poverty reduction through job creation and investments (52). Moreover, public-private partnerships are seen as a means to inspire new practice internationally, based on Danish values of sustainable society and business (50).

As for civil society, the private sector includes a variety of actors as well, such as businesses, investors, financial institutions, foundations, as well as public-private partnerships (50).

Several strategies are used to promote links with the private sector. At policy level, Danish development cooperation targets sectors where Denmark (and its multinational companies) has an international advantage, and where partner countries are more likely to mobilise domestic private resources (51). At operational level, different instruments exist, managed by DANIDA department for growth and employment. They are synthesised in Box 8.

Box 8. Danish partnership mechanisms for the private sector

- *Danida Market Development Partnerships*: support to innovative commercially oriented partnerships between (at a minimum) a private business and non-governmental actors, and promoting SDG8, i.e. sustainable economic growth and employment in developing countries;
- *Danida Business Contracts*: contract opportunities for private actors for the implementation of Danish development cooperation;
- *Danida Business Finance*: financial support through 10-year interest-free loans to Danish companies investing in sustainable infrastructure projects which are non-viable in market terms;
- *Danida Business Explorer*: financial support (grants) to Danish companies investigating specific business opportunities which contribute to SDGs, including possible contributions in humanitarian situations;
- *Danida Business Delegations*: export business promotions in developing countries.
- A program is currently being phased-out: *Danida Business Partnerships*. It offered financial support (grants) and technical assistance for partnerships having commercial purposes and embracing corporate social responsibility. It was suspended in 2014 after an evaluation shown little evidence of additionality and development benefits for the partner country, including improvement to business-enabling environment, job creation or growth.

Source: Danida business web page: <http://um.dk/en/danida-en/business/>

Besides those mentioned in Box 8, another key governmental instrument to leverage funds and investments in developing country is the *Investment fund for developing countries (IFU)*, which offers advisory services and risk capital to companies interested in doing business in low- and middle-income

countries. Today, it is IFU that manages blending finance. A joint committee with the Ministry of foreign affairs was put in place and meets regularly to improve coordination with companies and institutional investors and seek synergies (51).

To conclude, it is worth noting a series of recommendations that were raised by last OECD peer-review in relation to Danish partnership with the private sector. In particular, the need to clarify the added-value of private actors in implementing a development program; to avoid increasing the share of tied aid; to avoid fragmentation through multiple small supply-driven facilities; to favour demand-driven instead of supply-driven instruments; to maintain the pro-poor focus of development cooperation and balance between development and commercial goals; to ensure accountability and transparency on return on investments; to use human-rights based principles also for private sector programs (51).

Denmark is also strongly involved in partnership with multilateral organisations. At this regard, it should be noted that Denmark has been so far strongly committed to multilateralism. On the one hand, participating to multilateral organisations is conceived as serving Danish own interests in that it allows Denmark to directly promote its values and practices in terms of social models and development cooperation, and to better influence the international system and strategies, pushing for example towards improved coherence between international development and humanitarian action (50). On the other hand, in many contexts, multilateral organisations are considered as having greater legitimacy and political neutrality than bilateral donors, being thus better fitted to advocate for Danish core values related to social and institutional change, such as the promotion of human rights and sustainability (52, 55). Multilateral organisations also provide space for sharing resources and competencies, mutual learning and innovation, new partnerships and instruments (50, 52). Their relevance is also justified by current global challenges which demand global solutions (55).

Multilateral organisations are chosen based on their relevance and performance, but also considering division of labour and comparative advantages. This means focusing on organisations working in sectors or country where Denmark is less present, including as part of its development cooperation exit strategy, as well as on organisation best fitted to promote Danish priorities (51). The organisations assessment is based on MOPAN assessments.

Regarding the instruments used, the analysis of Danish multilateral cooperation held in 2013 identified core funding as the primarily funding modality used, earmarked contribution being limited to specific exceptional goals (55). Since then however, budget cuts have affected Denmark's contributions, and this in both cases (51). Moreover, the new strategy clearly shifted from Danish traditional approach to multilateral funding, announcing that *"to a greater extent than [...] done so far, [Denmark] we will also be targeting thematic and regional initiatives where [it] has special interests, strengths and is able to create added value (soft and hard earmarking of the funds)"* (56). To strengthen its partnership with multilateral organisations, Denmark also counts on: its active participation in organisations' governance structures; bilateral dialogue and initiatives; cooperation with like-minded partners through formal and informal groups, including multilateral representatives when relevant; networking and exchanges with Danes working in strategic positions within the organisations, and related to this, support to initiatives like the JPO program or UN City in Copenhagen (55). Finally, Denmark is currently testing a new format for Strategic Partnership Agreements with multilateral organisations which includes in a single comprehensive cooperation agreement all the different types of supports, from core and earmarked funding, to humanitarian and advisor support. This in order to promote a holistic approach to multilateral cooperation giving more global insight of Denmark entire contribution and allowing a more comprehensive basis for assessment and strategic dialogue (56).

