ROADMAP FOR A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH FOR BELGIAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Table of Content

Acknowledgments

This green paper proposing a roadmap for a Comprehensive Approach for Belgian Development Policy was no academic solitary adventure. In order to best grasp the different perspectives of actors, we conducted a wide consultation process throughout the programme, including multiple workshops in Brussels and abroad, three participative conferences (with around 80 participants each time), steering committees encounters as well as bilateral meetings. Through these multiple encounters, we had the chance to gather views from numerous actors and services, including from the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Enabel, BIO, the Ministry of Defence, the Federal Police, Non-Governmental Organisations, Federations and Umbrellas, Institutional Actors, the Ministry of Finances, or Treasury, and a diversity of local actors for both the Uganda and Burkina Faso case studies.

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While the green paper is based on an analysis of all the inputs received during the 18 months-long research process, the views and conclusions it contains are those of the authors and may not necessarily reflect the ones of individual actors or institutions consulted.

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List of Abbreviations

3D	Diplomacy, Development, Defence
3D-LO	Diplomacy, Development, Defence-Law & Order
AAP	All-affected principle
ACPCD	Advisory Council on Policy Coherence for Development
CA	Comprehensive Approach
CCA	Common contextual analysis
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DGD	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
EU	European Union
EUTM	European Training Mission in Mali
FCSD	Federal Council for Sustainable Development
FA	Foreign Affairs
FPS	Federal Public Service
ICP	Integrated Country Policy
ICPD	Interdepartmental Commission on Policy Coherence for Development
IDM	Inter-Departmental Meeting
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
JSF	Joint strategic framework
LDC	Least Developed Country
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MSME	Mico, Small and Medium-sizedenterprises
NGA	Non-Governmental Actor
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCD	Policy coherence for Development
PCSD	Policy coherence for sustainable development
PDIA	Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation
SC	Steering committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SN	Strategy note
TF	Task force
ToC	Theory of Change
TST	Transdirectional Team
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WoG	Whole-of-Government
WoS	Whole-of-Society

Executive summary

The aim of this green paper is to clarify the potential role of the Comprehensive Approach (CA) for Belgian development policy. Specifically, it questions if and how a CA can bring more coherence between (i) the different instruments of Belgian development policy and (ii) between Belgian development policy and the other instruments of Belgian Foreign Affairs.

The green paper focuses on Belgian development policy. This means that the added value of the CA is explicitly evaluated from a development perspective, and not as an approach for Belgian foreign policy as a whole. It is an attempt at building the *development* piece of the Belgian CA puzzle.

Also, the focus of Belgian development policy on fragile contexts is taken into account. The CA is all the more relevant in fragile situations that are confronted with a complex interplay of security, political, societal, economic and environmental risks and opportunities. Therefore, the analysis presented in this paper is focused on Belgian foreign policy towards those partner countries that are confronted with fragility.

The green paper assesses the role of the CA for Belgian development policy by answering six important questions.

Why is a CA needed?

The CA should ensure a more coherent contribution of Belgium foreign policy in the realisation of the 2030 Agenda. Through its endorsement of the 2030 Agenda, Belgium commits itself to align all its policies – including its foreign policy – towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The CA should therefore be used towards that end. SDG 16 (peaceful societies) and SDG 17 (global partnership) are especially relevant in this process. As such, the CA should fit into the broader framework of Belgian Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and the Agenda 2030 should be used as a safeguard to guarantee that each use of the CA stands the test of contributing to sustainable development.

What is a CA?

The CA is an instrument to increase Belgian foreign policy coherence by facilitating collaboration between different actors on different levels in different places. This definition distinguishes five levels of coherence:

- **Intra-agency** (within a government agency)
- **Whole-of-Government** (between government agencies)
- **Whole-of-Society** (between government, civil society and private sector)
- **Inter-agency** (with international partners)
- **International-local** (alignment with local partner country priorities and needs)

It is argued that the CA should be extended towards a broad Whole-of-Society (WoS) approach that not only includes Belgian governmental actors, but also values the expertise of Belgian civil society and private sector actors.

6

How should a CA be operationalised?

A CA will only succeed if it is perceived as a legitimate and effective answer to the challenge or problem it is meant to solve. Starting from context is the only way to guarantee this. Depending on the context, and always in the interest of those that will be affected by the policies and actions that will be executed or implemented through the CA, the approach should bring together all those actors that are necessary to ensure a legitimate and effective solution for the identified problem or challenge. This requires an open, participatory and transparent process in which the autonomy, complementarity, and comparative advantage of each and every stakeholder can contribute to innovative solutions.

When will a CA fail?

There are many risks that explain why a CA can easily fail. The most important risks are:

- A common vision is not found.
- Stakeholders are instrumentalised.
- Actions are implemented based on blueprints.
- End-users are not heard.
- Capacities, mandates and resources are not provided.

How should progress towards a CA be measured?

Outcome indicators need to be context-specific. They should be identified and monitored on the basis of crowd-sourced data – to build an evidence-based process of monitoring and evaluation at the level of the affected population – and adaptive management techniques – to ensure short feedback loops during implementation. The global SDG indicator framework can inspire the selection and identification of the outcome indicators.

Progress indicators should monitor the effectiveness and legitimacy of the process. Key in measuring quality of the process is the level of trust between the different stakeholders. An effective and legitimate process will have a positive effect on trust levels between stakeholders.

How should a CA be initiated?

An effective operationalisation of a CA will need to find a right balance between strategic and operational coherence. Sufficient and adequate strategic top-down steering should be combined with sufficient flexibility to leave room for a bottom-up and problem-driven approach. In order to reach this balance, several routes of actions are suggested, both on the strategic and operational level and according to each level of coherence: intra-agency, Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society, inter-agency, and local-international coherences. The following routes of action are primarily addressed to the FPS Foreign Affairs, and more specifically, to DGD.

Strategic level

- Define common goals and priorities for the Belgian CA.
- Define the CA as an approach for Policy Coherence for Development (PCD).

- Upscale the Common Contextual Analyses (CCAs) to full-fledged Belgian contextual analyses for Belgian partner countries.
- Develop a Belgian strategy and vision on non-governmental cooperation.
- Develop a Belgian strategy and vision on the role of the private sector in fragile contexts.
- Lead by example and advocate for European harmonisation and alignment with partner country priorities.
- Re-endorse the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011) as guiding principles for the Belgian CA.

Operational level

- Provide the right incentives, facilities and mechanisms to promote cross-boundary work.
- Use trans-departmental and field-connected teams.
- Provide the Belgian Embassies with the necessary resources and mandate to fulfil their role.
- Clarify the division of roles between Enabel and DGD.
- Fund network managers instead of synergy projects.
- Spearhead a peer learning exercise through the INCAF network.
- Follow a Whole-of-Society approach to represent Belgium on the international level.
- Safeguard and broaden partner country consultations for bilateral programmes.
- Strengthen and extend the 'right of initiative' and programme-financing.
- Partner with Belgian and local civil society to invest in crowd-sourced evidence and evidence-based policy.

Conclusion

The need for a context-focused approach combined with clear goals summarises the key message of this green paper. It reflects the central concerns raised throughout the consultation process, i.e. the need to balance strategic coherence (clear goals) with operational coherence (context-focused approach).

In conclusion, the green paper warns against a capability-expectations gap in spite of positive steps and advances. Indeed, given the recurrent budget restrictions and staff cuts, there is a substantive discrepancy between the expectations of what a Belgian CA should bring and the capabilities that are available to deliver the expected results.

Introduction

APPROACHING THE CA: COHERENCE AND COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

The aim of this green paper is to clarify the potential role of the Comprehensive Approach (CA) for Belgian development policy. There is an international consensus among donors that policy coherence is an important instrument to increase aid effectiveness[1]. This correlation between coherence and aid effectiveness has been the starting point for the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) to order academic research on the CA. The project was asked to research if and how a CA could contribute to more effective Belgian development policies. Specifically, it was asked to analyse (i) if and how more coherence could be reached between the different instruments of Belgian development policy (Integrated Country Policy – ICP), and (ii) if and how more coherence could be sought between Belgian development policy and the other instruments of Belgian Foreign Affairs (FA)(3D-LO perspective)[2].

The green paper focuses on Belgian development policy and, more in particular, takes into account the focus of Belgian development policy on fragile contexts. This means that the added value of the CA is explicitly assessed from a development perspective, and not as an approach for Belgian Foreign Policy as a whole. It is an attempt at building the development piece of the Belgian CA puzzle.

The CA emerged in the context of increasingly complex situations in which conflict, fragility and poverty became interconnected. In this context, the CA can be seen as an example to deal with such complex situations through the establishment of networked or collaborative governance.[3] The basic idea behind governance networks is that many of the contemporary challenges of our world demand the collaboration of diverse public, private and civil society actors. This is especially the case for the fragile and conflict-affected contexts in which a CA is recommended. In fragile situations new forms of hybrid governance emerged because of sometimes weak state capacity and/or legitimacy: increasingly we understand that governance and development in such places are regulated by continuous changing coalitions of state, private and societal actors on the local, national, regional and international level, and in which donors and aid policies become part of. As a consequence, these complex situations gave rise to 'an increasingly complex and interdependent international conflict management system'.[4] These are the circumstances in which the demand for a more comprehensive approach nurtured.

However, the CA may not always be the solution. Although there is a large consensus on the empirical question – comprehensive approaches are indeed on the rise – there is much less consensus on their effectiveness, i.e. if and how they bring about positive change. More coordination and cooperation is not always the best scenario to adopt. As with many new concepts, there is this danger that the CA becomes a 'holy grail' used to solve all kinds of problems, regardless of the context in which it should be implemented and the problem it should solve. Because of 'conceptual laziness' coherence is rapidly limited to 'doing the same things together'. As a consequence, the justified need for more coherence can lead to uniformity and 'more of the same'.

However, more coherence will most often bring more effectiveness. Coherence is also more than we think it is: there is a whole range of options to increase policy coherence, of which

'doing things together' is only one. Therefore, more conceptual clarity is needed. This conceptual clarity is necessary to facilitate the search for common ground: Belgian stakeholders of the CA need a common language and conceptual framework to have a fruitful debate on the topic.

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THE GREEN PAPER

The green paper aims to be a steppingstone towards a 'common language' that should enable the Belgian stakeholders to 'walk the talk' when it concerns the CA. This is done by answering 6 important questions:

1. **Why is a CA needed?** – The CA is a means to an end. Therefore, it is important to ask the question why Belgium needs a CA? What end(s) should the CA serve?

2. **What is a CA?** – On the one hand, the CA means many things to different people. Yet, on the other hand, the CA is easily defined as 'doings things together'. A more shared but nuanced view on the CA is necessary.

3. **How should a CA be operationalised?** – Is it possible to give some operational guidance when implementing CA practices? Are there lessons learnt that should be taken into account?

4. **When will a CA fail?** – A reality check is necessary: even if a shared understanding is reached among the Belgian stakeholders there are certain risks that explain why a CA can easily fail.

5. **How should progress towards a CA be measured?** – To be able to evaluate if, when and how the CA is implemented is important: can we measure the effectiveness of CA practices? And if so, what kind of indicators can we use?

6. **How should a CA be initiated?** – How can the analysis be summarised and translated into concrete action: what are possible routes of action for a further operationalisation of a Belgian CA?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & OUTPUTS

The green paper presents answers to these questions on the basis of research findings collected during an 18-month period. These findings are based on three pillars. The green paper is the result of the intersection between evidence papers, case studies and a consultative process.

Figure 1 - Three Research Pillars

- **Evidence papers** – The evidence papers summarize the literature review on both the 3D-LO and ICP perspective of the Belgian CA, a third evidence paper presents the conceptual framework of governance networks.[5]

- **Case studies** – The case studies were conducted in Uganda and Burkina Faso. Two thematic case studies covered each a particular nexus that is of importance for the CA: the case study on the response to the refugee crisis in northern Uganda focused on the

humanitarian-development nexus; the focus of the case study on local security in Burkina Faso was the security-development nexus. In addition, the case studies analysed the existing Belgian networks in both countries, as well as at headquarters in Brussels. The objective of these case studies was to have a state of play of the current relationships between Belgian development actors and how this network is connected to other Belgian, local and international actors.

