Evaluation of Gender and Development in Belgian Development Cooperation

Report of the Vietnam case study

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The opinions expressed in this document represent the evidenced view of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.
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Abbreviations and acronyms

ATL Active Teaching and Learning
BIO Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries
BTC Belgian Technical Cooperation
DARD Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DGD Directorate General for Development
DOET Department of Education and Training
FDS Full Day School
HBFU Hoa Binh Farmers Union (partner in OSB project)
HDI Human Development Index
GAP Gender Action Partnership
GDP Gross Domestic Product
ICP Indicative Cooperation Program
MARD Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG Millennium Development Goals
MOET Ministry of Education and Training
MOLISA Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MoU Memorandum of Understanding
MTR Midterm Review
NCFAW National Commission for the Advancement of Women
NGO Non Governmental Organisation
OSB Oxfam Solidarity Belgium
OVI Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PCM Project cycle management
SEQAP School Education Quality Assurance Program
SRB Sex Ratio at Birth
TFF Technical and Financial File
TTI Teachers Training Institute
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THWU</td>
<td>Thach Ha Women’s Union (partner in OSB project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAS</td>
<td>Vietnam Australia International School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVOB</td>
<td>Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VWU</td>
<td>Vietnam Women’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WU</td>
<td>(Vietnam) Women’s Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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1. Introduction

1.1 Evaluation framework

This case study is part of the thematic evaluation 'Gender and development in Belgian Development Cooperation'. As stated in the terms of reference of this evaluation presented in annex 1 of this report, this evaluation has a thematic and strategic focus; its object is the integration of gender in Belgian development cooperation with the aim to improve equality between men and women and to improve the position of women. The evaluation aims at assessing (1) how and with which results the Belgian international cooperation integrates gender in its policies and sector strategies, as well as in the different cooperation channels, (2) how and with which results Belgium supports its partner countries and implementing partner organisations in integrating gender in their strategies and development programs, and (3) to draw lessons so as to perform better in the future. The achievement of these objectives should allow formulating recommendations with the view to improve the way gender is taken into account in development policies and strategies.

The terms of reference of the evaluation also state that as part of this evaluation, 5 countries and 35 programs or projects (7 per country) will be visited; an additional 15 projects will be covered via a documentary study only. The selection of these countries and programs has endeavoured to be as representative as possible and tried to avoid biases to the extent possible. As such, the selection has taken into account, among others, the following parameters: the representation of the various channels of Belgian development cooperation (bilateral cooperation, BIO, NGOs, ...) with the exception of state-to-state loans, a geographic diversity reflecting the different situation of women in the world, and a proportional representation of different types of interventions.

Eight major evaluation questions have been formulated, also on the basis of the terms of reference. These questions cover the main DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact). They stand for a rather broad evaluation scope that covers both the Belgian development policy framework and the situation in the five countries and the 50 projects studied. Seven of these evaluation questions are analysed at the level of the country studies, of which five in depth and two only to a partial degree.

During the documentary phase and prior to the field studies, the evaluation team has developed an evaluation framework that has been used firstly for a documentary study at the level of the selected interventions and countries and for interviews with resource persons in Belgium. This phase has allowed drafting an intermediary report and preliminary project fiches (that were completed after the field visits, see annexe 4), which on their turn have provided the basis for the preparation and implementation of the field visits. These visits aimed at:

- producing a global but limited description and analysis of the situation at country level, including a country gender profile, an analysis of the economic, political and institutional context, as well as an overview of Belgian development cooperation with the country; this analysis is presented mainly in chapters 2 and 3 and to some extent in chapter 4;
- engaging in a limited benchmarking exercise related to the policies and practices with regard to gender of three other donors known for their commitment to
gender; the results of this benchmarking exercise will be used at the level of the synthesis report only;

- conducting an analysis of the seven programs/projects selected on the basis of the results of the documentary phase and completed with the results of field visits and interviews; this analysis is included in chapter 4;
- engaging in a qualitative impact analysis which is limited in scope; the results of this analysis are equally included in chapter 4.

**Important methodological remark**

The report of this Vietnam case study, like the other four countries reports, constitutes an annex of the summary report of the evaluation. As such, it is not a self-standing report that can be circulated independently of the synthesis report. One consequence of this status of the report is that it does not contain a section that describes the evaluation methodology. Readers who prefer to read only this country study are therefore strongly advised to take note of the methodological approach that has underpinned this case study, as it is described in Part XX of the synthesis report.

### 1.2 Particularities of the Vietnam case study

At the level of the bilateral cooperation between Vietnam and Belgium, gender has been included to some extent in the last Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) (2011-2015) the two partner countries have agreed upon. The BTC gender desk has participated in the last stages of the formulation of this ICP and, as such, has been instrumental in ensuring some attention for gender in this key document. However, the Belgian Development Cooperation section at the Embassy is small, which implies that, among others, it does not dispose of a gender desk and has to combine attention for gender with many other tasks.

As can be learned from gender related indicators such as SIGI, Vietnam is performing relatively well in terms of gender. As such, most development programs, rightly or wrongly, only tend to show specific attention for gender inequality in case they are directed to rural areas, in particular areas inhabited by ethnic minority groups where substantial gender inequalities often persist.

The seven interventions analysed in this case study are spread over the northern, central and southern regions of the country, four of them being active in several provinces and even regions. Consequently, the selection of the provinces included in the field visit has to the extent possible tried to include provinces where several interventions are (or were) active. Moreover, the Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU) played a role in three of the interventions, which provided an additional parameter for the selection of the sites to be visited and local organisations to be contacted. The geographic spread of the programs and projects studied has to some extent constituted a logistical challenge, which however could be adequately dealt with thanks to the flexibility of the local organisations involved, the excellent road network and the numerous and reliable flight connections between major cities in the country. Nevertheless, because of paucity of time the evaluation team only to a very limited extent could engage in visits to remote areas.

One of the programs, the VAS (Vietnam Australia International School, which got a loan as part of a BIO funding) could not be assessed as planned initially. The VAS management cancelled unilaterally a planned visit to the VAS premises two days prior to the visit and subsequent efforts, for two months, from the evaluation team to achieve the required information via mail or phone interviews failed to a major extent because of the reluctance of VAS to avail the necessary time and effort.

Several donor organisations active in the country are considered to have a good track record and reputation as far as gender is concerned. As such, it has been relatively easy to select three donors for the benchmarking exercise referred to above; Spain (AECID),
Canada and UK (DFID) were eventually selected whereby it should be noted that Canada and UK have also been selected in other case study countries.

As was the case in the four other case study countries, this case study also included a qualitative impact assessment at grassroots level, which has been limited in time and scope and implemented by young researchers from the ‘Gender and Family Institute of the Academy of Social Science’ who have assessed in two different provinces the impact on gender relations and women empowerment of two of the programs included in the study.

The evaluation team consisted of a local and a Belgian expert. A member of the Office of the Special Evaluator who acted as an observer accompanied the team. In addition, an interpreter assisted the team during field visits and interviews outside Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

At the end of the mission, the team presented its preliminary findings in an aide memoire, which was discussed with representatives of the Embassy, of BTC and of four of the programs included in the evaluation.

1.3 Report structure

This report is structured as follows. The next chapter presents a short country profile, including a gender situational analysis. The third chapter provides an overview of the Belgian cooperation with Vietnam, whereas the fourth and most important chapter presents a ‘gender and development analysis’ related to the seven interventions included in this case study. The last chapter present the main conclusions of this case study.

Four annexes complete this report: key data with regard to the seven interventions analysed, the list of persons contacted, the list of the main documents consulted and the fiches of the seven interventions analysed.

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1 Note that two of the programs evaluated had no representation in Hanoi.
3 Ibidem.
2. Country profile

2.1 Key country indicators

Table 1: Key country indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>RDC</th>
<th>Benin</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Bolivia</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (2012)</td>
<td>0,304</td>
<td>0,436</td>
<td>0,591</td>
<td>0,675</td>
<td>0,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HDI components:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth (years)</td>
<td>48,7</td>
<td>56,5</td>
<td>72,4</td>
<td>66,9</td>
<td>75,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of education (median)</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>4,4</td>
<td>9,2</td>
<td>5,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected years of education</td>
<td>8,5</td>
<td>9,4</td>
<td>10,4</td>
<td>13,5</td>
<td>11,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Domestic Product (US$/capita, PPP)</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>1.439</td>
<td>4.384</td>
<td>4.444</td>
<td>2.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP ranking minus HDI ranking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gini coefficient (income)</td>
<td>44,4</td>
<td>38,6</td>
<td>40,9</td>
<td>56,3</td>
<td>35,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The HDI places Vietnam at the second place of the five countries included in the evaluation. It is classified at the 127th position (out of 188 countries) and part of the group of countries with a medium human development\(^3\). Considering Vietnam’s relatively low GDP/capita, it has a relatively high HDI compared to Morocco and Bolivia that have a substantially higher GPD/capita. Vietnam’s low Gini coefficient is an illustration of the country’s capacity, over the last twenty years, to combine fast economic development with poverty reduction and equity. Nevertheless, disparities have grown over the same period.

Key gender indicators

The table on the next page presents a few key gender indicators and compares these with the same indicators of the other countries included in the evaluation:

- The SIGI indicator is a relatively new composite index related to gender equality. It is composed of twelve innovative indicators related to social institutions and grouped in five categories: the family code, physical integrity, son bias, civil liberties and property rights and entitlements. Each SIGI indicator is assigned a value between 0 (indicating the absence or very limited inequality) and 1 (very high level of inequality). The added value of SIGI related to the fact that it addresses the context and the institutional and social constructs of gender, whereas other indicators address mainly the consequences of these constructs, e.g. in the areas of health and education. In 2012, Vietnam ranked 43th out of 86

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\(^3\) Ibidem.
countries in the SIGI index, whereas its position in 2009 was 31\textsuperscript{st} (of 102 countries)\textsuperscript{4}.

- The Gender Inequality Index measures the losses in terms of human development caused by gender inequality in the areas of reproductive health, empowerment and labour market. The higher the score, the higher the losses in terms of human development. The lower the score, the lower the level of women empowerment. This index places Vietnam at the 49\textsuperscript{th} place on 146 countries\textsuperscript{5}.
- The gender empowerment measure is composed of three elements: political participation and decision-making, economic participation and decision-making and power over economic resources. The lower the score, the higher the level of women empowerment.

Table 2: Key gender indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>RDC</th>
<th>Benin</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Bolivia</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIGI - Social Institutions and Gender Index</td>
<td>0,514</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0,126</td>
<td>0,133</td>
<td>0,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequality index</td>
<td>0,681</td>
<td>0,618</td>
<td>0,444</td>
<td>0,474</td>
<td>0,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Empowerment Measure</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0,318</td>
<td>0,511</td>
<td>0,554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table indicates that Vietnam stands out favourably as far as the gender inequality index and the gender empowerment measure is concerned. Its SIGI score is however relatively weak (compared to Morocco and Bolivia), which most probably can be attributed to the high prevalence of domestic violence and restricted civil liberties.

2.2 Socio-economic situation

2.2.1 Poverty and socio-economic development

In its 2013 Human Development Report, UNDP ranks Vietnam 127\textsuperscript{th} on 188 countries in terms of its human development (HDI: 0,617), while in the same year an estimated 28.9\% of the population lived under the poverty threshold of 1.25 US$/day. According to the 2009 census, the total population was estimates at 85.85 million, with women accounting for 50.6\% of the total. However, Vietnam's sex ratio at birth has risen from 106.2 boys per 100 girls in 2000 to 112.3 boys in 2012 and this sharp trend continues to rise (see also below)\textsuperscript{6}. Vietnam’s average population growth between 1999 and 2009 has been 1.2\% while the urban population accounted in 2010 for about 29.6\%, with an average annual rate of 3.4\% per year in the same period\textsuperscript{7}.

Notwithstanding its relatively low HDI ranking, Vietnam has been changing very rapidly over the last 20 years, since the country started a process of economic and political reforms in 1986, including a transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy and an opening up of the economy to the world. The achievements of the country over this period are largely considered as a success story. Strong economic growth (approximately 7\% per year) has made that the country’s GDP nearly tripled since 1990 and has brought Vietnam in the category of middle-income countries in 2011 and that substantial progress has been made in terms of poverty reduction (in 1994,\textsuperscript{4} http://genderindex.org/country/viet-nam. Note that the analysis of the ‘son bias’ dimension in the 2012 index does not address the issue of sex-selective abortion that over the last decade in particular has led to a biased male/female birth ratio of 1,13.

\textsuperscript{5} https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-4-Gender-Inequality-Index/pq34-nwq7

\textsuperscript{6} www.un.org.vn/en/about-viet-nam

\textsuperscript{7} Ibidem
58% of the population was considered as poor, 14.5% in 2008\(^8\). Vietnam has also been applauded for its ability to combine strong economic growth with equity considerations. However, progress at the aggregate level masks significant disparity between different groups and regions in relation to achieving key MDG targets and indicators, e.g. in the area of infant and maternal mortality\(^9\). More in general, income growth has been concentrated around large cities and in areas with export oriented economic activities\(^10\). The picture is however complex, with poverty falling faster in rural areas compared to urban areas (3.2% versus 1.5% per year, respectively), while in relative terms inequality between the two regions has widened: in 1993 poverty was 2.6 times higher in rural than in urban areas; in 2008, it was 5.7 times greater. Even so, the prevalence among ethnic minorities compared with ethnic majority groups has widened from a factor of 1.6 in 1993 to 5.1 in 2006\(^11\).

Over the two last decades, the relative share of agriculture in the economic output has shrunk continuously to less than 22% in 2012, while the industry’s share reached 41% in the same year. Agriculture continued however to employ nearly half (48%) of the workforce in the same year\(^12\). Vietnam’s ambition to become an industrialized and modern economy by 2020 faces however important challenges. Over the last years, the country has faced serious macroeconomic problems including double-digit inflation, a depreciating currency, capital flight and eroding investor confidence. The quality and sustainability of the growth remain an issue of concern in view of the resource-intensive pattern of growth, the high levels of environmental degradation, lack of diversification and the declining contribution of productivity to growth. These challenges have made it difficult for the country to find a balance between further promoting growth and emphasizing economic stability via tighter monetary and fiscal control. The WB Vietnam Development Report (2012) argues that the root causes of Vietnam’s problems are to be found in the country’s incomplete transition to a market economy, with weak institutions and an inefficient investment regime. The undercapitalized banking sector with a substantial part of non-performing loans weighs heavily on economic development\(^13\).

Table 3: Evolution of Gross Domestic Product/capita and poverty rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GDP/Capita (°)</th>
<th>Population living with less than 1.25 US$ per day (%) (°°)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RDC</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>1.070</td>
<td>1.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>3.900</td>
<td>4.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2.500</td>
<td>2.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>2.250</td>
<td>2.800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(°) www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=67&c=cg&l=fr

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\(^8\) ODI, Viet Nam’s progress on economic growth and poverty reduction: impressive improvements, 2011
\(^10\) ODI, p. 8
\(^11\) Ibidem, p. 10
\(^12\) www.indexmundi.com/vietnam/economy_profile.html;
\(^14\) ODI, Viet Nam’s progress on economic growth and poverty reduction: impressive improvements, 2011, p. 5
2.2.2 Health and nutrition\textsuperscript{15}

Vietnam has made impressive progress toward improving the health status of the population, with progress that equals or surpasses that of many neighbouring countries. Life expectancy in Vietnam is 72.8 years (70.2 for men and 75.6 for women), a level that is considerably higher than that in many countries with similar levels of GDP per capita. From 1990 to 2009, the infant mortality rate fell from 44.4\% to 16.0\%, the under-five mortality rate dropped from 58.0\% to 24.5\%\textsuperscript{16}, and the maternal mortality ratio declined from 233 to 69 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Estimated to be around 18\% in 2010, the rate of under-five malnutrition has also fallen dramatically. These improvements are attributable to a widespread health care delivery network, increasing numbers of qualified health workers, and expanding national public health programs. Human resources for health are an important building block of health system. The number of health workers in Vietnam has increased substantially over the past 10 years, but there are still severe shortages in remote and disadvantaged areas.

Despite substantial achievements, there are still large health status disparities across regions and between demographic and socioeconomic groups. High prevalence of gender-based violence in Vietnam leads to abused women more likely than non-abused women unintended pregnancies and increased risks of induced abortion. Quite a significant number of young women are at high risk from unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Particularly young women that migrate within the country are especially vulnerable to risk related to their reproductive health, including HIV\textsuperscript{17}.

2.2.3 Education\textsuperscript{18}

The fast economic development of the country has been accompanied by an increasing demand for education and training both from the population at large and from the economy that relies for its growth in skills and knowledge in a context of increased globalization. In addition, education is a key strategy in addressing the risk of growing disparities between different groups as a consequence of a rapidly expanding economy.

There have been exceptional improvements in education attainment since the 1990s; in the period between 1992 and 2006, the percentage of the population aged 25-55 without any education level completed has decreased from 23\% to less than 1\%, and primary, lower secondary and upper secondary attainment has increased substantially. Rural and lower income populations have benefited the most from the increase in primary and lower secondary attainment. Primary enrolments have become nearly universal and the gross enrolment rates achieved (respectively 87\% and 73\% in 2004 for lower and overall secondary education) position Vietnam in a favourable position compared to countries with a similar per capita income.

Nevertheless, some key challenges remain. They relate primarily to the increasing inequities in educational attainment beyond primary, as rural populations and even more so ethnic minorities and the lowest income quintiles have not yet been able to go beyond lower secondary. In addition, the quality of the education system remains insufficient in particular for disadvantaged groups, which is a critical factor for full access to lower secondary and attendance/completion of secondary education. The quality of primary education, although improving, remains an issue overall and more particularly for the poor, rural and ethnic minority populations.

\textsuperscript{15} Nguyen D. Hinh and Hoang Van Minh, Public health in Vietnam: scientific evidence for policy changes and interventions, Global Health Action, 2013 (www.globalhealthaction.net/index.php/gha/.../pdf_1)
\textsuperscript{16} ... but improvement has been concentrated among the wealthiest three quintiles – ODI, Ibidem
\textsuperscript{17} www.un.org.vn.en/about-viet-nam
\textsuperscript{18} World Bank, Appraisal document for a School Education Quality Assurance Program, p. 1-7, 2009
2.2.4 Water and sanitation

According to the UN's Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, access to an improved water source increased from 58% in 1990 to 96% in 2010. However, in rural areas most Vietnamese receive water from a tap in the yard or a public tap in the village from where they have to carry water to their home. In 2010, only 23% of Vietnamese had a tap in their home. There are substantial differences in access between urban and "rural" areas. 70% of the Vietnamese population lives in rural areas, but many so-called rural areas are actually small towns, e.g. in the densely settled Red River Delta. In urban areas, 59% had a tap in their home, while in rural areas this share was only 8%19. In 2009 over 200 out of approximately 650 district towns did not have any piped water system20. The quality of the water is however unsatisfactory. In early 2009 tests by the Vietnam Institute of Biotechnology showed widespread contamination of municipal tap water, including high levels of e-coli. Most residents boil drinking water, because they do not trust the quality of the tap water, or use bottled water.

Access to improved sanitation increased from 37% in 1990 to 75% in 2011. There is a significant gap between urban areas, where access stands at 93%, and rural areas with an access of only 67%19. In 2009, 75% of households in provincial towns were not connected to a sewer20. Water pollution is a serious issue in Vietnam as a result of rapid industrialization and urbanization without adequate environmental management. As of 2008 only 10 % of municipal wastewater was treated, and only 45% of industrial zones were expected to have wastewater treatment of some kind in 201020.

2.2.5 Governance

Over the last quarter of a century and in line with the country’s socio-economic polices, Vietnam’s politics and society have gradually evolved towards greater openness and space for civil participation. Public discourse on a range of political, social, and economic issues has increased. Provisions are in place to require input by citizens in certain decisions at the grassroots level. The ability of the National Assembly to perform the role of a check and balance on the executive has strengthened. The National Assembly and People's Councils have been playing increasingly active roles in external oversight, despite being constrained by high turnover. Despite the progress achieved, greater openness and opportunity for citizens to participate in governance is needed to support Vietnam's long-term vision of becoming a modern industrialized society. In Vietnam, mechanisms for downward accountability, such as the periodical citizens report card surveys in Ho Chi Minh City and the improved transparency of draft laws, are just emerging. Expanding and strengthening mechanisms for downward accountability can help make the government more responsive to the needs and concerns of citizens and firms. However, with little awareness of legal rights and the lack of effective mechanisms to demand better services, the citizenry is not well placed to provide pressure from below21.

The country for historic reasons can rely on strong institutions across the country, with local governments having developed capacities to mobilize resources themselves in order to fund their activities and ensuring a wide spread of services and basic infrastructure. These institutions however have not necessarily the capacities to implement the economic and institutional reform needed22. Moreover, their classic top-down approach increasingly conflicts with the aspirations of the (growing middle class) people. Much remains also to be done in building capacity for better governance, fighting corruption, enhancing the role of the media and civil society. Freedom of speech, assembly and

19 WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation
22 ODI, ibidem, p. 14
association remain subject to severe restrictions and political life remains strictly controlled\textsuperscript{23}.

### 2.3 Gender situation analysis

As is the case in most other domains of human development, Vietnam has made considerable progress on gender equality over the last decades. The gender gap in Vietnam is less pronounced than in other East Asian countries, but important gender differences remain however\textsuperscript{24}:

- **Education.** Women have made major gains in educational enrolment, but are still highly segregated into particular fields. The gender gap in primary schooling has been eliminated and among the current school age children, Vietnam has closed and even reversed gender gaps in primary, secondary and tertiary schooling. Nevertheless, grounds for concern remain. They relate to gender disparities by age, ethnicity and location. The major gender education gap that still exists is among certain ethnic minority groups. There are also concerns about the gendered content of the education curriculum and the extent to which it equips girls and boys for capacity to take advantage of new opportunities and aspire to achievements beyond those dictated by persisting gender stereotypes\textsuperscript{25}. There is also a significant degree of segregation of men and women in their fields of study, which is connected to the significant segregation in terms of occupation and industry of employment: at tertiary levels, men are more likely to specialize in engineering, manufacturing, construction and services while women specialize in social sciences, education, humanities and the arts.

- **Health and reproductive health.** Vietnam has performed very well on the health front, including remarkable achievements on the two hardest-to-reach MDGs, child and maternal mortality. During the 1990 to 2009 period, its infant mortality rates had declined from 44.4 per 1000 to 16. This contributed to the decline in under-five mortality rates from 58 in 1999 to 24.4 in 2009 (MDG Report). These improvements are likely to reflect improvements in reproductive health services. The percentage of pregnant women receiving more than three pre-natal visits had reached 86 in 2008, the percentage receiving tetanus injections had reached 95% and the percentage using contraceptive methods had reached 80%.

Moreover, Viet Nam appears to have achieved this goal in gender-equitable ways. There is very little evidence of marked gender discrimination against girls in the areas of health and nutrition. However, the emergence of rising male to female ratios at birth (112.3 boys in 2012), suggesting the use of sex-selective abortion to ensure the birth of a son, is a worrying new development. The rise of the SRB does not necessarily indicate an increase in the degree of son preference but rather the desire for lower fertility in a context that is characterized by a culture of son preference, on the one hand, and the recent access to ultrasonic technology, which can determine the sex of the unborn child. Access to abortion, always widely available in Viet Nam, is now used on a sex selective basis by parents wanting to ensure at least one son.

HIV infection primarily occurs among men (73.2% in 2009) but the numbers of affected women have been increasing rapidly. Increasing numbers of women are contracting the disease through sex with partners or husbands who were infected through their own high-risk behaviour triggered by changing norms around masculinity and the relaxation of earlier restrictions on sexual behaviour.

\textsuperscript{23} http://genderindex.org/country/viet-nam

\textsuperscript{24} The World Bank, AusAID, UKaid, UN Women, Vietnam country gender assessment, 2011

\textsuperscript{25} A UNESCO analysis of school text books indicated the the presence of numerous gender biases, both of an obvious and subtle nature in the narrative text, illustrations and learning activities of primary school textbooks currently in use in Viet Nam – along with a number of examples of good practices in promoting gender equality (cited in Vietnam country gender assessment, 2011, p. 29).
• Gender based violence is believed to be widespread particularly in the family context. Based on the data from the National Assembly Committee of Social Affairs, it is reported that more than half of the divorces between 2000 and 2005 were due in part to domestic violence. There is evidence that many women prefer to remain in abusive marriages rather that to confront the social stigma as well as economic uncertainty that follow divorce\textsuperscript{26}. The National Study on the Family conducted in 2006 found that 21\% of couples had experienced at least one type of domestic violence in the preceding 12 months (including verbal, emotional, sexual and physical). The Viet Nam Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2006 found that 64\% of women aged 15-49 accepted violent treatment from husbands as normal. A national survey specifically on the issue of domestic violence was carried out in 2010 also collected information on the commonly held views about the causes of violence. What emerges from this information is the extent to which cultural beliefs and attitudes condoned, and even encouraged, violence against women. There was a widespread view that men and women expressed anger differently, that men found it difficult to control their anger because of their biology and that it was women’s nature to ‘endure’. Often women feel a responsibility for what is going on, because as women they feel their role is to create a good family life.

• Gender differences in poverty are small, but older women, especially in rural areas, are overrepresented among the poor. When women are worse off, it is to a significant extent due to the fact that they are on average older and thus are more likely to be living alone and/or have exhausted their assets In particular widows, who are both poorer and more numerous than widowers, are vulnerable because of their limited power over key assets such as land (land use rights and property have actually improved, but major differences remain). In addition, only 26\% of the elderly are supported by state allowances and retirement pension. which translates into 33\% of elderly men compared to 19\% of elderly women. However, while national estimates suggest that women are marginally more likely than men to live in poor households, female-headed households are, and have consistently been, less poor than male heads.

• Gender and employment. The gap in labour force participation and earnings has narrowed considerably, but gender differences remain that may put women at risk. Women’s wages are now about 75\% of men’s according to the 2009 Labour Force Survey (LFS), not taking into account differences in education or job experience. Nevertheless, differences remain that are suggestive of higher vulnerability for women. The gender distribution of employment by sector suggest that men are better placed to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the wider economy. Women are also in more vulnerable jobs, for example, own-account work and unpaid family labour. According to LFS estimates, 69\% of women were vulnerably employed in 2009 compared to only 54.4\% of men (ILO 2010). And data suggests there has actually been an increase in occupational segregation since 2006. Lower wages and far worse working conditions prevail in small informal family-run enterprises and among casual labour. Particularly disadvantaged are migrant women, widows, older women, ethnic minorities, and women with disabilities. Many of these women are landless or lost their land to industrial parks and urbanization. Others are left by their husbands in the rural areas who are looking for more rewarding jobs in growth centres. These are the women who are least able to access the opportunities generated by Viet Nam’s integration into the global economy. There is also the problem of the differential age of retirement. As men and women spend the same period of education and working but men retire five years later than women, women lose five years or equivalent to a term of service to participate in well rewarded leadership positions.

\textsuperscript{26} http://genderindex.org/country/viet-nam.
and, hence, lose opportunities\textsuperscript{27}. Finally, a 2008 survey suggests that men continue to contribute significantly less to housework than women, which can serve as a barrier to women’s full participation in the labour market.

- **Social and political participation.** Even though representation of women in the National Assembly is high by regional standards and there is a woman member of the Politburo, women do not have an equal voice in the public sphere. In fact, there are some indications that women’s representation in some areas, for example the 2011-2016 National Assembly term, got slightly worse, from 27.3\% for 2002-2007 to 24.4\% for 2011-2016. Recently, within the national assembly, the women deputies have created a working group to promote gender equality. The Assembly’s section on social issues is also tasked to screen all law proposals on gender issues before approval. The Assembly also is presently engaged in a discussion on gender budgeting. There are a variety of obstacles that women face in public life, including the unequal burden of unpaid work, which limits women’s involvement in the workplace and in civic society. A second major obstacle is the attitudes encountered in public life. There is resistance on the part of many men to women taking up leadership positions but also among women. Vietnam has passed important laws and policies in relation to gender equality but implementation is far from satisfactory, due to a lack of knowledge of these laws, a lack of implementing capacity, the limited presence of women in public decision-making forums and in politics more generally. Finally, deeply rooted cultural perceptions with regard to the roles and functions of women in society constitute a major obstacle to women’s full participation in society.

### 2.4 The country’s socio-economic development and gender equality frameworks

#### 2.4.1 The national development framework

Vietnam’s latest socio-economic development strategy (2011-2020) aims the country to become an industrialized and modern economy by 2020, thereby identifying the following key priorities: stabilisation of the economy, creation of a skilled work force, building world-class infrastructure and strengthening market-based institutions\textsuperscript{28}. Its socio-economic development plan for the 2011-2015 period includes the following overall objectives\textsuperscript{29}:

- the economy will be developed in a rapid, sustainable manner coupling with innovating growth model and restructuring the economy towards better quality and higher competitiveness efficiency;
- social welfare and social security will be ensured while material and spiritual life of the people will continue to be improved;
- diplomatic activities will be enhanced to promote the efficiency of international integration;
- independence, sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity will be firmly defended and political security and social order and safety be maintained, thus creating a foundation for the country to basically become a modernity-oriented industrial nation by 2020.

\textsuperscript{27} Gender equality in education: looking beyond parity, an IIEP evidence-based policy forum, Paris, 2011.

\textsuperscript{28} http://www.google.be/#q=Vietnam+socio-economic+development+strategy+(2011-2020)+

\textsuperscript{29} http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies/strategiesdetails?categoryId=30&articleId=10052505
During the first two or three years, the plan focuses on realizing the objectives of stabilizing the macro-economy, ensuring social security, achieving a proper growth rate and strongly expediting economic restructuring and the shift of the growth model. In the next two or three years, it will aim for the basic accomplishment of the economic restructuring to serve rapid and sustainable development and ensure that growth, macro-economic stabilization and social security goals harmonize.

To meet its ambitious aims, the country should however be able to deal with a broad range of challenges. On the one hand there are (macro-) economic and social challenges related to high inflation, capital flight, decreased investor confidence and corruption. On the other side, environmental challenges are huge and might even increase in the future: (1) climate change (Vietnam is considered as one of countries in the world hardest hit by climate change), (2) the depletion of natural resources (in the past years, for different reasons, natural resources, especially water and biodiversity resources, have been seriously degenerated), (3) environmental pollution (the prolonged degeneration of the environment as a consequence of the war and the environmental pollution due to the present socio-economic development), (4) wasteful and ineffective production and consumption (many sectors and localities still employ labour and energy resource intensive means of production, lowering both production and market share; in consumption, a significant section of the urban population maintain an extravagant lifestyle)\(^{30}\).

2.4.2 Government policies and institutions related to gender equality

The legal and policy framework

The Government’s commitment to gender equality is evident in its policies and at the institutional and structural level. Vietnam is a signatory to human rights conventions which guarantee the equality between men and women such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and ILO conventions on equal remuneration and discrimination. Vietnam also participates in many regional and international groups cooperating for women’s equality including the APEC Gender Focal Point Network and the ASEAN Committee on Women.

On the domestic level, the government has put into place major laws and policies to advance gender equality and address discrimination against women:

- The Gender Equality Law (2006) created a comprehensive legal framework for gender equality with the main goals to eliminate gender discrimination, to create equal opportunities for man and woman in socio-economic development and human resources development in order to reach substantial equality between man and woman, and to establish and enhance cooperation and mutual assistance between man and woman in all fields of social and family life\(^{31}\). As a consequence of the law, a Gender Equality Department, the first-ever state institution dealing with gender, was established within MOLISA (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs) to ensure the implementation of the law.

- The Law on the prevention and control of domestic violence (2007) regulates the prevention and control of domestic violence, protecting and assisting the victims of domestic violence; the responsibilities of individuals, families, organizations, institutions in domestic violence prevention and control and dealing with the breach of the Law. The Vietnamese government also issued decrees on the


\(^{31}\) Law on gender Equality; http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/934/Law%20on%20Gender%20Equality%202006.pdf

• The National Strategy and action program on Gender Equality for 2011-2020 is the first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equality in Vietnam to foster the implementation of the Gender Equality Law that was approved in 2006. This strategy marks the change of the national approach to gender equality from Women in Development to Gender and Development. It aims at to achieve, by 2020, substantive equality between men and women in opportunity, participation and benefits in the political, economic, cultural and social domains, contributing to fast and sustainable national development. Its specific objectives include (1) To intensify women’s participation in managerial and leading positions in order to gradually narrow gender gap in the political field, (2) To narrow the gender gap in the economic, labour and employment domains; to increase access of rural poor women and ethnic minority women to economic resources and the labour market, (3) To raise the quality of female human resources, gradually ensure equal participation in the education and training between men and women. (4) To ensure gender equality in access to and benefit from health care services, (5) To ensure gender equality in the cultural and information domain, (6) To ensure gender equality in family life, gradually eliminating gender-based violence and (7) To enhance the capacity of gender equality state management.

• While the 1992 Constitution of Viet Nam guarantees women equal rights in all spheres, including the family, and bans discrimination against women, the 2013 revised Constitution includes a number of provisions on ensuring gender equality. The terms “gender equality” and “gender discrimination” were incorporated in the specific provisions of the new constitution. As such, article 26 defines that “Every man and woman citizen is equal in all respects. … The State, society and family shall enable women to develop comprehensively, promote their role in the society. Gender-based discrimination is strictly prohibited.”

• Information obtained from MOLISA learns further that other legal initiatives (civil law, labour law, law on human trafficking, the new land law that requires signature of both husband and wife when land is bought/sold) further contribute to the country’s effort to achieve gender equality.

The institutional framework

• The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is the State Management Agency for Gender Equality Law and to develop National Strategy (2011-2020) and the National Program on Gender Equality (2011-2015). In this regard, MOLISA is responsible to perform state management of gender equality, guide other line ministries in the implementation of gender equality in line with laws, participate in the evaluation of mainstreaming gender equality in Viet Nam. MOLISA is also a focal point for Country report on CEDAW implementation in Viet Nam. The Ministry is also responsible to coordinate Viet Nam’s participation in UN mechanisms for promoting women’s rights, such as follow up the Plan of Actions of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and Beijing Plus and the Annual Commission on the Status of Women. The Department of Gender Equality, under the MOLISA, has the tasks to assist and advise the Minister to fulfil the state management tasks to achieve gender equality, such as propose short term

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33 http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies/strategiesdetails?categoryId=30&articleId=10050924
34 NCFAW, Women and progress, No. 1, March 2014.
and long-term strategies, plan of actions, national programs for gender equality and legal documents.

- **The National Committee for the advancement of women in Viet Nam (NCFAW)** is an inter-sectoral body that advises the Prime Minister of inter-sectoral issues concerning gender equality and women's empowerment nationwide. NCFAW includes representatives from different ministries and ‘mass organizations’. In September 2008 the Minister of MOLISA was designated the president of NCFAW. The vice-chairs are the president of the Viet Nam Women's Union and the Vice Minister of MOLISA. However, NCFAW has only a limited budget and has to mobilize most of its funds for gender equality activities from international donors. There is also a distinct lack of gender expertise to enable technical advice to be provided to other ministries.

- **The Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU)** was founded on October 20 in 1930. It advises the Communist Party and the government on issues for women’s advancement. More than 50% of the female population of Viet Nam are members of the VWU, with its current membership over 14 million. These members belong to over 10, 472 local women’s unions in communes and towns throughout the country, with 642 district level units and 63 provincial units. The key goals stated by the VWU for 2007-2012 are: to raise capacity and knowledge and improve the material and spiritual life of women; to cultivate Vietnamese women who are patriotic, knowledgeable, healthy, skilful, dynamic, innovative, cultured and kind hearted; and to build and develop an organizationally strong VWU, which can play a key role in motivating women and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of women. A recently conducted research at the level of one of the local branches of VWU concluded that ... that the VWU fails to challenge traditional gender norms, actually emphasizing women’s responsibilities in maintaining a ‘happy family’. However, solidarity with the poor is a key concern of the district offices’ agenda and many women do actually benefit practically from their projects. We conclude that the VWU’s main weaknesses emerge from its hierarchical structure and a centrally planned gender policy, which avoids addressing critical power issues.

**2.4.3 The role of NGOs, research institutions and the international community in promoting gender equality**

There exist several partnerships of local NGOs and academic institutions for gender equality. GENCOMNET is a voluntary network of Vietnamese non-governmental organizations, researchers, managers and practitioners, working for gender equity and gender equality that contributes to the formulation and implementation of gender related laws and policies. The Domestic Violence Prevention Network (DOVIPnet) was established to increase the effectiveness and implementation of policies regarding the prevention of domestic violence by authorized agencies and to create a new orientation of social conceptions and opinions regarding domestic violence. NEW is a network of organizations and individuals, who voluntarily participate in development activities to empower women, prevent gender-based violence and realize gender equality in Viet Nam. All three organizations work in research, training and advocacy feeding into policy discussions. In addition to these three networks there are many individuals and organizations that work on gender issues independently. International development agencies with a strong commitment on gender support the existing networks that are considered to gain in strength and influence and might become a major factor for change.

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36 ADB Strategy and program assessment, Viet Nam: Gender Situation Analysis
37 Website www.hoilhpn.org.vn, 25/7/11
38 Gaby Waibel and Sarah Glück, More than 13 million: mass mobilisation and gender politics in the Vietnam’s Women’s Union; published online; to link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2013.802148
towards gender equality, the more because “gender” is not considered a politically sensitive issue, which provides NGOs with more space for action.

A Gender Donor Group was established in Viet Nam in 1999 with the aim of promoting gender equality in Vietnam. In 2002 a review of its purpose and membership was undertaken by members and it was expanded to include gender experts from government institutions, donors, UN agencies and other organisations working on gender equality and was renamed the “Gender Action Partnership” (GAP). The TOR for the group states in its purpose that it “aims to improve partnerships and coordination around gender equality and the advancement of women within and outside the government. The GAP is chaired by the NCFAW and includes representatives of Government Ministries, donors, research institutes and international and national organisations working for women’s advancement including representatives of GENCOMNET, NEW and DOVIPnet. Many GAP members are carrying out activities in typical areas such as women trafficking, domestic violence. Often GAP donor members oscillate between working with the NCFAW and the VWU or trying to promote gender issues through direct engagement with ministries and agencies. Presently the GAP is considered rather as a (too) large network that does not engage in joint action but rather focuses on the exchange of information, often among those donors that are already ‘converted’. Furthermore the development of the GAP and of the donor community in particular is to be set against the background of many donors pulling out of Vietnam now that the country has accessed the middle-income category. Furthermore, the Vietnam Development Partners Forum constitutes the major forum where donors and Government meet and consult on a policy level. The forum has chosen five key themes to work on; gender is not included as a theme, but some donors (e.g. Canada) work hard to integrate it as a crosscutting issue in the policy discussions whereas others don’t.

2.4.4 Concluding note

The previous sections of this sub-chapter have made it clear that Vietnam has established a series of legal and institutional arrangements to move the country towards gender equality. While these frameworks are far from perfect (e.g. violence against women is only addressed in the context of the family), experience so far indicates that the existence of these frameworks and arrangements is, in itself, not enough to enact change. The understanding of gender is still weak at the level of those who are (co-) responsible for change and cultural and institutional factors inhibit change processes. Many Vietnamese, including government officials, are even not aware of key legislation such as the law preventing domestic violence.

A key challenge seems to be to define and above all implement an action plan composed of a concrete measures in line with the frameworks established. Such a move might start with increasing awareness and information (directed to both women and men) on women’s rights (including on services provided to victims of violence) and avoiding the use of gender stereotypes. In addition, more qualified human resources and financial means are needed for key structures such as the Gender Equality Department of MOLISA and its local branches, so that it can adequately take up the tasks assigned to it via the 2006 law and gender equality strategy.

40 The World Bank, ibidem
41 ADB, Vietnam Gender Situation Analysis, 2005.
3. Belgian cooperation with Vietnam: an overview

3.1 Facts and figures

The table below provides an overview of the interventions (number, expenses) classified according to the gender marker\(^{42}\), and compares the Vietnam figures with the total number of interventions (in all countries) included in the ODA database.

Table 4: Overview of interventions and expenses according to the gender marker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>All countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-0</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>56,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYF</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (°)</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{42}\) Without taking the NYF into account, so as to allow a comparison between Vietnam and the overall figures.

The table learns that there are considerably more (almost double) than average G-2 interventions in Vietnam, both in terms of numbers and expenses. G-1 interventions are close to average, both in number and expenses, and the same can be stated for G-0 interventions.

The tables below provide indications on the number of interventions per cooperation channel, both in absolute and relative figures.

Table 5: Overview of G1 and G2 interventions according to the cooperation channel (absolute figures)\(^{43}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Total (all countries)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYF</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (°)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{43}\) Without taking the NYF into account, so as to allow a comparison between Vietnam and the overall figures.

