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A difficult path towards equality

Gender and Development in Belgian Cooperation



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**Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation**

**Office of the Special Evaluator
for Belgian Development Cooperation**

A difficult path towards equality

**Gender and Development in Belgian
Cooperation**

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Summary Report

November 2014

This evaluation was carried out by a consortium comprising South Research, IOB (University of Antwerp) and an independent consultant, supported by a steering committee.

The opinions in this document reflect the positions of the authors and not necessarily those of the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
ACC	Access to credit and enterprise coordinated support services (<i>bilateral project in Vietnam</i>)
AD	Damiaanactie programme in the DRC
ADEFIH	Programme d'Appui au Développement des Filières Halieutiques du Bénin (<i>bilateral programme</i>)
AETFP	<i>Projet d'Appui à l'Enseignement Technique et la Formation Professionnelle (bilateral project in the DRC)</i>
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APEFE	Association pour la Promotion de l'Education et de la Formation à l'Etranger (<i>co-implementer of project for strengthening the services of the Ministry of Education in Bolivia and a project for disabled persons and nursing staff in Benin</i>)
APV	<i>Projet d'Appui à la Production Végétale (bilateral project in the DRC)</i>
ASA	<i>Amélioration de la Sécurité Alimentaire des ménages vulnérables par le renforcement de la production et de l'utilisation de semences améliorées (project implemented via FAO, Niger)</i>
ASF	Association Solidarité Féminine (<i>local NGO in Morocco, implementer of programme for unmarried mothers and their children</i>)
ASI	El Estado et la Sociedad contra la Violencia, el Abuso Infantil y la Explotación Sexual Comerical Infantil (<i>bilateral project in Peru</i>)
BD	Broederlijk Delen (<i>here referring to the Programa de Desarrollo rural y defense de los derechos en Bolivia</i>)
BFVZ	Belgisch Fonds voor Voedselzekerheid [Belgian Fund for Food Security]
BIO	Belgische Investeringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden [Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries]
BTC	Belgian Technical Cooperation
CDT	Confédération Démocratique de Travail (<i>trade union in Morocco, implementer of trade union project</i>)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund (programme in the DRC)
CIALCA	Consortium for Improving Agriculture based Livelihoods in Central Africa (Rwanda)
CIC	Coopération Intercommunale (<i>municipal cooperation project in Morocco</i>)

CUI-UAC	<i>Coopération Universitaire Institutionnelle avec l'Université Abomey Calavi (Benin)</i>
CUK	<i>Coopération Universitaire Institutionnelle avec l'Université de Kinshasa</i>
CWD	Belgian Commission on Women and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DC	Development Cooperation
DGD	Directorate-General Development Cooperation
Diaconia	Microcredit programme for small and medium-sized companies (<i>via BIO, Bolivia</i>)
DOET	Department of Education and Training (Vietnam)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRCRP	Document de la Stratégie de Croissance et de Réduction de la pauvreté
FAFA	Facilité d'Appui aux Filières Agricoles dans les Département du Mono et du Couffo (<i>bilateral programme in Benin</i>)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FPS	Federal Public Service
Forestal	Proyecto de Aprovechamiento Integral y Sostenible de los Recursos Forestales en el Tropicó de Cochabamba – Fase de consolidación (<i>Bilateral programme in Bolivia</i>)
FRDO	Federale Raad voor Duurzame Ontwikkeling [Federal Council for Sustainable Development Belgium]
GAD	Gender and Development
GF	Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (<i>multilateral programme</i>)
GPM	Gender Policy Marker
HDI	Human Development Index
IFSI	Institut de Formation Syndicale Internationale
ICP	Indicative Cooperation Programme
IST	(here) Appui au programma national contre les IST/SIDA (bilateral programme in Morocco)
JHSS	Joint Health Sector Support (SBS in Rwanda)
Juzoor	Palestinian NGO (<i>here referring to the project of direct support to a local NGO: Combating poverty of Palestinian women and improving the nutritional status of school children</i>)
LD	<i>Louvain Développement</i>
LISA	<i>Lutte Intégrée pour la Sécurité Alimentaire dans l'Atacore Ouest (programme carried out by the NGO Louvain Coopération au Développement in Benin)</i>
LVF	Programa Integral de lucha contra la violencia familiar y sexual en Ayacucho (<i>bilateral project in Peru</i>)

LVS	<i>Programme de Prévention et Lutte contre les Violences Sexuelles (DRC)</i>
MAR	<i>Prise en charge médico-nutritionnelle intégrée pour les enfants de moins de cinq ans, les femmes enceintes et allaitantes dans la région sanitaire de Maradi (implemented via MSF)</i>
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIP	Micro Intervention Project
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MM	Memisa (<i>here referring to Memisa programme in DRC</i>)
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MSLF	Le Monde Selon Les Femmes (<i>Belgian NGO, here also referring to the MSLF programme in Peru</i>)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSB	Oxfam Solidarity Belgium (<i>here referring to OSB programme in Vietnam: Towards a sustainable improvement of the life of small farmers</i>)
PAEP	<i>Programme d'Approvisionnement en Eau Potable (bilateral project in Morocco)</i>
PAPDS	<i>Programma d'Appui pour la mise en oeuvre du Plan de Développement Sanitaire (bilateral programme in Niger)</i>
Paris21	Partnership in Statistics in the 21st Century (<i>multilateral action programme in partnership with DAC/OESA</i>)
PARZS	<i>Programma d'Appui au Renforcement des Zones de Santé (bilateral programme in Benin)</i>
PASAB	<i>Projet d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire au Bugesera II (Rwanda)</i>
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PFM	Public Finance Management
PGFTU	Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (<i>here referring to the cooperation programme with IFSI</i>)
PMD-C	Programa Multisectorial de Desnutrición Cero (<i>bilateral cooperation programme in Bolivia</i>)
PPILDA	<i>Projet de Promotion de l'Initiative Locale pour le Développement à Aguié (programme conducted via FIDA with BFVZ funds)</i>
PROFAO	<i>Projet de Développement de la Filière des Amandiers dans la région de l'Oriental (bilateral project in Morocco)</i>
PROTOS	<i>NGO active in the water sector (here referring to the programme Accès durable à l'eau potable et la bonne gestion des ressources en eau et leurs écosystèmes au Bénin)</i>
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Note
PV	Proces Verbaal [Official Report]

RBM	Results Based Management
SBS	Sector Budget Support
SCRE	School Construction, Rehabilitation and Equipment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip - phase II (<i>bilateral project in the Palestinian territories</i>)
SEQAP	School Education Quality Assurance Program (<i>sector budget support programme in Vietnam</i>)
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
Solsoc	Solidarité Socialiste (<i>referring to a cooperation project in the informal sector in Casablanca, Morocco</i>)
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
Tarija	Project of municipal cooperation between Tarija and Brasschaat (Bolivia)
TFF	Technical and Financial File
TH	Improvement of sanitation and protection of the environment of Tuy Hoa town (<i>bilateral project in Vietnam</i>)
UCAG	Unité Conjointe d'Appui à la Gestion (DRC)
UCP	University Cooperation Program (<i>Ghent University in partnership with the University of Hanoi in the framework of the project Searching novel and more convenient catalysts for treatment of motorbikes' exhaust gases</i>)
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIR	Local Boliviaanse NGO, <i>implementer of a programme of direct support to local civil society</i>
VAS	Vietnam Australia International School (<i>here referring to a BIO programme of support to Mekong Capital Fund</i>)
VVOB	Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Technische Bijstand [Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance]
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union
WID	Women in Development

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Summary

Background, objectives and scope of the evaluation

This *thematic and strategic evaluation* was carried out on behalf of the Office of the Special Evaluator for Belgian Development Cooperation by South Research, the IOB (University of Antwerp) and an independent consultant. The evaluation has as object the integration of the gender dimension in Belgian development cooperation, with as goal increasing equality between men and women, and improving the position of women. The policy note 'Equal opportunities for women and men' (2002) was the main reference for this evaluation. The objectives of the evaluation are: (1) reporting on the results (and in this way accounting for the resources used), (2) learning from the past in order to do better in the future and (3) formulating reasoned recommendations that in turn must allow better integration of the gender dimension in policy measures and strategies, in which it is important to include international developments.

The evaluation covers virtually the totality of Belgian cooperation (only a few specific types of aid such as measures related to debt were not included). It covers a relatively long period (2002 – 2011), but in practice 2012 and 2013 were also examined. As is the case with many such exercises, this evaluation was faced with a number of methodological challenges and the need to make compromises. These had to do with the wide-ranging research domain of the evaluation (period, cooperation channels ...) as well as the available time and financial resources. These compromises, while largely inevitable, might have produced an impact on the validity and reliability of the evaluation results.

Main conclusions and lessons learned

This evaluation concludes that in general, Belgian Development cooperation has not succeeded until now in making an essential contribution to gender equality. Attempts were made at many places and in various ways to integrate gender and work for greater gender equality; however, the results obtained are mostly due to temporary and random configurations that occurred mainly at the initiative of motivated individuals. Only a limited number of the organisations involved in Belgian cooperation succeeded in integrating gender *in a structural and continuous way*, such that a meaningful contribution was made to greater gender equality. Overall, however, we can only conclude that the extent and intensity of the efforts made, and the results achieved, are not in proportion to the magnitude of the specific problems experienced by women in the South. The fact that other evaluations came to similar conclusions suggests to us that development cooperation *in general* finds it very difficult to effectively and sustainably contribute to better gender relations.

On closer inspection, it appears that especially a number of contextual factors resulted in the many, often commendable, initiatives yielding very little in the end. In the first place, the absence of strong societal support – here and in the South – was a major obstacle, despite the existence of adequate legal and policy frameworks. As a result, many initiatives encounter explicit and implicit resistance at all levels and stages of cooperation within development organisations, a resistance that reflects the view of the society of which these initiatives are a part. Dealing effectively with this resistance requires the fulfilment of a number of initial conditions (sufficient familiarity with and

acceptance of the policy note, adequate resources, adequate incentives, unequivocal support from leadership) that have only sporadically been met in Belgian cooperation.

A third inhibiting factor has to do with the essence and goal (transformation of relations) of gender and gender mainstreaming. This involves concepts that are not easy to understand and even more difficult to use. They, partially consciously and partially unconsciously, easily become the occasion for a dilution of concepts (which we described as a 'gender light' approach), so that the GAD strategies developed degenerate into empty shells with limited or no effect on the situation of women in the South. An important example of a 'gender light' approach is the treatment of gender as a cross-cutting theme, an approach for that matter that is also contained in the new development cooperation act. Taking a cross-cutting approach to gender and gender mainstreaming in fact places these at the margins, and detaches them from their ultimate goal of gender equality and justice.

With the benefit of hindsight, it may further be noted that the stringent preconditions mentioned above have resulted in the many initiatives targeting effective gender equality (at policy level and within interventions) generally lacking coherence and organisational embedding, so that their sustainability was not always assured. Regardless of their intrinsic quality and relevance, the many developed instruments, procedures ... can only yield sustainable results when they are able to thrive in an environment that aims to make gender equality a long-term policy priority and provides the needed resources and incentives. This implies that our recommendations in first place are situated at the political and strategic levels.

While we found that overall, Belgian cooperation until now has not contributed enough to gender equality, this does not imply that no progress has been made on the ground. In a number of cases, the results of projects in sectors such as education, health and economic development appear to be having an effect in the area of gender equality, even if a gender mainstreaming approach has not been followed. Technically successful projects in these areas frequently contribute to meeting the practical needs of women and girls.

However, opportunities are regularly missed to link practical needs to a broader strategic agenda that also includes attention for (and achieves results related to) transforming gender relationships. Economic projects appear to possess the greatest potential for changing gender relations. Women who succeed in increasing their production and/or income, often operate via these activities outside the framework in which they – intentionally or unintentionally – previously were living. Their economic integration initiates an interplay of enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem, a strengthening of their position in the household and society, and increased power of initiative that frequently develops talents that had long been underused. Insufficient attention to gender in this type of projects also presents extra challenges (such as an increase in the workload of women).

Main recommendations

The evaluation formulated eight general recommendations that mainly concern the global framework in which initiatives in the area of gender and gender mainstreaming must be developed; they apply to a large extent to all actors involved, and determine to a significant degree the relevance, efficacy and sustainability of the more operational recommendations. These recommendations, which can serve as guidelines for implementing and adapting the policy note, concern the following:

- 1. the need for a clear political and institutional commitment that at the same time must be both pragmatic and ambitious.** In this, Belgium should give preference to limited but institutionally attainable steps, from which it can learn from other smaller donor countries (such as Sweden) that are internationally regarded as a standard-bearer in promoting gender equality. This political and institutional commitment must be extended to all levels of the organisations in question, so that all view the pursuit of gender equality as part of their job, for which they can be held accountable. In this respect, amending the International Cooperation Act (with gender no longer approached as a cross-cutting theme) can be an important and powerful political signal;
- 2. a correction of the existing misconceptions concerning gender mainstreaming** (*misconceptions regarding gender mainstreaming presently cause this approach to be called into question internationally due to its limited effects*). In this, it is important that mainstreaming efforts are explicitly linked to the ultimate goal of gender equality and empowerment, and are followed up and assessed on this basis. In other words, gender and gender mainstreaming cannot be detached from the ultimate goal of gender equality, and thus must be part of the backbone (or mainstream) of Belgian cooperation;
- 3. confirmation of the twin-track approach** already proposed in the policy note (specific actions targeting both women and men, in combination with gender mainstreaming in the sense described in recommendation 2). This approach must be an important guideline in developing specific strategies, on the understanding that when developing both tracks, complementarity and synergies must be sought out;
- 4. the need to set clear priorities** (at the level of the cooperation in general and/or per country) within the broad field of gender and gender mainstreaming. These must ensure more depth and quality, and make responsibility (see recommendation 1) more concrete;
- 5. the need to conceive gender integration as a change process with two tracks:** internal gender mainstreaming at organisational level (which, if effectively carried out, can change the nature of the organisation), and gender integration in development policy, programmes and projects. This choice for a double change process has important implications concerning the training of personnel, commitment on the part of the leadership, and the way in which commitment to gender is valued within the organisation;
- 6. the need for a greater and structurally embedded focus on preventing and combating gender-related violence**, which is a very big problem in most partner countries (especially those with a low HDI) but one that largely escapes attention. This focus must be implemented in specialised projects as well as in the regular cooperation efforts that often provide important opportunities for such, as was shown in several case studies;
- 7. greater attention to initiatives that integrate men in interventions promoting greater gender equality.** These interventions must pay special attention to combating those aspects in attitude and behaviour (principally on the part of men) that contribute to existing gender inequalities;

- 8. more explicit choices for using and supporting local gender expertise that**, while often not well known, is widely available in most partner countries.

The above recommendations were supplemented with several recommendations of an operational nature that include the following:

- 9. integration of gender in the political dialogue with partner countries and in the policy dialogue with the indirect actors.** It is important to give shape to this integration *gradually*, to the extent that the more general recommendations (see above) are put into practice and gender becomes integrated in all stages of the development process;
- 10. correct use of the gender marker**, so that it provides accurate information for both internal and external use. An important first step here is that the actors involved must be requested to indicate and justify a gender marker for the interventions for which they are responsible;
- 11. full integration of gender in the intervention cycle**, with DGD giving significant weight to the integration of gender in its ex-ante evaluation of (bilateral, multilateral, indirect) interventions;
- 12. adequate integration of gender in results based management** as this is increasingly being used in the various levels of Belgian cooperation, with especially justice being done to the qualitative character of gender change processes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background, purpose and scope of the evaluation

1.1.1 Background

In recent decades, a quite strong normative framework concerning gender equality has taken form at international, European and national level, and anchored itself in important resolutions and legislation. While attempts to further extend this development and translate it into practical implementation has met growing resistance in recent years, in particular internationally¹, this normative framework in the area of development and development cooperation has been of great importance and has led to a situation in which gender equality has become a part of the development policy of all important actors. To implement this policy in practice, a wide range of measures, procedures, instruments ... were then developed. However, research into the effects of gender integration teaches us that the results of these efforts so far have been rather disappointing². A wide range of factors appears to play an inhibiting role here, with the importance of institutional factors, and especially the large gap between policy and practice standing out. Efforts to integrate gender appear to consist of a wide range of diverse measures and actions among the actors involved in development cooperation, each active within their own context, making it possible for things to go wrong in several areas. This has resulted in the ultimate effects on the beneficiaries remaining minimal.

These international insights and developments make it important to examine the current state of gender in Belgian cooperation. Furthermore, there are a number of specific considerations that played a role in the decision to organise this evaluation. For example, the Belgian Commission on Women and Development (CWD) targeted its first recommendation at the Minister of Development Cooperation. It advocated a strengthening of the Belgian contribution to gender equality. In addition, the CWD evaluation (2010) recommended that Belgian development policy in its totality undergo a gender equality assessment. There is a suspicion that in Belgium, and many other countries for that matter, despite international commitments, actual implementation of the gender strategy is falling short. The Act on Belgian International Cooperation of May 1999 also stipulates that the sectoral and thematic policy notes must be evaluated every four years. While this provision was not included in the new Act of March 2013, the new law does stipulate that the results of Belgian Development Cooperation must be evaluated. Finally, 2013 marked the 11th anniversary of the policy note 'Equal opportunities for women and men'. Consequently, given the importance of gender issues, it is high time to evaluate the results obtained, and where necessary to fine-tune the Belgian gender integration strategy and its implementation.

¹ Since 2012, resolutions in favour of greater equality between women and men, and their implementation have met growing resistance at the UN and among several European countries (based on religious, cultural and moral considerations).

² This is evident from many evaluations carried out in the last 15 years. For an overview, see Ria Brouwers, 'Revisiting gender mainstreaming in international development: Goodbye to an illusionary strategy,' ISS Working Paper No. 556, 2013.

1.1.2 Objectives and main themes

The evaluation brief (included in Annex 1) states that it concerns a *thematic and strategic evaluation* with as object the integration of the gender dimension in Belgian development cooperation, with the aim of strengthening equality between men and women, and improving the position of women. Section B4 of the brief specifies a double objective for the evaluation:

- (1) To report on the results (and in this way justify the resources used), and
- (2) learn from the past in order to do better in the future.

It was also stated that both of these objectives must make it possible to formulate 'reasoned recommendations' that in turn enable (3) better integration of the gender dimension in policy measures and strategies in which it is important to include international developments.

Thus, the goals of this evaluation correspond to the three traditional evaluation objectives: accountability, learning and policy support.

The most important themes of this evaluation are summarised in a series of evaluation questions (see part B7 of the brief) that were ordered according to the traditional OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact). The main themes are:

- the relevance of the policy note (which dates from 2002) in the light of developments in the international context;
- the coherence of gender integration with international commitments, other policies and strategies of Belgian cooperation;
- the extent to which Belgian cooperation has contributed to implementation of the action plan contained in the policy note, and the results that were achieved;
- the extent to which gender is integrated in all channels and at all levels of Belgian cooperation;
- the extent to which Belgian cooperation has contributed to creating the conditions required to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women, to effective empowerment, and to decreasing and preventing violence against women;
- the size of the budgets available for gender equality and the way these budgets were spent;
- the sustainability and impact of the results of Belgian cooperation with respect to gender integration and gender equality.

1.1.3 Scope

The evaluation in principle covers almost all aspects of Belgian cooperation (only a few specific types of aid such as measures related to debt were not included). The brief further states that only interventions in the 18 partner countries of the bilateral cooperation are included in the sample of projects and programmes to be examined, but also that the evaluation cover a relatively long period (2002 – 2011). However, in practice the years 2012 and 2013 were also examined.

In accordance with the requirements of the brief, based on the critical inventory of Belgian cooperation taken during the first phase of the evaluation and in consultation with the Steering Committee³ and the Special Evaluation Office, a selection of 50 representative interventions were studied further; 35 of these interventions (situated in five countries:

³ The steering committee for this evaluation consisted of representatives of the various actors active in Belgian development cooperation (including the FPS Foreign Affairs) and a representative of the Institute for Equality of Women and Men. The steering committee monitored the evaluation during the various phases, and also discussed – in addition to the descriptive inventory and the documentary report – this final report.

Benin, Bolivia, DRC, Morocco and Vietnam) were also visited in the field while the others (implemented for the most part in a limited number of countries: Palestinian territories, Niger, Rwanda and Peru) were analysed via a thoroughgoing document study supplemented with a number of interviews⁴. In all cases, the full intervention cycle was analysed, including the broader context (policy dialogue with the partner country, policy dialogue between the indirect actors and the DGD, and between indirect actors and their partners in the South ...).

1.1.4. Report structure

The report is subdivided as follows. This introductory chapter introduces the methodology and phasing of the evaluation, and then focuses on the basic concepts of the “Gender and Development” approach. This last part was developed among others because one of the most important conclusions of this evaluation is that the conceptual framework concerning gender and development, and gender mainstreaming, is insufficiently understood if understood at all, and seldom does its application extend to its essential implications.

The second chapter comprises the answers to the eight evaluation questions. In each case, a similar structure is used that is based on the evaluation framework developed for each evaluation question. Each question or sub-question concludes with a short summary (printed in italics).

The third chapter presents the most important findings and lessons learned. Here links are sought between the findings of the various evaluation questions, and the theory of change that was developed at the start of the evaluation is re-examined.

The fourth chapter contains the recommendations. The choice was made in particular to formulate strategic recommendations that could be operationalised in a later phase, depending on the specificity of the various actors.

A significant number of annexes supplement this report. They are available on the website of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs. They cover among others the Reference terms of this evaluation (Annex 1), a presentation of the evaluation framework (Annex 2), a description of the methodological approach (Annex 3) and a short description of the policy context (international, European, national) concerning gender and development (Annex 4). We also wish to mention Annex 9, which contains the country reports on the results in the five countries visited.

1.2 Methodology and Phasing

1.2.1 Theory of Change

As a basis for structuring the evaluation, a theory of change was developed that subsequently was used as an important reference in developing the evaluation questions as well as the evaluation method and approach (see below and Annexes 2 and 3 for more details; a schematic overview of the theory of change is presented at the start of chapter 2). The starting point for this theory of change is the ‘Policy Note Equal Rights and Opportunities between Women and Men’ from 2002. This note states that the strategy of Belgian international cooperation aims to support the efforts of its partners in working for equal rights for men and women, by integrating the gender dimension in all of its policy measures, programmes and projects. As such, the strategy rests on three pillars:

⁴ The methodological approach taken in the evaluation is described in detail in Annex 3.

- Supporting the gender integration efforts of partner countries;
- Supporting the gender integration efforts of international non-governmental organisations and actors;
- Strengthening the institutional capacities of the DGDC (now DGD).

It is also important to situate the 'policy note' in a totality of initiatives at Belgian, European and international level, within and outside of development cooperation, in other words in a broader context of initiatives in support of greater equality between women and men.

A scheme was developed that visually presents the theory of change on which the policy note is based, and that ultimately must result in gender equality and empowerment (see the start of chapter 2). As shown in the diagram, there are several important assumptions that must be met in order for the intended changes to take place. A number of these assumptions were formulated based on experience with integration processes within development organisations and international cooperation; others were formulated based on our knowledge of international experience with gender mainstreaming. Some of these assumptions for that matter were directly or indirectly included in the evaluation questions treated in this evaluation. As indicated in the theory of change diagram, most of the assumptions are situated very early in the change process; this points to the importance of institutional factors at the level of the northern actors who initiate the integration processes.

