

**Strategy note**

# **Environment in the Belgian Development Cooperation**



**THE BELGIAN  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**



The Strategy Note “Environment in the Belgian Development Cooperation” was developed by unit D2.4- Climate, Environment and Natural Resources of the Directorate general Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) in collaboration with several actors of the development cooperation. Jean-Pascale Labille, minister for Development Cooperation, approved the Strategy Note on April 28th 2014.

Picture: Fondo Indígena

# **Strategy note**

## Environment in the Belgian Development Cooperation

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## **Abbreviations & acronyms**

ACROPOLIS: Academic Research Groups for Policy Support  
BELSPO: Belgian Federal Science Policy Office  
BIO: Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries  
BRIC: Brazil, Russia, India & China  
BTC: Belgian Development Agency  
CCIEP: Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy  
D2.4: DGD Climate, Environment & Natural Resources  
DC: Development Cooperation  
DCs: Developing Countries  
DGD: Directorate General for Development Cooperation & Humanitarian Aid  
EU: European Union  
EUWI: EU Water Initiative  
FLEGT: Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade  
FPS: Federal Public Service  
GEF: Global Environment Facility  
IC: International Cooperation  
ICPC: Interdepartmental Commission for Policy Coherence for development  
IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
KLIMOS: Climate change/Development cooperation research platform  
LDC: Least Developed Country(ies)  
MEA(s): Multilateral Environmental Agreements  
MIC: Middle Income Country  
NAP: National Adaptation Plan  
NAPA: National Adaptation Programmes of Action  
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
PCD: Policy Coherence for Development  
RBINS: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences  
REDD+: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation  
RMCA: Royal Museum for Central Africa  
RMI: Royal Meteorological Institute of Belgium  
SD: Sustainable Development  
UN: United Nations  
UNDP: United Nations Development Program  
UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

## Summary

i. The strategy starts from the premise of drivers of change that heavily impact our world, such as economic growth, technology, demography, geopolitical shifts of power and justice, to which the post-2015 Development Framework will respond with the Sustainable Development Goals.

ii. Sustainable development that promotes economic growth and human welfare within existing planetary boundaries must provide new development paths in order to offer an adequate response to the consequences of climate change, increasing environmental degradation and exhaustion of natural resources.

iii. The Belgian Development Cooperation (DC) has a clear vision of the environmental issues in the world today, which is based on the Development Cooperation Act. This Act transversally integrates protection of the environment and natural resources, the fight against climate change, droughts and global deforestation into all its activities. It thereby emphasises "A high quality, accepted and sustainable environment in which Belgium and its residents actively and proactively contribute by, in the short and long term, designing equitable production and consumption patterns and processes for conserving and protecting the environment and effectively implementing them into global development processes."

iv. In order to address environmental challenges in developing countries, there is a need for a 3-track policy: (1) integration of the theme, "conserving and protecting the environment" by reinforcing *environmental governance* by means of capacity development, raising awareness and the mutual transfer of knowledge, technology and skills, (2) a *sector-specific environmental support plan* in 4 priority areas: water, sustainable use of land and soil, forestry and urban waste management, and (3) *policy coherence for development* between the various Belgian policy actions and reinforcing complementarity and synergy within the different areas of Belgian and European DC.

v. The environment will be integrated into all priority sectors of governmental cooperation (education, health, basic infrastructure, agriculture). Where possible, it includes the 3 priority themes of (1) human rights, (2) decent and sustainable work and (3) consolidation of society. Active effort from civil society, the decentralised administrations and the private sector is essential for enabling the transition to a sustainable development path.

vi. Implementing the strategy requires people as well as resources. The efforts of all Belgian DC actors, and in particular the diplomatic mission and the local BTC representation, is necessary in order to realise the strategy note. The contribution of the "Climate, Environment and Natural Resources" Unit is to coordinate, to support and/or to influence policy. Tools such as information and communication papers, environmental websites, the KLIMOS Toolkit, scientifically sound support by the Acropolis team, universities and federal scientific institutions can be used to this end. In partner countries, the strategy is applicable to policy dialogues, support for programmes and activities from the local administrations and local civil society, support for the private sector and

the development of Centres of Excellence. Obligatory or voluntary multilateral contributions, bilateral and humanitarian means can be deployed for realising the strategy objectives.

