Strategy note for the agriculture and food security sector
Strategic note for the agriculture and food security sector

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in Brussels, October 26th 2010

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In collaboration with the Belgian Agriculture and Food Security Platform
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Belgium aims to improve food security and to contribute to economic growth that is sustainable and that creates decent jobs in rural areas in order to achieve the MDG1.

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Interventions are implemented according to three major types of approaches tailored to the diversity of the local contexts: 1) the local economic development approach, 2) the supply chain approach, 3) the food security and food assistance approach.

Four priorities
1. **Agricultural production**: improvement and safeguarding of production and of agricultural productivity, integrating the sustainable development dimension.
2. **From products to markets**: Adding value to local products and improving access to markets.
3. **Governance** of the agriculture sector: strengthening of the State in its coordinating, facilitating and regulating roles and strengthening of civil society and of farmer organisations.
4. **Rural women**: individual and collective empowerment of rural women.
1. PURPOSE

This strategy note for the agriculture and food security sector by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation defines the priority intervention areas of the Belgian development cooperation in this sector. It was drafted in cooperation with the Belgian Agriculture and Food Security Platform which brings together the different stakeholders in Belgian agricultural development cooperation. The orientations of this paper therefore reflect the common vision of the Belgian development cooperation.

This new paper is an important part of the Belgian effort to improve aid effectiveness and is a response to multiple expectations. The evaluation of the previous agriculture and food security strategy note for the Belgian development cooperation clearly indicated the need for a framework document providing guidance to those in charge of the implementation of interventions. Likewise, the OECD\(^1\) recommends that Belgium highlight its strengths and its added value in agricultural support and clearly present the skills and instruments that it can make available to its partners. Finally, the European Union, *inter alia* in the context of its Code of Conduct on Complementarity and the Division of Labour in Development Policy, also encourages the Member States to specialise.

In this context, this new strategy note is above all a reference document for bi-lateral Indicative Cooperation Programmes and aims to highlight to our partner countries the areas in which the Belgian development cooperation can offer expertise and added value. The interventions of the Belgian Fund for Food Security\(^2\), which tackle the various dimensions of food security in sub-Saharan Africa, also fall within this general strategic framework. The same holds for the Belgian policy regarding food assistance.

In addition to its bi-lateral interventions, Belgium is one of the main donors to the international organisations active in the agriculture and food security sector (FAO, IFAD, WFP and CGIAR). While it is clear that these international organisations have a sphere of intervention spanning beyond the focus of the bi-lateral interventions of the Belgian development cooperation, this paper also steers Belgium’s positioning in relation to the key strategic choices of these

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organisations. Finally, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play an essential role in the agriculture and food security sector of partner countries. This paper will therefore also serve as a guide for the Belgian NGOs receiving financing from the Belgian development cooperation for their projects in this sector.

In view of the fact that this paper focuses on the strategic orientations of the Belgian development cooperation in the agriculture and food security sector, it is essential that it be followed by operational papers ensuring the effective implementation of the orientations defined. The papers will be drafted by the different actors in the Belgian development cooperation, based on their skills and mandates.
A. Focus
Belgium engages in agricultural development cooperation in support of family farming\(^1\) in partner countries \textit{with a view to contributing to the food security}^2 of the populations and to the economic growth that is \textit{sustainable and creates decent jobs}. To do this, the Belgian development cooperation commits itself to support, in conformity with the principles of the right to food and of gender equality, the process of transition from self-subsistence agriculture to humane, professional and economically profitable family farming. This vision is in line with the “New Agenda for Agriculture” as proposed by the \textit{OECD}\(^3\) and is in keeping with the EU’s policy framework regarding food security\(^4\). The interventions of the Belgian development cooperation in the agriculture and food security sector thereby aim to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in particular of the MDG1: to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

B. Approaches
The Belgian development cooperation ensures the coherence and effectiveness of its different interventions in the agriculture and food security sector, by situating them within the framework of the following three complementary approaches: 1) local economic development approach, 2) supply chain approach, and 3) food security and food assistance approach. One or more of the three approaches will be implemented, depending on the specificity of each local context. Although the three approaches have different processes, they share the common objectives of poverty reduction, decrease in food insecurity and strengthening the social and cultural role of family farming.

