Jean – Pascal Labille,
Minister for Development Cooperation

Belgian Development Cooperation policy was once again implemented in a context of financial and economic problems in 2013, despite timid premises of a long-awaited recovery.

However, it is at times of crisis that Official Development Assistance (ODA) is most necessary, as it remains the most predictable channel, unlike other, more volatile sources of funding, particularly for poor countries and fragile States. These countries are also the most seriously affected by climate change, an area in which ODA plays an essential role.

Public actions must be guided by effectiveness, whether or not there is an economic crisis, and the legislation must reflect this commitment. It is with this in mind that the framework law on development cooperation was modified and approved in 2013. It now provides a modern, progressive vision of Belgian development cooperation. Modern, because it includes the principles of effectiveness established at international level. Progressive, because it embodies a vision of cooperation based on human rights and highlights social justice and the fight against inequalities.

The principles guiding the new law were implemented gradually in 2013. This was the case particularly for Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which is understood as the need for collective action at national, regional and global level, going beyond the exclusive context of development cooperation in order to integrate other key areas such as trade, finance, climate change and food security.

Two other laws, directly linked to the law on development cooperation, were also modified in 2013; the law on Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC) and the law on the Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries (BIO). Their goal is to make these institutions perform better and be more in line with the modernisation of cooperation.

Central Africa remained the focus of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance programmes in 2013. Belgium must continue to encourage the international community to stay involved in the Central African region.

Finally, the international development community has been actively debating the post-2015 framework for development for some time now. Belgian cooperation intends to play an active role in this fundamental debate, which will set the international agenda for the coming decades. During the Ministerial Week in New York in September 2013, I explained the priorities of the Belgian cooperation in this new framework: on the one hand, the fight against social and economic inequality and on the other hand, the consideration of social welfare as a key element in sustainable human development.

Reform and budgetary restrictions

The reform process of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), which was launched in 2012, continued in 2013 and is beginning to produce some tangible results.

Furthermore, as in 2012, Belgian development cooperation had to operate in a general context of budgetary restraints; as a result, certain programmes and projects have suffered from the reduction in the resources of Belgian public development aid.

Reform of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD)

The reform process launched in 2012 has reached its cruising speed. Certain results are already tangible, such as:

- the role and operation of the strategic committee;
- the implementation of a certain number of formal and informal crosscutting dynamics;
- the mapping of political development areas following the analysis carried out by the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation;
- the integration of European issues, such as the joint programme, into the activities of the Geographic Directorate;
- the implementation of the strategy for Middle-Income Countries into the country programmes;
- the Thematic Directorate which plays a central role.
The budget for development cooperation and official development assistance in 2013

In 2000, the Belgian government promised that by 2010 it would comply with the United Nations standard which requests that industrialised countries devote 0.7% of their gross national income to development cooperation.

Following strong growth during the years 2008-2010 (0.62% of gross national income in 2010, i.e. the highest percentage ever achieved for Belgian official development assistance), the percentage of gross national income dedicated to Belgian official development assistance has decreased. It was 0.54% in 2011 and 0.48% in 2012.

In 2013, Belgian official development assistance represented approximately 0.45% of gross national income, a percentage lower than the individual target of 0.51% for European Union Member States.

Budgetary restraints and the reduction in the proportion available for operations to cancel the debts of developing countries are the main causes of this decrease in the percentage of gross national income dedicated to development. In fact, Cooperation has had to make an effort, like every other department, due to the economic crisis and the budgetary targets within the European Union.

In 2013, the annual development cooperation budget was originally fixed at 1,377 million EUR.

However, following an initial budget check, development cooperation was asked to try and make savings of 26 million EUR. The majority of these savings were made thanks to the 2012 balance of operational costs of Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC).

Approximately 995 million EUR in credits were frozen following the second budget check in July. Some of these savings were made from the “country” programmes.

Furthermore, prudent budgetary measures were adopted on 11 September 2013 in order to keep the Federal budget balanced.

Expenditure were limited to commitments made and fixed costs (personnel, execution of international agreements, regulations and laws, continuation of service activities). The impact of these measures can be estimated at approximately 60 million EUR.

As a result, 2013 performance was below what was originally anticipated for the 2013 budget: 1,175 million EUR, i.e. 129 million more than in 2012 (1,046 million EUR).

DGD aid per sector

- Healthcare: 121.5 mil.
- Population and reproductive healthcare: 111.1 mil.
- Water and sanitation: 28.7 mil.
- Government and civil society: 40.5 mil.
- Conflict, peace and security: 73.8 mil.
- Social services: 2.6 mil.
- Communication: 44.0 mil.
- Transport and storage: 56.5 mil.
- Banks and financial sector: 0.1 mil.
- Energy: 53.3 mil.
- Enterprises: 29.2 mil.
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing: 0.7 mil.
- Industry, mining and engineering: 135.7 mil.
- Trade and tourism: 5.2 mil.
- Conservation: 10.1 mil.
- Multisector: 72.0 mil.
- Humanitarian aid: 135.8 mil.
- Debt relief: 23.9 mil.
- Awareness-raising in Belgium: 25.7 mil.
- Other: 25.4 mil.
- Sector non-specified: 107.0 mil.