# 1. General context of the environmental strategy

## 1.1. Global challenges

1. There are a number of factors that lie at the root of the current environmental challenges and the pressure on scarce natural resources. For instance, we distinguish:

**Economic growth** together with a global rise of prosperity (quantitative) and changing supply and demand processes (qualitative);

**Technology and science:** new knowledge about natural products and their interaction can be used in an adapted and applied manner to satisfy human needs;

**Demography:** sharp increase in global population (quantitative aspect) and significant growth of urban and coastal population with non-sustainable consumption patterns (qualitative aspect);

**Geopolitical power shifts in countries and regions** that make political and social decision-making more complex at the global level.

**The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development** (June 1992) places mankind centre stage in the care for sustainable development with the right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. The right to human development must be realised in such a way that it provides for the developmental and environmental needs of the current and future generations in an equitable manner.

2. Global agreements attempt to provide an answer to these environmental challenges and aim for fair and just access to our scarce natural resources for current and future generations.

3. These drivers of change, which influence one another, have a rather high level of inertia. Finding appropriate answers in the form of targeted actions that reduce the pressure on natural resources is the challenge. Universal objectives for human welfare and sustainable development as listed in the **Sustainable Development Goals** are essential to the post-2015 development framework.

4. Climate change, air and water pollution, scarcity of fresh water, soil degradation and desertification, degradation of ecosystems and a decline in biodiversity are **complex, multi-dimensional phenomena that can mutually reinforce one another**. Environmental changes interfere at the local, regional and global level. Their consequences can be perceivable at great distances or for a long time. Overfishing, large-scale logging and the exhaustion of mineral supplies increase the pressure on the environment. Particularly the poorest of the poor in the "Least Developed Countries" and the small islands are vulnerable because of their lesser capacity to adapt to changes. More frequent droughts, together with increasing soil degradation, can lead to heavily reduced food production and to forced migration of populations to other areas or to the cities. Technological innovation and environmentally friendly interventions alone will not be able to prevent an increase in the **ecological footprint** of humankind.

5. It has now been scientifically confirmed that the earth is warming and that this warming is caused by emissions of greenhouse gases that humans have created. Together with mitigation, individuals, countries and other actors must already now adapt to the negative consequences of climate change (IPCC Assessment Reports).

6. Loss of **biodiversity** and the degradation of **ecosystems** have definite consequences on the services they provide. Coastal erosion is accelerating due to the disappearance of mangrove forests and under the influence of climate change.

7. **Air pollution and emissions of fine particles and other pollutants** cause an increased health risk in major cities and in mining areas. It should be noted that chemical pollution due to economic growth in non-OECD countries is increasing faster, so that now major health risks are also arising in BRIC countries.

8. **Globalisation and growth of the global economy and population** lead to an increase in pressure on the environment and increased competition for scarce resources. These issues affect everyone: citizens in low and middle income countries as well as those in high income countries, albeit in different ways. It concerns 'international public goods' for which collective international action is needed. The markets only offer an inadequate answer to this. These global challenges mainly require more effective and stronger international cooperation.

## **1.2. The environment in partner countries**

9. Most Belgian partner countries have **environmental legislation**. Their concrete application requires political will, a well-functioning **institutional framework** and the requisite financial and **human resources**. Environmental policy has a regional, transboundary dimension, is often only perceptible in the long term and occasionally gives rise to conflictual social interests. It rarely is among a country's top investment priorities. Economic development receives top priority. Management of natural resources in many countries is also an area **prone to corruption**.

10. This also applies to the implementation of national environmental strategies and multiannual plans. **Decentralised structures** play a crucial role in this but they have neither the budgets nor the knowledge to implement this task correctly.

11. There are many causes: a weak **civil society** that is not empowered to have a judicious and effective impact on policy, a local population that does not demand enough environmental protection, insufficient environmental knowledge as a result of poor education and applied scientific research, as well as imbalanced investment agreements.

12. These weaknesses are most strongly manifested in the **LDCs in Africa** and fragile states. Civil society in the MIC countries is stronger and usually more environmentally aware, there is more investment in research and knowledge development, albeit mainly out of commercial and economic considerations. The MIC countries have increasing economic and political clout at the global level, as well as in international negotiations concerning the

environment, climate and natural resources. The political will for converting and realising the negotiated environmental targets is often lacking, also in MIC countries, except in those countries where economic growth is slowed by the increasing scarcity of a certain raw material or degradation of the environment.