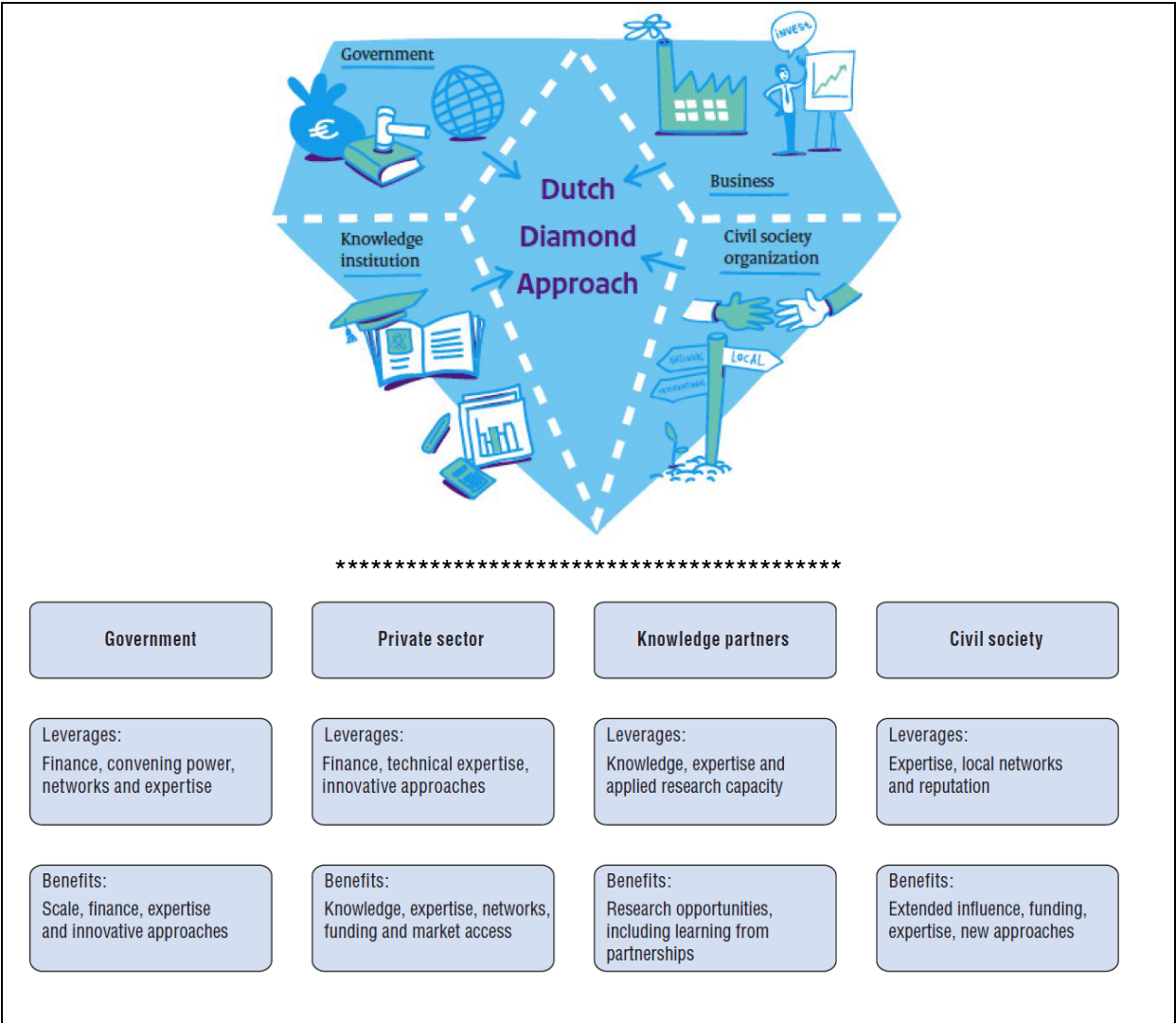
4.3. The case of the Netherlands

The Dutch diamond approach to partnership. The label of "Dutch diamond approach" refers to public-private partnerships between government, the private sector, civil society, and research institutions with the aim of promoting development through market-oriented investment. It is based on the assumption that working together can help reduce risks and increase development impact (57). As synthesised in Figure 5, each group of stakeholders brings in the partnership its own expertise and resources; the respective competences are enhanced and in turn all actors take advantage of them. A recent analysis of the Dutch Advisory council on international affairs suggested including a fifth stakeholder, namely the

financial institutions who, besides government, are also responsible of creating an enabling environment for the private sector, civil society and knowledge organisations (58).

Partnerships are a key part of Dutch joint policy for development cooperation and foreign trade. Currently, the Netherlands’ development cooperation is guided by the overarching policy adopted in 2013 *A world to gain*, which defines a common agenda for aid, trade, and investment (59). This is based on the acknowledgment that low- and middle-income countries are both recipients and commercial partners, and that aid relationships can move to trade relationships depending on the country specific context, generating benefits both for the partner country and the Netherlands. This explains the stress put on the involvement of the private sector. At the same time, the strategy also underlines that although market is essential in the fight against poverty, it does not by itself leads to sustainable and inclusive growth; the intervention of government and civil society is also necessary to reduce inequalities and promote human rights. In this sense, the promotion of multi-stakeholder partnership is thus inherent to the threefold aim of the joint policy: to eradicate extreme poverty; to achieve sustainable, inclusive growth; and to ensure success to Dutch companies abroad.

Figure 5. The Dutch diamond approach to partnerships



Sources: (57) and (49)

Partnerships also fall within the shift of Dutch development cooperation towards a thematic focus. Indeed, they are in line with the will to promote new, more hybrid forms of cooperation, away from the traditional distinction between governmental, non-governmental and multilateral cooperation.

Multi-stakeholder initiatives are considered as key to tackle specific development issues, in particular the four thematic priorities of Dutch cooperation: food security; sexual and reproductive health and rights; security and rule of law; water management. These have been chosen among the areas in which Dutch actors have major comparative advantages and because of the need to rationalise the scope of development policy that has followed recent budget cuts. Partnerships are also build around three cross-cutting themes: gender equality, climate, and environment. *A world to gain* also emphasises the importance of international public goods (IPGs), global issues or goods that affect or that should be available to everyone, and that call for transnational multi-stakeholder interventions and agreements. Besides three thematic priorities (water, food security, security and rule of law) and a cross-cutting theme (climate), IPG also include trade and migration (59).

Priority is given to humanitarian aid as well. At this regard, the priority given to security and rule of law aims to address the underlying causes of fragility and to promote resilience of partner countries. The variety of instruments and multi-year funding allow the Netherlands enough flexibility to link humanitarian responses to more long-term development-related interventions. The institutional organisation also enhances this coherence, as the humanitarian budget is managed by the *humanitarian and stabilisation department*, which is also in charge of stabilisation fund and migration management. However, according to last OECD-DAC peer-review the boundaries between humanitarian and development assistance in complex crises are not very clear yet and would benefit from clarification. Moreover, country strategies do not cover the entire set of interventions funded, thus undermining improved coherence between the two streams (60).

Box 9. The Dutch Relief Fund and Alliance

A new instrument for humanitarian assistance was put in place in 2014, the *Dutch Relief Fund*, providing additional funding to humanitarian budget, disbursed either as multi-year un-earmarked or softly earmarked allocations to NGOs and multilateral organisations, or to support emergency interventions. In this framework, a pilot financing mechanism was launched in 2015, the *Dutch Relief Alliance*, a coalition of 14 Dutch aid organisations with different structures, resources, and expertise, which directly manages and administers part of the Fund's budget (120 million € for the period 2015-2017). This initiative responds to concerns about effectiveness, but also to capacity constraints within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Members formally agreed to work together around common objectives and within *Joint Responses*, which are in fact funded on a crisis-by-crisis case to a single lead agency, the latter being responsible for negotiating the funding agreement with the MFA and for distributing the budget among the members. A recent mid-term evaluation of the *Alliance* showed positive results, such as the capacity to quickly submit proposals and to intervene in a large number of crises; efficiency gains for the MFA in dialogue, contracting and monitoring; efficiency gains for the NGOs themselves, thanks to increased funding predictability and reduced fundraising burden; a cultural shift from competition to collaboration, and mutual learning and information sharing among the members. On the other hand, challenges and constraints remain, among which the fact that efficiency gains concern mainly the headquarter and the organisations' levels, rather than the operational and the beneficiaries' levels; the risk of developing multiple small-scale interventions; the difficulty to integrate innovation in short-term action. Most of all, the evaluation stresses the importance of clarifying the overall vision of what is to be achieved in terms of effectiveness (what added-value is in fact targeted?) and of linking it to the effective boundaries of the *Alliance* interventions.

Source: (61) and www.dutchreliefalliance.org.

Multi-stakeholder partners are mobilised depending on the relationship established with the partner countries. Dutch development cooperation has been reoriented towards 15 low-income countries, which are classified between countries where an *aid relationship* is predominant, namely fragile contexts, and countries where a *transitional relationship* is possible, based both on aid and trade. Depending on the context, the kind of partners involved are slightly different, with humanitarian NGOs more engaged in the first group of countries and the private sector more involved in the second group for example. Moreover, looking at the different instruments in place, funds directed to civil society, the private sector, or multilateral organisations, actually cover a broader range of low- and low-to-middle income countries (59).

More strategic partnerships with civil society are sought, notably within the four priorities of Dutch cooperation. Civil society organisations are considered to be key actors for development as they can make governments and the private sector accountable, promote human rights, and work on areas and with people more difficult to reach for governments (59).

CSO partners are selected based on their added-value and in the framework of innovative partnerships between Dutch and Southern organisations, the role of the first needing to be renewed, given the emergence of a stronger local civil society, but also the restrictions remaining to their mobilisation in many developing countries. Partnerships between civil society and the private sector are also promoted.