\(^{42}\) Based on the gender database; the G2 marker is assigned to intervention having gender equality as its major objective; the G1 marker deals with interventions where gender equality is one of the objectives, whereas interventions without a gender objective get the GO marker.

\(^{43}\) The (rather small) differences among the totals with the previous table relate to interventions that do not belong to a specific channel.
The tables above point to relatively big differences among the three major cooperation channels. Somewhat surprisingly, the indirect cooperation has a relatively low share of G-2 interventions, whereas roughly 20% of bilateral interventions got a G-2 marker (whereas the corresponding total figures is three times less). Multilateral cooperation also has significantly more G-2 interventions compared to the overall figure. These findings are in sharp contrast with those in other countries studies, e.g. the DRC where exactly the opposite picture (relatively more G-2 interventions in the indirect cooperation) emerges.

The table below provides an overview of G-1 and G-2 interventions per priority sector.

### Table 6: Overview of G1 and G2 intervention according to the cooperation channel (relative figures)\(^4^4\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Total (all countries)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-2</td>
<td>19,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-1</td>
<td>60,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-0</td>
<td>19,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ((^\circ))</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\circ\) Without taking the NYF into account, so as to allow a comparison between Vietnam and the overall figures.

The table above learns that less than two thirds of the G-2 projects (15 out of 22) in the country deal with one of the priority sectors; rather surprisingly, the education sector gets an important number of G-2 projects.\(^4^6\) The picture related to G-1 projects corresponds more with what one would expect, with an important number of projects in the health, agriculture and education sectors.

### 3.2 Characteristics of Belgian cooperation

#### 3.2.1 Global characteristics

Vietnam is one of the 18 partner countries of Belgian bilateral development cooperation and presently the only partner country on the Asian continent. Belgium was among the first countries to engage in bilateral cooperation with the country when it opened up to the outside world. Over the years, the relative importance of Belgium cooperation has however decreased. In the years prior to the present ICP (2011-2015), Belgian ODA contributions averaged around 2% of the total disbursed grants to Vietnam, whereas

\(^4^4\) The (rather small) differences among the totals with the previous table relate to interventions that do not belong to a specific channel.

\(^4^5\) PRH: Population and reproductive health, CPS: conflict, peace and security, H: health; AF: Agriculture and Fisheries; E: education; SCS: society and civil society

\(^4^6\) Most probably this has to do with the way the gender marker score has been determined. For more details, see the synthesis report, part 2.3.5.
during the 2010 consultative group meeting, Belgian contribution accounted for 0.2% of the total ODA pledges. Belgian ODA to Vietnam amounted to €17 million yearly in the period 2008-2010, whereby governmental cooperation accounted for more than half (around 58%) of the expenditure.47

Besides governmental cooperation, a few Belgian NGOs are working in the country in the sectors of agriculture and rural development, labour and public health. Some university cooperation programmes are also implemented and VVOB and APEFE have also implemented educational programmes in the country during the period studied in this evaluation.

Early 2011 a new Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) was signed between the two countries, covering the period 2011 – 2015 with an indicative budget of €60 million (see below).

3.2.2 The indicative cooperation program 2011 – 2015

The ICP is based on a series of documents of which the Vietnamese 2011-2015 socio-economic development plan (SEDP) is the most important. The Vietnam law on gender equality and the related strategy (2011-2020) are among the other policy documents cited, but the Belgian gender strategy note (issued in 2002) is not included among the reference documents. The ICP is said to serve as the reference document for the preparation and implementation of the bilateral cooperation program, and for the coordination and harmonization of development activities with the EU other EU member states.

In view of the alignment needs expressed by the Government of Vietnam, the desire for harmonisation with other partners and Belgium’s experiences in the country, the ICP opts to concentrate on two sectors, i.e. Water and Sanitation and Governance, with the intention to stay active in these sectors for three successive indicative programs (12 years).

3.2.3 The integration of gender in the 2011 – 2015 indicative cooperation program

Analysis of the ICP document

Gender is fairly well integrated in the ICP document, among others as a result of a mission, by the BTC gender desk assisted by two local consultants, to make the ICP more gender proof (see below). The level of integration of gender in the ICP document can be determined on the basis of the following:

• it is stated that the law on gender equality (2006) and the national strategy for gender equality (2011-2020) have been taken into account in the process of defining the ICP;
• under the Belgian development policies and objectives (chapter 3), it is stated that ... Belgium strives for a peaceful and secure world where poverty and gender inequalities are a ‘thing of the past’ and where there are development opportunities for all, women and men;
• a reference is made to Belgium’s law on international cooperation (1999), which includes four cross-cutting themes to be addressed (including gender) and to the 2010 DAC peer review that emphasizes “gender equality and women empowerment” as priority themes;
• under chapter 7 (Cross-cutting themes), much attention is devoted to gender equality and women’s empowerment. This sections states, among others, that Belgian Development Cooperation takes gender equality and women’s

47 Indicative Cooperation Programme between Vietnam and Belgium, Period 2011 - 2015
empowerment into account in its policies, strategies and actions and that it also finances specific actions designed to fight gender-based violence and discrimination against women. The section refers to gender gaps in higher education, inequalities in the labour market and in access to economic opportunities. It stresses the importance of making development as well as sectoral plans gender sensitive. Finally, the section states that, according to the recommendations of the gender workshop held at the end of the ICP formulation process\(^48\), the ICP will integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment in all future interventions, thereby contributing to the objectives of the National Strategy for Gender Equality. Outputs of the ICP will, more specifically aim at:

- strengthening gender for a (e.g. the Gender Action Partnership),
- increasing capacities of partner institutions to mainstream gender
- promoting women’s participation in managerial and leadership positions in order to gradually reduce the gender gap in decision-making structures in the priority sectors,
- promoting the integration of gender and women’s participation in all aspects of the implementation of the ICP (sector programs, scholarships and study and consultancy funds).

- The sectoral analysis of the first priority sector (Water and sanitation) does not include a gender analysis, but ‘consistency with the existing and/or future national gender policy plans is one of the (numerous) criteria for the identification of future interventions. None of the proposed interventions has a gender focus, but four of the eight outcomes mentioned at the end of the section are related to gender (local strategies mainstreaming gender in local water & sanitation and climate change plans and programs; increased capacities of partner institutions on gender equality and women’s empowerment, increased participation of women in sectoral decision-making structures and increased number of gender-sensitive decision makers. In addition the recommendations of the gender mainstreaming workshop with regard to the sector are included as an annex to the ICP.

- The sectoral analysis of the second priority sector (Good governance) provides a similar picture with regard to gender integration: absence of a gender analysis and of proposed interventions with a gender focus, but relatively big importance of gender at the level of the envisaged outcomes (two of the seven outcomes relate to gender: the planning process is re-gendered and increased participation of women in the planning reform process).

- Furthermore, the ICP states that women will be awarded at least 50% of the scholarships, thereby mentioning that an appropriate distribution of scholarships for women and men should be considered.

- The CIP finally states that both parties reconfirm the important role of the Joint Working Team in the follow-up of the ICP and that all follow-up reports will explicitly mention the progress made in the mainstreaming of gender in all ICP components.

As mentioned earlier, the BTC gender desk and two national consultants undertook a mission to engender the ICP. Two reports exist on this mission\(^49\) and they provide a good picture of the process that has been quite comprehensive and inclusive, including a desk review of relevant documents and a consultative gender workshop involving various stakeholders. The consultants started with analysing the draft ICP and identified some gaps from a gender perspective for which improvements were suggested. While the work of the team has been meaningful, in retrospect it became clear that they could have made a more significant contribution in case they could have started their intervention earlier in the process. At the moment they started their work, major decisions (e.g. with regard to sector priorities and priorities within the sectors identified) were already taken and could not be changed. This is reflected in (parts of) the ICP document, in particular

\(^48\) This workshop was part of the above mentioned mission of the BTC gender desk to Vietnam. See also below.

the chapters on the priority sectors, where references to gender are, indeed, included in the text but not truly mainstreamed.

**The integration of gender in the ICP implementation**

The actual integration of gender in the ICP implementation could not be assessed comprehensively, among others because the bilateral interventions included in the evaluation assessment were already started up before the 2011-2015 ICP.

Overall, BTC involved its gender desk in the appraisal of newly formulated interventions. As implementation of bilateral programs is in the hands of national institutions, the level and willingness of gender mainstreaming depends much on national leadership at program level, whereby there is more openness at the national than at the local levels. BTC considers the VWU as a key partner in substantiating its gender integration efforts, among others because positive cooperation experiences in the past. It does however not yet consider other specific measures to strengthen gender mainstreaming.

The staff in charge of development cooperation at Embassy level accords the ‘required’ level of attention to gender so as to stay tuned with overall instructions in this regard. They however do not consider gender as a key issue in the present priority sectors. They find that gender is well integrated in the identification and formulation of new programs, and that this is an effect of the efforts undertaken during the formulation of the ICP. There is however no monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming efforts and possible effects on women’s empowerment, which is actually to be explained out of the generalised lack of monitoring and evaluation of bilateral cooperation at the level of the Embassy.

Belgium has participated in the GAP, but had to discontinue its participation because of staff reduction. Overall, the limited size of the development cooperation section does not allow for a high profile involvement in the GAP and related initiatives. Even more fundamentally, the limited capacity and authority of the Section with regard to following up the implementation of the bilateral cooperation deprives it from the necessary operational experience to contribute meaningfully to joint initiatives such as GAP.

**3.3 Presentation of the sample of projects included in the evaluation**

The table in annex 3 presents an overview of the key characteristics of the seven projects included in this country study. The following interventions have been studied:

- **Access to credit and enterprise Coordinated Support Services (ACCESS).** This intervention is the third phase of a bilateral program in the field of micro-credit implemented by the Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU), which appears as a partner in other interventions also (see below). The program was closed late 2012 and had the specific objective of ensuring 100,000 poor but economically active families access to quality and diversified financial services and support to business management in 17 provinces. The project works closely with women, but the approach followed is rather a WID (Women in Development) than a gender approach. The field mission contacted the direction of the VWU in Hanoi, some provincial representations and branches and VWU groups at the local level. The qualitative analysis of the impact on gender relations and the empowerment of women has covered one of the provinces included in the project.
- **School Education Quality Assurance Program (SEQAP).** It is a program that is part of a broader process of renovation of the educational system that focuses on improving the quality of education, especially for disadvantaged groups. SEQAP specifically aims to improve the performance of primary education, among others
by training teachers, improving school infrastructure and equipment and the introduction of a 'full day school' model. It demonstrates a clear concern for the inclusion of marginalized children and some indicators are gender-specific. The Belgian participation in this program is in the form of sector budget support (with the World Bank as the largest contributor). Belgium also attaches a technical advisor. The field mission contacted the central management unit and technical advisor of SEQAP, officials in charge of SEQAP at the level of some provinces and a few beneficiary schools.

- **Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town** (Phu Yen province). This bilateral project has already been closed in 2011 and was implemented in cooperation with the People's Committees of the city of Tuy Hoa and Phu Yen province. The project aimed to improve the sanitary and hygienic conditions by improved collection and waste treatment and awareness. The available literature suggests that gender was not included in the project. The field trip visited the city of Tuy Hoa and had discussions with the authorities of the city and the province, representatives of the VWU as well as the population and beneficiary structures.

- **Towards a sustainable improvement of the life of small farmers.** This project aims to reduce the vulnerability of small farmers by increasing their control over production factors (land, seeds, water, ...), the adoption of more sustainable agricultural practices and the development of alternative marketing channels. The project is a partnership between Oxfam Solidarity Belgium and three mass organizations (two peasant organizations, a branch of the VWU). Gender has been structurally integrated in the project. The field trip visited two areas covered by the project (in the northern and central part of the country) and had meetings with the partner organizations and final beneficiaries. One of the two areas has been included in the qualitative analysis of the impact on gender relations and the empowerment of women.

- **Bio Development Fund - Mekong II VAS.** This action concerns the participation of Belgium, via BIO in a fund (Mekong Capital) which, among other things, invested in the Vietnam Australian International School (..., a private school based in Ho Chi Minh City with more than 4,500 students 8 campus in the city. The investment aims to support the growth strategy of the school that wants to offer quality education in a safe and stimulating environment with a bilingual curriculum. Gender has not been included in the project. The field mission contacted the Mekong Capital fund managers and had email and phone contacts with the VAS.

- **VVOB Education for Development - Vietnam.** This program has three components including two in the education sector and one in the sector of agricultural extension. The education component aimed at improving the quality of secondary education through the promotion and increased use of ATL (Active Teaching and learning) method; the extension component aimed to increase the quality of extension by increased use of participatory methods. The program was implemented through a close partnership with the relevant departments of the country. Gender has been integrated into the program in several ways. The field mission had contacts with the VVOB office in Hanoi, and with ministries and educational institutions involved at provincial and district levels in two provinces. As the new program no longer contains a section on agricultural extension, this component was not included in the field visits.

- **Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases.** This project, implemented by the University of Gent with two Vietnamese academic institutions, aims to reduce emissions of motorcycles by the development of catalysts, among others via related doctoral research. Because of its highly technical nature, the project received - probably rightly - a G-0 gender marker. The field mission contacted the relevant resource persons in Hanoi to discuss the project, which included a broader discussion on the importance of gender in higher education.
4. Analysis of ‘gender and development’ at programme and intervention level

This chapter presents an analysis of seven of the eight evaluation questions of the analytical framework, which were considered relevant for the analysis at the level of the country case studies. Of these seven evaluation questions, five questions have been analysed comprehensively; the two remaining are analysed partially only as some dimensions of these questions do not deal with the analysis at country level.

The seven questions being discussed below cover several levels: first and foremost the level of the interventions included in the sample, but also the overall country level. These two levels are actually in many cases intimately connected. In addition, the analysis at intervention level can hardly be done without understanding (and analysing at least to some depth) policies and arrangements of the Belgian stakeholders at organizational level 'beyond' the interventions concerned. The degree of integration of gender in interventions is actually much conditioned by the policies and practices of organizations.

The fact that the analysis is conducted at two levels carries consequences for the summary tables integrated in our analysis below, which present scores that summarize the performance level at indicator level. Some of these tables include an assessment of relevant dimensions at global level, while others present scores related to the seven interventions analysed in detail.

Finally, and as already mentioned in Chapter 1, the seven interventions analyse have been visited by the evaluation team. A qualitative impact analysis, implemented by young researchers, completed the work of this team. This analysis was restricted in scope and took place in two provinces: Hoa Binh and Da Nang. In the first province, the impact of one component of the OSB program was assessed, whereas in Da Nang the research focused on the impact of the ACC project. The results of this analysis are included mainly in evaluation question 4 that deals with the impact of the Belgian cooperation on gender equality and women's empowerment.

4.1 Relevance and coherence

**Evaluation question 1: To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?**

Table 8: Existence of initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>++/++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>++/+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>++/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>+/+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>+/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>+/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>-/+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>-/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper described</td>
<td>-/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 For most indicators and judgment criteria, a four-grade scale has been utilised: ++/+/+-+/- (very good, good, poor, bad). If no score could be provided (because of lack of data, ...), the notion n.a. has been used. The synthesis report contains a section describing the approach followed for the provision of the scores. At the level of the interventions analysed, for each indicator an average score has been calculated (column at the right). In some cases, we have also calculated an aggregate score at the level of the judgment criteria. This score is not necessarily the average of the indicator scores related to that criterion, as some indicators might have received a bigger weight than others. Where this is the case, this will be clearly indicated.
The initial conditions for effective use of the strategy paper have been met (existence and use of mechanisms to inform the stakeholders of the existence of the strategy note, its field of application, etc.)

The evaluation has not found any evidence of measures taken to ensure the effective dissemination and use of the strategy paper, which actually has never been translated into English, the working language of the development cooperation between Vietnam and Belgium. The latest ICP (2011-15) refers to an important number of documents that have been used as a reference for drafting the ICP, but the strategy note does not figure in the list of these documents.

At the level of the seven interventions analysed, no reference has been found either (in financing proposals, implementation reports, evaluations, ...) to the strategy paper. Actually, some requirements do exist as far as the integration of gender in financing proposals is concerned (see below, Evaluation Question 3 in particular), but these requirements are not referred to in the strategic note. As far as SEQAP is concerned, it is important to mention that the Memorandum of Understanding of this budget support initiative stresses that SEQAP partners will make their best effort to ensure that their respective bilateral arrangements are compatible with the spirit and provisions of the MoU.

The findings above are in line with those that come across during the preceding phases of the evaluation, where it has been found that no or little efforts have been undertaken to ensure the dissemination and effective use of the strategy paper.

Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

Table 10: Extent of coherence between Belgian GAD policy and development policy of the country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criterion/indicator</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of coherence between the Belgian Gender and Development Policy and the development policy of the country</td>
<td>++</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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51 In the remaining part of this report, the seven interventions analysed will be referred to as follows: UCP: Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases (own initiative, university cooperation); VVOB: VVOB Education for Development – Vietnam; OSB: Towards a sustainable improvement of the life of small farmers (implemented via Oxfam Solidarity Belgium); SEQAP: School Education Quality Assurance Program (budget support program); TH: Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town (bilateral project); ACC: Access to credit and enterprise Coordinated Support Services (ACCESS, bilateral project); VAS: Bio Development Fund - Mekong II VAS.
Table 11: Integration of the needs and interests of women in the financing proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UCP</th>
<th>VVOB</th>
<th>OSB</th>
<th>SEQAP</th>
<th>ACC</th>
<th>TH</th>
<th>VAS</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>Extent to which the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent to which the</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>financing proposal has</td>
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<td>taken into account the</td>
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<td>women when selecting</td>
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<td>the partner organisation(s)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extent of coherence between the Belgian Gender and Development Policy and the development policy of the country**

The Belgian Gender and Development Policy and Vietnam’s development policy (including its gender policy) are coherent. There is a high level of similarity between the key documents of both countries, the Belgian Gender Policy paper and the 2006 Vietnam Gender Equality Law. The latest ICP refers clearly to key national documents pertaining to gender (law and national strategy) and has taken these documents into account in the process of defining the ICP, among others via the support of the BTC gender desk and two well qualified Vietnamese gender experts.

**Extent to which the financing proposals integrate the needs and interests of women and the obstacles they encounter**

The UCP project does not pay any attention to the specific needs and interests of women, but it is actually hard to find any specific need or interest in the specific area of the project (reduction of exhaust gases of motorbikes); as such, this indicator is not relevant for the project.

In the case of VVOB and OSB gender is well addressed in the financing proposals. The VVOB proposal addresses gender in both program sectors (education and agricultural extension). While the analysis is certainly not comprehensive, it addresses issues that are highly important for women. For instance, the analysis points to concerns related to gender imbalances in educational attainment and enrolment, in particular among ethnic minority groups. As far as the agricultural component is concerned, it is stated, among others, that there is not enough recognition for the important role women play in agriculture and for the fact that as a rule women are underrepresented in training events; furthermore, reference is made to the feminisation of agriculture (as a result of male migration) and its consequences.

The OSB programme equally integrates gender in a concise but comprehensive way, thereby addressing women needs, interests and obstacles at all relevant levels, including the situation with regard to gender awareness at the level of partner organisations. The field visit has indicated that local partners broadly share the analyses presented in the financing proposals be it that they do not use the same analytical framework as their Belgian partner.

The SEQAP MoU does not show any level of gender sensitivity, exception made for one of its attachments that contain a few sex-disaggregated indicators with regard to students’ graduation and enrolment rates.

The ACC proposal (related to micro-credit provision) attaches much importance to analyse the situation, needs and interests of the poor households but does so without explicitly distinguishing specific needs and interests of women and men. On the other side, the focus on women is implicitly present, as the project is implemented via VWU, the Vietnam Women’s Union, a mass organisation, which focuses on poor women in first
instance and supports them to generate employment and income. The strong focus on demand-led approaches with regard to credit provision and support services allows to concluding that needs and interests of women are systematically taken into account, but that this is done rather via a ‘Women in Development’ than a ‘Gender and Development’ approach, which is actually an overall characteristic of how VWU perceives its role in the promotion of women’s welfare.

Women specific needs, interests and obstacles have not been integrated in the TH financial proposal notwithstanding the fact that the local VWU chapter has played a (limited) role in the project preparation. According to the midterm evaluation of the project, the preparation process has been male dominated so that there was little space for women involvement in the process.

The VAS project has not integrated the specific needs, interest and constraints of women (in this case including girls) in the proposal documents. While there might be limited or no reason for concern as far as the involvement of girls in the project is concerned – education indicators suggest it is only at the level of ethnic minorities that gender is an issue in terms of access to education and student performance - the issue should at least have been addressed. The same applies is as far as the situation of (male and female) school staff is concerned.

**Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)**

This indicator is not applicable to the UCP for the reasons explained above. As far as the VVOB programme is concerned, the choice for government agencies as partner has been in line with VVOB’s overall policies that endeavour to build the capacity of government institutions. As such, the specific interest and needs of women are not taken into account in the selection of the partner organisations. In the case of OSB, both program partnerships build on a long-standing relation of cooperation and, hence, are not directly inspired by gender considerations. However, the fact that both local partners are showing a clear interest and commitment in gender constituted an important consideration for OSB to continue the cooperation. Attention for gender is also, for six years now, a formal criterion of partner selection. Partners should at least show a readiness to work on gender in case gender is not (or only poorly) addressed.

As a budget support program, SEQAP is meant to cooperate with the MOET and its branches at the decentralised level. This indicator is, hence, not applicable to SEQAP. In the case of VWU, the cooperation with the Union has a very long history and a particular origin. As such, this indicator could not be addressed either in the context of this evaluation. The same applies for the TH project, as solid waste management and urban sanitation are competences that ‘automatically’ fall under the responsibility of city and/or provincial authorities.

In the case of the BIO project, the selection of the partner organisation has been guided by other criteria. In this regard it should be noted that the VAS project is part of a broader funding to Mekong Capital Fund by BIO. The latter’s funding decision of Mekong Capital has not included gender considerations either.
4.2 Effectiveness

Evaluation question 3: To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men")?

JC 1: Belgian cooperation has supported gender integration at policy level in its cooperation with the partner countries

Table 12: Integration of gender at policy level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criterion/indicator</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which a gender analysis was made (and written out in a specific gender country note) and shared with the partner country</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent and manner in which the integration of gender is placed on the agenda of the political dialogue and the programming with the partner countries and followed up afterwards</td>
<td>+-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which a diagnosis of the needs and opportunities concerning equality between men and women has played a role in the process of selection of the intervention sectors by Belgian cooperation</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which the Indicative Cooperation Program (ICP) integrates gender in its priority cooperation sectors and include important programs with gender equality as their major objective</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent and manner in which Belgian cooperation has supported the partner countries in complying with and implementing the multilateral conventions on GAD and the international recommendations on GAD</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent and manner in which Belgian cooperation has supported the partner countries in creating the required conditions to reduce and prevent violence against women</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which Belgian cooperation has developed and applied a method for following up and evaluating gender issues</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent and manner in which Belgian cooperation in the partner countries has coordinated its gender integration efforts with other actors</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>+-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extent to which a gender analysis was made (and written out in a specific gender country note) and shared with the partner country

No specific gender analysis has been made and no specific document with regard to gender exists in as far as the bilateral cooperation with the country is concerned.

Extent and manner in which the integration of gender is placed on the agenda of the political dialogue and the programming with the partner countries and followed up afterwards
Belgian has not undertaken efforts to place gender on the agenda of the political dialogue and the programming with Vietnam, but has ensured that the initial results of the ICP drafting process were ‘engendered’ via the intervention of a specialised team. There efforts have been effective in the sense that gender appears more prominently in the ICP document, but have come too late to really integrate gender in the planning process, as at the moment of their intervention key decisions (with regard to sectors, sub-sectors, …) were already taken.

Extent to which a diagnosis of the needs and opportunities concerning equality between men and women has played a role in the process of selection of the intervention sectors by Belgian cooperation

A diagnosis of the needs and opportunities concerning gender equality has not been conducted. The selection of the priority intervention sectors has been made on the basis of other criteria, which refer mainly to the need for alignment with the country’s priorities as outlined in the country’s Socio-Economic Development Plan, thereby adopting a pragmatic attitude (limited number of sectors; building further of results from the past).

Extent to which the Indicative Cooperation Program (ICP) integrates gender in its priority cooperation sectors and include important programs with gender equality as their major objective

The sectoral analysis of the first priority sector (Water and sanitation) does not include a gender analysis, but ‘consistency with the existing and/or future national gender policy plans’ is one of the (numerous) criteria for the identification of future interventions. None of the proposed interventions has a gender focus, but four of the eight outcomes mentioned at the end of the section are related to gender. In addition the recommendations of the gender mainstreaming workshop with regard to the sector are included as an annex to the ICP.

The sectoral analysis of the second priority sector (Good governance) provides a similar picture with regard to gender integration: absence of a gender analysis and of proposed interventions with a gender focus, but relatively big importance of gender at the level of the envisaged outcomes (two of the seven outcomes relate to gender).

Extent and manner in which Belgian cooperation has supported the partner countries in complying with and implementing the multilateral conventions on GAD and the international recommendations on GAD

Belgian cooperation has not been active in this area, but this hasn't been necessary either as Vietnam complies, at least formally, with the key international conventions and recommendations on GAD.

Extent and manner in which Belgian cooperation has supported the partner countries in creating the required conditions to reduce and prevent violence against women

Belgian cooperation has not been active in this area.

Extent to which Belgian cooperation has developed and applied a method for following up and evaluating gender issues

No method for following up and evaluating gender issues has been developed, which can be deplored in view of the gender-related outcomes that have been formulated in the ICP for the two priority sectors.

Extent and manner in which Belgian cooperation in the partner countries has coordinated its gender integration efforts with other actors
Belgian bilateral efforts to promote gender integration have been limited, which to some extent can be understood considering the few staff of the cooperation office at the Embassy. However, in as far as Belgium has been engaged in promoting gender, it has done so taking into account the existing initiatives from other international actors and the country’s government (e.g. via the Gender Action Partnership).

**JC 2: Belgian bilateral cooperation has integrated gender in the projects and programmes and in sectoral budget support**

Table 13: Integration of gender in the program cycle of bilateral and budget support programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SEQAP</th>
<th>ACC</th>
<th>TH</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent and manner in which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of projects, programmes and sectoral budget support</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent and manner in which has been integrated in the assessment of the technical and financial files</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent and manner in which gender is integrated in the implementation of projects and programmes</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which gender is integrated in project and programme monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extensive and manner in which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of projects, programmes and sectoral budget support

The identification/formulation documents of SEQAP have not integrated gender, whereas these documents include well elaborated risk assessments addressing, among others, potential environmental and social risks. In this framework, a social assessment was conducted to verify key access issues (such as minority enrolment and completion rates, language of instruction, distance and cost, etc.) for poor, disadvantaged and ethnic minority children to understand their constraints to participating in the Full Day Schooling (FDS) program and to support preparation of program design in general. Gender was apparently not considered a key access issue ... more probably also because the Vietnam policy for basic education explicitly has opted not to deal differently with boys and girls. Presumably another major justification for the lack of attention for gender lies in the fact that differences between (rich and poor) regions in terms of quality of education and learning outcomes have constituted the major issue of concern, whereas data pertaining to key educational indicators revealed that there exist, within each region, only minor differences between girls and boys. The fact that ‘gender’ issues might very well deal with aspects beyond those covered by key education indicators seems to have been ignored. As a consequence, (possible) differences between boys and girls are hardly addressed in the appraisal documents, exception made for a few sex-disaggregated indicators on key educational indicators that indeed confirm the minimal differences between boys and girls. Finally, there is a reference to the fact that potential opportunity costs of FDS include field labour and other chores essential in the household (e.g. taking care of younger siblings). This is however not developed further.

No explicit gender analysis has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the ACC project. The focus is rather on the (rural) poor households and their problems.

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52 For this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (little or no action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable). ; in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
that are to some extent analysed. However, this project is the third phase of a program of cooperation and implemented by a highly experienced women’s organization. As such it can be safely stated that women issues (but not that much gender issues in the strict sense) are strongly embedded in the approach while they have not explicitly dealt with in the identification and formulation documents.

In the case of the TH project, gender has been entirely absent in the identification and formulation.

**Extent and manner in which has been integrated in the assessment of the technical and financial files**

As far as SEQAP is concerned, no documentation could be found with regard to the assessment of the funding proposal by Belgian institutions and this is also the case for the ACC and TH projects.

**Extent and manner in which gender is integrated in the implementation of projects and programmes**

In the case of SEQAP, the implementation reports available covering the period 2011 – August 2013 do not provide any indication related to gender, which seems not to have constituted a specific concern for the reasons outlined above (contrary to the issue of ethnic minority groups). This being said, some indicators (e.g. related to school attendance and performance at grade 5) are sex-disaggregated.

As indicated above, the ACC project has adopted a women-in-development approach without dealing with gender integration in a transversal way. As such, increased gender equity (or working with women and men) has never been an explicit aim of the project, which obviously does not imply that no improvements in gender relations have been achieved (see below). The project overall objective and specific objective focus on poverty and poor households, but two of the three results deal explicitly with women and have corresponding indicators formulated (the third and fourth result are more of an institutional nature). The results dealing specifically with women aim to ensure access to financial services and business development services for poor women. In addition, gender issues have at least indirectly been addressed during implementation via various actions that strengthen capacities of women, both in social and economic terms.

Gender has not been included in the implementation of the TH project, but the achievement of the project’s objective might very well have contributed to solving a practical need of women in terms of providing a solution for solid waste disposal. The project had however the intention to include women (though this is not substantiated in the implementation reports). The MTR further stated that the project set out with the intention of ensuring that it addressed gender issues by involving women throughout the processes where relevant. In many cases the intention to reach out to women was not achieved because of the gender imbalance within the normal structures within Vietnam, which are dominated by men. The MTR further stated that in a few cases it was recognised that the project could have focused its activities more on the women in the community. Similar findings are presented in the final evaluation that also mentions support to the creation of a scavengers’ association, which, combined with a health and safety training for the members, has considerably enhanced the status of the women involved. The discussion of the evaluation team with the association of scavengers confirmed largely the findings of the evaluation. These scavengers however to not constitute a ‘group’ in the full meaning of the word, but rather a loose entity that will meet when the situation demands to do so. Finally, the evaluation also states that while women occupy key roles in relation to health, hygiene, sanitation and waste issues at household level, men played key roles in the project because of the gender imbalance in communal management structures. The evaluation visit confirmed that the city WU has been involved at certain moments in the implementation process (as a member of the
PSC), but always in their capacity to convey project messages to their members, not as a partner in their own right.

**Extent to which gender is integrated in project and programme monitoring and evaluation**

The regular review missions conducted as part of the SEQAP program management do not address gender, which is understandable as it has not been an issue of concern in the key program documents; no information related to gender is included in the progress reports.

No comprehensive evaluation has been conducted so far, but some components of SEQAP have been evaluated, but these evaluations could not be studied. A SEQAP case study to review the comparative performance of schools (January 2014) does not address gender issues and the DFID Project Completion Review contains some disaggregated data with regard to boys and girls (in particular in the context of assessing the participation of ethnic minorities), but does not deal with gender issues.

As gender was not addressed as a transversal issue in the ACC project, changes in gender-related issues (practical needs and strategic issues) were not included in reporting and follow-up of the action. The focus has been on the outreach at household level and access of women to credit and business support services, not on the actual effects of these achievements.

Gender has been dealt with as a crosscutting issue in the final evaluation of the project (besides other transversal themes). The evaluation TOR contained an important number of questions related to the DAC criteria. Four questions related to gender equality were included under the transversal themes; three of these questions actually addressed (potential) project performance that has never been aimed at by the project (at least not formally). These questions can nevertheless be considered relevant and interesting provided their answer is dealt with in the right way. The main corps of the evaluation report deals with the project analysis in a ‘regular’ manner (using the project proposal and logframe as a reference). It briefly addresses gender as a crosscutting issue, but the analysis actually only deals with issues related to VWU and its women members, thereby being consistent with VWU’s WID approach, which does not address gender issues as such.

Gender has not been included in the reporting and follow-up of the TH project. Taking into account that reporting on project implementation has been gender blind (which let suppose that gender was not truly addressed in the project), both the MTR and the final evaluation of the project dealt relatively well with gender issues and pointing the finger on highly relevant issues such as the institutional constraints of involving women in an institutional setting which is dominated by men.

**JC 3: Belgian cooperation has supported the integration of gender in projects of international organisations and in indirect cooperation**

| Extent and manner in which GAD is integrated in the (policy) dialogue with international organisations and indirect actors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| UCP | VVOB | OSB | VAS | Average |
| n.a. | L | L | L | L |

**Table 14: Integration of gender in the program cycle of projects of international organisations and indirect actors**

53 Besides the WB and Belgium, DFID was the third partner funding SEQAP.

54 As was the case at the level of the analysis of bilateral cooperation and budget support, for this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (little or no action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
Extent and manner in which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of projects and programs of international organisations and indirect actors

| n.a. | E | D | L | E |

Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the financing proposal

| n.a. | L | L | L | L |

Extent and manner in which gender is integrated in the implementation of projects and programmes

| n.a. | E | D | L | E |

Extent to which gender is integrated in project and programme monitoring and evaluation

| n.a. | A | A | L | E |

Total score

| n.a. | E | A | L | E |

Extent and manner in which GAD is integrated in the (policy) dialogue with international organisations and indirect actors

The policy dialogue with VVOB takes place at the global level (not specifically for the Vietnam programme); gender has not been part of that dialogue so far. As far as OSB is concerned, the situation is similar, whereas VAS is part of the funding provided by BIO to Mekong Capital without gender being an issue in the partnership.

Extent and manner in which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of projects and programs of international organisations and indirect actors

The UCP proposal has to be drafted using a format, which contains a tiny section where gender issues can be addressed. This has however not been done, presumably because gender was not considered a relevant issue.

Gender has to some degree been integrated in the identification and formulation of the VVOB program. The multi-year 2011-2013 program proposal contains a sector analysis for education and agricultural extension and in both cases there is a section related to crosscutting themes in education and agricultural extension containing relevant information. Outside these sections there are however only limited references to gender. In other words, the programme considers gender essentially from a crosscutting issue point of view. The March 2013 gender review states that...up to date, VVOB Viet Nam has no formal gender analysis/assessment to identify prioritized gender issues at the organizational level and in program intervention components. In current three components of education program, there is no gender analysis/assessment taken into project proposal. This assessment, undertaken as part of VVOB’s global effort to deal with gender in a more consistent way, actually suggests that dealing with gender as a crosscutting issue does not suffice to truly integrate gender.

Gender has been well integrated in the formulation of OSB’s program, which builds on OSB’s and their partners’ experiences (including with regard to gender) in the previous

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55 Important to note in this regard is that since august 2012 VVOB disposes of a gender policy (Mainstreaming Gender Equality), which clearly recommends good practices with regard to gender mainstreaming to be applied both at the level of the organisation and its programs in the South, including the integration of gender in the logical framework. The program analysed here has been prepared before the actual formulation and application of that gender policy. The implementation documents this evaluation relies on also relate mainly to the period before the policy document has been issued. Discussions with VVOB staff revealed that many things have changed (or are changing) in the meanwhile, both at organisational and program management level. We therefor have tried during the field visit to assess the impact of the policy on actual practices with regard to gender integration in the program cycle. Moreover, in its new 2014-2016 program, the introductory part mentions gender equity as a central starting point of the program, whereas the programme maintains three transversal themes: children’s rights, gender and good governance. The logical framework for this program contains gender specific indicators for roughly two thirds of its results.
years and on the fact that ‘advancing gender justice’ is one of OSB’s change goals and is as such fully integrated in Oxfam’s Vietnam program. The gender analysis, in terms of process and results, is shared with the local partners. An assessment of the partner’s gender sensitiveness is included in the identification and formulation process and provides the basis for capacity building in this area at partner level.

The VAS/Mekong Capital proposal has been drafted along a format suggested by BIO, which does not include any reference to gender.

**Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the financing proposal**

For obvious reasons, the assessment of the UCP proposal does not contain a section on gender.

Gender has been raised as a point of attention during the VVOB funding proposal assessment but only to a minor degree. The focus in these assessments is rather on other issues that are, rightly or wrongly, considered as more crucial.

In the case of OSB, gender has not really been dealt with in the assessment of the funding proposal.

BIO uses the GPR/EPOL tool (Corporate Policy Project Rating) which has been developed by the German Development Bank DEG and is also used by other Development Finance Institutions, to ex-ante screen its proposals. This tool includes attention for Equality between Men and Women. In addition, the BIO screening also assesses the (potential) contribution to the MDGs, including MDG3 (promotion of gender equality and women empowerment). The yearly issued BIO Development Reviews report on the assessment of the proposals suggests a rather shallow application of the GPR tool and assessment of the contribution to the MDGs.

**Extent and manner in which gender is integrated in the implementation of projects and programmes**

For obvious reasons, gender has not been integrated in the implementation of the UCP, nor does its logical framework contain gender specific activities, results and indicators.

In the VVOB program, the inclusion of gender in the implementation phase goes beyond the description in the program proposal. More in particular, under the education component, it is mentioned that efforts have been undertaken together with the Women’s Union to include gender in introducing the ATL (Active Teaching and learning) approach and strengthening the links between schools and communities at the level of every DOET (Department of Education and Training), and in efforts to guide the children’s career (a.o. by contributing to a handbook on gender equality in career guidance). More importantly, gender seems to be addressed truly in a cross-cutting way by including gender checks in all institutional capacity development efforts. The 2013 peer evaluation concluded that there is sufficient attention and concern for gender in the programme thanks to, among others, the partnership with VWU, but at the same time recommends to having specific targets and activities concerning gender. The Evaluation Team considers this assessment however as far too optimistic considering the rather conservative position of the VWU, a key partner, in terms of gender. While some changes are taking place (in particular at leadership level), WU’s policy rather confirms women in their (subordinate) position as housewives, with the main responsibility to ensure a happy family. In addition, discussions with key partners at provincial level have revealed that the inclusion of differentiated analyses of boys and girls and gender equality principles (via avoiding gender stereotypes in manuals for instance) are important measures but not sufficient to truly integrate gender.

A similar approach is applied in the agricultural extension component where gender issues are integrated in a cross-cutting way in training sessions of extension workers,
female members of farmer clubs encouraged to participate in trainings, etc. The VWU is also invited to join in strategic meetings and training on participatory methodologies. The effects of these efforts are however not clear and have not been addressed in the two evaluations of the program. In this regard, an opportunity has been missed in not defining sex-disaggregated indicators at the level of logical framework.

The third component, related to career guidance, also addresses gender; it is stated that an optimal rate of participation of male and female participants is achieved in workshops (in Nghe An province, the participation of women and men teachers was around 40-60%) and they both are getting equal voices in the process. The plan for the revision of teaching and learning materials for career orientation avoids gender stereotypes. Avoiding social perception on gender stereotypes is also mentioned in many places in the developed MOET and VVOB career guidelines.

Across the three programme components, at the gender workshop of April 2013 that constituted a follow up of the March 2013 Gender Review, a checklist on gender mainstreaming was developed covering four key areas of the VVOB programmes: planning, core group development (in relation to the partner organisations), material development and monitoring and evaluation. It was planned to use this checklist in the interaction with the core group of the partners and further capacity building efforts and the checklist has consequently been used effectively. The discussion with the DOET revealed however that gender issues are not yet taken into account during the training course on Career guidelines for schools managers and teachers.

The OSB program implementation reports (both with regard to the results achieved at partner and OSB level) refer regularly (but presumably not comprehensively) to the inclusion of gender in implementation, in a way that is consistent with OSB’s commitment to advance gender justice. The underlying technical files drafted for each of the three partner organisations contain clear references to gender, both at the level of the description of the results, some indicators and activities. The files do however not contain indicators related to women empowerment and equality at the outcome level.

The field visits have learned that the reports provide a correct image of the reality at field level. In the case of both the Hoa Binh farmers union (HBFU) and Thach Ha Women’s Union (THWU) consistent efforts have been undertaken to integrate gender in implementation, via training efforts at various levels (targeting both women and men), the set-up of a core group of gender trainers and ‘communicators’ (HBFU) who are tasked to promote gender within the commune chapters of the farmers union and the set-up of gender equality clubs in THWU, which however do not always address woman-man issues via a gender approach. Deliberate efforts have also been undertaken to increase and strengthen female leadership and address specific issues of concern of women, such as domestic violence. Furthermore, gender is often included as a discussion topic in regular meetings at all (provincial, district, commune) levels, whereby the program’s efforts are situated in the broader framework of the Gender Equality Law, which requires specific actions to be undertaken by the State and the mass organisations at the local level. Notwithstanding all these efforts, the practical integration of gender as a crosscutting issue remains a challenge at implementation level.