- **Consultative process**[6] – The research project was supported by a steering committee[7] throughout the process. The evidence papers were not only based on literature review but also on an online survey distributed among all Belgian stakeholders; both the evidence papers and the results of the survey were presented during a kick-off workshop in October 2017. The case studies are based on workshops with the Embassy, Enabel and NGOs in Uganda (November 2017), Burkina Faso (February 2018) and Brussels (Spring 2018); findings of the case studies were presented in a second follow-up workshop in June 2018. Finally bilateral meetings[8] at the senior level management of the key Belgian stakeholders were held in October 2018.
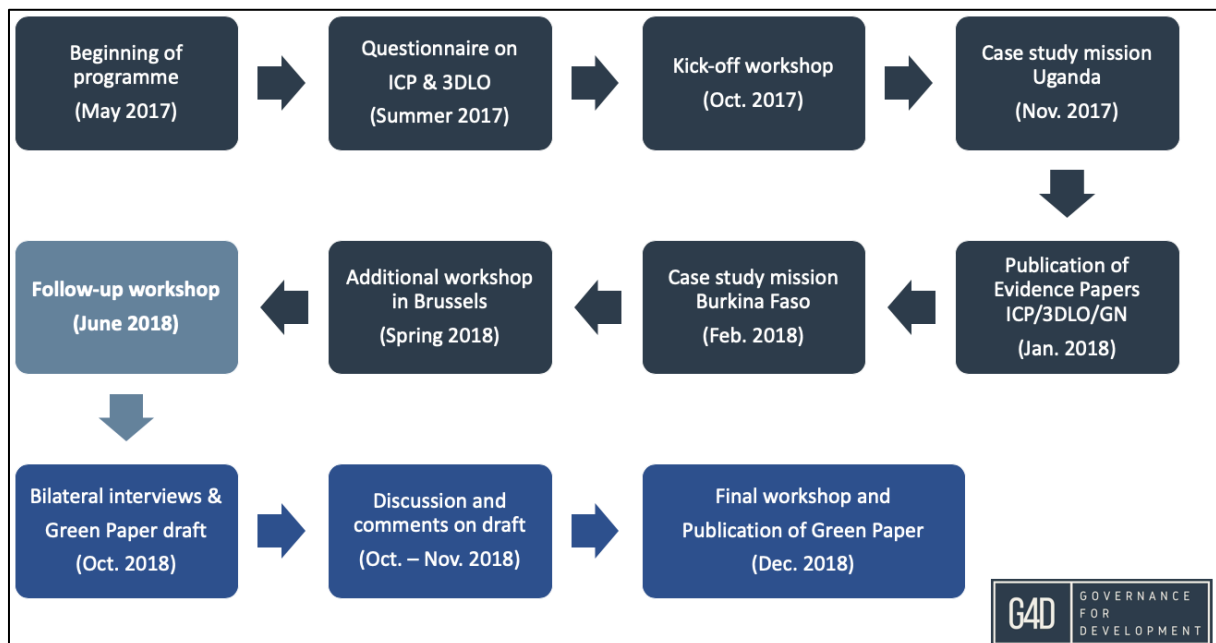
Figure 2 – Research programme steps and process

Based on the evidence papers, case studies, and this consultative process, a draft version of the green paper was discussed during the last meeting with the steering committee, after which the different members of the committee were invited to send their written comments. The final version of the green paper was presented at the end conference of the research project, on 11 December 2018.

1. Objectives – Why is a CA needed?

The CA is a means to an end and should be approached as such. Therefore, a CA can only be defined in relation to the foreign policy it is meant to serve. Throughout the consultation process it became clear that the link between the CA as an operational instrument and the strategic level of foreign policy priorities has not yet been clearly defined. Therefore, the crucial – normative – question is why Belgium needs a CA.

The Belgian Strategy Note on the CA published in August 2017 does not clearly define the priorities of Belgian foreign policy. The note refers to the Government Agreement, in which the protection of Belgian interests and values should be the central objective of foreign policy. However, the note also states that a CA should start from 'commonly accepted strategic objectives' or 'commonly defined interests and values'[9]. Unfortunately, the note also admits that such list of commonly defined Belgian interests and values is still lacking[10]. As long as these foreign policy priorities are not clear, the CA will rather remain an instrument without a concrete purpose.

On the Belgian level, the institutional framework of Belgium hinders the establishment of these common foreign policy priorities. This is mainly the result of the fragmentation of Belgian foreign policy across different Ministries. This, together with the fact that coalition governments govern Belgium, makes that different Ministers (Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development) from different political parties with different visions shape Belgian foreign policy. Additionally, other policy areas – especially trade and development policy – are the competence of both the federal state and federated entities.

At the international level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the ultimate exercise of policy coherence on a planetary scale. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are universal, inclusive, and indivisible. Through their endorsement, Belgium commits itself to align all its policies towards the SDGs. Hence, not only Belgian development policy but also other policy areas of the CA (diplomacy, defence, justice, federal police) and policy areas beyond the current CA (e.g. trade, environment, finance, migration) should be bound by the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should therefore be used as the internationally agreed reference framework to review the use of the CA. As such, sustainable – economic, social and environmental – development is the final end that should guide the use of the CA. The CA can be used to streamline the contribution of Belgian foreign policy to the realisation of the SDGs. While doing so it should take into account all five critical SDG dimensions (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership).

In this respect, SDG 16 on peaceful societies[11] is of particular relevance. The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions offer highly relevant and useful guidance to identify the priorities, scope and methods to operationalise the Belgian CA. Against this background, it is desirable that human rights, democratic institutions, good governance and the rule of law become core guiding principles of the Belgian CA. The Belgian seat at the United Nations Security Council in 2019-2020 provides an additional opportunity to do so.

In a similar way, SDG 17 on the Global Partnership[12] directly relates to the objective of the CA. Strengthening the means of implementation and the revitalisation of a global partnership for sustainable development reflects the need for the Belgian government to

exploit all available means to realise its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. The CA can be used as a vehicle to pool and streamline all Belgian means and efforts from governmental, societal and private sector actors towards a coherent Belgian foreign policy in line with the 2030 Agenda.

On the Belgian level, this revitalisation of the Global Partnership is linked to the Belgian commitments to Policy Coherence for (Sustainable) Development (PC(S)D). In 2007 this commitment to sustainable development was included in the Belgian Constitution. Article 7 bis states that the federal state, communities and regions should pursue the objective of sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions. Belgium created the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD) and the Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD). Furthermore, in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, the Belgian federal authorities also installed the Advisory Council on Policy Coherence for Development (ACPCD) in 2014. In parallel, the Interdepartmental Commission on Policy Coherence for Development (ICPCD) was initiated. Since the CA is an approach to increase coherence of Belgian foreign policy, it should be part of and therefore integrated in the broader framework of PC(S)D.

In conclusion, the 2030 Agenda is an important safeguard. From a development perspective the alignment with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is a critical safeguard to guarantee that Belgian foreign policy is not employed to defend narrow and short-term Belgian economic, political and security interests to the detriment of universal, inclusive and indivisible SDGs that should benefit both Belgian and partner country's interests, while also taking into account the interest of the future generations.

2. Definition – What is a CA?

As with many concepts it is difficult to come up with a definition that leaves no room for interpretation. Hence, there is no single definition nor international consensus on what a CA is.[13] However, a common conceptual framework and language would be helpful to have a more fruitful Belgian debate on the CA. It can facilitate the search for common ground. In this respect, the green paper suggests a working definition for the CA concept. Key aspects of the definition are:

- The 2030 Agenda
- Belgian foreign policy
- Levels of coherence

WORKING DEFINITION

The Comprehensive Approach is an instrument to increase Belgian foreign policy coherence with the objective of realising the Agenda 2030 through strengthening intra-agency, Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society, inter-agency, and international-local coherence.

Since the CA is a means to an end the latter is included in its definition: the 2030 Agenda is a safeguard to ensure that the CA contributes to sustainable development. It is restricted to Belgian Foreign Affairs to differentiate it from the broader PCD agenda: the CA is an instrument to guarantee that Belgian foreign policy in particular contributes to Belgian PCD efforts. Making the distinction between different levels has heuristic[14] value in reducing conceptual confusion: consultations revealed that actors often have different perspectives on the purpose of the CA and envisage it through different levels of coherence.

This definition suggests a broad Whole-of-Society (WoS) conception of the CA. In general, the CA is limited to a Whole-of-Government (WoG) approach in which primarily coherence is sought between different governmental agencies. There are, however, good reasons to broaden the scope to a WoS approach. Already in 2011 a UN report concluded that the most urgent needs in post-conflict situations worldwide 'cannot be filled by the technical staff found in UN or donor government bureaucracies'.[15] The report urged donors to look beyond their bureaucracies and valorise and deploy the civilian capacity[16] found in their own societies.[17] More broadly, this sollicitation of civilian capacity is translated into the revitalisation of a Global Partnership (SDG 17) that unites governmental, civil society and private sector stakeholders to achieve the 2030 Agenda. It is therefore not surprising that the Belgian strategy note on the CA acknowledges the need to go beyond a WoG approach and exploit Belgian civilan capacity.[18]

The CA is a multi-dimensional answer to multi-dimensional and therefore complex situations. The CA is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Depending on the context, and always in the interest of those that will be affected by the policies and actions that will be executed or implemented through the CA, the approach should bring together all necessary actors to guarantee coherence on different levels. This means that, depending on the context, actors will compete, coexist, coordinate, cooperate, integrate or unite[19], and that the CA will demand a specific combination of the following levels of coherence.

INTRA-AGENCY COHERENCE

Increasing coherence among policies and actions of DGD in partner countries. Intra-agency coherence refers to the level and nature of collaboration within an individual agency. For the purpose of this green paper, DGD is identified as the individual agency. Thus, intra-agency coherence means to improve collaboration between the different directorates and services of DGD, and therefore, between the actors that are responsible for the different Belgian aid channels: bilateral, multilateral, non-governmental, humanitarian and private sector aid. This level of coherence focuses on the internal functioning of DGD and not on its collaboration with its executing agencies (Enabel, BIO, NGAs, multi's; see further).

EXAMPLES

Transdirectional Teams (TSTs)[20]
In the past years and in order to cover more than one area of expertise and competence, transdirectional teams (TSTs) were set up. This new instrument envisaged a new, more transversal way of working in which the various services and directorates of DGD exchange their knowledge, experience or perspectvives. TSTs have been established for particular issues such as the preparation of the 2030 Agenda, preparation of Belgian policy for Financing for Development, and Belgian development cooperation programmes in Mali and Niger.

Transitional Development[21]
Within DGD, a new directorate (D5) responsible for Humanitarian Aid and Transition has been created to coherently pool and coordinate the expertise and tools towards the 'situations in transition', especially in regards to the 'humanitarian-development-security' nexus. Crucial here, this new directorate is responsible for the follow-up on the CA for DGD and as such represents the agency in the Steering Committee 'Comprehensive Approach' set up by Foreign Affairs and participates in region-specific Task Forces if needed (e.g. Sahel Task Force).

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT COHERENCE (WoG)

Maximazing coherence between policies and actions of the Belgian government in partner countries. Whole-of-Government (WoG) coherence is about bringing more coherence between the different governmental instruments of Belgian foreign policy. The Belgian strategy note on the CA mainly focuses on this level of coherence. It describes how the approach evolved from a 3D (Diplomacy, Development, Defence) towards a 3D-LO (Law & Order) approach in which five FPSs were represented (FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation, Defence, Justice, and Internal Affairs).[22] Also, the executing agencies of Belgian development cooperation – Enabel and BIO – are part of a WoG perspective: although they are independent agencies (and therefore do not fit into intra-agency coherence within DGD) their only shareholder is the Belgian State (even if they can carry out programmes for other donors), which explains why they are included on the level of WoG coherence.[23] Furthermore, it is also on the WoG level that CA and PCD are interlinked: the CA fits into the broader WoG exercise that should ensure that all Belgian policies (including foreign policy) are coherent with the sustainable development agenda. Finally, the specific reality of Belgium implies that coherence between policies of the federal and federated authorities is also integrated in the WoG coherence.

EXAMPLES

Sahel Policy
Both an Inter-Departmental Meeting (IDM) and a Task Force (TF) have been set up under the leadership of Foreign Affairs to better coordinate Belgian actions in the Sahel region. Both structures follow a WoG logic and represent Foreign Affairs, Defence, Development, Justice and Police. The main objective of the IDM is to enhance information sharing between the different public services. In addition, the TF is mandated to assess concrete possibilities of cooperation on the ground. In this respect, joint missions were for instance organised to the Sahel region.