### **1.3. Challenges for the Belgian Development Cooperation**

13. The environmental and development agendas are closely linked. A healthy environment forms the foundation of human welfare and well-being. Natural resources, such as water, soil, plants, animals and minerals constitute an important basic capital for economic development. Far-reaching degradation of the environment influences the effectiveness of development cooperation and, in a subsistence economy, mainly affects the poorest of the poor as they depend heavily on natural resources for their livelihood and health. Reducing **basic poverty** results in a very limited increase of environmental pressure; and measures that are aimed at climate change adaptation and at the conservation or recovery of ecosystems increase the resilience of vulnerable population groups and effectively contribute to poverty reduction. At the same time, these environmental measures form the basis for **low-carbon development** toward a higher standard of living. Keeping in mind the positive as well as negative interactions between development and the environmental issue, as well as with continuous developments in the field, the determination and realisation of targeted priorities are the most important challenges for Belgian DC.

14. Within the intrinsic value patterns, vision and task of the DGD, this strategy note not only responds to the altered structure and working culture of the DGD, the new Belgian Development Cooperation Act, Belgian international commitments at the EU and international level, but also to recent developments in the partner countries of the Belgian DC.

### **1.4. Evaluation of the first Environmental Strategy**

15. The **evaluation of the "Environment"** (2002) strategy note exposed several gaps such as a lack of clarity (too broad, lack of Belgian priorities), of communication (to target groups), and of internal coherence (lack of interaction between topics and the negative influence of biodiversity). It formulated the following **challenges for the new strategy note**: a) exploring thematic and geographical priorities and sensitivities, b) a correct assessment of institutional circumstances, capacities and policies in the partner countries, c) reaching a consensus among the various environmental actors requires time, particularly when it concerns Belgian priorities, and d) the need for policy coherence for development by considering the existing priorities in other, already existing Belgian strategies, institutions and policy areas.

## 2. Objectives and normative frameworks

### 2.1. Sustainable Development (SD)

16. **The Belgian Development Cooperation Act** takes sustainable development as its general objective and describes it as development that answers the needs of the current generations without hereby endangering the potential for future generations to provide for their needs. To achieve this, change is required and these change processes must be attuned to current as well as future needs. In order to guarantee sustainable human development, natural capital, in balance with economic and social capital and with respect for the planetary boundaries, constitutes the foundation for dignified development.

17. Essentially it concerns **fair access to, and fair distribution of natural resources, welfare and well-being within the boundaries of Earth and across several generations.** A policy aimed at SD promotes economic activity in its social and cultural context (lower social boundary) within the capacity of the environment (upper ecological boundary).

18. SD implies **a transition** to sustainable production and consumption patterns, promotes the equality of women and men and guarantees access of the entire population to basic public goods and services, social protection and respect for its rights. This transition considers the reserves of natural raw materials, planetary limits<sup>1</sup> and the conservation of the service capacity of marine and land ecosystems.

### 2.2. The normative framework

19. The **international** normative framework provides assumptions, principles, objectives and recommendations concerning responsibility and collective sovereignty, sound management, water/soil/air as a public good and the relationship with development cooperation and human rights.

20. An important component is the **human rights principles**, with the right to water and health, decent work, and the rights of women, children and indigenous peoples. This also addresses the principles of good governance, social participation, transparency and accountability.

21. According to the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment (1972) and the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development (1992), each country is sovereign but has responsibilities with respect to others. This commitment to sustainable development was reconfirmed in the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (2000) during the *United Nations World*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Stockholm Resilience Centre analysed the potential resiliency of Earth and describes 9 so-called environmental ceilings or "planetary boundaries." This concerns (1) climate change, (2) ocean acidification, (3) the breakdown of the ozone layer, (4) bio-geochemical cycles of nitrogen and phosphorous, (5) atmospheric aerosols, (6) use of fresh water, (7) change in land usage, (8) loss of biodiversity and (9) chemical pollution.[12] They calculated the levels that Earth can withstand before an irreversible and sometimes abrupt environmental change occurs. A sustainable environment must be situated within these boundaries.*

*Summit on Sustainable Development* (2002), and also recently during the *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20* (2012). The great challenge is now to head in the direction of **responsible sovereignty** in which states take into account the transboundary effects of the policy they implement. The minimalistic principle in this regard is that others may not experience any harm, referred to as the *do no harm* principle. It means that the sustainable development policy not only rests on one's own interests, but also on mutual responsibilities.

22. **Environmental principles** constitute another part of the framework. The Rio 1992 Declaration refers in particular to the precautionary principle, the principle that the polluter pays, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the principle of liability and compensation, and the subsidiarity principle.

23. **Belgium** and its **partner countries** ratified several **multilateral environmental treaties**. They impose international objectives, determine the modalities of execution, monitoring and reporting as well as the financing modalities. For the financing needed to realise the objectives, DCs consistently demand the inclusion of financial targets. In doing so, DCs appeal to the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and result-oriented management. Financial resources are provided for promoting capacity development, technology transfer and for financing the additional costs of integrating these objectives into the national and regional programmes.