At the level of the VAS project, there are no indications on the inclusion of gender in the implementation of the action. VAS does not follow a gender policy (though roughly 65% of its staff are female) but foresees special provisions for women staff which provide advantages on top of the Vietnamese labour law.

*Extent to which gender is integrated in project and programme monitoring and evaluation*

For obvious reasons, gender has not been included in the UCP program’s reporting and monitoring. The project hasn’t been evaluated.

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56 Renew of Educating on Career guidance training in higher up education, Training material, MOET and VVOB, December 2013.

57 Open ended discussion with Nghe An DOET, March 2014
The reporting format of VVOB includes a separate section on transversal themes that is coming back at the level of each result (output). Gender is also raised as an issue in the yearly discussions with DGD on program implementation. The M&E framework lacks however solid indicators related to gender (no sex disaggregated data; no specific indicators to measure progress related to gender mainstreaming and/or empowerment).

The March 2013 gender review stated that, considering that VVOB Vietnam has no formal gender analysis/assessment to identify prioritized gender issues at the organizational level and in program intervention components, its gender mainstreaming practice is not guided by specific information on the (potentially) differentiated effects of its activities on men and women (c.q. boys and girls).

Over the last years, various components of the Vietnam VVOB programme have been evaluated. The January 2011 evaluation of the agricultural extension component (PAEX) did not address gender or gender issues (while some attention to gender is given in the Cambodia component where gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension was a programme output). The final evaluation of the same programme (October 2012) does not address gender issues either. The peer evaluation of the education programme of early 2013 did on the contrary address the integration of gender in the programme. Gender was mainly (but not exclusively) addressed from a crosscutting perspective, whereby it was analysed to which extent gender was successfully integrated in technical assistance, monitoring and learning.

The internal evaluation of the education programme (2011-2013) conducted in April-May 2013 and using a peer evaluation methodology among the five provinces covered used a gender blind research whereas some evaluation aims related to impact in particular, could have called for sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis. This conclusion is rather disturbing as virtually at the same moment (March - April 2013), VVOB has conducted a gender review and follow up workshop. Finally, and probably most importantly, in March 2013 VVOB has commissioned an external review of its efforts to integrate gender both at program and organizational level. The review has been limited to the VVOB environment; no data collection on partner and beneficiaries level has been included. The results of the review, conducted in close cooperation with VVOB’s gender focal point, were at the same time highly critical and useful for VVOB, and were subsequently shared and discussed in workshop in April 2013.

The OSB reports and monitoring instruments include gender, but do not always document entirely what is done at field level. An interesting document (Results indicators for OSB’s programme, which is a document drafted for all OSB’s programs) operationalizes the set of indicators used and operationalizes these quite well, also in relation to gender. In line with OSB’s commitment to advance gender justice as one of its major goals, its M&E systems endeavours to follow up changes in this area. At the local level, partners have mostly good data on the level of participation of men and women in the activities, but mostly do not engage in deeper analysis to assess the (potentially different) impact of their actions on men and women.

Gender is fairly well integrated in the OSB Final Program Evaluation. More could have been done certainly, but gender comes back at various levels in the report, though predominantly under the section ‘cross cutting issues’ and with relatively more attention to the labour component where the integration of gender seems to be more challenging and less successful.

Gender has not been included in the (rather limited) reporting and follow-up of the VAS action. We have found no traces of the use of the GPR/EPOL tool for monitoring purposes; the recently conducted BIO evaluation (phase I) also states that the tool is virtually exclusively used as an ex-ante instrument.

BIO has recently been evaluated in a comprehensive way. The TOR of the evaluation mention under 2.1.3 (Corporate purpose) the criteria for BIO interventions (including the promotion of equality between men and women); however none of the evaluation questions under chapter 4 deals with gender. The phase I evaluation report does not

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58 This evaluation included also the evaluation of a similar component in neighbouring Cambodia.
address gender issues and gender is only shortly referred to in the context of the discussion on the GPR tool used for screening (see above).

**EQ 4:** To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

**JC 4.1:** Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing expertise at macro, meso and micro levels

| The extent to which the expertise of local organisations responsible for gender has been enhanced (with Belgian support) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| UCP              | VVOB   | OSB   | SEQAP | ACC   | TH    | VAS   | Average |
| n.a.             | ++     | --    | --    | --    | --    | --    | --/+-   |
| Extent to which Belgian support has contributed to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations |
| n.a.             | ++     | --    | --    | --    | --    | --    | --/+-   |
| Extent to which Belgian support has contributed to the development of adequate procedures for gender integration (both at organisational and program level) at the level of local partner organisations |
| n.a.             | ++     | --    | --    | --    | --    | --    | --/+-   |
| Total score      | ++     | --    | --    | --    | --    | --    | --/+-   |

*The extent to which the expertise of local organisations responsible for gender has been enhanced (with Belgian support)*

This indicator is not relevant for the UCP project, for obvious reasons.

Since the issuance of its gender policy (August 2012), VVOB has stepped up its efforts to develop gender expertise, also at the level of its programs and partner organisations in the South. A gender focal point has been appointed in each country and gender is part of VVOB’s capacity building program. Gender has also become an important element in the partner dialogue. Further, there has been some indirect support via (for instance) the attention for gender mainstreaming in training programs, new curricula, the ATL method, career guidelines training materials etc., which should at least have indirectly contributed to developing the gender expertise at partner level. VVOB intends to further develop its gender related capacities, in particular in relation to its program domains for the future (preschool and basic education, technical and vocational education, with focus on capacity building of teachers and school managers). The March 2013 review however states that … although some key issues had been identified and some recommendations were provided (in the 2010 workshop on gender), there is still lack of follow-up action … The review further continues stating that … Therefore, appropriate capacity-building activities need to be explicitly included in the organizational policy and project documents/frameworks. It should also be backed up with staff and budget, and it can be monitored and reviewed through appropriate indicators of change. The findings of the above-mentioned review have broadly been confirmed during the field visits. Partners clearly state that VVOB introduced them to gender and that gender issues were taken up
in various program aspects, but also that all-in-all attention for gender capacity building has remained limited in program implementation and too limited to ensure sustainable effects.

OSB has a strong focus on organisational strengthening at partner level (e.g. under result 1: improvement of institutional quality) and in the 2012 report it is stated that partners have taken on board the gender dimension at OD level, but that there is a lack of integrating gender as a cross-cutting issue at implementation level. The evaluation team broadly confirms this statement. The evaluation further found that gender has been integrated at varying levels among the partners. The field visits (HBFU and THWU) have confirmed that considerable efforts are undertaken at partner level to develop gender expertise, among others by the set-up of a ‘specialised’ core group of gender trainers who are supposed to train on their turn local cadres (in HBFU). Leadership at the provincial and local level show to dispose of a good basic understanding of gender. In the case of THWU, the OSB support has made of the Union a predominant partner in local development dynamics that takes the lead in many initiatives in various fields.

In SEQAP, Belgian support to the local partner organisation has been of a double nature: budget support to a major educational program and support via an expert technical assistance. Whereas SEQAP contains important capacity building efforts, no specific support has been provided to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations.

The TH project has provided no support in this area.

The ACC project has invested substantially in the building of the capacities of VWU staff at various levels, but the expertise developed was related to micro-finance, not to gender. Notwithstanding the technical nature of the training, ample evidence exists that the skills acquired have helped the women cadres concerned in making promotion within the VWU.

The VAS project has not provided support in this area either.

**Extent to which Belgian support has contributed to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations**

This indicator is not relevant for the UCP project, for obvious reasons.

VVOB has drafted in 2013 a gender checklist, which includes a set of guidelines for integration of gender at program level, including in the development of instruments (called material development). In addition, VVOB has ensured that several key materials developed are at the least free of gender biases and stereotypes. In addition, avoiding social perception on gender stereotypes, knowledge on gender and gender equality, gender sensitiveness aspects ... are mentioned in many places in the developed MOET and VVOB career guidelines training material.

In the OSB program, gender is integrated in a series of instruments which have been developed and mainstreamed at the level of the (larger) Oxfam family, such as for instance assessment grids for partner institutional/organizational development that include gender. At the local level (HBFU), the core group seems also to dispose of some rather generic instruments, which are fine but are not truly tailor-made to local reality and the activity domain of farmer organisation. HBFU has developed a gender handbook to be used in the program and a CD to ensure communication on gender. At the level of THWU, consistent efforts in gender capacity building have mainly allowed to increasing local understanding and awareness with regard to key gender issues (on labour and employment, marriage, domestic violence, predominant gender biases), so that these frameworks are more consistently used in local action. A key recommendation of the...
end-of-program evaluation (to avail a user-friendly gender mainstreaming toolkit) seems however to suggest that much still needs to be done in this regard.

In SEQAP, no specific support has been provided for the development of gender instruments at the level of national and local partner organisations. Even so, the TH project has provided no support in this area.

The ACC project has invested substantially in the building of tools and instruments at various levels, but these instruments were related to micro-finance, not to gender.

The VAS project has not provided support in this area either.

Extent to which Belgian support has contributed to the development of adequate procedures for gender integration (both at organisational and program level) at the level of local partner organisations

This indicator is not relevant for the UCP project, for obvious reasons.

As mentioned above, VVOB drafted a gender checklist, which includes a set of guidelines for integration of gender at program level, both in the programme cycle and at the level of partner organizations. Efforts have been undertaken to integrate gender at the level of partner organisations, but the April 2013 review and the visits by the team have found that these are still insufficient in the sense that no institutional procedures to include gender are in place yet.

Apparently gender has been well integrated in the functioning of the OSB partner organisations, but more needs to be done in terms of mainstreaming gender at program level, where the gender approach still lacks specificity and user-friendliness.

In SEQAP, no specific support has been provided for the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of national and local partner organisations. Even so, the TH project has provided no support in this area. Notwithstanding its substantial efforts related to institutional strengthening, the ACC project has not dealt with gender integration.

The VAS project has not provided support in this area either.

**JC 4.2: The extent to which the partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of making progress towards gender equality and empowerment of women**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criterion/indicator</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress achieved by partner countries in view of respecting and implementing multilateral agreements and international recommendations related to GAD (as a consequence of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which partner countries have created (or improved) the necessary conditions to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a consequence of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress achieved by partner countries in the area of integration of gender in their policies, national and sectoral development strategies and institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments in ministries) and legislation (as a consequence of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress achieved by partner countries in the setup and management of consultation frameworks with regard to gender integration and gender equality (as a consequence of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
None of the projects analysed has been active at the national level (with the VVOB program as an exception to some degree) and the activities from the Belgian Delegation in this area have also been very limited (see chapter 3.2 above), whereby it should be taken into account that Belgium is a relatively unimportant donor for the country.

Progress achieved by partner countries in view of respecting and implementing multilateral agreements and international recommendations related to GAD (as a consequence of Belgian support)

None of the projects analysed has been involved in efforts of this nature at the national level.

Extent to which partner countries have created (or improved) the necessary conditions to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a consequence of Belgian support)

None of the projects analysed has been involved in efforts of this nature at the national level, but some might have provided significant contributions at the local level (see JC 4.4 below).

Progress achieved by partner countries in the area of integration of gender in their policies, national and sectoral development strategies and institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments in ministries) and legislation (as a consequence of Belgian support)

None of the projects analysed has been involved in efforts of this nature at the national level. However, while VVOB has no clearly stated ambitions at this level, it is clear that it hopes that its approach, often developed on a pilot basis (and including a concern for gender mainstreaming), will be taken over at the higher level. As far as the education programme is concerned, the peer evaluation of 2013 states the following in this regard, suggesting that VVOB hasn’t so far been that successful in scaling-up its approach: Within VVOB we often go for pilot programmes, e.g. because of budget restraints or because the partner explicitly wishes to try out first on a smaller (regional) scale. As a result we, VVOB, formulate our programme on the pilot scale level. This often leads to nice results and impact at pilot level. However, when the step comes to scale-out/scale-up the project results we often see it isn’t that easy. Other agencies – often at national levels – go about these issues. We therefore recommend VVOB to either avoid piloting or when this is not possible (e.g. because of budget restraints or because the partner explicitly wishes to try out first on a smaller (regional) scale) we recommend to formulate – before the start of the programme – the different phases from piloting, to up-scaling, to nationwide implementation with VVOB conditionalities, e.g gender mainstreaming results.

The 2012 implementation report states that at the national level, the VWU recognized the value of the ‘Social participation’ model and organized Training for Trainers workshops to disseminate the approach. A manual was also developed and distributed nationwide. A closer look at the Social Participation model reveals however that the approach followed mainly if not exclusively confirms traditional roles and patterns related to the role of husband and wife in the family. On the other side, the material guidelines for the Social Participation model contain subjects which might be (relatively) new to be addressed in such a widespread publication, such as a section on domestic violence and gender equality in the family and schools, another section deals on sexual education in the family, on friendship and love among adolescents. Field visits have confirmed that this manual is effectively used at the local level.

Progress achieved by partner countries in the setup and management of consultation frameworks with regard to gender integration and gender equality (as a consequence of Belgian support)

None of the projects analysed has been involved in efforts of this nature at the national level.

JC 4.3: The process of gender integration (in the phases of the intervention cycles) has ensured equity in terms of access of women and girls to the benefits of the programs

| Extent to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs of women and the obstacles they encounter so as to achieve gender equality and improved autonomy |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| UCP             | VVOB            | OSB            | SEQAP           | ACC             | TH             | VAS             | Average         |
| -+              | +              | -+            | +               | +               | +              | +               | +               |
| Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to the project/program services and products |
| +               | -              | ++            | ++              | ++              | ++             | n.a.            | ++              |
| Total           | +              | +             | ++              | ++              | ++             | ++             | ++              |

Extent to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs of women and the obstacles they encounter so as to achieve gender equality and improved autonomy

The reduction of exhaust gases of motorbikes, the main aim of the UCP, is an important though not a priority issue for women; the problem addressed has no direct link with gender relations.

The major aims of the first and third component of the VVOB programme deal with important needs of both boys and girls. The introduction and increased use of the ATL approach is meant to not only increase the quality of education but also contribute to a more comprehensive development of boys and girls, so that they become more self-confident and capable to deal with the challenges they are facing. The career guidance component advocates an approach that places the pupils in the centre of the decision making process related to their further career, mainly by informing them on the options that exist and assisting them in better understanding their strengths and weaknesses so that they can make a well informed choice. These programmes components try consistently to avoid gender stereotypes but furthermore do not engage in trying to remove gender biases that still may exist. The training materials on career guidance insist on the necessity of providing knowledge on gender equality and avoiding gender stereotypes. The discussion with the DOET however revealed that those issues are not yet taken into account during the training course on Career guidelines for schools managers and teachers.

The second component related to agricultural extension has a similar approach in the sense that it advocates for participatory methods for technology development and extension and as such places the farmer (men and women) in the centre of the decision making process. Thereby the broader context of the environment is taken into account, including the particular challenges women face in rural areas.

The field visits to the OSB programme have learned that in the case of HFBU, the focus at the local level is actually a focus on the needs and interests of farmers, both men and women, without there being a concern for specific needs and interests of women, with the exception of the issues of domestic violence and the importance of female leadership at all levels, which is considered as key to promote women interests. THWU, as a branch
of the Women’s Union, takes the situation of the local women as their initial reference. The OSB program complements their ‘routine’ program as WU chapter (which is based on a rather traditional vision on the role of women in the household and family). By dealing predominantly with agriculture, the OSB program has supported the Union in developing an inclusive approach involving men and women in agricultural production groups, whereby the initiative is clearly in the hands of the women, also because of the fact that many men migrate to other areas in search of more rewarding jobs.

As far as SEQAP is concerned, education is without any doubt a priority need and interest for girls, in particular for girls from ethnic minorities. Many studies have provided ample evidence of the importance of education as a means, even a prerequisite, to reach gender equality, and empowerment and autonomy for women. SEQAP’s efforts to improve the quality of education hence can be considered as a key initiative to strengthen the autonomy of girls. The fact that SEQAP targets disadvantaged communities and succeeds in reaching these effectively is an additional positive element in this regard. On the other side, the programme has missed a chance to better include gender by ignoring potential constraining factors to full participation and autonomy of girls and women teachers.

As it is implemented by VWU, the ACC program is one of the many initiatives VWU undertakes to, at the one hand, support the political and economic agenda of the government and, on the other hand, engage in supporting women in their development, both within and outside the family. As VWU adopts a ‘women in development’ approach, gender equality and autonomy are not explicitly envisaged, but the ACC program clearly aims at strengthening the position of women, both at household and society level. Being a women’s mass organisation, VWU has to focus on women (actually on women solely), which makes a full-fledged gender approach difficult.

The envisaged benefits of the TH intervention deal with improved solid waste collection and disposal, and the effects closely linked with this objective in terms of improved sanitary and hygienic conditions. These benefits concern practical needs of the population of Tuy Hoa, in particular women who are mainly responsible for solid waste disposal and in the past often faced problems in this regard. While women are clearly benefiting from the project, the latter has been implemented without any consideration related to gender relations.

The situation for the VAS project is similar to that of SEQAP in the sense that education is to be regard as a priority need and interest for girls. Whereas in the VAS case, the pupils belong to families of the economic elite of Ho Chi Minh city, for the girls concerned education is even so a key that should allow them becoming empowered women in the future. Two thirds of the VAS staff are women.

Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to the project/program services and products

Both the Belgian and the Vietnamese promoter of the UCP are women and one of the two PhD’s realized in the framework of this project has been achieved by a women. As such, one can state that the project, most probably unintentionally, has strengthened the involvement of female academic staff and students in academic domains that are traditionally dominated by men. 

In case the project reaches its longer-term result - the use of a relatively cheap catalyser in motorbikes - it will benefit to both men and women who both are users of motorbikes.

The VVOB program has a strong institutional focus and does not directly deal with the final beneficiaries (boys and girls; male and female farmers), with the exception of the VWU parents taking well care of their children clubs. The members of these clubs are mainly (estimate: 70%) women, but efforts are undertaken to involve more men. At the level of the governmental partners (DOET/BOET, TTI, MARD/DARD), the staff members reached via the program are mostly men, particularly related to the career education
training for DOET/BOET, whereas VWU staff are exclusively women. The teachers reached via training in the framework of the career guidance component are mainly (60%) men and the same can be said for the clubs supported under the agricultural extension component.

The implementation reports of the OSB programme contain detailed information on the number of participants at the level of farmer groups and specific activities, but the figures provided are not sex-disaggregated. Evidence gathered in the field learned however that women constitute the majority of the beneficiaries. In HBFU this is explained by the fact of the importance of male labour migration in particular periods of the year; in THWU the local partner is a chapter of the Vietnam Women’s Union.

In the SEQAP program, girls and boys have equal access to the program services and products (various measures to improve the education and education facilities, lunches, ...) and this is consequently monitored by SEQAP via key indicators pertaining to net enrolment and learning outcomes (related to mathematics and Vietnamese language). The SEQAP services and outputs are also beneficial for teachers who are increasingly women.

Virtually all direct beneficiaries of the ACC programme are women.

Presently 16 communes belonging to Tuy Hoa town (with a total population of 160,000 people) have access to the program results. The program deals with both men and women, but serves in first instance practical needs of women without dealing with their strategic gender needs.

Two thirds of the VAS staff are women. Recruitment and promotion within VAS are decided on the basis of competence (not on gender), as VAS aims to provide high quality education.

**JC 4.4: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professionals organisation and to the private sector has contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in the area of education</th>
<th>UCP</th>
<th>VVOB</th>
<th>OSB</th>
<th>SEQAP</th>
<th>ACC</th>
<th>TH</th>
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<td>Changes in the area of health</td>
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<td>Changes in the economic field</td>
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<td>Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women</td>
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<td>Changes at the level of external empowerment of women</td>
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<td>Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations</td>
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<td>Total score</td>
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**Changes in the area of education**

The UCP project, most probably unintentionally, has provided an opportunity for female academicians (the two project promoters and a female PhD student) to engage in a research that can be considered highly relevant in view of Vietnam’s present needs and
environmental challenges. As such, the project will have contributed to a stronger presence (and/or a strengthening of the position) of female academicians, at least at the level of Hanoi University. Indeed, while the percentage of Vietnamese female students is on the increase in traditionally male dominated faculties such as that of technology and engineering, there still seem to exist barriers for women to develop their career in these faculties, as men are stereotypically considered to have more and better technical abilities and favourable conditions for a career development in this field.

On the other side and in a broader context, women have good chances to develop their career in academic settings as men tend to opt more for careers in the better paying private sector. Women academicians continue however to face challenges to access to key management positions in university notwithstanding the government policy to set quota for women in such positions. In addition, taking up management responsibilities brings additional challenges for women academicians who often remain in charge of many tasks at the level of their family.

The VVOB program is meant to produce its major impact in the education sector, but its institutional approach implies the eventual impact of its efforts are hard to determine. The peer evaluation of the education program provides detailed data on the number of people reached but no figures are available on the number of women/girls involved directly or indirectly in the program. However field visit evidence from Nghe An province suggests that men/boys outnumber women and girls. Some training has also been provided to (exclusively female) managers and key staff of the VWU involved in the social participation component; most members of the parent clubs supported are also women. No overall figures could be obtained with regard the career guidance component, but in Nghe An (one of the two provinces covered by this component) roughly two thirds of the people trained were men. The effects of these huge training efforts are difficult to assess. There is evidence of institutional changes in the education institutions (shifts in thinking about teaching/education/ATL/teaching methodologies; application of more innovative methods by teachers) as a result of the capacity building efforts. At VWU level, the peer evaluation of the education component claims that...

The impact of the programme on capacity of WU is considerable as the WU is now much more aware of its role in education and it has a much better understanding of ATL and roles of parents and the community. This finding is confirmed by the evaluation, which also found out that the clubs contribute significantly, via a manual and peer exchange and learning, on strengthening the parents’ capacities with regard to their role in education of their children, which in particular in the adolescence age is full of challenges. Parents state they have made big progress in this regard via the clubs, which have impacted positively on their relationship with their children and also, it was stated, on the children’s personality and academic performance.

Finally, it should also be noted that at all levels (senior staff of ministries and VWU, teachers, parents, youngsters) the evaluation team encountered strong convictions related to traditional gender roles and beliefs (e.g. women by nature are better teachers than men in particular in basic education, preference of girls and their parents for ‘typically’ female jobs, the conviction that by nature boys are stronger in mathematics than girls, etc.). It is without say that such convictions hamper the empowerment of girls via education.

The final evaluation of the agricultural extension program states that “Farmers clubs and Participatory Technology Development (PTD) are highly valued by farmers, extension workers and management level officers (district, province, MDI, IAS, programme management)”, which can be considered as a proxy indication of the fact that the farmers reached via the program have acquired relevant knowledge and skills to apply these. There are no clear indications on the number of women involved but the farmer clubs have a majority of male members.

As confirmed also by the qualitative impact research in Hoa Binh, one of OSB’s program areas, considerable results have been achieved in terms of creating awareness of farmer families (men and women) with regard to agricultural policies and evolutions in the
development context that affect their interests and on how collective action can be undertaken to address these issues (policy advocacy related to the effects of mining on farmers communities in THWU working area and policies to preserve and development of indigenous seeds by special producer groups with HBFU). In terms of gender considerable and systematic efforts in training and awareness-raising have substantially increased the level of understanding of “gender”, which has become a key notion in the local partners’ work (though not always adequately understood and operationalized). In the case of HBFU core group members have been trained more in depth and used to further spread comprehension and awareness on gender and gender mainstreaming. The impact research found out that this has impacted positively on gender discrimination (in terms of domestic violence, task division in the household, ...) that has substantially decreased. Last but not least, technical training (e.g. in animal husbandry and vegetable growing) has strengthened the capacity of many women (in particular) and allowed them engaging in income generating activities and in acquiring skills (e.g. related to the management of the family budget), which empowered them and strengthened their position at both household and community level (see below). It is stated that these awareness-raising and capacity building efforts have made the women brave enough to stand up, engage in economic activities and claim a better status.

Many impact studies worldwide have referred to education as a key factor in the emancipation and empowerment of girls61. As such, it can be safely stated that SEQAP has made in significant contribution, the more because it succeeds in reaching underserved areas and deals to an important extent with ethnic minorities where the status of girls is often low. The SEQAP progress reports so far do not (yet) contain information on the envisaged changes at the level of the program’s key performance indicators, which could confirm whether the experience acquired elsewhere also applies to SEQAP. In the document attached to the MoU these indicators foresee considerable progress in terms of girl students achieving the ‘independent learner status’ (= students eligible for grade 6) at Vietnamese language and mathematics, of increase of girls with an excellent grade in Vietnamese, of girls completing primary education and receiving at least 30 periods per week. Other relevant indicators include the total gross and net enrolment rates (for which no targets are mentioned).

Furthermore, the data obtained during the field visits do not provide a complete nor an actualised picture with regard to these key performance indicators. The latest (2010-2011) net and gross enrolment rates and figures related to school attendance available in the program’s results oriented monitoring database indicate equal or slightly better scores for girls than for boys in terms of completion rates and gross enrolment rates, slightly better results for girls in net enrolment and drop out rates, but slightly worse results for the participation of girls in FDS. Girls however clearly outscore boys in terms of good/excellent classroom assessments related to Vietnamese and mathematics. Overall, interviews with teachers and principals confirmed these findings, in particular that girls perform better than boys. As mentioned earlier, SEQAP did only marginally deal with the reform of school curricula, teaching methods and textbooks, which actually constitute areas where important educational impacts with regard to gender could have been produced.

Via the ACC project activities, VWU has also been able to reach out better at the local level and better implement its other programs related to education, gender, reproductive health, environment, etc. VWU has engaged substantially in capacity building efforts to (among others) develop the technical and business skills of about 50,000 members and improve financial and administrative literacy of VWU cadres at different levels. While the capacity building efforts have been predominantly of a technical nature, interviews at field level have revealed that they have produced positive effects in other areas as well, such as the self-confidence of women or their position in the household, as the trained women were supposed to transfer the newly acquired knowledge and competence to other family members that participate in their business. These findings have been

61 See for instance the UNFPA website for a short but good overview of research findings pertaining to the link between education and women and girls empowerment: http://www.unfpa.org/gender/empowerment2.htm.
confirmed by the impact research conducted in the VWU chapter of Da Nang. Training in combination with regular access to micro-credit has allowed women to become self-confident, take business risks and successfully engage in economic activities. And as "money is the passport to everything", women acquired a stronger voice and position in their family and community.

According to the TH end-of-project evaluation, the project has achieved a significant raising of the public's environmental awareness related to waste management (via public awareness campaigns, activities at schools, ...). The field visit has allowed finding out that the project has contributed to the empowerment of the City WU in the area of health; the Union engages on a regular basis in public awareness initiatives related to environmental health (e.g. road cleaning, theatre plays on environmental issues, etc.). The group of scavengers supported via the project has also received substantial training and capacity building related to occupational health and safety, but substantial awareness raising efforts to promote the categorization of solid waste at household level (separation of organic and non-organic waste, ...) have only partially been effective. All in all the education and training efforts seem to have resulted in a better understanding and practice with regard to sanitation and environment and better practices, at community and household level.

VAS contribution could not be assessed, but the school is well known (and successful) for providing high quality bilingual education to boys and girls from elite families in Ho Chi Minh Cities (and increasingly other cities as well). It can be expected that graduates from the school have enjoyed quality teaching and acquired skills that provide them a strong basis for the next steps in their lives.

Changes in the area of health

It can be expected that, in case the UCP project is successful (which implies its results will be adopted by motorbike constructors), it will produce on the long run an impact on the health conditions, in particular in cities, via the reduction of the emission of exhaust gases. In that case, both women and men will benefit from this positive impact. At this moment it is however too early to be affirmative of this potential project impact.

The SEQAP program foresees the promotion of the FDS model, which includes the provision of meals at school to the students. Visits at field level learned that these lunches are not only crucial to ensure optimal participation of poor children in FDS, but also have a (very) positive impact on the health of the students as the meals prepared fulfil nutritional standards and often compensate at least partially the poor quality of meals poor students get at home.

Via the ACC project, VWU has been able to reach out better at the local level and better implement its other programs related to education, gender, reproductive health, environment, etc. As such, the project has, for instance, been supportive to VWU’s efforts in the area of family planning where it succeeded in bringing more balance, among their members, in the choice of the contraceptive method within the couple (decrease from 90% to 60% of ‘female’ methods).

The TH project has contributed to a cleaner environment and a correlated decrease of medical and medicine costs for fighting sanitation related diseases estimated at VND 7,000 per household per month, which represents a financial saving of more than 2% for the poorest quintile of the city's households. While this progress is not specifically dealing with reproductive health issues, it might have been significant for women and girls, especially those belonging to the poorer sections of society.

The end of project evaluation stated the project has achieved impressive results in improving the living and environmental conditions in Tuy Hoa city. The old landfill has been adequately sealed off so that it does not entail an environmental danger for the future. Recycling activities that have started to process the plastics gathered by the scavengers had however to be discontinued as the premises did not fulfil the
environment protection related regulations of the government. The same happened with the recycling of organic waste to produce compost, which proved to be financially unviable.

The working conditions of the group of scavengers have been substantially improved: stop of night work, use of protective clothing, fixed and limited daily working hours, ... They stated they now have a more regular life allowing them taking better care of the children and better health since they do not have to work overtime and at night. Presently, a major issue of concern is the pollution caused by the spill-over of the landfill's recipient ponds used to recycle toxic wastewater. The infrastructure built for this purpose seems to be ill designed, causing spill-over of highly toxic wastewater in periods of heavy rainfall and threatening in that way the health and livelihoods of 60 families living in the neighbourhood.

Changes in the economic field

The OSB end-of-program evaluation states that farmers have got substantially improved access to main production means such as land, capital, seeds, information, technology and other inputs (water, electricity power, etc.). Further impacts include: reduced risk for farmers leaving land uncultivated due to high price of imported seed and the positive effects on indirect beneficiaries: a relatively big number of farmers outside of the groups also benefited from program interventions in both Hoa Binh and Thach Ha areas. More women than men are included in the program. At household level, in both areas there seems not to exist a predominant pattern with regard to control over income gained from economic activities; mostly women and men decide jointly on the use of their income. In terms of changes in the division of tasks, in some areas it was reported that men now take up agricultural activities, which used to be the women’s task in the past (e.g. related to rice cultivation and household chores). This has been confirmed by the impact research in the HBFU area that has found a noticeable shift in task division in many families as a result of gender awareness efforts and the increased involvement of women in economic activities. The fact that women gain their own income not only implies economic progress but also a change of their status at family and community level. In THWU area many production groups (husbandry, vegetables) have been successful (also because access to loans is granted) and have allowed women to increase the family income and change their position in the household. Often their activity has expanded that much that their husbands join and/or take over part of the household tasks. Officials state that the substantial decrease in poverty levels in Thach Ha district (from 46 to 8,5% over 8 years, according to official figures) is largely due to the work of the women's union in cooperation with OSB (note that in the communes visited and covered by the WU, poverty levels are presently even lower). While this information could not be further substantiated and while it is probable that changes in poverty are the result of several evolutions, it provides at least an indication of the value of the work of THWU.

The flip side of increased (successful) involvement of women in income generating activities is the increased workload at household level (and de facto in particular for women). Contextual developments (climate change, labour migration of men in particular) constitute additional challenges in this regard and might eventually impact negatively on the progress realised.

The SEQAP program does not contribute directly to economic impact, notwithstanding the fact that on the medium term (and according to WB calculations) it is meant to produce a substantial impact in terms of poverty reduction and social cohesion.

The ACC project has provided access to loans (often continued access), the development of a savings habit and business development support that undoubtedly have economically empowered women in their households as most loans have been successfully used for the development of income generating activities. Successes of women in the economic field were consistently (also in the impact research) reported to resulting in improved status of women and, hence, in improved gender relations at
community and household level with a better sharing of household chores and business activities among family members.

In some cases, the size of loans was reported being too small to allow for drastic progress. Nevertheless, overall, VWU succeeded via the ACC project in substantially decreasing the numbers of families under the poverty line and in ensuring that the economic progress achieved among these families became sustainable.

The TH project has installed a solid waste management system, which has allowed some minor decrease in the workload of women. The project has also stabilized the income of the group of about 30 scavengers (predominantly women), though the scavengers claim that their income has decreased because of the project intervention. Efforts to set up a viable recycling plant have however failed.

In the 16 wards/communes covered by the project (from original of 10 wards/communes), jobs have been created for poor women who collect waste at household level in bins donated by the project. These women then bring the waste to collection points where it is loaded on trucks. Many of these bins have however broken down and, according to local authorities, are too expensive to be repaired or replaced. This implies that the collection of waste at local level has to be undertaken in far from optimal conditions.

It can be expected that the good quality of the education offered by VAS will allow its graduates to become economically successful later in their life.

Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women

The UCP project has contributed to the internal empowerment of a few women academicians involved in the project.

In the VVOB program, it is claimed that the ATL method contributes to important changes both at the level of the teachers (men and women) and students (boys and girls) that contribute to their internal empowerment (more dynamic and innovative attitude, more openness to environment, better capacities to cooperate and relate, ...), but to our knowledge, so far this claim has not been substantiated via in-depth research. The approach followed in the career guidance component must have contributed to similar changes, for which slightly more evidence could be found during the field visit.

The OSB program has clearly contributed to the internal empowerment of women by its consistent and long-standing focus on women empowerment and on the promotion of women leadership within the organisation. Apparently, (potential) women leaders have been supported by the program and are now occupying key positions in the state apparatus and/or mass organisations. At the local level, women showed a considerable level of self-confidence (e.g. in meetings and interviews). Economic success in many cases has substantially contributed to this development, as have in some cases the effects of the gender equality clubs (THWU) that also deal with gender relations. It is however difficult to isolate the program’s contribution from other factors.

The impact research in Hoa Binh (HBFU) focused on how women and men themselves framed the changes that took place. They very much pointed to the “bravery and confidence” gained by the women via the program, though it is underlined that changes are the result of the personal and group efforts of the women themselves. Men are confirming these changes and refer to the fact that women have become more knowledgeable and capable in production and trading and social activities; they have become more self-confident and convincing thanks to their enhanced knowledge and awareness.

The introduction of FDS via the SEQAP program has often allowed schools to introduce lessons on ‘life skills’. A large variety of subjects is covered by this topic ranging from theatre and dance, music, sport, games, safety on the road, ... to communication, team work, gender equality and self-management and protection. Life skills are also
approached as a crosscutting issue and integrated in regular lessons. The Evaluation team has however not been able to really assess the impact of this extension of the curriculum on the internal empowerment of girls, but one might – in the light of experiences elsewhere – assume that the impact has been positive.

The ACC project has undoubtedly contributed to internal empowerment of women in various ways. Evidence has been gathered at field level, also via the impact study, that through skills development training women have gained confidence and become successful in economic activities. As such, they dare to engage in activities (becoming ‘brave’) which they never imagined before and can engage more in social activities at village level, are respected by their communities, become introduced in other associations and feel more confident to stand up and take initiatives if they consider this important. Via the program activities, VWU has also been able to reach out better to the local level and better implement its other programs related to education, gender, reproductive health, domestic violence, political participation, etc. which have at least an indirect positive effect on women’s internal empowerment.

Via the TH project, the group of scavengers (mainly women from poor households) got support that has improved their lives and added to their self-confidence. They feel proud of their autonomy and free to make their own choices. While they complain about some loss in income because of the project intervention, their revenue seems to be higher than that of many other personnel of the waste collection company. While the scavengers have undoubtedly a positive attitude with regard to the project intervention, opportunities have been missed to support them more comprehensively and address some key constraints they are facing (see also below). No other changes have been produced in terms of internal empowerment of women as activities on the household level have been too shallow to produce impact.

**Changes at the level of external empowerment of women**

The UCP project has contributed to the external empowerment of a few women academicians involved in the project.

For the same reasons as mentioned under the previous point, the introduction of the ATL and of a new approach for career guidance in the VVOB program, might have led to increased external empowerment of girls and women.

According to the OSB end-of-program evaluation ...farmers (including women farmers) got more confidence that via solidarity with group members and in networking with other groups, they can master their livelihoods much more productively and in a friendly manner to the environment. The evaluation further states that farmers feel happy with the new way of assembling and organizing to collectively claim for their legitimate rights. This new way is voluntary, needs-based, full of ownership and relevant for them to collectively do business planning, which is fully informed and sensitive to market signals. This was not known to them before. No intervention can be more effective and sustainable than when target beneficiaries get better aware of their rights and know how to get these rights realized. Another effect noted by the evaluation is that mass organizations (WUs, FUs) learned new experiences from their support to farmers, especially in regard to what and how to do policy advocacy, including with their members. They also learned on how best to empower members and help them realize their rights primarily through improving farmers' livelihoods.

The effects described above have been confirmed by the field visit and the impact research in HBFU area. The increase in women leadership within the farmer union also contributes to external empowerment of women as they play a bigger role in decision-making. Male dominance is however still prevailing in many situations (e.g. opposition by commune and party leadership). The impact research confirmed this last point, but also pointed to the change in the stereotypes around leadership: there are now several
younger female leaders, which contrasts sharply with the traditional view of a middle aged, prestigious man as a leader.

In the case of THWU, the initiatives of the Union with the District Father front committee took the lead, with OSB support (financially, training), in a local policy advocacy initiative that included other district actors to claim fair compensation for the losses experienced by families and communes because of the start up of mining activities. The relative success of these efforts impacted positively on the WU image, reputation and influence. This in turn, together with others constituted an important support to the WU’s efforts to increase women representation in local decision making bodies. Overall, women representation in these bodies has increased by 50% in the district, but in communes supported by the OSB program it has often doubled. WU members have been trained to engage in political lobby via the OSB program and elected women are outperforming their male counterparts as they are working in a more transparent, accountable and democratic way (e.g. via the organisation of meetings with their constituency). This made that there are now communes where men are voting for women candidates.

The introduction of FDS via SEQAP (actually in most cases the present situation is one of MDS Mixed Day Schooling - where students have at least 30 periods of schooling per week), leads to an increased workload for some teachers being predominantly women. In some areas teachers have to perform more teaching hours when FDS was introduced, whereas in other areas additional teachers were recruited. In itself, some consider this increased workload as fair as teachers use(d) to work less hours than other government staff. Others feel that teachers need to receive extra payment for extra work. There does not yet exist a global policy in this regard. In some areas, teachers are compensated to a little extent for the extra work, whereas elsewhere they get adequate compensation from various sources, the provincial government in first instance. Still in other places parents contribute to the teachers’ salary for the additional working hours. Particularly in rural and ethnic minority areas many (predominantly female) teachers engage also in agricultural activities, which they have to combine with their teaching job and household chores. But elsewhere also, female teachers have to adjust their lives and often see their overall workload increase.

Girls and boys take up household chores as well and, as such, might see their workload increase via the introduction of FDS. The extent to which this happens and further complicates life of children has not been analysed by SEQAP. While the evaluation team could not assess this issue in depth either, it found ample evidence of children, girls in particular, taking up household chores after school and in the weekend. In particular girls who have one or both parents being absent to work in other areas seem to be vulnerable.

Against these rather negative findings of FDS affecting negatively women and girls empowerment, it is clear that the better learning outcomes in SEQAP schools imply that school girls (and boys) are better prepared for the next steps in their lives to become well empowered citizens, an outcome that in our view outscores the negative findings presented above.

Parallel to their internal empowerment, the economic success of many women beneficiaries of the ACC program has encouraged them in taking up roles at the level of society and their extended family. Many successful VWU members engage also locally in political decision-making. At the level of household and family, beneficiaries interviewed (during the team’s visit and the impact research) claim that their progress has a major influence on power relations in the household and the family, led to a decrease of domestic violence and to a more balanced division of the workload related to domestic tasks. Women in many cases stand up to act proactively to solve problems at household of community level and/or ask for authorities to intervene.

Many VWU cadres trained have made promotion in the organisation and have become influential in local politics and in the political apparatus. Via the project activities, VWU has also been able to reach out better to the local level and better implement its other programs related to political participation and decision making, among others. The VWU meetings were also a forum to disseminate information on key laws such as the Gender Equality Law and the Domestic Violence Prevention Law (both issued in 2007).
The creation, in the TH project, of an association of scavengers (mainly women from poor households) has added to the self-confidence of this marginalised group and increased the social status of its members. They feel confident enough to approach local authorities to discuss issues related to their work and interest, when needed. The group has a relationship with the provincial trade union which provides them advice (on occupational health issues, ...) and occasionally training. So far, they have no regular relation with the City WU, which apparently is not organised to support this type of professional groups. The group states further that they so far have been unable to change their negative image at the level of society. They want however to continue their job, as they have no alternative. They work however hard to ensure that their children can study and will have more attractive jobs in their life.