BIO[24]
BIO is the Belgian Investment Company for developing countries. It is a private company whose capital is held by the Belgian State. It invests into the private sector of developing countries, with a focus on Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME). Several recent reforms were however carried out to guarantee a better integration of BIO activities into the broader Belgian development policy. For example, the latest legislative amendment allows BIO to make smaller investments with a higher development impact in the future. This should enable BIO to invest more in the least developed countries where the risks are often higher. This is crucial for a more coherent Belgian development policy, since eleven of the fourteen partner countries of Belgium are least developed countries (LDC) or fragile contexts.

Sustainable Development[25]
Belgium has several institutional mechanisms in place to follow-up the Belgian contribution to sustainable development. The Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD) and the Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) are the most important ones. Together with a task force within the Federal Planning Bureau, they are key in the preparation, adoption, implementation and improvement of Belgian contribution to sustainable development policies.

Public-Public Partnerships[26]
Enabel – the Belgian development agency – signs strategic partnerships with the Belgian public sector. These partnerships allow to mobilise Belgian expertise in various sectors, topics, regions, etc. Examples of partnerships established in recent years are those with Flanders Port Training Centre, Belgian Defence, Federal Police, Federal Public Service Justice, VDAB.

WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY COHERENCE (WoS)

Increasing coherence between policies and actions of Belgian governmental, civil society and private sector actors in partner countries. Whole-of-Society (WoS) coherence means to guarantee that policies and actions of the Belgian government, civil society organisations and companies in one of the Belgian partner countries are not in contradiction with one another. More importantly, this type of coherence has the most potential for innovation – because it brings together substantially different types of actors. However, this is also the reason why it is most confronted with cultural and institutional barriers that should be overcome to achieve the desired coherence.

EXAMPLES

New law on Development Cooperation[27]
The new law on Belgian Development Cooperation, adopted in June 2016, mainly focuses on a better integration of the non-gouvernmental cooperation within Belgian development policy. In addition to a geographic concentration, the Non-Governmental Actors (NGAs) were asked to align their programmes to a Common Contextual Analysis (CCA) and Joint Strategic Frameworks (JSF) for each partner country of Belgian development cooperation. This was deemed necessary to increase policy coherence through encouraging synergies and collective learning among the NGAs.

Advisory Council for Policy Coherence for Development (ACPCD)[28]
In accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, the Belgian federal authorities installed the Advisory Council on Policy Coherence for Development (ACPCD) in 2014. Its primary mission is to advise the federal government in order to ensure policy coherence for development. The Council consists of eight members representing Belgian civil society and academic world. Upon request from the federal government, the ACPCD publishes opinions on specific issues. An example is the opinion published in June 2016 on Peace and Security with recommendations on further operationalisation of a CA[29].

The Shift[30]
The Shift is a Belgian platform bringing together around 350 companies, NGOs and other organisations to stimulate partnerships and help co-create sustainable business models. It was founded in June 2015 and is now the Belgian contact for the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the UN Global Compact (UNGC).

INTER-AGENCY COHERENCE

Increasing coherence between actions and policies of Belgium and its international partners in partner countries. Inter-agency coherence aims at identyfing the added-value and comparative advantage of Belgium with its international partners. Obviously the EU

16

takes a central role at this level, but bilateral collaboration with EU member states, partnerships with multitlateral agencies, cooperation with neigbhouring countries, or partnerships with international civil society actors (international NGOs) or private sector actors (e.g. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) also fall under this level of coherence.

EXAMPLES

MINUSMA & EUTM
In Mali, Belgium has been in command for one and a half years on the UN mission MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali). Belgium also took the lead in the European Training Mission in Mali (EUTM). Both Belgian engagements have been strategic in achieving the Belgian seat at the United Nations Security Council in 2019-20.

INCAF
Because of its focus on fragile contexts Belgium has been an active member in the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Currently Belgium co-chairs the INCAF Task Team. By encouraging lesson learning and promoting good practice among its members, INCAF works to deliver results in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

INTERNATIONAL-LOCAL COHERENCE

Increasing coherence between policies and actions of Belgium and the priorities of the partner countries. International-local coherence should ensure that the actions and policies of Belgian governmental, civil society and private sector actors are in line with the priorities and needs of the partner country. International-local coherence embodies international agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. In all these agreements the international community agrees to align their aid policies with the priorities of the developing countries.

EXAMPLES

Co-management
The bilateral programmes executed by Enabel for the Belgian government are based on a partnership model. One particularity of this model is that programmes can be executed in 'co-management' (co-gestion) instead of a unilateral execution by Enabel only (régie). In this modality a double signature of Enabel and its local counterpart is needed to disburse funds and take decisions related to programme execution.

Non-Governmental Cooperation[31]
An important share of Belgian development cooperation is executed by Belgian non-governmental actors (NGAs). The organisation of non-governmental cooperation is based on a programme approach (medium-term vision of 5 years) and the 'right of initiative' (flexibility in choice of partners and strategies). This combination of a long-term and flexible approach is rather unique and offers the Belgian NGAs the possibility to enter into long-term partnerships with their local counterparts. In turn this guarantees a broad participatory consultation process with the local partners that paves the way for context- and problem-driven programmes.

17

ONION MODEL

International-local coherence incorporates all other levels of coherence. Depending on the context different combinations of coherence will be required. It is therefore important to understand their interconnectedness. An onion model visualises this interconnectedness and highlights that international-local coherence encompasses all other levels of coherence. As such, the onion model underscores that the

Figure 3 - 5 Levels of Coherence

alignment with local needs and priorities is the fundamental precondition for succesful coherence on the other levels. It reflects the difference between a demand-driven approach (starting from what is needed) and a supply-driven approach (starting from what donors are able to supply).
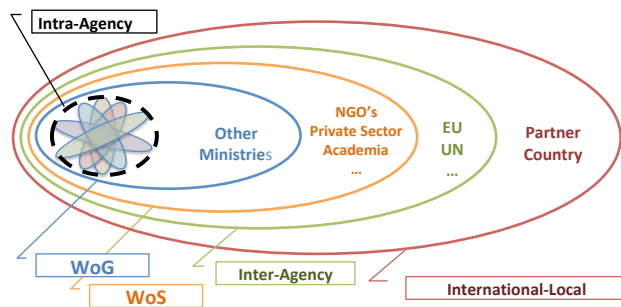
CONCLUSION

In addition to the examples given above, which illustrate the Belgian experience on the different levels of coherence, the following general observations can be made on the CA strategy as defined in the Belgian strategy note[32]:

- **Who leads?** Although the ambition is to include a wide range of actors, the stragegy notes makes clear that the CA remains a government-initiated approach: it is the government that has the right of initiative to present concrete cases and to invite the relevant partners to that extent.

- **Who's in?** The network is not closed: the strategy note does not limit the participation to a set of actors. To the contrary, the description of the network reflects a flexible and open network in which any relevant partner can be invited on a case-by-case basis.

- **How do they relate?** Loosely coupled and on a voluntary basis: the autonomy of the partners is guaranteed and the partners themselves decide if, when and how they engage in the process. Participation is voluntary and therefore by no means guaranteed. Again, network composition can change on a case-by-case basis. It is therefore important to note that coherence is not only about 'doing things together': coordinated programmes and actions (in which different aid channels are integrated). It is also – and sometimes even more – about 'working apart together': achieving coherent policies through the autonomous execution of independent programmes that are justified on the basis of a division of labour and a search for complementarity.

3. Principles – How should a CA be operationalised?

A broad Whole-of-Society (WoS) conception will be instrumental in operationalising context-based, legitimate and effective CA practices. In this respect, the current section further underpins our suggestion to start from a broad WoS conception as explained in the previous section. This is done by illustrating how a WoS approach can support three important principles of CA operationalisation.

START FROM CONTEXT

Local context and coherence of effort are the 'twin pillars' of a CA.[33] All international agreements on aid effectiveness endorse this view.[34] More specifically, the New Deal for engagement in fragile states underlines that 'one vision, one plan' is only possible on the basis of a country-led[35] and shared assessment of the fragile context.[36] Belgium has subscribed to this view both in the Belgian strategy note on fragile contexts and the fragility guidance that was developed for Belgian development policy in which 'starting from context' is identified as the first principle of engagement.[37]

Current approaches are still too much supply-driven. As long as a shared contextual anaysis is absent, actors relapse into a supply-driven approach, in which each actor 'does what it thinks it can, and what it has always done'[38], rather that adapting to context. In other words, efforts will not be coherent as long as they are not grounded in a shared understanding of the context.

A shared understanding of context demands a WoS approach. There is no 'uniform' local context: visions on the local context – and more specifically on the causes and solutions of conflict and fragility – can substantially differ, not only between international and national actors, but also between national actors. More specifically, it is likely that views of state and non-state actors will vary. Therefore, to have a nuanced and in-depth view, contextual analysis should be inclusive, go beyond a state-led exercise and take into account the visions of the key national stakeholders and non-state actors.[39]

Belgium could rely more on the presence of a diversity of Belgian actors to understand local context. Belgian diplomats, defence or cooperation attachés, Enabel and BIO staff, civil society organisations, cities and communities, knowledge institutions, the diaspora, and private sector actors maintain different relationships with their local counterparts. Tapping into this network of diverse Belgian actors and their local counterparts will be helpfull to obtain the required contextual analysis that takes into account the vision of a wide range of local actors.

Common Contextual Analyses (CCAs) prove the added-value of information-sharing as a crucial first step for a Belgian CA. In order to be eligible for programme-financing, Belgian NGAs were asked to conduct a CCA for each partner country of the Belgian development cooperation. Although it was a time-consuming process, the majority of actors agree that the CCAs have initiated an important process of information-sharing. Unfortunately, the CCAs are limited to non-governmental actors. However, it is exactly in merging information streams between non-governmental, governmental and private sector actors that lies great potential. The CCA exercise is therefore an interesting stepping-stone to arrive at shared Belgian contextual analyses. These could be the basis for the development of Belgian country strategies, something that was already suggested in the last

OECD peer review of Belgian development cooperation as crucial to increase coherence of Belgian action.[40]

The Belgian embassies are best placed to function as the central information hub for Belgian actors. This is a logical observation: embassies maintain connections with all Belgian citizens and organisations in the partner country. Hence, they are in the position to bring together complementary streams of information that are currently not or too little shared between Belgian stakeholders. Based on this integration of different information streams the embassy is also able to play a more pro-active role in identifying possible opportunities for concrete CA practices.

EMBASSIES – INFORMATION HUBS

During the case studies in Uganda and Burkina Faso, workshops were organised with the embassies, Belgian NGAs and staff of Enabel. In these workshops one of the objectives was to draw a map with information flows between all Belgian actors and their local counterparts. Both in Uganda and Burkina Faso the embassies were centrally placed in this information map. The embassies bring together different information streams that are otherwise not connected. This explains the important 'brokerage' function of the embassy: it is able to bridge 'structural holes' between different sub-groups of Belgian actors that are not directly connected to each other (e.g. NGAs, Enabel, private sector, diplomats).

Sufficient capacity in the Embassy is needed to ensure this role as information hub. Sufficient time and resources are necessary to go beyond a desk-study approach to contextual analysis. Insufficient capacity leads to complexity bias and contextual simplification: the combination of pressure from headquarters to deliver and the limited access to the field and information in general results in confirmation bias and groupthink that forces field staff to provide 'quick "answers" that are familiar to the hierarchy'[41] instead of taking the time to present field-based analyses and solutions. This, in turn, results in the above mentioned supply-driven interventions. To reverse this way of working, field staff need to be able to establish a network of resource persons and actors, to have sufficient access to the field, to possess the necessary capacities to collect and build evidence, and finally, to have the mandate to suggest CA practices on the basis of this evidence.

ENSURE LEGITIMACY

A CA will only succeed if it is perceived as a legitimate answer to a real need. This reflects the priority of local-international coherence against the other levels of coherence, i.e. the alignment with local needs and priorities is the fundamental precondition for success. If these are not taken into account there will be no buy-in from the concerned stakeholders and the CA will fail.

A WoS approach will help to build public support and ensure legitimacy. In many partner countries of the Belgian development cooperation, the legitimacy of the state is not always robust. Although this is an argument to actually engage with the government in order to strengthen its legitimacy or at least not undermining it, it is also an argument in favor of more collaborative forms of democratic governance. In many cases these bottom-up forms of democratic accountability through the integration of civil society and other societal actors will be necessary to ensure the legitimacy of the Belgium CA in the partner country and strenghen state-society relations.