24. The three **Rio Conventions**, namely the Convention on Climate Change and its protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, its protocols and related conventions, and the Convention on Combating Desertification are the most relevant for development cooperation, and their objectives constitute the international reference framework for the strategy note.

25. The **Belgian Development Cooperation Act** specifies that Belgium adheres to the UN declarations and conventions concerning development and the environment, as well as human rights in all its forms (Art. 9) and specifies that protection of the environment and natural resources, including the fight against climate change, drought and deforestation, should be integrated transversally in all its interventions (Art.11).

26. **Policy coherence** for Development (PCD) is a process in which policy decisions from other areas contribute positively or at least neutrally to the objectives of development cooperation. The Belgian Development Cooperation Act provides a legal basis for PCD and, in Art. 8, states that promoting policy coherence should occur at various levels: (1) within the various areas of the Belgian development policy and (2) within the various policy areas.

27. The aid effectiveness **principles** in the Declarations of Paris, Accra and Busan determine the manner, content and potential instruments with which international cooperation is applied. They should be included during the multilateral environmental negotiations.

### 3. Vision and priorities

#### 3.1. Our own vision

28. In development cooperation based on values, principles and objectives, **the poorest in the DCs must receive priority** in order to meet their basic needs in the short and long term. To this end, poverty reduction together with social and technological development must be integrated in **a balanced way** with the protection and, where necessary, the recovery of the (local) environment.

29. Belgium wishes to contribute to this by means of making **rational choices and operationally feasible priorities** that are based on its own strengths and aligned to the realities of each partner country.

30. A paradigm for the Belgian **development approach and vision** with regard to the environment would then be:

**A high quality, accepted and sustainable environment in which Belgium and its residents actively and proactively contribute by, in the short and long term, designing equitable production and consumption patterns and processes for conserving and protecting the environment and effectively implementing it into global development processes.**

31. In dialogue with our partners, and keeping the local situation in mind, we will search for **appropriate processes** that will be jointly supported in the partner country.

#### 3.2. Belgian priorities through a three-track approach

32. In order to address the summarised environmental challenges, a robust three-track approach is needed.

- (1) **Thematic integration** of 'conservation and protection of the environment' will contribute to the reinforcement of the environmental policy in the partner countries. In this way, capacity development is pursued through the mutual transfer of knowledge, technology and competences concerning the environment, climate and natural resources in key institutions, within the Belgian DC sectors and with civil society and the national and regional actors.
- (2) **Sectoral environmental support** that is country-specific and responds to the implicit development needs in the partner country or is necessary for achieving inclusive and balanced social-economic development.
- (3) Pursuing **policy coherence for development** within the various policy areas in Belgium and at the European level as well as complementarity and synergy in the country programmes with a view to greater efficacy of Belgian DC.

## 4. In concrete terms

### 4.1. Thematic integration of conservation and protection of the environment

33. **Belgian governmental cooperation** (Art.19) focuses **primarily on four sectors**: (1) education and training, (2) basic infrastructure, (3) healthcare and (4) agriculture and food security in which coherence between the environmental strategy and the relevant sectoral strategies will be pursued. Non-governmental organisations as well as university collaboration pay attention to these sectors and the majority of multilateral partner organisations have a sectoral mandate. Where relevant, integration of the environmental theme will also be included in the priority themes of bilateral Belgian cooperation.

34. **Strengthening the environmental policy or environmental governance**, as an essential element for sustainable development, was one of the Belgian and EU priorities during the Rio+20 negotiations and the reform of the UN, including upgrading UNEP from a programme to a UN organisation with universal membership, and will continue during the post-2015 negotiations. Integrating the environmental theme in Belgian interventions should contribute to this.

35. While implementing various Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), the partner countries took legislative initiatives and developed several national action plans with the financial and technological support of mainly GEF and UNEP/UNDP. **In this way, most partner countries have national action plans** for <sup>2</sup>, mitigation<sup>3</sup>, biodiversity<sup>4</sup>, desertification, etc. Additionally there are national communications and vulnerability analyses (e.g. climate vulnerability, exposure to natural hazards).

36. These national action plans and analyses are **useful and internationally accepted instruments** for supporting and using the priorities in the country and the national objectives concerning various environmental themes for the elaboration of country programmes in preparation for Mixed Committees. Their use should be encouraged and, if necessary, their content influenced.