The \textit{local economic development approach} aims to develop the agricultural potential of a given area to establish sustainable a socio-economic development dynamic and to thereby contribute to food security. It is based on partnership and on consultation between the different local actors in order to ensure the implementation of plans for the development of agricultural potential. To this

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\(^{1}\) See the annexed definition of family agriculture.
\(^{2}\) See the annexed definition of food safety.
\(^{4}\) European Commission (2010). An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges.
end, this approach involves local authorities, the technical services of the State, Farmer Organisations, as well as the private sector.

The supply chain approach is based on market logic, be it local, national, regional or international. The approach is driven by consumer demand. The actors are essentially small-scale entrepreneurs, possibly structured in a form of farmer organisations, ensuring the production, processing, valorisation and commercialisation of the products. This approach is dependent, on the one hand, on the proper functioning of the markets and, on the other hand, on the quality of the activities of the small-scale entrepreneurs. Consequently, this approach focuses on efforts to rectify the main market imperfections in order to create a climate favourable for the development of small enterprises and to strengthen the market power relationship of the producers and their organisations.

The food security and food assistance approach is based on a multidisciplinary process that seeks to strengthen each of the four pillars of food security. This approach is particularly relevant in regions or among vulnerable groups facing chronic food insecurity. In this context, it is essential to tackle both medium and long-term food insecurity problems.

C. Principles
Belgium specifically ensures that in defining and implementing its interventions it respects the principles inherent in the different cross-cutting themes of its cooperation. Thus, Belgian interventions should pay particular attention to the respect for the environment from a sustainable development perspective. In particular, growing consideration is given to the challenges posed by the global warming. Moreover, the differentiated roles of men and women, as well as the specific constraints faced by rural women are systematically taken into account in Belgian interventions. Likewise, respect for children’s rights as well as of workers’ rights constitutes a fundamental principle.

Finally, in its effort to improve the effectiveness of its development aid, Belgium applies the principles of the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the EU’s Code of Conduct on Complementarity and the Division of Labour in Development Policy, while recognising that the application of these principles needs to take into account the specificities of the agriculture and food security sector. In particular, the Belgian development cooperation aligns itself with national agricultural strategies that constitute an essential element of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of partner countries. Likewise, in keeping with the principles of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security5, Belgium

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5 Declaration of the World Food Security Summit, 2009
acknowledges the essential role of the multilateral system in the development of the agriculture and food security sector. In this way, through its close involvement in the work of the FAO’s new Committee on World Food Security, Belgium contributes to the reform of the global food security architecture.
According to the FAO, three-quarters of the poor on the planet currently live in rural areas and agriculture constitutes a means of subsistence for 86% of rural populations. The agriculture and food security sector, and in particular women who constitute a large proportion of the agricultural labour force and produce 60 to 80% of food in the majority of developing countries, play an essential role in the struggle for food security. In 2010, the number of malnourished people was close to one billion and the call for an international response that is coordinated and tailored to the complexity of the challenge is becoming all the more insistent.

By virtue of its functions of production, processing and sale of foodstuffs, the agriculture and food security sector is a sector of fundamental socio-economic importance and a crucial source of income for many households. Moreover, it significantly contributes to local economic growth. Multiple studies have shown that, in developing countries, GDP growth due to agriculture contributes at least two times more to reducing poverty than GDP growth due to non-agricultural activities\(^1\). Both the private and public sectors have a major role to play in enabling agriculture to fully realise its economic development potential. In this light, the development of the agriculture and food security sector is very largely dependent on the development of other economic sectors.

The agriculture and food security sector is currently facing considerable new challenges that jeopardise the achievement of the MDG1 and the effective implementation of national strategies for economic development. Demographic change, growing urbanisation, changes in consumption patterns and the development of new societal expectations (such as the protection of the environment and the preservation of biodiversity) put pressure on the demand for food products, in terms of both quantity and quality. To this is added the growth of energy crops, which may compete with the production of foodstuffs. Although globalisation and liberalisation of trade in agricultural goods offer new opportunities, the food crisis has shown that the global agricultural markets are volatile and do not currently guarantee income stability for producers. The pressure on fundamental production factors such as access to land and water is increasing, while the environment is deteriorating in many regions.