An open, inclusive and transparent participation process is necessary to get marginalised groups on board. Evidence suggests that those that have been marginalised before are also marginalised in the partnership process.[42] Participatory processes can play an important political role, but when not properly managed, they rather reproduce existing power imbalances instead of reducing them. One of the main explanations is that marginalised groups that will be affected by international interventions do not fit the formal and technical requirements to become eligible partners for donors. Traditional – governmental – donors still have difficulties to go beyond state-centred partnerships. And if civil society is included, it mainly concerns consultative processes with well-established civic organisations that fit the expectations of donors. More in general, the bureaucratic nature of the international community is not well suited to integrate the marginalised groups into their partnership processes.[43]

THE CRRF[44]

The Uganda case study focused on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) that is being implemented by the Uganda government and its international partners to manage the refugee influx in Northern Uganda. A social network analysis was done to map the information flows between the different members of the Steering Committee (SC) of the CRRF. Two findings support the thesis that the marginalised also risk of being marginalised in partnership processes. First, the refugees were not properly represented in the SC: on a total of 26 members, refugees were only allowed to delegate one representative, all other members being national government institutions, international donors and national/international NGOs. Also, the SC started its activities and convened several times before a refugee representative was delegated. Second, the information network that mapped the information flows between the different members of the SC showed that the refugees, but also other actors close to the refugees (mainly local actors such as the local council) are marginalised. They are excluded from information flows: they are almost not consulted by the other actors and they receive almost no information from them.

More in partiuclar, those affected by the CA should be able to hold accountable those that implement the CA. This classical democratic 'all-affected principle' (AAP) stipulates that 'all those affected by a political decision ought, directly or indirectly, to have a say in its making.'[45] However, for the CA – and development cooperation more especially – this is a major challenge. Although the CA will produce effects that can deeply affect people's lives in the partner country, those affected cannot hold the Belgian government accountable through formal democratic institutions: they cannot vote the Belgian government out of office.

Dialogue with the affected population is a helpful way to guarantee the legitimacy of CA practices. The above mentioned democratic deficit can be and is being handled in different ways: through partnering with representative democratic institutions of the partner country and by including civil society organisations in the participatory process. However, as mentioned above, this does not fully ensure the integration of the affected population. Therefore, it is important to establish a direct link between the implementing and affected stakeholders of the CA. This last option is able to build evidence-based knowledge at the level of the affected population, and it offers opportunities to strengthen public support for the CA practices on the very local level. Having planning and monitoring systems in place that are able to collect data and evidence on the level of the affected population will be useful to that end.

In order to maximise the democratic character of CA practices, the following four basic principles can give guidance to increase the legitimacy of CA practices:[46]

- **Political monitoring**: elected politicians and elected bodies should be able to monitor CA practices, in order to guarantee the link with representative democratic institutions.
- **Representative membership**: ensure the broad inclusion of all relevant and affected actors, and monitor that members should be representative for the groups and organisations they claim to represent.
- **Principal of affectedness**: provide sufficient opportunities for the affected stakeholders to enter into dialogue with the implementing stakeholders through the collection of data and evidence on the level of the affected population.
- **Democratic rules and norms**: guarantee procedural fairness to guarantee an open, transparant and democratic decision-making process that supports the building of trusting relationships.

ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS

The added-value of the CA is in bringing complementary stakeholders together. The additional benefit of the CA relies mainly in its search for complementarity. The added-value of the CA is basically to what degree the CA brings actors together with complementary expertise that were not cooperating before.

LOCAL SECURITY & THE KOGLWEOGOS

The thematic case study in Burkina Faso focused on local security and offers an interesting illustration of the trade-off between legitimacy and effectiveness. In the aftermath of the Burkina Faso crisis local security groups – the Koglweogos – emerged to substitute the state security forces that were unable to provide local security. The state security forces were seen as legitimate *but* ineffective, yet the Koglweogos were considered legitimate largely *because* effective: although they had no formal legitimacy, they 'earned' there legitimacy by a perceived effectiveness of their actions. The case study illustrates that a WoS approach – taking into account formal, but also informal and non-governmental security operators – is necessary to understand the complex network of actors that constitute local security.

A WoS approach offers most innovative potential. The crucial importance of civilian capacity in fragile and conflict-affected settings has already been mentioned.[47] In many cases, governmental donor bureacracies are unable to deal with the urgent needs in such situations. Civilian actors are better placed to deal with issues such as building peace constituencies, promoting local institutions and peaceful conflict management, crisis prevention through media contributions, education and youth promotion, trauma healing, reconciliation, and so on.[48] Increasingly, the international answer is translated into civilian-led missions that include the combination of humanitarian workers, human rights monitors, legal experts, and local civil society actors in addition to military forces.[49] In sum, a Belgian CA should be able to go beyond a state-focused approach and fully exploit civilian capacity, both in Belgium and in partner countries.

A Belgian CA best focuses on bridging the structural holes in the Belgian network.[50] Through several 3D-LO exercises, Belgium took steps to increase coherence on the level of the Government. In addition, Belgian civil society substantially invested in more coherence between NGAs through the adoption of CCAs and CSFs. However, both levels of coherence

are not interlinked. This division between a government-led and a civil society-led sub-network is illustrated in the network visualisation of existing experiences of collaboration between Belgian actors.[51]
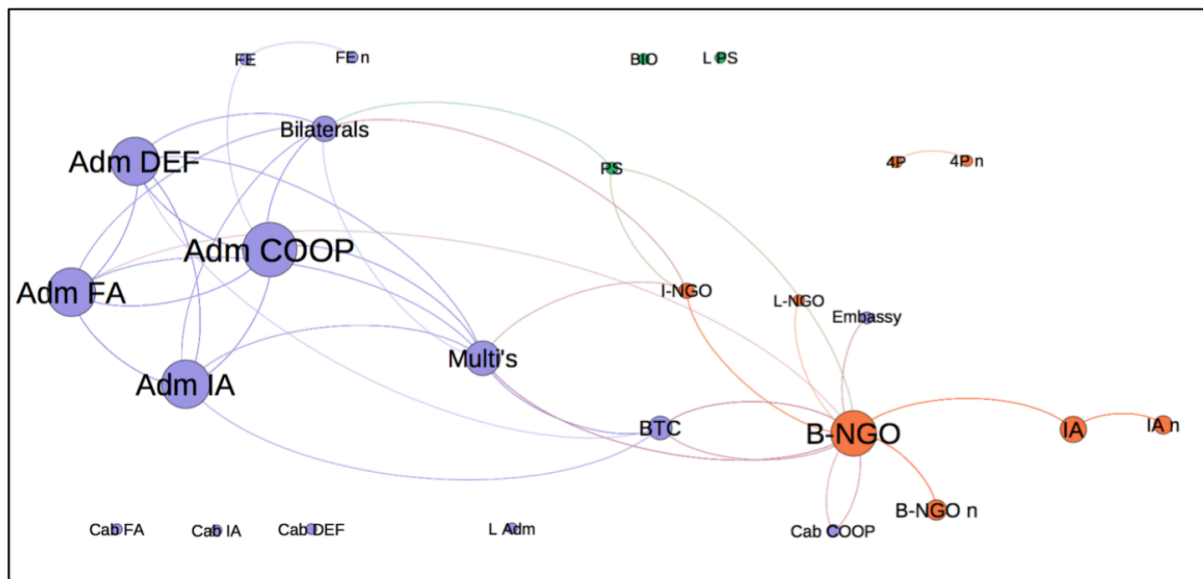

Figure 4 – Network of examples of current Belgian cooperation (purple = state, orange = society, green = market)[52]

The silos still exist. The tendency to work together with similar others, within the proper silo remains strong: NGOs work most closely together with NGOs, government agencies work most closely together with other government agencies. Furthermore, the analysis of experiences of Belgian collaboration illustrates that particular stakeholders are still underrepresented: the private sector, the diaspora, the communities and regions, local stakeholders in the partner country. In sum, a WoS conception of the CA will be useful to maximally exploit the diversity of expertise in both Belgium and the partner country, and to bridge structural holes in the Belgian network between complementary although not yet interlinekd actors and silos.

CONCLUSION

An iterative process is needed to operationalise effective and legitimate CA practices. Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) is a useful approach to meet the dual challenge of operationalising legitimate and effective CA practices.[53] Legimacity and effectiveness of CA practices are mutually reinforcing. However, it is not possible to identify a legitimate and effective solution in advance. PDIA argues that the effectiveness and legitimacy of CA practices will gradually improve through an iterative process. Functionality and legitimacy will need to be build throughout an iterative process that ensures short feedback loops between CA
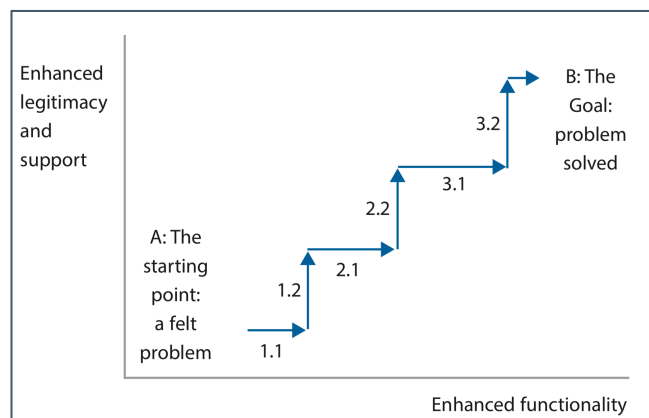

Figure 5 – Iterating to meet the dual challenge of legitimacy and functionality in reform; reproduced from Andrews et.al. (2015).

23

implementing and affected stakeholders. Through this iterative process CA practices should be able to achieve gradual functional improvement with growing legitimacy.

4. Risks – When will a CA fail?

It is important to include a reality check. Since CA practices bring together different stakeholders with different interests, visions and priorities, there are important risks that explain why CA practices may (easily) fail. The following elements cover the major risks that can explain a lack of success.

A common vision is not found. As stressed in the section on objectives, the CA is a means to an end. Without an agreement around strategic objectives, interests, values but also core functioning principles of the CA as an instrument for realising the SDGs, it is very difficult to build the necessary level of trust between the stakeholders and overcome the fear of instrumentalisation.

Stakeholders are instrumentalised. The CA can lead to a win-lose situation in which the costs and benefits are unequally distributed among the different stakeholders. Stakeholders do not join CA practices on an equal basis. Existing relationships and power imbalances between the stakeholders define the initial constellation of the network. And although common ground can be found among stakeholders, this does not mean that competing objectives will completely vanish once the CA is in place.[54] As a consequence, the risk of instrumentalisation and co-optation is real, and will harm certain actors – particularly those with less power – to engage in CA practices. Safeguards and firewalls at strategic and operational levels should be set in order to prevent such instrumentalisation (e.g. guarantees for financial and/or programmatic autonomy; ensuring ODA criteria are not breached, etc.)

End-users are not heard. CA practices can have counter-productive outcomes for some of its stakeholders, those that will be affected by the policies and actions of such practices, or even the wider public. Indeed, a CA can result in opaque decision-making structures without clear accountability mechanisms, and as such, install a lack of publicity and transparency. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on ensuring that an evidence-based process of evaluation is established at the level of the affected population, in order to sufficiently integrate the voices and interests of the affected population. If this public support is lacking, or if public distrust or defiance is installed, the risk of failure will substantially increase.

Capacities, mandates and resources are not provided. An effective operationalisation of a CA is dependent upon the availability of clear mandates, capacities and resources of the different stakeholders. In particular analytical capacity to guarantee that the CA is evidence-based is a crucial precondition for success. This demands time in the field and sufficient time to collect data and evidence. In addition, clear mandates are necessary to initiate and implement CA practices on the basis of the collected data and evidence.

Blueprints are implemented. A CA is not always the solution. A systematic or blue-print implementation of a CA could ruin stakeholders' engagement and raise mistrust regarding the approach itself. The search for coherence should not turn into a generalised commitment to systematic coordination and cooperation, regardless of the context in which a CA should be implemented and the problem it should solve. The CA should only be considered if it has

an added-value and can indeed bring about more legitimate and effective processes towards policy coherence for attaining the SDGs.

'Participation fatigue' can occur as a by-product of all these risks. Stakeholders will be unwilling to participate because of the potential pitfalls and burdens that come with the lack of common vision, their instrumentalisation, the absence of transparency and accountability, their lack of resources to participate.

The solution relies on the creation and strengthening of trust between the CA stakeholders and between the CA stakeholders and the wider public. This is not an easy task, but taking the three suggested principles seriously will be a first step in the good direction: through starting from context, and work with the most legitimate and complementary actors, while also assuring a transparent and accountable process will certainly increase the probability of an effective CA.