1.2.2 Evaluation framework

The evaluation brief contains a rather large number of evaluation questions that were ordered according to the five evaluation criteria of the DAC. As suggested in the brief, the evaluation team made use of the possibility to add and change main and sub-questions in order to fully meet the objectives of this evaluation. Concretely, the questions in the brief became the starting point for developing an evaluation framework with three levels (main questions, assessment criteria and indicators) that integrated all questions in the brief and added a number of supplemental elements. In a few cases, specific questions or sub-questions from the brief were placed elsewhere based on various considerations.

This exercise resulted in a comprehensive evaluation framework (see Annex 2) consisting of eight evaluation questions. Finally, as a supplementary component to the evaluation framework, a number of 'explanatory questions' were formulated to allow us to assess the factors underlying specific findings related to the various evaluation criteria. We found this important in view of the learning goals of this evaluation and, more specifically, to meet the brief's requirement to formulate *reasoned recommendations*. Moreover, many of these 'explanatory questions' can be linked to the assumptions that were included in the diagram of the theory of change.

1.2.3 Phasing

According to the brief's Technical Instructions, the evaluation must be conducted in six phases: the preparatory phase, the starting and descriptive inventory, the study phase, the field phase, the synthesis phase and the approval, distribution and feedback procedure (see Annex 3 for more details). Throughout the different phases, regular coordination took place between evaluators, commissioning authority and stakeholders, among others via meetings of the Steering Committee at crucial moments in the evaluation process (October 2013, January and September 2014).

1.2.4 Main methodological challenges and limitations

Like many similar exercises, this evaluation is faced with a number of methodological challenges and, given the evaluation's extensive research (period, cooperation channels...) compared to the available financial resources, the need to make a number of

compromises that can have an impact on the validity and the reliability of the evaluation results. In this regard, it is important to mention the following points:

- An important part of the findings of this evaluation is based on the 50 interventions that were selected as case studies (35 of which were visited in the five countries). The selection of these 50 interventions was made in full independence by a team member who was not involved with the analysis of the interventions as such; in this, multiple criteria were applied (see Annex 3), for which account was especially taken of the diversity of cooperation channels, sectors and types of intervention. Due especially to practical considerations (absence of key people, serious internal tensions in the project, only very indirect participation on the part of Belgian actors ...), in the end, a relatively high number of projects (7) were replaced by an alternative project for which of course the representativeness of the whole was an important consideration.
- While a sample of 50 interventions is quite substantial, this number remains quite limited in the light of the total interventions that were financed via Belgian cooperation since 2002. The ODA data file that was used for selecting the interventions contains more than 17,500 interventions for this period. As such, the sample remains quite small and, due also to the diverse cooperation channels, it is not possible to reach far-reaching conclusions concerning 'the' Belgian development cooperation based on the sample.
- In line with the previous point, it is important to emphasise that the 50 selected interventions could not be evaluated in the 'traditional' ways. This of course applies in the first place to the 15 interventions that were analysed only via a document study, but also to the 35 interventions visited in the field. The latter took place during a country visit (seven interventions per country) that lasted a total of three weeks. During this period, among others the context at the level of the country was also analysed. Thus, approximately two days of field visit were available per intervention. But a good understanding of the degree of gender integration requires that one is able to comprehend the reality of each intervention and its context, which takes time ... while the various interventions under consideration differed strongly. The same thing, a fortiori, can be said about the effects with respect to empowerment and gender equality: empowerment is often the result of a long process that is difficult to understand via a short visit.
- The team invested substantially in defining a well-designed evaluation framework. Nevertheless, the nature of this evaluation implies that a number of indicators, in particular concerning the analysis of the gender integration process, are rather qualitative and not entirely 'SMART'. It also was not possible or desirable, at least not in the context of this evaluation, to further operationalise the indicators. As was the case in other similar exercises, the choice was made to work with scales such as the widely used LEADS scale (*little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable*) with the evaluators in question working together closely in order to ensure consistent scoring (see also Annex 3).
- Concerning impact (gender equality and empowerment), initially a large number of indicators were defined that could measure 'impact'. However, it quickly became clear that it was not possible to obtain data on these indicators (in particular concerning the impact of Belgian aid). For this reason, a choice was made to define proxy indicators in a number of cases that among others made it possible to better clarify the role played by Belgian aid. However, this only partially addressed the problems because there was information available for only a few of the interventions concerning the effects of these interventions on the empowerment of women and gender equality. The qualitative impact study conducted via the evaluation in the five countries visited – in each case involving one or two interventions – was able to only partially fill this significant gap.

1.3 The basic concepts used in the 'Gender and Development' approach

1.3.1 Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD)

Since the early nineties and especially since the Beijing conference in 1995, greater international attention has been paid to the gender dimension of development. Initially there was primarily the *welfare approach*⁵, which approached women more as passive beneficiaries with an emphasis on their traditional role and corresponding demands (in domains such as health, child care, providing drinking water). In this approach, women were seen as a vulnerable group located outside the 'mainstream' of development. While some of the interventions resulted in positive effects, they left untouched the structural obstacles to gender equality.

The '*Women in Development*' (WID) approach⁶ that developed subsequently recognised the contribution women make to development, and especially targeted efficiency and poverty reduction. WID aims to integrate women in the development process and explains the inequality between men and women chiefly based on poverty levels; accordingly, this approach aims to eliminate poverty by better integrating women in the economic process and by improving their access to means of production (e.g. via microcredit). However, this approach above all aimed to integrate women in already established strategies and objectives, without much attention being paid to the perceptions and priorities of women. Consequently, WID projects tend to focus on practical needs that make it easier for women to fulfil their traditional roles. The WID approach targets only women, and ignores the importance of the role underlying gender relations play in clarifying the inequality that exists between men and women.

Successful WID projects can reduce poverty, but do not necessarily result in greater equality since the underlying gender structures and norms are left untouched (a 'successful' WID project for example will create a stable income for women, but increase their workload since gender roles are left unchanged). On the other hand, and despite its exclusive attention to women (thus ignoring underlying relations), the WID approach can indeed lead to a strengthening of the position of women and, based on this, to influencing the unequal relations between men and women. In these cases, however, these effects are not intended by the WID programmes as such, but rather are the result of the initiative taken by women in finding their own way. In any case, WID projects as such can be a basis for introducing a GAD approach.

The '*Gender and Development*' (GAD) approach emphasises the importance of the sociocultural construction 'gender' that determines the needs, rights, obligations and opportunities of men and women. It is this social construction that is viewed as the most important cause of the inequality between men and women. Hence, the GAD approach is based on the idea that interventions in all thematic areas and at all levels (global, macro, meso and micro) are influenced by the existing structural characteristics (such as gender) of societies. Thus, interventions are not made in a social vacuum, and their effectiveness and efficiency are determined among others by the underlying structures and institutions that influence human behaviour. Conversely, it is assumed that all interventions have the potential to influence gender (and other) relations. If account is not taken of this reciprocal influence, policy can fail and the existing male bias with respect to resource allocation and decision-making power further increase.

⁵ In the welfare approach, women are principally seen as beneficiaries of government policy and strongly associated with the household and reproductive domains.

⁶ The WID approach emphasises the unrecognised productive potential of women as the most important route to poverty reduction. See also section 1.4 below.

1.3.2 The twin-track approach: gender mainstreaming and specific actions

The existing reciprocal influential relationship between 'gender' and 'development' gives rise to the need for the *integration* of a gender dimension throughout the multiple phases (diagnosis, planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) of the development cycle and of all types of interventions at each level. The OECD/DAC guidelines (1999) specify that a gender mainstreaming strategy consists of two aspects:

- The integration of gender aspects in the analysis and formulation of all policy, programmes and projects (the so-called 'integrationist approach' that aims to build gender issues into existing development paradigms especially by integrating gender concerns across a broad spectrum of sectors without transforming the overall development agenda);
- Initiatives to empower both women and men to formulate and express insights and to participate in decision-making for the benefit of all development issues (the so-called '*agenda setting approach*' that implies the transformation of the existing development agenda).

Important here is that the use of the term "gender mainstreaming" later in this report refers to *both* aspects (integrationist approach and agenda setting). In this regard, we have opted to follow the OECD/DAC definition, which constitutes the reference in development cooperation but does not necessarily coincide with that used by the Belgian government⁷. The notion 'mainstreaming' became prominent in the late 1980s when it became clear that efforts until then had remained superficial and mainly addressed the symptoms rather than the causes of the problems. Consequently, a strategy was needed that was capable of addressing the structural and systemic aspects of gender inequality: gender in other words must become part of the mainstream of development interventions; it must be given a central place and not treated as an afterthought. Only if this condition is met, can gender equality be attained.

In addition to gender mainstreaming (with its two components), a second track is needed to achieve greater equality between men and women: the so-called *specific (or positive) actions* that target changes in gender structures and relations. These types of action are crucial in domains that are governed by strong gender norms. These specific actions can target men, women and institutions. The combination of gender mainstreaming (with its two components) and specific actions is usually called a "twin-track approach" to gender equality. Both tracks augment one another and both aim to contribute to empowering women.

1.3.3 WID and GAD in development practice

Of course, the policy and practice of Belgian development cooperation are the objects of this evaluation and these will be further analysed in the following chapters. However, it is important already in this introductory chapter to point out a number of obstacles concerning the integration of gender.

While the distinction between WID and GAD is conceptually clear, in practice gender is still misunderstood in many cases. Over the years, several misconceptions have developed, in particular concerning the notion of gender mainstreaming, thereby impairing the efficacy of this mainstreaming⁸. In many cases for example, existing approaches concerning the integration of men and women in development actions are incorrectly designated as 'GAD'. In practice, much uncertainty remains, not so much

⁷ The Institute for Equality of Women and Men, for example, which defines policy on gender equality at federal level, in line with the European level, uses a definition of gender mainstreaming (or gender integration) that comprises only the 'integrationist approach'.

⁸ For more details, see an interesting article on which we based ourselves for this part: Carolyn Hannan, From Concept to Action: Gender Mainstreaming in Operational Activities, paper prepared for the technical review meeting Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming and Empowerment of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2000 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/undpaper.PDF>)

concerning the concept as such but rather concerning its specific interpretation and implementation in practice. In practice, so-called gender approaches often appear to be little more than 'working with women', without attention being paid to *the relational dimension* that is central to the gender concept. In addition, 'gender mainstreaming' is generally narrowed to mean the integration component, and only seldom does it include agenda setting. On the other hand, gender mainstreaming is sometimes also reduced to performing specific actions to the detriment of mainstreaming.

Probably more important is the lack of clarity that exists concerning what gender *integration* (first component of gender mainstreaming) actually entails and when we can speak of true integration of gender in a policy or a project. Numerous evaluations suggest that people are quickly inclined to answer positively if, for example, the needs and demands of women have been properly inventoried (in an ICP sector, in a specific project ...), or many actions have been undertaken with women or a formulated project has been thoroughly checked and adapted by a gender expert. The ease with which the notion of gender mainstreaming is dealt often results in a dilution of the concept and practice, while precisely constant care and attention for the specific and strategic needs of women, including attention to underlying (gender) norms and values, are needed to be able to speak of true mainstreaming.

When interpreting gender mainstreaming, much attention has been paid until now to the 'how' dimension, resulting in the development of (among others) a significant number of instruments (checklists, manuals ...). Partly because gender mainstreaming is not as simple as it appears, this development has been at the expense of the underlying 'why' question, which notably places the emphasis on the ultimate aim of gender equality. In other words, the strong focus on the 'how' (the means) gradually displaces the goal, and one often forgets that gender mainstreaming is 'only' a strategy to achieve a higher goal (gender equality). Of course, 'gender mainstreaming' also means the injection, via a range of instruments, of the gender perspective in all domains of social life (in global and sectoral policy, in the intervention cycle ...), but it must go further and, from a gender perspective, link this input to a personal, political and institutional commitment to reduce gender inequality. Only when this happens, is gender truly a part of the 'mainstream' of cooperation: it implies defining specific actions that target gender equality and introduce changes into the way in which intervention objectives and effects are formulated. In this, the insertion of a gender perspective is an appropriate means, since it provides the necessary basis for an adequate definition of the approach taken that aims to contribute to gender equality.

In situations where gender mainstreaming is reduced to a goal in itself, gender mainstreaming often is limited to attention for the integration of women and girls in the development process and the factors that stand in the way of this integration. While this participation of women (in quantitative terms) is important, it also – mainly – concerns the qualitative transformative dimension, which implies that the perceptions of women and men are introduced into the development process and thus are able to correct the existing gender biases. This implies the need to make a critical analysis of existing values, attitudes and norms in the sector (in this case each actor who wishes to work on gender mainstreaming) a part of gender mainstreaming.

1.4 A few basic indicators of gender and development in the five countries visited

Below follows a very brief and no doubt incomplete sketch of the GAD situation in the five countries visited (Benin, Bolivia, DRC, Morocco and Vietnam). For a more detailed analysis of the GAD situation in each country, we refer to the country reports.

Table1: Key indicators

Indicators	Benin	Bolivia	Morocco	DRC	Vietnam
Human Development Index (HDI) (2013) ⁹	0.476	0.667	0.617	0.338	0.638
Ranking (186 countries)	165	113	129	186	121
<i>Components of the HDI</i>					
• Life expectancy at birth (years)	59.3	67.3	70.9	50.0	75.9
• Number of years of education (median)	3.2	9.2	4.4	3.1	5.5
• Number of expected years of education	11.0	13.2	11.6	9.7	11.9
• Gross National Product (US\$/head, PPP)	1,726	5,552	6,905	444	4,892
Gini coefficient (income inequality)	38.6	56.3	40.9	44.4	35.6
Gender indicators:					
• SIGI - Social Institutions and Gender Index	n/a	0.133	0.126	0.514	0.239
• Gender Inequality Index	0.614	0.472	0.460	0.669	0.322
• Gender Inequality Index ranking (154 countries)	134	97	92	147	58
• Gender Empowerment Measure	n/a	0.511	0.318	n/a	0.554

With respect to the HDI, the extremely low score of the DRC stands out compared to the other countries that were visited. This should not be surprising when you consider that the DRC had the lowest score of all countries surveyed. Benin also had a low score, and it also belongs to the group of poorest countries, while the HDI of the three other countries are quite similar. Bolivia scored better in the area of the educational components of the HDI, while Vietnam and Morocco have a greater life expectancy.

Concerning the gender indicators, we can mention the following:

- The *Social Institutions and Gender Index* is a relatively new composite index containing 12 indicators in the area of social institutions, grouped into 5 categories: the family code, physical integrity, the preference for sons, civil liberties and property rights. Each indicator is assigned a code between 0 (absence of or very little inequality) and 1 (much inequality). The advantage of the SIGI index is especially that it says something about the context and the institutional and social gender constructions, while other indicators primarily target the *consequences* of these social constructions, e.g. in the areas of health and education. The DRC's weak score is no surprise; Vietnam scored significantly lower than Bolivia and Morocco, which can be explained by the relatively high preference for sons, the high frequency of domestic violence and the still limited civil liberties.

⁹ UNDP, Human Development Report 2014, 2014

- The *Gender Inequality Index* measures the loss in human development that is caused by the inequalities between men and women with respect to reproductive health, empowerment and the job market. The higher the score, the higher the loss in human development and the lower the level of empowerment of women. As could be expected, the African countries score the weakest for this indicator. Here Vietnam scores substantially better than Bolivia and Morocco, probably due to the good quality of healthcare and the relatively good representation of women in economic and political life.
- The *Gender Empowerment Measure* also consists of three elements: participation in political decision-making (percentage of women with a seat in the national parliament), economic decision-making (percentage of women that take part in economic decisions) and control of economic resources (percentage of the total revenue earned by women). The higher the score, the higher the level of empowerment of women.

2. Findings related to the evaluation questions

As was explained in Annex 3 (Methodological Approach), the evaluation team categorised the evaluation questions from the technical instructions of the public invitation to tender (included in Annex 1) into eight main questions that are addressed below. The following page contains a schematic presentation of the theory of change regarding 'gender and development', with at the bottom of the page a chart that indicates the place of the evaluation questions in the framework of this theory of change (the darker the colour, the stronger the question was focused on this part of the theory of change).

The first two evaluation questions deal with coherence and relevance. Then follow two questions intended to allow an assessment of the effectiveness of the Belgian GAD policy and one question that analyses aspects of the policy's efficiency. Question six assesses the sustainability of the results of Belgian GAD policy. Question seven attempts to provide elements of an answer to the question whether the national implementation plan of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council has been effective. Finally, the last question examines unplanned positive and negative long-term results of the Belgian interventions.

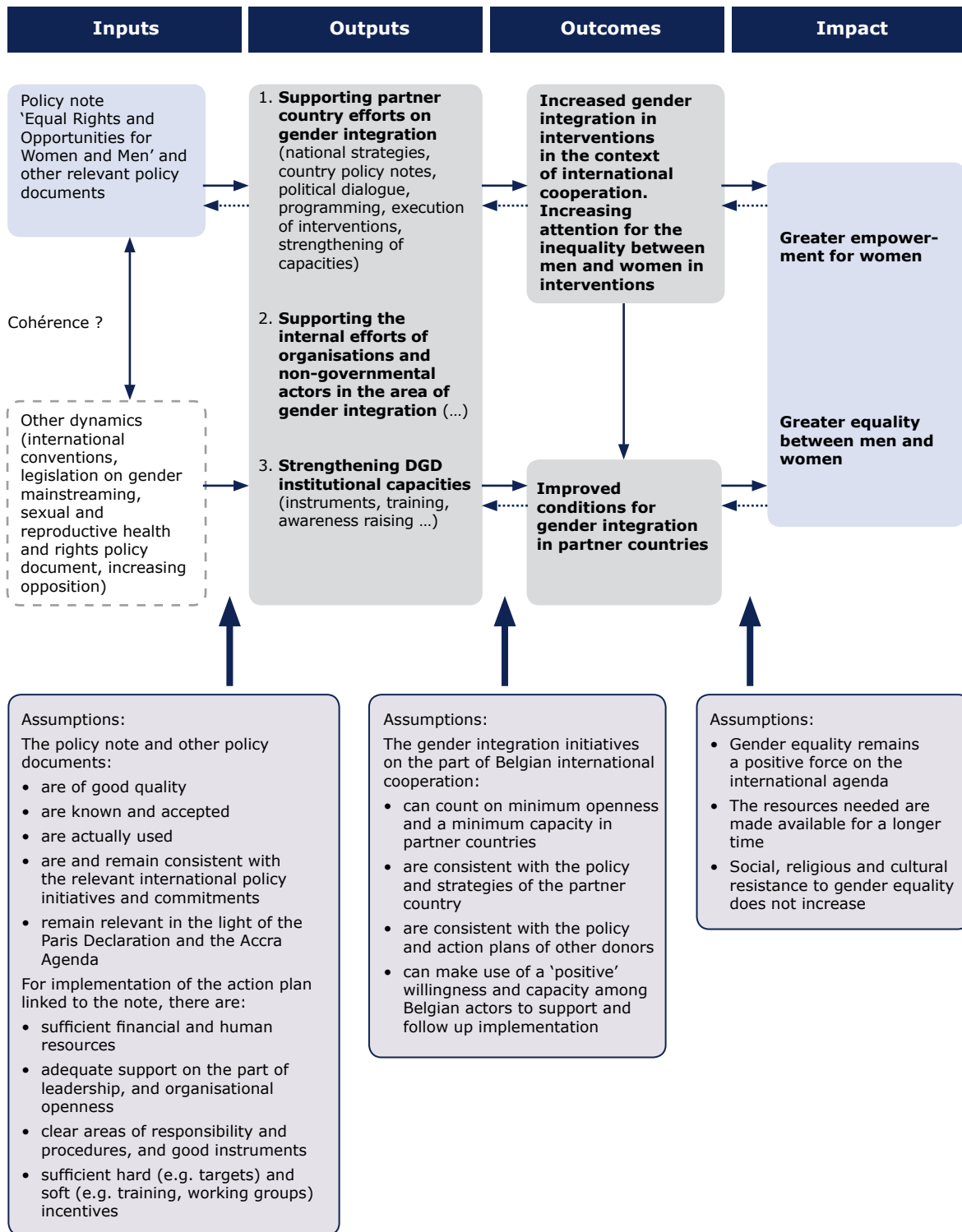
Each of the 50 projects was scored based on the assessment criteria and indicators that were studied for each question. A score was not possible in some cases: where the assessment criterion or the indicator was irrelevant or not applicable, and where insufficient information was available to award a score; the latter was frequently the case for the 15 projects that were analysed only via a document study. Each time the average score is indicated, there follows between parentheses the number of projects/programmes that were able to be scored. Generally¹⁰ a scale of 4 is used (+ +/+ -/- +/ -) is used for this, with the four values standing for 'good', 'fair', 'average' and 'weak' respectively. The scores were always indicated at the start of the discussion. As such the maximum score is 4 and the minimum score 1 (question 3 is an exception; here, 5 is the maximum score).

The scores have the advantage that they make possible an aggregation of the assessments of often extremely diverse projects. In this way, they support the qualitative assessment of the evaluators, however, without replacing it. As such, excessive attention will not be paid to the scores and they will only be commented on where deemed necessary¹¹.

¹⁰ The LEADS scale was used for evaluation question 3 (see below for clarification).

¹¹ An overview table of all scores is included in Annex 7.

Diagram 1. Schematic diagram of the theory of change concerning 'gender and development'.



EQ 1				
EQ 2				
EQ 3				
EQ 4				
EQ 5				
EQ 6				
EQ 7				
EQ 8				

2.1 Evaluation question 1: To what extent is the policy note still relevant, among others in view of changes in the international context?

The policy context in which the policy note was developed, and the characteristic features of the note, were sketched above in section 1.2 and Annex 4. The relevance of the policy note is analysed below from two perspectives:

- The intrinsic quality of the policy note, i.e. the extent to which the policy note offered in the past period, and then especially in the period that is the focus of this evaluation (2002 – 2011), a substantive, and institutionally relevant and coherent framework for gender integration;
- The extent to which the initial conditions for effective use of the policy note were met.

2.1.1 Intrinsic quality of the policy note

The goal of the policy note was to support the Belgian partners in their efforts at equal rights for men and women, and in the integration of gender in development policy, programmes and projects. In accordance with the international insights and good practices prevailing in 2002, the Note takes a twin-track approach to gender integration and positive actions, and it supports the shift from a 'Women in Development' (WID) to a 'Gender and Development' (GAD) approach. Furthermore, the Note pays attention to important principles concerning the efficacy of the aid such as 'ownership', *alignment*, harmonisation, result-oriented management, mutual accountability; it here concerns principles that only several years later, with the Paris Declaration (2005), would be given a more prominent place in development policy. Thus, the policy note was ahead of its time in some areas. The Note also recognises the relationship between gender equality and the effectiveness and efficiency of the aid. On the other hand, the policy note, in particular the action plan, paid only limited attention to strengthening the capacity of the partner countries to integrate gender into their policy, strategies, programmes and budgets (see also the commentary on gender in the budget for 2010 and 2011), which is wrongly seen by some as an important reason why gender-specific programmes are no longer being developed.

Relevance of the policy note to budget support. The twin-track policy is also relevant to new types of aid, including budget support (see for example the 2007 supplement to the 1999 OECD/DAC guidelines). The integration of gender in the political dialogue, an important instrument in the context of budget support, is included as activity in the policy note's action plan.