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and causing a drop in soil productivity. Finally, global warming is upsetting the existing ecosystems and is likely to considerably reduce agricultural yields in the tropics. As is too often the case, the poorest populations, especially women, are the main victims of these new developments.

Since the food crisis of 2007/2008, numerous initiatives have been launched globally in order to once again make agriculture central to development cooperation and to improve the coordination and coherence of local, national, regional and international strategies and policies that have an impact on global food security. The FAO’s new Committee on World Food Security (CFS) henceforth constitutes a central element of the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. With the help of its High Level Panel of Experts and the participation of civil society and specialist agencies, the CFS has become the political decision-making centre advising on a comprehensive and effective response to challenges of food insecurity. In parallel, discussions are in progress on the reform of the FAO and of the United Nations system as a whole. Likewise, a comprehensive reform of the structure of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was agreed at the end of 2008 and is currently being implemented. Finally, participative regional initiatives, such as the African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), are coming into being.
Each of the different intervention channels of the Belgian development cooperation has a mandate and specific expertise, and therefore possesses a comparative advantage in the implementation of different types of interventions. One of the major challenges in the agriculture and food security sector is the improvement of synergies between the interventions of different actors that operate in a partner country, so as to improve aid effectiveness. Coordination mechanisms have been put in place to address this challenge: at the national level through the Cooperation Attaché and in Brussels within the Agriculture and Food Security Platform.

In order to offer its partner countries high quality of expertise, Belgium focuses the majority of its interventions on a limited number of priorities for which it has demonstrated effectiveness.

In an effort to specialise, four preferred areas for intervention are selected and defined below.

1. Agricultural production: Improvement and safeguarding of production and of agricultural productivity, integrating the sustainable development dimension.

The production and productivity of family farming are generally limited by the constrained access to the factors of production: inputs, productive capital, information and technology. This is particularly true for women. Likewise, access to natural resources also play an essential role.

By promoting a modernised model of family production, Belgium aims at reducing these access constraints in order to increase the availability and quality of food and to strive for an improvement in food security. In this context, the Belgian development cooperation supports the development and/or the improvement of:

- research and extension services meeting the needs of local users;
- veterinary services;
- input markets and the seed sector;
- financial services;
- soil and water management;
• small-scale irrigation;
• the **safeguarding of access to resources** (land, forests, pastures, water, fishing resources, animals of good genetic quality).

Farmer organisations representing the interests of their members have an essential role to play in most of these areas. Moreover, in its interventions, Belgium carefully ensures the sustainable nature of agricultural development, the conservation of natural resources and of biodiversity, and the adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

### 2. From products to markets: Adding value to local products and improving access to markets.

**Access to markets**, which to a large extent comes within the remit of local authorities, requires an improvement of the physical conditions for access, through an improved access to isolated production areas, and the reduction of transaction costs. This requires an establishment of **appropriate infrastructure** (markets, access roads, etc.), as well as an **improvement of transport services and of information and communication services**. Moreover, the improvement of the interventions of technical services is also essential for establishing and monitoring standards for the sanitary quality of the marketed products.

In parallel, the **improvement of commercialisation** of the local products requires support for female and male entrepreneurs, associations and farming organisations in different areas. In this domain, **the Belgian development cooperation supports**:

- **The increase of local storage capacity**. Tackling excessive price volatility and striving for relative stability of supply is an essential precondition for food security and for the stability of the local rural economy. Local food crises, even short ones, have prolonged harmful effects that can plunge rural economies into chronic hunger-poverty traps. The development of local storage infrastructure for basic food products, possibly combined with a warehouse receipt system, makes it possible to ensure a more stable supply and thereby to limit local price volatility and the appearance of local crisis situations.