5. Indicators – How should progress towards a CA be measured?

Measuring the outcomes of CA practices is not an easy task. Multi-stakeholder constellations such as the CA have rather intangible (joint analysis, common values, more coordination); dispersed (for different actors, at different places); and non-attributable outputs (the network is only one of multiple causal relations). In addition, they mostly work towards dynamic (shifting during negotiation process); multiple (different from one actor to another); and diffuse goals (no blueprint at the beginning of process).[55] In the sections below, a distinction is made between necessary *conditions* that give rise to a qualitative *process* and the achievement of certain desired *outcomes*.

CONDITIONS

A variety of interconnected factors explain the success or failure of collaborative governance approaches such as the CA. Presented below is a schematic presentation giving an overview of the most important factors based on a meta-review of 137 cases by Chris Ansell and Alison Gash.[56]
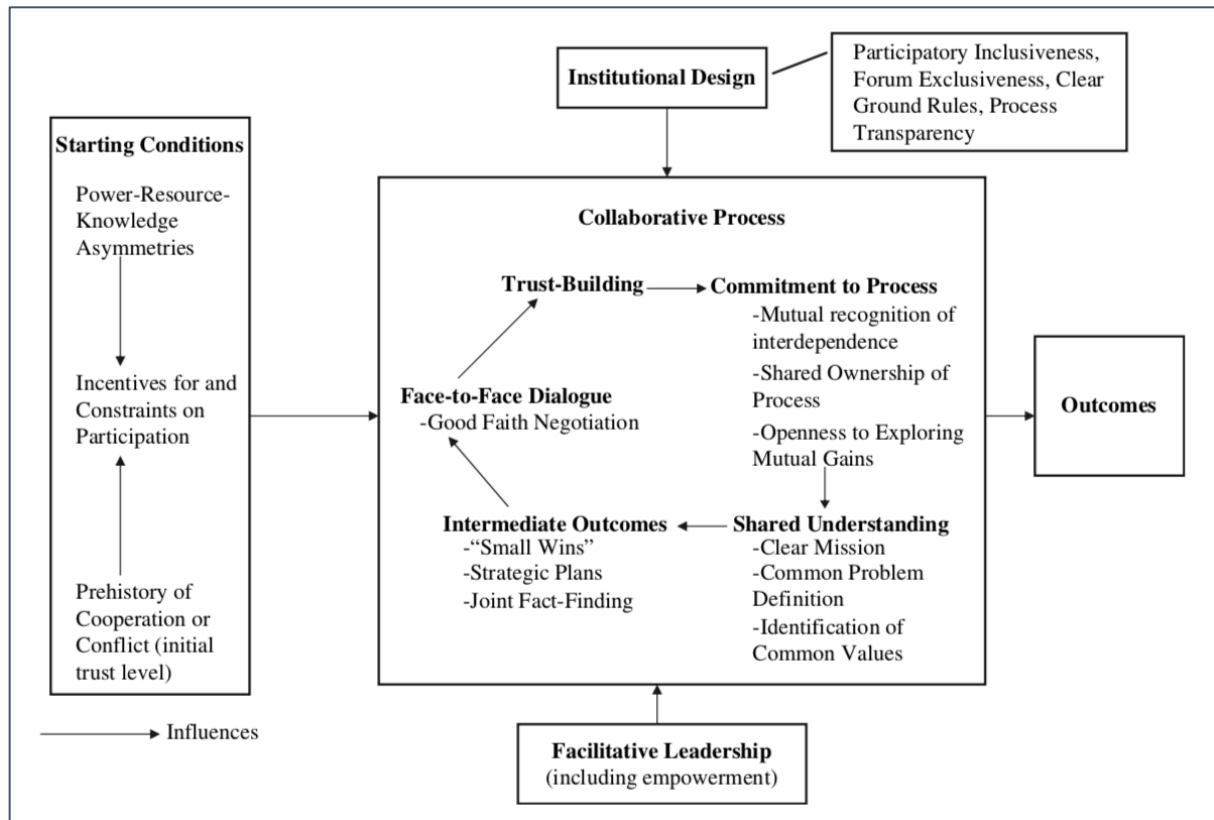
Diagram 1 – A Model of Collaborative Governance; Reproduced from Ansell C. and Gash A. (2007)

Starting conditions. The prior history of conflict or cooperation, the incentives for stakeholders to participate as well as the power and resource imbalances are crucial factors influencing the willingness of stakeholders to engage in collaborative processes, whether it is between state, civil society or citizens or between national and international actors. These factors explain the difficult starting conditions of many CA practices.

Facilitative Leadership. A collaborative or multi-stakeholder approach does not mean there is no need for leadership. To the contrary, facilitative leadership is a 'critical ingredient' to bring parties to the table, build trust, facilitate dialogue and explore mutual gains. [57] If the Belgian embassies – as suggested – take up this leadership role, they need the right skills to do so.

Institutional design. Institutional design refers to the procedures designed to guide the collaborative process. Access is the most fundamental design issue: the question 'who's in' and 'who's out' immediately defines the scope of the exercise.[58] According to the literature, the openess and inclusiveness of the process is crucial for its success. This resonates well with two key challenges of CA practices. Firstly, there is the difficulty of CA practices to reach out to the affected population in order to initiate a true inclusive process. Secondly, CA practices will frequently be confronted by the choice of including rival – or 'troublesome' – stakeholders (e.g. civil society vs state actors, humanitarian vs military actors). Although such situations are seen as unworkable, the success of the CA is exactly in bringing such stakeholders with different interests and views around the table.

Collaborative process. The starting conditions, the institutional design and the availablity of a facilitative leader all shape the nature and functioning of the collaborative process. Crucial

internal factors for success are face-to-face dialogue, trust building, commitment to the process, shared understanding, and intermediate outcomes.

PROCESS

The quality of the process is dependent upon the initiation of cognitive, strategic and institutional learning. At the heart of the CA is the need for collective action. This requires from stakeholders a willingness to learn from each other, understand each others' viewpoints, come to a shared understanding of the problem and its solution (cognitive learning). It also demands that stakeholders accept the constellation of the group, accept the other members as equals, and respect the rules and procedures of decision-making (strategic learning). Finally, it also requires a willingness to establish long-term engagements on the basis of increased levels of trust (institutional learning).

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LEARNING CYCLES[59]

- **Cognitive learning**: a shared problem-analysis was reached and common goals identified.
- **Strategic learning**: all necessary stakeholders were included and all stakeholder views were taken into account through democratic and transparent procedures.
- **Institutional learning**: the collaborative process gave rise to increased levels of trust between stakeholders.

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Satisfaction surveys are a useful way to measure the quality of the process. Next to a continous monitoring assessing how far these learning cycles are realised throughout the process, satisfaction surveys can easily evaluate ex-post if stakeholders are satified with the shared problem-analysis and the commonly defined goals. They can also assess in how far stakeholders experienced the negotiations as fair, transparent and with equal respect for all stakeholders, and in how far levels of trust between stakeholders did increase.

OUTCOMES

The 2030 Agenda is the overarching framework that should guide CA outcomes. Since the 2030 Agenda has been suggested as the normative regulatory framework to justify CA practices, also its outcomes should be in line with this agenda. The 2030 Agenda has been translated into 17 SDGs and a global indicator framework of 244 indicators to measure progress towards these 17 SDGs.[60] This indicator framework can guide the identification, monitoring and evaluation of outcome indicators for concrete CA practices.

However, outcome indicators should always be translated into context-specific indicators. Although the global SDG indicator framework can inspire the selection and identification of outcome indicators, these will always need a context-specific translation. Top-down and bottom-up narratives on local situations can substantially differ.[61] Inferring indicators from the top-down and external analysis will result in monitoring indicators that do not necessarily make sense on the ground. Hence, the need for localised indicators.

Crowd-sourcing – in its analogue and digital form – is an interesting way to ensure that CA outcomes are based on localised indicators that make sense for the affected population. Creating evidence-based policy should focus on collecting data and information on the level of the affected population. Evidence should not only come from government officials, other donors, consultancy reports, civil society elites, or private sector CEOs. It

should also come from the affected population. In other words: evidence should not be collected in meetings rooms but in the field.

This demands an investment in time and resources. Crowd-sourcing data and evidence is mainly done through participatory action research, which is an active form of research that has the potential to empower the affected groups.[62] But it demands time in the field and sufficient time to collect data through surveys, in-depth interviews, participatory observation, participatory-rural appraisal techniques, and new technologies, and this on a continuous basis in order to monitor and adapt interventions.

Adaptive management will be helpful to plan and monitor CA outcomes. Linear, static and hierarchical planning and implementation will most likely be too rigid to manage the multiple and dynamic goals and interests of the stakeholders involved in a CA practice. In such situations, a more horizontal, flexible, and iterative planning will probably be more effective. CA practices will profit from adaptive management techniques – such as PDIA and Theory of Change (ToC) – that are problem-driven and focus more on learning on the spot, and from taking a 'stepwise approach' to achieving the desired outcomes[63].

CONCLUSION

CA stakeholders can learn from each other and fully exploit their comparative advantages to plan, monitor and evaluate CA practices. Development actors, for example, have more experience with flexible, multi-stakeholders and participatory management approaches to implement complex and long-term programmes, which could be shared with other stakeholders. They have an arsenal of instruments and approaches to implement such programmes, of which ToC and PDIA approaches are only two concrete examples. Likewise, NGOs and other civil society organisations have a comparative advantage to build public support because of their presence in the field and their embeddedness into the local context. Another learning opportunity is the expertise of humanitarian actors to rapidly collect field data to plan their interventions. Moreover, they have instruments and approaches that can be shared and/or used to rapidly plan, monitor, adapt and evaluate CA interventions. Still another opportunity is the disclosure of specific military information that can be of crucial importance for other CA partners (information on the security situation being a particular case in mind). Existing collaboration between these partners have already proven their added value to collect data in order to plan, monitor and evaluate their interventions.

6. Actions – How should a CA be initiated?

A balance should be reached between strategic and operational coherence. Throughout the consultation process many concerns have been raised about the further operationalisation of a Belgian CA. It is extremely difficult to synthesize and translate all these concerns into a limited list of concrete routes of action. However, one key message underpinned most of these concerns, i.e. the need to find a right balance between strategic and operational coherence. In many conversations this twofold concern and its trade-off were raised.

On the one hand, there is a need for strategic coherence: sufficient and adequate strategic top-down steering. Strategic coherence ensures a strong political ownership and

the availability of a clear common strategy and identification of priorities. Many stakeholders argue that until now strategic steering has been insufficient, which explains their uncertainty about the exact meaning of a CA.

On the other hand, there is a need for operational coherence: sufficient flexibility to leave room for a bottom-up and problem-driven approach. This is supported by a broad consensus arguing that effective CA practices should start from the local context and operational reality on the ground. It should be problem-driven and based on the real need of collaboration between different stakeholders to solve the identified problem. Only then will CA practices result into win-win situations for the involved stakeholders.

The trade-off between strategic and operational coherence remains crucial at all levels. In the following paragraphs, we provide further details to the different levels of coherence as listed in the working definition of the CA: the intra-agency, Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society, inter-agency, and local-international coherences. For each level of coherence, possible routes of action are presented, both at the strategic and operational level. These routes are not exclusive to the level of coherence but provide a necessary focus.

INTRA-AGENCY COHERENCE

Strategic coherence

1. Provide the right incentives, facilities and mechanisms to promote cross-boundary work. Management can create an enabling environment that facilitates and rewards cross-boundary work. Professional – career – incentives for such engagement are one of the ways to bridge institutional, organisational or individual cultures among departments.[64] Integration of information management systems, creation of liaison offices, secondment of staff to other departments or common training modules would also facilitate cross-boundary work. Likewise, financial incentives for cross-departmental cooperation (e.g. pooled or joint budgets) or joined-up processes encouraging consultation and shared analysis (e.g. FRAME) can be helpful.