37. For the local interpretation of the country programme, all actors - and in particular BTC - who fulfil an exemplary role, will respect the existing **legislative framework**, even if the partner does not. This is a minimal requirement for integrating the environmental theme into development plans.

38. In all the interventions of Belgian DC, it must be examined during the analysis phase whether and in what way a positive contribution can be made for conserving and protecting the environment and how the pressure on the environment can be eased. In doing so, one cannot lose sight of the fact that the impact can be local, but also regional and global, and be perceptible immediately or with a delay for a long(er) period.

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<sup>2</sup> National Adaptation Programs of Action/NAPAs and National Adaptation Plans/ NAPs

<sup>3</sup> Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation/REDD+ of National Appropriate Mitigation Actions/NAMAs

<sup>4</sup> National Strategy Biodiversity and Action Plan/NBSA

39. Non-sustainable agricultural and infrastructure development, over-exploitation of natural resources and pollution and climate change are significant threats to biodiversity, which translates into degradation or the disappearance of ecosystems. Ecosystems are complex systems where several components (soil, water, fauna, flora, micro-organisms, air quality, temperature) interact. Measures for reducing or avoiding pressure on **ecosystems** and actions for restoring an ecosystem constitute the **core of integration** of the theme of conserving and protecting natural resources.

40. This should ultimately result in practically implementable proposals, measurable results and locally relevant solutions, and the right choice of local executing partners. **Raising awareness and knowledge transfer** about these multidisciplinary processes that react to ecosystems, species, populations and genes should be promoted in the partner countries.

41. For governmental cooperation, in many countries the **decentralised administrations** are essential actors in reinforcing environmental policy because they are (co)responsible for its implementation. Another important actor is **civil society**. When choosing the most effective implementation partner, we will look at actors in Belgium with specific experience in the relevant sub-areas.

42. Specific points of attention for **integrating the 'environment' theme in the four priority sectors of governmental cooperation and in humanitarian aid**:

#### **4.1.1. Education**

43. An environmental policy is only operational when it is supported by a motivated civil society and when the authorities, business world, knowledge sector and social organisations work closely together. **Education and training are the cornerstones** for realising an appropriate environmental policy and for a gradual transition to a green economy. By means of **high quality education, permanent training and applied scientific research**, the education and research sector will contribute to implementation of the strategy. New environmental technologies and applications can be transferred successfully, particularly in partner countries where professional and technical education are priorities. Thanks to adapted (teacher) training programmes, joint research and updated natural sciences education, personnel will be educated and will later pass on their environmental knowledge in the (secondary) schools and universities. Science (research, knowledge and transfer of knowledge) as well as society (awareness of environmental aspects) will benefit from this. The participation of **girls and women** in education also has a significant impact on demography, which is an important driver of change.

#### **4.1.2. Basic infrastructure**

44. Infrastructure can have important consequences for the functioning of ecosystems. On the other hand, certain sources of pollution or climate change can significantly shorten their economic lifetime. The expected consequences of construction works on the functioning of **ecosystems** and possible alternatives must be considered. When planning and designing infrastructure, these expected consequences must be taken into account, but so must the

anticipated consequences of **climate change** (temperature, change in precipitation patterns and volumes...) on ecosystems. Setting up a **maintenance plan** during planning, in which the requisite financial means are budgeted and which determines whether local know-how is available, will prevent the investment from becoming redundant before the end of its normal depreciation time frame as a lack of adequate maintenance leads to a waste of natural resources. Increasing energy efficiency and greater use of sustainable materials and environmentally friendly technologies and techniques can serve as indicators in this regard.

#### 4.1.3. Healthcare

45. Air, water and chemical contamination occur more and more often in DCs, particularly in the cities. Climate change alters the pattern and prevention of vector-transmittable diseases, which governments should be able to **anticipate**. Specific health problems arise in mining areas, in areas with intensive agriculture (e.g., pesticides, fertiliser) and with drastic ecological interventions (e.g., reservoirs). Damage to ecosystems makes plant and animal species disappear, whereby medicinal substances are lost (ethnobotany).

46. **Information campaigns** should make the population aware of these dangers and encourage them to treat their environment differently. **Within the health sector**, more attention must therefore be paid to the quality of the environment at home, on the work floor and in the cities. Separating medical from non-medical **waste streams** in hospitals and health centres and proper management of medical waste is an absolute minimum that all health programmes, supported by Belgium, must meet. The issue of radioactive medical waste deserves separate treatment.