- **The development and/or strengthening of farmer enterprises, associations or organisations involved in local processing**. The local processing of products creates added value for local commodities. It creates non-agricultural rural jobs for men and women and thus contributes to local growth.
• **The organisational structure of food trade.** This area of intervention comprises in particular: (1) support for the establishment of producer organisations intended to promote grouped sales so as to improve the stability of supply in terms of quantity and quality, (2) support for the setting up of information systems on prices and market opportunities, (3) establishment of business partnerships between producers and retailers, on the basis of codes of conduct.

Finally, regarding food assistance, the Belgian development cooperation supports the development of policies for the **purchase of foodstuffs in local or even regional markets.** These policies actually support the development of markets in situations of crisis, which generally benefits local producers.

Generally speaking, all of the interventions of the Belgian development cooperation related to adding value to local products and improving access to markets, which are in line with the orientations defined in the “Aid for Trade” strategy¹ are developed so as to improve the access to food, the quality of food and the stability of supply, and to thus contribute to food security.

3. **Governance of the agriculture sector: strengthening of the State, civil society and farmer organisations**

   **A. Strengthening of the State in its coordinating, facilitating and regulatory roles**

The interventions and policies of partner countries have not always provided an optimal response to the needs of the poorest. It is necessary to strengthen the capacity of public institutions to define a combination of measures, regulatory frameworks and investments that are in line with the expectations and specific needs of the different types of beneficiaries and of the private sector in order to revive the agriculture sector and to improve food security.

The interventions of the Belgian development cooperation aim to strengthen both national and decentralised public institutional capacities, with a view to **improve the development and implementation of public policies.** They aim to contribute to the partner countries refocusing on their core missions. Given the specificities of the agriculture sector and the multiplicity of stakeholders, support must also target the **strengthening of institutions and mechanisms for consultation and coordination between the stakeholders,** while ensuring the creation of mechanisms promoting mutual accountability.

B. Strengthening of civil society

Belgium has developed expertise in providing support for capacity **strengthening of farmer organisations**. In particular, the Belgian indirect cooperation has a strong counterpart in the civil society of our partner countries, which enables it to be particularly effective there.

In this context, Belgium’s interventions will aim both to **improve the services provided by the organisations to their members** and to increase their capacity to actively and effectively participate in **the identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies** or projects that concern them. Belgium in particular ensures that farming organisations are representative of the interests of the men and women who are their members and that women, as producers, participate in decision-making there at all levels.

The capacity strengthening of the State and of the civil society is particularly essential in countries where the quality of governance is lacking. This priority area should therefore be singled out by the Belgian development cooperation in fragile partner states.

4. **Rural women: Individual and collective empowerment of rural women**

Women play a crucial role in the agricultural production of developing countries, which makes them important agents of economic development. Moreover, the considerable proportion of food production attributable to women makes them the primary agents of food security and of the well-being of households in rural areas. It is in fact acknowledged that an increase in the incomes and the improvement of the living conditions of women have a positive impact on the nutritional condition and education of children. Despite that, rural women most often remain “invisible” when it comes to investment, policies and programmes.

Generally speaking, women do not have the same access as men to the means of production, be it in terms of access to land, water, financial resources, inputs, technology, information and innovation, training or decision-making. Furthermore, women are often overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks that fall on their shoulders since, in addition to their production activities, they are usually tasked with finding water, the collection of firewood, the processing and preparation of food, and caring for the children, the sick and the elderly. These disparities between the sexes and these specific constraints hinder the development of women’s potential both as drivers of agricultural growth and as
primary agents of food security and the well-being of households.

Belgium considers women to be **actors for development** and therefore situates its actions within the framework of **empowerment**\(^2\), on both an individual and a collective level. Belgian’s interventions specifically aim to support economic empowerment and the capacities of rural women by, in particular, promoting their access to resources and means of production as well as to decision-making at all levels. Belgium’s effort on this subject aims to ensure that women are able to participate, on an equal footing with men, in agricultural development and in the benefits that result from it and, in this way, to contribute fully to food security and to economic growth in rural areas. In addition to its positive role regarding development and food security, this approach should have a direct positive effect on the achievement of the MDGs 3, 4 and 5, which respectively concern the equality of the sexes and the empowerment of women, the reduction of infant mortality, and the improvement of maternal health.