No other (substantial) changes have been produced in terms of external empowerment of women, with the exception of changes at the level of the City WU that claims to be empowered in the area of environmental health.

**Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations**

As far as the VVOB program is concerned, the ATL and newly introduced approach for career guidance imply important changes in attitudes, behaviour and power between teacher, parents and students, whereby in particular the latter are empowered to make their own choices and take their own decisions.

As far as the OSB program is concerned the consistent efforts to promote gender have led, at least in certain cases, to changes in attitudes and behaviour, and most probably also in power relations. For instance, at the level of HBFU men recognize the key role to be played by women in their organisation and in society at large; some men also stressed that they felt much better now that their women are empowered and more equality is achieved in the husband-wife relationship. Women from their side now clearly take up (pro-)actively roles in the organisation and speak out during meetings. The impact research in Hoa Binh has found much evidence of changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations, which are a result of the combined effect of increased gender awareness (of women and men), increased skills and knowledge of women resulting in improved economic and social performance and higher self-confidence; overall the women’s success in the economic field seems to be the major trigger for changes in attitudes and behaviour, and eventually power relations. These changes also impact positively on domestic violence (see below).

In the case of THWU, the strength of the local WU chapter has impacted positively on local perceptions at district and commune level. Women are increasingly considered as competent, integer and reliable actors in politics and policy decision-making. At the level of the households, in particular economic success seems to have impacted positively on power relations and, at least in some cases, a more equitable division of household chores.

SEQAP has undertaken important efforts to communicate with the local population (parents in particular) about the potential benefits of FDS. These efforts have been largely successful, also because of the relevance of other activities undertaken by SEQAP (including infrastructure and equipment support, training for teachers and principals, etc.). As such, via the introduction of FDS progress has been made in terms of increasing and securing participation of girls in education to counter the widely prevailing conviction that “girls do not need to study long”. Parents and society at large feel it increasingly important to also ensure education of their girl children. While the major challenges in this regard are situated at the secondary education level, SEQAP schools have contributed to lay down a stronger foundation for extended girl inclusion in education.

On the other side, recent birth statistics point to a substantial imbalance between boys and girls (113 boys born for 100 girls), which constitutes at the same time a major
reason for concern and an illustration of prevailing values and attitudes in present Vietnam (see also chapter 2 above).

The interviews (by the evaluation team and during the impact research) with ACC (female) program beneficiaries provided strong evidence that the activities of the project have resulted in changes in attitude and behaviour, both within the household and in the community. Women who successfully developed their business are treated with respect in society and by their family (husband in first instance), seem to suffer less from domestic violence and, in a number of cases, achieve in influencing the behaviour of their husband who is ready to take up some tasks in the household. While men who take up domestic tasks used to be laughed at, in many cases that situation has changed drastically as the local community (men and women alike) cannot ignore the success of women as entrepreneurs. Women stated that, all in all, their workload might nevertheless have increased in total (notwithstanding the fact that increased welfare allows them often to buy equipment that eases their house chores), but that they prefer this situation compared to the previous situation where their action was confined to the household.

Overall, the TH project certainly has brought a change, at the level of society, in attitudes and behaviour related to the (preservation of the) environment, which indirectly produces a positive impact to the entire population of Tuy Hoa city, women in particular. The attitude towards the scavengers (poor women) has however not changed.

**JC 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women**

| Changes in the number of women that are victim of violence |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UCP              | VVOB | OSB | SEQAP | ACC | TH | VAS | Average |
| n.a.             | +   | +   | n.a.  | +   | n.a.| n.a. | +  |
| Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and to take care and follow up victims of violence |
| n.a.             | +   | +   | n.a.  | n.a. | n.a.| n.a. | n.a. |
| Total score      | n.a. | +   | n.a.  | +   | n.a.| n.a. | n.a. |

*Changes in the number of women that are victim of violence*

This is not a relevant indicator for the UCP, for obvious reasons.

The VVOB program has not produced direct effects in this area. The peer evaluation of the education programme mentions however ... *Very interesting is the endeavour of the WU to also enhance participation of men and to train them on gender and on parenting. The WU is also very much engaged in combating domestic violence.* The evaluation visit could confirm that the issue of domestic violence is addressed in the parents club as one of the 12 ‘standard’ themes/topics. A role-play has been designed to deal with the issue. The VWU also added a few themes to be addressed by the clubs, including (undesired) pregnancy and early marriage. However, in view of the prevalence of domestic violence in Vietnam, VVOB could (should?) have done more to integrate the issue of domestic violence in its various program components, in particular those with government educational institutions as partner.

In the OSB program, both components (HBFU and THWU) address the issue of women violence via the gender/communicators core group (HBFU) and regular trainings and meetings of gender equality clubs (THWU). The HBFU core group members act as
consultants at the level of families that face domestic violence and a video clip has been made and promoted related to the issue. In the case of THWU, domestic violence is addressed in a similar way (via mediation of local leaders) and it is often also discussed in gender equality clubs (peer group approach). It is however not clear to which extent these interventions are truly effective and exert an important influence on the overall incidence of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence. Some local farmer leaders (HBFU) are however convinced this is the case and this is confirmed via the impact study conducted in Hoa Binh. It appears from this analysis that specific program efforts dealing with domestic have an effect, but that these become effective in conjunction with other changes related to women becoming more confident and knowledgeable and their success in economic and community activities. While domestic violence is far from eradicated, it has decreased in frequency and weight. In the case of THWU, local leaders recognized that sometimes mediation is ineffective, but also stated that there are cases of success. In a number of cases, the issue has been brought to the court, but this is not always a good solution in view of the consequences for the wife and children.

Some stated that the fact that the issue is more openly and systematically addressed has a positive (preventive) effect in itself. On the other side, it is felt that the issue is very complex: some causes of domestic violence are firmly embedded in local culture whereas others have to do with more recent developments (unemployment, rise of alcoholism). Finally, the fact that women become empowered and successful often has the unintended negative impact of increased domestic violence because of the husband’s frustration. Finally, it is important to note that only domestic violence seems to be addressed and not other forms of gender based violence.

SEQAP has not undertaken specific activities related to this area. But FDS provides room for extra lessons in which ‘life skills’ have been introduced as a new topic in the curriculum. Ones of the topics dealt with is awareness raising related to child trafficking and how girls student need to be self protected. In theory SEQAP could have been more proactive in influencing the topics for the extra lessons, but this area actually falls beyond the remit of the program.

The ACC project has most probably produced positive indirect effects in this area as (1) it facilitated and strengthened the functioning of VWU, also at the local level where important efforts were undertaken to inform members about important issues such as the Gender Equality Law and the Domestic Violence Prevention Law, and even more importantly (2) it empowered women in such a way that domestic violence decreased even when this was not explicitly focused on. In particular this second finding was confirmed in the qualitative impact study that provided much evidence of a strong linkage between, on the one hand, economic success and, on the other hand, women empowerment, increased women confidence and decreased domestic violence.

This is not a relevant indicator for the TH project, for obvious reasons.

Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and to take care and follow up victims of violence

This is not a relevant indicator for the UCP, for obvious reasons.

The VVOB program has not made a direct contribution in this area, but information and communication with regard to the gender equality law and the law on domestic violence are part of the training and awareness-raising related to domestic violence in the clubs. While the effect of these measures is largely unknown, the lack of systematised efforts in this area has certainly not helped to effectively attack the problem.

The OSB program, while active mainly in agricultural development, is including activities to prevent domestic violence and support women who have been victim of such violence. As such, it has no influence on the existence of measures to prevent such forms of
violence. However, the program at least has contributed to people being better informed about the issue as a violation of human rights and Vietnamese law, which might have impacted positively on the level of social acceptance of domestic violence. The impact research also learned that the program managed to ensure that the mechanism that are formally put in place by the government to tackle the issue of domestic violence, at least to some extent are functional and effective. The research has come across various cases where domestic violence has been dealt with effectively and victims supported in their efforts to deal with the consequences and avoid violence in the future.

SEQAP has not produced any direct effect in this area, for reasons explained above.

The ACC project did not directly intervene in this area. Indirectly, its success reinforced however the functioning of VWU, which at the local level engaged in initiatives to prevent and contain domestic violence and deal more effectively with women who have been victim of such violence.

The TH project has not been active in this area.

4.3 Efficiency

Evaluation question 5: To what extent does the Belgian international cooperation have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCP</td>
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<tr>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
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<tr>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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</table>

J.C. 1 : Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors

This indicator is not relevant for the UCP.

The indications on the availability of financial resources and capacity are lacking in the VVOB implementation reports, but these reports suggest that it is not difficult to mobilize the required capacity and identify the instruments needed to achieve the ambition to mainstream gender in the three program components. Furthermore, the gender policy (issued in August 2012) foresees the approval of a country gender training plan and budget. VVOB Vietnam has a gender focal point who provides technical support and oversees gender mainstreaming in the organisation. There have been several gender
focal points already for 5 years. The current gender focal point only added gender mainstreaming to her responsibilities in 2013. In addition, several training and capacity building efforts related to gender have been conducted since a first training in March 2010; later on a seminar at the global VVOB level followed (February 2012) and a gender review including follow up workshop in March 2012-April. In December 2013 a workshop on gender mainstreaming in the career guidance program has been organised to review all career guidance material and by end of March 2014, a workshop on gender mainstreaming, M&E and finance has been organised.

The peer evaluation of the education programme mentions further that ... the set of training materials and modules available to partners and beneficiaries, and adopted by the core group of trainers, covers the most important aspects of gender and HIV/Aids.

The March 2013 gender review reports states that the VVOB Vietnam’s gender mainstreaming strategy is available and accessible to all staff, that there does not exist any discrimination in the area of human resources management (recruitment, salary, gender neutral performance appraisals, equal access to training opportunities, gender sensitive labour regulations that are in advance compared to Vietnam’s labour law). On the other side, the review states that the staff's knowledge on gender remains too shallow, that concrete tools to apply the strategy are lacking, that the gender focal point lacks the time to do this job properly and that her skills are too limited, and that so far knowledge and skills on gender are not a criterion for staff recruitment.

In the OSB program, there are no references to a specific budget for gender initiatives, but gender is well integrated, so that no separate budget is necessary. OSB at headquarters level has a gender focal point, but all staff is supposed to dispose of basic knowledge and skills related to gender. The quality of some of the tools developed indicates that gender expertise has been mobilized for key activities.

As mentioned earlier, at program level some specific instruments are used, but the need for simple instruments remains high (recommendation of evaluation). This is confirmed by the field visit that found out that, despite considerable investments in capacity building, gender is often not rightly operationalised. This has certainly to do with a rather indiscriminate use of the term ‘gender’ that covers various practices (including a simple focus on women in activities), but also but the challenges related to translate the generic gender concept and approach in a well contextualised and sector approach.

There does not exist a specific budget for gender initiatives in SEQAP, neither for an input in terms of gender expertise at the level of the Belgian actors; the task description of the Budget Support Advisor does not contain any reference to gender, which is understandable in the context of the choices made by the program. The program has been accepted quite a long time ago, most probably before the BTC gender expert at the BTC headquarters has been recruited or could have had a look at the project. This expert conducted a support mission to Vietnam to engender the 2011 – 2015 ICP process together with two local counterparts, but the SEQAP project had already been approved before. We have not found indications of support of the expert to the SEQAP project.

No specific resources have been earmarked for gender-related activities in the ACC.

No financial resources, capacity or specific instruments have been made available in the TH project.

**J.C. 2: Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors**

This indicator is not relevant for the UCP.

VVOB issued its gender policy in August 2012. The document is mainly of a conceptual nature but contains many useful tools (e.g. a checklist to assess gender in key program components of VVOB, examples of gender-sensitive indicators that can replace the
indicators used till that time, etc.). A detailed plan of action is however not integrated in the policy, but there are some concrete actions to be implemented, such as the selection of a gender focal point per country and the approval of a gender training plan and budget per country. The existence of this policy is certainly to be considered as an important institutional incentive. The March 2013 gender review reports states that there is a strong commitment for gender mainstreaming within VVOB Vietnam at the level of leaders and staff. The enabling organisational environment (see above) also constitutes an incentive.

Formal incentives do not exist in the OSB program, but seem not to be necessary as gender is well integrated at organizational level (cfr. results based framework at OSB level). As such, it is clear that specific commitment with regard to gender is compatible with the organisation’s culture and values. Also at the local level (HBFU and THWU) commitment to gender is compatible with the unions’ values and vision.

No indications have been found of the existence of such incentives in the SEQAP program. One can even state that the Vietnam policy, which has made a clear choice for no differentiation between boys and girls in primary education, constitutes a disincentive for the integration of gender.

VVOB has started quite recently to better integrate gender in its programme. As VWU is one of its partners, some synergies could have been considered, but nothing has happened (also because of the time difference between projects).

At the level of the Belgian actors involved (BTC), in the ACC project no incentives have been found to integrate gender.

A similar finding has been made for the TH project. The evaluations state that the project was set out with the intention that a gender balance was achieved along all activities. In reality, this intention has not been put into practice and no accompanying measures have been taken to support this intention. Activities that were targeted at women (mostly via the City WU) were merely functional in nature to ensure adequate cooperation of women and households in the implementation of decisions taken before. The Belgian partner seems not to have considered to providing incentives to better include gender along the initial intention of the project.

J.C. 3: Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration

This indicator is not relevant for the UCP.

The choice of the VWU as a VVOB program partner implies, in principle, that synergies are created in view of gender integration. In practice, this is however a challenging task in view of the VWU’s position with regard to ‘women’s issues’ which to a major extent implies a confirmation (and optimisation) of the traditional role of women in the family. In cases/programs where women empowerment is envisaged, these efforts are mostly framed in the same traditional framework and predominantly following a ‘women in development’ approach.

In the OSB program, there is a reference to cooperation with the VECO program (related to agricultural chain development), but in practice both programs have not really cooperated. At the local level, the important efforts to mainstream gender and to create gender expertise at the local level are not optimized. Indeed, in the case of HBFU the pool of local gender trainers/communicators and women leaders constitute an important resource to promote gender beyond the boundaries of the partnership with OSB. So far, this has not been done in Hoa Binh, but local leadership is reflecting on taking initiatives in that direction. In the case of THWU, the strong position of the WU has led to synergies in various situations (the policy advocacy on the mining issue being the most
outstanding example), and increased the openness of other mass organisations and the local leaders for women’s (not necessarily gender) issues.

In SEQAP, no indications have been found of the creation of such synergies.

As the ACC project is implemented via VWU, which also is a key partner in the VVOB and SEQAP programs, some synergies could have been considered, but nothing has happened.

In accordance with what has been stated above, the cooperation with the City WU has certainly allowed some synergies in the TH project, but not with a view to improve gender integration, but rather of a functional nature, i.e. to use the strong network and extension capacities of the WU to reach out to communities, women in particular.

J.C. 4: Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)

The project promoter is a woman and so is her Vietnamese counterpart. They have been jointly in charge of the management of the project.

With the exception of VWU, in the VVOB program men predominantly occupy management positions at the level of partners. Further, VVOB staff are predominantly women.

The composition of management and decision making structures in the OSB program is an issue of attention and in some cases some progress has been made in this regard, at least in terms of increasing the number of women associated to decision making processes, even when this implies year-long efforts in terms of capacity building, persuasion and lobby (as is the case in HBFU, confirmed also by the impact research). At the level of the latter union, female and male staff are equal in number. In the case of THWU, leadership is in the hands of women only, both at district, commune and village level. All staff of the union and those in charge of program implementation are also women.

The Joint Review Missions are the main decision making mechanism of SEQAP. A broad range of stakeholders from different ministries, the donors, etc. participate in these missions, which often makes decision making complicated. We could not find comprehensive data on the participants to these missions and their respective influence, allowing us to address this judgment criterion.

More women than men attend the joint steering committee meetings of the ACC project. The president of the Steering Committee is a woman and so are the representatives of the Ministry of Planning and Investment and of the Ministry of Finance.

The eleven members of the PSC of the TH project were all men with one exception.
4.4 Sustainability

Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</th>
<th>UCP</th>
<th>VVOB</th>
<th>OSB</th>
<th>SEQAP</th>
<th>ACC</th>
<th>TH</th>
<th>VAS</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<td>++</td>
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Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building (macro, meso and micro levels)

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<th>Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building (macro, meso and micro levels)</th>
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Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)

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<th>Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</th>
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Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women

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<th>Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</th>
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Total score

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(*) Third indicator has half of the total weight.

J.C. 1: Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle

The existence of a VVOB gender policy constitutes a positive factor in terms of sustaining gender integration practices in the project cycle. While the March 2013 gender review has indicated an important number of weaknesses with regard to integration of gender in the phases of the cycle, the very fact that such a review has been undertaken to assess the level of gender integration and to undertake remedial action, is an important indicator of VVOB’s determination to mainstream gender. This is illustrated by its 2014-2016 program, which shows substantial progress with regard to gender mainstreaming in many areas.

Gender integration is firmly embedded in the various phases of OSB’s program cycle, also at the local level. The fact that the partnership with OSB ended in December 2013 was never mentioned as a major constraint for sustainability in HFBU. It was however raised as an issue in THWU (in one village meeting), where local leaders expressed their concern in particular with regard to the results achieved with the integration of gender in the program. The local chapter of the WU seems however solid and capable to ensure sustainability; in addition, the evaluation team was told that other members from the Oxfam family will continue to work with the Union.

J.C. 2: Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building (macro, meso and micro levels)

The existence of a gender policy certainly constitutes a positive factor in terms of sustaining gender capacity building achievements of the VVOB program, but much more is needed (a.o. at the level of the partner organisations but also at VVOB level) to uplift capacities, as is pointed out by the gender review and the team opinions. More systematized efforts have been undertaken in the meanwhile, but in particular at the level of the partner organisations progress is too fragile to be sustainable.
The end evaluation of the OSB program is rather pessimistic about the sustainability of the effects of the promotion of new organisational models, as a clear conceptual and practical framework to support groups are lacking and no exit strategy including reduction of financial dependence on outside resources has been defined. The field visit does not entirely share that conclusion, at least not as far as gender-related capacity building at the level of HBFU and THWU is concerned. In the case of HBFU, the local core group members seem to have been fairly well trained and definitely acquired their capacities and skills as (gender) trainers. There is certainly room for improvement, but their present skills and capacities constitute an asset for the organisation. This is confirmed by the qualitative impact study. In addition, the HBFU, while benefiting from external support, has also its internal funding which allows it to at least maintain a basic level of functioning. Similar conclusions can be made for THWU where, among others, the strongly embedded skills related to micro-credit provide a solid basis of continued income generation part of which can be used for ‘social activities’ as is already presently the case.

As ‘technical’ capacity building might have produced indirect effects on women empowerment in the ACC project (see above – confirmed by the impact study), it is important to mention that the final project evaluation assigned a high score to sustainability, among others because of the high level of ownership of the changes and results achieved. Our evaluation results confirm this finding.

**J.C. 3: Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)**

The contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (limited to a very few individuals) of the UCP can be considered sustainable.

As mentioned above, the contribution of the VVOB program to gender equality and empowerment (in the areas of education, internal and external empowerment in particular) are of a rather indirect nature. In as far as such contributions might have been realised, they have a big chance to be sustainable.

In the OSB programme, solid evidence with regard to the sustainability of the achievements at the level of gender equality and women empowerment could not be gathered, as most indications of achievements in these areas are actually indirect. At HBFU level, progress with regard to gender leadership and awareness is well embedded in the organisation and to be leading to, at least, some sustainable progress in terms of women empowerment. The findings of the impact study in HBFU’s working area have identified important levels of progress in terms of women empowerment that seem to be solidly rooted in local society. Similar conclusions can be made with regard to THWU where economic progress and skills with regard to income generating activities provide a solid ground for empowerment of women at household and village level. The strong position of the WU provides in addition an ‘umbrella’ to safeguard progress made in this area, as does the national law on gender equality that provides a action plan towards gender equality, which is taken up seriously at the local level. Contextual developments (climate change, modernisation of the agricultural sector that goes against the interests of small farmers) seem to constitute the major threat for sustainability in this area.

SEQAP’s major contribution to impact and gender equality is obviously situated in the area of education. Girls (but also boys) in predominantly poor areas of the country, often belonging to ethnic minority groups, are provided better quality education leading (most probably) to improved learning outcomes which will contribute to the empowerment of girls. On a broader level, the program contributes to the mainstreaming of FDS in Vietnam, which is also to be considered as an important contribution to improved schooling for girls and boys. It is however doubtful that Vietnam will substantially
increase its budget for education in the future\textsuperscript{62}, whereas there are still many needs to be covered. This implies that the involvement of local communities and government institutions will be crucial to maintain the present level of quality or to further improve this.

In many schools, SEQAP managed to increase interest, commitment and contributions (in kind and in cash) from local authorities and parents. Discussions at the local level indicated that school managers were confident that the same level of involvement from third parties will be maintained after SEQAP will have pulled out. The fact that there have been serious delays in SEQAP implementation entails however the danger that local systems have to be put in place too hastily, which eventually can affect implementation.

The outcomes achieved in the ACC project with regard to gender equality and women empowerment have a high chance to become sustainable, in view of the strong position of VWU at the national and decentralised levels and, above all, of its well developed skills and access to funding with regard to micro-credit and the capacity of the VWU to continue this program in the future.

The end of project evaluation of the TH project is positive about the project achievements, which address practical needs of women, but stresses the importance to ensure continuity of several key actions, related (among others) to awareness raising and information sharing, income generation and institutional arrangements. The visit to Tuy Hoa confirmed the determination of the city and provincial authorities to at least maintain the present level of service delivery (adequate solid waste collection and disposal) and authorities at these levels seem capable and committed to ensure adequate funding for these activities.

On a broader scale, Tuy Hoa city is one of the most vulnerable cities in Vietnam with regard to climate change. The city is located close to the sea and already now faces periodically (on average three times a year) flooding that affects the city communes located close to the sea. While the city seems to have developed quite effective disaster mitigation plans, it is clear that this problem can only become more important in the future and might require more substantial protection measures on the medium term.

\textbf{J.C. 4: Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women}

The VVOB program has only provided minor contributions in this area, which have a chance to be sustainable, as they are well owned at the local decentralised level of VWU chapters and parents clubs.

Only partial evidence with regard to achievements at this level could not be gathered in the OSB program, but the inclusion of attention for gender violence in the HBFU and THWU seems to be firmly embedded. The impact study in the HFBU working area has brought findings that allow some optimism with regard to the sustainability of the impact achieved in terms of reducing and preventing domestic violence.

The progress achieved with regard to the decrease of domestic violence in ACC seems to be sustainable as its key factor, the economic progress of women, is also sustainable.

\textsuperscript{62} On average, the state budget allocated to education sector is relatively high (20\% in 2013 of 6600 bill VND) in comparison with others sectors (e.g. culture and information-only 1,8\%; science and technology- only 2\%). However in 2014 it is informed that the budget allocated for the sector will be reduced to 6000 bill VND. http://vnexpress.net/tin-tuc/giao-duc/giam-10-ngan-sach-chi-cho-giao-duc-nam-2014-2929540.html
4.5 Impact

It has not always been easy for the evaluation team to make a clear distinction between “planned” and “unplanned” impact, in particular with regard to positive results. Often projects have broadly formulated overall objectives to which they are meant to contribute in the long run to some extent. Sometimes also, such objectives were only implicitly aimed at, which made it difficult to apply a clear distinction between planned and unplanned impact.

1. Positive unplanned long-term results

As indicated above, the fact the women have occupied key positions in this project and been in charge of its implementation, implies that the UCP has provided chances to women to further develop their academic career and, hence, strengthen their position and that of women in general at university level in a scientific domain that is dominated by men.

The qualitative impact assessment in Hoa Binh (OSB program) has recorded several (more or less unintended) positive impacts: the success of agricultural activities has reduced work outside the area; and women are getting more responsibilities at household and community level which increases their workload but makes them also feel happier.

One of the SEQAP progress reports available discusses, quite lengthy, several negative developments in the education sector in Vietnam, in particular the increasing commercialization of education services (and related corruption), with negative impacts on poor and disadvantaged households that cannot pay for the cost of (quality) educational services. These disturbing evolutions are well described but it is not clear how important they are and to which extent SEQAP takes (or can take) them into account. The fact however that SEQAP explicitly focuses on poor areas and, to an important extent on ethnic minorities where girls are often in a disadvantaged position, to some extent mitigates the effects of the negative developments in the sector.

The qualitative impact assessment in Da Nang (ACC project) has clearly contributed to a higher level of performance of the local VWU chapter enabling it to convey more easily and widely its routine programs. Some women (in particular in urban settings) have also been able to diminish their reproductive tasks at home as they have the resources to buy equipment (for cooking, washing) and buy food from outside. The success of the loan program enabled the VWU to broaden its program and organize new activities such as excursions and cultural exchanges and festivals.

The TH project strengthened the local capacities, which has been a factor in setting up cooperation between the city and provincial authorities and an ADB project that is expected to further solidify and expand the project results.

2. Negative unplanned long-term results

No negative unplanned impacts have been noted in SEQAP, in the sense that the potentially negative impacts mentioned above – i.e. girls and boys have to take up household chores as well and, as such, might see their workload increase via the introduction of FDS, are considered as ‘planned’ negative impacts and, hence, are ‘accepted’.

Flaws in the design of the landfill constructed under the TH project (the team was told that because of budget limitations, compromises had to be made in terms of the design of the landfill) create a serious environmental danger, which only came to the surface
after the project closure. The spill over of highly toxic waste is presently threatening the livelihood of sixty families; the evaluation was informed that the problem will soon be addressed with Belgian support.

The qualitative impact analysis (OSB and ACC projects) found that, while many men are ready to engage in household jobs that were exclusively taken up by women in the past, this is not always the case. If so, women must often work harder if they want to combine their unpaid work at home with income generating activities; as such, many of them have no time for leisure and their social life might become poorer. The analysis mentions also the fact that some husbands are prone to negative reactions as they feel inferior in front of their partners’ economic success and increased respect. Some frustrated husbands also engage in drinking, which easily leads to (physical or oral) violence. Finally, in some areas the success of the project has sparked feelings of jealousy and frustration in nearby villages not included in the project.
5. Conclusions

This chapter starts with the presentation of the overall findings of this case study, which can be considered as an executive summary. The second section endeavours to present some key findings and lessons learned that cut across the various section of this evaluation and are meant to feed the formulation of lessons learned and recommendations at the synthesis level.

5.1 Overall findings

Framework of the evaluation

This case study is part of the thematic evaluation ‘Gender and development in Belgian Development Cooperation’. The evaluation object is the integration of gender in Belgian development cooperation with the aim to improve equality between men and women, and to improve the position of women. The evaluation aims at assessing (1) how and with which results the Belgian international cooperation integrates gender in its policies and sector strategies, as well as in the different cooperation channels, (2) how and with which results Belgium supports its partner countries and implementing partner organisations in integrating gender in their strategies and development programs, and (3) to draw lessons so as to perform better in the future. The achievement of these objectives should allow formulating recommendations with the view to improving the way gender is taken into account in development policies and strategies.

The Vietnam case study is one of the five country case studies conducted in the framework of this evaluation. Vietnam is the only country in Asia with which Belgium has concluded a bilateral cooperation agreement. The case study includes a country analysis that has been limited in scope, both with regard to the global development and the specific gender context. A small benchmark with the gender policies and practices of three other donors has also been part of the study. The main focus of the study has been on the analysis of a sample of seven interventions representing the different channels of Belgian development cooperation in the country: bilateral cooperation and budget support (three interventions), indirect cooperation via NGOs (one intervention), VVOB (one intervention), universities (one intervention) and BIO (one intervention).

The country context

The Human Development Index (2013) places Vietnam at the 127th position (out of 188 countries), while in the same year an estimated 28.9% of the population lived under the poverty threshold of 1.25 US$/day. Considering Vietnam’s relatively low GDP/capita, it has a relatively high HDI compared to Morocco and Bolivia, two other countries included in the evaluation study. Vietnam has experienced a fast social and economic growth over the last twenty years. Besides strong economic growth, the county has made impressive progress towards improving the health status of the population, with progress in terms of life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality that surpasses that of many countries of the region. Changes in the education sector provide a similar picture, in particular at the level of primary education with virtually universal primary enrolment. In addition, over the last quarter of a century and in line with the country’s socio-economic polices,
Vietnam’s politics and society have gradually evolved towards greater openness and space for civil participation. The country’s development success has implied that, since 2011, it belongs to the group of countries with a medium human development. The country is often cited as an example, among others because its achievement in terms of combining fast economic growth with prevailing equity.

A comparison of scores related to key gender indicators (SIGI, Gender Inequality Index, Gender Empowerment Measure) provides a differentiated picture. Vietnam stands out favourably as far as the gender inequality index and the gender empowerment measure are concerned, which points to a relatively strong participation of women in political and economic issues and relatively limited gender inequality in areas of health, empowerment and the labour market. Its relatively weak SIGI score most probably can be attributed to the high prevalence of domestic violence and restricted civil liberties.

In education, Vietnam has closed and even reversed gender gaps in primary, secondary and tertiary schooling, but major gender education gaps still exist among certain ethnic minority groups. A major concern remains the significant degree of segregation of men and women in their fields of study, which is connected to the significant segregation in terms of occupation and industry of employment. This situation is a key factor for still important gender differences in labour force participation and earnings, with men being better placed to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the growing economy. Women are also more found in vulnerable jobs and unpaid family labour, also because men still contribute significantly less to housework.

Vietnam has performed very well on the health front, including remarkable achievements on the two hardest-to-reach MDGs, child and maternal mortality. There is very little evidence of marked gender discrimination against girls in the areas of health and nutrition. However, Vietnam’s sex ratio at birth has risen from 106.2 boys per 100 girls in 2000 to 112.3 boys in 2012 and that this sharp trend continues to rise; this evolution clearly points to the fact that despite major socio-economic changes, cultural preferences for boys (and men) remain strong. Another worrying phenomenon, strongly rooted in Vietnamese culture (to a degree that it is even accepted by many women), is gender violence, which is believed to be widespread, particularly in the family context, and responsible for more than half of the divorces, despite the fact that many women prefer to remain in abusive marriages rather than to confront the social stigma and economic uncertainty that often follow divorce.

Women’s participation in social and political life still faces serious obstacles, including the unequal burden of unpaid work, strongly embedded perceptions against women taking up roles in public life and leadership positions. While the country has passed important laws and policies related to gender equality, these are often not well known.

**The country’s policy and legal framework to promote gender equality**

Vietnam is a signatory to human rights conventions which guarantee the equality between men and women such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and ILO conventions on equal remuneration and discrimination.

On the domestic front, the country has put in place major laws and policies to advance gender equality and address discrimination against women including the comprehensive Gender Equality Law (2006), Law on the prevention and control of domestic violence (2007) and the National Strategy and action program on Gender Equality (2011-2020), which is the first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equality in Vietnam to foster the implementation of the Gender Equality Law. This strategy marks the change of the national approach to gender equality from Women in Development to Gender and Development. It aims at to achieve, by 2020, substantive equality between men and women in opportunity, participation and benefits in the political, economic, cultural and social domains, contributing to fast and sustainable national development.
While much progress is made at the level of the policy and legal framework, the present situation contains several lacunae (such as the narrow focus of the 2007 law on domestic violence). In addition, implementation is lagging behind for various reasons, to a major extent linked with the difficulty of changing institutions and the values and perceptions of those who have to enact the law and strategies. The country’s institutions (including the NCFAW and VWU) undertake important efforts to speed up progress but face a lack of resources to do so effectively despite international support. A Gender Donor Group was established in Vietnam in 1999 already with the aim of promoting gender equality. The present Gender Action Partnership is considered rather as a (too) large network that does not engage in joint action but rather focuses on the exchange of information, often among those donors that are already ‘converted’ as far as gender promotion is concerned.

**Belgian cooperation with Vietnam: a short characterisation**

Vietnam is one of the 18 partner countries of Belgian bilateral development cooperation and presently the only partner country on the Asian continent. Belgium was among the first countries to engage in bilateral cooperation with the country when it opened up to the outside world. The ODA database has registered, over the period 2002-2012, a total of 221 interventions with expenses totalling €137 Million. Over the years, the relative importance of Belgium cooperation has decreased. Belgian ODA to Vietnam amounted to €17 million yearly in the period 2008-2010, whereby governmental cooperation accounted for more than half (around 58%) of the expenditure.

Early 2011 a new Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) with an indicative budget of €60 million was signed between the two countries, covering the period 2011 – 2015. In view of the alignment needs expressed by the Government of Vietnam, the desire for harmonisation with other partners and Belgium’s experiences in the country, the ICP opts to concentrate on two sectors, i.e. Water and Sanitation and Governance, with the intention to stay active in these sectors for three successive indicative programs (12 years). Gender is fairly well integrated in the ICP document, which refers among others to Vietnam’s gender equality law and national strategy. The document stresses the importance of making development as well as sectoral plans gender sensitive, but the short sectoral analyses in the document lack a gender analysis while formulating outcomes that take gender quality into account.

The actual integration of gender in the ICP implementation could not be assessed comprehensively, among others because the bilateral interventions included in the evaluation assessment were already started up before the 2011-2015 ICP and because of the lack of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The staff in charge of development cooperation at Embassy level accords the ‘required’ level of attention to gender so as to stay tuned with overall instructions in this regard. They however do not consider gender as a key issue in the present priority sectors and consider that gender is well addressed in the identification and formulation of new projects. There is however no monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming efforts and possible effects on women’s empowerment.

**Findings at the level of the seven interventions**

- **Relevance of the strategy note and coherence of the gender integration approach**
  The evaluation has not found any evidence of measures taken to ensure the effective dissemination and use of the strategy paper, which actually has never been translated into English, the working language of the development cooperation between Vietnam and Belgium. Consequently, neither the latest ICP (despite its efforts to integrate gender), nor the seven interventions (some of which implemented by organisations with a well elaborated gender policy) refer to the paper. While the strategy note has not played a direct role, at least not over the period 2008-2014, there is a high degree of coherence between the gender policies of both countries, for
instance between the strategy note and the 2006 Vietnam gender law and related strategy, which are also cited as references in the 2011-15 ICP.

The financing proposals of the seven interventions analysed integrate the needs and interests of women to varying degrees. Projects implemented by organisations that dispose of a clear gender policy (VVOB and OSB) take these needs and interests well into account in their proposals, whereas the two education projects (SEQAP and VAS) do not address specific needs and interests of girls, maybe because this is not that much an issue in Vietnam at the level of primary education. The TH project does not address specific women needs and interests either, whereas such needs and interests certainly exist in view of the project’s object. Finally, the ACC project is a special case, as it is implemented by VWU which since decades deals with the interests and needs of women; the project proposal’s focus is however framed in terms of the needs and interest of poor households, not particularly women.

The needs and interests of women have never guided the selection of a partner organisation, but in the case of OSB, partners should at least have an interest and commitment for gender.

• **Integration of gender in the project and programme cycle**

At the level of the bilateral projects and in the budget support program analysed, gender has in general not or only poorly been integrated in the different phases of the project cycle. Attention and concern for gender issues have been virtually absent in the TH project, with the exception of both the midterm review and end-evaluation that have dealt with gender to some extent. The ACC project shows a consistent focus on poor households, in particular on their women members, throughout the implementation cycle. The lack of a clear-cut gender approach is to some extent compounded by the strong embedding of the VWU chapters in local society and their acquaintance with women problems and interests. On the flip side, VWU’s WID (as opposed to gender) approach and the organisation’s rather conservative views on the role of women at household and society level, imply that gender is not integrated and gender equality is not explicitly aimed at.

The SEQAP appraisal documents have not integrated gender issues, whereas a social risk assessment was conducted verifying key access issues for poor, disadvantaged and ethnic minority children. Gender as such was not considered a key access issue, presumably because Vietnam already had achieved gender equality at the level of all key performance indicators in primary education. Consequently, gender has not been an issue either during implementation and monitoring either, notwithstanding the fact that routinely collected data pertaining to key performance indicators were sex-disaggregated. All this has implied that some gender issues related to the consequences of the introduction of Full Day Schooling did not receive the attention they deserved.

At the level of indirect cooperation, the picture is highly different among the projects included in the analysis. The integration of gender is actually not relevant in the UCP project that has a narrow engineering focus and has also been entirely absent in the VAS project where gender should have been integrated. Of all interventions analysed, those of VVOB and OSB score best in terms of gender integration, notwithstanding the fact a gender assessment was virtually absent in the screening of both program proposals. Gender has been well integrated in both organisations’ proposals, but that of OSB also has dealt with an assessment of the partners’ gender sensitiveness and capacity. A similar level of integration has been consistently maintained in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases, whereby VVOB experienced more difficulties to transfer gender integration practices at partner level. The experience of both organisations also points to the challenges related to ensuring and maintaining good quality at all levels (staff, approaches, …) and in all stages, as translating the usually generic gender tools into adapted instruments often constituted a big difficulty.
• **Contributions to gender equality and empowerment of women**

  **Enhancing gender expertise.** Not surprisingly, the four projects (UCP, SEQAP, TH, VAS) that, for different reasons, haven’t integrated gender in their cycles, haven’t undertaken any effort to enhance gender expertise either. VVOB has undertaken various efforts to strengthen gender expertise (via training, tool development, ...), both at the level of its local office, its partners and those reached by their program (teachers, school managers, ...). These efforts have been stepped up to a more coherent approach since the overall VVOB gender policy has come in place and after the (rather critical) gender review of March 2013. The institutional focus of its program implies however that its efforts might still be too thinly spread to create substantial differences. From its side, the OSB program has a strong focus on organisational strengthening whereby gender is a major consideration. Leadership at the level of the partner organisations has a good understanding of gender and specialised gender capacity has been developed to train cadres and members. Awareness raising deals among others with key gender issues (on labour and employment, domestic violence, existing gender biases in local cultures and practices, ...). The ACC project has engaged to an important degree in capacity building of its members, but expertise developed was related to micro-finance, not gender. The skills acquired have however empowered the VWU cadres trained and strengthened their autonomy.

  **Equitable access of women and girls to program benefits.** Exception made for the UCP, all interventions deal, directly or indirectly, with important or even priority needs of girls and women. The UCP project is however implemented by female academicians and this in a sector where women are a minority. The VVOB program has promoted ATL and a career guidance approach which both, among others, a place children at the centre and aim to enhance their self-confidence and autonomy, thereby trying to avoid gender stereotypes; the direct beneficiaries of the program (teachers, ...) are however predominantly men. The OSB program focuses on farmers (women and men) but women constitute the majority of the direct beneficiaries: the program combines its focus on agriculture with specific gender issues such as the fight against gender violence. The two educational programs (SEQAP, VAS) deal with priority needs for girls, as education is an important means to reach gender equality and empowerment; while the VAS provides bilingual education to children from the elite in Ho Chi Minh City, SEQAP focuses on disadvantaged areas and ethnic minorities where girls are often experience higher levels of marginalisation. The ACC program deals only with women and supports them to make true their economic aspirations as part of the broader VWU program that also covers a large range of social, political and cultural aims. The TH project deals with solid waste collection and disposal, which is an important practical need of women.

  **Contributions to changes in the lives of women and girls.** While the evaluation did not conduct in-depth impact analyses, strong indications have been found of contributions to gender equality and women empowerment.

  • **In the area of education**, the UCP, most probably unintentionally, has provided an opportunity for female academicians to engage in research in a faculty and area traditionally dominated by men; besides contributing to the researchers’ empowerment, a little contribution might be made to a better gender balance and less gender stereotyping in academic cycles. The VVOB program has produced institutional changes in education institutions and VWU with have improved quality of education and career guidance, and changes in parents clubs with positive changes for women and girls. SEQAP contribution is also situated in the area of improved educational quality (as noted via progress at the level of key indicators such as the percentage of girls eligible for grade six). With regard to formal education, it should however be noted that at all levels (from the grassroots till senior staff in ministries) there exist strong traditional convictions related to gender roles (pointing e.g. that women by nature are better teachers than men, that boys by nature are
stronger in maths than girls, ...), which can hamper efforts towards gender equality.

Awareness raising and technical training also have contributed significantly to women empowerment in some projects. The OSB project has reached important results in this regard, both in the field of agriculture, development policies and gender leading to increased gender awareness and changes in behaviour, which were also confirmed via the qualitative research undertaken. Similar findings were found in the ACC project where technical and business skills training, void of any gender content, eventually has led not only to increased skills of women, but also increased self-confidence, economic success and power, and a stronger position in the household and society (see below).

- In the area of health, a secondary but significant impact has been noted at the level of SEQAP, which provides for nutritious lunches as part of the introduction of Full Day Schooling, which compensate at least partially for the mediocre quality of meals poor students get at home. The TH project has contributed to a clearer environment and a correlated decrease of medical costs and to a substantial improvement of the working conditions of the group of (female) scavengers supported.