2.1.2 Initial conditions for effective use of the policy note

While the strategy document operationalises complex concepts such as gender, and converts these into specific strategies and activities, the quality, usefulness and user friendliness of the policy note are undermined by a lack of unambiguous priorities, of clear objectives with deadlines, of allocation of responsibility for following up the policy note and for establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. The policy note especially suffers from a lack of support and interest on the part of the DGD Directorate, resulting in it quickly falling into disuse. Finally, the annual detailed action plans with time frame and performance indicators that were announced in the policy note were never developed and no explanation given (nor requested) for not implementing the Note. While elements of the policy note were implemented, the policy note *as such* was not. This was also described as such in the OECD/DAC peer review of Belgium, which refers to the lack of operational management, resulting in the strategy document not being systematically used (OECD/DAC, 2010).

The results of our separate electronic survey confirm that familiarity with the policy note is quite low. While the policy note still includes current policy on gender and development, less than half of the respondents from DGD (47.1%) and BTC (43.8%) were sufficiently or

well familiar with the gender strategy. According to several persons interviewed, this low familiarity was partially due to the fact that the policy note principally was developed by just one staff member without much participation from other staff. When the policy note was complete, it was not discussed in-depth, but only briefly presented at a workshop in which the other sector and cross-cutting strategies were also addressed. While the policy note is available on the official Belgian development cooperation website, it was never translated into Spanish and English, and not distributed broadly among the various Belgian cooperation actors. All of these elements point to the lack of serious institutional interest in gender integration.

The low level of familiarity with the policy note was further illustrated by the fact that a reference to the policy note was found in only one of the proposals of the fifty interventions that were analysed in this evaluation (and conducted by a wide range of Belgian actors and their local partners)¹². Concerning the indicative cooperation programmes (ICP) in the five countries visited (Benin, Bolivia, DRC, Morocco, Vietnam), only in the ICPs of Bolivia (2008-2013 and 2014-2016) was reference made to the policy note without, however, operational consequences being attached to this. The other ICPs frequently mention a relatively large number of policy documents that form the basis of the ICP, but the gender policy note is not among them¹³.

The integration of gender in the dialogue with other actors is assumed in the policy note's action plan, but it offers no specific guidelines for structuring this dialogue. As a result, gender de facto never has become an important discussion point in the dialogue with these actors (see also below). On the other hand, it was noted that even bringing up gender in the margins (in addition to including gender as touchstone when assessing the programmes – see below) was a signal for a number of NGOs to take the integration of gender seriously.

Concerning familiarity with the twin-track approach promoted in the policy note, the results of the electronic survey show an interesting difference between the DGD and the BTC. Among the DGD respondents, familiarity with the twin-track approach was substantially higher (61.8%) than was familiarity with the Note as such (which implies that familiarity with gender does not necessarily go together with knowledge of the Note), while among the BTC respondents, familiarity with the twin-track approach scored even lower (37.5%) than familiarity with the policy note. Familiarity was especially low (25%) among programme managers and sector specialists, versus 50% among operational staff (among the DGD respondents, 57.1% of the operational staff were familiar with the twin-track policy and 64% of programme managers and sector specialists)¹⁴.

2.1.3 Brief conclusion

Despite its obvious intrinsic qualities, the relevance (in terms of ultimate usefulness and application) of the policy note remains limited. As is the case with many other policy documents, the cause is not so much the policy note as such, but rather expectations that are too high (in comparison to the reality in the field) and especially the lack of provisions for effective application of the note – starting with good distribution and publication of the note - and strategic guidance that would have made corrections possible from the moment that it was clear that follow-up of the policy note was weak. The realisation that the policy note,

¹² One must be careful not to jump to conclusions here. In a number of cases this is indeed a regrettable finding. In other cases, however, the organisations in question had absolutely no need of the policy note to develop and implement good gender policy. Nevertheless, the policy note, given its intrinsic quality, has the potential to assist organisations in developing their policy. This will be again be discussed below in this report. Finally, a number of multilateral interventions were included in the evaluation in which Belgium refrained from placing its own policy at the centre.

¹³ This finding also may not be an occasion for premature conclusions: it is not because the ICPs did not mention the policy note that they did not pay attention to gender. A further analysis of the gender sensitivity of the ICPs follows below in this report.

¹⁴ Concerning the other Belgian development actors, among the NGOs and academic respondents, and other actors there respectively was a 42.9% and 53.9% greater familiarity with the twin-track-approach than at the BTC; on the other hand, their familiarity with the policy note was substantially lower (28.6% and 30.6% respectively).

which treats one of the basic issues of development cooperation, could have lain dormant for over a decade, is at least an indirect indication of the low political and policy importance given to 'gender and development' at the DGD and FPS Foreign Affairs in general during this period. It may also be said that the Belgian Commission on Women and Development (CWD) failed with respect to monitoring the distribution and implementation of the policy note. The adoption in 2009 of a National Action Plan implementing UN Resolution 1325 was unable to change the situation¹⁵. On the other hand, this is the fate of many policy documents, and the limited role of the policy note has not prevented socially engaged individuals and organisations from implementing a GAD policy and practice.

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

This evaluation question is intended to analyse several dimensions of coherence:

- *First, we wish to examine the extent to which (internal) coherence exists between GAD policy and other Belgian cooperation policy.*
- *A second point examines the extent to which there is coherence between GAD policy and Belgian policy on gender integration.*
- *A third point assesses the (external) coherence between GAD policy and the policy of external actors.*
- *A fourth and final point analyses the extent to which gender integration is consistent with the needs and interests of the women in partner countries, and with the obstacles they encounter in achieving greater gender equality and empowerment.*

2.2.1 Internal coherence between GAD policy and other Belgian cooperation policy

• **GAD policy and the Development Cooperation Act**

While the policy note on 'equal rights and opportunities between women and men' was not implemented as such, the Development Cooperation Act of 1999 already focused on integrating gender by postulating equality between men and women as a cross-cutting theme. This law in fact specifies that the five priority sectors of Belgian development cooperation (basic healthcare including reproductive healthcare, education and training, agriculture and food security, basic infrastructure, conflict prevention and societal development) must adopt equality of men and women as a cross-cutting theme.

The new International Cooperation Act (March 2013, amended in January 2014) that replaces the 1999 Act (see above) states in article 11, § 2 that in all of its interventions, Belgian Development Cooperation must integrate the gender dimension as a cross-cutting theme that aims at empowering women and bringing about gender equality between men and women. As such, the new "gender" act continues to take a thematic approach and does not consider it an intrinsically necessary condition for the existence of effective aid (we will return to this in our conclusions).

• **GAD policy and sector strategies**

In 2002, a strategy document was developed (and presented at the same time as the gender policy note) for each of the five (then) priority sectors¹⁶. The healthcare policy note was updated in 2008, the agriculture and food security policy document in 2010, and the education policy document in 2013.

These three more recent strategies were developed after the publication in 2007 of the federal Gender Integration Act, which states among others that each ministry

¹⁵ ... but also were not actually implemented; see evaluation question 7 below (section 2.7).

¹⁶ For that matter, these sector strategy documents were not used as frame of reference.

must integrate the gender dimension in its policy, actions and activities. An interdepartmental working group, under the guidance of the Institute for Equality of Women and Men, was created to guide the implementation of this law. Since an initial federal plan on gender integration was approved only in 2012, and a gender integration task force established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only in 2013, the federal law on gender integration has influenced the more recent strategies only minimally. Nevertheless, in our analysis of the degree to which the gender dimension has been integrated in the eight strategies specified above, we wish to make a distinction between the five strategies of 2002 and the three more recent strategies. In this we are assuming that if gender is integrated in the strategies, an equal number of references to men and women can be expected. If this is not the case, it could indicate that one gender is implicitly and consistently taken as norm, while the other gender is consistently problematised¹⁷. Moreover, gender integration implies that the gender issue is integrated in the various parts (analysis, setting priorities, activities, budget, M & E) of the documents.

While all sector strategies contain references to gender and equality between men and women (see table 1), in total, many more references were made to women than to men. Furthermore, the specific attention for women is stronger in the five strategies of 2002 than in the three recent strategies. References to gender have a relatively greater presence in the recent strategies.

Table2: Number of references to gender, women and men in the 2002 and the recent sectoral strategies

	Sector strategies from 2002 (5)		Recent sector strategies (3)		Total	
	<i>number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>%</i>
References to gender	39	10.7	22	25.9	61	13.6
References to women	259	71.2	53	62.4	312	69.5
References to men	66	18.1	10	11.8	76	16.9
Total	364	100.0	85	100.0	449	100.0

Source: Policy notes of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

The sector strategy document with the highest percentage of references to women (89%) is the 2002 strategy document on basic healthcare. Interesting is that the strategy document with the lowest percentage of references to women (50%) is the updated version of this policy note, the 2008 strategy document on the right to health and healthcare that refers to a shift from a WID approach to a GAD approach in this sector strategy.

Concerning the integration of gender in the different parts of the sector strategies, we were only able to assess the integration of gender in the analyses, the priority setting and activities (or domains of operationalisation), since these sector strategies contain no budgets and indicators for M&E. In most sector strategies, the attention for gender and women is stronger in the analyses and priority setting than in the activities/ domains for operationalisation. Compared with the other sector strategies, the health sector strategy document (2008) and the strategy document for agriculture and food security (2010) pay significant attention to gender and/or women in the activities/ domains for operationalisation. Moreover, of course it is important to examine the extent to which attention is paid to the strategic needs of women. The strategy document for the health sector, for example, includes the use of gender budgeting and a strengthening of the local civil society's gender capacity. In the strategy document for the agricultural sector, one of the four priorities is the individual and collective emancipation of women in the countryside, which among others consists of strategies to strengthen their economic position and capacity. In the gender paragraph in the 2012 budget, this policy note is considered a good example of systematic integration

¹⁷ Debusscher, P. (2011), Mainstreaming gender in European Commission development policy: Conservative Europeanness?, Women's Studies International Forum, 34: 39-49.

of the gender dimension in the policy, strategies and various cooperation channels. However, the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO) rightly notes in the opinion (2011) it issued on the strategy document that the attention paid to eliminating gender inequality must not be limited to this priority, but must receive a central place in the entire strategy¹⁸. In this regard, it must be said that the opinion issued by the FRDO and also that of the Belgian Commission on Women and Development (CWD) came at too late a stage to exert a significant influence on the notes. For the rest, no structural attention is paid to gender in the opinions of the FRDO. Attention for gender depends on the members of the working group that prepare the opinion. Representation of the women's movement in the FRDO since 2012 has increased attention for gender, but the movement has no voting rights.

- **GAD policy and policy concerning other priority themes**

Concerning the level of coherence between GAD policy and policy on the other priority themes of Belgian Cooperation (environment, children's rights, social economy/civil society development), it can be said that in the policy notes of the cross-cutting themes in general, the WID approach is stronger than that of the GAD approach: greater attention is paid to women as a distinct group, i.e. without a gender or empowerment perspective in which women can influence and strengthen their position (power relationship) as women with respect to the position of men¹⁹. Furthermore, relatively greater attention was paid to gender and women in the analyses and setting of priorities, than in the activities.

- **GAD policy and ICPs**

Finally, under this point we must pay brief attention to how ICPs have integrated existing 'gender and development' policy²⁰. The instructions (2009) for the preparation of an ICP pay attention to the integration of gender, and as such are an important potential lever in achieving effective integration of gender in the ICP.

- *In Benin*, the 2008-2011 ICP states that in the priority sectors (agriculture and healthcare) as well as in the other instruments (grants ...), specific attention will be paid to equality between men and women, and to improving the social position of women. The ICP foresaw a specific budget to implement these intentions. The 2013-2017 ICP contains a more explicit social commitment with respect to gender via the proposal of specific measures to achieve effective integration of gender via (among others) policy dialogue and defining precise gender objectives for interventions in the priority sectors. A number of procedures were also defined to follow up the integration of gender throughout the implementation and the monitoring.
- *In Bolivia*, one of the three specific objectives (concerning healthcare) from the 2008-2011 ICP contains a clear reference to gender. In addition, the cross-cutting themes explicitly refer to the need to integrate gender in all phases of the development process such that men and women can participate in all decisions that concern them. Gender is also present in the 2014-2016 ICP, not as main objective but as cross-cutting theme that is further specified among others in the 'capacity building' programme.
- *In Morocco*, the 2011-2013 ICP focused on gender with an explicit reference to the adoption of a GAD approach in the sectoral interventions in both priority sectors. It will also promote the equal participation of women in the decision-making bodies of bilateral cooperation instruments (e.g. grants, MIPS, steering committees) and the integration of local authorities responsible for gender in the different phases of the interventions.
- *In the DRC*, the 2010-2013 ICP contains several references to gender, principally as cross-cutting concern, but mentioning specific measures to better facilitate

¹⁸ The Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO) and the Belgian Commission on Women and Development (CWD) issue opinions on the sector's policy notes. However, this obligation was dropped in the Development Cooperation Act of 2013.

¹⁹ For that matter, in order to evolve to a "win-win" situation, ideally such a strategy should also include a focus on men as a separate group based on attention for "masculinity" and the form given to the male role in changing power relationships.

²⁰ This aspect was further examined in the five countries visited, and the report of this analysis was also further developed in question 3 (see section 2.3.1 below).

the inclusion of gender in (among others) policy dialogue, sectoral interventions (via specific gender objectives) and the intervention cycle. It was also stated that special attention will be paid to combating the lack of safety and impunity, in particular concerning sexual violence.

- *In Vietnam*, gender is also integrated in the ICP (2011-2015), among others as a result of a support mission by the BTC gender expert, the DGD gender advisor and two local experts. References to gender are contained in all chapters of the ICP, and it states that gender equality and the empowerment of women will be a part of all future interventions. However, gender is not specifically integrated in the discussion of the approach and priorities in the two priority sectors.

2.2.2 Coherence between GAD policy and Belgian policy on gender integration

There is a high level of coherence between GAD policy and the Belgian policy on gender integration. The policy note's twin-track approach is also used by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, which is responsible for implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Act and a first report on the government's gender policy was published in January 2014²¹. However, the difference in classification according to the G-marker (G-2, G-1 and G-0, where G-1 stands for projects where gender is an important but not the main goal of the intervention) in the gender policy note and the classification for gender budgeting in the Gender Mainstreaming Act (category 1, 2 and 3, where category 3 concerns all loans for lines/(groups) of activities that contain a gender dimension) can be confusing²².

At ministerial level, there is an inter-departmental gender mainstreaming coordination group that comprises representatives of the administrations and the policy units. Furthermore, at FPS Foreign Affairs there is a Gender Mainstreaming Task Force to facilitate the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Act, and finally there is an interdepartmental task force that coordinates the Resolution 1325 activities made up of members of FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation, Defence, Home Affairs and Justice. Communication concerning Resolution 1325 between the various departments of the ministry is still extremely difficult, despite the existence of the interdepartmental working group (interviews)²³.

Implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Act began only recently with the creation of the gender task force and the appointment of a full-time coordinator. Two staff members from each department (an actual member and a substitute) are members of this task force. It was decided during the first meeting to create a full-time position for the coordination of gender mainstreaming. In August 2013, a full-time coordinator was appointed, assisted by a part-time staff member. Together they constitute the gender mainstreaming unit, which is affiliated with the services of the Chair of the Executive Committee who has her own budget (interviews). Compared to other Belgian federal ministries, the creation of such a high-level gender mainstreaming unit with a full-time coordinator is unique (interviews). While the initiative is laudable, the extent to which it will promote the actual integration of the gender dimension in the FPS remains to be seen. Recently the task force, after a rather long process, developed an action plan with twelve communal actions for all FPS departments, and a number of specific actions per department. This action plan covers the period September 2014 – August 2016 and in the meantime has been submitted to the Executive Committee. The action plan consists of two parts. The first part sketches the context, with attention paid to the Belgian legal and regulatory context of gender mainstreaming (the Act of 2007 ...) as well as a proposal (among others of the departments and networks responsible for the equality of men and women at FPS Foreign Affairs). The second and most important part contains the actual action plan, comprising 12 common actions for all departments of the FPS and department-specific (including DGD) actions. The joint actions include integration

²¹ ... which for that matter refers to this evaluation.

²² See also 2.5.1 below.

²³ We further examine the implementation of Resolution 1325 in evaluation question 7 (see section 2.7 below).

of the gender dimension in all management plans, in the management contracts and other strategic planning instruments and activity reports, preparation of gender-specific statistics, integration of the gender dimension in public works contracts, and training and awareness raising of personnel concerning gender mainstreaming. The DGD has retained two specific objectives: (1) All departments and services of DGD understand the gender objectives, the gender marker and know the checklists for operationalisation, and (2) DGD communication gives a balanced picture of gender and combats stereotypes²⁴.

2.2.3 External coherence between GAD policy and the policy of external actors

The policy note is consistent with international obligations thanks to the twin-track approach to gender integration used, specific actions, and the shift from a WID to a GAD approach. In practice, however, the policy note *as such* has barely been implemented and the focus *de facto* is on four domains: health, and sexual and reproductive rights; the implementation of Resolution 1325 (see also question 7 under 2.7); education for girls and training for women; and the participation of women in economic development (especially in the agricultural sector), however, without clear attention paid to changes in the position of women and power relationships. This means that in practice there has been a stronger focus on the WID approach than on the GAD approach, and only limited attention for real gender integration with equality between men and women as the final goal.

As indicated earlier, there is a high level of coherence between the policy note and important principles of international cooperation as established in the Paris Declaration, the *Accra Agenda for Action*, the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* and the *EU Gender Action Plan*. In the policy note, in accordance with references in the AAA and the Busan Partnership, effectiveness arguments are cited as a reason for pursuing gender equality. However, these arguments are seldom used in practice, with gender equality mainly being approached as a cross-cutting theme.

In the context of the field missions, the coherence between Belgian GAD policy (or better, the way in which this policy was given form on site, i.e. without making use of the policy note) and the development policy of the partner countries (including gender policy) was examined. It was also noted in the partner countries that the bottlenecks are not located so much in the formulation of policy, but rather in its implementation. Since also the policy of the partner countries is often aligned with international developments²⁵, in four of the five countries there is high degree of policy coherence. In some cases, reference is also explicitly made to basic documents of these partner countries (e.g. to gender legislation and strategies adopted relatively recently), with respect to which it can be noted that these documents do not always set clear operational priorities, but rather offer a wide range of possibilities in which each donor can find something to their liking. However, a significant bottleneck is the discrepancy between the formal policy framework of the partner countries, which often appears to have been drawn up according to the wishes of foreign partners, and the real importance that is attached to the objectives of the formal GAD policy. Formally speaking, there is "ownership", but the translation into practice is meagre. In such a context, it is not easy to give clear form to Belgian policy. The evaluation found no examples of a strategic positioning in this area (to for example pursue GAD objectives via indirect cooperation).

However, the situation in Bolivia is an exception. The Belgian GAD policy is not consistent with the policy of the Vice-ministry of Equal Opportunity that is strongly focused on the problem of violence and was not taken over by Belgium in its policy choices. However, the policy of this ministry and even gender as such are not integrated in the national development plan. This situation is explained by the national debate on gender and

²⁴ Plan d'action *Gender Mainstreaming* du SPF Affaires étrangères, Commerce extérieur et Coopération au développement (SPF AE), September 2014/Août 2016, p. 30-31.

²⁵ However, it was noted that the GAD policy of the partner countries was not always adequately integrated in the basic documents (such as PRSPs) for the country's development; this, for example, was the case in Bolivia. Moreover, the partner countries often have endorsed and ratified all international conventions on women's rights and equality between women and men.

gender strategies that is taking place in multicultural Bolivia, in which significant local opposition exists to the use of an approach to gender (imported from the West)²⁶. Seen from this perspective, the lack of a gender strategy in the ICP documents is justifiable.

Finally, the field missions also examined how Belgian GAD policy compares with that of other donors in the partner country. Here it was established that policy coherence is not really at issue. Other donors, like Belgium, are committed to a greater or lesser extent to gender integration, in their own projects and programmes as well as in supporting (or influencing) the partner country, in order to better integrate gender at macro and meso level; this is not always easy, for example when little real political will exists for gender integration (DRC) or political developments complicate gender efforts (Morocco). The principal challenge concerns *the coordination* of donor efforts with respect to the partner country, which frequently is not easy due to the weakness of the ministry responsible for gender (e.g. in Benin and DRC). Insofar as Belgium actually has joined the gender bandwagon (which is not the case in all countries²⁷), there is a concern that its efforts are coordinated with those of other donors. In DRC, Benin, Morocco and Bolivia, Belgium for example is a member of the thematic gender working group, and in DRC, it coordinates one of the three thematic subgroups. The results of the benchmarking, in which contacts were made with donors with a pronounced gender policy, teach us that this does not always imply that these donors play a prominent role in processes of gender integration in the country. Much in this context depends on the relative importance of the programme/presence of the donor in the country. Furthermore, it appears that a strong gender policy on the part of the donor in question especially influences the policy choices and strategy of this donor in the affected country.

2.2.4 Coherence of the gender integration policy with the needs and interests of the women in partner countries and with the obstacles they encounter in obtaining greater gender equality and empowerment

Coherence in this area is mainly studied at the level of the project and programme proposals of the 50 interventions. The analysis suggests extremely diverse levels of gender integration in the proposals, with a weak overall score (cfr the average score of 2.35, which is closer to 'average' than to 'fair'). With the exception of the studied university and BIO interventions, most proposals paid at least some attention to the specific needs and interests of men and women (often as part of a global problem analysis that examines the situation at the level of 'the poor' or 'families', without differentiating between women and men), but paid much less attention to the specific obstacles encountered by women when trying to achieve greater gender equality and empowerment. It is also important to note that if the specific needs and interests of women are analysed, more a WID than a GAD approach is used, with as starting point the traditional division of roles between women and men in society. The needs and interests of women are then mainly examined based on the concern for adequately meeting the (often significant) practical needs (for example related to reproductive health), but without aiming for a transformation (or even only an improvement) in the existing division of roles and gender relationships. With the exception of a few G2 interventions, the strategic needs and interests of women generally are only addressed via actions that aim to achieve greater participation of women (e.g. in local decision-making bodies). Several NGO interventions (e.g. in Vietnam, Morocco and the Palestinian territories) are a positive exception to this, and their analyses of the needs and interests of women are explicitly placed in a gender transformation framework.

The evaluation also examined the extent to which the needs and interests of women were considered in the choice of partner organisation. This is seldom the case, and it needs to be said here that in many cases the partnership is with a 'not to be ignored' partner organisation (for example in primary education or healthcare), and that among

²⁶ In recent years, the (political) narrative in Bolivia on decolonisation calls into question a number of Western concepts such as gender. Since the aim is to restore traditional Andes culture, equality between women and men is not spoken of, but rather 'complementarity' between women and men, which in practice comes down to a continuation of the traditional relationships and inequality before the law.

²⁷ See also section 2.3.1 below.

Belgian actors, only NGOs (and possibly BIO) have a relatively high degree of freedom in this area.

Finally, we find it important to mention that intervention proposals still pay an excessive amount of attention to the *problems* of local communities, without paying much attention to *their unique (often different for women and men) resources and knowledge* that could be deployed. On reflection it appears that in projects and programmes, also the degree of attention paid to the needs and interests of women and the obstacles they encounter coincide strongly with the extent that a gender policy is present in the Belgian organisations that are (co-) responsible for implementation, with the quality of this policy, and especially with the manner in which it became a part of the organisation's structure and practice.

2.2.5 Brief conclusion

The question whether Belgian international cooperation has coherently integrated gender must be answered in a nuanced way. In this, it is important to distinguish between formal policy (as formulated in policy documents) and the actual implementation and application of this policy. Internal coherence between GAD policy and other policies related to such cooperation appears to be formally present, but with only weak extension to the level of activity. In many cases, gender is still incorrectly treated in policy notes, resulting in some sector and thematic policy notes using a WID approach rather than a GAD approach. This finding, and the fact that the policy note does not play a role in the sector strategy, are important obstacles to coherent operational integration of gender in cooperation.