Operational level

2. Use trans-departmental and field-connected teams. Sharing knowledge through direct face-to-face dialogue, including when necessary, through field missions, is a powerful way to overcome the silo mentality.[65] The need for opportunities to 'get to know each other' was an often-heard concrete suggestion during consultations. Within DGD the use of transdirectional teams to focus on specific issues such as the preparation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sahel Policy or the DGD strategy on environment have been instrumental in facilitating the socialisation between staff of different directorates. Such experiences should be actively promoted and initiated whenever they can have a possible added value. A particular challenge is to guarantee that these teams are field-connected. For example, the complaint of embassies that 'instructions are sometimes out of touch with reality on the ground'[66] was reconfirmed. In this respect, increasing visits between headquarter and embassies is to be considered. Also, the availability of joint dissemination and uptake activities on the CA concept (publications, information sessions, workshops, training, …) can strengthen learning and information-sharing beyond departments.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT COHERENCE

Strategic Level

3. Define common goals and priorities for the Belgian CA. Stakeholders can be reluctant to engage and invest in a CA because its priorities are not yet clear and because they also hold different and conflicting views on what these priorities should be.[67] However, since the CA is dependent upon voluntary engagement and collaboration between interdependent yet autonomous stakeholders, it will be necessary to overcome these differences. The only way to achieve collaboration is the identification of a superordinate goal, i.e. a goal that is able to unite all stakeholders beyond lower-order conflicts among individual or subgroup goals.[68] Without such clear 'common goal' or 'common vision' to which stakeholders can commit themselves, and which is laid down in a policy document for reference, most of them will remain reluctant to engage and step into a CA. Concretely, it is suggested that the current Belgian Strategy Note on the CA would benefit from both a deepening – defining more explicitly the common goals and priorities – and a broadening – including a wider range of stakeholders – of its scope and content. The federal government should take the lead in this process.

4. Define the CA as an approach for Policy Coherence for Development (PCD). As illustrated in the first chapter of the first Belgian National Voluntary Review of the 2030 Agenda implementation, the institutional framework put in place by Belgium is complex. Several mechanisms exist, both at the federal and subnational levels (communities and regions).[69] The CA should, in one way or the other, fit into this broader agenda of policy coherence for development. Indeed, if the CA is an approach to streamline Belgian foreign policy, it is therefore necessary that this foreign policy integrate Belgium's efforts to strengthen PCD and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In order to ensure this alignment, existing PCD institutional settings could have an oversight function. Until now these mechanisms mainly have had – in the best case – an advisory role[70]. Nevertheless, a more active role could be envisaged. CA initiatives could for example be systematically submitted to the ICPCD and/or ACPCD, which is then mandated to present an opinion – binding or not. This will increase transparency both within the government (ICPCD) and beyond (ACPCD). However, opinions on the usefulness of these PCD mechanisms are diverse. A reflection on how to adapt and strengthen these tools will be probably needed.

Operational Level

5. Provide the Belgian embassies with the necessary resources and mandate to fulfil their role. As important as the need for strategic top-down steering is the need for bottom-up operational flexibility.[71]

There is a broad consensus among the consulted stakeholders that the embassy should become the central broker in the Belgian CA network. It can make the crucial connection between the strategic and operational level, i.e. assuring that strategic steering from headquarters is correctly translated at the operational level, yet also guaranteeing that the strategic steering from headquarters is based on the operational reality on the ground. However, as highlighted in the latest peer-review of Belgian development cooperation, until today, decentralisation efforts did not go far enough to provide the embassies with the necessary resources and mandate to fulfil this role.[72] This crucial aspect must be addressed.

Delegating the mandate to initiate CA practices – although within the priorities set on strategic level – explicitly to the embassy level would be a helpful step in the right direction. If so, a staff member should be granted a clear mandate to coordinate between the different embassy sections (political, security, development sections) and external stakeholders, while also systematically and pro-actively identifying potential CA challenges.

Following the delegation of mandate, capacity should also be delegated, meaning that substantial monitoring capacity is needed: to develop contextual analysis, on the basis of which potential opportunities for CA practices are identified, stakeholders are mapped, and consultations are initiated. Those steps must precede the formal request for approval from headquarters. Furthermore, throughout the execution process, the embassy should be able to steer, monitor and evaluate CA practices in order to guarantee an effective implementation and ensure a learning effect for future CA practices. Specific attention should be given to provide the embassy with sufficient capacity to directly collect and integrate the priorities of the affected population, and to systematically monitor the effects of the CA, including on this population.

6. Clarify the division of roles between Enabel and DGD.[73] If the new management contract provides certain elements for the division of roles between DGD and Enabel, it is solely for bilateral programmes, it does not provide a clear description and distinction of their respective role in a broader CA framework. For instance, there is no consensus on the effect of the Enabel reform on the CA. Will the reform be an opportunity for more operational coherence? Enabel's increased autonomy may allow it more flexibility in choosing and adapting partners and strategies. Or will the reform create an imbalance between operational flexibility and strategic steering? Specifically, will DGD's capacity for strategic steering of Enabel (to ensure coherence both with the other instruments of Belgian development policy and with the instruments of foreign policy) be reduced? Likewise, there is also confusion on who should take the lead in the CA. Will DGD remain the privileged partner of Enabel? In this case, DGD should take the lead in facilitating collaboration between Enabel and the FPS Foreign Affairs and other FPSs. Or should Enabel have direct contacts with the FPS Foreign Affairs and beyond? In this case, DGD may only be invited when necessary. The unclear division of roles between Enabel and DGD has been a longstanding constraint, and until now, the new management contract appears unable to ease the institutional tensions between both partners.

To the least, a clear division of roles, based on a systematic and transparent communication and information sharing between DGD and Enabel – both at headquarters and embassy level – should be achieved. Rather than setting up formalised consultation structures, a more fruitful approach would be to increase and systematise face-to-face dialogue on the operational level. In this respect, the one roof policy – integrating Enabel into the embassy – is worth noticing: it is an interesting experiment to promote face-to-face dialogue and see how it may result in more collaborative relationships.

WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY COHERENCE

Strategic level

7. Develop a Belgian strategy and vision on non-governmental cooperation. A significant amount – 16% – of Belgian ODA is executed by Belgian Non-Governmental Actors (NGAs).[74] However, there is a lack of a clear strategy defining the role and added value of non-governmental cooperation. For instance, the fact that DGD drafted 16 strategy notes on priority themes such as private sector cooperation, multilateral cooperation or humanitarian aid but has yet to agree upon a strategy clarifying the role and importance of non-governmental cooperation is revealing. This hinders a full exploitation of the added value and complementarity of non-governmental cooperation. A clear strategy – which should also define the role of Belgian and local civil society in the broader framework of the CA – would be required to bridge this divide, as it was also identified during the last OECD peer-review of Belgian development cooperation in 2015. More specifically, the OECD recommendation refers to the development of a clear strategy *with* civil society backing.[75]

8. Upscale the CCAs to full-fledged Belgian contextual analyses of the partner countries. In the context of the OECD review in 2015, Belgium already indicated its intent to develop integrated country strategies in order to increase impact and visibility of Belgium's aid.[76] Through the development of the Common Contextual Analysis (CCAs) and the Joint Strategic Frameworks (JSFs) the NGAs were asked to take steps in that direction.

In particular, the CCA intended to unite a diversity of actors to share a common understanding of the context, without touching the autonomy of the various stakeholders. The exercise illustrates that information sharing is a crucial step to initiate further synergy, complementarity and learning opportunities, and that this should not necessarily lead to a rigid and formalised policy document, but instead is best used as a dynamic document to update shared contextual analysis. However, the exercise also had its limits as it was an exercise among NGAs and no other channels of Belgian development cooperation were involved. As such, the CCA exercise offers the opportunity to be used as a stepping-stone to initiate the broader exercise to draft Belgian contextual analyses in which all stakeholders of a Belgian CA are involved.

9. Develop a Belgian strategy and vision on the role of the private sector in fragile contexts. The role of the private sector as an important pillar of Belgian development cooperation has been a clear priority in the last few years. However, the Belgian vision and strategy on the definition and role of the private sector as a development actor rarely matches the reality of fragile situations and low-income countries on which Belgium also pledged to focus. For example, although the strategy note on the private sector endorses the view that fragile and low-income countries demand a particular approach and specific priorities, such an approach has not been developed. Furthermore, the strategy note admits that other priorities than private sector development exist in such fragile environments.[77]

At the same time, the private sector *is* indeed an important player: in many fragile settings, the increase of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) is higher that the increase of ODA.[78] Therefore, the main challenge is not about attracting FDI, but rather on how the country manages FDI.[79] However, this calls for a different and more context-specific approach, since it appears that local economy and the private sector are often part of the structural causes that lead to conflict and fragility.[80] Therefore, the focus should be to provide supporting services to Belgian and local private sector actors to prevent them from doing harm through fuelling root causes of conflict and fragility (corruption, inequality, natural resource management).

This requires building up government capacities to support local and Belgian companies with conflict-sensitive best practices to work in fragile environments.[81] A private sector strategy focusing on such issues becomes a much more relevant and crucial pillar of a Belgian CA in such settings.

Operational level

10. Fund network managers instead of synergy projects. Contrary to the strategic level where there is still room for improvement, a diversity of bottom-up synergies is already exploited at the operational level by Belgian actors. Based on real needs and opportunities, a variety of actors already find each other to tackle challenges on the basis of their complementarity. These collaborations are most often voluntary, bottom-up, sometimes informal, and always with respect for the autonomy of the different stakeholders.

A traditional modality to upscale these synergetic opportunities is to lock them up in 'synergy projects' with their proper objectives, activities and budget. But this goes against the very idea of synergy: synergy should be focusing on better connecting existing activities, not about creating new ones. Also, the downside of synergy-projects is that most of them do not

have a structural and long-term impact once the project is finished. They are rather ad hoc collaborations.

Instead of a project-based approach to support bottom-up synergy and collaboration is the financing of network managers. These actors are embedded in organisational or platform structures, and are therefore well placed to mainstream synergy and collaboration in a much more structural way. In other words, synergy does not necessarily need extra funds for additional activities, it needs extra human resources to prospect and maintain a network of relationships that can give rise to structural opportunities for collaboration and synergy. However, currently, staff that dedicates time to facilitate cross-organisational collaboration is often seen as a distraction of the core activities of the organisation, and is therefore perceived as unnecessary and irrelevant.[82] This vision should be challenged.

INTER-AGENCY COHERENCE

Strategic level

11. Lead by example and advocate for European harmonisation and alignment with partner country priorities. Belgium should continue to stress the importance of European harmonisation in its partner countries by actively contributing to initiatives that enhance and increase coherence between EU member states. When doing so, Belgium should advocate for alignment with partner country priorities. To transmit this message, Belgium can lead by example and promote its long-term partnership model that Belgian actors (both for bilateral and non-governmental aid) are renowned for (ref. international-local coherence).

Operational level

12. Spearhead a peer-learning exercise through the INCAF network. Several other bilateral donors – such as Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK and Switzerland – have already a CA in place.[83] The Belgium CA could build on these experiences. A peer learning exercise could also be initiated with one or more of these countries.[84] An important success factor for such peer learning is the composition of the Belgian delegation. This delegation should have both a considerable political backing and include a wide range of concerned stakeholders (representatives of civil society, private sector, and academia). Since Belgium is currently co-chairing one of the working groups of the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF), this network would be a good option to initiate such a learning exercise in which Belgium could take the lead.

13. Follow a Whole-of-Society approach to represent Belgium on the international level. Belgian actors have much expertise to offer. This applies to both governmental (Enabel, and other public actors such as the federal police, justice, defence, customs, notably through public-public partnerships to implement the bilateral programme), civil society (international NGO families, cities, knowledge institutions), and private sector (EU network on corporate social responsibility, the UN Global compact) actors. The Belgian government can take measures to boost the visibility of this Belgian expertise on the international level. This exposure should be seen as opportunities to further integrate Belgian expertise into international settings.

One particular recommendation is that, whenever relevant, Belgium could use mixed delegations that include several of these governmental and non-governmental actors as experts. This would strengthen the position and legitimacy of Belgium as a member of the international community that capitalises and values all available expertise in its society, and therefore puts SDG 17 (revitalisation of the Global Partnership) into practice. It would also strengthen the dialogue, and therefore set the bases for a common understanding of key

issues, by both DGD and NGA's. Finally, this exposure on the international level can initiate new opportunities for international synergy and cooperation for Belgian actors.