About the instruments used, the Netherlands has recently reviewed its funding modalities to CSO, moving away from the previous practice of core-funding and seeking more strategic partnerships, having a clear added-value, better aligned on Dutch policy priorities, and providing reduced administrative burdens (60). Several mechanisms exist. Up to 9 programs are listed in the Ministry website for the period 2016-2020, providing CSO with grants for interventions focused on specific issues, such as women and sexual and reproductive health and rights, mine action, the root causes of conflict, local employment, medicines development, capacity strengthening in lobbying and advocacy (see Box 10). Besides these grant programs, CSO can also be funded in the framework of public-private partnerships. Moreover, we already mentioned above the *Dutch relief fund* (cf. Box 9), as an example of funding program for humanitarian action. Aside from financial instruments, policy dialogue is also clearly identified as a key way to promote an enabling environment for civil society mobilisation in partner countries, but also at international level (59).

Box 10. The Dutch “Dialogue and Dissent” policy framework for lobbying and advocacy

The *Dialogue and dissent* policy framework was introduced in 2014 to strengthen CSOs’ in LMIC in their role as advocates and lobbyists. It supports strategic partnerships between the MFA and CSOs providing an added-value to influence policy change. Each partnership involves at least one Dutch NGO with proven competencies and experience in lobbying, advocacy, and capacity building. Partners are also selected based on the quality of the theory of change underpinning the partnership; and so to cover the different topics set out in the policy agenda for foreign trade and development cooperation. Program proposals are submitted for grant based on prior discussion between the Minister and the CSO on joint strategic goals, respective roles, and responsibilities. For the period 2016-2020, 25 organisations or consortiums were selected for projects ranging from 2 to 20 million € and implemented either in developing countries, at international level, or in the Netherlands. If clear agreements are taken at strategic level (role, tasks, responsibilities, communication policy, etc.), partners maintain sufficient freedom at operational level and acknowledge the possibility not to work together if this is not possible or necessary. The agreement content is also quite general, so to be adapted if necessary. Moreover, each year 1% of the budget goes into a flexible fund to finance current urgent issues.

Two funds complement the *Dialogue and dissents* partnerships:

- *Voice*, a fund intended to strengthen the lobbying and advocacy capacity of the most marginalised and discriminated groups in LMIC. The fund is managed by a consortium between Oxfam Novib and Hivos.
- The *Accountability fund*, launched in 2016 to support local CSO to fulfil their monitoring and watchdog functions. This fund is managed by the Embassies, which have great flexibility in selecting partners and activities.

Source: (62) and <https://www.voice.global/>

A final remark on civil society. If the recent reform of Dutch non-governmental cooperation aimed to enhance CSOs’ civil and non-governmental nature – and thus their independence from governmental funding, the reduction in the budget available for CSO programs is also related to significant overall budget cuts to development cooperation. It should be noticed that, following the reform, funds are mostly channelled through CSO rather than to them. Moreover, they are mostly allocated to Dutch organisations rather than to Southern ones (60).

Research institutions are also involved in the framework of knowledge multi-stakeholder platforms and PPPs. This particular kind of civil society organisations is specifically targeted for the

role it plays in providing teaching and knowledge key to support policy in leading Dutch sectors and to find solutions to global problems (59).

Research institutions are involved primarily in the framework of the knowledge platforms that have been set up in 2012 for each of the four priorities of Dutch development cooperation. These include a variety of actors, from policy-makers to the private sector, from think tanks to universities, from international institutions to CSOs. An additional cross-cutting platform, *Include*, focuses on how to ensure fairer, more sustainable economic growth in Africa; it is the only one that involves researchers from African countries as well. Research institutions are also involved in the framework of the public-private partnerships funded.

A wide range of instruments exist to support private sector development and investments in LMIC. As already said, the private sector is a key partner of the Netherlands' joint policy agenda for development and foreign trade, as a driver of economic growth in developing country and for the development of Dutch sectors.

The Netherlands has been among the first donors using public finance to attract private sector investment in developing countries. A wide range of instruments are used, which can be distinguished between those for private sector development in developing countries and those for trade and investments by Dutch companies wishing to do business in developing countries. Table 7 synthesises examples of instruments available to support private sector development in LMIC. An example of instrument to support trade with and development-related investment in developing country is the *Dutch good growth fund* (DGGF), which provides small- and medium-sized enterprises both in developing countries and in the Netherlands with funds for exports and local-investments. Most of the funds available for public-private partnerships are managed by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO). They are coordinated by an expertise centre, which is also responsible for making the overall PPP policy and drawing lessons from experience.

Table 7. Examples of Dutch instruments supporting private sector development in LMIC

Purpose	Instrument	Short description
Increase access to markets for entrepreneurs from developing countries	- CBI – Centre for the promotion of imports from developing countries	- It helps small and medium-sized partnerships in LMIC to gain access to the EU market and to emerging markets in the South
Ensure reliable official bodies and other organisations	- PMU - Netherlands senior experts programme - DECP – Dutch Employers Cooperation Programme	- It provides local entrepreneurs with expert advice - It strengthens the position of business member organisations in developing countries
Develop good infrastructure	- IDF - Infrastructure development fund - DRIVE - Development Related Infrastructure Investment Vehicle	- It supports private investment in infrastructure financing inclusive companies and paying attention to climate mitigation - It facilitates investments in infrastructure that contribute towards a good business climate and entrepreneurship in the priority areas of Dutch development cooperation
Facilitate access to financial services	- HIF - Health Insurance Fund	- It offers affordable health insurance to people in Africa

Source: Synthesis made by the authors.

We conclude on the private sector mentioning some of the concerns raised by last OECD-DAC peer-review about the Netherlands support to and partnership with private actors. One concern is the multiplication of instruments and the few links between them, which increases aid fragmentation and administrative burden, while decreasing coherence of and clarity on Dutch cooperation objectives both for the partner country and the staff itself, notably at Embassy level. A second concern relates to the tendency towards supply-driven programs at the expense of demand-driven ones, what decreases ownership and alignment on partner countries' priorities. Finally, a remaining challenge of public-private

partnerships is to prove additionality of private funds with respect to public ones, the distinction between the different cofunding being not always clear (60).

Partnerships with multilateral organisations have been reoriented on Dutch thematic priorities.

The Netherlands is strongly engaged in international organisations, which are considered as key in addressing transnational problem, setting agenda on global issues, supporting sustainable economic and social development, intervening in conflict resolution and coordinating peace operations (59). Participating on the board of multilateral organisations is also a means to influence the international agenda and drive change, including in relation to humanitarian assistance or support to the private sector (60).

Following the recent budget cuts, funding and engagement of Dutch cooperation have been reoriented on the thematic priorities set out by the policy agenda and where Dutch actors can bring clear added value. Besides the compulsory and voluntary contributions directly disbursed to the international organisations, these are also eligible to Dutch thematic programs. The Netherlands also engages increasingly in international multi-stakeholder initiatives. For example, it co-chaired the Global partnership for effective development cooperation (GPEDC) between 2014 and 2016. Table 8 lists some examples of Dutch support to international initiatives or organisations strengthening the private sector in LMIC.