Furthermore, there is a high level of coherence between GAD policy and global Belgian policy on gender integration, but here again a delay in implementing Belgian policy (in particular the federal gender mainstreaming act that dates from only 2007) implies among others that good formal coherence does not necessarily result in change.

At international level, Belgian GAD policy formally corresponds well with international commitments and practice, but the weak implementation of the gender policy note as such implies that in reality, there has been a strong focus on WID at the expense of gender integration. A similar picture emerges in the five countries visited, where the challenge is not so much at the level of policy, but rather in the translation of this policy into practice; this finding agrees with developments elsewhere, regarding which reference is made to the difficulties in adequately operationalising in particular the notion 'gender mainstreaming'. At macro level, there is also an important challenge in setting up good and effective donor coordination – preferably guided by the partner country – to influence the country's policy.

Concerning the interventions examined, it – again – was noted that the needs, interests and obstacles of women were mostly analysed from a gender-neutral perspective, i.e. that in the best case, a separate analysis was made of the needs of men and women; often, however, it is about "the population". Only in a few cases were analyses explicitly made that integrate gender and as such could be the basis for activities that influence gender relations.

The picture sketched above, and in particular the discrepancy between formal policy and implementation in reality, invites further reflection. Gaps in the desired approach to developing policy were certainly an important cause; these gaps are identified and discussed in detail below. However, at the root lies a confusion of concepts (or should we say a dilution of concepts?) on gender and gender integration, which can clearly be felt in policy documents and that no doubt influences policy implementation. They view 'gender mainstreaming' primarily as the integration of a gender perspective, which translates itself among others into attention for gender as a 'cross-cutting' theme. This approach contains the risk that 'gender mainstreaming' is seen more as a goal in itself and that gender equality, as the goal of gender mainstreaming, is lost from view. Realising this goal of course requires a political commitment to reducing inequality and placing gender at the centre of development interventions. We do not find this commitment reflected in most Belgian policy documents, nor in those of a significant number of other donors.

2.3 Evaluation question 3:

To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular) integrated gender in the DGD and at all levels of the cooperation (and among others, implemented the action plan of the policy note “Equal rights and opportunities between women and men”)?

This rather broad question assesses the degree and the results of the integration of gender in Belgian cooperation. Given the quite specific characteristics of the different cooperation channels, this question can only be adequately answered by including sufficient distinctions in the analysis, even if certain patterns are found in each channel in the same way. For this reason, the following distinctions are used below:

- *First, we examine how Belgian cooperation has integrated gender at policy level in its cooperation with the partner countries (in particular those visited for the evaluation);*
- *Then how gender was integrated in the projects and programmes:*
 - *of bilateral cooperation (including sector-budget support)*
 - *of cooperation with international organisations*
 - *of indirect cooperation (via NGOs, universities ...)*
- *A final and more specific part of this question covers the extent to which Belgian cooperation is capable of assessing the progress made with respect to gender integration with the help of the Gender Policy Marker (GPM).*

Where relevant, the analysis will refer to the Policy Note.

2.3.1 Support of gender integration at policy level in the partner countries

In accordance with the stipulation in the International Cooperation Act (1999), for the cooperation a so-called Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) is drawn up with each partner country, which takes into account the development strategy and policy priorities of the partner country, as established in the PRSP or similar document. The instructions (2009) for the preparation of an ICP pay attention to the integration of gender, and as such are an important potential lever in achieving effective integration of gender in the ICP. The DGD and BTC gender experts worked together intensively to integrate a gender dimension in the ICP instructions (interviews). These instructions state that cross-cutting themes (gender, environment, rights of the child) must be considered in each phase of the ICP and must be integrated in the priority sectors. Based on these ICP instructions, the O* Platform ‘Aid Effectiveness’ developed methods and instruments for improved integration, with particular attention paid to the use of specific methods to promote gender in policy and programmes (Holvoet and Inberg, 2009) and these were applied in the DRC (desk and field study, focus on agriculture) (Holvoet and Inberg, 2010a) and Rwanda (desk study, focus on health, energy and forestry) (Holvoet and Inberg, 2010b). In practice, however, this operationalisation of the ICP instructions has not been used until now. An informal group that was established to monitor the integration of gender in the ICPs met only once (interviews).

In 2012, the BTC examined the integration of gender in all ICPs established since 2009. Since then, all ICPs have a separate section on cross-cutting themes including gender, which translates, for example, into a reference to the rule that 50% of scholarships must be awarded to women. However, only 3 out of the 13 surveyed ICPs pay attention to the integration of gender at a *strategic* level. The new International Cooperation Act introduced nothing new here.

Drawing up a gender analysis in each partner country²⁸. The drawing up of such an analysis per partner country is included as activity in the policy note, but this is not done systematically. When done, the analysis is indeed shared with the partner country. For the five countries visited, only in Morocco and Benin was explicit attention paid to an ex ante gender analysis, while in RDC (education sector) and Rwanda (more global), an ex post analysis was conducted²⁹. In Morocco, in preparation for the 2010-2013 ICP, a gender workshop was held with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. Here the focus was on the challenges related to gender equality in the priority sectors of the cooperation, not on gender analysis as such. However, the results of the preparatory workshop were not followed up since according to BTC, it was not realistic to follow up the formulated indicators (lack of baseline and of involvement by the Ministry of Economy and Finance). In Benin, the preparatory documents for the most recent ICP (2013-2017) paid rather superficial attention in their analysis of the implementation of the previous ICP to the difficulties related to integrating gender. The policy note drawn up by the BTC (based on the strategic orientations in the 2013-2017 ICP), however, does contain a gender-sensitive context analysis.

Monitoring gender integration in country policy notes. The instructions (2009) for the preparation of an ICP imply that this item was given attention since then, at least for a time. Thus for example, the gender experts at DGD and BTC worked together closely on integrating gender during the preparation of the ICPs and the joint committee (2009) and specific initiatives such as the integration of gender in the ICPs of the DRC and Vietnam. At present, however, there is little cooperation among the BTC and DGD gender experts on the integration of gender in the ICPs³⁰. However, the BTC gender expert has independently continued her efforts at integrating gender in the ICPs. As a result, in the number of countries missions have been undertaken to integrate gender: in addition to the countries mentioned above, these are Morocco, Senegal, the Palestinian territories and Rwanda. For such initiatives and especially for their effectiveness over time, the BTC gender expert depends on the goodwill of the local BTC head and on the local personnel available for the follow-up.

*The O*Platform 'Aid Effectiveness', after such a request from the DGD gender expert at that moment, developed methods and instruments for improved gender integration based on the ICP instructions. In a number of cases, this has resulted in improved integration of gender in the ICP document. This, however, does not automatically imply that gender de facto is better integrated at policy level and in its implementation. There are many explanations for this: the (too) late intervention of the gender experts in the ICP formulation process (this was the case for example in Vietnam), the (sometimes) – de facto – limited binding force of the ICP as reference document (for the Belgian and the local partners), in particular concerning cross-cutting themes, and especially the difficult translation of intentions into actual practice.*

Gender as focus in the policy dialogue with the partner country. The placing of gender on the agenda of the political dialogue with partner countries is one of the activities included in the policy note's action plan. For the rest, the policy note Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR, 2008) indicates that partner countries should be encouraged throughout the policy dialogue to integrate SRHR in their PRSPs and sectoral policy plans. On the other hand, there are no specific guidelines for the way in which this dialogue must be conducted, whereby much if not all is left to personal skills and initiative, making the (policy) attention for gender de facto person-dependent. The BTC is attempting to involve the gender machinery of the partner countries (ministry responsible for gender as well as gender focal points in the sector ministries) in the dialogue, thereby strengthening it. This is not always easy since the gender contact points frequently do not have the needed competencies and authority, nor sufficient resources to comprehensively engage in gender mainstreaming. Local gender leaders

²⁸ Concerning this part, only the situation in the five countries included in the field visits were examined.

²⁹ However, the situation is different with a number of indirect actors; see section 2.3.4 below.

³⁰ However, there are several examples of ad hoc cooperation between these leaders and, for example, specialist organisations such as MSLF or a joint initiative of several Belgian actors (such as recently in the DRC where BTC, the Attachés and VVOB worked together on gender).

are also seldom included in the political dialogue between Belgium and the partner country. Partner ministries seem primarily interested in “technical” support. While gender is “integrated”³¹ in the ICPs of the five countries visited, in the end, there is little policy dialogue in the full sense of the word. If the gender issue is raised, this seldom has concrete consequences, partly because there is little enthusiasm for it in the partner country (e.g. in the DRC and Bolivia). Only in the countries where an attaché is specifically charged with gender (DRC, Morocco) can we speak of concrete implementation of policy intentions, but not necessarily in the area of policy dialogue. However, in the DRC it tends to concern dialogue in specific gender working groups consisting mostly of only gender actors (national and donor). For the rest, gender is raised in a number of sectoral working groups that Belgium leads (the agriculture working group in Benin for example).

The weak performance of Belgium with respect to the integration of gender in the policy dialogue, which is also related to an unclear division of tasks – at least concerning the facts – between DGD and BTC, contrasts strongly with the results of our survey in which 89% of the respondents found it very important or important that gender is a part of the policy dialogue with the partners in the South. More specifically, this even applies to 91.2% of the 34 DGD respondents and to 93.7% of the 32 BTC respondents.

Importance of gender in the choice of the priority sectors for Belgian cooperation.

Especially historical, institutional and organisational considerations carry weight in the choice of the priority intervention domains in the ICPs. A choice is made for example to remain in a sector for at least three consecutive ICPs, to limit the number of priority sectors, and/or to allow alignment with the issues of the partner country and the choices of other donors³². Hence, gender does not play a role in determining the priority sectors. In the best case, an analysis is made of the needs and opportunities concerning gender equality *after* the choice of the priority domains has been made or confirmed, and this gender analysis can then contribute to determining intra-sectoral choices.

Integration of gender in the priority sectors. The integration of gender in the priority sectors is weak with respect to content, in the sense that gender is poorly integrated in the sector analyses (insofar as these were implemented). If attention is paid to gender in these sectors, it primarily concerns the mainstreaming of gender, not specific actions (Morocco is an exception here). On the other hand, a number of ICPs foresee clear commitments, for example, to guarantee that gender is actually addressed in the identification and formulation, implementation and M&E, that gender-related objectives are formulated in interventions, that gender is integrated in capacity building, etc. and that these intentions are operationalised in gender-related outcomes³³.

Global follow-up and evaluation of the integration of gender in the cooperation.

Policy intentions concerning the integration of gender in cooperation in fact were not followed up, and their realisation was not (externally) evaluated. There are several explanations for this, the first of which is the lack of a tradition and practice in Belgian cooperation in the area of the monitoring and evaluating country policies. The division of tasks between DGD (in this case the cooperation section at the embassy) and BTC, with the former not charged with the implementation, creates an additional difficulty. In several countries there is also resistance to systematically placing gender on the agenda, for various reasons (not a priority, cultural and political sensitivity ...).

At the supranational level, the most recent evaluations of the external evaluation office refer multiple times to gender in their analysis, but gender is treated minimally in the

³¹ ... in the sense that gender is included as cross-cutting theme and, in a number of cases, as special focal points and action items in the priority sectors. See also our discussion of the basic GAD concepts in section 1.3 and the discussion of internal coherence between GAD policy and the ICPs in section 2.1.1.

³² The new International Cooperation Act stipulates among others that when choosing sectors, account must be taken of the priorities of the partner country and that this choice is adapted to the partner country and other donors. In addition, a maximum of three sectors may be chosen, and the bilateral cooperation will be mainly limited to the following priority sectors: healthcare (including reproductive health and attention for HIV/AIDS as cross-cutting theme, training and education, agriculture and food security, and basic infrastructure.

³³ The field visits were too short to investigate the extent to which these intentions were made concrete.

conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation of the DGD result report (2012)³⁴ is completely gender blind.

Coordination of gender efforts with other actors. In accordance with the policy note, Belgium (in this case mainly the personnel of the cooperation section at the embassies) places a priority on coordinating its gender efforts with those of other actors (government of the partner country, other donors, civil society). This concern for coordination and alignment is a global characteristic of Belgian cooperation and applies not only to gender. In the five countries visited, there are gender coordination forums active in which Belgium participates; however, the influence exerted by these forums differs strongly from country to country and in time, and the same can be said concerning the role of Belgium in these forums. More so than formal policy and clear choices, the intensity of Belgian participation in the activities of these forums depends on available personnel and on the personal interest and knowledge of the parties concerned. In Vietnam, for example, Belgium was forced to cut back its participation in a gender working group due to a reduction in personnel.

Summary and assessment. *Attention for gender integration in the instructions (2009) for the preparation of an ICP appear to have temporarily acted as a lever for gender integration. Since then, all ICPs have a separate section that focuses on cross-cutting themes, including gender. However, the question remains whether this can be called progress. After all, there are great risks associated with treating gender as a cross-cutting theme: with this approach, gender equality and empowerment do not belong to the primary goals of the cooperation. Moreover, treating gender as cross-cutting opens the door to a ritual treatment of the theme. It is therefore not surprising that attention for gender is not as strongly underpinned (no or weak global and sectoral analyses, little or no specific resources, no clear guidelines on integrating gender in the policy dialogue, only seldom are there gender objectives). Furthermore, cooperation between those responsible for gender at DGD and BTC, which initially was very smooth, presently is less than optimal. The BTC gender specialist is continuing her efforts at extending the integration of gender to the operational level. The lack of political will and the resulting lack of clear instruments and clear procedures to transform intentions into policy and operational practice imply, among others, that gender does not play a role in the choice of the priority sectors, its development in sector documents is weak with respect to substance, and the intentions as formulated in the ICP are not actually being followed up, evaluated and corrected. This weakness in practice contrasts with the results of the survey that indicated significant support at both DGD and BTC for integrating gender in the policy dialogue. In conclusion, we can say that the seeds of the process of so-called 'policy evaporation' were planted already in the initial steps of the cooperation cycle.*

³⁴ Evaluation of the results reporting of the Directorate-General Development Cooperation, (DGD), Special Development Cooperation Evaluation Unit; http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/binaries/evaluatie_resultatenrapportage_dgd_eindrapport_nl_tcm313-211446.pdf

2.3.2 Integration of gender in the bilateral cooperation programmes (including sector budget support)

A total of 18 bilateral interventions were analysed (5 of which only via a document study). In assessing the integration of gender in the project and programme cycle, use was made of the LEADS³⁵ scale commonly used in analysing mainstreaming processes. The table below gives an overview of the average scores for the bilateral projects:

Table3: Level of integration of gender in the bilateral cooperation programmes

	Score ³⁶	N
Integration of gender in identification and formulation	1.83	18
Quality of gender analysis in the programme proposals	1.83	18
Presence of gender in the logical framework	1.94	17
Importance of gender in assessing programme proposal	1.64	11
Integration of gender in the implementation	2.22	18
Integration of gender in reporting and follow-up	1.89	18
Integration of gender in evaluation	1.75	16
Global score ³⁷	1.89	18

The table above indicates that gender usually is weakly integrated in bilateral cooperation. The average score is below 2 (level of 'efforts'). On the other hand, it is important to mention that recently started projects generally score better than older projects (see below).

Integration of gender in the project and programme proposals. This section treats several elements: the extent to which the proposals contain a gender analysis, the needs and interests of women were analysed, and gender was actually integrated in the identification and formulation phases.

- *Presence of a gender analysis and an analysis of the needs and interests of women.* A differentiated analysis per gender for the direct bilateral cooperation projects and programmes is foreseen as activity in the policy note's action plan. The attention and time available to make a gender analysis are often limited, which prevents a thorough integration of the gender dimension in projects and programmes (see also DGD analysis, use of G marker). On the other hand, much too little use is made of existing analyses (e.g. those made at the initiative of other donors). For that matter, the shortage of time and resources for (thorough) project and programme preparation is a much-heard complaint in bilateral as well as indirect cooperation. On the other hand, there are examples of a good gender analysis (e.g. in Morocco), which implies that 'insufficient time and resources' is only a part of the explanation, and actually says that the priorities lie elsewhere. A lack of expertise certainly also plays a role. In a number of cases for example, the various roles of men and women were well described as part of a global (poverty) analysis, but the analysis remains at that level and for example, does not investigate which mechanisms create and maintain unjust gender relations and how these can change. In several cases, the fact that one is able to build on past cooperation and experiences is a significant advantage. This does not necessarily result in a strongly developed gender analysis, but does provide a good assessment of the challenges and possibilities with respect to gender integration. In addition, no analysis is made

³⁵ The five points on the LEADS scale stand for little action, efforts, action taken, developed, sustainable.

³⁶ The averages presented below are expressed using a five-point scale, with 1 the minimum score and five the maximum. Hence, these scores cannot be compared with those mentioned elsewhere in the report, where a four-point scale is used in each case. In several cases (in particular projects included in the document study), projects could not be scored, mainly because the necessary information was lacking.

³⁷ The global score is not the average of the seven scores; certain indicators (i.e. scores) carried more weight in determining the global scores. Thus the relatively greatest importance was attached to the integration of gender in the implementation.

in a number of programmes, but it was stated that this will be done at the start of the programme. We were not always able to verify whether this truly was the case. Little consideration is taken of gender in sectoral budget support; the focus lies on more technical aspects, such as Public Finance Management (PFM), and is based on the incorrect assumption that no gender aspects are present in PFM³⁸. In exceptional cases, e.g. in the health sector in Rwanda where initiatives on gender budgeting are underway, attempts are being made to make a link with these initiatives. The SEQAP programme (sectoral budget support in the education sector in Vietnam) places sufficient focus on a social analysis of the access by the underprivileged to education, but in this, gender is not retained as specific focus, in contrast to the situation among ethnic minorities³⁹. The PMD-C programme in Bolivia (combating undernourishment) has a similar approach, with attention paid to the 'traditional' mother-child relation.

- *Integration of gender in the identification and formulation phases.* The policy note refers to the importance of the identification phase for the integration of gender in interventions, an integration that is strongly dependent among others on the gender competence presence in the identification team. Integration of gender in the identification phase does not guarantee the integration of gender in the formulation (and following phases); hence after integration of gender in the identification phase, continued attention is needed to ensure this integration throughout the full intervention cycle. Integration of gender in the identification and formulation phases is strongly dependent on those concerned (their specific sensitivity to and training in gender issues) and the country's context (see DGD analysis, use of G marker), on the choice of partner organisations and on the time and resources available for identification and formulation. Reference terms for formulation missions insufficiently integrate the gender dimension, and when gender is integrated, it is seldom specific; only general points of attention were mentioned.

Box 1: Food security: a shared responsibility of women and men.

A workshop during the evaluation of the BTC project "Malnutrition zero" brought to light the importance of giving the responsibility for food security not only to women. The workshop exposed the shortcomings of an approach based only on the reproductive role of women and their corresponding responsibility for feeding their families. This approach was rooted in a formulation that was weak with respect to gender.

The quality of the integration of gender in the programme and project proposals is no doubt related to the quality of the gender analysis. When good analyses are made, these usually also translate into gender-specific activities, results and indicators; elsewhere, gender integration is limited mostly to a few global statements (in the 'cross-cutting themes' chapter) with limited operational value and not extended to the actual project approach, objectives and indicators. Finally, it is not standard practice to involve gender experts in the formulation or to integrate specific research on gender in the formulation process. Recently the BTC proposed a new procedure to systematically integrate the gender dimension in the formulation phase; experience was gained on this recently in the DRC, but it is still too early to draw conclusions.

The screening of the bilateral projects suggests that only 3 out of 18 interventions obtain a satisfactory or good score (see box). These weak results again contrast with how the need to integrate gender is viewed. Of the 66 DGD and BTC survey respondents, 66.7% (67.6% of the 34 DGD respondents; 65.6% of the 32 BTC respondents) explicitly believe that gender should be addressed during the identification and formulation phases of projects/programmes. On the other hand, a lower share of the respondents (47.0%) believe that this is done in a satisfactory or very satisfactory way (41.2% of the DGD respondents; 53.1% of the BTC respondents). These latter (quite high) figures in any case suggest that a significant minority of the respondents do not want to set the bar too high concerning the integration of gender.

³⁸ See for example Issue Brief 6 of the DAC Network on Gender Equality that specifically examines the integration of gender dimensions in PFM reforms.

³⁹ ... because Vietnam has been successful in ensuring the general access of girls and boys to primary education.

Finally, we wish to state that the format presently used for the formulation and preparation of the Technical and Financial File (TFF) places all cross-cutting themes in one special chapter, at the end of the dossier. Placing them at the end is in accordance with the traditional approach: the 'technical' aspects of a project are first formulated, then reflection takes place on integrating the cross-cutting themes, including gender. This is not conducive to integration (in the full sense) of gender in the formulation process. It would seem to be more appropriate to include the chapter on gender not only at the beginning of the format (with an indication of where in the document process gender-specific elements will be developed), but also to organise the formulation process in such a way that gender is treated in parallel and in interaction with the more technical aspects.

Integration of gender in assessing the project proposals.

Before being formally submitted for assessment, the BTC has all technical and financial files screened for gender by the gender expert or a national or international gender expert, via participation in the formulation mission or written input. The involvement of the DGD gender unit is ad hoc and subject to the goodwill of the file manager; in any case, this intervention comes too late to still have a significant influence (in many cases, this also applies to the intervention by the BTC expert).

The official reports of the meetings of the quality control committee that assesses the TFFs (Technical and Financial Files) very seldom refer to gender integration. While these reports do not always exhaustively reflect the contents of the discussion, it indeed appears that gender is seldom treated in these meetings. To our knowledge, it has never happened that a TFF was rejected due to insufficient integration of the gender dimension.

Integration of gender in the implementation of projects and programmes. The analysis shows that the implementation of gender integration scores slightly higher than the preliminary phase: 'efforts' are undertaken, but these are far from (real) 'action taken'. Globally, one might expect a correlation between the quality of gender integration in the preparation and that in the implementation. This is indeed the case in a number of the interventions studied (e.g. Vietnam, Morocco and DRC). On the other hand, it appears that the relatively recent efforts taken by the BTC (via separate gender focal points or support to ministries, via technical support in the area of gender) are working, and in several cases were able to correct a weak starting situation; as also indicated by the experience with the CHF in the DRC, correction during the programme is quite possible (see box). This is the case in particular in Morocco and Benin, where in the latter country a positive influence was exerted based on the gender action research initiated by the Attachés (in which, for example, more MIP resources went to initiatives of women and women's groups). It is also important to mention a number of projects that make use of a traditional WID approach or demonstrate a clear focus on the participation of women (among others because they work in sub-sectors and on themes of concern to women). While gender is not (formally) integrated in these projects, the implementation can go in one of two directions: either no specific attempts are made at (e.g.) strengthening gender capacity or improving the participation of women in decision-making, or a dynamic will emerge with activities that (can) influence gender relations and finally, planned or otherwise, can contribute to greater gender equality. Even if the result is positive, it points to the missed potential to realise greater gender equality via a better integrated approach to gender. If we wish to interpret this more

Box 2: Change in the attention paid to gender in the Common Humanitarian Fund

The managers of the "Common Humanitarian Fund" (a donor fund financing humanitarian micro-projects in the DRC) originally paid limited attention to gender, until a Swiss expert began to work for the programme. She made gender an important focus that required much attention already during the project formulation phase. Thus gender became an important criterion for assessing projects that could cover a wide range of sectors.