#### 4.1.4. Agriculture and Food Security

47. Reduced biodiversity, increasing pressure on production factors such as land, forest and water together with a decrease in soil productivity and the consequences of climate change are determinative factors for **sustainable agriculture**. Agriculture still forms the basis of food security for the poorest populations. Together with subsistence agriculture, governments - also in the LDCs - are increasingly committing to large-scale, industrial agriculture, which puts even greater pressure on natural resources. Ultimately, this is at the expense of the productivity and profitability of the sector. For sustainable agriculture, the transition to a **green economy** that creates well-being and social fairness and reduces environmental risks with respect for ecological scarcity and limits, is the approach for Belgian cooperation. **Legal security** is a first requirement to this end and without it, there is little chance for the necessary **intensification** in agriculture to safeguard valuable ecosystems and forests. Once this condition is fulfilled, the environmental impact of the sector can be reduced by means of **technological innovations** and farmers will be encouraged to invest in preserving soil productivity and rational (re)use of water.

#### 4.1.5. Preventing natural disasters

48. Disasters, regardless of their cause, lead to demands for urgent and/or humanitarian aid. Storms, floods, earthquakes, extreme drought or tornadoes

are weather-related phenomena and their intensity and frequency will alter as a result of climate change. **Disaster Risk Reduction - DRR<sup>5</sup>, better predictability and preparedness for disasters** must therefore receive more attention. Investing in DRR contributes to the adaptation to climate change by vulnerable countries and groups, spares human suffering and is also economically responsible. In countries with frequently recurring disasters, it is not only necessary to organise activities with and for potential victims, but also to refer - during the policy dialogue with the partner country - to the importance of reducing risks and of developing mechanisms that can be quickly and appropriately deployed in the event of an emergency. The ultimate goal is to increase the **resilience and the defensive capability** of these countries and their population.

## 4.2. Sectoral environmental support

49. Socio-economic development can be significantly hindered in countries, regions and cities with high population density and with a high concentration of economic activities, in fragile ecosystems with heavily degraded soil or high levels of contamination. In such situations **it is necessary to make it a priority to address the deeper causes of this degradation and the unrestrained pressure on natural resources**. The existing Belgian expertise in Belgium and abroad, the survey in the Belgian partner countries and the consultations in preparation for the environmental strategy, point mainly towards **four sectoral environmental challenges**:

### 4.2.1. Sustainable water management

50. Households, agriculture, the energy sector and industry are users of large amounts of water, and its future availability is becoming uncertain due to climate change. **Reduction of waste and reuse of household water** are the first steps for efficient water use; water purification should be linked with this. **Integrated management of water basins** aims to protect water quality, reduce water pollution, protect the ecosystems and meet the need for water. The most important principles of water basin management are the fair distribution of transboundary water (including **groundwater**) among users, the principle of 'the polluter pays' and the right of every citizen to have access to water (supply) and sewers (discharge).

The emphasis is on good governance and water policy, reinforcing institutions for transboundary water management, access to drinking water and sanitary provisions for everyone. The Belgian experiences at home and in DCs regarding water management and purification contribute to the support of a sound water policy.

### 4.2.2. Sustainable land and soil use

51. Competition for the use of land for food, nature, housing, bio-energy, etc., is gradually increasing. Soil and land are the main substrates for agriculture, housing and infrastructure. **Restoration of degraded soil** is not only part of protecting natural capital but is also an economically profitable long-term investment. By means of supporting initiatives that lead to assigning **title deeds or user certificates**, the phenomenon of land grabbing can be

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<sup>5</sup> This requires a systematic approach that identifies, evaluates and attempts to reduce disaster risks

limited. Legal security is the best guarantee for the future to stop endangering the current potential for sustainable and multi-functional land management systems. Adapted agricultural techniques, judiciously constructed infrastructure works and well-considered urban planning are core elements of sustainable land and soil use and for protecting and safeguarding the agricultural substrate.

#### **4.2.3. Sustainable forestry**

52. Forests provide energy, raw materials and food, employment and incomes for the surrounding population. They harbour ecologically valuable areas and are a source of biological and cultural diversity. They play an important role in climate change as a storage area for carbon and are essential in local and regional water cycles. Deforestation often goes together with soil erosion and land degradation, generally as a consequence of inappropriate production and consumption systems. Promoting sustainable forestry by the Belgian DC will consist of (1) a thorough approach to **trade in illegally harvested timber**, aimed at the supply and demand side (FLEGT), (2) the (re)formation of a **policy framework** and making sustainable, ecological and economically profitable forestry operational with guarantees for the protection of ecologically valuable areas with a view to economic development and (3) **spatial planning**.