- In the economic field, the OSB end-of-project evaluation states that farmers (most of them women) have substantially improved their access to production means and agricultural income and contribution to reductions in poverty. The fact that women contribute more to the family income in many cases has led not only to increased self-confidence, but also (in some cases) to a more balanced division of household tasks whereas elsewhere the women's workload has increased (which women prefer however compared to the situation before). The ACC project has produced similar results, with similar effects on the role and status of women, both at the level of the household and the community.

- Internal empowerment of women. The two main educational projects (VVOB and SEQAP) included activities that are meant to foster the self-employment of the individual (girls and boys, women and men). There are indirect indications that these have contributed to internal empowerment, but those could not be substantiated, as an assessment would require in-depth research. The OSB and ACC programs, following a different path in terms of the promotion of women empowerment, have clearly contributed to internal empowerment. In the case of OSB a long-standing focus on women empowerment and women leadership via training and awareness raising has led to increased self-confidence and women showing 'bravery' (as quoted in the impact research) to stand up, change their habits and engage in social and economic activities. Similar results were recorded in the ACC program where success in the economic field (as a consequence of access to loans and business training) produced similar effects; again the long period of support via ACC and its predecessors seems to have played an important role. The TH project has achieved some modest results in terms of internal empowerment with the group of scavengers, but even so chances were missed to contribute to bigger impact.

- External empowerment of women. The findings are highly similar to those at the level of internal empowerment. The OSB and ACC programs produced the most significant results because of the nature of their action (in the economic sphere, combined with capacity building, conducted over a long period), which has allowed women to gradually overcome social, cultural and economic barriers to gain power and influence both at the level of their families and communities. In addition they contributed to increased women representation in political decision making bodies and stronger leadership, which in some districts outperforms that of their male counterparts. Finally, the impact research found evidence of a decrease in domestic violence as a consequence of the strengthened position of women. The integration of Full Days Schooling in the SEQAP program might have affected the empowerment of women
teachers and girls who have to combine longer school days with their household chores; on the positive side, the improved quality of education prepares the children better for the next steps in their lives. For the same reasons as mentioned above, the VVOB program might have led to increased empowerment of girls and women. The TH project has contributed to the external empowerment of the group of scavengers who now feel confident enough to approach local authorities to discuss issues related to their work and interest.

- **Change in attitudes, behaviour and power relations.** The VVOB program, via, on the one hand its focus on gender (avoiding stereotypes, …) and on the other hand the introduction of the ATL and a new career guidance approach, has contributed to changes in attitudes, behaviour and parents between teachers, parents and students (boys and girls), whereby the latter are empowered to make their own choices. SEQAP promotion of FDS implied major communication efforts with parents on the benefits of FDS which included progress in securing participation of girls in education to counter the widely prevailing conviction (in particular in poor areas) that ‘girls do not need to study long’, which might have a positive effect of girls attendance in secondary and higher education. The field research confirmed (via interviews of both women and men) that OSB’s consistent and combined efforts to promote gender and increase skills have led, at least in a number of cases, to changes in attitudes and behaviour, and most probably power relations, including more equality in the husband-wife relationship and decreased domestic violence (see also below). The ACC program produced similar results, as many women participating in the microcredit program successfully developed their business and are now gaining more respect from their family and in society. Changes seem to be more outspoken in urban than rural areas where women have more difficulties to induce a change process because of strongly embedded views and practices.

- **Decrease in and prevention of domestic violence.** Various programs produced an effect in this regard, whereas only the OSB program addressed it explicitly. Via its cooperation with the VWU and the promotion of parents clubs, in the VVOB program some attention goes to the issue of domestic violence, that is one of the standard themes addressed. The eventual effects of these efforts could not be assessed. The strongest effects with regard domestic violence are achieved in the OSB and ACC programs. OSB has integrated the issue as part of its gender awareness raising efforts and deals with it via its gender communicators or gender equality clubs. It is not clear how effective and ‘professional’ these efforts are, but the impact research in Hoa Binh recorded important progress, which was also attributed to overall women empowerment. It was also stated that the simple fact of addressing the issue regularly produces a preventive effect. The ACC program contribution to the reduction of domestic violence is rather indirect (i.e. not directly addressing the issue); via the program, the VWU is strengthened, which on its turn allows it to improve its regular program, which includes, among others, information campaigns on the Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Prevention Law. Furthermore, the economic progress achieved by many women members has generated clear empowerment effects (see above), which in many cases constitute an effective barrier against domestic violence.

• **Institutional commitment and resources.** The VVOB program has shown a strong institutional commitment and mobilized the necessary resources to promote gender. Since the issuance of the organisation’s policy in 2012, its gender commitment has become more coherent and strategic. While there are strong institutional incentives to pursue gender equality, the March 2013 external review still points to a lack of quality of the human resources in charge of gender promotion and that adequate tools to apply the strategy are lacking. As part of the Oxfam family, OSB implements the overall Oxfam strategy in which gender equality is a key objective. As such, there is a clear institutional commitment for gender promotion in the organisation and all
staff is supposed to dispose of the basic knowledge and skills related to gender. At the local level, there seems however to exist a need for simple tools and approaches that are better tailored to the local situation. The ACC program has no specific commitment and resources for gender but deals consistently with women from a ‘women in development’ perspective. The other programs (SEQAP, TH, UCP, VAS) have not earmarked resources for gender.

- **Sustainability of the ‘gender and development’ results achieved.** Only OSB and VVOB has clearly opted for integrating gender in the phases of their program cycle; in view of the institutional commitment for gender equality of both organisations, the sustainability of the results at this level are very high. The sustainability of the results achieved in terms of gender capacity building is varied: at the level of the VVOB program, the results achieved at the level of partner organisations seem to be too shallow and thinly spread to become sustainable. The situation is better at the level of the OSB program where OSB’s long standing efforts have created a ‘gender legacy’ at the level of both partner organisations, notwithstanding the lack of a clear approach and conceptual framework. Most importantly, the sustainability of the results with regard to gender equality and women empowerment is mostly well guaranteed. The education programs (VVOB, SEQAP, UCP, VAS) have produced rather indirect empowerment effects at the level of individuals, but these seem to be solidly acquired and will continue to contribute the beneficiaries’ empowerment. A similar conclusion can be taken as far as the (often) important results of the OSB and ACC programs in terms of gender equality, women empowerment and decrease of domestic violence are concerned, as local capacities at individual and organisational level have become well embedded so that no external support is needed. The TH project has contributed to solving some practical needs of women and seem to be sustainable in view of the city’s and province’s commitment to ensure continuity of the waste disposal and related sanitary services.

- **Unexpected impacts.** A limited number of positive unexpected impacts have been recorded, which mostly are in line with the overall objectives of the programs. They related, among others to more happiness- a better life – in successful programs (OSB, ACC) and increased institutional capacity of VWU to implement its regular programs. Negative unexpected impacts include the increase of workload for girls and teachers (SEQAP) and successful women entrepreneurs (ACC and OSB), as many men remain reluctant to engage in household work. A few cases are also mentioned of negative reactions (violence, excessive drinking) of men that are frustrated in view of their wives economic and social success.

### 5.2 Key conclusions and lessons learned

The following are a few key conclusions and lessons learned from this case study.

- Only two out of the seven interventions studied (OSB and VVOB) have clearly promoted the integration of gender with a view of promoting gender equality and women empowerment. A third intervention (ACC) has dealt nearly exclusively with the economic promotion of its women members using a ‘women in development’ approach, which eventually has also achieved important effects in terms of women empowerment. Only in one of the four remaining interventions (UCP) gender can be considered as not relevant, whereas in the three other interventions (SEQAP, TH, VAS) chances have been missed to integrate gender as a means to contribute to gender equality.

- While the seven interventions cannot be considered as a representative sample of the level of integration in Belgian development cooperation, it is clear that the institutional incentives that exist (the gender policy note; attention for gender in the appraisal process) have not played an important role in making the Belgian cooperation more engendered. The positive results achieved can be nearly
exclusively attributed to the policies and institutional commitment of the implementing organisations concerned (OSB, VVOB) or the specific characteristics of the partner organisation (VWU).

- In institutionally complex countries such as Vietnam, where Belgium’s presence as a bilateral donor is relatively limited or relatively unimportant (compared to that of other donors), Belgium cannot be expected to play a leading role in promoting gender in policy dialogue with the country. In view of the resource limitations, it seems more adequate in such situations to make a priority of the adequate integration of gender in the ICP cycle. Such process should start during the early preparation stages of a new ICP, focus on incorporating gender in strategic decisions related to the choice of sectors and sub-sectors and also include well operationalized mechanisms to follow-up the integration of gender in subsequent stages.

- Even for committed and well resourced organisations, the process of gender integration remains a challenge, which can be attributed in first instance to the rather abstract and complex notion of gender. Effective gender integration requires a substantial operationalization effort to translate generic aims, concepts and tools into concrete objectives and instruments, tools and procedures that are well adapted to the specific socio-cultural and organisational context. This process in most cases needs the support from specialised experts, which is not necessarily present in the implementing organisations themselves, even when they have a clear policy commitment to gender.

- Related to the previous point, one might wonder whether in the case of countries (or organisations) without a strong gender tradition and record, and with a weak practice of translating policies in practice, a “stand-alone” gender mainstreaming approach can be effective. The least that can be said is that a double-track approach within each sector would be clearly beneficial for effective gender integration and enhanced contribution to gender equality.

- Without underestimating the merits of Belgian organisations and their local partners, success in terms gender equality and women empowerment has been greatly enhanced by continued program activity over a relatively long period of time that goes beyond one financing cycle. In other words, even in cultural settings (as that of Vietnam) that are not heavily discriminating women, a prolonged and consistent commitment is needed to achieve sustainable impact in terms of gender equality.

- While violence against women is a major problem in present day Vietnam, it has hardly received any attention in the interventions analysed. Laudable efforts have been undertaken in the OSB program however, whereby actions to combat domestic violence were integrated in the global approach of gender awareness raising, agricultural skills enhancement and leadership building. While there are some doubts (in the OSB program) related to the quality of the approach followed at the local level, the qualitative impact research conducted has come across important improvements in this area. This evidence suggests that gender-based violence can be successfully dealt with as a specific action in technical programs where gender is consistently mainstreamed.

- The strongest evidence of progress towards women empowerment has been found in situations where women have been able to achieve economic progress. Such change induces self-confidence and virtually inevitably leads to a stronger position at household level, increased respect at community level and a more prominent role in society. Consistent awareness raising efforts such as undertaken by OSB certainly are valuable but seem only to bear fruits in as far as they are coupled with more tangible results such as increased production or income. On the other side is there evidence (ACC) that economic progress in itself leads to increased gender equality and women empowerment, without these being explicitly aimed at.
• Aspiring institutional change related to gender is truly challenging even in an institutional context that is relatively friendly as is the case in Vietnam, as VVOB’s experience illustrates. Changes at institutional level seem to require a coherent, consistent and intense effort over a long period of time, which requires important resources (funds, capacities) and a long-term institutional commitment.

• Indirect evidence has been gathered of educational programs (SEQAP, VVOB, UCP) and programs with an important technical training component (VVOB, ASB, ACC) contributing to women empowerment via the increased quality of the training and educational services provided. Considering the important resources devoted to education, training and capacity building, it is important (as was partially done) to ensure adequate gender mainstreaming in these programs and to try to record (as was never done) to which extent the efforts undertaken have contributed to empowerment of the beneficiaries (boys and girls, men and women).

• While the interventions analysed all score rather well in terms of reaching out to girls and women and in ensuring their access to the program’s benefits, few interventions (SEQAP is a notable exception) dispose of sex-disaggregated indicators and even less have invested in assessing regularly their outcomes. Outcomes in terms of gender equality and women empowerment are never followed-up and only rarely (and if so very partially) addressed in evaluations. This is actually a generic weakness of evaluations that for various reasons rarely succeed in generating new information and understanding at outcome level.
# List of annexes

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<th>Annex</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Analytical fiches of the interventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Annex 1: Key characteristics of the interventions included in the case study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Nr.</th>
<th>Original title</th>
<th>Organisation in charge of implementation</th>
<th>Sector code</th>
<th>Gender marker</th>
<th>Total expenses 2009 - 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3003210</td>
<td>Access to Coordinated credit and Enterprise Support Services - Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU)</td>
<td>BTC - Belgian Technical Cooperation</td>
<td>24040</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.366.975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3008463</td>
<td>Budget Support to &quot;School Education Quality Assurance Programme&quot; (SEQAP)</td>
<td>BTC - Belgian Technical Cooperation</td>
<td>11220</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.000.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000150</td>
<td>Improvement of water sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen Province</td>
<td>BTC - Belgian Technical Cooperation</td>
<td>14030</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.304.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3012204</td>
<td>OSS2 - Vers une amélioration durable du niveau de vie des petits paysans</td>
<td>NGO Oxfam - Solidariteit</td>
<td>31110</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>241.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3011031</td>
<td>BIO - Development Fund - Mekong II VAS - Vietnam</td>
<td>BIO - Mekong Capital</td>
<td>11110</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>241.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3012074</td>
<td>VVOB Education for development - Vietnam</td>
<td>VVOB -</td>
<td>11420</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.278.543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3008523</td>
<td>Project of University Development Cooperation Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motor bikes' exhaust gases</td>
<td>VLIR - Flemish Inter-university council</td>
<td>41020</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58.425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2: List of people met

- **DGD:**
  - Berbel Vrancken (D1.4)
  - Claire Terlinden (D3.4)
  - Leen Verstralen (D3.4)
  - Hazel Onckelinx

- **Belgian Embassy in Hanoi:**
  - Geert Vansintjan, Head of Delegation
  - Hà Phuong Loan

- **BTC:**
  - **in Belgium:**
    - Saskia Ravesloot
    - Julie Hertsens
    - Sophie Waterkeyn
  - **in Vietnam:**
    - Alain Deveaux, Resident representative
    - Tran Le Nam, Programme Officer
    - Ms. Huong, Programme Officer in charge of SEQAP

- **MOLISA:**
  - Ms. Va Ngoc Thuy, Dept. of Gender Equality

- **Project of University Development Cooperation - Own Initiative 2009 - Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes' exhaust gases**
  - **Belgium:** Prof. Isabel Van Driessche (phone interview)
  - **Hanoi:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Le Minh Thang, Vice Director and in charge of project implementation; Mr. Nguyen The Tien- Ph.D candidate of the project

- **VVOB Education for development - Vietnam program**
  - **Belgium:** K. Smets, program office; J. Fransen, Gender focal point
  - **Hanoi:** Nguyen Phuong Anh Country Programme Co-Manager; Ms. Thu Thuy, Gender Focal Point Officer
  - **Nghe An:** Ms Khanh, Staff of DOET, project coordinator and Gender Focal point; Mr. Dong- DOET inspectorate
  - **Quang Nam,** provincial level: Ms. Loi Chairman of WU; Ms Thuy, Vice Chairman and in charge of % million good mother project; Ms. Thuy Ha- Vice head of Propaganda Committee, Focal point staff of VVOB project; Ms Nguyet, Vice Office Manager and staff of VVOB project
  - **Quan Nam, Phú Ninh District; Tam Phước commune, Kỳ Phú Village:** Club of Live and Education: Ms. Tam- Chairman of Commune WU; Ms Pho- Vice Chairman of Commune People Committee; and about 10 women and men - members of the club

- **Towards a sustainable improvement of the life of small farmers (OSB)**
  - **Belgium:** Hilde Van Regenmortel, Joelle Plumerel
  - **Hanoi:** Fabrice Vandeputte- Regional Programme Coordinator; Ms Nguyen Thi Le Na- Program Officer for the project
  - **Hoa Binh,** provincial level: Ms. Ho Kim Hang, Vice chairman of Famer Union; Mr Quach Dinh Nhac, Head of organisation committee; Ms Pham Kim Thoa, Communication officer; Mr. Hoang Hung, Project Coordinator
  - **Hoa Binh, Tan Lac District, Phong Phu Commune:** Mr. Bui The Dan, Chairman of District FU; Mr. Bui van Tuyen, chairman of commune FU; Ms Bay, Head of Agriculture Cooperative; Ms Nhung, Communicator of Commune Muong Khien,
village Muong Khe; Mr Bui van La, Chairman of Muong Khe FU; Mr. Bui Van Thuan, Core Trainer/Communicator; 8 Core Trainers; 4 Communicators and 4 Consultants on Domestic Violence

- **Hoa Binh, Lac Son District, Huong Nhuong Commune**: Mr. Bui Van On, Vice Chairman of District FU; Mr. Bui van Tuyen, Vice chairman of Communist Party of the commune; Mr. Bui van Dat, Head of the village Chum; Mrs. Bui Thi Dan, Vice chairman of the commune

- **Ha Tinh Province, Thach Ha District WU**: Mr. Lê Xuân Huyên- Chairman of Father Front; Mr. Phan Huu Tuat- Vice chairman of Advance for women committee; Mr. Nguyen Luong Lich- Vice Chairman of District People Committee; Ms. Xuan- Project coordinator; Ms An- Vice Chairman of District WU; Ms Tran Mai Hoa- THUW staff; Ms. Huyen- Chairman of Thach Van WU; Ms Buoi, Chairman of Thach Dan WU; Ms Ngoc-Chairman of Thach Hai WU; Ms Hoa, Chairman of Thach Tri WU and women members from all 4 communes

**Access to Coordinated credit and Enterprise Support Services - Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU)**

- **Hanoi**: Mrs. Cao Thị Hồng Vân, Project Director; Ms Le, Project Director Assistant

- **Da Nang city**: Ms. Huyễn, Former Project accountant and Office Manager of the City Women Union at present; Ms. Y- Former Staff with MB (credit updating software); Ms. Vu Thị Ngoc, Head of Hải Châu 2 ward's Women Union

- **Dông Tapol provincial level**: Ms. Nguyễn Thị Thu Thuy, Former Project Manager and Chairman of Provincial Women Union; Ms. Nguyễn Thị Thu Thao, Former Project Staff in charge of MB software

- **Dông Tapol ward level**: Ms Phuong, Head of project unit at sub village 2; Ms Thuy-Head of project unit at sub village 2; Ms Diep, Head of Project unit at sub village 3; Ms Dao- member of Commune WU; Ms No, Chairman of Ward WU and former cashier of the project; Ms Bach Mai, project beneficiary; Ms Tam, Vice chairwomen of the Ward communist party and former Head of Project at the Ward

**SEQAP**

- **Ha Noi**: Mr. Trần Đình Thuan, Project Manager; Mr. Truong Thanh Hai- Project Coordinator, Mr. Hans Lambrecht, Budget Support Advisor

- **Quang Nam provincial level**: Mr. Thang- Director of DOET; Lê văn chính, Vice Director of DOET; Mr. Nguyễn Khánh Tú, head of Primary Education Division; Ms. Nguyễn Thị Thu, Head of Finance and Planning division, Mr. Trần Xuan Quang, Project Coordinator; Mr. Hồ Văn Hưng, Vice head of the Department Office.

- **Quang Nam, Hiep Duc District**: School Nguyen Ba Ngoc: Mr. Ngô Ngọc Quốc, Vice head of BOET; Mr. Uyen; Mr. Bon, Staff of the BOET; Mr. Đông-Chairman of Commune; Mr. Ban, Parents Representative; Ms. Minh, School Principal

- **Nghe An provincial level**: Mr. Vinh, Vice director of DOET and Present Project Manager; Mr. Son, Vice head of Primary Education in charge of SEQAP; Ms. Binh, Vice Head of Division in charge of Project; Mr. Manh, Project Coordinator

- **Dông Thap province, Cao Lanh city**: Mr. Trần Thanh Liêm, Vice Director of DOET; Mr. Nguyễn Văn Huyen, Vice Head of Primary education division of the DOET; Mr. Vui, Vice Chairman of the City people Committee; Mr Le Thanh Hung, Head of Cao Lanh City BOET; Ms. Thuy, School Principal; Mr. Phu, Coordinator of the SEQAP in Dong Thap; Representative of Commune and several parents; 6 Principals of schools

**Improvement of water sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen Province**

- **Representatives of the province, city and Urenco Company**: Mr. Trần Trung Trực, Environment Division of DONRE; Mr. Hung, DOHA; Ms. Tran Minh Tiep, Vice Chairman of City WU; Mr. Phuc, Vice Office Manager of PPC; Mr Le Hoai
Anh, Division of Foreign Relationship of DPI; Mr. Nguyen Van Dong, Vice Director of DOC; Mr. Nguyen Thai Son, Vice Head of Investment Division of DOF; Mr. Toan, Director of Phu Yen Urenco; Mr. Hung, Vice Director of Phu Yen Urenco; Mr. Duy- Staff of Phu Yen Urenco; Ms. Huyen, Project Accountant

- Scavengers association: Ms. Hai- Chairman of the Association; Ms. Hong- Secretary of the Association
- VWU chapter of Tuy Hoa: Ms. Nguyen Thi Tuong Vi- Chairman of City WU; Ms. Tiep- Vice Chairman of City WU

- BIO - Development Fund - Mekong II VAS - Vietnam
  - Belgium: Mr. Eric Van den Bosch, BIO
  - Ho Chi Minh City: Mekong Capital: Ms Truong Dieu Le- Director of Operations in HCM city

- Representatives of other donors
  - Canada:
    - Ms. Victoria Sutherland, Deputy Director, Counselor
    - Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Nuong
  - Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID)
    - Ms. Silvia Vaca Sotomayor, Program Director
    - Ms. Ana de Mendoza Barbera
  - United Kingdom: DFID
    - Ms. Than Thi Thien Huong, Social Development Advisor

- Other resource persons:
  - Ms. Pham Thu Hien, gender expert
Annex 3: List of most important documents consulted

Global documentation:

- UNDP, Human Development Report 2013
- The World Bank, Vietnam Country Gender Assessment
- ADB, Viet Nam: Gender Situation Analysis, 2005
- ODI, Viet Nam’s progress on economic growth and poverty reduction, 2011
- NCAFW, Women and Progress, No. 1, March 2014
- Government of Vietnam, National Strategy on Gender Quality for the 2011-2020 period
- Indicative Cooperation Programme between Vietnam and Belgium, Period 2011 – 2015
- Saskia Ravesloot, Engendering the ICP in Vietnam (2011-2015), March 2011
- Luke Hunt, Vietnam’s Gender policies take a progressive turn, The Diplomat
- SIGI, http://genderindex.org/
- Le Thi Hong Hai and Tran Thi Van Nuong, Evaluation Report, Some key findings from the qualitative research in Hoa Binh and Da Nang

Key documents related to the interventions analysed:

- Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases:
  - VIIR-UOS, Format for the annual activity report and the final activity report TEAM/Own Initiatives
  - VIIR-UOS, Vietnam strategy document, January 2012
  - Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases, Own Initiative Proposal, 2009
  - Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases, Annual Activity Report, October 2009 – September 2010
  - Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases, Annual Activity Report, October 2010 – September 2011

- VVOB Education for Development – Vietnam
  - VVOB, Multi-year programme 2011-2013
  - VVOB, Specifiek Uitvoerings- en Opvolgingsverslag 2011
  - VVOB, Specifiek Uitvoerings- en Opvolgingsverslag 2012
  - VVOB, Mainstreaming Gender Quality, August 2012
  - VVOB, Workshop Report Gender Debrief for VVOB Vietnam staff in Hanoi office, April 2010
  - Le Van Son, Gender Review Report, March 2013
  - Le Van Son, Workshop Report, Gender Debrief for VVOB Vietnam staff in Hanoi office, April 2013
Towards a sustainable improvement of the living of small farmers (OSB)

- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Specific Objective 2 – Vietnam
- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Technical file Hoa Binh Farmers Union
- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Technical file Ha Tinh Farmers Union
- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Technical file Thach Ha district Women’s Union
- Narrative Report 2011 – Country Programme, Specific Objective 3 – Vietnam
- Narrative Report 2012 – Country Programme, Specific Objective 3 – Vietnam
- Dr. Trinh Tien Dung, et al., Final Program Evaluation – Vietnam, OSB, June 2013-12-23

School Education Quality Assurance Program (SEQAP)

- Report on SEQAP performance of Quang Nam province’s Department of Education and Training, March 2013
- Report on SEQAP performance of Quang Nam province’s Department of Education and Training, March 2013
- Report on SEQAP performance of Cao Lãnh City’s BOET, March 2013
- Report on SEQAP performance of Hoa Thuan’s Primary School of Cao Lãnh City, March 2013
- J.M.R. Cameron, Tran Thi Bich Lieu, et al., A SEQAP Case Study to Review the Comparative Performance of Schools, January 2014-03-22
- DFID, Project Completion Review, School Education Quality Assurance Programme (SEQAP), January 2014
- SEQAP, Results and outcome matrix
- SEQAP Mid Term Review, Wrap up Meeting, April 2013
- Ministry of Education and Training, SEQAP, Progress Report 6, August 2013
- SEQAP, Aide-Memorial of the 6th Review Mission, September 2013
- SEQAP, Progress Report 5, September 2012
- SEQAP, Progress Report 3, August 2011
- SEQAP, Aide-Memorial of the Review Mission, September 2010
- Gauthier de Woelmont, Paul Verlé, Technical Note SEQAP, August 2009

Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services (ACC)

- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, DTF
- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, Annual Report 2010
- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, Annual Report 2011
- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, Final Report, end 2012
- Final Evaluation, Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services

Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen Province

- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Identification report
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Technical and financial file
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, annual report 2007
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Mid-term review report, August 2009
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Annual report 2009
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Progress report nr. 6
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Final report
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, End of project evaluation report, December 2010
- Assessment of Project performance on its operation-by Phu Yen’s Urban Environment Company, March 2014

• **Bio Development Fund – Mekong II VAS**
  - BIO: basic information on website (www.bio-invest.be)
  - BIO: checklist Business Plan
  - BIO development Review 2010, March 2011
  - Evaluatie van de Belgische Investeringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden (BIO), Fase 1, Augustus 2012
  - Mekong Capital: basic information on www.mekongcapital.com
  - Mekong Enterprise Fund II, 3Q13 Quarterly Report for the period ended 30 September 2013
  - Mekong Capital, Vietnam Australi International School and Mekong Enterprise Fund II partner to empower Vietnam’s future generation
  - VAS: basic information on website (www.vas.edu.vn)
  - Ondernemen tegen armoede? Het Belgisch Investeringsfonds voor Ontwikkelingslanden (BIO) onder de loep, 11.11.11 dossier
Annex 4: Analytical fiches of the interventions

See next pages.
Evaluation of the action searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases

1. Key characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action title</th>
<th>Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention code DGD</td>
<td>3008523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and sub-sector</td>
<td>41020 Environmental protection – Biosphere protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid modality</td>
<td>Project aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective start of action</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Envisaged) end of action</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian organisation in charge of implementation</td>
<td>VlIR-UOS – Ghent University, Faculty of Science, Dept. of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>Hanoi University of Technology; Hanoi Advanced School of Science and Technology, Nano-science and Nanotechnology Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (€)</td>
<td>293.751 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (ODA data base)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex ante)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex post)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Concise description of the action

2.1 Context (country and region, sector, …)

Vietnam, which currently ranks 101 out of 162 countries in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI), has been going through a transition from a centrally planned to a socialist-oriented market economy for three decades. Since Đổi mới, the renovation drive set in motion by the Sixth Party Congress in 1986, the country has undergone spectacular economic growth while gradually transitioning from a centrally led to a market economy. It strives to become an industrialized nation by 2020. Yet, Vietnam is still a poor country, with 21.5% of the population living on less than $1.25 a day in 2006. The country has a population estimated at about 89 million (2009) and is divided into 8 regions, 63 provinces, 560 districts and 10,320 communes. Due to the finite supply of arable land and the scarcity of non-agricultural employment opportunities in rural areas, rural-urban migration is on the rise. While the urban population currently represents some 23-25% of the total population, it is expected that this share will rise to 40% by 2015.

2.2 Rationale

Motorbikes are presently the main way of transportation, causing very heavy environmental pollution, the emitted exhaust gases exceeding the standard 1.5 – 5 times; at the moment of the submission of the proposal, the yearly increase of motorbikes was between 15 and 30%. Although the government wishes to reduce the pollution by funding some research projects on catalysts for the treatment of automobile exhaust gases and introducing some foreign companies to bring catalytic converters to apply for motorbikes in Vietnam, the research is still not effective and the application is difficult. The reason is that the most effective components of the existing catalytic
converters are noble metals, causing high costs. Moreover, the application of a converter into a motorbike requires special designs of its exhaust pipe, therefore the motorbikes which are in use are not able to be fitted with a catalytic converter. In that sense, the daily use of these motorbike converters for persons with low income is not convenient. Finally, foreign producing companies import most motorbikes to Vietnam where they are only assembled; these companies show no interest in developing new products (such as catalysers) in Vietnam itself.

This project intends to give an answer to these problems by searching for novel catalyst systems, based on scientific research of new mechanisms for catalytic activity based on new and improved material design. To that effect, the project also interacts with other related university based research initiatives.

2.3 Major objectives

The academic overall objective of this project is contributing to equip and train human resources for a new established institute on advanced science and technology in Vietnam in order to help this institute to reach a high international standard level and so improve the independent and sustainable growth of the institute in particular and of the HUT research at broader level. The development overall objective of this project is reducing the emission of polluted exhaust gases from motorbikes in Vietnam and contributing to improve life quality of citizens at developing countries.

The academic specific objective of this project will be obtained by the research of two PhD’s on the field of catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases. The students will be employed to work at the institute after their graduation. The developmental specific objective of this project is obtaining novel, effective and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases.

The expected results and deliverables of the project include: novel and effective catalysts for the treatment of motorbike exhaust gases, qualified PhD diplomas, publications in international peer-reviewed journals, conference contributions and preparatory input for patents.

2.4 Institutional setup

Ghent University and the Department of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry take the main responsibility in organisational and administrative set-up. This department will take the overall coordination of the project through the Flemish promoter and the administrative secretary. Hanoi Advanced School of Science and Technology, Nano-sciences and Nanotechnology Laboratory will take the specific responsibility in implementing the project. The activities will be managed by the local promoter but will be monitored by Hanoi Advanced School of Science and Technology. Most of project’s activities will be planned and performed at this laboratory, but all of the activities must be approved by the Flemish promoter and Ghent University prior to implementation.

3. Relevance and coherence

3.1 To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

**Extent to which the project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account**

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63 For the rating of most judgement criteria and indicators, a four-points scale has been used: +++/+/-+-/-- (very good, good, modest, bad); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
No reference is made in the project proposal to the strategy paper, but this can be understood in view of the problem addressed by the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score relevance</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

**Extent to which the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter are integrated in the financing proposal**

The specific (if any) needs and interests of women are not integrated in the financing proposal, but it seems hard to find any specific need or interest in this specific area. The financing proposal includes a section (under 'specific factors pertaining to project sustainability') related to 'financial, economic, technological, environment and gender considerations, but no reference to gender is made in this section.

**Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)**

N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The financing proposal integrates the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score coherence</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Effectiveness

#### 4.1 Evaluation question 3: To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men")?

JC: The Belgian cooperation has integrated gender in the project/programme cycle⁶⁴

1. **Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action** (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)

The proposal submitted for funding has been drafted along a predetermined format, which contains a tiny section where gender issues can be addressed. This has however not been done, presumably as the nature of the project implies that 'gender' is not a relevant issue.

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⁶⁴ For this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
2. **Extent to which the financing proposals includes a gender analysis** (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)
The proposal does not include a gender analysis for the obvious reasons mentioned above.

3. **Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)**
The logical framework does not include objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific.

4. **Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal**
The assessment of the proposal does not contain a section on gender.

5. **Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**
Gender has not been included in the implementation of the action.

6. **Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**
Gender has not been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action.

7. **Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**
No evaluation of the project has been conducted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which gender the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall score related to the integration of gender in the action cycle | n.a. |

4.2 Evaluation question 4: To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

**JC 4.1:** Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional
organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing gender expertise

1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations
N.a.

2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations
N.a.

3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall score related to effectiveness related to capacity building efforts
N.a.

JC4.2: The partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of realising progress towards gender equality and women empowerment

1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

3. Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&amp;D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support).

Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support).

Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to effectiveness related to institutional strengthening</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JC 4.3: The process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has ensured equitable access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes

1. Degree to which the envisaged benefits of Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy

The reduction of exhaust gases of motorbikes is an important though not a priority issue for women; the problem addressed has no direct link with gender relations.

2. Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products

Both the Belgian and the Vietnamese promoter of this own initiative are women and one of the two PhD’s realized in the framework of this project has been a woman. As such, one can state that the project, most probably unintentionally, has strengthened the involvement of female academic staff and students in academic domains that are traditionally dominated by men.

In case the project reaches its longer-term result, the use of a relatively cheap catalyser in motorbikes, it will benefit to both men and women who both are users of motorbikes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to access of women and girls to program benefits</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JC 4.4: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3)

1. Changes in the area of education

The project, most probably unintentionally, has provided an opportunity for female academicians (the two project promoters and a female PhD student) to engage in a research that can be considered highly relevant in view of Vietnam’s present needs and environmental challenges. As such, the project will have contributed to a stronger presence (and or a strengthening of the position) of female academicians, at least at the level of Hanoi University. Indeed, while the percentage of Vietnamese female students is on the increase in traditionally male dominated faculties such as that of technology and engineering, there still seem to exist barriers for women to develop their career in these faculties, as men are stereotypically considered to have more and better technical abilities and favourable conditions for the career development in the field.
On the other side and in a broader context, women have good chances to develop their career in academic settings as men tend to opt more for careers in the better paying private sector. Women academicians continue however to face challenges to access to key management positions in university notwithstanding the government policy to set quota for women in such positions. In addition, taking up management responsibilities brings additional challenges for women academicians who often remain in charge of many tasks at the level of their family.

2. Changes in the area of health
It can be expected that, in case the project is successful, it will produce on the long run an impact on the health conditions, in particular in cities, via the reduction of the emission of exhaust gases. In that case, both women and men will benefit from this positive impact.

3. Changes in the economic field
N.a.

4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women
The project has contributed to the internal empowerment of the women academicians involved in the project.

5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women
The project has contributed to the external empowerment of the women academicians involved in the project.

6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>1. Changes in the area of education</th>
<th>N.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Changes in the area of health</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Changes in the economic field</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall score related to effectiveness in the area of women empowerment | - |

JC 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women

1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence
N.a.

2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| General score for effectiveness in the area of the reduction and prevention of | N.a. |
5. Efficiency

Evaluation question 5: To what extent does the Belgian international collaboration have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?

_CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors_
N.a.

_CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors_
N.a.

_CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration_
N.a.

_CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)_
The project promoter is a woman and so is her Vietnamese counterpart. They have been jointly in charge of the management of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score for efficiency</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Sustainability

Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?

_JC1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle_  
N.a.

_JC2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building_  
N.a.
**JC3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)**

The contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (limited to a few individuals) can be considered sustainable.

**JC4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women**

N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score for sustainability**

n.a.

### 6. Impact

**Evaluation question 8: What are the unexpected long-term results (positive and negative) of the interventions in the context of the Belgian ODA that target gender equality (gender policy marker value 1 and 2)?**

1. **Positive unplanned long-term results**

As indicated above, the fact the women have occupied key positions in this project and been in charge of its implementation, implies that this project has provided chances to women to further develop their academic career and, hence, strengthen their position and that of women in general at university level in a scientific domain that is dominated by men.

2. **Negative unplanned long-term results**

No negative unplanned long-term results have been identified.

### Annexe: List of most important documents consulted

- VIIR-UOS, Format for the annual activity report and the final activity report TEAM/Own Initiatives
- VIIR-UOS, Vietnam strategy document, January 2012
- Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases, Own Initiative Proposal, 2009
- Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases, Annual Activity Report, October 2009 – September 2010
- Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes’ exhaust gases, Annual Activity Report, October 2010 – September 2011
Evaluation of the action VVOB education for development - Vietnam

1. Key characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action title</th>
<th>VVOB Education for Development - Vietnam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention code DGD</td>
<td>3012074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and sub-sector</td>
<td>11420 – Education – Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid modality</td>
<td>Indirect (other than NGO) program support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective start of action</td>
<td>January 2011 (continuation of earlier program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Envisaged) end of action</td>
<td>December 2013 (but new program being prepared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian organisation in charge of implementation</td>
<td>VVOB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Training; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ministry of Planning and Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (€)</td>
<td>1.282.565 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (ODA data base)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex ante)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex post)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Concise description of the action

2.1 Context (country and region, sector, ...)

VVOB started its cooperation with Vietnam in 1992. Since the early years of the cooperation, the programme focused on the sectors of basic education, lower secondary education (LSE) and agricultural extension. VVOB’s cooperation strategy is based on a set of key principles, which include, for its Education programme, the alignment with the national education policy (with the innovation of the curricula and the training of the teachers as the most important strategies, as well as the reinforcement of social participation in education). VVOB has chosen to make clear geographical choices by concentrating its efforts in the Northern and Central provinces so as to contribute to more equality with regard to quality of education (fight against increasing differences of quality between urban and rural areas).

As far as its Agricultural Extension programme is concerned, the March 2010 Government decree on agricultural extension is taken as a reference; this decree deals with important issues related to participative extension including the development of grass root extension networks, focus on producer needs, development of demonstration models that meet the needs of (among others) small scale farmers and the development of the technical and methodological capacity of extension officials. Geographically, as far as this component is concerned VVOB has opted to work in the southern part of the country where the need for participative extension methods is more pronounced than in the North (where several important project were and are implemented).

As part of its commitment, since 2011, to further professionalize, VVOB took the decision to reduce the diversity in its programmes worldwide and to opt for interventions in three sectors: early childhood, primary education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training. As a result, the organisation’s involvement in the Agricultural Extension has been stop(ped).
2.2 Rationale

The choice for the two sub-sectors builds on VVOB’s strong tradition in the sector, which has allowed it to understand the dynamics, challenges and constraints of both sub-sectors the organisation is involved in. The multi-year programme components and sub-components are clearly aligned the country’s policy priorities, which on their turn address key challenges and constraints in the education and agricultural extension domains respectively. As such the program has a clear innovative focus with the ambition to deal with key constraints in both sub-sectors and promote innovative approaches and methods to that effect.

2.3 Major objectives

The program is focused on two sectors but has three components, each with a specific intervention logic.

The education program has the following objectives:

- **Overall objective**: Communities, teachers and educational managers of LSE (lower secondary education) improve the quality of education through an increased use of ATL (Active Teaching and Learning) and a strengthened link between school and communities.
- **Specific Objective**: DOET (Department of Education and Training at provincial level), TTI (Teachers Training Institute) and Mass Organisations of 5 provinces have the capacity to jointly promote and support the use and institutionalization of ATL in LSE in view of improving the quality of education within the framework of the CFS (Child Friendly School) movement.
- **The outputs** of the program are:
  - DOET supports the use of ATL at provincial, district and school level.
  - TTI are delivering teachers that can apply ATL (in EE and other subjects including ICT for teaching and learning).
  - Mass Organizations are promoting/facilitating participation of the community in education with focus on ATL.

The Agricultural Extension program has the following objectives:

- **Overall Objective**: Farmers, agricultural extension workers and management of agricultural extension services improve the quality of agricultural extension through an increased use of participatory methods.
- **Specific Objective**: DARD (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at provincial level), AEC (Agricultural Extension Centres) and Mass Organisations of 5 provinces have the capacity to jointly promote and support the use and institutionalization of participatory approaches in agricultural extension in view of improving the quality of agricultural extension.
- **The outputs** of the program are:
  - AEC/AES (Agricultural Extension Stations) are incorporating PTD (Participatory Technology Development) in their regular extension activities.
  - The mass organizations are active and fully involved in the network that provides support to agricultural extension and they support / promote the use of participatory extension methodologies.

The third component of VVOB’s cooperation strategy in Vietnam, the TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) was new and as such its objectives still rather indicative:

- **Overall objective**: Communities, teachers and educational managers of SE improve the quality and relevance of vocational education through improved career guidance and appreciation of the value of vocational education by communities.
- **Specific objective**: DOET, schools and mass organisations of 5 provinces have the capacity to jointly improve quality and relevance of vocational education by improving the career guidance in SE. In view of this objective
- **The programme envisions the following three outputs**
2.4 Institutional setup

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Planning and Investment together with the National Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Centre (NAFEC) became the main strategic partners of VVOB for its 2008 – 2013 program. For each of the three program components, clear implementation arrangements have been agreed upon with the competent government bodies and mass organisations (the Women’s Union and the Youth Union)

3. Relevance and coherence

3.1 To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

_Extent to which the project proposal refers to the strategy paper_

The 2011-2013 program proposal does not refer to the strategy paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score relevance</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

_Extent to which the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter are integrated in the financing proposal_

The financing proposal addresses gender issues in both sectors (Education and Agricultural extension) that are part of the program. The analyses presented are not comprehensive but touch nevertheless upon highly important issues related to the needs and interests of women. E.g. as far as the education sector is concerned, the analysis points to some concerns with regard to gender imbalances in educational attainment and enrolment, in particular among particular ethnic minority groups. Further, the large gender bias in training and education staff (78% are women) is referred to. In the agricultural extension sector analysis, it is stated that there is not enough recognition for the important role women play in agriculture, that women’s workload is often substantially higher, that women are underrepresented in training events, etc. As there is an important excess of labour in agriculture, many men opt for seasonal migration, which contributes to the feminisation of agriculture and temporarily female-headed

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65 For the rating of most judgement criteria and indicators, a four-points scale has been used: ++/+-/-/+-/--- (very good, good, modest, bad); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.