How is Belgian official development assistance funded?

- by contributions from the development cooperation budget (which represents approximately 60% of total official development assistance);
- by credits from other Federal authorities, including Belgian aid provided through the European Commission;
- by part of the costs for receiving refugees and those for receiving students from developing countries who come to study in Belgium;
- by contributions from the Regions, Communities, provinces and communes;
- by debt cancellations, approved at international level.
The stakeholders' Meeting of Development Cooperation

The Sixth Stakeholders’ Meeting of the Belgian Development Cooperation, held in Brussels in May, launched a proactive analysis of the development agenda post-2015, to renew the framework for the Millennium Development Goals.

The sixth Stakeholders’ Meeting of Belgian Development Cooperation, held at the Palais d’Egmont in Brussels on 7 May, brought together political decision-makers, institutional players, representatives of civil society and academics, in the presence of Princess Mathilde and Amina J. Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

The central theme of this Stakeholders’ Meeting of Development Cooperation was the post-2015 framework for development. This was a topical debate, as it was at the heart of the Special Event organised by the United Nations several months later, in September 2013. It was an opportunity to draft a status report on the efforts made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and, in particular, to reflect on the changes to be made to the current framework, which will expire in 2015.

Integrating the various aspects of Rio+20, including climate change and biodiversity, into the development agenda will be a huge challenge, as will the definition of the development financing process.

It will not be easy to agree on a universal approach which suits developed countries, emerging countries and developing countries.

The new development framework must provide a response for eradicating poverty, and at the same time lead to sustainable development. Together with all Belgian players, the Stakeholders’ Meeting helped to define Belgium’s priorities within this new framework, namely the fight against inequality, universal social welfare and the decent work agenda.

As well as this debate, the Cooperation Stakeholders’ Meeting also drafted a status report on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) at Belgian level. The Meeting was an opportunity to explain the creation of a Belgian mechanism for policy coherence for development (PCD), which aims to guarantee PCD through high-level political commitment, greater policy coordination and independent monitoring of the progress made. It also provided an opportunity to discover the approaches of the federated bodies with regard to PCD and the common aspirations of the different bodies in this area.

The Sixth Stakeholders’ Meeting of Development Cooperation, prepared by the DGD, representatives of federated entities, NGOs, trade unions and universities, created a platform for participants to debate and discuss these subjects and come to understand together the development agenda for the coming years.

The Sixth Stakeholders’ Meeting of Development Cooperation allowed participants to debate, discuss and understand together the development agenda for the coming years.
Two new cooperation strategies: one for education, the other for Middle-Income Countries

Helping the States of partner countries in their educational mission
Belgian cooperation considers education to be a major factor in creating equal opportunities and social mobility. A new strategy paper defines its educational priorities in developing countries and the way in which it will support partner States in setting up their education system.

In contemporary societies, transfer of some areas of knowledge, interpersonal skills and ways of life have grown beyond the grasp of families and have become the collective responsibility of the education system. As the State’s socio-economic functions are the allocation of resources, the redistribution of wealth and the regulation of the system, it has a duty to ensure that education fulfils this collective responsibility. The State is responsible for implementing a series of policies, strategies, actions and resources which together make up the education system.

Belgian Cooperation intends to support States in the development and rolling-out of their education systems, adopt a holistic view of the sector and implement strategies appropriate to each different context.

It has drafted a strategy paper on education in developing countries, which was approved by the Minister for Cooperation in May 2013.

The three priorities for education strategy:
1. Focus on basic education and technical and professional teaching
2. Focus on the least developed countries, in which more than 10% of children have dropped out of school and/or under 60% of children complete basic schooling
3. Aim to achieve a balance between:
   • access, in particular managing transition rates based on skills;
   • equality in terms of access, remaining in school and chances of success;
   • teaching quality and the relevance of learning.

Helping Middle-Income Countries to take up new challenges
The level of human development is higher in Middle-Income Countries (MIC). These countries have greater financial and human capacities, which means that they are better equipped to take up development challenges. However, they still have significant socio-economic, political and ecological needs, as well as internal social and regional disparities.

The MIC still have to face major challenges. Development problems are largely attributable to the unequal social redistribution of the benefits of growth, to insufficiently inclusive public policies and institutions and to a lack of social cohesion. All these elements are conducive to a change in the model for cooperation and the pursuit of a new, more inclusive partnership.
The Strategic choices for Belgian cooperation

In early 2013, the Minister for Cooperation approved the strategy paper on Belgian development cooperation in Middle-Income Countries (MIC).

Belgian development cooperation plans to improve the living conditions of those who are not benefiting from the increase of the level of well-being. In this respect, it is seeking to promote human, financial and institutional potential as leverage for development.

Priority areas of cooperation in Middle-Income Countries:

• the redistribution of well-being through social welfare and taxation;
• the political and social emancipation of disadvantaged, vulnerable and excluded citizens;
• more inclusive and more sustainable growth;
• climate and environment.