#### **4.2.4. Integrated waste management in cities**

53. Rapid urbanisation and galloping population growth cause health problems due to **air pollution** and **untreated waste**. A shortage of healthy drinking water and adequate sewage systems connected to **water purification installations** and inappropriate **mobility patterns** are additional challenges. More than half of the population in DCs live in cities and is confronted with these problems, resulting in a lowered quality of life.

54. Waste is a nuisance but is also a raw material that can be usefully and efficiently (re)used. The local legal, organisational and procedural administrative framework, management and implementation modalities, raising awareness of sorting, waste taxation, practical collection and transport systems, waste streams, the processing industries, research and training, contamination, eco-efficiency and eco-design are many aspects of a functioning waste policy that, given the urgent needs in some partner countries, can initially be applied in metropolitan areas. Belgium is one of the leaders regarding **integrated waste policy** and can make this expertise available to partner countries.

### **4.3. Complementarity and policy coherence for development**

#### **4.3.1. Complementarity and synergy between country programmes and regional organisations**

55. **All DC actors will** – in accordance with the law – **contribute to realising the strategy**. The starting point for developing programmes remains the policy documents of the partner countries. When appreciating these plans, the **analyses** of specialised international and multilateral organisations will be taken into account. The analytical capacities and field

experiences of non-governmental organisations and the private sector will also be used.

56. During the **policy dialogue** with the partner countries, the obligation to integrate protection and conservation of the environment will systematically be brought to their attention.

57. Agreements about **environmental indicators** and **modalities for measuring and monitoring** as permanent components of each intervention will be made with the partner organisation or institution.

#### **4.3.2. Policy coherence for development**

58. Policy coherence for development is a process in which policy decisions from other areas contribute positively or at least neutrally to the objectives of development cooperation. The consequences of some policy options in **Belgium and the EU**, but also **in developing countries** can lead to increased pressure on natural resources locally, regionally or globally. Together with food security, migration, trade, finance and security, climate change is one of areas that the EU wants to make a priority in the framework of policy coherence for development. The Interdepartmental Commission for Policy Coherence for development (ICPC), the Advice Council and the platform concerning policy coherence for development will make priority policy decisions and will further develop specific actions that have an impact on developing countries. The Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy (CCIEP), that elaborates international policy on environmental issues, is another important forum.

##### **4.3.2.1. Changes in production and consumption patterns**

59. The current production and consumption patterns in the world are not sustainable. The EU has an action plan for sustainable production and consumption as well as an industrial policy; it entails more sustainable consumption patterns, setting up a circular economy and improving raw material efficiency without doing harm to international competitiveness. The consequences for Belgian DC are significant, considering that the place of production, consumption and transformation are usually not the same (import/export and internationalisation). The demand for a transparent and uniform **certification and control process** serving as a quality guarantee (based on raw materials with a sustainability label) will only increase.

60. By promoting "**Corporate Social Responsibility**" and "**Sustainable Enterprise**", it will be possible to meet the need for awareness and ownership by the private sector in Belgium. There is a great need in DCs for integration of the environmental component in all facets of the socio-economic business world. Corporate social responsibility is namely a form of enterprise aimed at economic performance with respect for social interests within ecological boundaries. Professional federations as well as employee associations have a role to play.

61. The governments in the EU and DCs can guide the transition to a green economy by deploying **financial, economic and legal instruments**.

62. Even more than previously, it is necessary to commit to **raising the awareness of civil society and consumers** in order to make the transition from environmental awareness (knowing) to specific applications in the environment (doing).

#### 4.3.2.2. Low-carbon development

63. Subsidies for fossil fuels encourage excessive use of these fuels in the transport sector. This causes higher emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants and slows down the low-carbon social development. On the contrary, **sustainable energy** is an energy source that is currently available but that is not detrimental to the environment and the possibilities of future generations. The possibilities for generating, exploiting and using renewable forms of energy, however, depend on the fossil energy market, which will influence any potential decisions. Some energy sources deliver less harmful greenhouse effects and make society less dependent on the fossil energy market, which seems increasingly difficult to exploit. **More efficient use of energy** is the major challenge. As a consequence, adapted environmental technology in the partner country is necessary for the sustainable management of vulnerable natural resources and for limiting carbon emissions through more diversified energy use, greater energy efficiency and better access to renewable energy.