66 Note that the data presented here are not confirmed by the SEQAP (and other) data as far as enrolment is concerned; the explanation is that both projects used different data. SEQAP had access to unofficial WB data while VVOB worked with official MOET statistics.
households. It is stated that agricultural extension should take into account the broader context in which women live.

**Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)**

VVOB has a policy of engaging in partnerships with government agencies and to strengthen their capacities to better perform and ensure their services. In the case of Vietnam, the VVOB Vietnam education programme is designed to build the capacity of three partners: Departments of Education and Training (DOET), Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) and the Women's Union (WU). The programme targets at management, trainers and implementers (principals, teachers, college lecturers, club leaders and facilitators) and focuses on the partners’ capacity to use ATL. In the case of the other programme components (agricultural extension, career guidance), similar choices are made. As such, the specific interest and needs of women are not taken into account in the selection of the partner organisations. The selection of the WU is based predominantly on the capacity of the Union to reach out to the beneficiaries level and to spread particular messages and programmes. In addition, the selection may also come from the fact that in Vietnamese perception and cultural context, taking care of children and their study are considered as gifted works and interest for the women most of them are the Union’s member.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The financing proposal integrates the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter</td>
<td>+−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>−−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score coherence</td>
<td>+−</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Effectiveness

4.1 Evaluation question 3: To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men")?

**JC: The Belgian cooperation has integrated gender in the project/programme cycle**

*Important initial remark*

Since august 2012 VVOB disposes of a gender policy (Mainstreaming Gender Equality), which clearly recommends good practices with regard to gender mainstreaming to be applied both at the level of the organisation and its programs in the South, including the integration of gender in the logical framework. Before that date, gender was already an issue of concern within VVOB, but never taken up in a systematic way and truly integrated. The program analysed here has been prepared before the actual formulation and application of the gender policy. The implementation documents we dispose of also relate mainly to the period before the policy document has been issued. Discussions with VVOB staff revealed that many things have changed (or are changing) in the meanwhile, both at organisational and program management level. We therefor have tried during the field visit to assess the impact of the policy on actual practices with regard to gender

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67 For this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (*little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable*). ; in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
integration in the program cycle. Moreover, in its new 2014-2016 program, the introductory part mentions gender equity as a central starting point of the program, whereas the programme maintains three transversal themes: children’s rights, gender and good governance.

1. **Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action** (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)

As indicated above, gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the program. The multi-year 2011-2013 program proposal contains a sector analysis for education and agricultural extension and in both cases there is a section related to cross-cutting themes in education and agricultural extension containing relevant information. Outside these sections there are however only limited references to gender. In other words, the programme considers gender essentially from a cross-cutting issue point of view.

The March 2013 gender review of VVOB presents a relatively short but highly interesting section on gender disparities in education, which, together with the review findings, has been discussed during a workshop with VVOB staff. The same review states however that ...up to date, VVOB Viet Nam has no formal gender analysis/assessment to identify prioritized gender issues at the organizational level and in program intervention components. In current three components of education program, there is no gender analysis/assessment taken into project proposal.

2. **Extent to which the financing proposals includes a gender analysis** (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)

See above.

3. **Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)**

The logical framework does not include objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific. There might be different reasons for this, one being, at least for the first component, the strong institutional focus of the outputs and specific objectives that does not easily allow gender specific indicators (in as far as these would be relevant); nevertheless, for some (sub-)outputs gender-specific indicators could have been defined. For the last component (TVET), the fact that it is a new area of work makes that the results based framework included in the proposal is still embryonic. However in the agricultural extension component chances have been missed to clearly integrate a gender dimension in the approach and results. Further it is important to mention that in its new program (2014-2016), VVOB has formulated gender-specified indicators for roughly two-thirds of its results.

4. **Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal**

Gender has been raised as a point of attention during the funding proposal assessment but only to a minor degree. The focus in these assessments is rather on other issues that are, rightly or wrongly, considered as more crucial.

5. **Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**

There are some indications on the inclusion of gender in the implementation, which goes beyond the description in the program proposal; but on the other side there is also much evidence of the limited effects of gender inclusion, which on its turn is an illustration of the complexity of gender mainstreaming:

- Under the education component, it is mentioned that efforts have been undertaken together with the Women’s Union to include gender in the efforts to introduce the ATL approach and strengthening the links between schools and communities at the level of every DOET, in the efforts to guide the children’s career (a.o. by contributing to a handbook on gender equality in career.
guidance). More importantly, gender seems to be addressed truly in a cross-cutting way by including gender checks in all institutional capacity development efforts.

The 2012 implementation report states further, under the educational component, that when training materials are developed a gender check is always conducted, but also that cross-cutting issues (gender, environment, HIV/AIDS) could be more explicitly addressed in other capacity development areas. The 2013 peer evaluation concluded that there is sufficient attention and concern for gender in the programme, but at the same time recommends to having specific targets and activities concerning gender. The evaluation further states that ... Both ATL and EFA imply a careful analysis of the needs of girls and boys, women and men. Besides that, all partner organisations are guided by policies that seek to ensure gender equality. Inclusion of the WU in the programme is a guarantee that women are included in the programme (as stakeholders, as change agents and as beneficiaries). When talking with high ranking officials at ministries, DOETs, etc. it became clear that gender equity is not a main issue, rather, the issue of the people (often ethnic minorities) in mountainous areas was brought up several times. The same evaluation states further that ... all partner organisations are guided by policies that seek to ensure gender equality. Particularly the collaboration with the Vietnam WU ensures attention for women representation and rights in the VVOB Education programme. Very interesting is the endeavour of the WU to also enhance participation of men and to train them on gender and on parenting.

The Evaluation Team considers this assessment however as far too optimistic considering the rather conservative position of WU in terms of gender. While some changes are taking place (in particular at leadership level), WU’s policy rather confirms women in their (subordinate) position as housewives, with the main responsibility to ensure a happy family. In addition, discussions with key partners at provincial level have revealed that the inclusion of differentiated analyses of boys and girls and gender equality principles (via avoiding gender stereotypes in manuals for instance) are important measures but not sufficient to truly integrate gender.

- A similar approach is applied in the agricultural extension component where gender issues are integrated in a cross-cutting way in training sessions of extension workers, female members of farmer clubs encouraged to participate in trainings, etc. The VWU is also invited to join in strategic meetings and training on participatory methodologies. The effects of these efforts are however not clear and have not been addressed in the two evaluations of the program.
- The third component, related to career guidance, also addresses gender; it is stated that an optimal rate of participation of male and female participants is achieved in workshops (in Nghe An province, the participation of women and men teachers was around 40-60%) and they both are getting equal voices in the process. The plan for the revision of teaching and learning materials for career orientation avoids gender stereotypes. Avoiding social perception on gender stereotypes is also mentioned in many places in the developed MOET and VVOB career guidelines.

Across the three programme components, at the gender workshop of April 2013 that constituted a follow up of the March 2013 Gender Review, a checklist on gender mainstreaming was developed covering four key areas of the VVOB programmes: planning, core group development (in relation to the partner organisations), material development and monitoring and evaluation. It was planned to use this checklist in the interaction with the core group of the partners and further capacity building efforts and the checklist has consequently been used effectively. The discussion with the DOET revealed that the gender issues are not yet taken into account during the training course on Career guidelines for schools managers and teachers.

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68 Renew of Educating on Career guidance training in higher up education, Training material, MOET and VVOB, December 2013.
69 Open ended discussion with Nghe An DOET, March 2014
6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)

The reporting format of VVOB includes a separate section on transversal themes that is coming back at the level of each result (output); see more details above. Gender is also raised as an issue in the yearly discussions with DGD on program implementation. The M&E framework lacks however solid indicators related to gender (no sex disaggregated data; no specific indicators to measure progress related to gender mainstreaming and/or empowerment).

The March 2013 gender review stated that, considering that VVOB Vietnam has no formal gender analysis/assessment to identify prioritized gender issues at the organizational level and in program intervention components, its gender mainstreaming practice is not guided by specific information on the (potentially) differentiated effects of its activities on men and women (c.q. boys and girls).

7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)

Over the last years, various components of the Vietnam VVOB programme have been evaluated. The January 2011 evaluation of the agricultural extension component (PAEX) did not address gender or gender issues (while some attention to gender is given in the Cambodia component where gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension was a programme output). The final evaluation of the same programme (October 2012) does not address gender issues either.

The peer evaluation of the education programme of early 2013 did on the contrary address the integration of gender in the programme. Gender was mainly (but not exclusively) addressed from a cross-cutting perspective, whereby it was analysed to which extent gender was successfully integrated in technical assistance, monitoring and learning.

The internal evaluation of the education programme (2011-2013) conducted in April-May 2013 and using a peer evaluation methodology among the five provinces covered, aimed among others to evaluate the impact of professional development of school managers, teacher trainers, teachers (pre- and in-service) and parents on aspects of ATL, and to evaluate the impact on the final beneficiaries: the students in LS schools in the five partner provinces. The report of this evaluation indicates that the research approach used by the evaluation been gender blind whereas some evaluation aims related to impact in particular, could have called for sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis. This conclusion is rather disturbing as virtually at the same moment (March - April 2013), VVOB has conducted a gender review and follow up workshop (see next paragraph).

Finally, and probably most importantly, in March 2013 VVOB has commissioned an external review of its efforts to integrate gender both at program and organizational level; the review has been limited to the VVOB environment; no data collection on partner and beneficiaries level has been included. The results of the review, conducted in close cooperation with VVOB’s gender focal point, were at the same time highly critical and useful for VVOB, and were subsequently shared and discussed in workshop in April 2013.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score (2011 – 2013)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which gender the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
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70 This evaluation included also the evaluation of a similar component in neighbouring Cambodia.
4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal
5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)
6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)
7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall score related to the integration of gender in the action cycle</th>
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<td>E</td>
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4.2 Evaluation question 4: To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

JC 4.1: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing gender expertise

1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations

Since the issuance of its gender policy (August 2012), VVOB has stepped up its efforts to develop gender expertise, also at the level of its programs in the South and partner organisations. A gender focal point has been appointed in each country and gender is part of VVOB’s capacity building program. Gender has also become an important element in the partner dialogue. Further, there has been some indirect support via (for instance) the attention for gender mainstreaming in training programs, new curricula, the ATL method, Career guidelines training materials etc., which should at least have indirectly contributed to developing the gender expertise at partner level. VVOB intends to further develop its gender related capacities, in particular in relation to its program domains for the future (preschool and basic education, technical and vocational education, with focus on capacity building of teachers and school managers). It is planned that by end of March 2014, an 3 days workshop on Gender mainstreaming, M&E and Finance in Early education program will be implemented, one of the objectives of the workshop on the gender mainstreaming is to improve partners’ capacity on the issue of gender and agree on the action plan for gender mainstreaming in programme activities. The main participants of the workshop are from Vietnam National Woman Union; DOETs; TTIs; WUs. The March 2013 review states that although some key issues had been identified and some recommendations were provided (in the 2010 workshop on gender), there is still lack of follow-up action ... VVOB has not many activities to raise awareness of gender analysis and gender mainstreaming for their local partners. Interview results also show that gender training for local partners is not only limited at the basic concepts of gender. Meanwhile, to do gender mainstreaming, the gender analysis and gender mainstreaming skills are essential, but these skills have not been considered much for last training courses. The review further continues stating that .... Therefore, appropriate capacity-building activities need to be explicitly included in the organizational policy and project documents/frameworks. It should also be backed up with staff and budget, and it can be monitored and reviewed through appropriate indicators of change. However, the staff interviews show that VVOB Viet Nam still has some gaps of gender including a lack

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at staff level in terms of deeper knowledge related to gender and gender mainstreaming, a lack of the application of the available gender strategy, and lack of time and skills (at the level of the gender focal point) to deal fully with gender mainstreaming.

The findings of the above-mentioned review have broadly been confirmed during the field visits. Partners clearly state that VVOB introduced them to gender and that gender issues were taken up in various program aspects, but also that all-in-all attention for gender capacity building has remained limited in program implementation and too limited to ensure sustainable effects.

2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations

During a gender workshop held in April 2013 a gender checklist has been drafted which includes a set of guidelines for integration of gender at program level, including in the development of instruments (called material development). In addition, VVOB has ensured that several key materials developed are at the least free of gender biases and stereotypes. As mentioned above, avoiding social perception on gender stereotypes, knowledge on gender and gender equality, gender sensitiveness aspects ... are mentioned in many places in the developed MOET and VVOB career guidelines training material.

3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)

See above. During a gender workshop held in April 2013 a gender checklist has been drafted which includes a set of guidelines for integration of gender at program level, both in the programme cycle and at the level of partner organizations. Efforts have been undertaken to integrate gender at the level of partner organisations, but both the April 2013 review and the visits by the team have found that these are still insufficient in the sense that no institutional procedures to include gender are in place yet72.

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<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>++</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>-+</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)</td>
<td>-+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to effectiveness related to capacity building efforts</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

72 At the provincial DOET visited, there is one staff in charge of the program implementation who is also gender focal point.

JC4.2: The partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of realising progress towards gender equality and women empowerment

1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.
3. Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)

While VVOB has no clearly stated ambitions at this level, it is clear that it hopes that its approach, often developed on a pilot basis (and including a concern for gender mainstreaming), will be taken over at the higher level. As far as the education programme is concerned, the peer evaluation of 2013 states the following in this regard, suggesting that VVOB hasn’t so far been that successful in scaling-up its approach:

*Within VVOB we often go for pilot programmes, e.g. because of budget restraints or because the partner explicitly wishes to try out first on a smaller (regional) scale. As a result we, VVOB, formulate our programme on the pilot scale level. This often leads to nice results and impact at pilot level. However, when the step comes to scale-out/scale-up the project results we often see it isn’t that easy. Other agencies – often at national levels – go about these issues. We therefore recommend VVOB to either avoid piloting or when this is not possible (e.g. because of budget restraints or because the partner explicitly wishes to try out first on a smaller (regional) scale) we recommend to formulate – before the start of the programme – the different phases from piloting, to up-scaling, to nationwide implementation with VVOB conditionalities, e.g gender mainstreaming results. This will ensure that all concerned partners are in the operational CD picture from the start of the programme onwards.*

The 2012 implementation report states that at the national level, the WU recognized the value of the ‘Social participation’ model and organized Training for Trainers workshops to disseminate the approach. A manual was also developed and distributed nationwide. A closer look at the Social Participation model reveals however that the approach followed mainly if not exclusively confirms traditional roles and patterns related to the role of husband and wife in the family. On the other side, the material guidelines for the Social Participation model contain subjects which might be (relatively) new to be addressed in such a widespread publication, such as a section on domestic violence and gender equality in the family and schools, another section on sexual education in the family, on friendship and love among adolescents.

4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)

N.a.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&amp;D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>-+</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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Overall score related to effectiveness related to institutional strengthening N.a.

JC 4.3: The process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has ensured equitable access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes

1. Degree to which the envisaged benefits of Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, …) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy

The major aims of the first and third component of the VVOB programme deal with important needs of both boys and girls. The introduction and increased use of the ATL approach is meant to not only increase the quality of education but also contribute to a more comprehensive development of boys and girls, so that they become more self-confident and capable to deal with the challenges they are facing. The career guidance component advocates an approach that places the pupils in the centre of the decision making process related to their further career, mainly by informing them on the options that exist and assisting them in better understanding their strengths and weaknesses so that they can make a well informed choice. These programmes components try consistently to avoid gender stereotypes but furthermore do not engage in trying to remove gender biases that still may exist. The training materials on career guidance insist on the necessity of providing knowledge on gender equality and avoiding gender stereotypes. The discussion with the DOET, however revealed that those issues are not yet taken attention during the training course on Career guidelines for schools managers and teachers.

The second component related to agricultural extension has a similar approach in the sense that it advocates for participatory methods for technology development and extension and as such places the farmer (men and women) in the centre of the decision making process. Thereby the broader context of the environment is taken into account, including the particular challenges women face in rural areas.

2. Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products

The VVOB program has a strong institutional focus and does not directly deal with the final beneficiaries (boys and girls; male and female farmers), with the exception of the VWU parent taking well care of their children clubs. The members of these clubs are mainly (estimate: 70%) women, but efforts are undertaken to involve men. At the level of the governmental partners (DOET/BOET, TTI, MARD/DARD), the staff reached via the program are mostly men, particularly related to the career education training for DOET/BOET, whereas VWU staff are exclusively women. The teachers reached via training in the framework of the career guidance component are mainly (60%) men and the same can be said for the clubs supported under the agricultural extension component.

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<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, …) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>- +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to access of women and girls to project benefits</td>
<td>+ -</td>
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JC 4.4: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3)

Introductory remark.
As mentioned above, VVOB’s approach is essentially institutional, whereby it endeavours to contribute to changes at the level of key institutions in the education and agricultural extension sectors, which on their turn should lead (or contribute to) changes at the level of direct and indirect beneficiaries. In addition, in case changes at beneficiaries level would be found, attributing these changes to the VVOB program is methodologically challenging, in the sense that many factors might have played a role in provoking the changes found. In addition, little to no indications of such changes have been provided in the implementation and evaluation reports available, presumably because of the difficulties to (1) record outcome and impact as these are (far) beyond the results envisaged by VVOB in the results chain and (2) attribute these the VVOB programme. As such, the indications provided below are to be dealt with carefully.

1. Changes in the area of education

Education and career guidance components
The peer evaluation of the education program of December 2012 provides an overview of the number of people being trained in ATL via various VVOB capacity building and training efforts. In 2011 and 2012, capacity building and training in teaching methods have reached at TTI level 1.735 managers, key trainers and lecturers and roughly 8.000 students (trained via lecturers). Further 72 key trainers from the Department of Education and Training have been trained in teaching methods also, and on their turn they have trained 5.800 LSE teachers. Training figures related to education management are, for the same two years: 170 (direct) and 5.900 (indirect). No figures are available on the number of women/girls involved directly or indirectly in the program, but evidence from Nghe An province suggests that men/boys outnumber women and girls. Some training has also been provided to 374 managers and key staff of the VWU involved in the social participation component whereas parents attending monthly club meetings are estimated at 6.250. Most of the members of these clubs are women.

No overall figures could be obtained with regard the career guidance component, but in Nghe An (one of the two provinces covered by this component in total 3.906 teachers have been trained of which 2.418 were men.

The effects of these huge training efforts are difficult to assess. As far as the education component is concerned, there is evidence that these considerable efforts contributed to institutional changes (shifts in thinking about teaching/education/ATL/teaching methodologies; application of more innovative methods by teachers). At VWU level, the peer evaluation of the education components claims that … The impact of the programme on capacity of WU is considerable as the WU is now much more aware of its role in education and it has a much better understanding of ATL and roles of parents and the community. WU now supports much better the creation of a proper home and school learning environments. This finding is confirmed by the evaluation, which also found out that the clubs contribute significantly, via a manual and peer exchange and learning, on strengthening the parents’ capacities with regard to their role in education of their children, which in particular in the adolescence age is full of challenges. Parents state they have made big progress in this regard via the clubs, which have impacted positively on their relationship with their children and also, it was stated, on the children’s personality and academic performance. Concluding, all these changes might have lead to better education results at the level of the boys and girls targeted indirectly by the program.

No information is available with regard to the effects of the career guidance component. Most probably, the component is newly started and here also there are important institutional effects in terms of a change, at the level of the competent educational partners (and parents), in the traditional approach of career guidance in favour of a more open approach in which the students (boys and girls) are empowered and
supported to make a rational choice. The parents’ clubs mentioned above also deal with career guidance and do so in a way that is similar to that promoted in this programme component.

In as far as these changes lead effectively to the anticipated better career choices, they might provide a substantial contribution to better results in the area of education.

A baseline study with regard to ATL, conducted quite early in the period evaluated (March 2010, found among others that although, in general, DOET, teachers and principals are in favour of ATL, and enthusiastic to apply it, they still find it difficult to apply it in the classrooms. In addition, the differences of ATL quality in different areas depend on the school leadership and teachers' motivation. Further, the (relatively limited) elements of observation in the classroom related to the learners only show average results.

Concluding, it can be stated that the program has contributed to changes in the area of education. Relatively strong evidence could be gathered of changes at institutional level (ministries, parents clubs), whereas evidence with regard to changes at the level of boys and girls is indirect. Thereby it is important to note that gender has only been integrated to a limited extent in the program, via limited gender training which seems not have more effect that some exposure to the notion of gender, via attention for better inclusion of women in training programs and men in parents clubs, via the avoidance of gender stereotypes in manuals and other tools. In this regard it should also be noted that at all levels (senior staff of ministries and VWU, teachers, parents, youngsters) the evaluation team encountered strong convictions related to traditional gender roles and beliefs (e.g. women by nature are better teachers than men in particular in basic education, preference of girls and their parents for ‘typically’ female jobs, the conviction that by nature boys are stronger in mathematics than girls, etc.).

**Agricultural extension component**

The final evaluation of the agricultural extension program states that “Farmers clubs and Participatory Technology Development (PTD) are highly valued by farmers, extension workers and management level officers (district, province, MDI, IAS, programme management)», which can be considered as a proxy indication of the fact that the farmers reached via the program have acquired relevant knowledge and skills to apply these. There are no clear indications on the number of women involved but the farmer clubs have a majority of male members.

**2. Changes in the area of health**

The program has not made a contribution in this field, although there is a topic on skill on taking care of health for adolescents in the Guidance on operating the club for Parent taking well care of their children.

**3. Changes in the economic field**

The program has not made any direct contribution in this field.

**4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women**

It is claimed that the ATL method contributes to important changes both at the level of the teachers (men and women) and students (boys and girls) that contribute to their internal empowerment (more dynamic and innovative attitude, more openness to environment, better capacities to cooperate and relate, …), but to our knowledge, this claim has not been substantiated in the programme.

The approach followed in the career guidance component must have contributed to similar changes, for which slightly more evidence could be found.

**5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women**

For the same reasons as mentioned above, the introduction of the ATL and of a new approach for career guidance, might have led to increased external empowerment of girls and women.
6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations
Same as above. The ATL and newly introduced approach for career guidance imply important changes in attitudes, behaviour and power between teacher, parents and students, whereby in particular the latter are empowered to make their own choices and take their own decisions.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the area of education</td>
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<td>2. Changes in the area of health</td>
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<td>3. Changes in the economic field</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations</td>
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</table>

Overall score related to effectiveness in the area of women empowerment: +

JC 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women

1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence
The program has not produced direct effects in this area. The peer evaluation of the education programme mentions however ... *Very interesting is the endeavour of the WU to also enhance participation of men and to train them on gender and on parenting. The WU is also very much engaged in combating domestic violence.*

The evaluation visit confirmed that the issue of domestic violence is addressed in the parents club as one of the 12 ‘standard’ themes/topics. A role-play has been designed to deal with the issue. The VWU also added a few themes to be addressed by the clubs, including (undesired) pregnancy and early marriage.

Overall and in view of the prevalence of domestic violence in Vietnam, VVOB could (should?) have done more to integrate the issue of domestic violence in its various program components, in particular those with government educational institutions as partner.

2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence
The program has not made a direct contribution in this area, but information and communication with regard to the gender equality law and the law on domestic violence are part of the training and awareness raising related to domestic violence in the clubs. While the effect of these measures is unknown, the lack of systematised efforts in this area has certainly not helped to effectively attack the problem.

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<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
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General score for effectiveness in the area of the reduction and prevention of violence against women: -
5. Efficiency

Evaluation question 5: To what extent does the Belgian international collaboration have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?

CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors

The indications on the availability of financial resources and capacity are lacking in the implementation reports, but the implementation reports suggest that it is not difficult to mobilize the required capacity and identify the instruments needed to achieve the ambition to mainstream gender in the three program components. Furthermore, the gender policy (issued in August) foresees the approval of a country gender training plan and budget. VVOB Vietnam has a gender focal point who provides technical support and oversees gender mainstreaming in the organisation. There have been several gender focal points already for 5 years. The current gender focal point only added gender mainstreaming to her responsibilities in 2013. In addition, several training and capacity building efforts related to gender have been conducted since a first training in March 2010; later on followed seminar at the global VVOB level (February 2012) and a gender review including follow up workshop in March 2012-April. In December 2013 a workshop on gender mainstreaming in the career guidance program has been organised to review all career guidance material and by end of March 2014, a workshop on gender mainstreaming, M&E and finance will be organised.

The peer evaluation of the education programme mentions that … the set of training materials and modules available to partners and beneficiaries, and adopted by the core group of trainers, covers the most important aspects of gender and HIV/Aids.

The March 2013 gender review reports states that the VVOB Vietnam’s gender mainstreaming strategy is available and accessible to all staff, that there does not exist any discrimination in the area of human resources management (recruitment, salary, gender neutral performance appraisals, equal access to training opportunities, gender sensitive labour regulations that are in advance compared to Vietnam’s labour law). On the other side, the review states that the staff’s knowledge on gender remains too shallow, that concrete tools to apply the strategy are lacking, that the gender focal point lacks the time to do this job properly and that her skills are too limited, that knowledge and skills on gender are not a criterion for staff recruitment.

CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors

VVOB issued its gender policy in August 2012. The document is mainly of a conceptual nature but contains many useful tools (e.g. a checklist to assess gender in key program components of VVOB, examples of gender-sensitive indicators that can replace the indicators used till that time, etc.). A detailed plan of action is however not integrated in the policy, but there are some concrete actions to be implemented, such as the selection of a gender focal point per country and the approval of a gender training plan and budget per country. The existence of this policy is certainly to be considered as an important institutional incentive. It is not clear to which extent the actual intention as detailed in the 6th chapter of the policy (Way Forward) have been implemented.

The March 2013 gender review reports states that there is a strong commitment for gender mainstreaming within VVOB Vietnam at the level of leaders and staff. The enabling organisational environment (see above) also constitutes an incentive.

CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration
The choice of the Vietnam Women’s Union as a program partner implies, in principle, that synergies are created in view of gender integration. In practice, this is however a challenging task in view of the VWU’s position with regard to ‘women’s issues’ which to a major extent implies a confirmation (and optimisation) of the traditional role of women in the family. In cases/programs where women empowerment is envisaged, these efforts are mostly framed in the same traditional framework and predominantly following a ‘women in development’ approach.

**CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)**

With the exception of VWU, management positions at the level of partners are predominantly occupied by men. VVOB staff are predominantly women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration</td>
<td>-+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
<td>-+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score for efficiency</td>
<td>+/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4. Sustainability**

**Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?**

**JC1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle**

The existence of a gender policy constitutes a positive factor in terms of sustaining gender integration practices in the project cycle. While the March 2013 gender review has indicated an important number of weaknesses with regard to integration of gender in the phases of the cycle, the very fact that such a review has been undertaken to assess the level of gender integration is an important indicator of VVOB’s determination to mainstream gender. This is illustrated by its 2014-2016 program, which shows substantial progress with regard to gender mainstreaming in many areas.

**JC2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building**

The existence of a gender policy certainly constitutes a positive factor in terms of sustaining gender capacity building achievements, but much more is needed (a.o. at the level of the partner organisations but also at VVOB level), as is pointed out by the gender review and the team opinions. More systematized efforts have been undertaken in the meanwhile, but in particular at the level of the partner organisations progress is too fragile to be sustainable.

**JC3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)**

As mentioned above the contribution of the VVOB program to gender equality and empowerment (in the areas of education, internal and external empowerment in particular) are of a rather indirect nature. In as far as such contributions might have been realised, they have a big chance to be sustainable.
JC4. **Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women**

The program has only provided minor contributions in this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score for sustainability**: + -

### 5. Impact

**Evaluation question 8**: What are the unexpected long-term results (positive and negative) of the interventions in the context of the Belgian ODA that target gender equality (gender policy marker value 1 and 2)?

1. **Positive unplanned long-term results**

No positive unplanned long-term results with regard to gender equality have been identified.

2. **Negative unplanned long-term results**

No negative unplanned long-term results with regard to gender equality have been identified.

**Annexe: list of most important documents consulted**

- VVOB, Multi-year programme 2011-2013
- VVOB, Specifiek Uitvoerings- en Opvolgingsverslag 2011
- VVOB, Specifiek Uitvoerings- en Opvolgingsverslag 2012
- VVOB, Mainstreaming Gender Quality, August 2012
- VVOB, Workshop Report Gender Debrief for VVOB Vietnam staff in Hanoi office, April 2010
- Le Van Son, Gender Review Report, March 2013
- Le Van Son, Workshop Report, Gender Debrief for VVOB Vietnam staff in Hanoi office, April 2013
- Internal Evaluation of the VVOB Education Programme (2011-2013), April-May 2013
- Jeroen Thijsen, Baseline study on active teaching and learning in lower secondary education five provinces of Vietnam, March 2011
- VVOB, Multi-Year Programme 2014-2016, General introduction
Evaluation of the action: towards a sustainable improvement of the living of small farmers

1. Key characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action title</th>
<th>Towards a sustainable improvement of the living of small farmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention code DGD</td>
<td>3012204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and sub-sector</td>
<td>Agriculture and husbandry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid modality</td>
<td>Indirect to NGO – program support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective start of action</td>
<td>January 2011 (continuation of previous program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Envisaged) end of action</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian organisation in charge of implementation</td>
<td>Oxfam Solidarity Belgium (OSB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>Hoa Binh Farmers Union, Thach Ha Women’s Union, Ha Tinh Farmers Union (°)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (€)</td>
<td>241,011 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (ODA data base)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex ante)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex post)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(°) Cooperation with the last mentioned union has been discontinued in 2012

2. Concise description of the action

2.1 Context (country and region, sector, …)

Vietnam’s development is presently following a modernisation model, which has opted for rapid industrialization and an export-led growth model in which cheap labour and food are necessary ingredients for success. The agriculture sector is still employing the majority of the population (60%), but only contributes to 21% of the country’s GDP. The country’s policy want the sector to rationalize so as to free labour for the industry while increasing its productivity; a large-scale agro-industrial model is promoted at the expense of small-scale and sustainable production modes, leading to pressure on land and environmental degradation. Small farmers are becoming increasingly vulnerable as a consequence of these developments; women farmers are even more hit as they are left aside in the modernization process, see their workload increasing (as men increasingly leave the sector for more rewarding jobs, often abroad), have only limited access to credit, education and training, and underrepresented in rural institutions and decision making processes. In addition, overall the agricultural sector becomes increasingly unattractive, with younger people not ready to take over the farm from their parents. Consequently in some villages much agricultural land is left idle. The Government of Vietnam tries to address this problem via its new agricultural policy (among others), but so far has not been successful in reversing trends.

Farmers are increasingly concerned by these developments but dispose of limited alternatives and possibilities to voice their concerns and influence policies. Existing mass organisations, including those grouping farmers, are weakly organised and often more inclined to put existing top-down defined policies into practice than to defend the interests of their members. As a result small farmers often have no alternative than to undergo the implementation of policy decisions that often are not adapted to local circumstances and go against their interests in the short and long run.
The partnerships between Oxfam Solidarity Belgium (OSB) and Hoa Binh Farmers Union (HBFU) and Thach Ha Women’s Union (THWU) are long-standing. For instance, THWU and OSB started to cooperate 18 years ago already and the results of previous cooperation projects continue to impact positively on the programme evaluated here. In the case of THWU for instance, the partnership initially dealt with the set-up of a micro-credit programme which in the meanwhile has allowed the Union to develop a substantial credit fund (around 9 million US$, partially bank loans, is managed by the Union) the for its members that supports them in further developing their livelihoods.

2.2 Rationale

In view of the developments depicted above, there is a need to develop an alternative model of sustainable agricultural development which recognizes the rights and potential of small farmers (women and men), takes their interests into account and supports them in developing a model in which they have control over their productive assets, can engage in developing sustainable (socially, economically, environmentally) alternatives and strengthen their resilience in view of climate change. The achievement of this ambition implies the strengthening of mass organisations that genuinely defend the interests of small farmers and rural communities. While policies work mostly against the poor, some of these also offer windows of opportunity, e.g. the Grassroots Democracy Ordinance (2007) and the mandate mass organisations dispose of to question policies and propose alternatives.

2.3 Major objectives

The specific objective of the program has been formulated as follows: 32.000 small producers in Hoa Binh and Ha Tinh province reduce their livelihood vulnerability caused by industrialization and the modernization of agricultural practices by reclaiming more control over their production system (land, seed, water), by adopting more sustainable practices and by developing alternative marketing channels. 

Three results have been defined:
- Partners are able to effectively put in place collective empowerment strategies for 150 farmers groups;
- 150 small producer organizations are better able to put in place sustainable production systems that bring added value (income, health, sustainable use of resources, ...) to their 3000 families and to their communities as a whole;
- With the support and participation of the 150 small producers organizations, the partners are able to contribute to agricultural policy discussions at provincial level from a peasants’ perspective.

2.4 Institutional setup

Oxfam Solidarity Belgium (OSB) cooperates with three mass organisations that work with approximately 150 farmers groups, which include 3,000 farmers. Notwithstanding their limitations (see above, among others), this type of organisations is recognized as a political actor and the most legitimate to promote change on behalf of the farmers as they have the possibility to liaise with government institutions and bring in the perspective and interests of their members in the policy debates.

OSB works with the mass organisations at district and provincial level, thereby aiming also to strengthen these institutions, among others in terms of increasing the voice of their members, women in particular. The better these organisations are structured, the better also they succeed in liaising with other actors, including local authorities, research institutes, local NGOs, technical government agencies and other mass organisations.
3. Relevance and coherence

3.1 To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

Extent to which the project proposal refers to the strategy paper
The program proposal 2011-2013 does not refer to the strategy paper (notwithstanding the fact that gender is well integrated).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project proposal refers to the strategy paper</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score relevance</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

Extent to which the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter are integrated in the financing proposal
The needs and interests of women and the obstacles they encounter are well integrated in the financing proposal. These are shortly but clearly dealt with at all relevant levels of the proposal: the overall context analysis, the analysis with regard to the agricultural sector and sustainable agriculture, the role of women and the level of gender awareness at the level of the partner organisations and the intervention logic (with different logical frameworks for achievements at the level of both the partners and OSB). The visits at field level (HBFU and THWU) have indicated that the local partners broadly share the analyses presented in the financing proposal, be it that they are not always using a gender framework for their analysis. It has implied, among others, that they attach much importance to the issue of gender in their activities.

Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)
Both program partnerships build on a long-standing relation of cooperation and, hence, are not directly inspired by gender considerations. However, the fact that both local partners are showing a clear interest and commitment in gender constituted an important consideration for OSB to continue the cooperation. If this would not have been the case, this clearly could have been a reason for OSB to discontinue the partnership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The financing proposal integrate the needs and interests of the women and obstacles they encounter</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score coherence</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the rating of most judgement criteria and indicators, a four-points scale has been used: ++/+/+/-- (very good, good, modest, bad); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
4. Effectiveness

4.1 Evaluation question 3: To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men")?25

JC: The Belgian cooperation has integrated gender in the project/programme cycle

1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)

Gender has been well integrated in the formulation of the action (see above), which builds on OSB’s and their partners’ experiences (including with regard to gender) in the previous years and on the fact that ‘advancing gender justice’ is one of OSB’s change goals and as such integrated in Oxfam’s Vietnam program. The gender analysis, in terms of process and results, is shared with the local partners. An assessment of the partner’s gender sensitiveness is included in the identification and formulation process and provides the basis for capacity building in this area at partner level. Attention for gender is also, for six years now, a formal criterion of partner selection. Partners should at least show a readiness to work on gender in case gender is not (or only poorly) addressed.

2. Extent to which the financing proposals includes a gender analysis (related to the practical needs an strategic interests of women and men)

The proposal does not contain a self-standing gender analysis, but gender is addressed consistently in the proposal. In the OSB approach, a stakeholder and power analysis is combined with a gender analysis as a basis for the formulation of the program, often in cooperation with partners. The analysis (as it appears in the proposal) could have been somewhat more thorough, but maybe the proposal format did not allow so. The visit at HBFU level indicated that local cadres made a good gender analysis and are well aware of existing inequality; the union conducted an internal survey in 2010 to evaluate gender sensitivity within the union, which provided the data to build its gender program upon. At the level of THWU the visit has led to similar conclusions: gender is a major issue of concern and gender inequalities are adequately defined (though not always addressed in an optimal way in our view – see below).

3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)

The overall program description and related results framework does not contain gender specific objectives and indicators (but includes some references to gender aspects to be mainstreamed), but this seems rather to be caused by the synthesis character of this description. The underlying technical files drafted for each of the three partner organisations contain clear references to gender, both at the level of the description of the results, some indicators and activities. The files do however not contain indicators related to women empowerment and equality at the outcome level.

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25For this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal

Gender has not really been assessed in the assessment of the funding proposal.

5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)

The reports (both with regard to the results achieved at partner and OSB level) refer regularly (but presumably not comprehensively) to the inclusion of gender in implementation, in a way that is consistent with OSB’s commitment to advance gender justice.

The field visits have learned that the reports provide a correct image of the reality at field level. In the case of both the Hoa Binh farmers union (HBFU) and Thach Ha Women’s Union (THWU) consistent efforts have been undertaken to integrate gender in implementation, via training efforts at various levels (targeting both women and men), the set-up of a core group of gender trainers and ‘communicators’ (HBFU) who are tasked to promote gender within the commune chapters of the farmers union and the set-up of gender equality clubs in THWU, which however do not always address woman-man issues via a gender approach. Deliberate efforts have also been undertaken to increase and strengthen female leadership and address specific issues of concern of women, such as domestic violence. Furthermore, gender is often included as a discussion topic in regular meetings at all (provincial, district, commune) levels, whereby the program’s efforts are situated in the broader framework of the Gender Equality Law, which requires specific actions to be undertaken by the State and the mass organisations at the local level. Notwithstanding all these efforts, the practical integration of gender as a cross-cutting issue remains a challenge at implementation level.

6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)

The reports and monitoring instruments include gender, but do not always document entirely what is done at field level. An interesting document (Results indicators for OSB’s programme, which is a document drafted for all OSB’s programs) operationalizes the set of indicators used and operationalizes these quite well, also in relation to gender. In line with OSB’s commitment to advance gender justice as one of its major goals, its M&E systems endeavours to follow up changes in this area.

At the local level, partners have mostly good data on the level of participation of men and women in the activities, but mostly do not engage in deeper analysis to assess the (potentially different) impact of their actions on men and women.

7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)

Gender is fairly well integrated in the Final Program Evaluation⁷⁶. More could have been done certainly, but gender comes back at various levels in the report (though predominantly under the section ‘cross cutting issues’ and with relatively more attention to the labour component where the integration of gender seems to be more challenging and less successful).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which gender the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁷⁶ See list of documents consulted (annex) for the complete reference of this evaluation.
5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)  
6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)  
7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)  

| Overall score related to the integration of gender in the action cycle | A |

4.2 Evaluation question 4: To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

**JC 1: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing gender expertise**

1. **Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations**

OSB has a strong focus on organisational strengthening at partner level (e.g. under result 1: improvement of institutional quality) and in the 2012 report it is stated that partners have taken on board the gender dimension at OD level, but that there is a lack of integrating gender as a cross-cutting issue at implementation level. The evaluation team broadly confirms this statement.

The evaluation further found that gender has been integrated at varying levels among the partners. The field visits (HBFU and THWU) have confirmed that considerable efforts are undertaken at partner level to develop gender expertise, among others by the set-up of a ‘specialised’ core group of gender trainers who are supposed to train on their turn local cadres (in HBFU). Leadership at the provincial and local level show to dispose of a good basic understanding of gender. In the case of THWU, the OSB support has made of the Union a predominant partner in local development dynamics that takes the lead in many initiatives in various fields. While its ‘gender’ initiatives rather reflect a ‘women in development’ approach, they clearly influence the integration of attention for gender (or better: for women) in local policies and practices.

2. **Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations**

Gender is integrated in a series of instruments which have been developed and mainstreamed at the level of the Oxfam family, such as for instance assessment grids for partner institutional/organizational development that include gender.