Table 8. Examples of Dutch support to international initiatives for private sector development in LMIC

Purpose	Instrument	Short description
Increase access to markets for entrepreneurs from developing countries	- TMEA - Trade Mark East Africa	- A not-for profit Company Limited by Guarantee funded by several development agencies to promote East African exports and regional trade
Favour good legislation	- Advisory centre on WTO Law	- An international organisation giving developing countries legal advice in the event of trade conflicts
Develop good infrastructure	- PIDG - Private infrastructure development group	- A multi-donor fund that mobilises private sector investments to assist developing countries in providing infrastructures

Source: Synthesis made by the authors.

If innovative partnerships are put in place, the downside is increased fragmentation and tied aid, as well as reduced ownership and accountability. The efforts the Netherlands have made so far towards improved coherence between its development and foreign trade policies, as well as between the different cooperation channels, are in line with recent international engagements, like the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action. However, last OECD-DAC peer-review brings attention, inter alia, to four critical points that weakness commitments made towards aid effectiveness principles (60). These more general points are of interest as they show some of the challenges to consider when implementing more integrated approaches. First, broadening development cooperation to trade policy may be at the expense of development objectives, and may raise the share of tied aid. Attention should thus be paid to better balance development and trade objective, in order to maintain aid untied and not to lose the focus on poverty reduction. Second, the Netherlands increasingly takes a centrally-driven approach, where budget is managed from the headquarter with limited opportunities for national government to inputs into decisions, and the risk of undermining country ownership. Third, if the tender approach currently favoured has promoted partnerships with several Dutch actors and the development of innovative funding models, at the same time it has increased fragmentation of the cooperation program and has reduced alignment on country systems. Interlinked with this centralised approach, a last point is that the multi-year country strategies the Netherlands agree with the partner country do not include all the interventions effectively funded in the country, reducing transparency, and mutual accountability, as well as opportunities to improve coherence between humanitarian and development assistance in contexts concerned by both streams, as already mentioned above. A unique comprehensive country strategy may address this constraint.

Part 2: Survey results

As stated in the introduction of this evidence paper, the second part of this research is based on a survey sent out to numerous stakeholders both within and outside the Belgium development community. Its objective is to shed some light on the perceptions of actors regarding Belgium formal and informal practices of an ICP approach. In this section, we present the results of this survey and analyse its content.

In order to investigate the perceptions, practices, and references of Belgian actors (public, private, and civil society) involved in Belgian foreign policy, a survey was carried out between June and September 2017⁵. Respondents were contacted by email and asked to fill an online questionnaire. The latter and the presentation of the survey sent to respondents can be found in appendix 1.

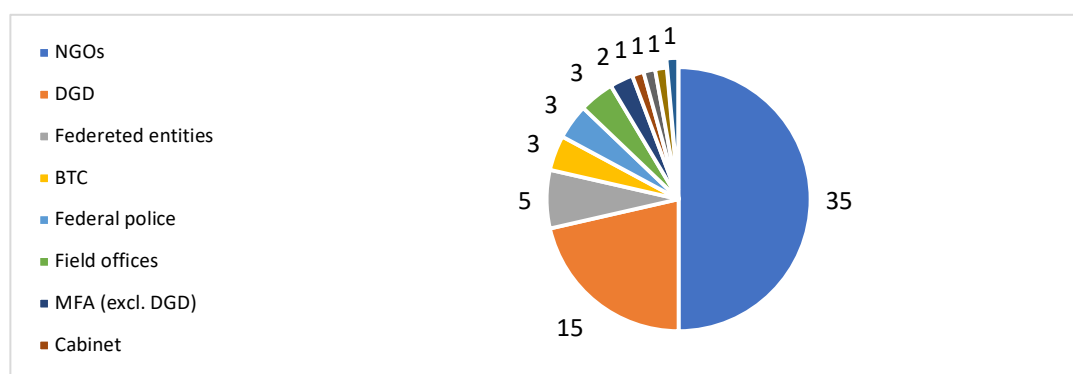
Methodologically, we analysed the answers provided by the participants through filtering, regrouping and sometimes interpreting or translating its substance (note: surveys have been responded to in English, Dutch and French). It is therefore a qualitative analysis of the answers provided. The elements presented in the tables below are not the exhaustive list of the latter but rather a synthesis of the major responses regrouped by the authors in different categories.

1. Respondents to the survey

A total of 70 persons took part in the survey specifically related to ICP. 35 persons filled in the standalone survey on ICP and 35 the questionnaire combining ICP and 3D-LO/Comprehensive approach sections.

NGOs (35x) and DGD (15x) are more represented, as shown in Figure 6. Other participants include personnel from the federated entities (5x), the BTC (3x), the federal police (3x), the field offices (3x), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (excl. DGD, 2x), the cabinet (1x), Bio (1x) and European External Action Service – EUCAP mission in the Sahel - Mali (1x). One survey was filled out anonymously.

Figure 6. Distribution of respondents based on their organization.



The profile of the respondents is detailed in the table below.

⁵ Survey results for the 3D-LO / CA part of the questionnaire are presented in a second evidence paper, which can be downloaded on G4D website: www.governance4development.org (ACROPOLIS evidence paper on a Comprehensive approach for Belgian development cooperation).

Table 9. Institutional origin of the respondents to the survey

Institution	Direction / Services / Organisation (number of respondents between brackets)
Direction of Development Cooperation (DGD) (15)	D1.2 West Africa and the Arab world (1), D2 Thematic Direction (1), D2.2 Inclusive growth (1), D2.3 Social development (1), D2.4 Climate, environment and natural resources (2), D3.2 Civil society North and West Africa, Arab world (1), D3.3 Civil society Central and Southern Africa (1), D3.4 Civil society Asia and Latin America (1), D4.2 Management of quality and results (2), D5 Humanitarian aid and transition (1), D5.1 Humanitarian aid (2), D5.2 Transitional development and governance (1)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (2)	Finexpo (1), S4 Office of the Special Evaluator (1)
Cabinet (1)	Cabinet Minister for Development cooperation (1)
Field offices (3)	Burkina Faso (1), Niger (1), USA/Washington (1)
BTC (3)	Governance (2), Health (1)
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) (+ 4de Pijler) (35)	11.be (4), Action in Development (1), ADG (1), Broederlijk Delen (2), Caritas (1), Croix-Rouge de Belgique (1), Echos communication (1), Fairtrade Belgium (1), FINADO (1), Friends of Tamiha (1), G3M-M3M (1), NGO Federatie (2), IIAV/CSC (1), Iles de Paix (2), MEMISA (1), Miel Maya Honing (1), MSI/CGSLB (1), Ondernemers voor ondernemers (1), Oxfam (3), S-EAU-S-SAHEL (4de Pijler) (1), SOS Faim (2), Trias (2), VECO (2), WSM (1)
Federal Police (3)	CGI-EEAS détaché (1), CGI-DCAF détaché (1), Directie Internationale Politiesamenwerking (1),
Federated entities (5)	Vlaamse overheid/BuZa (1), VLIR-UOS (3), VVOB (1)
Others (3)	Anonymous (1), Bio (1), EUCAP Sahel Mali (1)

2. Awareness of steps taken by Belgium towards an ICP

Question: Are you aware of the steps Belgium is taking towards an integrated country approach? If so, can you describe what steps have been taken?

2.1. Awareness

A large majority of respondents answered positively to the question on their awareness of the ongoing process towards an ICP. 55 out of 70 respondents say they are aware of the steps taken by Belgium in that direction (78,6%).

Among the 15 respondents that answered not being aware of those steps, 9 are from the group of NGOs (25,7%), 4 are from the Direction of Development Cooperation (26,7%), 1 from Finexpo and 1 who answered anonymously.