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\(^2\) See the annexed definition
1. Definitions

Agriculture
Agriculture is defined by the OECD as follows:

“Agriculture includes households engaged in farming, herding, livestock production, fishing and aquaculture. Also included are other producers and individuals employed in cultivating and harvesting food resources from salt and fresh water and cultivating trees and shrubs and harvesting non-timber forest products - as well as processors, small-scale traders, managers, extension specialists, researchers, policy makers and others engaged in the food, feed and fibre system and its relationships with natural resources. This system also includes processes and institutions, including markets, that are relevant to the agriculture sector.”

Family farming
The Inter-Réseaux Développement group has defined family farming as follows:

“Family farming is characterised by the predominance of work by family members and a family-based organisation in the production process, on the one hand, and on the other hand, by the existence of a clear link between production, consumption and the reproductive economy of the household.”

Defined by these characteristics, family farming constitutes a vast array that encompasses very different situations as regards access to land (farmers who are owners on the basis of the very diverse land rights, farmers and sharecroppers, landless peasants, small-scale processing and marketing enterprises, urban animal owners, etc.), production techniques (manual farming, animal traction power, motorisation), productivity, and the destination of the products (self-consumption, local trading, supply of national and international markets).
Food security
Since the World Food Summit of 1996, food security has been defined as follows:

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.

On the basis of this definition, the FAO focuses food security around the following four pillars:

1. **Food availability**: The availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports (including food aid).

2. **Food access**: Access by individuals to adequate entitlements for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all commodity bundles over which a person can establish command given the legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community in which he or she lives (including certain traditional rights such as access to common resources).

3. **Utilisation**: Utilisation of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and healthcare to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met. This highlights the importance of non-food parameters in food security.

4. **Stability**: To be food secure, a population, household or individual must have access to adequate food at all times. He or she should not risk losing access to food as a consequence of sudden shocks (e.g. an economic or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g. seasonal food insecurity). The concept of stability can therefore refer to both the availability and access dimensions of food security.

Sustainable development
The law of 1999 governing Belgian development cooperation defines sustainable development as follows:

“Sustainable development is predicated on the satisfaction of current needs, without compromising the needs of future generations, and its achievement entails a process of change adjusting the utilisation of resources, the allocation

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of investments, the targeting of technological development and institutional structures to meet current and future needs alike.”

Empowerment
The Commission on Women and Development defines empowerment as follows:

“The empowerment approach as developed by movements from the South is based on a plural approach to power. Empowerment can therefore be considered as the process to acquire ‘power’ individually and collectively. Among individuals or a community, it designates first and foremost the ability to act autonomously, but also the means needed and the process to achieve this capacity to act and make one’s own decisions regarding life and society. Empowerment is thus seen as a process, a dynamic two-pronged construction of identity, both individual and collective.”

2. Belgian actions

“Agriculture and food security” is, by virtue of the law on Belgian International Cooperation of 1999, a priority sector for the Belgian development cooperation. In 2008, during the High-Level Conference on Food Security in Rome, Belgium, speaking through the Minister of Development Cooperation reinforced this commitment, setting the objective to dedicate 10% of Belgium’s official development assistance (ODA) to agriculture in 2010 and 15% in 2015 in response to the commitment made by the African Union during the Maputo Summit in 2003 to increase the share of agriculture in its budget to 10%. This places Belgium at the forefront of the international donors in this sector and enables it to be an influential player both with its partner countries and in international organisations.