INTERNATIONAL-LOCAL COHERENCE

Strategic coherence

14. Re-endorse the Paris Declaration (2005), the Accra Agenda (2008), and the Busan Partnership (2011) as guiding principles for the Belgian CA.[85] Since the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Belgian development policy has been strongly committed to contribute to coherent international efforts that are aligned with partner country priorities. This commitment was reaffirmed through adopting the principles for effective engagement in fragile contexts and its support for the New Deal.[86] However, in recent years, doubts have been raised about the usefulness of these principles, given their unrealistic implementation in countries like DR Congo and Burundi, both partner countries of the Belgian development policy. Furthermore, the implementation of a CA is necessarily confronted with the tension between Belgian and partner country's interests. An optimistic minority believe these tensions can be reconciled and common objectives reached, resulting in a win-win situation for both Belgium and the partner country. However, a majority within the Belgian development sector holds a more pessimistic view and argues in favour of strict safeguards to ensure a development focus of the CA.[87] The ambiguous position of Belgium on this issue is illustrated by the strategy note on the CA, in which neither the Paris Declaration nor the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation are mentioned.[88] Belgium will need to take a more substantiated position on this issue. It should clarify if and how it will impose conditions on the CA to guarantee its development focus, and therefore, its alignment with partner country priorities and interests.

Operational coherence

15. Safeguard and broaden partner country consultations for bilateral programmes. Based on first experiences, concerns are raised on the consultative character of the new management contract between the Belgian State and Enabel. In the programme management cycle, as laid down in the Royal decree dealing with the management contract, the consultative process with the partner country is only defined in broad terms. This provides insufficient guarantees for a locally aligned bilateral programme. For each step of the programme cycle, the management contract should clearly define the (i) need for partner country consultations, (ii) the different target groups to be consulted, (iii) the procedure of consultation (what decision-making power is given) and (iv) how the results of the consultation process will feed into the programming. Particular attention should be paid to the inclusiveness of the consultations: not only should national level government be consulted, but the voices of civil society organisations, private sector actors, academia, media, and the communities should be taken into account. A WoS approach would broaden public support, ownership and visibility of the programme.

16. Strengthen and extend programme-financing. On the basis of a geographic concentration and an organisational screening, Belgian policy achieved a better integration of its non-governmental cooperation. Within this strategic framework, NGAs receive programme-financing: a combination of long-term programming (5 years) with relative free choice of partners, themes, sectors, and strategies (right of initiative). This allows Belgian NGAs to develop long-term relationships with their local counterparts, which enables them to design and implement highly context-specific and problem-driven programmes. It offers programmes with less donor conditionality, and therefore, leaves more room for bottom-up planning. These are crucial and important advantages. Currently, however, an increase in call for proposals is observed to disburse Belgian aid.[89] This does not only increase the risk for further fragmentation and non-manageable transaction costs[90], but it also increases the

34

risk for short-term supply-driven projects that violate the need for international-local coherence. The latter demands long-term investments and a structural approach that goes beyond 'hopping' from one call for proposal to another. It is worth reflecting if and how the programme-financing modality can be optimised and used more broadly to disburse Belgian funds. This programme-financing mechanism ensures substantive local embeddedness of Belgian actors and their activities in the partner country. Belgian development cooperation should be more aware of this crucial benefit.

17. Partner with Belgian and local civil society to invest in crowd-sourced evidence and evidence-based policy. A common threat throughout all routes of actions is the lack of analytical capacity to collect data and information to guarantee evidence-based policy. Although everyone agrees on Doing Development Differently, most keep working with blueprints and best practices for which no sound evidence exists. Blueprints are attractive because they save time and deliver reports as expected. More crucially, resources and capacities to go beyond the blueprint and collect data and evidence are often lacking.

A particular reference is made to crowd-sourced evidence – both in its 'analogue' and 'digital' form – to make a crucial point clear: the focus in creating evidence-based policy should be on collecting data and information on the level of the affected population (end-users of the CA). Evidence should not only come from government officials, other donors, consultancy reports, civil society elites, or private sector actors. It should come from the end-users. In other words: evidence should not be collected in meetings rooms but in the field.

There is, however, a capacity gap. First of all, collecting evidence takes time: instead of a participatory workshop at headquarters, it demands a trip to the field and sufficient time to collect data through surveys, in-depth interviews, participatory observation, participatory-rural appraisal techniques, and new technologies, and this on a continuous basis in order to monitor and adapt interventions. New technologies can accelerate and facilitate the collection of data but cannot replace actual presence and exchanges on the field. Second, it demands the right skills. Donor's and aid agencies' technical and bureaucratic staff are often not well equipped and trained for such tasks.

As explained in the section on indicators, there is a however a clear opportunity to tap into the substantive experience of Belgian and local civil society and humanitarian organisations to bridge this knowledge gap. Because of their embeddedness in the local context, they represent a significant potential of analytical capacity to feed into evidence-based policy. Perhaps equally important is the fact that partnering with them to collect evidence will not only result in evidence-based policy, but it will also increase its legitimacy. Civil society can play its double role as a service provider (collecting and delivering evidence) and as a political actor (representing the affected population, i.e. the end-users of CA practices).

Conclusion

A context-focused approach combined with clear goals is the kind of catchphrase that could summarise the key message of this green paper. It reflects the central concerns raised throughout consultation process, i.e. the need to balance strategic coherence (clear goals) with operational coherence (context-focused approach). However, in order to find this balance, it is important to remain honest and admit that – next to the uncertainty of political buy-in beyond current legislation – there is still another elephant in the room.

A capability-expectations gap stands between a CA on paper and in practice. At the beginning of the 1990s, the concept 'capability-expectations gap' was introduced to capture the discrepancy between the expectations raised for the EU and its actual capability to achieve them.[91] One could argue that Belgian development cooperation finds itself in a similar situation. Despite raising high expectations, setting up new initiatives and mechanisms, and engaging in a thorough reform of Belgian development cooperation, the political commitment has not yet been met with the required investment in capacities.

To the contrary, the succession of budget restrictions and staff cuts, both at headquarters and embassy levels, already signalled in the OECD peer-review in 2015, have not been altered. Human resource management in the FPS of Foreign Affairs was already an issue in the peer-review of 2010. No progress was observed during the peer review of 2015. Indeed, concerns were expressed of a further degradation of human resource management as 61 staff are expected to retire in 2019. [92]

The green paper identified the needs, added-value, pitfalls and opportunities for a Belgian CA, as well as some key challenges. It is now up to the concerned stakeholders to decide if and what investments they are willing to make in order to implement a Belgian comprehensive approach.

Annex – List of participants & interviewees

ONLINE SURVEY (SPRING-SUMMER 2017)

Participants from the following institutions and organisations participated to the online survey on **Integrated Country Policy**.

Institution	Direction / Services / Organisation (number of respondents between brackets)
Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (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 (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 Actors (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)

Participants from the following institutions and organisations participated to the online survey on the **Comprehensive Approach**.

Institution	Direction / Services / Organization
Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and	D1.2 West Africa and the Arab world; D2 Thematic Direction; D2.1 Humanitarian Unit; D2.2 Inclusive growth; D2.3 Social development; D2.4 Climate, environment and natural resources; D3.2 Civil society

Institution	Direction / Services / Organization
Humanitarian Aid	North and West Africa, Arab world; D3.3 Civil society Central and Southern Africa; D3.4 Civil society Asia and Latin America; D4.2 Management of quality and results; D5.2 (and D0) Transitional development
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	B1 Geographic Directorate – Africa; B2. Finexpo; M2 United Nations; S4 Office of the Special Evaluator; International Security Policy against terrorism; Cabinet
Field offices	Burkina Faso; Niger; United States (Washington)
Ministry of Defence	Operations; Strategy; Intelligence; Royal Military Academy
Federal Police	International police cooperation directorate; Detached to DCAF; CGI
Non-Governmental Actors	11-11-11; Broederlijk Delen; Caritas Belgium; Fairtrade; G3W-M3M; Memisa; Miel Maya Honing; MSI; IIAV; Oxfam Belgium; VECO International; VECO Congo
Others	BTC; Immigration Office; EEAS EUCAP Sahel Mali

For more information on the methodology, see ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *A Comprehensive Approach for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018; ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *An Integrated Country Policy for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018; ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *Governance Networks for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018. The evidence papers are available at: https://www.governance4development.org.

PARTICIPANTS TO THE CASE STUDIES WORKSHOPS

Uganda (November 2017)

Embassy 18 Nov. 2017	• Erwin De Wandel, Head of cooperation • Tine Deschacht, Development section • Alain Lambert, Defence attaché (Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan) • Karine Maeckelberghe, Consul • Sam Vanuytsel, First Secretary – Development Section
Enabel 29 Nov. 2017	• Gregory Acar, Project director SSU EUTF • Rose Athieno, Programme officer • Sammy Auwerx, Finance & Contract SSU • Jan Bijnens, Programme Manager Education • Inge Demortier, Finance Health • Virginie Hallet, Project coordinator Teacher training • Christelle Jocquet, Resident Representative • Elizabeth Nkwame, Training manager • Ralph Rothe, Technical assistant SSU Field
NGA 23 Nov. 2017	• Paul Allertz, Trias • Eduardo De La Pena, Bos+ • Amber Dierckx, VSF-Belgium • Francis Kadaplackal, Belgian Red Cross • Bjorn Maes, Africalia

	• Gerrit Matton, Broederlijk Delen • Hannelore Martens, Protos • Januario Ntungwa, Trias • Romain Ravet, ASF • Marleen Willemsen, Broederlijk Delen

Burkina Faso (February 2018)

Embassy 8 Feb. 2018	• Kathelyne Craenen, Development attaché • Lieven De La Marche, Ambassador • Noélie Dispa, Consul • Bertrand Koenigs, Regional security advisor • Katrien Meersman, Development attaché • Olivier Savadogo, Local Development Assistant
Enabel 8 Feb. 2018	• Eric de Milliano, Resident Representative • Nicolas Oebel, Contractualisation expert PARSIB • Roberto Resmini, Project Manager PARSIB • Kader Tapsoba, National technical assistant
NGA 9 Feb. 2018	• Eva Dossche, Trias • Sarah Goyens, Solidagro • Arianne Iszenga, Broederlijk Delen • Noémie Lambert, SOS Faim Belgique • Brenda Nsengiyumva, APEFE • Germain Ouedraogo, UVCW • Patrice Pamousso, Solidarité mondiale • Lore Raport, Broederlijk Delen • Karime Séré, OXFAM • Modeste Soubeaga, Iles de Paix • Michel Tougna, Riolto • Ramata Touré, SOS Faim Belgique • Didier Woirin, APEFE

Brussels (March-May 2018)

Government 21 March 2018	• Jean-Jacques Bastien, D2.2 • Florence Deschuytener, D1.2 • Florence Duvieusart, D5.2 • Ruys Lutgard, S0.0 • Frédéric Meurice, B1.4 • Kris Roelants, FPS Defence • Caroline Vanhyfte, FPS Police • Alexandre Verhoeven, D5.2 • *written comments were received from Corentin Genin, D3.2
Enabel 25 May 2018	• Marleen Boosmans, expert Gender and Human Rights • Jean-Christophe Charlier, Governance unit manager • Gijsbert Ooms, D4D • Georges Pierseaux, Operations manager

	• Joëlle Piraux, expert Governance
	• Sophie Waterkeyn, expert Education, Training, Employment
NGA 22 March 2018	• Inès Bentolila, Belgian Red Cross
	• Benoit de Wageneer, OXFAM
	• Isabelle Jardon, Ile de Paix
	• Evelyne Menne, ARES
	• Benoît Naveau, Autre Terre
	• Dorine Rurashitse, Africalia
	• Suzy Serneels, Broederlijk Delen
	• Barbara Vanden Eynde, UVCW
	• François Vandercam, SOS Faim
	• Wim Vereecken, Solidagro

INTERVIEWS (AUTUMN 2018)

- Jean-Jacques Bastien, DGD (D2.4), 9 October 2018
- Mara Coppens d'Eeckenbrugge, DGD (D3), 15 October 2018
- Barbara Delcourt, DGD (D0), 5 October 2018
- Marc Denys, DGD (D2), 11 October 2018
- Michèle Deworme, DGD (D3), 15 October 2018
- Sebastian Druyts, Cabinet Development Cooperation, 11 October 2018
- Catherine Galand, DGD (D3), 15 October 2018
- Hilde Hersens, DGD (D3), 15 October 2018
- Arnout Justaert, NGO Federatie, 16 October 2018
- Peter Leenknegt, DGD (D2), 11 October 2018
- Frédéric Meurice, DGB (B1.4), 9 October 2018
- Peter Moors, Cabinet Development Cooperation, 11 October 2018
- Hazel Onkelinx, DGD (D3), 15 October 2018
- Ann Saunders, ACODEV, 16 October 2018
- Koen Van Acoleyen, DGD (D5), 2 and 5 October 2018
- Bogdan Vanden Berghe, 11.11.11., 16 October 2018
- Bruno van der Pluijm, DGD, 2 October 2018
- Jean Van Wetter, Enabel, 12 October 2018
- Kristien Verbrugghen, Vlir UOS, 16 October 2018
- Alexandre Verhoeven, DGD (D5.2), 5 October 2018
- Arnaud Zacharie, CNCD-11.11.11, 3 October 2018
- Luuk Zonneveld, BIO, 9 October 2018

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[1] See for instance sections 4.2 and 4.3. of *The New European Consensus on Development 'Our World Our Dignity, Our Future'*, June 2017.