This level of awareness should be qualified by the description of those steps made by the respondents which reveals a high diversity of perceptions on what actually contributes, in their view, to the development of an ICP.

2.2. Steps taken by Belgium

Answers from the respondents can be grouped in different categories that can be linked to different dimensions presented in the first part of this paper (why-, what-, where-, who- and how-dimensions, see part 1, section 3). Before presenting the different categories of answers (see also Table 10), it is important to stress that the most frequent step mentioned by respondents was by far the process of production of the Joint context analysis (JCA) and Joint strategic framework (JSF).

1. **The why- and what-dimensions.** The production of strategic documents and the promotion of new approaches were mentioned by the respondents. As stressed above, the reference to JCA and JSF is predominant but the adoption of the new law on cooperation (incl. a reference to “integrated policy”), new strategic notes and the rights-based approach were also seen as steps towards an ICP.
2. **The where-dimension.** Respondents referred to the reduction of the number of partner countries of Belgian development cooperation as another step, arguably through the higher concentration of Belgian actors in the same regions this reduction should bring about.
3. **The who-dimension.** On this dimension, the inclusion of new actors, especially the promotion of the role of the private sector is the key element mentioned by respondents.
4. **The how-dimension.** This dimension encompasses the highest diversity of answers. Respondents mentioned: 1) programmes (esp. the now closed Belgian Fund for Food Security programmes) and procedures (new instructions to Embassies for pre-analysis, joint programming in EU context); 2) coordination mechanisms (closer relations between BTC and Embassies, information and concertation initiatives (notably the Fora of Belgian actors); 3) institutional reforms, in particular the Enabel reform; 4) research and mobilisation of expertise for policy support (ACROPOLIS G4D research).

In conclusion, the analysis of the answers provided by the respondents raises two key points. First, steps have been taken but the development of an **ICP is a process and lessons have to be learned** from recent experiences (esp. the JCA and JSF, see section 3 below). Second, this process is characterised by an important institutional reform (Enabel reform) and much will depend on the **choices made regarding current actors’ roles, missions and resources** and the **actual implementation** of the reform.

Table 10. Categorisation and major responses – Steps taken by Belgium

Categories	Major responses
Strategic documents/approach	• JCA/JSF (most frequent answer) • New law on cooperation (2016: “integrated policy” reference) • New strategic notes have been adopted (environment, gender, fragility) • New strategic notes are under development (comprehensive approach, not adopted at the time of the survey) • Rights-based approach
Geographic focus	• Reduction of partner countries
Inclusion of new actors	• Promotion of private sector
Programmes/procedures	• BFFS (stopped) • New instructions to Embassies for pre-analyse “requiring holistic view on all channels of BE development cooperation” (Tanzania, Senegal, Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso, Palestine)

Categories	Major responses
	Joint programming in EU context (Niger)
Coordination mechanisms	- Closer relations BTC/Embassies - Periodic concertation with different entities (notably Flanders) (e.g. Afrika overleg) “Forum des acteurs belges de cooperation”/Field cooperation programme meetings
Institutional reforms	Enabel reform (ongoing, will be key variable but uncertainty)
Research/Policy support	ACROPOLIS G4D research

3. Relevant experiences and lessons learned on ICP

Question: Can you share any relevant experiences (good practices but also failures, lessons learned) that can contribute to an integrated country approach? By Belgian actors/By international actors

3.1. Belgian actors

By far, the two most frequent answers to this question are (1) the production of the JCA and JSF and (2) the (now closed) Belgian Fund for Food Security (BFFS). **JCA and JSF** are largely seen as a potentially positive exercise for the development of an integrated country approach. Yet, the actual organisation of the elaboration process and the meagre use of the documents produced lead the respondent to a mixed assessment (see Box 6 in part 1). The **BFFS** is presented by the respondents as a very positive experience of a multi-stakeholder approach where complementary organisations group resources and expertise around a specific and shared goal (e.g. in Tanzania, Mali). They tend to explicitly regret the end of the instrument (see Box 7 in part 1) and refer to it when reflecting on the guiding principles of an ideal ICP (see section 4.1 below).

Respondents also mentioned other specific experiences at different levels.

- Specific **programmes** are presented as good examples of coordination and collaboration between Belgian development actors. It is for example the case of synergies sought after by BTC, APEFE and VVOB in Rwanda (2010-2015). Some attempts at such coordination have failed though, notably because of incompatibility between planning cycles (e.g. basis allocation “Synergie” in Senegal during the period 2011-2015, when NGAs closed their programmes before the actual implementation of BTC activities). The possibility for Embassies to launch calls for proposals is also seen as positive as it allows for addressing policy priorities in coherence with existing programmes.
- Regarding the **geographic focus**, the issue of **concentration** is raised by several respondents. The selection of the concentration region in Senegal is seen by a respondent as positive because it was based on the presence of a large number of NGAs. On the opposite, the choice of Centre-East region in Burkina Faso is criticised because NGAs are least present there. More largely, the focus on fewer partner countries and fragile contexts (Belgium) or a specific region and **development priorities** (South-Africa and one sector only per country for Flanders) is seen as a good practice by some respondents.
- Participation** of all development actors and **information-sharing** are the last focus of respondents regarding experiences in relations with the development of an ICP. They mention the organisation of interdepartmental meetings with representatives of different ministries but also different departments (development, humanitarian affairs) (e.g. Sahel, Palestine); the Fora of BE actors and the participation of NGAs in the elaboration of thematic approaches (such as Decent work) or the formulation of new cooperation programmes. This participation is seen as a good practice yet many respondents stress that it is often “artificial”, not inclusive enough (fourth pillar actors, diaspora), too short, not enough transparent (documents circulated too late,

not enough feedback), not enough taken into account for decision or during the final arbitrage at the level of the cabinet (e.g.: choice of Centre East region in Burkina Faso).

It can be noted that experiences of collaboration and coordination between actors (e.g. NGAs and BTC) are seen more positively or negatively depending on the **specific contexts or programmes** experienced by the respondents. Detailed case studies could contribute to better identify the factors conducive to collaboration and coordination.

3.2. International actors

Respondents tend to answer this question focusing on the links and collaborations their own organisation developed with **similar actors** from other countries or international organisations and platforms. While some respondents indicate that several European donors are following this **new orientation** (e.g. Austria; the Netherlands – see part 1, section 4.3 –; Denmark – see part 1, section 4.2 –; Luxembourg), few concrete elements regarding experiences of integrated country approach adopted by international actors are mentioned.

Most of those elements concern:

1. **Integrated approaches/instruments**: for instance, the International Federation of Red Cross Community Resilience Guidance, the Fonds Commun Education in Burundi, the One UN Strategy/Delivering as One, the EU Civilian Crisis Management Missions (e.g. in Mali).
2. **Donors thematic platforms**: for instance, the Agricorn network.
3. **Information-sharing** practices for achieving better complementarity and division of labour: for instance, the EU info sessions in Senegal or the Trade Union development cooperation network.

Interestingly, respondents stress that the success of such approaches in the past **varied largely according to the context** (e.g. One UN Strategy). Among the **negative experiences**, they also raised the instrumentalisation of civil society organisations through donors' call for proposals and the risk of putting development goals after the donor's foreign policy objectives within some integrated country approach such as the USAID's country development cooperation strategy.

4. The ideal ICP

Question: How should an integrated country approach ideally look like?

What should be guiding **principles** or **objectives**?