This policy change forced organisations that wished to submit projects (largely local NGOs) to strengthen their internal gender capacities. To this end, the Fund – which itself hired a Gender Capacity Advisor – provided regular training and exchange moments in which experiences with the integration of gender in several domains were discussed. Leaders of the NGOs in question stated that the Fund had played an important role in developing their gender awareness and capacities, qualities that also proved useful in other programmes they were carrying out.

broadly, we must conclude that gender mainstreaming frequently is reduced to 'attention for women'; without specific knowledge, expertise and resources, attempts to integrate 'gender' often become mired in a WID approach⁴⁰.

Of the 66 DGD and BTC survey respondents, 59.1% (61.8% at DGD, 56.3% at BTC) explicitly find that gender should be treated throughout the implementation and follow-up of projects and programmes. On the other hand, only a minority (26.3%; 23.5% at DGD and 31.2% at BTC) of respondents find that this occurs in a satisfactory or very satisfactory way. When we examine the practice, 22.7% of the DGD and BTC respondents (29.4% and 11.8% respectively) integrate gender fully during the implementation and follow-up of projects/programmes, and 16.7% (or 15.6% and 21.9%) seldom do this. Thus seen globally, integration of gender during implementation scores lower than during preparation (identification and formulation), which for that matter also applies to indirect cooperation⁴¹. On the other hand, our analysis indicates that in reality, the opposite takes place.

Integration of gender in reporting, follow-up and evaluation of projects and programmes. Gender-sensitive reporting is included as activity in the BTC gender strategy. The BTC M&E system that presently is being revised foresees the integration of gender in the baseline reports, annual reports, interim and final reviews, using a checklist with 16 items, including gender, with gender included in the standard reference terms.

- In many cases, *reporting* on gender appears to be an obligatory component because it happens to be included in the format (in the section cross-cutting themes). Thus successive annual reports frequently contain exactly the same text... However, as aspects of gender are included in the project/programme proposals (e.g. via gender-specific indicators, activities or results), increased attention is almost automatically paid to gender in the reporting since they use the proposals (and for example the included logical frameworks) as reference. BTC is presently revising its M&E system to integrate gender in a more systematic way. Nevertheless, it appears that the focus here is primarily on monitoring the *technical* project results, and the expectation is that more substantial reporting on gender will only take place if there indeed is something to be said on the matter. 87.9% of the DGD and BTC respondents (88.2% and 87.5% respectively) find it (very) important that the results of gender integration are included in the project/programme reporting. Finally, the report results seldom lead to changes in the way in which gender is or is not implemented in practice, in how practice on the ground can be improved, on how to deal with resistance, and with the cultural and religious aspects of the reality ...
- *Evaluations* of projects and programmes place varying degrees of attention on gender. In accordance with BTC policy, the reference terms for evaluations include a focus on gender. In some cases this is done seriously and relevant questions are asked, in other cases the questioning remains extremely general. However, when there are 'good' questions, they are not always well elaborated in the evaluation reports; conversely, there are reports with a (relatively) good gender analysis without these having been initiated by good questions in the reference terms. Apparently here again personal interest and motivation (of the team of evaluators in this specific case) play a role. No follow-up is given to the way in which gender is included in the evaluation, probably among others because the reference terms often contain an extremely large number of questions such that it is impossible to answer them all properly in the typically short period available to the evaluators. And because priority is not given to gender aspects within the bigger picture. Finally, it is important to mention that 'gender-motivated' evaluators only seldom can reach in-depth conclusions concerning gender equality and the empowerment of women, because there are no gender-specific

⁴⁰ This observation for that matter applies not only to Belgium, as can be seen in an evaluation of the African Development Bank (African Development Bank, (2012) *Mainstreaming Gender Equality: A road to Results or a Road to nowhere?*; Synthesis Report, ADB Group, Operations Evaluation Department, Tunisia.

⁴¹ The evaluation of the quality of the BTC services in 2011 showed that only in 3 of the 32 analysed interventions were specific attempts made to integrate gender.

indicators at outcome level or, if they do exist, no information has been gathered on this during the project. This brings us to an important conclusion: for several reasons, evaluations (and by extension result oriented reporting) do not result in (empirically grounded) indications on the impact of projects on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Nevertheless, of the DGD and BTC survey respondents, 93.9% (88.2% at DGD, all at BTC) find it explicitly or significantly important that gender is addressed during the evaluation of projects/programmes. On the other hand, only 56.1% (52.9% at DGD, 59.4% at BTC) believe this happens sufficiently, while only 15.2% of DGD and BTC respondents (17.6% at DGD, 5.9% at BTC) fully integrate gender during the evaluation of projects/programmes, and 9.1% seldom do.

Summary and assessment. *Gender is present in all phases of Belgian bilateral cooperation, but not to the extent that there is real gender integration and that one could expect that this integration would systematically contribute to improving the position of women and to greater quality. Policy texts pay attention to gender but are insufficiently translated into clear instruments, procedures, key activities (such as training and coaching) in order gradually to become embedded at all levels and become part of the organisational structure. Political will and leadership within DGD carry no weight in guaranteeing implementation of the policy. And where instruments and procedures have been developed, mechanisms are lacking to monitor their use. The (reductive) approach to gender as cross-cutting theme plays a role here, because it does not provide sufficient impetus to extend gender to the level of activities and goals. Because of this, gender, despite interesting but frequently personal initiatives here and there (in particular with respect to implementation), does not become effectively anchored and there is a dilution (evaporation) of policy intentions throughout all phases. An important negative consequence of this situation is that little data is available (via follow-up and reporting) concerning the actual effects of the interventions on improving the position and empowerment of women and increasing gender equality.*

2.3.3 Integration of gender in the cooperation with international organisations⁴²

A total of 7 multilateral interventions were analysed (5 of which only via a document study). The table below gives an overview of the average scores for these projects:

Table4: Level of integration of gender in the multilateral cooperation programmes

	Score	N
Integration of gender in identification and formulation	2.14	7
Quality of gender analysis in the programme proposals	1.40	5
Presence of gender in the logical framework	1.57	7
Importance of gender in assessing programme proposal	2.00	4
Integration of gender in the implementation	2.29	7
Integration of gender in reporting and follow-up	1.71	7
Integration of gender in evaluation	1.60	5
Global score	2.00	7

The table above shows that gender usually is weakly integrated in multilateral cooperation, although we must avoid excessive generalisations given the limited number of programmes included in the analysis. The average score is just above 2 (level of 'efforts').

⁴² Cooperation programmes with international organisations were visited only in the DRC; however, there were five such programmes in the document study. Their relative over-representation in the document study has to do with the fact that a choice was made to include several programmes with a large budget in this part of the evaluation.

The multilateral cooperation policy document (2011) states that Belgium will ensure that the promotion of equality of men and women, and the empowerment of women are included in the objectives of the multilateral organisations that fund it, and that the gender dimension is incorporated in a cross-cutting way in their policy measures, development strategies and actions. According to the gender commentary on the 2010-2013 budgets, this indeed is taking place, but what is not mentioned is how, and with what results... The placement of gender on the agenda of the annual bilateral meetings with the international partner organisations is also included as activity in the policy note's action plan. According to the gender commentary on the 2011-2013 budgets, this is indeed taking place (can be confirmed for the DRC in one case), but what is not mentioned is how, and with what results. The – too anecdotal – information that the team received was unable to confirm the above results. The relationship between DGD staff in Belgium and the multilateral projects examined is usually weak; it frequently concerns only administrative follow-up from a great distance, without much knowledge of the operational side. The staff members involved state that they do not monitor the integration of gender, but here subscribe to the policy of the organisation in question, in which they assume that interventions are assessed *ex ante* concerning their gender sensitivity. Furthermore, many of these programmes are partnerships between a large number of organisations, in which it is not always easy, and also not advisable, to 'go it alone'. In addition, reference is made to the delegations at the embassy that, in a number of cases, would be following up the execution of these projects. Finally, it is clear that staff reductions have a negative impact, forcing personnel to set priorities at all levels; seldom is gender one of these priorities.

Both important multilateral programmes being supported in the DRC have integrated gender well, but this is not due to the efforts of the Belgian Cooperation. The first programme concerns the 'Common Humanitarian Fund' (CHF) which supports humanitarian actions in several sectors. Thanks to the consistent efforts of a committed staff member, it presently has integrated gender in the full cycle. A gender capacity advisor plays an important supporting role in this process. In particular, the strict requirements with respect to integration of gender in the project proposals have had a significant effect among the actors (NGOs, but also UN organisations) that submit projects for funding. However, the CHF not only places demands, it also offers training possibilities related to gender (formal training but also exchange moments where joint instruments are developed or refined) to strengthen the capacities of the interested organisations. The second programme (*Prévention et Lutte contre les Violences Sexuelles LVS*) is not satisfied with supporting women in their practical needs. It also attempts, in an extremely difficult context, to contribute to greater gender equality. Belgium (via 'Brussels' and the embassy) has made a significant and highly appreciated contribution to this programme, but not in the area of gender. Finally, it is important to note that despite the good integration of gender in the two programmes, both have weak scores in the area of following up and evaluating gender effects.

Concerning the projects included in the document study, a FIDA programme in Niger (PPILDA) scores well with respect to gender integration in the project cycle, but this is not the case for a project carried out by UNICEF in Peru (ASI), and the same can be said for an FAO programme in Niger. Two multi-country programmes, including the '*Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria*' (GF) also have weak scores. Belgium has never intervened in this area. There are a number of reasons for this (cfr. above); however, the very weak scores obtained by the programmes do raise the question whether Belgium should not try to more actively intervene, and if so, what is the best way to do this. Insofar as these programmes can be taken as a reference, one in any case may not simply assume that multilateral programmes are properly assessed *ex ante* concerning their gender sensitivity.

2.3.4 Integration of gender in the cooperation with indirect actors

Under the heading 'indirect actors', this section brings together a wide range of organisations and forms of cooperation: northern NGOs but also local NGOs that are financed directly, trade unions, the VVOB and APEFE, university cooperation, North-

South cooperation between municipalities, and finally BIO⁴³. A total of 25 projects and programmes of indirect actors were examined. The table below gives an overview of the average scores for these projects:

Table5: Level of integration of gender in the indirect cooperation programmes

	Score	N
Integration of gender in identification and formulation	2.43	23
Quality of gender analysis in the programme proposals	2.17	23
Presence of gender in the logical framework	2.26	23
Importance of gender in assessing programme proposal	1.50	18
Integration of gender in the implementation	2.96	24
Integration of gender in reporting and follow-up	2.27	22
Integration of gender in evaluation	2.27	15
Global score	2.61	23

The table above indicates that gender is usually better integrated in indirect cooperation projects than in bilateral and multilateral projects, with especially NGO projects distinguishing themselves. The global score (2.61) is closer to the level of 'action taken' than of 'efforts'). As is the case for the other programmes, the score for 'implementation of gender integration' is the highest. Thus, while the indirect actors score better, in absolute terms the level of gender integration remains rather mediocre.

Integration of gender in the policy dialogue and assessment of programmes of the indirect actors. The place of gender in the political dialogue agenda with the indirect actors is included as activity in the policy note's action plan. According to the gender commentary on the 2012 and 2013 budgets, this indeed is taking place, but what is not stated is how, and with what results. Gender was included under development relevance in the assessment criteria for the NGO programmes (2011-2013). Previously (2008-2010), specific attention was paid to gender, among others concerning logical frameworks and M&E. The DGD gender expert played a role in the (admittedly fragmented) focus on gender during this period. The assessment criteria for the new programmes (2014-2016) again pay greater attention to gender: only gender and environment are retained as cross-cutting themes, which can lead to greater attention for the integration of gender by the NGOs. In particular, attention must be paid to gender in the description of the programmes (more specifically in describing the specific objectives, the interim results and the type of activities foreseen). Concerning university development cooperation, attention to cross-cutting themes is contained in the instructions, but plays no role in practice.

Contrary to the gender commentary on the budget, attention for gender in the practice of policy dialogue is presently minimal. While gender is integrated in the format that is used for assessing NGO programme proposals, the level of attention to the integration of gender is not a heavily weighted criterion when assessing the NGO programmes and the policy dialogue. Nevertheless, the inclusion of gender in the format has ensured that NGOs are inclined to pay some attention to gender. DGD staff recognises that gender receives limited treatment in the policy dialogue, but adds that there are so many issues on the table that there is no time for gender. Only in a few cases (NGO projects in Benin) were critical comments made by DGD, but these did not carry weight in the final assessment. On the other hand, a number of NGOs do actually take gender to heart, but do so based on their own vision and motivation, not because DGD insists on this. In these cases, this does not result in positive comments by DGD. On the other hand, the assessment of the BFVZ projects on gender aspects indeed has had an impact on the attention paid to and the further development of the gender approach in NGO projects.

The situation concerning trade union cooperation is similar to that of NGOs, also concerning the actual focus on gender based on their own vision. In the policy dialogue concerning university cooperation and APEFE/VVOB, little or no attention is paid to gender, and the same can be said for municipal cooperation. While there is no pressure from the government

⁴³ BIO is, formally speaking, not an indirect actor, but is treated as such in the ODA database.

to integrate gender, in the analysed trade union projects, gender is often an important focal point, and this also applies to the VVOB. Thus, VVOB has had a well-developed global and country-specific gender policy for several years now. Concerning BIO, a policy note (in support of the private sector) and a management contract exist as guiding elements, but DGD appears unable to exercise significant influence on defining and executing BIO policy. Internally, BIO uses an instrument for screening funding proposals (acquired from the German Development Bank) that includes as criterion a focus on equality between men and women; however, the application of this instrument is superficial. For that matter, 31% of the survey respondents found the policy note scarcely suited, if suited at all, to supporting the indirect actors in integrating gender in their projects/programmes, while 44% had no opinion on the matter.

Integration of gender in the programme proposals. Seen globally, with the exception of the NGOs, the level of integration of gender in programme proposals of indirect actors does not deviate from the situation in bilateral and multilateral cooperation. University cooperation, APEFE and BIO obtain weak scores, VVOB scores slightly better⁴⁴. Among the NGOs (including direct financing of local NGOs), we find examples of both weak integration and genuinely good practices such as the OSB programme in Vietnam, the Solsoc programme in Morocco and LISA (LD) in Benin. The IFSI/PGFTU trade union programme in the Palestinian territories also integrates gender well, and a good example of gender integration via a local NGO (Juzoor) also deserves mention. These projects usually have specific gender objectives and indicators (such as the degree of representation of women in leadership positions). Other projects frequently contain a focus on integrating women, e.g. as an important component in combating poverty, and women often are even the most important target group without, however, the presence of a specific gender-based approach. Several programmes continue to struggle with the challenge of converting good policy intentions into an effective approach to gender (VVOB Vietnam, MM in DRC).

Of the NGO and university DC survey respondents (N=31), 61.9% explicitly think that gender should be addressed during the identification and formulation of projects and programmes. On the other hand, only 28.6% of them fully integrate gender during these phases and 14.3% do this seldom⁴⁵.

Integration of gender in the implementation. Integration in the implementation scored better than in the preparation. On the one hand, there are projects that integrated gender well in the preliminary phase and did a good job of extending this into the implementation phase. On the other hand, there are projects in which weak performance during preparation continued in the implementation phase; this applies in particular to university DC projects. However, there is also an interesting third category of projects with weak attention to gender in the preparation, but a *de facto* presence of gender in the implementation. In these cases, in the implementation (via the project's contact with women's groups, for example) a dynamic emerges with attention not only for women but also for change in gender relationships, without being called such in the project practice and/or in the reports. A good example of this is the Tarija project in Bolivia (cooperation between municipalities), where female members of the local fire department were able to ensure equality with their male colleagues, among others by demonstrating that they have the same physical and sporting capacities. An important proviso here is that this third category usually consists of cooperation projects with women at the basis, and the resulting dynamic is rather the outcome of the initiative of the target groups than of the organisation responsible for the project. In contrast, there are projects that work with a local institutional partner (MM with the healthcare structures in DRC, VVOB with the ministry of education and training in Vietnam, PROTOS with municipalities in Benin) and in this setup experience significant challenges in the effective integration of gender in the implementation.

The APEFE, BIO and university DC projects spend no attention on gender in the implementation, but the university DC does aim to award 50% of the grants to women. Of the 21 survey respondents (NGO, university DC), 71.4% explicitly find that gender

⁴⁴ ... in relation to which it must be noted that the present situation at VVOB deviates in a positive sense from that noted in the Vietnam programme, in which especially the period through 2012 was examined (sole VVOB intervention in the sample).

⁴⁵ However, in this group of respondents there are considerable differences between NGO respondents and university DC respondents, with the NGO respondents scoring better.

should be addressed during implementation, but in only 42.9% of the cases does this actually take place in a satisfactory or very satisfactory way; only 19% of the respondents integrate gender fully, and 14.3% do so seldom or not at all.

Integration of gender in follow-up and evaluation.

As already mentioned, gender is given limited attention in the policy dialogue; as such, follow-up of gender depends entirely on *internal* incentives within the organisation in question. The degree of gender integration in the follow-up runs parallel to that in the implementation, even though the available reports do not always give a complete picture of the practice in the

Box 3: Gender evaluation VVOB Vietnam

In recent years, VVOB has undertaken much effort to integrate gender. In March 2013, an external review was carried out of the VVOB efforts to integrate gender at both organisation and programme level. It was limited in scope and focused only on the direct VVOB environment, and for example contained no survey of partners and target groups. The local VVOB gender contact actively participated in the review. The (critical) results of this exercise were then discussed in detail at a workshop, and an action plan was drawn up to monitor the results of the evaluation.

Although it was a relatively limited exercise, the results are comparatively very important and have already provided good support for the on going change process within VVOB.

field (in part because reporting on gender was not explicitly requested!). However, in a number of cases of good integration in implementation (IFSI Palestine, MSLF Peru), the reporting remains limited to the level of activity. Several organisations (BD in Bolivia, VVOB in Vietnam) are working on improved integration of gender via a global (country-wide or regional) policy that includes gender more than was done in the past; the OSB is able to rely on a strong gender policy that was developed within the international Oxfam family. Quite a few of the examined interventions were not evaluated. When evaluations were performed, gender was well integrated where one would expect such given the preceding phases. However, here the gender *effects* were not measured. In other cases, gender is insufficiently addressed; thus the meta-evaluation of the programmes of non-governmental actors (2013), based on an analysis of 66 evaluation reports, stated that 73% of the reference terms did not refer to cross-cutting themes, that there were few reports that had discussed these themes, and that, insofar as this did happen, the discussion remained superficial. No example was found of an evaluation that called into question a weak gender practice, probably because in projects and programmes where gender is weakly integrated, the evaluation task did not include a close look at gender integration. An interesting good practice is the VVOB initiative in Vietnam to have a thematic evaluation conducted on the integration of gender at programme and institutional level (see box). Of the NGO and university DC survey respondents, 81% explicitly or to a significant degree found that gender should be followed up in its programmes, and 90.4% found that the results should be included in the reporting. For evaluation, this number increases to 95.3%, with 61.9% of respondents stating that this takes place in their case in a satisfactory or very satisfactory way.

Summary. *At DGD, with the exception of the BFVZ, there are few institutional incentives to encourage indirect actors to properly integrate gender; thus, these actors were also not judged based on gender integration. Conversely, NGOs with a good gender practice also were not given positive comments. As a result, the level of gender integration depends on the initiative of the actors themselves (and possibly their local partners). In a number of cases, NGOs were able to integrate gender in an exemplary manner. In each case, this appears to be in the context of a long-term process that is supported by a gender policy and a positive culture within the organisation; gender equality and justice frequently depend closely on the mission and vision of the organisation. Good integration usually begins in the preparation phase, which then is extended into the following phases. In a few cases, however, there is effective implementation of gender integration only in the implementation phase, and this is primarily due to a dynamic coming from the base, or in some cases, to the motivation of individual staff members. The level of gender integration and the attainment of gender effects are weakly followed up and evaluated, especially because gender reporting and the integration of gender in evaluations are not required, and because the absence of good indicators at outcome level make follow-up and analysis of gender effects in evaluations difficult.*

2.3.5 The gender policy marker as instrument for assessing the level of gender integration

DGD staff members are expected to indicate a gender policy marker (GPM) for each financed intervention. In principle, proper coding of the interventions using the gender marker should allow ascertaining the extent to which gender is integrated in the cooperation, and allow comparisons to be made in time, between sectors, aid channels, and the like. The GPM information is also submitted to the DAC that draws up international comparative tables and analyses the level of gender integration. DGD defines a gender marker only during the preparation phase and takes no account of what takes place during the implementation.

The gender policy marker has three values:

- G-2: gender equality is the main objective
- G-1: gender equality is an important objective, but not the main objective
- G-0: gender equality is not an objective

The monitoring of gender integration via a uniform (across donors, channels, sectors, countries ...) instrument is certainly a good thing. However, a number of problems arise in the application that jeopardise the value of the GPM⁴⁶:

- The definition of the three values for the GPM is not unambiguous, not only with respect to Belgian cooperation, but also at international level;
- A significant part of DGD staff that must award the scores is not familiar with the GPM (see survey results below); the fact that several staff members award the scores and few instructions are given in this regard, make comparisons difficult.
- Sometimes the information in the technical and financial files is insufficient to allow definition of the correct G-marker; in addition, the beneficiaries frequently are described as a uniform group, making it difficult to determine the specific (potential) effect on men and women;
- During the period 2002-2012, a GPM is specified for only 63.9% of all interventions (67.2% of expenditures);
- A G-1 value is quickly given when women and/or girls are among the beneficiaries, or when it concerns interventions in the health or education sector;
- A G-2 value is quickly given when women are the logical target group, for example in the context of reproductive health projects;
- For some types of aid, such as budget support, it is more difficult to determine the correct value;
- There is institutional pressure not to award a 0 value, since this could damage Belgium's image.

Of the 100 survey respondents, 70% are not familiar or insufficiently familiar with the gender marker (52.9% of the 34 DGD respondents; 84.4% of the 32 BTC respondents, and this increases to 85.8% among the 21 NGO and university DC respondents, and is 53.9% for the 13 other actors). Of the 30% of respondents who were familiar with the G-marker, no one was of the opinion that the G-marker was a good instrument to assess the progress made in the area of gender integration

Despite these problems, use of the GPM data remains interesting, as we tried to prove in our interim report, among others because it makes it possible to conduct a (superficial) gender (budget) analysis. In addition, the evaluation tried to go a step further by (1) ex ante analysing the quality of the GPM score, (2) ex post investigating whether significant

⁴⁶ The problems mentioned below have been formulated based in part on an internal DGDC analysis (Van Hove, 2010). What follows is based in part on the internal DGDC analysis "Rapport d'enquête. L'intégration de la dimension Genre et l'utilisation du Gender Policy Marker dans les activités de la Direction Générale de la Coopération au Développement" [Survey Report: The Integration of the Gender Dimension and the Use of the Gender Policy Marker in the Activities of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation], Kingdom of Belgium, Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Directorate General for Cooperation Development, D0.1 Policy Support.

changes took place during the implementation that would result in a modification of the GPM. Our analysis shows that:

- the average GPM of the ODA database is 1.06 (46 interventions) versus 0.78 in the evaluators' score for the same interventions
- in only 23 of the 46 projects (50%), did the evaluators agree with the ex ante DGD score;
- in only 6 of the 50 projects (12%), did the ex post score of the evaluators deviate from their ex ante score.