[2] Terms of Reference of the ACROPOLIS G4D programme, 2017; while '3D-LO' was used in the initial Terms of Reference, the broader concept of 'comprehensive approach' replaced it (see evidence paper on *A Comprehensive Approach for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018).

[3] The following definition of collaborative governance can be used: 'A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement

public policy or manage public programs or assets'. Ansell, C. and Gash, A. (2007). Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. p. 545.

[4] C. de Coning and K. Friis. (2011). 'Coherence and Coordination. The Limits of the Comprehensive Approach'. *Journal of International Peacekeeping*. 15: p. 245.

[5] ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *A Comprehensive Approach for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018; ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *An Integrated Country Policy for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018; ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *Governance Networks for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018. The evidence papers are available at: https://www.governance4development.org.

[6] For a list of the institutions and organisations whose members contributed to the online survey, a list of participants to the workshops and of interviewees, see the annex.

[7] Including different departments of DGD (D1, D3, D4, D5) and representatives of the Cabinet of Development Cooperation, Foreign Affairs (S0.1), Enabel, and Belgian NGAs.

[8] Meetings with DGD, Cabinet Development Cooperation, NGOs, Enabel, and BIO and with specific departments within DGD (D0 Migration, D2, D3 and D5) and Foreign Affairs (B1.4).

[9] FOD Buitenlandse Zaken. 2017. Strategic Note Comprehensive Approach: 1-2.

[10] Idem, p. 2.

[11] 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. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16.

[12] SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17.

[13] There are various definitions used by different stakeholders, and many of them define the CA in vague terms. Exemplary is for example the EU definition '[T]o combine, in a coherent and consistent manner, policies and tools ranging from diplomacy, security and defence to finance, trade, development and human rights, as well as justice and migration'. [...] '[T]he comprehensive approach is both a general working method and a set of concrete measures and processes to improve how the EU, based on a common strategic vision and drawing on its wide array of existing tools and instruments, collectively can develop, embed and deliver more coherent and more effective policies, working practices, actions and results. Its fundamental principles are relevant for the broad spectrum of EU external action.' (Foreign Affairs Council, Council Conclusions on the EU's Comprehensive Approach, Brussels, 12.05.2014).

[14] There are several conceptual frameworks that differentiate levels of coherence. All have their heuristic value to disentangle the concept of coherence, according to the particular context they refer to. This paper starts from the framework used by de C. de Coning and K. Friis that used it as a conceptual framework to discuss coherence in peacekeeping. We add Whole-of-Society approach as an additional level. (See C. de Coning and K. Friis. (2011). Journal of International Peacekeeping 15: 243-272).

[15] Brunk, D. (2016). 'Whole-of-society' peacebuilding: A new approach for forgotten stakeholders. *International Journal* 2016, Vol. 71(1): p. 73.

[16] Primarily civilian capacity is defined as non-military capacity, this can include both governmental, non-governmental and private sector capacities. Brunk, D. (2016).

[17] The current fight against terrorism confirms this quest for civilian capacity, since one-sided military approaches have not been successful so far. See e.g. https://blog.mondediplo.net/sortir-du-tout-militaire.

[18] FOD Buitenlandse Zaken. 2017. Strategic Note Comprehensive Approach: p. 3.

[19] The model of de C. de Coning and K. Friis differentiates between the following different relationships: actors can compete, coexist, coordinate, cooperate, or are integrated or united on the different levels of coherence. C. de Coning and K. Friis (2011).

[20] DGD Year Report 2013, p. 18 https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/jaarverslag_dgd_2013.pdf.

[21] https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/policy/development_cooperation/who_we_are/our_organisation/dgd/organizational_chart.

[22] FOD Buitenlandse Zaken. 2017. Strategic Note Comprehensive Approach: p. 4.

[23] See the legal framework of Enabel. https://www.enabel.be/content/legal-framework-management-and-control-bodies

[24] https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/newsroom/news/2018/thorough_reform_bio_completed.

[25] https://www.frdo-cfdd.be/en.

[26] https://www.enabel.be/content/partnerships-and-networks.

[27] Algemene_beleidsnota_internationale_ontwikkeling_2017.pdf: p. 8-10. https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/algemene_beleidsnota_internationale_ontwikkeling_2017.pdf.

[28] http://www.ccpd-abco.be/?lang=en.

[29] http://www.ccpd-abco.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Avis-paix-et-sécurité1.pdf

[30] https://theshift.be/en.

[31] https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/policy/development_cooperation/how_we_work/channels_of_aid/financing_subsidies_by_indirect_cooperation.

[32] FOD Buitenlandse Zaken. 2017. Strategic Note Comprehensive Approach.

[33] Brunk, D. (2016). 'Whole-of-society' peacebuilding: A new approach for forgotten stakeholders. *International Journal* 2016, Vol. 71(1): p. 68.

[34] In particular the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda, and the Busan Partnership as guiding principles for the Belgian CA. See: http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm.

[35] In fragile contexts this can be a challenging exercise since the partner country and the international community do not necessarily hold the same opinions on the causes of fragility or conflict.

[36] https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/new-deal/new-deal-principles/.

[37] DGD. 2013. Strategienota fragiele situaties (https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/strategienota_fragiele_situaties.pdf) and Guidance on Fragility (https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/guidance_on_fragility.pdf)

[38] de Vries, H. (2015). 'Going around in circles. The challenges of peacekeeping and stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo'. *Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations.* CRU Report, September 2015: p. 4.

[39] https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/new-deal/new-deal-principles.

[40] OECD. (2015). OECD Development cooperation peer reviews: Belgium. p. 60. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-belgium-2015_9789264239906-en#page1.

[41] de Vries, H. (2015): p. 37.

[42] Bierman, F., Chan, M-S., Mert, A., Pattberg, P. (2007). Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Does the Promise Hold? CSR PAPER 28.2007: p. 20.

[43] Williams, A.P. & Mengistu, B. (2014). An exploration of the limitations of bureaucratic organizations in implementing contemporary peacebuilding. *Cooperation in Conflict*. February 2014.

[44] https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/886e27_facd6af5590846f4beb5876923fcd498.pdf.

[45] Näsström, S. The Challenge of the All-Affected Principle. *Political Studies*. Vol. 59: p. 117.

[46] Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J. (2009). Making governance networks effective and democratic through metagovernance. *Public Administration*, Vol. 87, No. 2: p. 244.

[47] Brunk, D. (2016): p. 73.

[48] Ropers, N. (2002). Peace-Building, Crisis Preventionand Conflict Management. GTZ.

[49] Human Security Group. (2016). From Hybrid Peace to Human Security: Rethinking EU Strategy towards Conflict. The Berlin Report of the Human Security Study Group.

[50] A structural hole means that actors or groups of actors with complementary information or resources are not linked within the network. In other words, reducing this gap between these actors or group of actors can be highly beneficial because it will make available new information or resources that were not already present for both actors or groups of actors before. (see Evidence Paper).

[51] For a more elaborate description of the network and the underlying methodology we refer to ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *Governance Networks for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018.

[52] ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *Governance Networks for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018.

53 Andrews, M., Pritchett, L. Samji, S., Woolcock, M. (2015). Building capability by delivering results: Putting Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) principles into practice. A governance practitioner's notebook. OECD.

54 To give just one example: even when joint actions are done, each of the participating actors will compete to maximize the visibility of their contribution.

55 Sørensen, E. and Torfing, J. (2009). p. 234–258.

56 Ansell, C. and Gash, A. (2007). Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. p. 543–571.

57 Ansell, C. and Gash, A. (2007): p. 554.

58 Ansell, C. and Gash, A. (2007): p. 555-558.

59 Klijn, E.H. and Koppenjan, J. (2016). *Governance networks in the public sector*. London/New York: Routledge.

60 https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list.

61 Mac Ginty, R. (2013). Indicators +: A proposal for everyday peace indicators. Evaluation and Programme Planning, 36: p. 56-63.

62 Mac Ginty, R. (2013): p. 59.

63 Valters, C., Cummings, C., Nixon, H. (2016). Putting learning at the centre. Adaptive development programming in practice. *Overseas Development Institute*: p. 14.

64 Collaborative work across organisational boundaries is often seen as a distraction from the core business and priorities of the proper department. As a consequence, collaborative efforts are not always valued in terms of career development. Guidance on Fragility: 45 (https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/guidance_on_fragility.pdf).

65 O'Brien, M. (2010). Review of Collaborative Governance: Factors crucial to the internal workings of the collaborative process. *Research Report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment*: p 12.

66 OECD. (2015). OECD Development cooperation peer reviews: Belgium. p. 51. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-belgium-2015_9789264239906-en#page1.

67 Belgian coalition governments already divide different components of Belgian foreign policy (foreign affairs, defence, development, trade) among different political parties, each with its own vision on the role of Belgium on the international level. Beyond the government, conflicting views can also be expected with civil society, academic and private sector actors.

68 O'Brien, M. (2010). 'Review of Collaborative Governance: Factors crucial to the internal workings of the collaborative process'. *Research Report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment*: p. 8.

69 Of which the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD) and the Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) are the most important ones. In parallel the follow-up of Belgian Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) has been entrusted to the Advisory Council on Policy Coherence for Development (ACPCD) and the Interdepartmental Commission on Policy Coherence for Development (ICPCD).

70 E.g. the advice given by the ACPCD peace and security, 30 January 2017.

71 These are not necessarily contradictory demands; to the contrary, more often than not they complement each other. Without strategic steering operational coherence on the ground will be ad hoc and its impact will be fragmented. But strategic coherence that is not in touch with the reality on the ground and is not able to accept operational flexibility to adapt to particular contexts and problems is not realistic.

72 OECD. (2015): p. 51.

73 To large extent, this recommendation and concerns regarding a clarification of roles between DGD and ENABEL are also valid for the DGD-BIO relationship.

74 DGD Year Report 2017, p. 18 https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/jaarverslag-os-2017.pdf.

75 OECD. (2015): p. 59.

76 OECD. (2015): p. 21.

77 DGD. (2014). Strategienota: De Belgische ontwikkelingssamenwerking en de lokale privésector: ondersteuning van een duurzame, menselijke ontwikkeling. p. 10. https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/strategienota_private_sector.pdf.

78 Brunk, D. (2016): p. 64.

[79] 'Many of the world's fastest growing economies are countries that rank high on the Fund for Peace's fragile state index, where much of this wealth is being fuelled by foreign direct investment, particularly in the extractive industries.' Brunk, D. (2016): p. 75.

[80] https://www.mo.be/opinie/winst-maken-congo-ontwikkelingssamenwerking-20-volgens-minister-de-croo.

[81] Brunk, D. (2016): p. 75.

[82] Collaborative work across organisational boundaries is often seen as a distraction from the core business and priorities of the proper department. As a consequence, collaborative efforts are not always valued in terms of career development. Guidance on Fragility: 45 (https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/guidance_on_fragility.pdf).

[83] ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *A Comprehensive Approach for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018; ACROPOLIS G4D, Evidence paper on *An Integrated Country Policy for Belgian Development Cooperation*, February 2018.

[84] A similar approach could be followed as for peer learning exercises between OECD-DAC countries (e.g. http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/private-sector-engagement-for-sustainable-development-lessons-from-the-dac.htm).

[85] http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm.

[86] DGD. 2013. Strategienota fragiele situaties. (https://diplomatie.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/strategienota_fragiele_situaties.pdf).

[87] In the context of the 2030 Agenda these two contrasting positions are reflected in the distinction between advocates for Policy Coherence for Development (PCD, with a one-sided focus on partner country priorities) and proponents of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD, with a focus on universal common goals for both donor and partner country).

[88] FOD Buitenlandse Zaken. 2017. Strategic Note Comprehensive Approach: p. 1-2.

[89] E.g. Digital4Development call, Transitional Development call, Private Sector Development call.

[90] The reason why the PSD call is outsourced to the King Baudouin Foundation.

[91] Directorate-General for External Policies, policy department. (2016). EU Policy Coherence for Development: The challenge of sustainability. The European Parliament. p. 18.

[92] OECD. (2015): p. 53.