What **actors** should be involved?

How should **cooperation** between actors be organised?

4.1. Guiding principles and objectives

This question mainly addresses the “**why- and what-dimensions**” discussed in the first part of the paper. Overarching guiding principles mentioned by respondents are notably the principles for intervening in fragile contexts (such as Do no Harm, Start from context, long term perspective, alignment on the partners policies) and the SDGs Agenda. Regarding the issue of integration more specifically, the answers of the respondents clearly point to a **tension** between on the one hand the need to build “**commonalities**” and on the other the importance of respecting the **autonomy** of the different stakeholders.

1. Many respondents stress the importance of starting from a **common objective** and to gather actors in relation with that shared goal. Indeed, integration is largely seen by the participants to the survey as an instrument or modality and not as a goal per se. This implies

the construction of a clear and transparent vision, a common understanding of context, and for some respondents even a common approach.

2. Others, insisted on the need to recognise the **autonomy** of the different actors, their different roles and visions. They tend to argue that an ICP should be based on a search for voluntary division of labour and complementarity rather than similarity and should not be used as a way to control NGAs. In that perspective, the key principles mentioned by the respondents are: ownership, bottom-up processes, transparency, information-sharing and participation.

4.2. Actors to be involved

This question addresses the “**who-dimension**” of an integrated country approach. Different answers are given by respondents. Some focus on traditional Belgian development actors, while others mention very specific Belgian actors (such as diaspora, 4th Pillar, trade unions) or non-Belgian actors (such as local civil society). Grouping all the answers in different categories would produce a quite exhaustive mapping of all potentially relevant actors:

- **Belgian development actors**
 - Governmental
 - Federal administrations of the 3D (DGD, MFA, MoD)
 - Other Federal Ministries
 - Federal cabinets
 - Federated and decentralised entities
 - Belgian Embassies
 - Non-governmental
 - BTC/Enabel
 - BIO
 - NGOs
 - IAs (incl. universities)
 - Private sector
 - Trade unions
 - 4th Pillar
 - Diaspora
- **Non-Belgian actors**
 - EU (including EU Delegations)
 - Other bilateral Donors
 - Multilateral actors (UN agencies, regional organisations)
 - Partner countries
 - National authorities
 - Local authorities
 - Local civil society and NGOs

The most interesting lessons to be learnt from those answers are probably to be found in the comments made by the respondents regarding the principles for selecting the actors that should be involved and their specificities.

- **Principles for selection.** Several respondents stress that actors should be selected on the basis of their added-value, comparative advantage and specific expertise in a given context (“fit for purposeness”); others, raising once again the issue of autonomy, insist on the need to ensure that integration is voluntary when common objectives are pursued.
- **Actor specificities.** Humanitarian actors’ specificities, in particular the need to ensure their (real and perceived) independence, was mentioned several times, as was the importance to take into account the very different resources of the actors and the need to go beyond Belgian actors.

4.3. Organisation of the cooperation between actors

This question addresses the “**how-dimension**” of an integrated country approach. The answers provided by the respondents clearly stress two key issues that need to be addressed: 1) the leadership and the roles of the different actors and 2) the type of cooperation mechanisms and instruments.

1. **Leadership and actors’ roles.** Several respondents insisted on the necessity to identify leading actors and to clearly share labour and responsibilities according to clear goals and the actors’ specific expertise, comparative advantage and added-value. The importance of identifying leaders (and possibly sub-leaders for specific sectors or themes) is notably linked to lessons learned from the JCA and JSF exercises.

Yet, diverging answers were given to the questions “what should be done”, “by whom” and “at what level”. The need for a facilitation role was often put forward. In a context characterised by some lack of trust (see section 5.2. on weaknesses), it is not surprising that a key responsibility of this **neutral facilitator** or broker is seen as reducing inequalities between actors, recognising the role of every actors and taking into account their interests and preferences. Most respondents saw the **administration** (DGD) as the best fitted actor to take on this role. Some respondents called for a strong role to be given to **different departments according to the contexts** (e.g. Diplomacy in Tunisia, Defense in Iraq and Development cooperation in Burkina Faso), or to the **Embassy** – and more broadly to the field level.

2. Type of **cooperation mechanisms** and **instruments**. Formal and informal, as well as compulsory and optional mechanisms were mentioned by the respondents, illustrating the large diversity of opinions on this issue. It is yet interesting to note that a balance could be searched for between hard and soft mechanisms depending on their importance for ensuring a more integrated approach. On the one hand, many insisted on the need to be flexible, to opt for light and more strategic than administrative mechanisms. On the other hand, some respondents stressed the need to develop strict and systematic mechanisms for information sharing, long term and strategic dialogue or transparent communication. In terms of instruments, some existing formats were mentioned as positive experiences to be maintained or relaunched (Fora of Belgian actors in the field, JSF, calls for proposals issued by the Embassies). New instruments were also called for such as multi-actors platforms in the cooperation countries that could notably contribute to promote the capitalisation of expertise and lessons sharing from innovative interventions and the identification of synergies. Respondents also underlined that implementing increased cooperation requires resources that must be made available and stressed the opportunities linked with the use of information technology.

5. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Risks

Question: In your opinion, what are the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks** related to implementing an integrated country approach?

5.1. Strengths

The analysis of the answers provided by the participants on the strengths related to the implementation of an integrated country approach can be classified in different categories. An ICP is seen as: (1) increasing the **legitimacy** of interventions; (2) increasing **efficiency and effectiveness**; (3) increasing **resources**; (4) increasing **coordination and coherence**; (5) increasing **transparency and communication**; (6) improving Belgian **reputation** and visibility. Table 11 synthesises the specific strengths associated to these 6 categories.

Table 11. Categorisation and major responses – Strengths

Categories	Major responses
Legitimacy	• More democracy • Programmes based on a shared strategic vision • More participation taking into account the needs of all stakeholders • More control by the Belgian State
Efficiency and effectiveness	• More impact • More effectiveness • More efficiency • More scale-effects • More sustainable
Resources	• More funds • Less wastage of resources • Less overhead costs
Coordination and coherence	• More concertation • More coherence of policies • More synergy • More de-compartmentalisation • More division of labour • Less overlap • Less competition • Less contradictions • Multi-disciplinary approach in line with context complexity
Transparency and communication	• More experience sharing • Building of mutual knowledge • More information sharing
Reputation	• Better reputation for Belgium as a cooperation actor • More impact and leverage to convince and influence the partner • More visibility for Belgium cooperation

5.2. Weaknesses

From the variety of individual answers, the following categories of weaknesses can be presented as the main obstacles to the development of an integrated country approach: (1) the lack of a (common) **vision**; (2) the existence of different **interests**; (3) the **lack of trust** between actors; (4) the **limited implementation** of the approach; (5) the **institutional obstacles** and (6) the **transaction and coordination costs**. Table 12 synthesises the specific weaknesses associated to these 6 categories.