From this it can be concluded that the GPM in the ODA database does not supply truly reliable information on the level of gender integration in Belgian cooperation, of course insofar as the definition for determining the GPM is applied in the same way: indeed, in practice it appears that the application of the score is sometimes difficult ('primary objective' for example can be interpreted differently) and room is also allowed for interpretation. On the other hand, it appears that the information that is available ex ante is a relatively good predictor of the level of gender integration in the implementation.

Finally, it is important to mention that the recently adopted Gender Action Plan of the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation contains an important objective that aims at ensuring that all DGD directorates and departments adequately understand the gender marker.

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

This is the most important question concerning the effects of Belgian aid on real change in the situation of women (greater gender equality, empowerment, reducing and preventing violence against women). This comprehensive question was elaborated in several parts, each of which could have been an evaluation question in itself:

- *A first part assesses the effects of the Belgian aid on strengthening gender capacities*
- *A second part examines the extent to which partner countries have improved their legal, institutional and development framework in order to make progress in gender equality and the empowerment of women*
- *A third part examines whether the process of gender integration in the different phases of the intervention cycle has resulted in equal access for women and girls to the programmes' benefits*
- *A fourth part concerns the effects of Belgian aid on gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3⁴⁷)*
- *A final part assesses the effects of Belgian aid on reducing and preventing violence against women.*

⁴⁷ MDG 3 aims to promote gender equality and empower women. The specific target of this MDG is ... to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

2.4.1 Contribution of Belgian aid to strengthening the gender capacities of the local partner organisations

It is obvious that strengthening gender capacities, whether this takes place at macro, meso or micro level, only received attention in these projects and programmes when at least some attention was paid to gender and gender integration. Projects with no gender integration component (and thus that did not contribute to strengthening gender capacities) will not be treated in the discussion below. We are talking here of 13 projects out of the total of 50⁴⁸.

When assessing 'strengthening gender capacities', three aspects in particular were examined: strengthening gender expertise, the introduction and development of adapted gender instruments, and the development of adapted gender procedures for gender integration. In practice it was found that these three aspects frequently were linked to, and also partially overlapped, one another.

Table6: Belgian aid for strengthening the gender capacities of local partner organisations

	Score	N
Contribution to the development of gender expertise	1.94	47
Contribution to the development of adapted gender instruments	1.70	47
Contribution to the development of adapted gender procedures	1.67	46
Global score	1.77	47

The global score for this assessment criterion is low, lower than for example the global score for integration of gender in the project cycle. Of course the low score is due in part to projects that pay limited attention to gender (and thus also to gender capacity building). Nevertheless, this global score suggests that the strengthening of gender capacities is given too little attention and/or inadequately takes place, also in projects that take gender seriously; it is important to keep this in mind during the more 'technical' analysis below.

Contribution to the development of gender expertise. Several of the interventions examined effectively contributed to the development of gender expertise. First and foremost, efforts to integrate gender in the intervention cycle, but also the processes of empowerment that often accompanies such efforts, unmistakably increase the gender capacities within the affected organisations and the groups with which they work. It here concerns as it were a 'creeping' process, which can be distinguished from (but preferably combined with) more targeted and formal capacity building efforts that via training result in the identification and formation of gender focal points, the organisation of exchanges, and the like.

In Morocco, the effects at the level of formal gender capacity building remain limited, despite the quite good implementation of gender integration in the execution of several projects. Only the SolSoc project scored well, mainly due to its linking of training to explicit gender integration. In the bilateral IST project, the project's theme offered

Box 4: Strengthening of gender capacities via action research in Benin.

The Belgian embassy and Louvain Développement (LD) initiated action research to which BTC and several Belgian NGOs also contributed. The study covered a longer period and comprised among others training and applications in the field; it was supported by two experts and monitored by a steering committee. The gender focal points and cadres of the partner organisations were also involved in the process. The action research resulted in the publication of the book "*Genre au quotidien*", which proposes specific instruments for applying a gender approach to food security programmes.

The study made possible the integration of gender in several programmes (of NGOs and BTC), and also strengthened the capacities of local partners and ensured wide distribution of the instruments to local organisations. On the other hand, a number of Belgian actors were unaware of the initiative, and thus an opportunity was missed to realise an even greater affect.

⁴⁸ However, the fact that gender was not integrated in an intervention, does not imply that it did not generate gender effects (see below).

considerable opportunities, but these were not sufficiently utilised. In the other projects, gender capacity building took place especially via isolated educational moments, the effects of which were not entirely clear. The BTC's new approach to gender in the framework of PROFAO is more structured and has more resources available, but since it is a quite technical project, the challenges remain extremely great. In Benin, the '*recherche action*' initiative mentioned above has resulted in important positive effects in the area of capacity building. Several good practices (LISA, and PARZS – especially the demand side of the project; embassy initiative – see box) have made a significant contribution to capacity building via several initiatives (the creation of a gender platform with focal points at the level of the affected grassroots organisations, development of a gender specific action plan, strengthening personnel at all levels including institutional partners,

In the DRC, the bilateral projects examined scored poorly on this point, but it is important to mention the relatively new BTC approach with gender capacity building via the so-called UCAG (*Unité Conjointe d'Appui à la Gestion*) that is situated at the level of the partner ministries and via the appointment of gender experts in each of the geographic zones of the bilateral cooperation; for the rest, cooperation from below with the 'Division Genre' is good. Furthermore, MM has made important efforts to develop gender capacity via training and the identification of gender focal points. Frequently, however, these efforts lack the personality, resources and expertise to effectively make progress in gender integration in an environment that is not always open to such. The best practice in DRC is the CHF that imposes relatively high demands with respect to gender on local NGOs and UN organisations that wish to see initiatives supported, but at the same time offers training in the area of gender, stimulates the identification of gender focal points and supports exchange between them.

In Bolivia, BTC has drawn up two documents on gender-integration. However, these have had limited effect. In the BD project, work sessions were held with the partners to develop strategies that critically examine male/female relationships within the 'complementary' approach that is promoted in the Andes (see also above; see also box). There has been further development of gender capacity in a number of projects and local organisations, without, however, this being attributable to the Belgian aid.

In Vietnam finally, in particular the VVOB and OSB programmes obtained strong scores. For the VVOB, its efforts in this area are part of the organisation's gender policy and its country strategy. The organisation recently developed a new strategy with the ambition to make gender integration and capacity development an important focal point within the newly chosen areas of intervention. The focus on the OSB programme is on strengthening the organisational as well as the programme aspects, in the context of which the creation of a gender core group of local trainers deserves mention; this group is expected to train local cadres on gender issues.

Among the projects of the document study, it is important to mention the MSLF programme in Peru where the development of gender expertise is an important objective, linked, however, to the substantive theme of food sovereignty. In addition, there is the IFSI programme that has developed gender expertise within the trade union umbrella organisation in Palestine and is co-anchored in a gender department.

Box 5: How to approach gender in a strong cultural context?

In Bolivia, gender must be addressed in a pluralist and intercultural context of decolonisation, in which there is strong resistance to a (Western) approach that aims at equality of men and women. In the Andes culture, the relationships between women and men are seen as complementary (*chachawarmi*).

It was not easy for BD to address the inequality of men and women in such a context. For this reason, BD organised a reflection moment with the partners in order to discuss the gender issue with Indian movements from an intercultural perspective that at the same time included a focus on human rights. A gender concept was then developed together that took account of the pluri-cultural reality of Bolivia.

Finally, insofar as the surveyed projects and the countries visited are representative, it is noteworthy that the contribution to the development of gender expertise frequently takes place within specific projects and programmes, and only seldom foresee efforts to support the integration of gender in the legislation, policy and development strategies of partner countries (in the priority sectors) (see also 2.4.2 below). Nevertheless, it seems important for the sustainability of the gender integration effects that the gender integration efforts also specifically target (at least) the partner institutions. It is clear

that this has important implications concerning resources (expertise, budgets) and the strategy to be used at country and sector level. The BTC approach in the DRC via the UCAG (see above), the approach in Benin (via e.g. LISA) and the twin-track approach (focus on programme *and* partner organisation) of OSB and VVOB in Vietnam are interesting initiatives in this regard.

Contribution to the development of adapted gender instruments. The development of gender capacity is always accompanied by the use of (possibly) adapted instruments. Several good examples were found in the cases examined. Here, we can make a distinction between 'generic' already existing gender instruments that more or less meet the requirements of the project and that were adapted to the context and, project-specific instruments in which gender is coherently integrated. Examples of the first category include the introduction of gender budgeting, the gender scan of project proposals, and checklists on the integration of gender at organisational level. Examples of the second category include the screening of the specific instruments for gender biases (VVOB Vietnam), a legal assistance handbook for victims of sexual violence (LVS, DRC), a guide for the 'daily' integration of gender in food security programmes (developed in the context of the action research in Benin), a 'roadmap' for integrating gender in the project execution (PROFAO, Morocco). The most important challenge in this area is the 'contextualisation' of the gender principles and efforts; several projects have clearly struggled with this (e.g. MM in the DRC, SolSoc in Morocco, OSB in Vietnam), but overall it appears that organisations have succeeded in developing instruments adapted to the task.

Contribution to the development of adapted gender procedures. The way in which gender is integrated in the project cycle was described above. Furthermore, in a number of cases results were achieved in the area of the integration of gender *at organisational level*, first as a result of the organisation's own policy, second because it was an explicit ambition to support the institutionalisation of gender with the partner (MSLF Peru, OSB Vietnam, IFSI Palestine), for example via the development of a gender department or unit and by ensuring that these have adequate human and financial resources at their disposal and are able to exert influence within the organisation⁴⁹. In other cases, the ambitions were more limited (e.g. the introduction of a gender-sensitive human resources policy, AETFP in DRC). Overall, however, there is no question of a systematic coupling of gender integration at organisational and programme level, which raises questions concerning the sustainability in particular of the effects of gender mainstreaming in projects and programmes.

Conclusion and assessment. *Belgian aid for the development of gender capacities obtains weak scores, even weaker than those with respect to the integration of gender in the project cycle, where the scores already were unconvincing. While there are sporadic success stories, policy intentions concerning gender appear to be insufficiently translated into coherent and effective practice around the strengthening of gender capacities. Where there is evidence of a successful practice, this frequently is linked to an individual initiative and, partly because of this, is especially to be found in the context of specific projects and programmes, without sufficient attention being paid to strengthening gender capacities in the affected organisations. Only in cases in which the Belgian partner has a well-embedded gender policy and practice is the integration of gender at organisational level addressed in, as it were, a natural way. The absence of this double (organisation – programme) track constitutes a serious threat to the sustainability of the effects of the gender integration efforts and the gradual development of gender capacity within organisations that should result in improved practice over time.*

⁴⁹ Due to the strong focus on the 50 selected projects, the activities at organisational and institutional level (e.g. in the framework of partnerships) were not fully included.

2.4.2 Contribution of Belgian aid to strengthening the legal, institutional and development framework of the partner countries (in order to improve gender equality and the empowerment of women)

This assessment criterion was intended to examine four different dimensions of institutional aid: (1) progress in the partner countries concerning the adoption of international conventions and recommendations with respect to gender and development; (2) progress in the partner countries in creating conditions to reduce and prevent violence against women; (3) progress in partner countries in integrating gender in the national and sectoral development policy, strategies, institutions and laws; (4) progress with respect to the organisation and management of consultative structures concerning the integration of gender and gender equality⁵⁰.

Only a very limited number of projects included in the sample made a contribution at this level⁵¹. To a certain extent, this certainly has to do with the fact that Belgium (in this case its bilateral cooperation) does not have a real tradition of making policy dialogue (in general, on gender) concrete in initiatives at macro level, so that at least with respect to gender, no initiatives were taken at institutional level ... while this is indeed the case in the priority sectors of cooperation in a number of countries. In Benin, for example, there is a programme of institutional cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishing that contributed to the development of a gender action plan. On the other hand, one might (should?) expect that several projects, given their unique position, would have made a contribution in this area (e.g. promoting or strengthening consultative structures with respect to gender). This finding helps explain the weak global score (1.92) for this criterion.

Of the 35 projects visited, only the LVS project in the DRC was active in this area. Belgium has long supported this initiative. The programme, supported by several donors, has played an important role in the creation of the national strategy to combat sexual violence (2009), which contributes to better implementation of UN Resolutions 1325 and 1820. Many also consider the development of a national gender policy as an outcome of this strategy. The programme, via its five components, has also contributed to creating conditions intended to facilitate reducing and preventing sexual violence. In this it has also engaged actors (such as the army and rebel groups of the DRC) that are guilty of sexual violence. It is important to mention here that this has not automatically translated itself into real changes on the ground. The weak institutions in the DRC and the instability in particular in Eastern Congo are significant obstacles in this regard.

Among the document study projects, it is important to mention IFSI (Palestinian territories) and MSLF (Peru). Via its partnership with the Federation of Palestinian Trade Unions, the IFSI project is strongly committed to reducing discrimination against women within the trade unions' field of action (for example with respect to remuneration, occupational health ...); however, the project did not treat the issue of violence against women. The MSLF project, via strategic partnerships with local actors and gender networks, worked hard to improve the legal framework for combating violence against women and strengthening local organisations to more effectively perform their lobbying activities. Both of these projects are good illustrations of the possibilities that exist, even with limited resources, to generate institutional effects.

⁵⁰ Due to the limited number of projects that made contributions at this level, the four dimensions referred to above were not systematically treated below.

⁵¹ However, we must be careful not to link far-reaching conclusions to this; in the composition of the random sample, the different (potential) types of contribution were not a criterion.

2.4.3 Level of access of women and girls to the programmes' benefits

This criterion was assessed based on two indicators:

- The extent to which projects effectively address the (priority) needs and interests of women and the obstacles they experience in achieving gender equality and greater autonomy;
- The number and percentage of women and girls with effective access to the project services and benefits

Table7: Level of access of women and girls to the programmes' benefits

	Score	N
The extent to which projects address the (priority) needs and interests of women and the obstacles they experience in achieving gender equality and greater autonomy	2.79	48
The number and percentage of women and girls with effective access to the project services and benefits	3.14	43
Global score	2.91	47

Overall, the results for this assessment criterion are relatively positive. This criterion achieved the highest score of all the assessment criteria surveyed. The good result reflects the fact that the access by girls and women to the benefits of the programme indeed was quite good, though it would be dangerous to draw far-reaching conclusions from the high percentages related to the participation of women/girls (see below). If there is one area in the last decade where gender progress has been made, then it is probably here. More so than often was the case in the past, the actual access of women and girls to the benefits of the programmes was examined. While in itself this does not guarantee greater gender equality, it is a necessary condition for such.

Extent to which projects effectively address the needs and interests of women and the obstacles they experience.

The relatively high score for this indicator cannot be explained by the relatively great importance in the random sample of G2 projects that primarily target women and thus also their (high-priority) strategic needs. Even projects with weak scores in the area of gender usually include a focus on (the integration of) women and their practical needs, and see to it that these are addressed in the project. A possible explanation is the fact that, particularly in the least developed countries, women and girls have a wide range of high-priority needs, for example in the areas of education, health and agriculture. Even without a specifically gender-oriented approach, in these cases, via a wide-ranging approach with attention for the total population, these projects will reach women and frequently also succeed in (see section 2.4.4 below) having great significance for women and girls because they provide a good answer to *important practical needs*. Moreover, there are several examples of bilateral projects with a strong technical focus that demonstrate good sensitivity to the needs of women (e.g. the three bilateral projects in Morocco) that transcend the purely technical. Whether and to what extent the projects analysed also address *priority* needs is unclear, since a good gender analysis is usually not made.

Whether or not this important focus on practical needs is also linked to attention for strategic needs primarily depends on the relative importance of gender in the project's approach and strategy. Projects in which gender is well integrated usually address both practical and strategic needs. The process of developing a solution to practical needs frequently is a stepping stone to also paying attention to strategic needs, for example through the development of female leadership, combating stereotypes, etc. It also happens that addressing practical needs brings about an emancipating dynamic within the target groups that give the project activities an emancipating (strategic) bias. Nevertheless, actions against and the prevention of sexual violence remain a significant blind spot, even in G-2 projects; the OSB agricultural project in Vietnam, which is also involved in the fight against sexual violence, is an exception in this regard (see also 2.4.5 below).

The number and percentage of women and girls with effective access to the project services and benefits. In the past, there were numerous projects in which women and girls, frequently due to a combination of several factors, de facto had little or no access to the services and benefits of programmes, while often they should have been the first to lay claim to such services and benefits. If our random sample is representative, it can be said that such a situation in which women and girls lack access, is occurring less and less; this is also supported by the score for this indicator, which is the highest for all the indicators.

It is important to emphasise that a high level (and a high score for this indicator) of access of women and girls to the project services says little *in itself*. A high percentage frequently is due to the nature of the project (for example a reproductive health project will principally address women; the same applies to a project that targets unmarried mothers ...). Even a high score for this indicator is not automatically positive from a gender perspective. This applies for example to WID projects that address only women; the participation of men in these projects can be positive for stimulating gender transformation. The same applies to a reproductive health project that also addresses men, for example, in its activities around family planning. A positive example here is the LVS project in the DRC that addresses not only the victims of sexual violence, but also the men and (the male dominated) communities, in order to bring an end to the sexual violence. On the other hand, projects that attempt to address the limited access of women to agricultural production means (e.g. PROFAO in Morocco) and, in relative terms, achieve only limited participation on the part of women, in fact are doing fine work. Furthermore, there are cases where a guideline concerning the number and the percentage of women with effective access to programme benefits makes very good sense. This applies for example to the rule that says that half of the scholarships should go to women; even though this is not always possible (e.g. Benin) or is superfluous (e.g. Vietnam, where the vast majority of candidates are women).

While this indicator must always be treated in a nuanced way, from a gender integration perspective it remains important to have a good view of the extent to which women and girls are reached and participate in the benefits, in general and in specific projects. Thus gender-specific indicators certainly have their value. In this, it is especially important to keep in mind that 'effectively reaching women' is not the same as 'effectively contributing to the empowerment of women'. Furthermore, unequal participation of men and women in a programme can be justified, but can also be an impetus for corrections. A good example here is the AD programme in the DRC (in which gender is not formally integrated), which maintains gender-specific data concerning the patients who are treated; when large differences occur, the cause is investigated and the approach modified if required. Finally, situations of great inequality in the participation of men and women (or boys and girls) can be an invitation to take specific actions that target breaking down existing stereotypes (in both directions), e.g. in technical education projects in which girls traditionally have a low level of participation.

2.4.4. The effects of Belgian aid on gender equality and empowerment (including achieving MDG 3)

This part concerns the discussion of the results around the ultimate goal: progress in the area of gender equality and empowerment. Did the aid to women and girls, whether or not framed in a gender approach, achieve results? And if changes for the good are ascertained, can we be satisfied with progress made, or was more expected; and are the detected changes attributable only to the projects? Experience has shown that a good answer to this question is not easy, for several reasons:

- *The lack of efforts in projects (also in projects with good gender integration) to assess the gender effects and development effects in general;*
- *The fact that there is no unambiguous "theory of change" that allows making a strong link within the different sectors between fulfilling the practical needs of women and girls on the one hand, and greater gender equality on the other.*

The evaluation was aware of these challenges from the beginning, and wished to partially address these via the organisation of a – limited in scope – quality impact study in each of the five countries (see Annex 3 for more details). This study yielded interesting results that are included below, but was only able to offer a partial solution to the existing limitations.

The effects in the area of gender equality and empowerment were classified as follows:

- Effects in the area of education;
- Effects in the area of health;
- Economic effects;
- Effects on the internal empowerment of women;
- Effects related to the external empowerment of women;
- Changes to attitude, behaviour and power relationships.

It must be noted here that the findings concerning in particular the more 'technical domains' (education, health, economy) no doubt are very dependent on the projects that were included in the random sample. The effects on the three other domains are more cross-cutting and can in occur in almost any type of project (except G-0 projects).

Table8: Effects of Belgian aid on empowerment and gender equality

	Score	N
Effects in the area of education	2.67	42
Effects in the area of health	2.76	33
Economic effects	2.63	30
Effects on internal empowerment	2.78	40
Effects on external empowerment	2.54	37
Changes to attitude, behaviour and power relationships	1.94	16
Global score	2.72	47

The global score on the effects is relatively high for nearly all types of effects, with the exception of 'changes to attitude, behaviour and power relationships'. This can seem surprising in the light of the relatively weak scores on the integration of gender in the projects and the contribution to gender capacity building. As will be seen below, the principal explanation concerns the way in which women and women's groups develop based on the aid provided: in many cases such aid is accepted in order to strengthen their own position and further increase their own power, even if such is not explicitly intended by the project or programme that supports them.

Effects in the area of education. Education and training are generally considered extremely important means for empowering women and girls. No one denies the major importance of education, but this applies even more to girls and women because, due to the existing gender inequality, they find it more difficult to take advantage of the possibilities offered. Furthermore, the strong link between education for girls and women and (reproductive) healthcare is well known: educated girls are more likely to marry later in life, and have smaller and healthier families; they understand better the importance of healthcare and knowledge for themselves and their families. Education also helps them build self-confidence, stand up for their rights, and results in greater and better access to the job market.

The paragraph above is a summary of what is known on the effects of education on gender, as accumulated via a wider range of development experience; as such, this paragraph is *not* a direct result of our analysis. The latter in fact had neither the resources (nor the ambition) to perform an in-depth assessment of the (gender-related) effects of education. However, it does give us a basis to say that the positive results found by

the evaluation in the area of education very likely contributed to greater gender equality and empowerment as indicated above⁵².

Almost all the examined projects include educational activities that contribute to increasing knowledge, skills and insight in the target groups⁵³. This applies first of all to projects in the (formal) education sector (university projects, APEFE in Bolivia, VVOB and a sectoral budget support programme in Vietnam, technical education in the DRC ...). They no doubt have contributed to better educated youth (girls and boys), but usually have a sectoral focus with limited attention to gender elements (such as stereotyping in educational material). None of these programmes consistently focused on, for example, the elimination of gender biases in curricula or improving access for girls (although the latter was not always needed). One programme (VVOB Vietnam) is an exception to this due to its substantive focus on curricula and educational material, and its ambition to integrate a gender approach in education. Nevertheless, in general, the programmes in the education sector have neglected many opportunities to better integrate gender in their activities in a relevant way⁵⁴.

Concerning the projects in other sectors, it is striking that in many cases a mix of training activities was developed. In addition, projects generally did not score poorly with respect to the participation of women (see 2.4.3 above). In the first place, these projects contain technical training, in line with the project focus. Furthermore, many (in particular NGO) interventions focus on broader awareness raising concerning sectoral issues and – related to this – the development of skills (e.g. to search for information and to lobby, to resolve or manage conflicts ...) and offering training that aims at strengthening the organisation (e.g. in the trade union projects); only in exceptional cases is attention paid to gender in specific training (see also 2.4.1 above). More specifically, it was found that:

Box 6: The wide-ranging effects of cooperation between the fire department of Brasschaat and that of Tarija

While gender was not a focus of the project, it is an interesting example of an approach to male-female relationships. Women working as volunteers for the fire department are very active in the project and have made it a point of honour to undergo the same training as their male colleagues and to assume the same tasks and responsibilities.

This has strengthened the volunteers' self-esteem. It was also found that acting as a mixed team brought with it many benefits: in the case of accidents, for example, female fire fighters are able to better assist female victims psychologically and medically. It was also found that the so-called mixed 'bicycle brigades' are able to intervene more effectively in the case of street violence: a mixed team appears to reduce the risk of violent reactions and makes it easier to dialogue with offenders.