New forms of cooperation with Middle-Income Countries:

Belgian development cooperation will gradually abandon financial aid and the provision of services, focusing instead on the transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise in order to support the social players working to achieve a fairer socio-political balance of power and greater supra-national cooperation.

In the future, relations between Belgium and its partner MICs will go beyond the political area of development cooperation.

In its cooperation with Middle-Income Countries, Belgium wants to go beyond the donor-beneficiary relationship and promote relations based on egalitarian, mutually beneficial partnerships. Belgian cooperation will gradually abandon financial aid and the provision of services, focussing instead on the transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise.
A high-performing Organisation providing effective aid

The Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) wants to be and must be a high-performing Organisation. Different systems have therefore been put in place to work towards and ensure permanent improvements in the effectiveness of the aid provided, as regards both the processes and the results achieved. Particular attention is being paid to the assessment and monitoring of these results and to transparency. Attention is also being paid to sharing skills and expertise, through the creation of trans-directional teams.

The management and monitoring of the assessment results

Assessment of MOPAN and the WHO

Belgium is one of the seventeen donor countries of MOPAN (Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network). The MOPAN network assesses the effectiveness of the multilateral organisations financially supported by the donor countries.

In 2013, the network assessed, among other bodies, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Food Program (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), three multilateral organisations which are partners of Belgian development cooperation.

During bilateral consultations with these organisations, the DGD used these reports as a basis for preparing for executive board meetings.

The MOPAN network is currently in transition. In this context, an external assessment of MOPAN was carried out in 2013. Belgium played a role in this assessment, which was used as a basis for discussions on the reform of MOPAN. These discussions should be concluded in 2014, when a proposal must be approved so that a new approach and a new methodology can be introduced in 2015.

Belgium is also playing an important role in the assessment of the WHO. The Belgian representation in Geneva and its Dutch counterpart have worked together to facilitate the assessment process and have begun discussions with the WHO on this subject. This close cooperation has made it possible to lay the foundations for the monitoring work which Belgium and the Netherlands want to organise with the WHO, in order to learn lessons from the assessments and identify areas where improvements can be made.

Transparency and results

Transparency and results are two important components of aid effectiveness. The DGD is addressing these issues in various ways.

Transparency towards the Belgian public and players. Information on all the actions financed by the DGD budget is made available to the public on its website (http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/politique/cooperation_au_developpement/) and can be easily consulted thanks to a user-friendly search engine.

Transparency with regard to the international community. This transparency is embodied in the reports of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) and via the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Through these two additional channels, donors are specifically fulfilling their commitment to transparency, a commitment made during the fourth High-Level Forum on aid effectiveness held in Busan, South Korea. In Busan, the decision was made to bring the various existing reports and communication channels together into a standardised Common Open Standard for Aid Information.

This new report standard is very demanding: a greater number of elements must be taken into consideration and measured; the information must be updated more regularly and it must be easier to consult and process using search engines, interactive applications and the local databases of the partner countries.

This new method involves major changes for donors. A roadmap is being prepared, which will set out how each donor must present all the information it can or will be able to provide and when and how often this information must be updated. The system should be operational in 2015. Belgium is being proactive in this area and has promised the “Publish What You Fund” (PWYF) lobby that it will scrupulously follow this roadmap, in the spirit of Busan.

The DGD itself has committed to the systematic publication, by the end of 2015, of the results aimed for and achieved, measured objectively using the relevant indicators.

The DGD has launched a project to set up a system of internal data, which should be developed during 2014 so that it can fulfil its ambitious commitments by the end of 2015 at the latest.

Improving the internal control of the organisation: internal monitoring

As part of the modernisation of the administration, greater attention is being paid to good governance and the more effective management of resources. The DGD is aware of these values and always mindful of making optimum use of public funds; as a result, it has been fully committed to this process since its last reform through the Organisation Management Directorate (D4).

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The O* platforms: PULSE and KLIMOS; GRAP santé: a productive collaboration between the universities and Cooperation

Belgian development cooperation collaborates with several inter-university platforms and takes advantage of their expertise and skills in specific areas such as climate and health, as well as educating the population in the challenges of development. Until the end of 2013, university cooperation financed research groups whose mission involved providing scientific support to the DGD, both for the determination of political positions and for broadening the thematic skills within it. Furthermore, these research groups also aimed to stimulate and increase interest and expertise in these themes within the university community.

Three groups operated on this basis in Flemish universities during the period 2009-2013:
- KLIMOS (environment and climate adaptation);
- PULSE (survey into public support for development);
- AID EFFECTIVENESS.

Three other groups worked in French-speaking universities:
- GRAP-3A (agriculture);
- GRAPPAX (conflict prevention and peace-building);
- GRAP-PA (Paris – Accra agenda and the health sector).

The DGD has also received scientific support through the programmes of the Institute of Tropical Diseases, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and the Museum for Central Africa.

The three areas of research are explained below:

The O* platform PULSE studies support for development among the Belgian public

Compared with other European countries, Belgium invests a great deal in providing development information and education, but it is not always possible to know what impact the NGO and awareness-raising campaigns in schools have on the public’s attitude and behaviour. However, support for development cooperation tends to diminish during times of economic crisis.