Table 12. Categorisation and major responses – Weaknesses

Categories	Major responses
Lack of (common) vision	• No strategic vision • Different theories of change • Different organisational cultures • Different philosophies/values • Lack of mutual knowledge • “Lowest common denominator” agreements
Different interests	• Competition within sector • Different agendas • Less visibility for individual actors • Lack of willingness • BE-centered, need to take into account local and international actors • Partner countries prefer silos
Lack of trust	• Fear of instrumentatisation (esp. from NGOs) • No level playing field, No equal actors, power imbalance • “Top-down” imposed process • Different roles of the different actors, but not considered as important • No open/transparent communication/hidden agendas
Limited implementation	• Slow and complex process • Administrative process, enforced, with no real value-added • No evidence it works/delivers • Simple addition of individual programmes • Unrealistic expectations
Institutional obstacles	• Different time horizons/programming cycles • Difficult to harmonise with EU Joint Programming • Lack of institutional channels for information-sharing
Transaction and coordination costs	• Less autonomy • Less innovation (“low hanging fruits”) • Too many compromises • Too time consuming • Too many actors/too many sectors • Less flexible • Less quick reaction • Too complex • Transactions/coordination costs

5.3. Opportunities

Respondents’ answers in regards to the opportunities of implementing an integrated country approach can be divided between internal (in the sense of Belgian) and external opportunities. Internal opportunities are identified as deriving: 1) at a strategic level, from the current and foreseeable political commitment and context and 2) at a more operational level, from a) the recent steps (esp. JCA and

JSF) and current institutional reforms (esp. Enabel reform), b) the new relations between development actors in that context and c) the search for more efficiency.

External opportunities mentioned by the respondents can be linked with the international context and notably the existing SDGs Agendas and the potential development of EU Joint programming. More details about both types of opportunities are given in Table 13.

Table 13. Categorisation and major responses – Opportunities

Categories	Major responses
Internal opportunities	<u>Political commitment and context</u> • The Belgian focus on fragile contexts and LDCs • There is a positive environment for the involvement of private sector (Efficiency/impact demonstrated) • The national political agenda is in favour of ICP • The migration crisis calls for an ICP • “There is no alternative - TINA” (integrated policy as only way for development) <u>Recent steps and current institutional reforms</u> • The existing JCA and JSF are a foundation for an ICP, it is possible to start from there and align for ensuring quick wins • The development of territorial approaches in recent years • The Enabel reform <u>New relations between development actors</u> • JCA and JSF increased the mutual knowledge • Learning opportunities exist • New roles for actors/groups (diaspora, 4th pillar) emerge • More dialogue (framework) • More information-sharing • ‘Dediabolisation’/Mutual acceptance of diversities • More involvement of all actors • Less duplication • Identification of cooperation opportunities • More awareness <u>Search for more efficiency</u> • Scaling up/more weight • More innovation • More experimentation
External opportunities	<u>International context</u> • The SDGs are as a strong international frame for developing ICP • There is an international momentum with new challenges such as the migration crisis • BE recognition as good student in development • The EU is a strong frame (// joint programming/implementation)

5.4. Risks

The respondents’ answers in regards to the risks of implementing an integrated country approach once again refer to both internal and external risks. The major internal risks mentioned by the participants to the survey can be grouped in the following categories: 1) the unequal power relations and lack of respect

for the autonomy all the development actors; 2) the politisation and instrumentalisation of development and humanitarian aid; 3) the lack of political will; 4) the continued existence of different visions and interests; 5) the lack of capacity of actors in charge of implementing the ICP and 6) an increased inefficiency. Out of these 6 categories, the major risk seen by the participant is clearly the one of loss of autonomy for non-governmental actors and “instrumentalisation” of development aid.

Regarding the external risks, respondents refer, on the one hand, to the loss of momentum of the aid effectiveness agenda and, on the other hand, to the partner countries. They point at the latter’s lack of capacity to adapt to ICP but also to its ability to play the different actors against each other and oppose efforts for greater integration. More details about both types of risks are given in Table 14.

Table 14. Categorisation and major responses – Risks

Categories	Major responses
Internal risks	<u>Unequal power relations and no respect for autonomy of all actors</u> • Loss of autonomy (esp. NGOs) (most common answer) • Forced professionalisation seen as counterproductive • Too technical/administrative for small players (diaspora/4th pillar) • Crowding out/eviction/good players exit • Loss in positive diversity of actors • No real commitment for equalitarian dialogue (Defence/Economic cooperation v. Development) • Lack of trust <u>Politisation and instrumentalisation</u> • Subjugation of development objectives to economic or security interests • Politisation of humanitarian actors (loss of neutrality) • Pressure for collaboration from funding and not shared goals • Instrumentalisation of NGOs by Administration / BTC <u>Lack of political will</u> • Loss of initial motivation (“exhaustion”)/frustration • Less funding for development cooperation • Lack of political support (government level) • “Facadisme”/politically correct discourse but not implemented <u>Different visions and interests</u> • No common objective/no agreement on common objective • Too different visions among actors • Competition for funding <u>Lack of capacity</u> • Insufficient DGD capacity to oversee/implement • Lack of coordination capacity <u>Increased inefficiency</u> • Time consuming/loss in effectiveness • High transaction costs • Multiplication of meetings/coordination non-followed by implementation • Less initiative • Less innovation • One-size-fits-all approach • No short term results • Administrative burden

Categories	Major responses
	• Too rigid/not flexible re. context • Lack of timing coordination • BE-centred/Donor driven approach not aligned with intervention context • Interdependence and faulty partner / blurred lines re. responsibilities
External risks	• Loss of momentum of the aid effectiveness agenda • Partner country plays actors against each other • Partner country lacks capacity to adapt to ICP • Losing focus on dialogue with local and international actors

6. Documents

Question: *Are there any documents that provide useful guidance on an integrated country approach that you want to share?*

It has to be noted that only 9 respondents out of 70 answered this question and that apart from the Joint strategic frameworks and Joint context analyses, no specific reference was given more than once. This arguably points to the current lack of shared references and guidance documentation on the ICP.

6.1. Belgian documents

For the Belgian documents, respondents mentioned the following documents:

- Joint strategic frameworks.
- Joint context analyses.
- Seminar on Change and Complexity organised by BTC/COTA/ACODEV, Ngo-Federatie and Be-cause Health (October 2015).
- Belgian strategic note on MICs.
- Strategic note and procedures for BFFS.

6.2. International documents

For the international documents, respondents mentioned the following documents from the EU, the OECD and the Netherlands:

- A strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action (<http://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/BN71-What-EU-Comprehensive-Approach-October-2014.pdf>).
- EU Comprehensive approach for the Sahel.
- OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform.
- Terms of reference documents of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Conclusions

This evidence paper analyses the development of more integrated approaches within Belgian development cooperation, focussing on the *Integrated country policy* (ICP) promoted and implemented since 2014. We explored this issue through a desk study on the documents and literature existing on the topic (first part of this paper) and an on-line survey addressed to a broad range of Belgian stakeholders including both governmental and non-governmental actors (second part).

Findings from the evidence show how the development of an integrated approach by Belgium clearly follows an international trend towards multi-stakeholder partnerships. The latter are increasingly being promoted for the opportunity they offer of greater complementarities and more comprehensive interventions. At the same time, ICP is clearly a Belgian label specifically addressing the implementation of more coherent approaches within Belgian development cooperation. However, various alternatives labels are used in relation to ICP practices, and this terminology is already old-fashioned and outdated, since ICP is now considered as part of a more global “comprehensive approach” related to Belgian foreign policy. What emerges then from the desk study is that actors may be lost in terminologies and Belgian strategy towards more integrated development practices needs to be clarified, as this could lead to misleading interpretations about what is expected, what issues are targeted and what actors are involved and how. This paper suggests a five-dimension framework which could help build consensus around what the policy is about, making more explicit on a case-by-case basis the policy boundaries in relation to: 1) the strategy aimed (*why-dimension*), 2) the thematic areas targeted (*what-dimension*), 3) the geographic areas covered (*where-dimension*), 4) the actors to be involved (*who-dimension*), and 5) the processes, resources, and instruments to be integrated (*how-dimension*). To clarify its strategy, Belgium can also be inspired by the lessons learned from international practice. This paper presents more in particular the cases of Denmark and the Netherlands, which are among the donors who have mostly progressed in the implementation of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Their experience is interesting for the way these partnerships are associated to a clear vision and strategy; they also propose innovative practices to increase coherence and complementarities, such as Danish unique partnership agreement between humanitarian and development assistance. However, Belgium will also have to consider the challenges and main risks that the reform also entails, such as *inter alia* the risk of increased fragmentation and instrumentalisation of the development strategy.