This commitment of the Belgian development cooperation is fulfilled through its different intervention channels for development cooperation. Bilaterally, since 2008, agriculture is a priority sector in 11 of the 18 indicative governmental cooperation programmes with our partner countries. Multilaterally, our contributions to the international organisations active in the food security sector (FAO, IFAD, WFP, CGIAR) have seen a significant rise during the course of recent years. In addition, Belgium contributed considerably to the in-depth reform of the CFS and is continuing its effort in order for the CFS to be able to fully play its role of the major global platform for the coordination of the different initiatives for food security. In terms of indirect cooperation, the Belgian NGOs, of which many specialise in agriculture, food security and rural funding, also receive increased
funding. Moreover, multiple Belgian universities have cooperation programmes with university agriculture departments and agricultural research institutes in partner countries. The new Belgian Fund for Food Security, which succeeds the Belgian Survival Fund, has been given a budget of EUR 250 million, which will enable it to continue its activities for food security in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, the Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries (BIO) has also intensified its activities in the agriculture and food security sector. In this way, through the SME Fund and the expertise fund, BIO has undertaken to dedicate 50% of the Belgian’s state aid allocated to the development of the agro-industrial sector with a preference for food agriculture.

Between 2005 and 2009, the Belgian development cooperation spent a total of approximately EUR 450 million in support to the food security of developing countries. This aid is mainly focused on: multisectoral rural development interventions (21%), agricultural development (14%), agricultural research (8%), agricultural policies and administrative management (7%), livestock (7%), agricultural cooperatives (6%) and agricultural production (5%). In order to deepen its expertise, Belgium is seeking to reduce the number of its areas of intervention in order to develop expertise and a specific and recognised comparative advantage in a limited number of strategic areas.

3. Intervention channels

**Bilateral cooperation**

The Belgian bi-lateral development cooperation is mainly implemented by the Belgian Technical Cooperation agency (BTC). It mostly works with the technical ministries (Livestock Farming, Agriculture, Fisheries) in partner countries. The most frequent areas of intervention concern agricultural development, adding value to agricultural production and the strengthening of capacities of public actors in the implementation of agricultural policies. Since the BTC’s partnership is naturally tied to the area of public sector, the support for the private sector usually takes the form of the setting up of funds (investment, training, studies) intended to support their initiatives.

**Multilateral cooperation**

The main international organisations active in agriculture and food security are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural
Research (CGIAR). Following the DGD policy of providing ‘core funding’ to multilateral organisations, and in an effort to increase the effectiveness of aid, none of Belgium’s voluntary contributions for these organisations is earmarked. Given that Belgium is among the main donors of these organisations, Belgium actively contributes to the definition of their strategic orientations.

FAO
The FAO is active on two different levels: normative and operational. Through its normative activities, it offers a neutral forum for international negotiations, maintains a statistical database, draws up standards, codes and international agreements and distributes information to its member countries. Its operational activities chiefly aim to strengthen the capacities of local farmers in developing countries.

The contribution of the Belgian development cooperation to the FAO amounts to over EUR 15 million per year. Belgium is thereby the tenth largest donor to the FAO, all its contributions combined (including multilateral cooperation, emergency cooperation and the partnership with the Belgian Fund for Food Security).

IFAD
IFAD is a development fund specialising in agricultural development that is aimed in particular at the poorest populations with the goal of increasing their food security and their income. To this end, it essentially provides loans to governments at very favourable conditions. The loans may be accompanied by donations to finance development projects in support sectors, such as health or education, with a medium to long-term impact.

For the new financial provision (2010-2012), the Belgian contribution for IFAD has more than doubled and amounts to EUR 7 million per year. Moreover, the supplementary contributions of the Belgian Fund for Food Security, which constitute a significant share of the total contributions, are also increasing. Belgium is thereby the seventh largest donor to IFAD when all contributions are combined.

WFP
The WFP has a dual mandate and comprises both emergency and development activities. The WFP focuses its actions on five strategic priorities: 1) to save lives in crisis situations, 2) to protect livelihoods in crisis situations and to enhance resilience to shocks, 3) to support the improved nutrition and health status of children, mothers and other vulnerable persons, 4) to facilitate access to
education and to reduce the gender disparity in access to education and skills training, 5) to help governments establish and manage food assistance programmes.

The WFP implements the majority of Belgium’s interventions regarding food assistance and Belgium has considerable involvement in this organisation’s Executive Board. One of the primary elements of Belgian policy is the purchasing of commodities in local markets, when possible and appropriate, in order to support their development. In the same context, Belgium also provides considerable support to the “Purchase for Progress” programme that aims to substantially reform the way in which the WFP organises the purchasing of foodstuffs in order to enable local small-scale farmers and small-scale intermediaries to benefit as much as possible.

