

Management response from the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid to the Gender and Development Evaluation

The evaluation provides insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the gender policy of the Belgian Development Cooperation. However, it lacks an overall vision of the efforts of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) through the various channels of Development Cooperation: its focus lies mainly on governmental cooperation, and not so much on non-governmental cooperation. An analysis of the investments in the multilateral and humanitarian segment, as well as in BIO, would have been useful and would likely have made the overall picture more balanced. For example, the evaluation does not take into account the fact that UNWOMEN is one of the multilateral partner organisations of the Belgian Development Cooperation and the fact that this organisation performs very well, according to the screening by MOPAN in 2014.

Taking this limitation into account, DGD accepts all recommendations of the evaluation. The planned update of the strategic document on gender equality will take the evaluation report into consideration. In addition, the new strategic document will also rely on the Management Plan of DGD and will lead to real commitments in the operational plans of each of the directorates. By thorough embedding in the processes, the strategy will be able to achieve maximum impact.

DGD has thoroughly examined and discussed each of the recommendations internally. As the answer to almost all of the recommendations must be elaborated in the strategy, in consultation with the various directorates and implementing parties, it seems reasonable not to anticipate on the exact modalities. However, DGD can already provide the following overall response:

1. Conceptual matters, strategy and priorities

DGD notes the importance of a two-track approach: gender mainstreaming and specific actions, in view of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

DGD notes the conceptual confusion that was observed around gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming should be understood as a means to achieve gender equality, not as an end in itself. The communication about this issue will follow the UN and OECD-DAC definitions and standards, in accordance with the EU Gender Action Plan and with best practices of other donors.

The administration will also explore whether the Development Cooperation Act contains decisions that stand in the way of proper gender mainstreaming. If so, the administration will submit a proposal of amendment to the Minister.

DGD notes the importance of fighting violence against women. This priority fits in a policy for development cooperation based on the human rights approach.

2. Operationalisation in the intervention cycle and measuring results

The operationalisation of the gender policy presents significant challenges. DGD will proceed to build a track record of good practices, on a project basis.

At the same time, the use of the OECD-DAC Gender Marker will receive a prominent place in the context of results-based management. The gender marker makes investments measurable and also includes a number of commitments and goals (indicators) for each intervention. These have to be integrated in the evaluation cycle of the interventions.

The renewed approach of the Belgian Development Cooperation at a country level will lead to an integrated strategic analysis per partner country. The gender analysis should be a part of this.

These analyses will be useful for the interventions in the several channels of the Belgian Development Cooperation. More specifically, the post-2015 agenda and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP1325) will be addressed per partner country, so that goals or specific interventions can be planned.

Maintaining a dialogue with all partners of the Belgian Development Cooperation is necessary to achieve the goals of the gender strategy. The diplomatic channel, too, plays a role in gender-sensitive issues, thanks to the collaboration between Development Cooperation and

Foreign Affairs. The coordination with other bilateral donors, for example in the context of the EU, will also increase (Cotonou Agreement, Human Rights Strategy, Joint Programming).

DGD highlights the necessity of very generalised and broad gender education and raising awareness among all actors of development cooperation, as appropriate for a transversal theme. Resources will be provided for appropriate training.

Belgium will also seek more cooperation with local gender expertise, in governmental, non-governmental and multilateral cooperation. This also requires specific efforts in terms of capacity building of local gender expertise.

3. Organisation culture

DGD notes that the principle of gender mainstreaming presupposes a trajectory for change throughout the organisation. In this matter we refer to the efforts in the context of the Gender Mainstreaming Act. The gender efforts within the organisation will be continued within the framework of the Gender Mainstreaming Task Force and the Gender Mainstreaming Plan of our Federal Public Service. Goals for cultural change within the organisation will be formulated in that context. Gender awareness will be supported throughout the organisation via this plan. At the same time, the integration into the policy for development cooperation will be continued. Thanks to an improved gender culture (training) gender will gradually be addressed in all interventions in a consistent manner, with the best possible use of resources.