The PULSE research platform, launched at the initiative of development cooperation, has carried out a five-year survey in order to identify trends in public opinion towards development.

PULSE also identified the awareness-raising actions which have the greatest impact and attempted to measure this impact. The platform attempted to identify the players who carry out these awareness-raising actions and A few conclusions from the PULSE survey:
- It is difficult to convey a message about development cooperation in the mass media. The message must be as specific as possible. It must contain a hint of dramatic tension and a positive element, preferably within a local context. This is not as easy as it seems. However, it is still essential to establish good relations with the media. An event as popular as Music for Life reaches a broad public, but there is a risk of the message being lost.
- Development cooperation is not a priority for political parties in Belgium, because it is not a subject which wins elections. It is therefore left to some expert to develop a vision on this subject, although generally this expert only plays a secondary role in the party.
- The Internet is the most appropriate tool for conducting a survey, with a panel of people who have volunteered to take part. Internet surveys both cost less and are easier to carry out than telephone surveys, and also offer sufficient guarantees of reliability.

The O* platform KLIMOS establishes a link between climate change and development cooperation

In addition to its research activities, the inter-university “Climate and development cooperation” (KLIMOS) platform cooperates with the DGD, to which it provides scientific support.

KLIMOS, a platform specialising in issues related to climate change, mitigation and development cooperation, brings together ten research groups from four universities (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Universiteit Gent, Universiteit Antwerpen and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) and from the Katholieke Hogeschool Sint-Lieven.

The KLIMOS toolbox

The KLIMOS 2.0 toolbox has been adapted to better meet the needs of development cooperation, thanks to the extension and optimisation of its database.

This toolbox was used during regional DGD workshops in Kampala (English-speaking Africa) and Bamako (French-speaking Africa).

A total of five workshops, three articles, two working documents, one conference contribution, one report, three posters and two case studies have been organised, carried out or written, with the support of five PhD students.

In 2013, collaboration between KLIMOS and the DGD made it possible to:
- create a mission to assess the sustainability of school construction and construction projects in Palestine;
- draft a manual for analysing the environment and vulnerability;
- carry out a feasibility study for combining the Development aid database and the KLIMOS toolbox;
- provide input during management committee meetings and comments on the assessment of the 2002 environment strategy by the Special Evaluation Office;
- develop indicators for sustainable development goals and support the Belgian contribution to Rio+20;
- set up five workshops whose contributions will be used to draft a new DGD strategy paper on the environment;
- develop the KAFKA and EIDDD tests;
- organise a several day-long workshop on networks.

The KLIMOS project planned to spend two years focussing on the publication of scientific articles and the organisation of seminars. The other two years were dedicated to case studies. A PhD student was assigned to each case study (DRC, Rwanda, Peru, Ethiopia, Ecuador, South Africa, Malawi, Uganda and Mozambique) in order to carry out long-term work and, using the experience acquired, achieve a multiplying effect for climate surveys.

Through appropriate interaction, KLIMOS ensured that the various players in Belgian cooperation included its scientific research, teaching, training, social approach and scientific knowledge in their operational policies.
KLIMOS has played a key role in a large number of projects concerning adaptation, mitigation and development cooperation, in collaboration with local universities.

GRAP-PA is assessing aid effectiveness in the public health sector

The mission of the Research Group Supporting Cooperation Policy on the implementation of the Paris-Accra aid effectiveness agenda (GRAP-PA) was to study aid effectiveness, including monitoring the implementation of the Paris and Accra Declarations, especially in the public health sector.

The multidisciplinary analysis conducted by GRAP-PA included two areas of research:

- international cooperation and health policies, including those of Belgian cooperation;
- the influence of international cooperation and health policies on the implementation of public health policies in developing countries;
- In 2013, its support for the DGD policy led to, among other things:
  - the analysis of the new law on cooperation;
  - support for the deliberations on technical assistance and the system of transdirectional teams;
  - the three GRAP also took part in and contributed to consultations with civil society on the Belgian position on the post-2015 development agenda.

An ongoing training module on the challenges and implementation of aid effectiveness principles was created on the basis of the results of this research. This training should increase the capacities of the players and their commitment to making aid more effective; it should also allow them to improve the operation of their administration. This training was provided in Benin in March 2013 and in Senegal in October. The target public was national administration managers, development partners, including Belgian Cooperation Attachés and BTC assistants and civil society.

GRAP-PA santé in brief

GRAP-PA SANTÉ is part of the DGD’s Health and Development Network (HDN). This allows the creation of regular links between GRAP-PA Santé and the focal points of the DGD, the networking of various players (DGD, BTC, ITM and Be-cause health) and the possibility of active participation in and contribution to the debates on Belgian development cooperation in the area of health.

For the DGD, this direct involvement of GRAP-PA in an internal group such as the HDN has made it possible to create a direct link with academia and enjoy regular ad hoc or more structured support.

www.grap-pa.be

GRAP makes an active contribution to the debates on Belgian development cooperation in the area of health.