## 5. Implementation and resources

### 5.1. Strategy implementation

64. The new strategy wants (1) to be a guideline for all Belgian DC actors regarding the environment, (2) to more strongly integrate the environment in the planning and execution of all activities of the Belgian DC, (3) to serve as a substantial guide for integrating the environment into the policy dialogue with DC partners, (4) to be an approach to integrating the environment and sustainability in the development objectives during international negotiations and debates, (5) to be the reference for assigning resources, (6) to be one of the tools for promoting policy coherence for development.

65. In response to the recommendations from the evaluation of the strategy note, DGD proposed specific actions concerning strategy, policy, analysis, increasing knowledge, capacity development, raising awareness, monitoring and evaluation, focusing on results and tools.

66. The **efforts of all Belgian DC actors, and in particular the diplomatic mission and the local BTC representation**, are necessary in order to realise the strategy note.

67. The contribution of the **"Climate, Environment and Natural Resources"** Unit (D2.4) is mainly to coordinate, to support and/or to influence policy. Consultation with the FPS Public Health, Food Chain Safety & Environment, Belgian universities and collaboration with institutions such as Belspo, RBINS, RMCA, RMI and the Meise Botanic Garden will be supported by cooperation protocols with proportionate means.

68. In its **annual plans**, each diplomatic mission will make proposals that translate the Belgian commitments in the framework of **multilateral environmental conventions** into specific actions that promote policy coherence for development. Applied science, exchange of knowledge and transfers of environmentally friendly technologies by means of developing active and solid partnerships between local and Belgian institutions, non-governmental organisations and businesses may contribute to this.

69. In consultation with the EU delegation and based on the experiences of the BTC representation and non-governmental organisations, the diplomatic mission will actively participate in the **policy dialogue** and the local environmental forums in the partner countries. Integration of the environment theme will hereby receive the necessary attention in the various policy areas.

70. Properly functioning **Centres of Excellence** in the partner countries where transfer of knowledge and technology and sustainable investments take centre stage, will be supported. The translation of their findings into policy advice and recommendations for the private sector and civil society will contribute to sustainable development in the partner country.

71. In Belgium as well as in the DCs, **decentralised administrations** participate in numerous environmental activities that are not yet (well) known. Limited financing possibilities are the general rule there. Much can be accomplished by conveying the lessons learnt to other actors. Particularly the *Disaster Risk Reduction* track at the local level is a track to be considered.

72. The instruments and programmes for supporting the **private sector** (i.e., BIO, BTC, Trade for Development Centre) will be encouraged to emphasize green economy and corporate social responsibility within their interventions and investment policy.

73. Support for partnerships among **local and Belgian environmental organisations and consumer and producer organisations** for raising environmental awareness of the population and the government, will be encouraged.

## **5.2. Potential resources**

74. **More sustainable planning and implementation of projects and programmes will lead to extra expenses.** This must be budgeted together with local policy support (for legislation, promotion,...) so that local projects can grow beyond themselves and generate a multiplication effect at the national level.

75. **Environmental budgets** include **multilaterally compulsory and voluntary contributions to funds** established under the conventions or in their implementation. Activities by the Belgian Fund for Food Security, projects for social development and good governance, and direct financing for awareness raising of and by local civil society are budget allocations that can be deployed. At the country level, study and expertise funds can finance the evaluation of environmental impacts in the development programmes.

76. Humanitarian funds and budgets are relevant for programmes that increase the **predictability and preparedness for disasters** and aim for improved institutional disaster preparedness.

77. The following tools will be used: information and communication papers, environmental websites, the KLIMOS Toolkit, scientifically sound support by the Acropolis team, universities and federal scientific institutions.

## 6. Conclusion

78. This note makes clear choices for the Belgian development policy regarding the environment and in a spirit of mutual solidarity, through active exchange of knowledge, the pursuit of policy coherence for development and safeguarding global public goods for future generations. This strategy will only become truly concrete if all actors from Belgian development cooperation, policy makers, the private sector, civil society and the decentralised administrations in the partner country integrate protection of and proper use of environmental services into their actions. Joint but differentiated responsibility is the prevailing theme and, given the variety of country contexts, this strategy will have to be aligned with the actual situation in each developing country.

## ● Annexes

1. Results of IC attaché enquiries, June-Sept. 2013.
2. Mindmap Strategic Environmental Note, Oct. 2013.
3. DGD management response "Evaluation of Environmental Strategy", Feb. 2014.
4. Structure of an adapted operational plan, March 2014.

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## ● Work in progress

1. Further development of the operational plan
2. Project and programme evaluation grid - 'environment'



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Responsible editor: Dirk Achten, Rue des Petits  
Carmes, 15 - 1000 Brussels

August 2014



**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**  
Federal Public Service  
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