At the local level (HBFU), the core group seems also to dispose of some rather generic instruments, which are fine but are not truly tailor-made to local reality and the activity domain of farmer organisations. HBFU has developed a gender handbook to be used in the program and a CD to ensure communication on gender. At the level of THWU, consistent efforts in gender capacity building have mainly allowed to increase local understanding and awareness with regard to key gender issues (on labour and employment, marriage, domestic violence, predominant gender biases), so that these frameworks are more consistently used in local action.

A key recommendation of the end-of-program evaluation (to avail a user-friendly gender mainstreaming toolkit) seems to suggest that much still needs to be done in this regard.

3. **Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and
organisational level)

Apparently gender has been well integrated in the functioning of the partner organisations, but more needs to be done in terms of mainstreaming gender at program level, where the gender approach still lacks specificity and user-friendliness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to effectiveness related to capacity building efforts</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JC2: The partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of realising progress towards gender equality and women empowerment**

1. *Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)*
   
   N.a.

2. *Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)*
   
   N.a.

3. *Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)*
   
   N.a.

4. *Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)*
   
   N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&amp;D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to effectiveness related to institutional strengthening</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JC 4.3: The process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has ensured equitable access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes

1. Degree to which the envisaged benefits of Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, …) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy

The field visits learned that in the case of HFBU, the focus at the local level is actually a focus on the needs and interests of farmers, both men and women, without there being a concern for specific needs and interests of women, with the exception of the issues of domestic violence and the importance of female leadership at all levels, which is considered as key to promote women interests. THWU, as a branch of the Women’s Union, takes the situation of the local women as their initial reference. The OSB program complements their ‘routine’ program as WU chapter (which is based on a rather traditional vision on the role of women in the household and family). By dealing predominantly with agriculture, the OSB program has supported the Union in developing an inclusive approach involving men and women in agricultural production groups, whereby the initiative is clearly in the hands of the women also because of the fact that many men migrate to other areas in search of more rewarding jobs.

2. Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products

The implementation reports contain detailed information on the number of participants at the level of farmer groups and specific activities, but the figures provided are not sex-disaggregated. Evidence gathered in the field learned however that women constitute the majority of the beneficiaries. In HBFU this is explained by the fact of the importance of male labour migration in particular periods of the year; in THWU the local partner is a chapter of the Vietnam Women’s Union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, …) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
<td>± ±</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to access to project benefits for women and girls</td>
<td>± ±</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JC 4.4: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3)

Key data presented below are derived from the final evaluation of the program, conducted mid 2013. This evaluation covered the two main components of OSB’s Vietnam program, of which only the agricultural component is analysed here. The Evaluation has included both the THWU and the HBFU in its analysis. The evaluation does not specify, at least not in its section on impact, between effects at the level of men and women, but as THWU is women’s union it can safely be supposed that women constitute a considerable part of the beneficiaries (to be analysed further). The data of the final evaluation have been crosschecked and where necessary completed on the basis of the data gathered during the field visits to HBFU and THWU.

1. Changes in the area of education

The project documents and field visits have learned that considerable results have been achieved in terms of creating awareness of farmer families (men and women) with regard to agricultural policies and evolutions in the development context that affect their
interests and on how collective action can be undertaken to address these issues (policy advocacy related to the effects of mining on farmers communities in THWU working area and policies to preserve and development of indigenous seeds by special producer groups with HBFU).

In terms of gender considerable and systematic efforts in training and awareness-raising have substantially increased the level of understanding of "gender" which has become a key notion in the local partners’ work (though not always adequately understood and operationalized). In the case of HBFU core group of communicators and core group members have been trained more in depth and used to further spread comprehension and awareness on gender and gender mainstreaming.

Last but not least, technical training (e.g. in animal husbandry and vegetable growing) has strengthened the capacity of many women (in particular) and allowed them engaging in income generating activities (see below).

2. Changes in the area of health
N.a.

3. Changes in the economic field
The evaluation states that farmers have got substantially improved access to main production means such as land, capital, seeds, information, technology and other inputs (water, electricity power, etc.). Further impacts include: reduced risk for farmers leaving land uncultivated due to high price of imported seed and the positive effects on indirect beneficiaries: a relatively big number of farmers outside of the groups benefited from program interventions in both Hoa Binh and Thach Ha areas.

As indicated above, more women than men are included in the program. At household level, in both areas there seems not to exist a predominant pattern with regard to control over income gained from economic activities; mostly it was stated that women and men decide jointly on the use of their income. In terms of changes in the division of tasks, in some areas it was reported that men now take up agricultural activities, which used to be the women’s task in the past (e.g. related to rice cultivation and household chores). In THWU area many production groups (husbandry, vegetables) have been successful (also because access to loans is granted) and have allowed women to increase the family income and change their position in the household. Often their activity has expanded that much that their husbands join and/or take over part of the household tasks. Officials state that the substantial decrease in poverty levels in Thach Ha district (from 46 to 8,5% over 8 years, according to official figures) is largely due to the work of the women’s union in cooperation with OSB (note that in the communes visited and covered by the WU, poverty levels are presently even lower). While this information could not be further substantiated and while it is probable that changes in poverty are the result of several evolutions, it provides at least an indication of the value of the work of THWU.

The flip side of increased (successful) involvement of women in income generating activities is the increased workload at household level (and de facto in particular for women). Contextual developments (climate change, labour migration of men in particular) constitute additional challenges in this regard and might eventually impact negatively on the progress realised.

4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women
The program seems to have contributed to the internal empowerment of women by its consistent and long-standing focus on the promotion of women leadership within the organisation. Apparently, (potential) women leaders have been supported by the program and are now occupying key positions in the state apparatus and/or mass organisations.

At the local level, women showed a considerable level of self-confidence (e.g. in meetings and interviews). Economic success in many cases has substantially contributed to this development, as have (THWU) in some cases the effects of the gender equality clubs that also deal with gender relations. It is however difficult to isolate the program’s contribution from other factors.
5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women

According to the evaluation, farmers (including women farmers) got more confidence that via solidarity with group members and in networking with other groups, they can master their livelihoods much more productively and in a friendly manner to the environment. The evaluation further states that farmers feel happy with the new way of assembling and organizing to collectively claim for their legitimate rights. This new way is voluntary, needs-based, full of ownership and relevant for them to collectively do business planning, which is fully informed and sensitive to market signals. This was not known to them before. No intervention can be more effective and sustainable than when target beneficiaries get better aware of their rights and know how to get these rights realized.

Another effect noted by the evaluation is that mass organizations (WUs, FUs) learned new experiences from their support to farmers, especially in regard to what and how to do policy advocacy, including with their members. They also learned on how best to empower members and help them realize their rights primarily through improving farmers’ livelihoods.

The effects described above have been confirmed by the field visit. As women constitute a majority among the target group, it can be safely stated that the effects described above apply also for women. In addition, in the case of HBFU, the increase in women leadership within the farmer union also contributes to external empowerment of women as they play a bigger role in decision-making. Male dominance is however still prevailing in many situations (e.g. opposition by commune and party leadership).

In the case of THWU, the initiatives of the Union with the District Father front committee took the lead, with OSB support (financially, training) in a local policy advocacy initiative that included other district actors to claim fair compensation for the losses experienced by families and communes because of the start up of mining activities. The relative success of these efforts impacted positively on the WU image, reputation and influence. This in turn, together with others constituted an important support to the WU’s efforts to increase women representation in local decision making bodies. Overall, women representation in these bodies has increased by 50% in the district, but in communes supported by the OSB program it has often doubled. WU members have been trained to engage in political lobby via the OSB program and elected women are outperforming their male counterparts as they are working in a more transparent, accountable and democratic way (e.g. via the organisation of meetings with their constituency). This made that there are now communes where men are voting for women candidates.

6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations

Interviews during the field visits have learned that the consistent efforts to promote gender have led, at least in certain cases, to changes in attitudes and behaviour, and most probably also in power relations. For instance, at the level of HBFU men recognize the key role to be played by women in their organisation and in society at large; some men also stressed that they felt much better now that their women are empowered and more equality is achieved in the husband-wife relationship. Women from their side now clearly take up (pro)actively roles in the organisation and speak out during meetings.

In the case of THWU, the strength of the local WU chapter has impacted positively on local perceptions at district and commune level. Women are increasingly considered as competent, integer and reliable actors in politics and policy decision-making. At the level of the households, in particular economic success seems to have impacted positively on power relations and, at least in some cases, a more equitable division of household chores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>1. Changes in the area of education</th>
<th>2. Changes in the area of health</th>
<th>3. Changes in the economic field</th>
<th>4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women</th>
<th>5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ -</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall score related to effectiveness in the area of women empowerment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>++</td>
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</table>

**JC 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women**

1. **Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence**

In one of the reports, a reference is made to activities at the level of one partner organisation to deepen their understanding on gender-based violence on how to deal with it. Field visits confirmed that in HBFU and THWU the issue of women violence is addressed via the gender/communicators core group (HBFU) and regular trainings and meetings of gender equality clubs (THWU). The HBFU core group members act as consultants at the level of families that face domestic violence and a video clip has been made and promoted related to the issue. In the case of THWU, domestic violence is addressed in a similar way (via mediation of local leaders) and it is often also discussed in gender equality clubs (peer group approach). It is however not clear to which extent these interventions are truly effective and have an important on overall incidence of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence. Some local farmer leaders (HBFU) are however convinced this is the case. In the case of THWU, local leaders recognized that sometimes mediation is ineffective, but also stated that there are cases of success. In a number of cases, the issue has been brought to the court, but this is not always a good solution in view of the consequences for the wife and children. Some stated that the fact that the issue is more openly and systematically addressed has a positive (preventive) effect in itself. On the other side, it is felt that the issue is very complex: some causes of domestic violence are firmly embedded in local culture, others have to do with more recent developments (unemployment, rise of alcoholism). In this regard it is important to note that only domestic violence seems to be addressed and not other forms of gender based violence.

2. **Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence**

As mentioned above, the programme, while active mainly in agricultural development, is including activities to prevent domestic violence and support women who have been victim of such violence. As such, it has no influence on the existence of measure to prevent such forms of violence. However, the program at least has contributed to people being better informed about the issue as a violation of human rights and Vietnamese law, which might have impacted positively on the level of social acceptance of domestic violence. It is however not clear to which extent these measures are sufficient to be truly effective in terms of decreasing domestic violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>++-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>++-</td>
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</table>

General score for effectiveness in the area of the reduction and prevention of violence against women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>+-</td>
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</table>
5. Efficiency

**Evaluation question 5:** To what extent does the Belgian international collaboration have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?

**CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors**

There are no references to a specific budget for gender initiatives, but gender is well integrated, so that no separate budget seems to be necessary. OSB at headquarters level has a gender focal point, but all staff is supposed to dispose of basic skills related to gender. The quality of some of the tools developed indicates that gender expertise has been mobilized for key activities.

As mentioned earlier, at program level some specific instruments are used, but the need for simple instruments remains high (cfr. recommendation of evaluation). This is confirmed by the field visit that found out that, despite considerable investments in capacity building, gender is often not rightly operationalised. This has certainly to do with a rather indiscriminate use of the term ‘gender’ that covers various practices (including a simple focus on women in activities), but also but the challenges related to translate the generic gender concept and approach in a well contextualised and sector approach.

**CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors**

Formal incentives do not exist in OSB, but seem not to be necessary as gender is well integrated at organizational level (cfr. results based framework at OSB level). As such, it is clear that specific commitment with regard to gender is compatible with the organisation’s culture and values.

Also at the local level (HBFU and THWU) commitment to gender is compatible with the unions’ values and vision.

**CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration**

There is a reference to cooperation with the VECO program (related to agricultural chain development), but in practice both programs have not really cooperated.

At the local level, the important efforts to mainstream gender and to create gender expertise at the local level are not optimized. Indeed, in the case of HBFU the pool of local gender trainers/communicators and women leaders constitute an important resource to promote gender beyond the boundaries of the partnership with OSB. So far, this has not been done in Hoa Binh, but local leadership is reflecting on taking initiatives in that direction. In the case of THWU, the strong position of the WU has led to synergies in various situations (the policy advocacy on the mining issue being the most outstanding example), and increased the openness of other mass organisations and the local leaders for women’s (not necessarily gender) issues.

**CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)**

The composition of management and decision making structures is an issue of attention in the program and in some cases some progress has been made in this regard, at least in terms of increasing the number of women associated to decision making processes, even when this implies year-long efforts in terms of capacity building, persuasion and lobby (as is the case in HBFU). At the level of the latter union, female and male staff are equal in number. In the case of THWU, leadership is in the hands of women only, both at district, commune and village level. All staff of the union and those in charge of program implementation are also women.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score for efficiency**  
+ -

4. Sustainability

**Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?**

**JC1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle**

Gender integration seems to be firmly embedded in the various phases of OSB’s program cycle, also at the local level. The fact that the partnership with OSB ended in December 2013 was never mentioned as a major constraint for sustainability in HFBU. It was however raised as an issue in THWU (in one village meeting), where local leaders expressed their concern in particular with regard to the results achieved with the integration of gender in the program; the local chapter of the WU seems however solid and capable to ensure sustainability; in addition, the evaluation team was told that other members from the Oxfam family will continue to work with the Union.

**JC2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building**

The evaluation is rather pessimistic about the sustainability of the effects of the promotion of new organisational models, as a clear conceptual and practical framework to support groups are lacking and no exit strategy including reduction of financial dependence on outside resources has been defined.

The field visit does not entirely share that conclusion, at least not as far as gender-related capacity building at the level of HBFU and THWU is concerned. In the case of HBFU, the local core group members seem to have been fairly well trained and definitely acquired their capacities and skills as (gender) trainers. There is certainly room for improvement, but their present skills and capacities constitute an asset for the organisation. In addition, the HBFU, while benefiting from external support, has also its internal funding which allows it to at least maintain a basic level of functioning. Similar conclusions can be made for THWU where, among others, the strongly embedded skills related to micro-credit provide a solid basis of continued income generation part of which can be used for ‘social activities’ as is already presently the case.

**JC3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)**

Solid evidence with regard to achievements at the level of gender equality and women empowerment could not be gathered, as most indications of achievements in these areas are actually indirect.

At HBFU level, progress with regard to gender leadership and awareness seems well embedded in the organisation and to be leading to, at least, some sustainable progress in terms of women empowerment. Similar conclusions can be made with regard to THWU where economic progress and skills with regard to income generating activities provide a solid ground for empowerment of women at household and village level. The strong position of the WU provides in addition an ‘umbrella’ to safeguard progress made in this area, as does the national law on gender equality that provides a action plan towards gender equality, which is taken up seriously at the local level.
Contextual developments (climate change, modernisation of the agricultural sector that goes against the interests of small farmers) seem to constitute the major threat for sustainability in this area.

**JC4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women**

Solid evidence with regard to achievements at this level could not be gathered (see above), but the inclusion of attention for gender violence in the HBFU and THWU seems to be firmly embedded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

| Overall score for sustainability                                                               | + -   |

**5. Impact**

**Evaluation question 8: What are the unexpected long-term results (positive and negative) of the interventions in the context of the Belgian ODA that target gender equality (gender policy marker value 1 and 2)?**

1. **Positive unplanned long-term results**
   No positive unplanned long-term results have been identified.

2. **Negative unplanned long-term results**
   No positive unplanned long-term results have been identified.

**Annexe: list of most important documents consulted**

- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Specific Objective 2 – Vietnam
- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Technical file Hoa Binh Farmers Union
- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Technical file Ha Tinh Farmers Union
- Program proposal 2011 – 2013, Technical file Thach Ha district Women’s Union
- Narrative Report 2011 – Country Programme, Specific Objective 3 – Vietnam
- Narrative Report 2012 – Country Programme, Specific Objective 3 – Vietnam
- Dr. Trinh Tien Dung, et al., Final Program Evaluation – Vietnam, OSB, June 2013-12-23
Evaluation of the school education quality assurance program

1. Key characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action title</th>
<th>School Education Quality Assurance Program (SEQAP) – phase 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention code DGD</td>
<td>300846330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and sub-sector</td>
<td>Basic Education – Full day schooling reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid modality</td>
<td>Budget support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective start of action</td>
<td>29/11/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Envisaged) end of action</td>
<td>31/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian organisation in charge of implementation</td>
<td>BTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Training (implementation) and Ministry of Finance (follow up of the funding and overall supervision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (€)</td>
<td>5.000.000 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (ODA data base)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex ante)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex post)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Concise description of the action

2.1 Context (country and region, sector, …)

The program is situated in Vietnam, a country that is changing very rapidly, with annual economic growth rates around 7% and substantial progress in poverty reduction over the last 15 years (with poverty levels decreasing from 58.1% in 1994 to 10% in 2009), bringing the country in the middle-income category. While the country is well on track to achieve the MDGs, about 40% of the population can still be classified as poor (2010, USD 1,25/day as poverty line). The Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) focuses, among others, on sustainable development. Strengthening Human Capacity is one of its priority domains and supporting the development of education and training one of the components of this domain. SEQAP is designed within the larger framework of the government’s programme of transition from half-day to full-day primary education with 35 periods per week by 2025. This Full Day Schooling (FDS) programme is aimed at improving the quality of education in primary schools through increased and more effective time for schooling.

2.2 Rationale

Vietnam is part of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) but had yet to benefit from this partnership at the start of SEQAP. SEQAP has been designed within the larger framework of the transition, to be completed by 2025, from half-day to full-day primary education with 35 periods per week. SEQAP is meant to support this transition process in disadvantaged regions thereby supporting the development of the policy framework of full day schooling and ensuring support in terms of human resources, schooling facilities and assistance to poor and vulnerable students.
In addition, Vietnam seeks to engage in a large-scale pedagogical renovation process (via the introduction of the Vietnam New School Model – VNEN, among others) and to that purpose seeks funding from the GPE to introduce over 2012-2015 a new school model inspired by the internationally renowned Columbian Escuela Nueva program. A pilot has already been implemented and the intended program has now the intention to cover 10% of Vietnamese primary schools in priority provinces. VNEN intends also to serve as the basis for the overhaul of the primary education curriculum that will start in 2015.

A strong articulation was envisaged between the VNEN and SEQAP as both are focusing on schools applying full day schooling; SEQAP was supposed to further ensure data collection activities to feed into VNEN’s M&E framework. And VNEN was planned to use the SEQAP developed pilot classroom observation methodology to design its own measurement of changes in teaching and learning processes. In actual implementation, the articulation between VNEN has been less than initially designed.

2.3 Major objectives

The objective of the program is to improve learning outcomes and education completion for primary education students, particularly disadvantaged primary education students, through supporting the Government’s Full Day Schooling (FDS) reform program. The program has four outputs:

- Improvement of the policy framework for the implementation of the FDS program (development of an FDS model, guidelines of incorporation of FDS and of policy frameworks); in this framework road map is to be developed at central level to ensure that the broader policy framework allows for the application and improvement of the model (quality assurance framework, human resource management, community and parental participation management, recurrent financing mechanisms for sustainable transition)
- Improvement of human resources for the implementation of the FDS program (provision of in-service training to teachers, support to the application of teacher professional standards, provision of pre-service training to prospective teachers, training to improve teaching methods, school management, financial management and school supervision)
- Improvement of school facilities and resources for the implementation of the FDS program (construction and/or upgrading of school infrastructure, assistance to provinces and schools to implement the FDS strategy, provision of technical assistance through regional coordinators; increase of salaries of teachers to compensate for the increased workload; scholarship for disadvantaged students from ethnic minorities); during implementation the provision of lunches to disadvantaged students has become an important component of this output, as it appeared a critical measure to ensure the integration of poor students in FDS
- Program management at central and sub-national level (a.o. via the provision of technical assistance)

2.4 Institutional setup

The participation of foreign partners in SEQAP (a $ 186M. program with the World Bank and DFID as other foreign partners) is described in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Government of Vietnam and the participating donor agencies. The role and contribution of Belgium in SEQAP is further arranged via two Specific Agreements (SA) signed with the Vietnam Ministry of Finance (MoF) which is the agency responsible for the follow-up of the funding and overall supervision of the SA, whereas the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) is designated as the agency responsible for the implementation of SEQAP. From the Belgian side, DGD is responsible for the Belgian contribution and BTC as executing agency for the Belgian participation in the M&E of the program (mainly via semi-annual implementation review missions) and the recruitment of an international budget support advisor. Belgian’s on-budget contribution (grant) to SEQAP has been budgeted at € 5M.
3. Relevance and coherence

3.1 To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

**Extent to which the project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account**

*(basis: attachment to MoU)*

The documents describing the program do not refer to the gender strategy paper. The MoU (under part I, p. 2) further states that SEQAP partners will make their best effort to ensure that their respective bilateral arrangements are compatible with the spirit and provisions of the MoU.

The MoU does not show any gender sensitivity, exception made for attachment 5, the so-called ‘Policy roadmap for Full Day Schooling’, that contains a few sex-disaggregated indicators with regard to students graduation and enrolment rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score relevance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

**Extent to which the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter are integrated in the financing proposal**

The documents do not contain any analysis of the specific needs and interests of women and girls, and of the obstacles they might encounter. The only level where specific needs/interest are addressed, albeit in general terms, are those related to non-Kinh population groups (ethic minorities), which is to some extent understandable as in Vietnam ethnicity is a far more important factor affecting access to and participation in basic education than gender; the major challenges for a national program such as SEQAP are actually decreasing inequity of the education quality and the difference in outcomes between regions. Further more, Vietnam has a strong policy to not differentiate education for boys and girls at primary level.

This being said, the (potential) impact of the introduction of FDS on the situation of girls (in particular girls belonging to ethnic minority groups) and of women teachers (most primary school teachers are women) could/should have been addressed in the appraisal documents. As the program also caters for the improvement of human resources via different types of training, the ex ante analysis could have assessed to which extent present teaching methods and school management practices are (or are not) gender biased.

Resource persons at central level further underlined that the Government endeavours to systematically integrate gender in all its programs, but that there is a lot of “erosion” in this regard, when programs are implemented at decentralised levels.

**Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)**

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77 For the rating of most judgement criteria and indicators, a four-points scale has been used: +++/++/-+/+-/-- (very good, good, modest, bad); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
As a budget support program, SEQAP is meant to cooperate with the MOET and its branches at the decentralised level. This indicator is, hence, not applicable to SEQAP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The financing proposal integrates the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score coherence</td>
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</table>

4. Effectiveness

4.1 Evaluation question 3: To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities between women and men”)?

JC: The Belgian cooperation has integrated gender in the project/programme cycle

1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)

The identification/formulation documents available to us (the DGD Technical note of September 2009; the World Bank Appraisal Document, May 2009) have not integrated gender, whereas both the DGD Technical note and the WB appraisal document contains well elaborated risk assessment addressing among others potential environmental and social (not including gender) risks. In this framework, a social assessment was conducted to verify key access issues (such as minority enrolment and completion rates, language of instruction, distance and cost, etc.) for poor, disadvantaged and ethnic minority children to understand their constraints to participating in the Full Day Schooling program and to support preparation of program design in general. Gender was apparently not considered a key access issue ...

Presumably a major justification for the lack of attention for gender lies in the fact that differences between (rich and poor) regions in terms of quality of education and learning outcomes have constituted the major issue of concern, whereas data pertaining to key educational indicators revealed that there exist, within each region, only minor differences between girls and boys. The fact that ‘gender’ issues might very well deal with aspects beyond those covered by key education indicators seems to have been ignored.

As a consequence, (possible) differences between boys and girls are hardly addressed in the appraisal documents, exception made for a few sex-disaggregated indicators on key educational indicators. However, a component of the program endeavours to improve the FDS model in itself in terms of curriculum focus, design and application. The basis to do so should/could have included a gender assessment.

Finally, there is a reference to the fact that potential opportunity costs of FDS include field labour and other chores essential in the household (e.g. taking care of younger

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78 For this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable). }; in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
siblings). This is however not developed further, which is justified by the fact that a survey revealed that demand from parents and students for FDS is high.

2. **Extent to which the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)**
The identification/formulation documents do not include a gender analysis, presumably for a lot of reasons (see above).

3. **Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)**
The description of the program and the program performance indicators as attached to the MoU do not contain gender specific objectives and activities, but some indicators (e.g. related to school attendance and performance at grade 5) are sex-disaggregated.

4. **Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal**
No documentation could be found with regard to the assessment of the funding proposal by Belgian institutions.

5. **Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**
The implementation reports available covering the period 2011 – August 2013 do not provide any indication related to gender, which seems not to have constituted a specific concern (contrary to the issue of ethnic minority groups).

6. **Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**
The regular review missions conducted do not address gender, which is of course understandable as it has not been an issue of concern in the key program documents; no information related to gender is included in the progress reports.

7. **Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**
No comprehensive evaluation has been conducted so far, but some components of SEQAP have been evaluated, but these evaluations could not be studied. A SEQAP case study to review the comparative performance of schools (January 2014) does not address gender issues and the DFID Project Completion Review contains some disaggregated data with regard to boys and girls (in particular in the context of assessing the participation of ethnic minorities), but does not deal with gender issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which gender the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall score related to the integration of gender in the action cycle                              | L     |
4.2 Evaluation question 4: To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

JC 1: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing gender expertise

1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations
Belgian support to the local partner organisation has been of a double nature: budget support to a major educational program and support via an expert technical assistance. Whereas SEQAP contains important capacity building efforts, no specific support has been provided to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations.

2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations
No specific support has been provided for the development of gender instruments at the level of national and local partner organisations.

3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)
No specific support has been provided for the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of national and local partner organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall score related to effectiveness related to capacity building efforts

JC 4.2: The partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of realising progress towards gender equality and women empowerment

1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.
3. Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&amp;D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall score related to effectiveness related to institutional strengthening
N.a.

JC 4.3: The process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has ensured equitable access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes

1. Degree to which (envisaged) benefits of the Belgian interventions deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy
Education is without any doubt a priority need and interest for girls, in particular for girls from ethnic minorities. Many studies have provided ample evidence of the importance of education as a means, even a prerequisite, to reach gender equality, and empowerment and autonomy for women. SEQAP’s efforts to improve the quality of education hence can be considered as key initiative to strengthen the autonomy of girls. The fact that SEQAP targets disadvantaged communities and succeeds in reaching these effectively is an additional positive element in this regard. On the other side, the programme has missed a chance to better include gender by ignoring potential constraining factors to full participation and autonomy of girls and women teachers.

2. Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products
Girls and boys have equal access to the program services and products (various measures to improve the education and education facilities, lunches, ...) and this is consequently monitored by SEQAP via key indicators pertaining to net enrolment and learning outcomes (related to mathematics and Vietnamese language). The SEQAP services and outputs are also beneficial for teachers who are increasingly women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall score related to access of women and girls to program benefits | ++

**JC 4.4: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3)**

1. **Changes in the area of education**
The progress reports do not yet contain information on the envisaged changes at the level of the program’s key performance indicators. In the document attached to the MoU these indicators foresee considerable progress in terms of girl students achieving the ‘independent learner status’ (= students eligible for grade 6) at Vietnamese language and mathematics, of increase of girls with excellent grade in Vietnamese, of girls completing primary education and receiving at least 30 periods per week. Other relevant indicators include the total gross and net enrolment rates (for which no targets are mentioned).

Furthermore, the data obtained during the field visits do not provide a complete nor an actualised picture with regard to these key performance indicators. The latest (2010-2011) net and gross enrolment rates and figures related to school attendance available in the program’s results oriented monitoring database indicate equal or slightly better scores for girls than for boys in terms of completion rates and gross enrolment rates, slightly better results for girls in net enrolment and drop out rates, but slightly worse results for the participation of girls in FDS. Girls however clearly outscore boys in terms of good/excellent classroom assessments related to Vietnamese and mathematics. Overall, interviews with teachers and principals confirmed these findings, in particular that girls perform better than boys.

As mentioned earlier, SEQAP did only marginally deal with the reform of school curricula, teaching methods and textbooks, which actually constitute areas where important educational impacts could have been produced.

2. **Changes in the area of health**
The program foresees the development of the FDS model, which includes the provision of meals at school to the students. Visits at field level learned that these lunches are not only crucial to ensure optimal participation of poor children in FDS, but also have a (very) positive impact on the health of the students as the meals prepared fulfil nutritional standards and often compensate at least partially the poor quality of meals poor students get at home.

3. **Changes in the economic field**
The program does not contribute directly to economic impact, notwithstanding the fact that on the medium term (and according to WB calculations) it is meant to produce a substantial impact in terms of poverty reduction and social cohesion.

4. **Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women**
One of the characteristics of the ‘Nueva Escuela’ approach (introduced in Vietnam via the VNEN program) is the engagement of the students; so, it could have had an impact on the internal empowerment of girls and boys. However the envisaged articulation between the VNEN and SEQAP has not really materialized.

The introduction of FDS often allows schools to introduce lessons on ‘life skills’. A large variety of subjects is covered by this topic ranging from theatre and dance, music, sport, games, safety on the road, … to communication, team work, gender equality and self-management and protection. Life skills are also approached as a crosscutting issue and integrated in regular lessons. The Evaluation team has not been able to really assess the impact of this extension of the curriculum on the internal empowerment of girls, but one might – in the light of experiences elsewhere – assume that the impact has been positive.
5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women

The introduction of FDS (actually in most cases the present situation is one of MDS Mixed Day Schooling - where students have at least 30 periods of schooling per week), leads to an increased workload for some teachers. In some areas teachers have to perform more teaching hours when FDS was introduced, whereas in other areas additional teachers were recruited. In itself, some consider this increased workload as fair as teachers use(d) to work less hours than other government staff. Others feel that teachers need to receive extra payment for extra work. There does not yet exist a global policy in this regard. In some areas, teachers are compensated to a little extent for the extra work, elsewhere they get adequate compensation from various sources, the provincial government in first instance. Still in other places parents contribute to the teachers’ salary for the additional working hours. Particularly in rural and ethnic minority areas many (predominantly female) teachers engage also in agricultural activities, which they have, hence, to combine with their teaching job and household chores. But elsewhere also, female teachers have to adjust their lives and often see their overall workload increase.

Girls and boys take up household chores as well and, as such, might see their workload increase via the introduction of FDS. The extent to which this happens and further complicates life of children has not been analysed by SEQAP. While the evaluation team could not assess this issue in depth either, it found ample evidence of children, girls in particular, taking up household chores after school and in the weekend. In particular girls who have one or both parents being absent to work in other areas seem to be vulnerable.

Against these rather negative findings, it is clear that the better learning outcomes in SEQAP schools imply that school girls (and boys) are better prepared for the next steps in their lives to become well empowered citizens, an outcome that in our view outscores the negative findings presented above.

6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations

Important efforts have been undertaken to communicate with the local population (parents in particular) about the potential benefits of FDS. These efforts have been largely successful, also because of the other activities undertaken by SEQAP (including infrastructure and equipment support, training for teachers and principals, etc.). As such, via the introduction of FDS progress has been made in terms of increasing and securing participation of girls in education to counter the widely prevailing conviction that “girls do not need to study long”. Parents and society at large feel it increasingly important to also ensure education of their girl children. While the major challenges in this regard are situated at the secondary education level, SEQAP schools have contributed to lay down a stronger foundation for extended girl inclusion in education. On the other side point birth statistics to a substantial imbalance between boys and girls (113 boys born for 100 girls), which constitutes at the same time a major reason for concern and an illustration of prevailing values and attitudes in present Vietnam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Overall score related to effectiveness in the area of women empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
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<td>(+)</td>
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</table>
CJ 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women

1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence
The project has no activities related to this area. But FDS provides room for extra lessons in which ‘life skills’ have been introduced as a new topic in the curriculum. Ones of the topics dealt with is awareness raising related to child trafficking and how girls student need to become self protected. In theory SEQAP could have been more proactive in influencing the topics for the extra lessons, but this area actually falls beyond the remit of the program.

2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General score for effectiveness in the area of the reduction and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Efficiency

Evaluation question 5: To what extent does the Belgian international collaboration have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?

CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors
There did not exist a specific budget for gender initiatives, neither for an input in terms of gender expertise at the level of the Belgian actors; the task description of the Budget Support Advisor does not contain any reference to gender, which is understandable in the context of the choices made by the program. The program has been accepted quite long ago, most probably before the BTC gender expert at the BTC headquarters has been recruited or could have had a look at the project. This expert conducted a support mission to Vietnam to engender the 2011 – 2015 ICP process together with two local counterparts, but the SEQAP project had already been approved before. We have not found indications of support of the expert to the SEQAP project.

CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors
No indications have been found of the existence of such incentives. One can even state that the Vietnam policy, which has made a clear choice for no differentiation between boys and girls in primary education, constitutes a disincentive for the integration of gender.

CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration
No indications have been found of the creation of such synergies.
**CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)**

The Joint Review Missions are the main decision making mechanism of SEQAP. A broad range of stakeholders from different ministries, the donors, etc. participate in these missions, which often makes decision making complicated. We could not find comprehensive data on the participants to these missions allowing us to address this judgment criterion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score for efficiency**

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4. **Sustainability**

**Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?**

**JC1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle**

N.a. (gender has not been integrated in the cycle).

**JC2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building**

N.a. (no capacity building efforts related to gender have been undertaken by SEQAP).

**JC3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)**

SEQAP’s major contribution to impact and gender equality is obviously situated in the area of education. Girls (but also boys) in predominantly poor areas of the country, often belonging to ethnic minority groups, are provided better quality education leading (most probably) to improved learning outcomes which will contribute to the empowerment of girls. On a broader level, the program contributes to the mainstreaming of FDS in Vietnam, which is also to be considered as an important contribution to improved schooling for girls and boys. It is however doubtful that Vietnam will substantially increase its budget for education in the future\(^79\), whereas there are still many needs to be covered. This implies that the involvement of local communities and government institutions will be crucial to maintain the present level of quality or to further improve this.

In many schools, SEQAP managed to improve increased interest, commitment and contributions (in kind and in cash) from local authorities and parents. Discussions at the local level indicated that school managers were confident that the same level of involved from third parties will be maintained after SEQAP will have pulled out.

\(^79\) On average, the state budget allocated to education sector is relatively high (20% in 2013 of 6600 bill VND) in comparison with others sectors (e.g. culture and information-only 1,8%; science and technology- only 2%). However in 2014 it is informed that the budget allocated for the sector will be reduced to 6000 bill VND. [http://vnexpress.net/tin-tuc/giao-duc/giam-10-ngan-sach-cho-giao-duc-nam-2014-2929540.html](http://vnexpress.net/tin-tuc/giao-duc/giam-10-ngan-sach-cho-giao-duc-nam-2014-2929540.html)
JC4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women

The activities in this domain have been too fragmented and only of limited outreach to be assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall score for sustainability: +

5. Impact

Evaluation question 8: What are the unexpected long-term results (positive and negative) of the interventions in the context of the Belgian ODA that target gender equality (gender policy marker value 1 and 2)?

1. Positive unplanned long-term results
No positive unplanned impacts have been noted.

2. Negative unplanned long-term results
No negative unplanned impacts have been noted, in the sense that the potentially negative impacts mentioned above (under 4.4.5) – i.e. girls and boys take up household chores as well and, as such, might see their workload increase via the introduction of FDS, are considered as 'planned' negative impacts.

Note: one of the progress reports available discusses, quite lengthy, several negative developments in the education sector in Vietnam, in particular the increasing commercialization of education services (and related corruption), with negative impacts on poor and disadvantaged households that cannot pay for the cost of (quality) educational services. These disturbing evolutions are well described but it is not clear how important they are and to which extent SEQAP takes (or can take) them into account.

Annexe: list of most important documents consulted

- Report on SEQAP performance of Quang Nam province’s Department of Education and Training, March 2013
- Report on SEQAP performance of Quang Nam province’s Department of Education and Training, March 2013
- Report on SEQAP performance of Cao Lanh City’s BOET, March 2013
- Report on SEQAP performance of Hoa Thuan’s Primary School of Cao Lanh City, March 2013
- J.M.R. Cameron, Tran Thi Bich Lieu, et al., A SEQAP Case Study to Review the Comparative Performance of Schools, January 2014-03-22
- DFID, Project Completion Review, School Education Quality Assurance Programme (SEQAP), January 2014
- SEQAP, Results and outcome matrix
- SEQAP Mid Term Review, Wrap up Meeting, April 2013
- Ministry of Education and Training, SEQAP, Progress Report 6, August 2013
• SEQAP, Aide-Memoire of the 6th Review Mission, September 2013
• SEQAP, Progress Report 5, September 2012
• SEQAP, Progress Report 3, August 2011
• SEQAP, Aide-Memoire of the Review Mission, September 2010
• World Bank, Project Appraisal Document SEQAP, May 2009
• Gauthier de Woelmont, Paul Verlé, Technical Note SEQAP, August 2009
Evaluation of the action: Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services

1. Key characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action title</th>
<th>Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention code DGD</td>
<td>3003210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and sub-sector</td>
<td>240 Banking and financial services – Informal/semi-formal financial intermediaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid modality</td>
<td>Project aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective start of action</td>
<td>November 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Envisaged) end of action</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian organisation in charge of implementation</td>
<td>BTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (€)</td>
<td>3.393.877 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (ODA data base)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex ante)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex post)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Concise description of the action

2.1 Context (country and region, sector, ...)

This project (acronym ACCES) is the third phase of the bilateral credit project implemented in cooperation with VWU. It could be implemented against the background of sound economic development in Vietnam, which provided a solid foundation for the development of micro-finance and its adequate integration in the overall financial system. Vietnamese authorities have clearly responded to these evolutions by creating a legal framework for the Organisation and Operation of Micro-finance institutions (MFI) via Decree 28.

The formal sector plays an important role in expanding the outreach of the MF sector in Vietnam by linking up with mass organisations such as VWU. Among the semi-formal providers, only a few focus exclusively on micro-finance and often the quality of their services and functioning leaves to desire. This sub-sector is further characterized by its fragmentation and the lack of coordination; their staff members often lack technical capacity and have only limited access to training.

VWU is the most important of these semi-formal providers and distinguishes itself by its significant institutional strength. As a key institution in the country, it is well placed to support the development of a more professional MF sector in the country. Its cooperation with Belgium has allowed it engaging in innovative approaches, such as wholesale lending, which have attracted the attention of the Government. Further, VWU manages a database on MFI for the entire country, which is another illustration of its key role and position in the sector.
2.2 Rationale

Despite economic development and the increasing outreach of social provisions and MF, poverty levels remain high in Vietnam, especially in rural remote areas. In addition, rapid economic changes often make the poor even more vulnerable and their long-term access to financial services a key requirement for their economic development. As a mass organization, VWU is well placed and equipped to reach out to the most remote and poor areas of the country and to involve the poor, in particular women, in economic development programs.

2.3 Major objectives

The major objectives of the project as formulated in the technical and financial proposal read as follows:

- **The overall objective** is to contribute to the reduction of the incidence of poverty among the households in Vietnam
- **The specific objective** is that by 2010, at least 100,000 economically active poor households in the target provinces of Vietnam have access to high quality and diversified financial and/or business development services provided by coordinated and market-responsive providers following good practices for sustainable service delivery.
- **The project has four key results:**
  - Access to financial services
  - Access to non-financial services
  - VWU-wide coordination among its microfinance programs
  - Efficient program management

2.4 Institutional setup

The Government of Vietnam has designated VWU as the project owner. As a mass organisation, VWU will be involved in implementation at all levels. The BTC is charged with the timely mobilization of the Belgian contribution and inputs to the project, among others via an international chief technical advisor working full-time for the project for its entire duration.

A project steering committee (PSC) represents the highest management level of the project and in charge of providing strategic guidance to the project implementers and assuring that the project objectives are attained on time. The PSC has also the responsibility to maintaining the linkages between the many government departments that are associated to the project.

A project management unit (PMU) is placed at the central VWU level and manages the daily implementation of the project. This PMU has counterpart PMUs at provincial, district and commune levels to ensure smooth project implementation at field level.

3. Relevance and coherence

3.1 To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

**Extent to which the project proposal refers to the strategy paper**

The project proposal (DTD) does not refer to the strategy paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score relevance</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

**Extent to which the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter are integrated in the financing proposal**

The proposal attaches much importance to analyse the situation, needs and interests of the poor households but does so without explicitly distinguishing specific needs and interests of women and men. It states for instance that there is a need for a more adapted approach of loan provision (from a supply led approach to a demand oriented approach tailored to the specific needs of the poor), but without assessing the specific situation of women and men. The fact that women face a large variety of challenges might explain that no specific analysis of their situation is presented and that this is postponed till actual project implementation (e.g. activity 1 for result 2).

On the other side, the focus on women is implicitly present, as the project is implemented via VWU, which focuses on poor women in first instance and supports them to generate employment and income; the mobilization and provision of loans is a key strategy in this regard. The same can be said about the strong focus on vocational training and the creation of job centres and the promotion of savings through the creation of saving groups.