The contribution of the Belgian development cooperation to the WFP amounts to over EUR 25 million per year. Belgium is thereby the seventeenth largest donor to this programme.

**CGIAR**

The CGIAR’s mission is to tackle hunger and poverty, to improve human health and nutrition and to enhance the resilience of ecosystems by promoting partnerships, leadership and excellence in international agricultural research. In this way, the CGIAR is at the origin of cutting-edge scientific research that contributes to sustainable agricultural growth for the benefit of the poor.

The CGIAR is currently in the process of reform aimed at bringing international agricultural research more into line with the needs of the users (family farming), the national contexts and the current challenges (climate change and adaptation, food security, preservation of biodiversity, etc.). Belgium supports this reform, which must improve the cooperation between the CGIAR’s different centres. Belgium in this way stresses the importance of the non-earmarked contributions for major research programmes and of the participation of all the stakeholders (national research institutes, advisory institutions, farmer organisations).

The Belgian contribution to the CGIAR is growing considerably and will amount to EUR 9.4 million by 2011. Belgium is currently the CGIAR’s twelfth largest donor.

**Indirect cooperation**

The indirect cooperation actors are essentially Non-Governmental Organisations
(NGOs) and agricultural trade unions. These actors have accumulated multiple and varied expertise, particularly as regards the strengthening of the capacities of farmer organisations in the South in a context of sustainable agricultural development, the strengthening of microfinance institutions and also the setting up of inclusive agricultural supply chains.

Moreover, the universities and the different scientific institutes, some of which are financed through the University Cooperation for Development (CUD) and the Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR), have internationally renowned agricultural expertise. The Belgian development cooperation turns to them frequently in the orientation of political and strategic choices as well as for the training of qualified researchers from our partner countries.

**BIO**

The Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries is highly active in the financial and banking sector of our partner countries. BIO furthermore provides direct credit and participates in the capital of companies in the agri-food sector. Approximately half of BIO’s allocations to the SME Fund benefit the primary processing companies. In addition, BIO develops partnerships with private companies and supports product quality control and the establishment of quality labels that make it possible to add value to basic products. BIO in particular requires that the companies receiving its financing respect both national and international sanitary and phytosanitary standards as well as standards imposed by the private distribution chains downstream.

The ATHENA Facility, a partnership between BIO and the Centre for the Development of Enterprise (CDE), provides financing specifically tailored to very small enterprises (VSEs) and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the countries of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group. This financing can be granted by banking on their complementarity in the service of a common objective combining the development of capacities and access to credit. Finally, BIO also co-finances feasibility studies for start-up companies. All of these activities in support of the local private sector contribute to reducing poverty in rural areas and thus to improving food security.

**Belgian Fund for Food Security**

The Belgian Fund for Food Security (BFFS) is an initiative of the Belgian Parliament, with over EUR 250 million over 10 years, to tackle food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa. The BFFS focuses its action in the partner countries of
the Belgian development cooperation and targets the areas in these countries with the greatest food insecurity. Its integrated approach to the different dimensions of poverty enables it to sustainably improve food security across its four pillars\textsuperscript{2} and to have an expanded three-dimensional vision of the fight against poverty (access to basic social services, strengthening of defensive capacities and strengthening of institutional capacities). In this way, the BFFS supports equitable and sustainable socio-economic development geared towards vulnerable groups.

The implementation of the BFFS’s programmes is undertaken by organisations belonging to the three channels of cooperation (NGOs, international organisations and BTC), that are partners of the BFFS and that are obliged to work together in the same area of intervention in order to maximise the synergies and elements of complementarity.

\textbf{Regional cooperation}

The Belgian development cooperation also supports the agriculture and food security sector on a regional level. For example, in Central Africa agricultural development is the theme selected for support to the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (ECGLC).

\textsuperscript{2} See the definition of food security in Annex 1.
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Legal registration: 0218/2011/40

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October 2011