The survey held with Belgian stakeholder confirms most of the elements pointed out by the desk study evidence. Thus, for example, although most of the respondents say to be aware of the steps taken by Belgium towards the ICP, this policy is actually associated to different dimensions depending on the respondent, and common references and guidance document on it seem to be lacking. The NGA reform (and the Joint context analysis and Joint strategic framework) is for stakeholders the most evident operationalisation of ICP insofar. Most importantly, the survey clearly shows that the development of an ICP is a process and lessons have to be learned from recent experiences. Past and individual experiences are indeed what “make sense” for stakeholders when speaking about integrated practices. It is important to start from there to understand the perceptions, practice, and references of Belgian development actors. Today, this process is characterised by an important institutional reform (Enabel reform) and much will depend on the choices made regarding current actors’ roles, missions and resources and the actual implementation of the reform.

This paper is part of a series that includes two other papers (on a comprehensive approach and on governance networks for Belgian development cooperation – see our website: <https://www.governance4development.org>) and is the first step of a research process, which lays the theoretical bases and draws preliminary lessons for our future work. In particular, a green paper is expected at the end of the project (end 2018) which will provide with more operational elements (principles, indicators, and actions) related to the development and implementation of a comprehensive approach within Belgian development cooperation.

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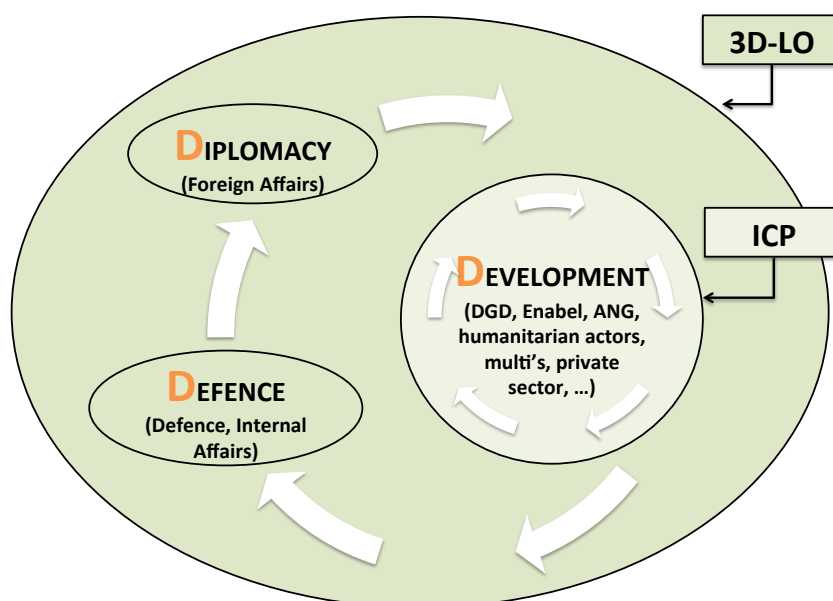
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Appendix 1 – Survey questionnaire

Survey on the Comprehensive Approach

Belgium wishes to implement a **comprehensive approach** to development cooperation. In this context, DGD has asked the ACROPOLIS research group on 'Governance for Development' (www.governance4development.org) to study two aspects: (i) the search for an integrated country approach (or Integrated Country Policy – **ICP**) that enhances more cooperation between development actors, and (ii) the promotion of **3D-LO** approach that optimises cooperation between Development, Diplomatic, Defense and Law and Order actors, amongst others.



This **survey** is a first step in our research work and includes few general questions in order to collect preliminary information on the **perceptions, practices and references of Belgian stakeholders** on this comprehensive approach. For this reason, it is addressed to a large panel of actors, from governmental, non-governmental cooperation and the private sector.

The results of the survey will be integrated in evidence papers that will be published and presented to a wide public during a **workshop** at the end of September 2017.

Your **participation** to this survey is essential to make the evidence paper as relevant as possible. Please return it completed by the 30th of June to Jessica Martini: jmartini@ulb.ac.be.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

First name:

.....

Last name:

.....

Organisation:

.....

Service:

.....

Fonction:

.....

A. INTEGRATED COUNTRY POLICY

Are you aware of the steps Belgium is taking towards an integrated country approach? If so, can you describe what steps have been taken?

☐ yes ☐ no

Description:

Can you share any relevant experiences (good practices but also failures, lessons learned) that can contribute to an integrated country approach?

By Belgian actors

By international actors

How should an integrated country approach ideally look like?

- What should be guiding **principles** or **objectives**?

- What **actors** should be involved?

- How should **cooperation** between actors be organised?

In your opinion, what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks related to implementing an integrated country approach?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Risks

Are there any documents that provide useful guidance on an integrated country approach that you want to share?

Belgian documents

International documents

B. 3D-LO APPROACH

Are you aware of the steps Belgium is taking towards a 3D-LO approach? If so, can you describe what steps have been taken?

☐ yes ☐ no

Description:

Can you share any relevant experiences (good practices but also failures, lessons learned) that can contribute to a 3D-LO approach?

By Belgian actors

By international actors

How should a 3D-LO approach ideally look like?

- What should be guiding **principles** or **objectives**?

- What **actors** should be involved?

- How should **cooperation** between actors be organised?

In your opinion, what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks related to implementing a 3D-LO approach?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Risks

Are there any documents that provide useful guidance on 3D-LO that you want to share?

Belgian documents

International documents

More in-depth interviews will be held at the end of August / beginning of September.

Would you be available to further discuss this topic with us? ☐ yes ☐ no

Would you like to suggest colleagues or other organisations we should contact on this topic?

.....
.....

The results of the survey will be integrated in evidence papers that will be published and presented to a wide public during a workshop at the end of September 2017.

Do you want to be invited for this workshop? ☐ yes ☐ no

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ACROPOLIS stands for ACademic Research Organisation for POLicy Support. The ACROPOLIS groups conduct academic research and provide academic services tailored to the Belgian development cooperation. Bringing together policymakers and researchers, their aim is continued professionalization and improvement in the quality and impact of the Belgian development cooperation policy. ACROPOLIS also contributes to the international visibility of Belgian academic expertise in development cooperation. The programme is funded by the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through ARES-CCD and VLIR-UOS.

The ACROPOLIS group dedicated to Governance for Development (G4D) gathers academic partners from Université St Louis Bruxelles and Universiteit Gent (coordinating universities), Université libre de Bruxelles, Université catholique de Louvain, and Université de Liège. Its main fields of research are the Great Lakes Region of Africa and Sahel. It builds on the network previously set up under GRAPAX – Groupe de recherche en appui aux politiques de paix and ACROPOLIS – Aid Effectiveness in Fragile Contexts.