Summarizing, the strong focus on demand-led approaches allows to concluding that needs and interests of women are systematically taken into account, but that this is done rather via a ‘Women in Development’ than a ‘Gender and Development’ approach.

Finally, it is important to mention that the initial project design has undergone important changes (from direct service delivery to sector support) during implementation, which might however not have altered the initial focus on women and gender.

**Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)**

The cooperation with VWU has a long history and a particular origin; as such, this indicator should not be addressed in the context of this evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The financing proposal integrates the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>+/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score coherence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Effectiveness

4.1 Evaluation question 3: To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men")?

JC: The Belgian cooperation has integrated gender in the project/programme cycle\(^\text{80}\)

1. **Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)**

No explicit gender analysis has been integrated in the identification and formulation of this project. However, this project is the third phase of a program of cooperation and implemented by a highly experienced women's organization. As such it can be safely stated that women (and not that much gender issues in the strict sense) issues are strongly embedded in the approach while they are not explicitly dealt with.

2. **Extent to which the financing proposals includes a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)**

There is no explicit gender analysis in the financing proposal for the reasons mentioned above. The focus is rather on the (rural) poor households and their problems that are to some extent analysed.

3. **Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)**

The project overall objective and specific objective focus on poverty and poor households, but two of the three results deal explicitly with women and have corresponding indicators formulated (the third and fourth result are more of an institutional nature). The results dealing specifically with women aim to ensure access to financial services and business development services for poor women.

4. **Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal**

No information available.

5. **Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**

As indicated above, the project has adopted a women-in-development approach without dealing with gender integration in a transversal way. As such, increased gender equity (or working with women and men) has never been part of the project, which obviously does not imply that no improvements in gender relations have been achieved (see below).

6. **Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**

As gender was not addressed as a transversal issue, changes in gender-related issues (practical needs and strategic issues) where not included in reporting and follow-up of the action. The focus has been on the outreach at household level and access of women to credit and business support services, not on the actual effects of these achievements.

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\(^{80}\) For this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable); in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)

Gender has been dealt with as a cross-cutting issue in the final evaluation of the project (besides other transversal themes). The evaluation TOR contained an important number of questions related to the DAC criteria. Four questions related to gender equality are included under the transversal themes; three of these questions actually addressed (potential) project performance that has never been aimed at by the project (at least not formally). These questions can nevertheless be considered relevant and interesting provided their answer is dealt with in the right way.

The main corps of the evaluation report deals with the project analysis in a ‘regular’ manner (using the project proposal and logframe as a reference). It briefly addresses gender as a cross-cutting issue, but the analysis actually only deals with issues related to VWU and its women members, thereby being consistent with VWU’s WID approach, which does not address gender issues as such.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which gender the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>E</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overall score related to the integration of gender in the action cycle | E |

4.2 Evaluation question 4: To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

JC 1: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing gender expertise

1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations

The project has invested substantially in the building of the capacities of VWU staff at various levels, but the expertise developed was related to micro-finance, not to gender. Notwithstanding the technical nature of the training, ample evidence exists that the skills acquired have helped the women cadres concerned in making promotion within the VWU. The development of business skills of poor women has been another major component of the project, with more than 40,000 women trained. The information available suggests that this training was predominantly technical; however most probably, the skills
acquired will have produced broader effects (self confidence, empowerment) of the women trained (see below).

2. **Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations**
See above.

3. **Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)**
See above.

### Judgment criteria and indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)</td>
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</table>

**Overall score related to effectiveness related to capacity building efforts**

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**JC 4.2: The partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of realising progress towards gender equality and women empowerment**

VWU has been active in some of the areas depicted below, but not as a consequence of the ACCESS program.

1. **Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)**
N.a.

2. **Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)**
N.a.

3. **Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)**
N.a.

4. **Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)**
N.a.

### Judgment criteria and indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&amp;D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
JC 4.3: The process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has ensured equitable access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes

1. Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy

As it is implemented by VWU, the ACCESS program is one of the many initiatives VWU undertakes to, at the one hand, support the political and economic agenda of the government and, on the other hand, engage in supporting women in their development, both within and outside the family. Gender equality and autonomy are not explicitly envisaged, but the ACCESS program clearly aims at strengthening the position of women, both at household and society level. Being a women’s mass organisation, VWU has to focus on women (and on women solely), which makes a full-fledged gender approach difficult.

2. Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products

Virtually all beneficiaries of the programme are women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>++</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overall it can be safely stated that the project has substantially contributed to women empowerment, notwithstanding the fact that it has not been implemented along a gender approach.

1. Changes in the area of education

Via the project activities, VWU has also been able to reach out better at the local level and better implement its other programs related to education, gender, reproductive health, environment, etc.
VWU has engaged substantially in capacity building efforts to (among others) develop the technical and business skills of about 50,000 members and improve financial and administrative literacy of VWU cadres at different levels. While the capacity building
efforts have been predominantly of a technical nature, interviews at field level have revealed that they have produced positive effects in other areas as well, such as the self-confidence of women or their position in the household, as the trained women were supposed to transfer the newly acquired knowledge and competence to other family members that participate in their business.

2. Changes in the area of health
Via the project activities, VWU has also been able to reach out better at the local level and better implement its other programs related to education, gender, reproductive health, environment, etc. As such, the ACCESS programme has, for instance, been supportive to VWU’s efforts in the area of family planning where it succeeded in bringing more balance, among their members, in the choice of the contraceptive method within the couple (decrease from 90% to 60% of ‘female’ methods).

3. Changes in the economic field
Access to loans (often continued access), the development of a savings habit and business development support have economically empowered women in their households as most loans have been successfully used for the development of income generating activities. Successes of women in the economic field were consistently reported to resulting in improved gender relations with a better sharing of household chores and business activities among family members.
In some cases, the size of loans was reported being too small to allow for drastic progress. Nevertheless, overall, VWU succeeded via this program in substantially decreasing the numbers of families under the poverty line and in ensuring that the economic progress achieved among these families became sustainable.

4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women
The project has contributed to internal empowerment of women in various ways. Through skills development training women have gained confidence and become successful in economic activities. As such, they can engage more in social activities at village level, are respected by their communities, become introduced in other associations and feel more confident to stand up and take initiatives if they consider this important.
Via the program activities, VWU has also been able to reach out better to the local level and better implement its other programs related to education, gender, reproductive health, domestic violence, political participation, etc.

5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women
Parallel to their internal empowerment, the economic success of many beneficiaries of the program, has encouraged them in taking up roles at the level of society and their extended family. Many successful VWU members engage also locally in political decision-making. At the level of household and family, beneficiaries interviewed claim that their progress has a major influence on power relations in the household and the family, at a decrease of domestic violence and at a more balanced division of the workload related to domestic tasks.
Many VWU cadres trained have made promotion in the organisation and have become influential in local politics and in the political apparatus. Via the project activities, VWU has also been able to reach out better to the local level and better implement its other programs related to political participation and decision making, among others. The VWU meetings were also a forum to disseminate information on key laws such as the Gender Equality Law and the Domestic Violence Prevention Law (both issued in 2007).

6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations
The interviews with program beneficiaries provided strong evidence that the activities of the project have resulted in changes in behaviour, both within the household and in the community. Women who successfully developed their business are treated with respect in society and by their family (husband in first instance), seem to suffer less from domestic violence and, in a number of cases, achieve in influencing the behaviour of their husband who is ready to take up some tasks in the household. Women stated that, all in all, their workload might nevertheless have increased in total, but that they prefer
this situation compared to the previous situation where their action was confined to the household.

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</table>

**Overall score related to effectiveness in the area of women empowerment**

**JC 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women**

1. **Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence**

The project has most probably produced positive indirect effects in this area as (1) it facilitated and strengthened the functioning of VWU, also at local level where important efforts were undertaken to inform members about important issues such as the Gender Equality Law and the Domestic Violence Prevention Law, and even more importantly (2) it empowered women in such a way that domestic violence decreased even when this was not explicitly focused on.

2. **Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence**

The project did not directly intervene in this area. Indirectly, its success reinforced however the functioning of VWU, which at the local level engaged in initiatives to prevent and contain gender related violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**General score for effectiveness in the area of the reduction and prevention of violence against women**

**N.a.**

**5. Efficiency**

**Evaluation question 5: To what extent does the Belgian international collaboration have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?**

**CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors**

No specific resources have been earmarked for gender-related activities.
**CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors**

At the level of the Belgian actors involved (BTC), no incentives have been found to integrate gender.

**CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration**

As the ACC project is implemented via VWU which also is a key partner in the VVOB and SEQAP programs, some synergies could have been considered, but nothing has happened.

**CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)**

More women than men attend the joint steering committee meetings of the project. The president of the Steering Committee is a woman and so are the representatives of the Ministry of Planning and Investment and of the Ministry of Finance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score for efficiency</td>
<td>-+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**4. Sustainability**

**Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?**

**JC 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle**

N.a.

**JC 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building**

N.a.

As ‘technical’ capacity building might have produced indirect effects on women empowerment, it is important to mention that the final project evaluation assigned a high score to sustainability, among other because of the high level of ownership of the changes and results achieved.

**JC 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)**

The outcomes achieved with regard to gender equality and women empowerment have a high chance to become sustainable, in view of the strong position of VWU at the national and decentralised levels and, above all, of its well developed skills and access to funding with regard to micro-credit.

**JC 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women**

The progress achieved with regard to the decrease of domestic violence seems to be sustainable as its key factor, the economic progress of women, is also sustainable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score for sustainability**

**++

5. Impact

**Evaluation question 8: What are the unexpected long-term results (positive and negative) of the interventions in the context of the Belgian ODA that target gender equality (gender policy marker value 1 and 2)?**

1. **Positive unplanned long-term results**
   No particular positive unplanned long-term results have been found.

2. **Negative unplanned long-term results**
   No particular negative unplanned long-term results have been found.

**Annexe: list of most important documents consulted**

- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, DTF
- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, Annual Report 2010
- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, Annual Report 2011
- Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services, Final Report, end 2012
- Final Evaluation, Access to coordinated credit and enterprise support services
Evaluation of the action: Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen Province

1. Key characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action title</th>
<th>Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen Province</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention code DGD</td>
<td>3000150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and sub-sector</td>
<td>14030 – Water supply and sanitation; 14050 – Environmental protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid modality</td>
<td>Project aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective start of action</td>
<td>April 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Envisaged) end of action</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian organisation in charge of implementation</td>
<td>BTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>Provincial People’s Committee of Phu Yen Province; People’s Committee of Tuy Hoa town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (€)</td>
<td>3,320,000 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (ODA data base)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex ante)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex post)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Concise description of the action

2.1 Context (country and region, sector, ...)

This project was part of a program introduced by the Vietnamese Delegation to the July 2000 Joint Commission where both countries agreed to collaborate in the environmental sector. It is aimed at supplementing the efforts of the Tuy Hoa town in the area of solid waste management (SWM). The city has a population of some 110,000 (2004) but is growing in importance as a provincial capital. The identification report mentioned that by the time of the identification, 80% of the households are covered by a collection service, which is assured by communes and wards and by the Housing Development and Urban Construction Company, which is part of the Provincial People’s Committee.

The policy framework of the waste management sector in Vietnam is rather complicated. At provincial level, SWM is the responsibility of the Department of Construction. This department both assures functions of governmental management in the region and manages directly other functional organisations in the area of drinking water, drainage, environmental management, public lighting, etc. At the cities/towns, SWM at the city area is the responsibility of the city’s or town’s People’s Committee (PC). Collection and disposal of waste is normally undertaken by a state-owned enterprise, which is Phu Yen’s Urban Environment Company – Phu Yen Urenco. At the moment of the project start, the organisation of SWM is not clearly defined in a legal framework and budgets for urban SWM were still too low. Currently the Phu Yen Urenco is owned by the Phu Yen Provincial People Committee, and it has an annual

81 This company is now renamed as Phu Yen’s Urban Environment Company
contract with Tuy Hoa town people’s committee on ensuring the city’s clean environment, including SWM.

The problem analysis conducted in the city during the project preparation revealed, among others, the following problems. At the technical level: poor infrastructure preventing collection with pushcarts, lack of bins and containers, lack of modern collection vehicles and of a proper maintenance workshop, lack of treatment facilities for solid waste (for recycling, composting). Problems related to health and safety included: insufficient collection coverage (leading to improper waste disposal and related diseases), improper handling of health care waste and unacceptable waste disposal at dump sites. At the user level, limited financial affordability and insufficient cost recovery were mentioned. At institutional level the lack of capacity at the level of the authorities was mentioned as well as the poor coordination at ward level, the weak participation of communities in SWM and the lack of enforcement and regulations.

At the moment of the visit of the evaluation team, the project was already closed for exactly three years. In that period, the new landfill of which the construction was finished around the moment of the project closure, has become fully operational

2.2 Rationale

The existing situation produced important problems in terms of negative impact on public health and the environment. Waste piles in residential areas are a breeding ground for vectors such as rodents and flies. The blockage of sewage and storm water ditches contributes to this. Open dumps also contribute to the pollution of air and surface water and the soil and present a serious health hazard to waste pickers. With the economic development of the city and the province, it is to be feared that the problems will further increase. These problems are compounded by the lack of technical and institutional capacity and a lack of awareness at all levels.

On the other side it is clear that solving these problems will bring clear positive impacts, whereby it should be noted that the support of an externally funded project should be complementary to the city’s and the people’s own contribution and efforts.

2.3 Major objectives

The general objective of the project is: The sanitary and hygienic living conditions for the population of Tuy Hoa and the protection of the surrounding environment are improved. The specific objective of the project has been defined as follows: A better and more selective way of solid waste collection and disposal and awareness raising within these fields implemented.

Five intermediate results have been defined:

• Institutional and Organisational Conditions for Solid Waste Management are improved
• Sufficient financial means are generated to sustain proper solid waste collection and disposal
• Solid waste collection services improved
• Environmental health and safety conditions improved
• Awareness on environmental health and safety aspects among relevant authorities and the general public improved.

2.4 Institutional setup

The Government of Vietnam has designated the Provincial People’s Committee (PPC) of Phu Yen province as the owner of the project. The PPC has appointed the Tuy Hoa Town’s People’s Committee (TPC) as the implementing authority. The chairman of the TPC is to verify whether activities are properly implemented, to guide the implementing

As such, the environmental problems referred to later on in this report, only surfaced after closure of the project.
team and coordinate with government institutions and offices on legal aspects affecting the project. He/she should also appoint a Project Management Unit (PMU) that is responsible for day-to-day implementation. The PMU will report to the Project Steering Committee (PSC).

The BTC is charged with the timely mobilisation of the Belgian contribution and inputs to the project. It will facilitate the TPC in its role as implementing agency and will be assisted by a part-time international technical advisor who will also act as co-director of the project.

The PSC is the highest management structure of the project and will provide strategic guidance to all project implementers and will assure that the project objectives are attained in a timely manner. The PSC also has the responsibility to maintaining the linkages with the many government departments at different levels that provide inputs to the project.

3. Relevance and coherence

3.1 To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

Extent to which the project proposal refers to the strategy paper
The project proposal does not refer to the strategy paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score relevance</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

Extent to which the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter are integrated in the financing proposal
No indication has been found of the needs and interests of women and the obstacles they encounter being integrated in the financing proposal. The City WU (Women's Union) has played a role in the preparation process by participated in a survey conducted in terms of communicating to their members about the project initiative, the need of households and what the project expected the people to do.

The midterm evaluation indicated that the Vietnamese institutions involved in the preparation process were male dominated so that there was little space for women involvement in the process.

Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)
Considering the specific nature of this project, it is not relevant to assess this indicator in the framework of this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The financing proposal integrates the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score coherence</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Effectiveness

4.1 Evaluation question 3: To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities between women and men”)?

JC: The Belgian cooperation has integrated gender in the project/programme cycle

1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action
Gender has not been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (see above).

2. Extent to which the financing proposals includes a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)
The financing proposal, while of rather good ‘technical’ quality, does not include a gender analysis.

3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)
The logical framework does not include gender specific objectives, activities or indicators. Some awareness raising activities are foreseen, but they are designed in a global (not gender specific) way.

4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal
No documents related to the assessment could be retrieved.

5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)
Gender has not been included in the implementation of the action, but the achievement of the project’s objective might very well have contributed to solving a practical need of women. The project had however the intention to include women (though this is not substantiated in the implementation reports). According to the MTR ... The project set out with the intention of ensuring that it addressed gender issues by involving women throughout the processes where relevant. The awareness raising process should have involved men and women equally but this was not achieved in certain areas because of the gender imbalance within the normal structures within Vietnam. For example getting messages to the Wards and Communes through the ward leaders meant dealing with a group that consisted almost entirely of men. At the other extreme when holding health and safety classes with the scavengers then the audience was almost exclusively women. The fact that scavengers exist because of the state of poverty in Vietnam is one issue and the other is that women are the family members who have to do this unpleasant job. Whilst recognising the gender inequalities in certain areas it was not within the remit of this project to address these wider social issues. In a few cases it was recognised that the project could have focused its activities more on the women in the community. This will be addressed in one instance by running waste management awareness training with housewives organised through the Women’s Union.
Similar findings are presented in the final evaluation that also mentions support to the creation of a scavengers’ association, which, combined with a health and safety training for the members, has considerably enhanced the status of the women involved. The discussion of the evaluation team with the association of scavengers confirmed largely the findings of the evaluation. These scavengers however to not constitute a ‘group’ in
the full meaning of the word, but rather a loose entity that will meet when the situation demands to do so. The project has positively impacted on their health and safety, but some recommendations of the end-of-project evaluation have not been followed up, with as a consequence that, for instance, part of the scavengers are still in a situation of vulnerability because they have no health insurance.

Finally, the evaluation also states that while women occupy key roles in relation to health, hygiene, sanitation and waste issues at household level, men played key roles in the project because of the gender imbalance in communal management structures. Our evaluation visit confirmed that the city WU has been involved at certain moments in the implementation process (as a member of the PSC), but always in their capacity to convey project messages to their members, not as a partner in their own right.

6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)
Gender has not been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action.

7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)
Taking into account that reporting on project implementation has been gender blind (which let suppose that gender was not truly addressed in the project), both the MTR and the final evaluation dealt relatively well with gender issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which gender the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall score related to the integration of gender in the action cycle | L     |

4.2 Evaluation question 4: To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

JC 1: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing gender expertise

1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations
No support has been provided in this area.
2. **Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations**

No support has been provided in this area.

3. **Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)**

No support has been provided in this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall score related to effectiveness related to capacity building efforts | 1 |

**JC4.2: The partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of realising progress towards gender equality and women empowerment**

1. **Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)**

No support has been provided in this area.

2. **Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)**

No support has been provided in this area.

3. **Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)**

No support has been provided in this area.

4. **Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)**

No support has been provided in this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&amp;D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
JC 4.3: The process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has ensured equitable access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes

1. Degree to which the (envisaged) benefits of the interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy

The envisaged benefits of the intervention deal with improved solid waste collection and disposal and the effects closely linked with this objective in terms of improved sanitary and hygienic conditions. These benefits concern practical needs of the population of Tuy Hoa, in particular women who are mainly responsible for solid waste disposal and in the past often faced problems in this regard. While women are clearly benefiting from the project, the latter has been implemented without any consideration related to gender relations.

2. Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products

Presently 16 communes belonging to Tuy Hoa town (with a total population of 160,000 people) have access to the program results. Both men and women are concerned by the program, but the latter serves in first instance practical needs of women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
<td>+--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score related to access of women and girls to the program benefits</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JC 4.4: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3)

1. Changes in the area of education

According to the end of project evaluation, the project has achieved a significant raising of the public's environmental awareness related to waste management (via public awareness campaigns, activities at schools, ...). The field visit has allowed finding out that the project has contributed to the empowerment of the City WU in the area of health; the Union engages on a regular basis in public awareness initiatives related to environmental health (e.g. road cleaning, theatre plays on environmental issues, etc.). The group of scavengers has also received substantial training and capacity building related to occupational health and safety. Substantial awareness raising efforts to promote the categorization of solid waste at household level (separation of organic and non-organic waste, ...) have only partially been effective.

2. Changes in the area of health

The project has contributed to a cleaner environment and a correlated decrease of medical and medicine costs for fighting sanitation related diseases estimated at VND
7,000 per household per month, which represents a financial saving of more than 2% for the poorest quintile of the city’s households. While this progress is not specifically dealing with reproductive health issues, it might have been significant for women and girls, especially those belonging to the poorer sections of society.

The end of project evaluation has been positive about the project’s performance and state it has achieved impressive results in improving the living and environmental conditions in Tuy Hoa city. The old landfill has been adequately sealed off so that it does not entail an environmental danger for the future. Recycling activities that have started to process the plastics gathered by the scavengers had however to be discontinued as the premises did not fulfil the environment protection related regulations of the government. The same happened with the recycling of organic waste to produce compost, which proved to be financially unviable.

As mentioned above, the working conditions of the group of scavengers have been substantially improved: stop of night work, use of protective clothing, fixed and limited daily working hours, ... They now have a more regular life allowing them taking better care of the children and better health since they do not have to work overtime and during night.

Presently, a major issue of concern is the pollution caused by the spill-over of the landfill’s recipient ponds used to recycle toxic wastewater. The infrastructure built for this purpose seems to be ill designed, causing spill-over of highly toxic wastewater in periods of heavy rainfall and threatening in that way the health and livelihoods of 60 families living in the neighbourhood.

### 3. Changes in the economic field

Overall, the adequate functioning of the solid waste management system has allowed some minor decrease in the workload of women. The project has also stabilized the income of the group of about 30 scavengers (predominantly women), though the scavengers claim that their income has decreased because of the project intervention. In the 16 wards/communes covered by the project (from original of 10 wards/communes), jobs have been created for poor women who collect waste at household level in bins donated by the project. These women then bring the waste to collection points where it is loaded on trucks. Many of these bins have however broken down and, according to local authorities, are too expensive to be repaired or replaced. This implies that the collection of waste at local level has to be undertaken in far from optimal conditions.

### 4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women

The group of scavengers (mainly women from poor households) has stated that the project support has been beneficial and added to their self-confidence. They feel proud of their autonomy and free to make their own choices. While they complain about some loss in income because of the project intervention, their revenue seems to be higher than that of many other personnel of the waste collection company. While the scavengers have undoubtedly a positive attitude with regard to the project intervention, opportunities have been missed to support them more comprehensively and address some key constraints they are facing (see also below).

No other changes have been produced in terms of internal empowerment of women.

### 5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women

The creation of an association of scavengers (mainly women from poor households) has added to the self-confidence of this marginalised group and increased the social status of its members. They feel confident enough to approach local authorities to discuss issues related to their work and interest, when needed. The group has a relationship with the provincial trade union which provides them advice (on occupational health issues, ...) and occasionally training. So far, they have no regular relation with the City WU, which apparently is not organised to support this type of professional groups. The group states however that they so far have been unable to change their negative image at the level of society. They want however to continue their job, as they have no alternative. They work however hard to ensure that their children can study and will have more attractive jobs in their life.
No other (substantial) changes have been produced in terms of external empowerment of women, with the exception of changes at the level of the City WU that claims to be empowered in the area of environmental health.

6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations
Overall, there is certainly a change, at the level of society, in attitudes and behaviour related to the (preservation of the) environment, which indirectly produces a positive impact to the entire population of Tuy Hoa city, women in particular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the area of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the area of health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Changes in the economic field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall score related to effectiveness in the area of women empowerment: +

JC 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women

1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence
n.a.

2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence
n.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General score for effectiveness in the area of the reduction and prevention of violence against women: n.a.

5. Efficiency

Evaluation question 5: To what extent does the Belgian international collaboration have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?

CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors
No financial resources, capacity or specific instruments have been made available.

CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors
The evaluations state that the project was set out with the intention that a gender balance was achieved along all activities. In reality, this intention has not been put into practice and no accompanying measures have been taken to support this intention.
Activities that were targeted at women (mostly via the CityWU) were merely functional in nature to ensure adequate cooperation of women and households in the implementation of decisions taken before.

**CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration**

In accordance with what has been stated above, the cooperation with the City WU has certainly allowed some synergies, but not with a view to improve gender integration.

**CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)**

The eleven members of the PSC are all men with one exception.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score for efficiency**

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4. **Sustainability**

**Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?**

**JC1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle**

N.a.

**JC2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building**

N.a.

**JC3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)**

The end of project evaluation is positive about the project achievements but stresses the importance to ensure continuity of several key actions, related (among others) to awareness raising and information sharing, income generation and institutional arrangements.

The visit to Tuy Hoa confirmed the determination of the city and provincial authorities to at least maintain the present level of service delivery (adequate solid waste collection and disposal) and authorities at these levels seem capable and committed to ensure adequate funding for these activities. The fact that city and province presently have engaged in cooperation with ADB project related on environment improvement (with strong attention on awareness raising), constitutes an additional guarantee for the sustainability of project benefits.

The present problems at the landfill with the management of toxic wastewater constitutes however a major issue of concern and needs to be addressed urgently. Local authorities informed the team that the Belgian Embassy and BTC have been approach for support and said they got the promise that Belgium would recruit an expert to assess the situation and propose adequate solutions. At this moment it is not clear whether such solutions can be found, what will be their cost and who will be in charge of their funding.

On a broader scale, Tuy Hoa city is one of the most vulnerable cities in Vietnam with regard to climate change. The city is located close to the sea and already now faces
periodically (on average three times a year) flooding that affects the city communes located close to the sea. While the city seems to have developed quite effective disaster mitigation plans, it is clear that this problem can only become more important in the future and might require more substantial measures on the medium term.

**JC4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women**
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</td>
<td>+ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score for sustainability**

5. Impact

**Evaluation question 8: What are the unexpected long-term results (positive and negative) of the interventions in the context of the Belgian ODA that target gender equality (gender policy marker value 1 and 2)?**

1. **Positive unplanned long-term results**
The cooperation of the city and provincial authorities with ADB project will further solidify and expand the project results.

2. **Negative unplanned long-term results**
Flaws in the design of the landfill (the team was told that because of budget limitations, compromises had to be made in terms of the design of the landfill) create a serious environmental danger and political problem if not adequately addressed.

**Annexe: list of most important documents consulted**

- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Identification report
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Technical and financial file
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, annual report 2007
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Mid-term review report, August 2009
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Annual report 2009
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Progress report nr. 6
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, Final report
- Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town of Phu Yen province, End of project evaluation report, December 2010
Evaluation of the action BIO development fund – Mekong II VAS

**Important preliminary remark:** this project could not be assessed during the field visit, as the planned visit to the VAS premises was cancelled by the VAS management at the last moment. In the subsequent two months, attempts to acquire the necessary information via other channels (email, skype interview) have not been successful. Consequently, this project fiche lacks crucial information with regard to the project.

1. Key characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action title</th>
<th>Bio Development Fund – Mekong II VAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention code DGD</td>
<td>3011031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and sub-sector</td>
<td>11220 Education – Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid modality</td>
<td>Indirect non NGO support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective start of action</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Envisaged) end of action</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian organisation in charge of implementation</td>
<td>BIO (Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner organisation(s)</td>
<td>Mekong Capital and (indirectly) VAS (Vietnam Australia International School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (€)</td>
<td>245,387 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (ODA data base)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex ante)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender marker (score consultant ex post)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Concise description of the action

2.1 Context (country and region, sector, …)

BIO, the Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries has the mandate to participate in enterprises and to provide loans and use other forms of enterprise funding (always against market-conform conditions). As such, BIO want to support a strong private sector in developing and/or emerging countries, to enable them to gain access to growth and sustainable development with the aim to achieving the MDG’s. Today, BIO focuses on three areas: the financial sector, enterprises and infrastructure projects, thereby using a series of financial instruments: equity and quasi-equity stakes, long-term loans, guarantees. The organisation focuses on the partner countries of Belgian Development Cooperation and on less developed countries. Presently, BIO has seven on-going investments in Vietnam, of which four in SME investment funds. One of these funds is Mekong Capital, a private equity firm specialized in consumer driven businesses established in 2001. BIO has taken twice an equity stake in this firm, the second being the Mekong Enterprise Fund II, a $50 million growth capital private equity fund launched in 2006. The Fund has made a total of 10 structured investments, one being with the Vietnam Australian International School in which it has invested $6 million.
Vietnam Australia International School (VAS) is a leading educational institution based in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) aiming to build a model, advanced school system integrating regional and international standards and encompassing all levels of education from kindergarten through senior secondary. The school has the ambition to strengthen its position in the non-public educational community nationwide and beyond. At present the school has some 4,500 students at 8 campuses in HCMC.

2.2 Rationale

The chairman of VAS considered the strategic partnership with Mekong Capital as a means to enhance the overall management capability of VAS to the next level, and at the same time improve the quality of teaching and learning to match that of internationally recognized organisations. VAS’ educational offer is capturing a growing domestic demand that corresponds with Vietnam’s economic growth and the country’s ambition to integrate in the global community.

2.3 Major objectives

As mentioned above, the loan to VAS is meant to support the organisation’s growth strategy to provide high quality education in a safe, caring and stimulating environment thereby conducting a bi-lingual curriculum. The institution ensures teaching at an international standard and ensures the pupil’s integration with a global community, thereby also maintaining Vietnamese values.

2.4 Institutional setup

Mekong Capital and VAS have a win-win agreement that lasts already over a long period. While the investment in VAS is rather atypical in the portfolio, for Mekong Capital the quality of the management team and the growth potential of the international K-12 education sector have been major considerations to continue the partnership.

3. Relevance and coherence

3.1 To what extent is the strategy paper still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

Extent to which the project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account

No reference is made in the project documents to the strategy paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project proposal refers to the strategy paper and takes it into account</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score relevance</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Evaluation question 2: To what extent has Belgian international collaboration coherently integrated gender?

Extent to which the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter are integrated in the financing proposal

The specific (if any) needs and interests of girls seem not to be integrated in the documents at our disposal. It is however not clear to which extent the position of girls should be considered as an issue of concern in this context. Global education indicators for Vietnam suggest that there is no problem with regard to access of girls to education among the dominant Vietnamese ethnic groups (the situation is different among tribal
groups). We presume the situation among the Vietnamese elite is similar, but it is worth checking this and analysing how VAS deals with gender differences. In any case, from the perspective of Belgian policies related to gender, the issue should have been addressed.

**Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)**

The financing proposal has taken into account other criteria than the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The financing proposal integrates the needs and interests of the women and the obstacles they encounter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent to which the financing proposal has taken into account the specific needs and interests of women when selecting the partner organisation(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score coherence</td>
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4. Effectiveness

4.1 **Evaluation question 3:** To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among other things implemented the action plan of the strategy paper "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men")?

**JC: The Belgian cooperation has integrated gender in the project/programme cycle**

1. **Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action** (including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)

The proposal submitted for funding has been drafted along a format suggested by BIO, which does not include any reference to gender.

2. **Extent to which the financing proposals includes a gender analysis** (related to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)

The proposal does not include a gender analysis for the obvious reason mentioned above.

3. **Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs and strategic interests)**

So far we have not encountered a logical framework of other result-oriented management tool.

4. **Extent to which a gender assessment has been part of the assessment of the funding proposal**

BIO uses the GPR/EPOL tool (Corporate Policy Project Rating) which has been developed by the German Development Bank DEG and is also used by other Development Finance Institutions, to ex-ante screen its proposals. This tool includes attention for Equality between Men and Women. In addition, the BIO screening also assesses the (potential)

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83 For this question, a scale has been used which is currently applied in the analysis of gender integration efforts: LEADS (*little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable*). ; in case no score could be provided, the notion n.a. has been used.
contribution to the MDGs, including MDG3 (promotion of gender equality and women empowerment). The yearly issued BIO Development Reviews report on the assessment of the proposals suggests however a rather shallow application of the GPR tool and assessment of the contribution to the MDGs.

5. **Extent to which gender has been included in the implementation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**

There are no indications on the inclusion of gender in the implementation of the action.

6. **Extent to which gender has been included in the reporting and follow-up of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**

Gender has not been included in the (rather limited) reporting and follow-up of the action. We have found no traces of the use of the GPR/EPOL tool for monitoring purposes. The recently conducted BIO evaluation (phase I) also states that the tool is virtually exclusively used as an ex-ante instrument.

7. **Extent to which gender has been included in the evaluation of the action (practical needs and strategic interests)**

BIO is presently being evaluated in a comprehensive way; the first phase of the evaluation has been concluded in 2012 and the second phase (including field visits) is presently finalized. The TOR of the evaluation mention under 2.1.3 (Corporate purpose) the criteria for BIO interventions (including the promotion of equality between men and women); however none of the evaluation questions under chapter 4 deals with gender. Consequently, the phase I evaluation report does not address gender issues; gender is only shortly referred to in the context of the discussion on the GPR tool used for screening (see above).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extent to which gender has been integrated in the identification and formulation of the action</td>
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<tr>
<td>(including a risk analysis to avoid negative unplanned effects)</td>
<td>L</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Extent to which gender the financing proposals include a gender analysis (related to the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>practical needs and strategic interests of women and men)</td>
<td>L</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Extent to which the logical framework (or other results-oriented management tool) includes</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>objectives, activities and indicators that are gender specific (related to the practical needs</td>
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<td>and strategic interests)</td>
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<tr>
<td>strategic interests)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall score related to the integration of gender in the action cycle</td>
<td>L</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Evaluation question 4: To what extent has Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector contributed to the gender equality and empowerment of women (incl. achieving MDG 3) and reducing and preventing violence against women?

JC 1: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to enhancing gender expertise

1. **Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations**
   N.a. (note: reference is made to the work of a Belgian educational specialist, Marcel Van Miert, with extensive experience in school management; his contribution could not be assessed, but is not connected to the Belgian organisations involved in the project).

2. **Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations**
   N.a.

3. **Level of Belgian support to the development of procedures to integrate gender at the level of local partner organisations (both at program and organisational level)**
   N.a.

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender expertise at the level of local partner organisations</td>
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<td>2. Level of Belgian support to the development of gender instruments at the level of local partner organisations</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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<td>N.a.</td>
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</table>

**Overall score related to effectiveness related to capacity building efforts**

N.a.

JC 4.2: The partner country has improved its legal, institutional and development framework in view of realising progress towards gender equality and women empowerment

1. **Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)**
   n.a.

2. **Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)**
   n.a.

3. **Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies,**
**Evaluation**

**Gender and Development in Belgian Development Cooperation – Vietnam case study, draft**

4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)

n.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria and indicators</th>
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<td>1. Progress achieved by the partner countries in adhering to multilateral agreements related to G&amp;D and international recommendations in that area (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Partner countries have created (or improved) the conditions required to reduce and prevent violence against women (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Progress achieved by partner countries with regard to the integration of gender in national and sectoral development policies and strategies, institutions (ministry of gender, gender departments, ...) and legislation (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Progress achieved by the partner countries with regard to the setup and management of consultation frameworks related to the integration and equality of gender (as a result of Belgian support)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall score related to effectiveness related to institutional strengthening</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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</table>

**JC 4.3**: The process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has ensured equitable access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes

1. **Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy**

The intervention deals with education, a priority need and interest for girls.

2. **Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1. Degree to which Belgian interventions (direct and indirect cooperation, ...) deal with the (priority) needs and interests of women and their obstacles to reach gender equality and strengthen their autonomy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number/percentage of women/girls that have effective access to project/programme services and products</td>
<td>+/−</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall score related to effectiveness related to access of women to the program benefits</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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</table>

**JC 4.4**: Belgian support to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to the professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3)

1. **Changes in the area of education**
   (changes in literacy rates of men and women, boys and girls; ratio of girls and boys in primary, secondary and higher education; changes in the level of knowledge of boys/girls – women/men + measures taken to enhance access to education (primary, ...)

n.a.
such as scholarships, construction of boarding schools, systems to care for students, … + access to literacy courses for women and men)

2. Changes in the area of health
(changes in the female mortality rate and the fertility rate among adolescents and adults; changes in the access to reproductive health care, in the number of assisted births, in the demand and availability of contraceptives)

3. Changes in the economic field
(changes in the workload for women and girls; changes with regard to assets owned by women; changes in income of women and in access to land, credit, inputs and information; changes in access to markets)

4. Changes at the level of internal empowerment of women
(changes related to self-respect, identity, knowledge of rights and economic environment)

5. Changes at the level of external empowerment of women
(changes in the number of women in decision making bodies at national and local level; changes in the capacity of women to take decisions, solve problems; changes at the level of the political and social power – women’s capacities to negotiate, internal solidarity, …; changes in the role of women groups and organisations in local politics, …)

6. Changes in attitudes, behaviour and power relations
(changes in the commitment of men (including local and religious authorities) towards gender equality, equal rights and chances for women and men and women empowerment; changes in behaviour and power relations)

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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</table>

Overall score related to effectiveness in the area of women empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JC 4.5: Belgian aid to centralised and decentralised government agencies, to the grassroots organisations in civil society, to professional organisations and to the private sector has contributed to a decrease in and prevention of violence against women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changes in the number of women who have been victim of violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.a.</td>
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<td>N.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Changes in the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence and measures in support of women who have been victim of violence</td>
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</table>

| General score for effectiveness in the area of the reduction and prevention of violence against women |
| N.a. |
5. Efficiency

Evaluation question 5: To what extent does the Belgian international collaboration have sufficient commitment to implement the strategy paper “Equal rights and opportunities for men and women” and the GAD strategy in general and has it efficiently made use of these resources?

**CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors**

(existence of a specific budget for gender initiatives, including the level of easy access, regularity, ... of that budget; existence of gender expertise, including its professional quality, accessibility and availability, ...; existence of specific instruments)

N.a.

**CJ 2. Existence of incentives to integrate gender at the level of the Belgian actors**

(possibilities of exchange, networking, inclusion of gender in the assessment of staff, attitude of the leadership)

N.a.

**CJ 3. Level of creation of synergies in view of gender integration**

N.a.

**CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)**

Women play an important role in the management both at Mekong Capital and VAS level.

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Availability of financial resources, capacity and specific instruments (including their quality) at the level of the Belgian actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Composition (men and women, with their level of expertise and position) within the management and decision making structures within projects and programs (such as mixed steering committees, ....)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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**Overall score for efficiency**

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4. Sustainability

Evaluation question 6: To what extent are the effects of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to GAD sustainable?

**JC 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle**

N.a.
JC 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building
(sustainability of capacity building of local organisations with a mandate/responsibility for gender equality and women empowerment; sustainability of effect to make policies more gender sensitive; sustainability of the capacity to pressure for political and strategic changes related to gender inequality in key areas (= where these measures are most needed, e.g. reproductive health, violence against women and girls)
N.a.

JC 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)
(sustainability of changes in the areas of education, health, economy, internal and external power of women, attitudes, behaviour and power relations)
N.a.

JC 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women
(sustainability of the changes in the number of women who are victim of violence; sustainability of the existence and importance of measures to prevent violence against women and provide care to women who are victim of violence, ...)
N.a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment criteria/indicators</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJ 1. Sustainability of the effects of gender integration in the phases of the cycle</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 2. Sustainability of the effects at the level of capacity building</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 3. Sustainability of the contribution to gender equality and women empowerment (including MDG 3)</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ 4. Sustainability of the contribution to the decrease and prevention of violence against women</td>
<td>N.a.</td>
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</table>

Overall score for sustainability | N.a. |

5. Impact

Evaluation question 8: What are the unexpected long-term results (positive and negative) of the interventions in the context of the Belgian ODA that target gender equality (gender policy marker value 1 and 2)?

1. Positive unplanned long-term results
No positive unplanned long-term results have been noticed.

2. Negative unplanned long-term results
At this moment, several negative developments are occurring in the education sector in Vietnam, in particular the increasing commercialization of education services (and related corruption), with negative impacts on poor and disadvantaged households that cannot pay for the cost of (quality) educational services. It is not clear to which VAS contributes to such developments. In any case is it important to note that the potential negative impact of support to this initiative has never been addressed by the project partners (including BIO) and that, at the global level of Belgian support to Vietnam, some inconsistency can be noted between this project and the support via SEQAP.
Annexe: list of most important documents consulted

- BIO: basic information on website (www.bio-invest.be)
- BIO: checklist Business Plan
- BIO development Review 2010, March 2011
- Evaluatie van de Belgische Investeringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden (BIO), Fase 1, Augustus 2012
- Mekong Capital: basic information on www.mekongcapital.com
- Mekong Enterprise Fund II, 3Q13 Quartely Report for the period ended 30 September 2013
- Mekong Capital, Vietnam Australia International School and Mekong Enterprise Fund II partner to empower Vietnam’s future generation
- VAS: basic information on website (www.vas.edu.vn)
- Ondernemen tegen armoede? Het Belgisch Investeringsfonds voor Ontwikkelingslanden (BIO) onder de loep, 11.11.11 dossier