A new cycle of collaboration:

In view of the assessments of university players and their own evaluations, it was decided to continue this form of collaboration over the next three years but to modify a few elements:

- only three research groups, in order to strengthen monitoring within the DGD;
- a clear definition of the expected results at the start of each year of work;
- promote inter-university collaboration within each group when possible and relevant, preferably with researchers from both communities.

On 15 December 2013, CIUF-CUD and VLIR-UOS applied to collaborate with the DGD on three of the subjects selected by the government:

- financing for development;
- the integration of environmental and climate change themes in the transition towards sustainable development;
- aid effectiveness, with a focus on fragile contexts.

This collaboration was launched under the name ACROPOLIS (Academic Research for Policy Support).
BELGIUM’S 18 PARTNER COUNTRIES FOR GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

2013

EAST AFRICA
10. Uganda
11. Tanzania
12. Mozambique

ASIA
18. Vietnam
Policy coherence for development

In a multipolar, globalised world, development in Low-Income Countries now depends on a number of areas which do not involve actual development cooperation. Monitoring, guarantees and assessments are therefore imperative to see whether the other policies (economic, commercial, agricultural, financial, energy, etc.) implemented by industrialised States are coherent with development cooperation. Policy coherence is a priority for Belgium, at both national and international level.

Cooperation working to achieve policy coherence for development

The globalisation of the economy has a significant effect on developing countries. Some capitalise on the new possibilities, while others cannot manage to extricate themselves from their fragile or marginal situation.

For this reason, the political context of development cooperation has changed considerably. It is now characterised by the increasing strength of emerging economies, particularly the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

The old approach, which viewed development cooperation in terms of North/South, has become obsolete and must be replaced with a modern approach which takes account of the multipolar context.

The integration of economic links also means that development possibilities in Low-Income Countries are increasingly determined by political areas other than actual development cooperation. This is why modern development policies must now pay greater attention to the impact that other political areas, such as trade, finance, energy, climate and migration can have on developing countries.

The Belgian government expressed this concern explicitly in the coalition agreement of 1 December 2011, as well as in the general political declarations relating to development cooperation.

Belgian cooperation must therefore ensure that it strengthens policy coherence for development. The 2012 Stakeholders’ Meeting on development cooperation was entirely dedicated to this theme. Following this meeting, a mixed working group including NGOs was set up to prepare concrete measures.

A new legislative framework for strengthening and guaranteeing policy coherence for development

The new 2013 law on development cooperation includes various articles whose purpose is to make policy coherence for development a tangible reality.

The Ministerial Conference on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) received the green light from the Council of Ministers. Employment, climate change, (in)tolerance and (in)security, migration, markets, investments, the brain drain, capital flight, energy prices, etc. - almost all decisions taken at local level are now linked to what happens abroad. This interdependence is especially true for developing countries. In order to be effective, therefore, development cooperation can no longer be separated from other Federal government policies. Decisions involving the economy, agriculture, foreign trade, migration, the environment, sustainable development and energy have direct repercussions on the development of third countries. All these areas should develop a ‘cooperative reflex’.

- The first body is a committee whose aim is to make the different Federal departments aware of policy coherence for development and to ensure that the different political areas are made more aware of the interests of developing countries.
- The second body is an independent Consultative Council which will monitor the operation of the institutional mechanisms in the context of policy coherence and help to make them more effective.

An impact analysis Committee has also been created. It has been operational since 1 January 2014 and consists of representatives of the sectors involved. Its mission is both to assist and to report.

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Strengthening policy coherence using a toolbox in order to achieve the following objectives:

- Creation of a platform which brings together non-governmental players and aims to promote policy coherence for development.
- A new, more integrated and more accessible system for analysing the impact of the Federal regulations has been in force since 1 January 2014. The KAFKA test (concerning the administrative burden of a recommendation) and the EIDD test (assessment of the impact of sustainable development) have been modified and harmonised, so they can take account of the analysis of the impact of regulations on gender relations (gender test) and on the operation of small and medium businesses and the development of Southern countries.
- This unique procedure means that these impact analyses can be carried out using an integrated form, completed on the Internet; this allows the impact of a regulation on several areas (administrative burdens, sustainable development, gender, SMEs and policy coherence for development) to be tested in a single operation.
- Belgian cooperation is also analysing policy coherence in bodies such as Finexpo (promotion of foreign trade) and Ducroire (export funding) and regularly consults finance services to ensure that the positions adopted by Bretton Woods institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) are paying sufficient attention to the development needs of partner countries.
- The DGD’s personnel plan anticipates the creation of a specific unit of managers responsible for ensuring policy coherence for development.

A priority at international level

Policy coherence is also at the top of priority lists at international level. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) remains very active in this area and has launched a number of initiatives. The biannual European Union report presented an exhaustive list of the different actions taken by its Member States in the area of policy coherence for development. Five priority areas have been highlighted, namely trade and finance, climate change, food safety, migration and security. In addition, Belgium is placing great emphasis on integrating policy coherence into the United Nations post-2015 development agenda.