- Many training initiatives have a narrow 'technical' focus (e.g. on new farming techniques and the transformation of agricultural products, business skills, hygiene and nutrition ...). In many cases, in particular in training on health, nutrition, hygiene ... this is based on the traditional roles of men and women. A number of projects in economic sectors have a good focus on the participation of women, in which traditional roles may or may not have been transcended. There are many examples, in particular in the economic sphere, of the empowerment of women who make *autonomous* use of the obtained technical knowledge and skills to make social and economic progress and strengthen their position (e.g. ACC in Vietnam, which uses a WID approach). But good 'technical' training in the area of hygiene and health can also result in broader empowerment effects (e.g. PARZS in Benin).

⁵² ... though this does not necessarily apply to the same degree always and everywhere. Thus for example, the Palestinian authorities succeeded in creating gender equality with respect to access to education. The fact remains, however, that better education contributed only to a limited degree to the empowerment of girls and women at social, political and economic level. As cause, reference is made to the strong inequality present in society and the absence of attention to gender equality in the educational system.

⁵³ This is evident from among others the high number of projects (42 out of 50) that we were able to score on this criterion.

⁵⁴ ... Which is not to say that these types of programmes must use gender as a focal point; much would have been possible even without significant changes to the approach of these programmes.

However, only rarely are technical training initiatives conceived as explicitly breaking down preconceived roles. Clearly many opportunities were missed to consistently integrate gender in a technical domain; moreover, this was not always easy (e.g. OSB in Vietnam). The best positive example here is Tarija (Bolivia), where under the impetus of the Belgian partner, men and women of the local fire department underwent the same (demanding) physical training programme ... and it was found that women have the same capabilities as men, which resulted especially in broader social change (see box).

- Few projects were limited to technical education *only*. They also paid attention to (for example) organisational development (for example managing a savings and credit group or a health insurance fund), leadership development, conflict resolution skills or effectively engaging in advocacy and conducting negotiations; in some cases, a link was also made with human rights and UN resolutions (e.g. Resolution 1325). The combination of this type of strengthening of skills with technical education makes it easier for women to go to work with the acquired skills and knowledge, and improve their position, *with or without support from the project in question*. There are indications that this is actually happening in many cases⁵⁵.
- The number of projects that organised *specific* gender training and awareness raising is limited, and where this did happen, it was not always easy for the participants to make a link with the project reality. Only in cases where this training was part of an approach in which gender was integrated consistently, did this training appear to have an effect (see also 2.4.1 above).

Effects in the area of health. *Women occupy a key position in providing basic healthcare, particularly at the level of their family and community. However, many girls and women, already in the first years of their life, are faced with discrimination in healthcare, nutrition, workload and education (at education level, this is usually strongly linked to well-being in the area of health), making them more vulnerable than boys and men. In addition, women can only fully develop when their sexual and reproductive rights are guaranteed (via access to adequate facilities, recognition of their basic sexual and reproductive rights, the absence of sexual and other gender-related violence ...), which is not the case in many societies: sexual and other gender-related violence is a significant problem, even when legal frameworks exist to combat such. Thus, gender and gender relations play a very important role in the quality of health and healthcare for women and girls.*

The healthcare projects covered basic healthcare including reproductive healthcare (e.g. Memisa in the DRC, PARZS in Benin, PAPDS in Niger), so-called 'vertical' projects that address specific diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and TBC or victims of sexual violence (e.g. AD and LVS in the DRC, IST-SIDA in Morocco, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and TBC ...) or combine both (JHS in Rwanda), projects that address (as main focus or part of the programme) nutrition/malnutrition (e.g. Juzoor in Palestine, LISA in Benin, PASAB in Rwanda) and, finally, projects related to drinking water and sanitation (e.g. PAEP in Morocco, PROTOS in Benin). Furthermore, some projects focus on health aspects based on their specificity (e.g. trade union projects for which occupational health is an important focus, such as PGFTU in Palestine; educational projects targeting the medical sector, such as APEFE in Benin).

Most projects in the basic healthcare sector obtained good results in the area of improved access to health services (increased visits to health centres, increase in pre- and postnatal consultations, increased use of modern contraception methods, higher vaccination rates...) resulting in lower morbidity and mortality. The same can also be said for the projects that address specific diseases. The effects of these programmes on the health and well-being of men and women are unmistakable, in particular in countries with a low level of development in which the quality of healthcare frequently leaves much to be desired. For women, in particular reproductive healthcare programmes are crucial and constitute a necessary condition for empowerment and greater gender equality. Both types of projects are based on an approach targeting the *population as whole* (men and women, children and adults) and take little account of gender relations. Many of

⁵⁵ We will return to this when discussing the final question; see section 2.8 below.

these projects have an eye for obstacles that can prevent access to the care, and to this end develop solutions (health funds, minimum fees or free treatment, wide-ranging awareness campaigns ...). Furthermore, these projects often benefit from insights that were developed globally and operationalised in standard protocols that, for example, in reproductive healthcare focus on the specific characteristics of relationships between men and women, without this being a clearly gender-based approach. Nevertheless, recognition is growing within the medical community that the consequences of 'disease' can be different for women than for men, and that the economic and socio-cultural context (including gender relations) must be more explicitly included. In addition, the most important criticism with respect to basic health projects in the random sample was that they have little or no regard for explicit and less explicit forms of sexual violence against women, while they are very well-placed to devote attention to this.

Projects that address nutrition and malnutrition target especially vulnerable groups (children under five and their mothers); nowhere were indications found of unequal treatment of girls or boys. However, these projects also principally target women, while here again opportunities are missed to better involve men in the projects (and the theme on which they focus). Two other interesting experiences in this area concern SEQAP (budget support in Vietnam) and Juzoor (Palestinian territories). The first programme to introduce full time primary education in Vietnam discovered that it was necessary to provide the children with a (nutritious) lunch. As a result, a specific activity was developed with positive effects on the nutritional status of the children, and the participation of parents and local authorities. The Juzoor programme succeeded in changing poor eating habits of pupils by offering nutritious meals prepared by women's groups, which also provided an income for these groups.

Drinking water and sanitation projects have the potential to generate clear health effects and in many cases offer opportunities for men and women to increase their knowledge and skills, and play a more active role in the local community (e.g. via their involvement in managing drinking water facilities). These projects focus on the specific role of women in drinking water and sanitation, and on the representation of women in management structures. The extent to which this became an occasion for empowerment could not be determined (partly because this type of effect was not really monitored). In many cases, projects were confronted with the demand on the part of women for support of economic activities, in order to productively use the newly acquired time.

In summary, it can be said that doubts continue to exist, in particular with respect to the healthcare programmes. These of course have nothing to do with the importance of these programmes for the population and in particular women, and with the undeniably significant results that were achieved. However, not all programmes take explicit account of possible obstacles that can affect access by women to healthcare, and in this, limited account is taken of the extent to which such obstacles exist and what can be done to neutralise or decrease their impact. But programmes that score better in this area also missed many opportunities to integrate a gender perspective; in particular, the lack of attention paid to violence against women is very problematic, and given the size of the problem, cannot be ignored, even if it formally is not a part of the objectives of the intervention.

Economic effects. *Probably the greatest economic problem for women is the fact that their work is not recognised or is undervalued by society, resulting in no or inadequate access to means of production. Women work more hours than men and contribute in many ways to economic development and family welfare (e.g. in food agriculture), but because of existing gender inequality and discrimination, this contribution does not carry sufficient weight in determining the position and status of the women. Consequently, changes to this situation must target giving women control of capital in order to generate incomes and make financial progress. Such progress results in an increase in confidence, and also benefits the families, since – as supported by the experiences of the projects surveyed – the surplus income is largely spent on the family's welfare. Furthermore, economic and financial independence allows women to make better choices in their personal and social life.*

A significant number of projects included in the study generated direct economic effects and contributed to the empowerment of women to one degree or another. A number of agriculture projects succeeding in allowing access by women to means of production (e.g. access to land and agricultural equipment/inputs in the FAFA and LISA projects in Benin, in the BD project in Bolivia) or in improving such (e.g. OSB Vietnam), resulting in an increase in their or their family's income, and a strengthening of the autonomy and position of the women in question. In the case of OSB, the project cooperated with the local peasant *families* (more women than men due to seasonal migration), but the effects on empowering women were enhanced by the programme's strong gender focus that (according to the quality impact study) also contributed to a shift in the traditional division of labour between women and men.

Three of the literature study projects (ASA and PPILDA in Niger, PASAB in Rwanda) targeted vulnerable *families* and the promotion of food security via, technically seen, quite comparable approaches, and claim progress in this area. In the case of both Niger projects, however, there were no indications (in the area of participation in the activities and in the benefits) of the *specific effects on the situation of women*, while PASAB already *ex ante* invested strongly in defining gender-specific indicators, and on this basis, were also able to document, monitor, and evaluate the participation of women, and to establish that the participation of women was substantial, which in any case is at least an indirect indicator of the extent to which they were able to take advantage of the project's benefits.

Another important type of project that can play an important role in empowering women, supports women in setting up and implementing income-generating activities, possibly in connection with providing microcredit (e.g. Diaconia in Bolivia, ACC in Vietnam, Juzoor in the Palestinian territories, CHF in the DRC, SolSoc in Morocco). As also confirmed by the quality impact study (in the DRC and Vietnam), these projects unmistakably contribute to the increased empowerment of women, even if gender is not integrated in their approach. The fact that women generate an income enhances their position in the family and in the society in which they live. These empowerment processes were often enhanced by the capacity building enjoyed by the women (technical, business skills, working in groups, possible – but quite rare – gender training) that increases not only their skills but also their self-confidence; on the other hand, economic empowerment at individual level does not necessary result in changes in gender relations within the society (see box).

Box 7: Individual empowerment of women does not always result in an impact on society.

Interviews, during the field visit, of women that had received microloans via the Diaconia project (Bolivia), point out the strong effects in the area of individual empowerment. However, the women in question did not have the time to work with the social organisations in their neighbourhood; all of their attention and energy went to managing their loan and saving. Positive changes remained limited to the family setting.

Finally, it is important to mention that many projects in other sectors generate economic side effects, for men as well as for women. The link between good health and economic activity is clear. It is equally clear that education contributes to economic emancipation and easier integration in the job market (e.g. APEFE in Bolivia). Projects around supplying drinking water usually result in a significant savings of time, which women try to use productively, and in some cases offer opportunities for additional income via the development of small-scale irrigation farming.

However, the positive effects of improved integration of women in economic activities have their shadow side. In many successful projects in this area (e.g. Protos Benin, OSB and ACC in Vietnam, CHF in the DRC, BD and Diaconia in Bolivia), women report an increase in their workload (because men do not take over household activities or only do so to a limited degree, due to migration ...) and/or because men are inclined to contribute less to the household finances. Nevertheless, women appear to prefer this situation over the previous situation of major economic dependence. Finally, in Vietnam, mention was made of cases in which domestic violence increased on the part of men who found it difficult to accept their partners' success. However, such cases are exceptions that prove the rule (economic success commands respect and reduces violence). It is difficult

to estimate precisely the magnitude of these negative side effects; However, they do illustrate the adverse effects of a lack of gender integration in economic projects; many projects undoubtedly miss opportunities to use economic success as a lever for greater gender equality.

***In summary,** it can be said that the economic dimension of the empowerment of women is present, directly as well as indirectly, in many projects that reach women. This may be related in part to development strategies that aim to integrate women in the economic sector, among others as part of a poverty reduction strategy that does not call into question the unequal social power structures. However, the case studies provided some examples where women, despite the lack of a gender approach (and lack of attention to existing inequalities), have succeeded in gaining economic empowerment and influencing existing gender relations.*

Effects on the internal empowerment of women – strengthening the individual.

While very few projects took the efforts to measure their effects and document the increase in the internal empowerment and capabilities of women, there are strong indications that most projects that worked with women were able to make a contribution in this area. It often concerns an indirect – or rather: implicit – effect of these projects that manifests itself, as it were, together with more explicitly prescribed objectives such as capacity building, awareness raising and increasing production or income. Such an increase in internal empowerment manifests itself in diverse ways (more positive self-image, increased confidence, the courage to try new things, greater autonomy, managing their fears ...) and cannot always be clearly distinguished from an increase in external empowerment. Furthermore, it must be stated that changes noted in this area within the framework of the projects usually did *not* call into question traditional gender relations and roles. In many cases, however, an increase in internal empowerment *does* lead to transformation in the area of gender, but this is due to changes among women themselves that translate into a different interaction with their environment, without this being explicitly intended by the projects in question. In only a few projects, in particular those projects where gender was integrated consistently (e.g. OSB in Vietnam, Solsoc in Morocco – see box), is there a strong, explicit linking of internal empowerment – external empowerment – gender transformation.

Box 8: Empowerment of women (SolSoc Morocco)

The SolSoc programme focuses on changes in society in the direction of greater equality between women and men, empowering women, and changes in attitude and perception with respect to the role and position of women and youth (boys and girls).

Working via neighbourhood organisations ensures that women are better able to analyse the mechanisms that create and perpetuate poverty, inequality and exclusion. Their ability to plan and manage actions, to influence municipal policy, and to successfully engage in economic activities increased substantially. The women were also well informed concerning the content and underlying concepts of the Madouwana (family code).

This led to a strong increase in the self-confidence of girls and young women, who now felt able (for example) to act in public and defend ideas. They realise that women are equal to men, and that this equality implies that they must also act outside the household.

The degree of internal empowerment frequently also depends on the type of (sector, approach) projects. Projects in healthcare and nutrition (e.g. PMDC in Bolivia, AD and MM in the DRC) result in the preservation (possibly restoration) of the human person and internal empowerment without, however, aiming to change traditional roles and relations. However, when health projects also include a demand component (PARZS in Benin), they result in stronger effects in the area of personal empowerment. It can be stated more broadly that projects with a strong commitment to education and training (also outside the education sector), result in some form of personal empowerment. Thus for example there are strong indications of an increase in personal empowerment via education efforts: literacy makes women proud and increases their confidence (LISA), technical training strengthens women in their social contacts (PROFAO), limited organisational support of women working at a dump has a significant effect on their self-esteem (TH, Vietnam), etc. Similar effects were also very noticeable in education projects, even if gender was not integrated at all in these projects. This also applies to 'pure' educational projects, university projects as well as projects in support of secondary

or primary education, certainly when this includes women being encouraged to engage themselves professionally (CIUF Benin).

However, as was already indicated above, it appears that economic progress is the most powerful lever in strengthening the internal (but also external, see below) empowerment of women. Women who succeed in increasing production and/or income operate via these activities outside the framework in which they – intentionally or unintentionally – previously took place. Their economic integration, usually brought about by skills obtained via training and guidance, initiates an interplay of enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem, strengthening the position in the household and society, and increased power of initiative that frequently develops talents that had long been underused.

Effects related to the external empowerment of women. As indicated above, few projects investigated and documented in detail their effectiveness with respect to the external (social, political ...) empowerment of women, and in many cases we must limit ourselves to indirect indications. Furthermore, experience gained in the projects, once more, shows that empowerment at the technical and organisational level on the one hand, and strengthening the internal and external empowerment of women on the other, are closely and dialectically related to one another and reinforce one another. Furthermore, once again it appears that even without a well-developed approach to gender, women (can) acquire external empowerment via projects, but that at the same time due to the absence (or only partial implementation) of the gender dimension, opportunities are missed to achieve greater effects in the area of gender equality.

The analysis suggests that processes of acquiring external power by women are extremely multifaceted and contextually determined. Broadly speaking, we can characterise these processes as follows. First, there are processes in which girls and women *as individuals* acquire greater external empowerment, with internal and external empowerment being closely linked. These types of processes play a role especially in education projects (university education, but also for example in AETFP (DRC) where the social position of female students changes already during their education thanks to the technical advice they are able to give related to agriculture, or to the income they generate by, for example, sewing) and are closely connected to the personal development that the parties in question undergo; similar developments were noted with APEFE in Bolivia. A different, somewhat special, example is the Diaconia project (Bolivia) that extends microcredit to individuals, but according to a strict, individual approach.

Insofar as the projects constitute a representative sample of Belgian cooperation, it can be stated that acquiring external power is also (and especially?) a *collective* process in which women act together to acquire social and political power. These processes are most clear and unambiguous in places where women, whether or not in the context of a project initiative, have united in autonomous women's organisations with a social, political and/or economic agenda. This reflects on the organisation, and it gains social and political influence in particular when its members are economically successful (e.g. ACC in Vietnam, Juzoor in Palestine ...). Another good example is IFSI (Palestine) where via the trade union federation project, a gender division with representation at all levels was created and provided with the resources (personnel, expertise) to fulfil this role.

In many projects, the external empowerment of women frequently is due to important and consistent efforts to bring the representation of women within the decision-making structures up to standard. Many projects aim to increase the initially non-existent or marginal representation of women within these structures and, in so doing, to also give women the tools they need to effectively play their role. Examples of this approach can be found in the water sector (PAEP in Morocco, PROTOS in Benin), in the medical sector (MM in the DRC, PARZS in Benin), in agriculture and rural development projects (OSB in Vietnam, PPILDA in Niger, PROFAO in Morocco, Fafa MC in Benin), in social and trade union projects (SolSoc, CIC and CDT in Morocco, CHF in the DRC, IFSI in Palestine, Tarija in Bolivia). The 'drive' behind these projects is the will to guarantee qualitatively better participation, without explicitly placing this in a gender perspective. Consequently, the extent to which greater representation of women in decision-making structures effectively results in greater gender equality is unclear. We certainly may not assume that this is

automatic. The least that can be said, however, is that this type of initiative paves the way for greater participation of women in associative life at local level, that it facilitates and encourages women to act, and that gradually other roles for women emerge (however, without specific initiatives directed at men as power relations change). Whether and to what extent these efforts effectively contribute to empowerment could not be verified, partly because projects do not monitor these kinds of effects.

An interesting exception in this regard is the PPILDA project (Niger), where a survey was conducted on the involvement of women and youth in village decision making. The survey indicated a clear improvement in the area of the involvement of women, despite negative contextual developments. However, this last positive example may not deter us from stating that the efforts to increase the involvement of women in decision making often are insufficiently framed in a more global strategy of acquiring power and gender equality, with the probable outcome that proportionately little progress is made in the direction of greater political and social empowerment and gender equality.

Changes to attitude, behaviour and power relationships. There is also very little documented with respect to these types of change in the project reports and evaluations, while on the other hand – in particular during the field visits – many indications were present of real changes in attitude, behaviour and empowerment. However, it was difficult to verify whether the examples cited were representative of a broad and in-depth process of change. Finally, it is also clear that a strong increase in internal and external empowerment had repercussions on attitude, behaviour and power relationships. However, and chiefly, (too?) few projects appeared to be intentionally and explicitly committed to this type change, even though they had the possibilities for such. Changes in (gender-related) attitude and behaviour undergo several processes. A first type of change process starts from major efforts in notably trade union and social projects, in order to initiate changes in attitude and behaviour (in men and women) via awareness raising, education and training (e.g. on women's rights). Examples of (relative) success in this area include the IST-SIDA project in Morocco (sex workers obtained a stronger negotiating position) or the ASF project in the same country (improved social acceptance and integration of unmarried mothers), SEQAP (increased awareness of the importance of education for girls), VVOB Vietnam (introduction of innovative teaching methods and career counselling for youth, in which the latter are given greater responsibility) and PGFTU (change in attitude with respect to female trade union representatives). These cases concern intentional effort taken in projects to change existing attitudes and behaviour, possibly from an explicit gender perspective. The latter is seldom the case. The LVS project (the DRC) is the best example of this because it is committed to changes in behaviour with respect to sexual violence, includes actions targeting men (soldiers, traditional leaders ...) and takes an approach that attempts to penetrate to the deeper causes of sexual violence.

A second change mechanism starts from women's organisations and the participation of women in civil society. A number of projects result in – often indirect but nevertheless clear – effects emanating from well-functioning women's organisations or female leaders in mixed organisations. Their integrity, competence and reliability (often performing better than men in these areas) ensure respect and a change in attitude regarding the role and possibilities of women and their organisations.

However, it comes as no surprise that especially a third mechanism, the economic success (individually or as a group) of women, is responsible for the most fundamental changes in attitude, behaviour and especially power relationships. When women achieve economic success, this results in significant increases in welfare for the entire family, and in many cases in a shift in power relationships and in the division of labour in the family. However, this is not always the case, though it is striking that in projects where gender is well integrated (e.g. micro-projects supported by CHF in the DRC, OSB in Vietnam, PASAB in Rwanda), changes are described as 'win-win' situations, also by men. In the SolSoc project (Morocco) that is active at social level, the improved quality of family life is mentioned as an important effect.

Finally, experience in Bolivia indicates that this increase in empowerment among women does not necessarily imply changes in the attitude and behaviour of men and at the level of society in general. Strong cultural traditions and resistance to gender issues (see above) are significant obstacles to greater gender equality, even when women enjoy economic success (e.g. Diaconia).

In summary, with respect to changes in internal and external empowerment, attitude and behaviour, it can be said that many examples of internal empowerment were found, to begin with in projects that meet the practical needs of women (although this type of effect generally is poorly followed up by the projects). However, there are few projects that also (aim to) change traditional roles and patterns. Internal and external empowerment increases especially in those projects that have made use of education, training and organisational development. For the rest, as was already indicated above, it appears that economic progress is the most powerful lever in strengthening the internal (but also external) empowerment of women. Women who succeed in increasing their production and/or income, operate via these activities outside the framework in which they – intentionally or unintentionally – previously took place. Their economic integration, usually brought about by skills obtained via training and guidance, initiates an interplay of enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem, strengthening of the position in the household and society, and increased power of initiative that frequently develops talents that had long been underused.

2.4.5 The effects of Belgian aid on reducing and preventing violence against women

The – quite modest – country analyses that were conducted in the five countries visited clearly indicate that 'violence against women' is a significant societal problem, even in countries (such as Morocco, Bolivia and Vietnam) that have made significant progress in recent decades in the area of human development. However, this evaluation had neither the possibilities nor the ambition to examine the global effects of Belgian aid with respect to decreasing and preventing violence against women. The analysis below is based on the findings related to the 50 interventions included in the random sample. It is important to make a distinction here between projects that have as explicit goal the reduction and/or prevention of violence against women, and projects that exercise an indirect influence in this area. Finally, it is important to examine the extent to which specific projects could/should have dealt with this problem but did not do so.

A total of four projects *explicitly* focused on combating and/or preventing sexual (or family) violence. In the DRC, the LVS programme is the most important initiative in the country for combating sexual violence. The programme, which has been underway for quite a long time and is supported by several donors, has contributed to the creation of a policy and legal framework, and in particular in Eastern Congo is (was) very active in combating and preventing sexual violence via a programme committed to caring for and reintegrating victims as well as preventing violence (prevention, protection) and prosecuting sexual offenders. Despite organisational problems, successes were achieved in each of these areas that, however, remain relatively limited in light of the magnitude of the problem. The CHF programme, via its sub-programme 'protection', also contributed to the prevention of sexual violence. Other programme components (such as health and nutrition, housing) of this humanitarian programme have made very specific contributions to women and girls in crisis situations, and in many cases provided protection against sexual violence.

Two programmes in Peru (analysed based only on documents) also addressed violence against women and children. The programme in Ayacucho combating family and sexual violence has made significant efforts via awareness campaigns that sharpened society's focus on the issue, raised awareness with respect to women's and children's rights, and developed a number of good practices. An evaluation of the project shed light on positive developments concerning violence against women, but revealed doubts about the sustainability of the project's benefits. A second programme targeted the combating of sexual abuse and the (commercial) sexual exploitation of children without, however, adopting a gender perspective. As a result, no gender-specific data, for example, is available concerning the abuse. The programme reached the relevant government institutions, resulting in increased attention being paid to the problem, but without integrating the gender perspective, which implies that efficient and structural answers to the problem cannot be developed.