The new 2013 law on development cooperation includes various articles whose purpose is to make policy coherence for development a tangible reality.
A joint European programme

Context and concept of the joint programme

The process of developing a joint programme was launched in 2012 by the European Ministers responsible for development cooperation. In line with the aid effectiveness and 2005 Paris Declaration agenda, this concept focuses on the following principles:

- ownership by partner countries;
- harmonisation of donors;
- alignment of the development agenda;
- mutual accountability of partner countries;
- results-based commitment.

The joint programme intends to conform to these principles and at least manage to strengthen harmonisation and alignment.

The programme will also comply with the following principles: this is a process managed from the ground, participation is voluntary and it is led by the European Union (delegation or Member State). Finally, the process is open to donors who are not part of the European Union.

The goal is for EU Member States to create a common programme in each developing country in which they are present.

How is this joint programme established?

Firstly, a joint analysis of the context of the country and its development needs is carried out in advance.

Secondly, the tasks are distributed, based on the needs of the country and the expertise of the donors, who can focus on the sectors in which they specialise. This method avoids the dispersal of the available resources. The sectors in which the different donors will operate are then defined, in order to increase their impact.

It is also possible to transfer certain activities to other donors or to envisage the joint financing of certain operations. Finally, the results may be pooled in order to examine what needs to be improved and assessed.

The starting point for this exercise is the national development plan of the partner country in question. It is therefore necessary to adopt programme cycles which correspond to those of the developing countries, so that the country’s authorities and European donors can synchronise their operations for the coming years.

Implementation and status report

Eleven pilot projects were launched in 2012, including Rwanda and Mali as partner countries of Belgian cooperation. The process was launched in more than 40 countries at the end of 2013. As there was no ‘one – size – fits – all’ model or precise instructions, during the first implementation phase, each country traced out its own roadmap, in accordance with its context, regarding the form that this joint programme should take.

The uncertainties have been eliminated since then and the different Member States have clearly stated that they are ready to move forward. The process is clearly taking shape in certain countries, with the aim of launching a joint programme which will be effective in 2014. Other countries are experiencing greater difficulties and will not be in a position to launch an effective programme for several years yet.

Nevertheless, it is already clear that the exercise is having a positive effect on coordination between European donors and on matching with the needs of partner countries.

Belgian commitment to the joint programme

Belgium has always been in favour of the joint programme and has played a leading role in this area. This commitment has been enshrined in the new law on development cooperation, as well as in the latest strategy documents.

Meanwhile, the joint programme has been launched in 14 of the 18 partner countries of Belgian cooperation. As a result, Belgian development cooperation will undergo certain changes in these countries as a result of this exercise, in order to make our aid more effective. This is a long-term project which will be extended in 2014.

Furthermore, in 2014, in collaboration with the Netherlands, the European Commission and the European External Action Service, Belgium will organise one of the five regional workshops (that of Central, Western and Southern Africa) devoted to the joint programme. These workshops will provide an opportunity to discuss experience and knowledge and promote best practice on the ground.
Thematic approaches

Human rights

The four human rights sub-themes already covered by Belgian cooperation are:

- **rights and protection of women** (equal access to employment and political positions, sexual and reproductive rights, rehabilitation of female victims of violence, etc.);
- **rights of children and young people** (child labour, protection of minors, youth justice, socio-economic integration of young people, etc.);
- **right to decent work** (social welfare, equal salaries for men and women, professional training, etc.);
- **right to justice** (preventive detention, access to justice, protection of victims and witnesses, transitional and restorative justice, etc.).

Consolidating the societies of partner countries

In order for development cooperation to achieve sustainable results, it is important to help partner countries obtain high-performing governance tools which meet the criteria of democracy and the rule of law. Belgium and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are working together to support Arab countries towards a democratic transition and to help them consolidate their respective societies.

The Belgian government is a major partner of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the promotion of governance. Combating corruption, supporting the democratisation process and improving justice are essential for ensuring a successful democratic transition in countries which have experienced conflict situations.

Inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth

It is important to ensure that this growth is inclusive, equitable and sustainable, so that everyone in developing countries, even the poorest citizens, can benefit from and take part in economic growth. Belgian cooperation considers that private sector support in these countries is a way of achieving this objective.

The new law on development cooperation promotes actions which contribute to inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth, prioritising local entrepreneurship, the social economy and the creation of decent and sustainable jobs, in accordance with the fundamental conventions and the ILO’s decent work agenda.

This new law therefore gives a key role to the local private sector and also states the objectives, principles and basic values applicable to all cooperation operations.

Developing an approach based on human rights means:

- promoting development which reconciles the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic;
- implementing equal opportunities, particularly in gender relations, a cross-cutting obligation promoted by Belgian cooperation;
- giving priority to criteria of social economy.
A multitude of actions to promote awareness-raising and information in 2013

In addition to the many initiatives carried out by the NGOs and co-financed by the DGD, a multitude of ad hoc and event-based (film festivals, exhibitions, etc.) activities have also enjoyed the financial support of the DGD, as have some fifteen films/TV/radio programmes.

Dimension 3

Dimension 3 is the free magazine published by Belgian development cooperation. It provides a broad overview of the different development actions carried out and financed by Belgium, as well as information on the current events and challenges involved in development cooperation at global level. For teachers and secondary school students, the magazine also provides accessible information which can be used during lessons, as was demonstrated by a survey in 2008.

www.dimension-3.be

Informing the public and raising awareness of development issues

Support for development cooperation from the Belgian public tends to diminish during times of economic crisis. It is therefore more essential than ever to raise awareness and inform the general public of the challenges of development and the need to balance North-South relations and the actions Belgium is taking in this area. This is one of the missions of the DGD.

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Humanitarian assistance

In 2013, millions of people around the world continued to be affected by armed conflicts and violence, causing massive movements of constantly increasing numbers of refugees in many countries.

The natural catastrophes which affected certain regions of the world caused great human distress.

A number of African countries have been affected by serious floods and are experiencing armed conflicts. Asia has suffered cyclones, storms and flooding. Cholera, meningitis and yellow fever epidemics have struck in several regions of the world.

Belgian humanitarian aid had its work cut out in 2013, contributing to the aid provided to different crises, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Mali, the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

The main areas of humanitarian action in 2013

Democratic Republic of Congo. The humanitarian situation remains extremely precarious; of its 78 million inhabitants, 2.5 million people have been displaced and 6.3 million require humanitarian aid. The climate of insecurity has also led many Congolese to seek refuge in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The crisis in DRC remains a protection crisis, with civilians seriously affected by the violence (including sexual and sexist violence), generalised insecurity and the impunity of the rebel groups and AFDRC (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo). The fighting between the M23 and the AFDRC attracted political and media attention in 2013, but other groups are also operating in the East of the country. People’s livelihoods are also under threat, due to population displacement and the insecurity which is preventing access to the land.

Syria. More than two years after the start of the crisis, the armed conflict continues to have devastating consequences, both in Syria and in neighbouring counties. The situation of the civil population continued to deteriorate in 2013. Serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights have been highlighted, including rape, torture, massacres and the use of chemical weapons and cluster bombs. The number of deaths due to the conflict has continued to increase and exceeded 100,000 in mid-2013. The serious deterioration of the security situation has made it harder to provide a response to the needs of the population, restricting the work of aid agencies and preventing them from reaching vulnerable people.

The number of refugees in neighbouring countries more than doubled in 2013. More than 2 million Syrians have been taken in by foreign countries, mainly Libya, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. In this context, and in order to accommodate the serious increase in humanitarian need, in 2013 the United Nations launched the largest appeal in their history, through the revised version of the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), which totalled 1 billion EUR, and the Regional Response Plan (RRP) which amounted to 2.1 billion EUR, in order to provide humanitarian aid to Syria and its neighbouring countries in 2013.

Mali. This country is affected by a complex large-scale political, security and humanitarian crisis. The armed conflict, which has affected the three regions of Northern Mali since 2012, spread in 2013 and caused a major displacement of people fleeing insecure areas. The armed conflict has led to severe humanitarian needs, which come on top of the pre-existing needs caused by the 2012 food and nutritional crises.

Central African Republic. In the space of a few months, the country experienced a change from a low-intensity conflict causing major humanitarian needs concentrated in the least populated regions of the country to the collapse of the State affecting the entire country. The entire population of 4.6 million people is affected by the crisis and 2 million people need humanitarian aid. The conflict has led to the displacement of almost 900,000 people within the country and has forced 62,000 people to seek refuge in neighbouring States. The humanitarian needs are immense.

The current crisis is also characterised by the large-scale violation of international humanitarian law and human rights (murder, mutilation, rape, kidnapping, forced conscription, including of children, and destruction of schools and medical infrastructures). Due to the lack of security, humanitarian organisations are experiencing exceptional difficulties in reaching the communities affected and providing them with assistance and protection.

South Sudan. Following a serious deterioration when the country became independent in July 2011, the humanitarian situation seemed to stabilise somewhat in 2013. It suddenly worsened in mid-December 2013 following the renewed intensity of inter-community fighting (between the Nuers and the Dinkas), which left many civilians dead and forced almost 900,000 people to flee the combat zones. There are serious, urgent humanitarian needs; more than 3 million people require humanitarian aid.
The Belgian contribution to the MDG

For several years, the DGD’s annual report has provided an overview of the activities undertaken to implement the Millennium Development Goals. One or two MDG are selected every year. This year’s report focuses on MDGs 1 and 2. There is no review of the 8 MDGs.

Belgian development cooperation includes the first Millennium Development Goal, namely eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, in its actions in all the partner countries in which it operates. Agriculture and food safety are two of the four priority sectors for achieving this MDG1.

Goal 1: reducing extreme poverty and hunger

Belgian actions to achieve MDG1:
The eradication of poverty is one of the key goals of Belgian development cooperation. To achieve this, agriculture and food safety are two of the four priority sectors, principally through actions targeting family-run agriculture.

The DGD’s goals in this area, among other things, are defined in the 2010 strategy paper “Agriculture and Food Safety”.

An Agriculture and Food Safety platform has been created to operationalise this paper. This platform brings together the different DGD services and other Belgian players involved in the application of the development strategy relating to food safety, such as the BTC, the ACNG, the universities, BIO, etc. It operates as a space for information, coordination and discussion between the different Belgian players.

It met on four occasions in 2013 and, among other things, gave an opinion on the “Responsible Agricultural Investment” document of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The Agriculture and Food Safety platform produced the evaluation and assessment grid for the projects and programs submitted for funding. This grid was adopted in December 2013 and is used as a tool for assessing whether these actions meet the general objectives of Belgian cooperation and embrace the four priorities identified in the strategy paper. It applies to all the channels of Belgian cooperation.

In the interests of specialisation, four main areas of intervention were selected and are defined below.

1. Agricultural production: improvement and security of production and agricultural productivity with a view to sustainable development;
2. Marketing of the products: improvement of agricultural promotion and access to markets;
3. Governance of the agricultural sector: strengthening of the State, civil society and farming organisations;
4. Rural women: individual and collective empowerment of rural women.

The new law on Belgian development cooperation sets sustainable human development as an objective and insists on the need to create decent, sustainable jobs, in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In 2008, the then Minister of Cooperation promised that 10% of total DGD expenditure would be dedicated to agriculture and food safety in 2010 and that this figure would rise to 15% of expenditure in 2015.

Some of the commitments of Belgian cooperation in 2013:

- World Food Programme: 1 million EUR for the “Purchase for Progress” (P4P) project in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- International Fund for Agricultural Development: 24 million EUR dedicated to the 9th reconstruction of IFAD resources (i.e. 8 million EUR a year for 2013, 2014 and 2015) plus 6 million EUR for ASAP-Adaptation for the Smallholder agricultural programme. This makes a total package of 14 million EUR for 2013;
- CGIAR: 8.1 million EUR for research actions in agriculture, for food safety, nutrition and the use and protection of natural resources and biodiversity. This long-term commitment is expected to reach 9.3 million EUR for the years 2014 and 2015;
- FAO: approximately 2.5 million EUR, as a voluntary contribution to the general resources to support the achievement of the five strategic objectives (helping to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, making agriculture, forestry and fishing more productive and sustainable, reducing rural poverty, promoting the implementation of open and effective agricultural and food systems and improving the resilience of livelihoods in the face of catastrophes).

Goal 2: achieve universal primary education for all

The DGD has been working in the education sector in the context of the Millennium Development Goals since 2002. During 2013, it drafted an assessment of the activities carried out in this area, with a view to improving coherence and complementarily, particularly by creating a connection with civil society players. It is this deliberation that led to the new education strategy described in this report (part 1 “The focuses of Belgian development cooperation in 2013”. Title 4, “Two new cooperation strategies.”)

The second Millennium Development Goal aims to give all children, both boys and girls, everywhere in the world, the means of completing a full cycle of primary studies.

To help achieve this goal, the DGD has committed to increasing the resources given over to education, in particular basic education, and to increase the effectiveness of its aid, i.e. to obtain better results with the resources available.
Increase the means given over to basic education

Over the last few years, Belgium has defended the position that the margins released by debt-reduction operations, for example in the initiative to help heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), should be used in social sectors, including education.

Since 2002, Belgium has been funding the Fast Track Initiative, which has now become the “Global Partnership for Education” (GPE). This initiative helps the least developed countries to design and implement their national strategy for the education sector. In working with the Netherlands, Norway and Italy in 2002 to create the Trust Fund, which makes the actions of the GPE possible, Belgium has helped to cause a crowding-in effect among the donors. This Trust Fund now brings in 2.2 billion EUR. It has made it possible to support basic education in 57 countries. Belgian financing of this fund has been constantly increasing: it was 9 million EUR in 2013.

Increasing aid effectiveness

In Belgium: The application of aid effectiveness principles to bilateral cooperation and greater collaboration with civil society:

Belgian cooperation has been very proactive in improving the effectiveness of its aid. It has been involved in partnerships in all the countries in which it operates, aligns with national strategies and implements sector-based budgetary aid where the conditions are met. Belgian cooperation has supported the definition of national strategies and policies for the education sector in DRC and Burundi, for example. The DGD also takes part in delegated cooperation with the United Kingdom in Rwanda (Belgium finances and the United Kingdom implements).

In the education sector, the DGD has created a connection with all the bodies involved in Belgian cooperation. The Educaid platform, financed by the DGD through the APEFE and VVOB programmes, brings these players together (DGD, BTC, ACNG, universities, WBI, the Flemish Region and civil society organisations). It is an asset for improving the coherence and complementarity of Belgium’s actions in this sector. It has also made it possible to hold common deliberations on the new strategy for the sector (see part I). This strategy was approved by the Minister for Development Cooperation in May 2013. It includes aid effectiveness among its three guiding principles.

At multilateral level: 
the Global Partnership for Education

Belgian cooperation is involved in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), whose mission is to improve basic education in developing countries. Its steering committee is composed of representatives of partner countries, civil society and donors.
You can download the complete annual report (only available in French and Dutch) from our website www.dg-d.be

Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

Rue des Petits Carmes 15
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel. +32 2 501 81 11

www.diplomatie.belgium.be
www.dg-d.be

Editor in charge: Dirk Achten,
Rue des Petits Carmes 15,
1000 Brussels, Belgium

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