A number of projects active in other domains also focused in a limited or rather structural way on the problem of violence against women. In all cases, it here concerns projects carried out by organisations with a clear gender policy (OSB, VVOB, LISA - LD), even though this is not necessarily described as such (Tarija). In the case of OSB, the structural focus on gender resulted in local structures (gender core group, local branches of the women's and farmer's union) taking actions against domestic violence). The LISA project (Benin) suggests that an integrated approach (attention for fulfilling practical needs, for greater autonomy on the part of women and for campaigns targeting men) is also a path to success. In the Tarija project, mixed teams of police patrolling on bicycle ensure that problems with sexual violence among youth on the street can be effectively dealt with. Finally, there are projects that show a clear link between empowering women and reducing gender-related violence.

Box 9: An agricultural programme was also able to address the issue of domestic violence (Vietnam)

The OSB programme in Vietnam chiefly focuses on strengthening the resilience of peasant families and is being carried out in partnership with local farmer's and women's organisations. Gender is strongly integrated within OSB as well as within the programme. An important aspect of the programme's work is the training of local cadres that play an important role especially within the programme's regular activities (related to agriculture). However, the cadres are also expected to pay attention to the problem of domestic violence. And while the interventions of local cadres (not specifically trained in this domain) did not always prove effective, the impact study suggests that the project did achieve results in this area. The fact that domestic violence was addressed in meetings and was alluded to (e.g. with respect to women's rights and national legislation) appears to have had a deterrent effect. However, the study also pointed out the importance of an integrated approach that makes the combating of violence part of a broader effort in favour of greater gender equality.

On the other hand, many projects paid no attention to this issue, while one might ask whether they should have. The evaluation is inclined to give a positive answer to this question in a number of cases. This applies in the first place to public healthcare projects (MM, AD, PAPDS) in countries with significant gender-inequality and a major problem with gender-related violence (DRC, Niger); in the case of the APEFE project in Benin (training of nurses and midwives), some attention is paid, but this remains limited.

While a close link exists between public healthcare and sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls, and it is certainly necessary for health sector projects not to ignore the problem, it is important to ask how far projects in other sectors may/can go in addressing the problem. It is difficult to provide a clear answer to this question, since the answer depends on many parameters. In a number of cases, however, the consistent integration of gender in a programme can quickly reveal problems in this area. And once gender is well integrated, it should also become easier to make a meaningful contribution in this area, as suggested by the OSB project (Vietnam) and LISA project (Benin). Presently, however, this is not the case and many opportunities are being missed.

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

Viewed globally, the commitment of Belgian international cooperation is evidenced by the Gender Mainstreaming Act of 2007 and the International Cooperation Acts (1999 and recently in 2013), which view gender as a cross-cutting theme. However, gender, like other cross-cutting themes, is seen as a specialisation, not as theme about which all must have knowledge, and still less as an aspect that deserves explicit inclusion in the development goals (globally and at programme and project level). As such, the

existence of a good policy framework does not imply that sufficient gender capacity is present, including at the top of the organisation.

As can be seen in the table below, the global score for this is 2.18 (N=44), which already indicates a relatively low level of commitment. The scores are very weak, especially with respect to the existence of incentives and the development of synergies.

Table9: Commitment to implementing the policy note

	Score	N
Presence of the necessary financial resources, capacity and instruments to implement the action plan and the GAD strategy	2.30	43
Presence of the necessary incentives to encourage implementation of the action plan and the GAD strategy	1.80	41
Creation and development of synergies for promoting gender	1.75	40
Representation of women in decision-making structures	2.29	34
Global score	2.18	44

2.5.1. Presence of the necessary financial resources to implement the action plan and the GAD strategy

A. Global framework

DGD does not have a separate budget item for supporting equality between men and women. In response to the gender mainstreaming act, in 2010 a circular was distributed concerning the implementation of gender budgeting. This circular (29 April 2010) subdivides the basic allocations into three categories:

- Category 1: loans for projects with no gender dimension
- Category 2: loans concerning actions to realise equality between men and women
- Category 3: other loans, which can include gender-specific actions⁵⁶.

As established in the Gender Mainstreaming Act, loans in the second category must be included in a gender policy note. The form given to a gender policy note, as well as a first attempt to categorise the basic allocation and inclusion of an in-depth general reflection on category-three projects in the justification of the basic allocation, is expected starting in 2011 (Vice-Prime Minister, Minister for Work and Equal Opportunity, charged with Migration and Asylum Policy, 2010).

FPS Foreign Affairs classifies the majority of its basic allocations as category 3 expenditures, which would automatically imply that gender should be integrated in most of its portfolio. One basic allocation was classified as a category 2 expenditure. While the obligation exists to draw up a gender policy note for this type of expenditure, this did not take place before 2013 because no expenditures were foreseen for this basic allocation.

Except for the annual contribution to the Belgian Commission on Women and Development, no budget is foreseen for gender mainstreaming. The Gender Mainstreaming Act (2007) was adopted with the idea that no budget was needed for gender mainstreaming. While this may be true in theory, experience shows that a budget is initially needed to put the conditions in place to apply gender mainstreaming. The message that gender mainstreaming required no extra budget in fact was a type of selling point that now appears to undermine the implementation of gender mainstreaming, among others because it creates the impression that gender mainstreaming can be realised without effort. The Gender Task Force (see also below) within FPS Foreign Affairs has a budget of 5,000 euro per year. Indirect actors may, if they wish, make budgets available for developing (capacity building ...) and maintaining gender integration and some – those with a clear gender policy and practice – in fact do this (see below). In exceptional

⁵⁶ ... for example, actions that aim at gender equality but that are part of larger allocations/programmes that do not do this directly.

cases, this takes place as a result of comments made during the policy dialogue (this applies in particular to the BFVZ programmes, where much attention is given to gender – see also 2.3.4 above).

Progress in the area of gender equality in principle is monitored based the OECD/DAC G-marker (see also section 2.3.5 above). In the period 2002-2012, the percentage of total screened expenditures for G-2 interventions varied between 3.6% in 2010 and 7.5% in 2006. During this period, the percentage of expenditures for G-1 interventions varied between 42.4% in 2002 and 63.4% in 2006. For the period studied, a real trend cannot be detected concerning the importance (number of interventions, expenditures) of G-1 and G-2 interventions. DGD set as goal, in line with the EU Gender Activity Plan, the funding of 75% of G-1 interventions.

The limitation on using the G-marker as an instrument for measuring the importance of gender in the cooperation was already pointed out in section 2.3.5. Despite these shortcomings, we are able to conduct a superficial gender analysis based on the gender marker. The table below gives an overview of the number of and expenditures for interventions funded via Belgian ODA for the period 2002 – 2012.

Table10: Number of interventions and expenditures according to the Gender Policy Marker (absolute and relative) for the period 2002-2012

G-marker	Number			Expenditures		
	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>Relative total (%)</i>	<i>Relative screened (%)</i>	<i>Absolute ('000)</i>	<i>Relative total (%)</i>	<i>Relative screened (%)</i>
G-2	1,067	6.1	9.5	639,906	3.6	5.3
G-1	4,189	23.8	37.3	5,773,924	32.1	47.7
G-0	5,967	34.0	53.2	5,689,216	31.6	47.0
Not screened	6,352	36.1	-	5,905,639	32.8	-
Total	17,575	100.0	100.0	18,008,685	100.0	100.0

Source: ODA database of DGD

The table teaches us that in the period 2002-2012, almost 47% of the screened interventions and more than 53% of the screened expenditures had gender as main or important objective, with G-2 interventions forming only a small percentage (9.5% of the number of interventions for 5.3% of the expenditures). Thus, the budgets for G-2 interventions appear to be smaller than average, while the budgets for G-1 interventions are slightly above average⁵⁷. Based on the limitations described above (2.3.5) on the use of the G-marker, it appears to be safer to interpret the figures mentioned above as indications of the level of integration of women in the development interventions.

B. Findings at the level of the case studies

As previously indicated, the gender action plan has no real influence on the level of gender integration among Belgian actors, and this also applies to their choices concerning the financial resources they are willing to allocate to gender. During the field visit, an examination was made of the degree to which the actors in question had the necessary financial resources to support their intentions with respect to gender integration. First of all, it is striking that in only a few cases does a budget exist for 'specific' gender activities possibly linked to activities and results contained in the logical framework; also the (timid) attempts at gender budgeting have not been convincing until now. However, this is not to say that no financial resources might be available for specific gender activities. The opposite tends to be the case: when an institutional commitment exists to invest in gender (at organisation, programme and project level), the resources for this are found. There are very few indications of problems in this area; one example is MM in the DRC,

⁵⁷ For a more detailed analysis, we refer you to earlier reports of this evaluation: the interim report and the Descriptive Inventory drawn up during the start phase of this evaluation.

which has undertaken significant efforts to select and give shape to gender focal points, and to support these in their functioning, but needs further (more professional) support to increase the effectiveness of these frameworks; however, creating the budgetary room for this turned out to be difficult when the programme was forced to operate with a smaller overall budget due to a decrease in grants.

2.5.2 Presence of the necessary capacity, instruments and mechanisms to implement the policy note and the GAD strategy

Strengthening the institutional capacity of DGD is one of the three pillars of the gender policy note. The policy note further formulates a number of lessons learned from the past (based on an OECD/DAC document from 2000):

- *The integration of gender equality at institutional level demands additional resources, in the sense that all civil servants responsible for this domain, and specific units that are charged with gender must rather play a catalysing, advisory and supporting role;*
- *An important aspect of each institutional strategy is developing the authority, empowering civil servants, adequate follow-up by developing gender-aware indicators, and publication of the results;*
- *Strengthening the gender capacity of all personnel, especially in the field, is crucial.*

Over half (58%) of the survey respondents believe that there are inadequate or no provisions (capacity building, training, technical support, documentation, time) available to properly integrate gender in their tasks. In addition, the previous chapter has shown that, overall, the integration of gender in the various phases of the project/programme cycle are relatively limited, with some important positive exceptions. Studies of other (development) institutions have revealed that commitment to gender equality and a gender-aware policy discourse do not automatically result in a gender-aware practice⁵⁸. To prevent policy evaporation, obligations and general policy need to be translated into adequate personnel and organisational capacities and clear incentives. As will be described below, this is the case in only several organisations.

A. Presence of gender capacity

A.1: The role and influence of gender experts (gender desks, focal points...)

In practice, gender capacity is concentrated in personnel who were specially appointed to focus on gender. The personnel available at both DGD and BTC is limited: there is a specific gender unit with 1 to 2 staff members at DGD, and there is a gender specialist at BTC.

The results of the survey show that personnel are not fully satisfied with the support received from these gender desks. As shown in the chart below, 50% of both DGD and BTC respondents believe that the support is inadequate, while 14.7% of DGD respondents and 3.1% of BTC respondents experience no support at all. These percentages are substantially lower for the indirect/academic players (38.1% insufficient support, 0% no support) and other players (30.8% insufficient support, 0% no support), but this principally can be explained by the absence of specific gender support in these organisations (28.6% and 38.5% respectively indicate that specific gender support is lacking).

The results of the study also show that the division of tasks between the DGD gender unit and the BTC gender expert and other DGD and BTC personnel is not clearly demarcated; for 55.9% of the DGD respondents and 46.9% of the BTC respondents, the division of tasks is not or seldom clear. This percentage in turn is much lower for the indirect and academic players, and other players (14.3% and 7.7% respectively, but 52.4% and 53.8% respectively gave no answer).

⁵⁸ See: CIDA (1994) "Assessment of DAC Members' WID Policies and Programmes: Overall Report (work carried out under the auspices of the OECD/DAC Expert Group on Aid Evaluation)", CIDA, Ottawa, and Hafner-Burton, E. M. and Pollack, M.A. (2002) "Mainstreaming Gender in Global Governance", European Journal of International Relations, 8 (3), 339-373.

Interestingly, many of the respondents for whom the division of tasks was clear or very clear, were also satisfied with the support (23 of the 30 respondents), while many of the respondents for whom the division of tasks was not or seldom clear are also dissatisfied with the support (32 of the 38 respondents). This correlation between the perceived clarity of the mandates and the perceived quality of the support, underscores the importance of a clear division of tasks.

The current unclear distribution of responsibilities is not unique to Belgium, but often occurs in the case of gender mainstreaming within organisations⁵⁹. The underlying assumption of a gender mainstreaming strategy is that the responsibilities should be spread across the entire organisation, while gender specialists should focus on catalysing, advisory, supporting, horizontal (between sectors and aid modalities) and vertical (between several phases of the intervention cycle) supervisory tasks. In reality, however, there are no examples of organisations in which gender is fully integrated, and gender mainstreaming in general remains the responsibility of the gender desks or specialist (Holvoet and Inberg, 2012). The idea that the existence of gender mainstreaming policy automatically coincides with effective gender mainstreaming within the organisation is further reinforced by the idea that gender mainstreaming can take place without cost (see above).

In order to effectively play a catalysing, advisory and supporting role, a gender desk must be located high enough in an organisation's hierarchy. Recently, however, both the DGD gender unit and the BTC gender specialist were moved to a lower position in the hierarchy: the DGD unit has presently moved from a policy support unit to a thematic department (more specifically within the unit that deals with community building). However, this move can also have advantages because it makes possible a closer relationship and improved exchange and coordination between the gender expert and a thematic unit; it is indeed a common complaint that the vagueness of the gender jargon stands in the way of effective integration of a gender dimension in sector interventions (interviews). Moreover, a lack of exchange between BTC and the embassy has been reported in the field.

It is also crucial for gender mainstreaming that the responsible gender experts possess specific capacities and qualities such as assertiveness, pro-activity, networking skills and the ability to 'sell' the gender theme in the various sectors, and that it is not only women (but also 'convinced' men) who play a role in this process. Especially at DGD, the gender experts have not always possessed these capacities and qualities, with varying visibility of the gender issue within the organisation as a result (interviews). The backstopping mission to the DRC of a DGD gender expert is an example of a good practice, which is also mentioned in the DAC peer review (OECD/DAC, 2010). This mission resulted in better integration of gender in the three priority sectors (agriculture, accessibility of the countryside, technical and vocational training) of the ICP. The DAC peer review also recommends making sufficient financial resources available for such backstopping missions (OECD/DAC, 2010). In recent years, the gender expert at BTC has undertaken a number of similar missions (see above), the intended effects of which were not always realised. Especially the lack of local monitoring mechanisms, leadership that is positive with respect to gender (and follows up gender integration) and gender experts, and above all the use of sufficient human resources, appear crucial in this regard. The presence in an increasing number of countries of cadres with a specific gender responsibility is encouraging in this context, even though it is still too early to draw conclusions.

In the area of bilateral cooperation, the existence of gender focal points at the level of several embassies (e.g. in the DRC and Morocco) was already mentioned above; elsewhere, cadres are given (by the embassy, by BTC) the responsibility to deal with gender issues. Reference is also made to the increasing efforts of BTC to appoint thematic experts for gender (also in both countries). It is also important to mention the initiative in Benin taken by the embassy in which gender capacity was enhanced among a wide range of players via action research.

⁵⁹ Mukhopadhyay, M. (2009) "Mainstreaming Gender or 'Streaming' Gender Away: Feminists Marooned in the Development Business", *IDS Bulletin*, 35 (4): 95-103.

The bilateral projects included in the random sample that had already ended and were started relatively long ago, experienced no – or only very indirect – influence from gender focal points (or other gender instances). This is different, however, for projects started later; the PROFAO project (Morocco), for example, is supported by a thematic consultant who developed a path for integrating gender in the project (unfortunately the recommendations of the consultant were not fully followed). Within the FAFA project (Benin), a gender focal point was appointed together with a junior development worker to support the integration process.

Concerning *multilateral cooperation*, Belgium has no influence in the area of mobilising resources and capacity development for integrating gender.

Concerning *indirect cooperation*, the case studies have not resulted in a clear view of the gender capacity present among the non-governmental actors. Some NGAs appear to have been whittled down due to budget cuts, in other cases, NGAs appear to have developed capacity based on an internal dynamic. On the French-speaking side, there is an NGO (*Monde Selon Les Femmes*) that supports the integration of gender at NGAs; there is no such organisation on the Dutch-speaking side. The case studies confirm this very diverse picture. Organisations with a strong gender policy typically also have formally appointed gender experts, at headquarters as well as in the field (for example MM, VVOB, OSB, IFSI), but also expect that all of their personnel have the needed gender expertise. Some organisations (for example, VVOB) also have a gender strategy (global and at country level), while others (for example OSB) consistently integrate gender at all levels.

A.2: Gender training and education

Two training activities are included in the action plan of the policy note:

- *Training programmes that are adapted to the needs*
- *Annual training of the attachés and the permanent representation of BTC*

There is little demand for gender training, because generally there are no or limited institutional incentives to integrate gender. On the other hand, demand and interest are great when there is a policy that includes gender support.

The development of gender capacity within DGD is limited to the higher levels (interviews). The annual training for DGD attachés usually pays limited attention to the gender issue (interviews), but the annual briefings for BTC members do not (despite lobby work by the gender expert); as such, attention at gender level largely depends on the personal commitment of the local representatives (interviews). It is generally considered that knowledge of cross-cutting themes, including gender equality, should not be seen as a necessity for all employees, but rather as an extra (interviews).

Specific gender training possibilities were available at DGD via the EU (online training). A large number of DGD staff registered, but the project managers did not directly request such. There were also other training possibilities. DGD staff members state that there are enough possibilities, but that a lack of time makes participation difficult. Moreover, the limited leverage DGD has to further influence the course of events in projects and programmes is a major demotivating factor for following gender training.

BTC integrates gender in the training of junior development workers, but the juniors find this training too short⁶⁰. There is no training for senior staff members who have

⁶⁰ Moreover, BTC is also responsible for the organisation of the so-called 'Infocycle' that aims to "promote and deepen the knowledge and participation of civilians in world issues". Target groups of the cycle are present and future cooperation and/or international solidarity actors. Until 2014, the cycle consisted of a three-hour module on gender mainstreaming in development programmes. Beginning this year, the module has been abolished due to a cross-cutting approach to the theme. As such, there is a risk that the theme will no longer be offered to those who follow the training due to a lack of time and expertise on the topic on the part of the trainers. Training on the basic concepts of gender and development will also no longer be offered.

been working for a longer time at BTC; the training provided for the ResReps also does not include attention for gender. Training, however, was organised for the staff members of the grant office and the agriculture unit. There are also short briefings for all development workers who depart for the field. Since 2013, every six months a brochure is published, to which many have subscribed, containing an update on all gender training.

BTC together with ITC/ILO is chair of the Gender Expert Group of learn4dev. This expert group works together with other expert groups to integrate gender in all learn4dev training. It was noted during a 'Training Needs Assessment' that it is not necessary to develop new training material, because sufficient material is present on the learn4dev website.

BTC has also hired several junior development workers to deal with a backlog in a number of projects in the area of gender (e.g. for developing statistics). In addition to the general training, these development workers also receive specific gender training. The initial experiences are positive, insofar as the juniors receive adequate support. Some are convinced that it is a good idea to use especially juniors to help get the gender dimension on board; the use of national gender expertise could also be a solution.

Gender training and education has taken place in quite diverse contexts among the indirect actors. These range from isolated initiatives through well-developed programmes (action research in Benin) to components of a clearly developed strategy (e.g. VVOB). The greatest challenge in this area has already been covered: the creation of context-specific and sector-specific training programmes, so that these are able to effectively change existing practice. True change is often a long process that requires much more than the organisation of a few training moments.

B. Presence of gender instruments and mechanisms

The gender policy note indicates that gender should be integrated in the methods that personnel must use. Since these methods have been insufficiently operationalised in specific instruments, the policy note's action plan foresees the development of instruments that meet the requirements of each directorate and the development of a methodology for evaluating gender integration at institutional level.

Practice shows that these instruments have not been developed, with the exception of the integration of gender in the instructions for the ICPs and in the NGO assessment form (see 2.3.1 through 2.3.4 above). Furthermore, the G-marker is used to monitor the integration of gender in the identification and formulation phases of the interventions (see 2.3.5 above).

The study shows that 50% of the DGD respondents believe that there are no (adequate) tools available to integrate gender in their work, and 58.8% believe that no or insufficient information is available on the use of these tools.

Since 2011, BTC has been using a gender budget scan to assess the planned expenditures in terms of their probable impact on women and men, and to follow up the progress of the implementation and monitoring. The gender budget scan uses four colours: green for gender-sensitive activities, red for gender-specific activities, yellow for activities that support the gender machinery, and blue for gender-blind activities. The gender scan is simple to use, and is considered a useful complementary tool with respect to the G-marker, partly because the scan is also used after the identification phase and it provides more detailed information (interviews). Through the end of 2013, the gender scan had been applied to approximately 20 programmes in diverse sectors.

Despite the existence of this new gender budget scan, 81.3% of the BTC respondents are of the opinion that there are no (adequate) instruments available for integrating gender in their work, and that little or no information is available on using these instruments. According to the BTC gender mainstreaming strategy, especially the lack of knowledge and skills to integrate the gender perspective in BTC projects and programmes is a problem, and not so much the lack of methods, guidelines, manuals, checklists, strategies and instruments, because these are widely available at national and international level

(CTB, 2010). An important reason for not using the available resources and instruments is that the instruments are viewed as not being sector specific enough. The evaluation is of the opinion that there is also evidence of a lack of motivation and insight: the fact that women and men do not have equal opportunities to develop their lives is not seen by many as a challenge to which they (their programme) can (or should) contribute.

The existence and use of gender instruments and mechanisms within projects and organisations usually is a part of a broader gender policy and practice, in which capacity building also has a place. There are several exceptions (e.g. LISA in Benin) where gender has not been formally developed within the organisation's policy, but has been integrated (including instruments) in the field. On the other hand, the existence of for example a manual (CDT Morocco) also does not imply that it is actually being used by all departments of the syndicate. The development and refinement of thematic or sector-appropriate and useful instruments appear to be a major challenge (LVS in the DRC), even for organisations with an explicit gender policy and a strong tradition such as OSB.

2.5.3 Presence of the necessary incentives to encourage implementation of the action plan and the GAD strategy

According to the evaluations included in an evaluation summary of the African Development Bank (ADB), the absence of accountability and incentives is an important factor in explaining the limited integration of the gender dimension in organisational processes and interventions (African Development Bank Group, 2012). The lack of incentives is also a problem cited by a large majority of our discussion partners. Incentives can be categorised as 'hard' or 'soft'. Hard incentives refer to binding and enforceable measures, while soft incentives are less precise, non-binding and subject to voluntary compliance (Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2010)⁶¹.

In their 2009 study on the efficacy of gender mainstreaming in the EC, both authors show that cross-cutting mandates such as gender and environment have greater success when hard incentives are used. However, others (Weaver, 2008 cited in Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2010), are more sceptical and point out that hard incentives will especially lead to ritual compliance instead of far-reaching changes to the social institutions.

In the evaluation of gender and development in Belgian development cooperation, we focused on two hard and two soft incentives:

- Awareness raising, in particular by demonstrating the positive results of gender integration (soft)
- Possibilities for coordinating and creating networks (soft)
- The existence of a mechanism for monitoring the level of knowledge and continuing learning (hard)
- The integration of gender in the assessment criteria for personnel and project proposals (hard)

Concerning the hard incentives, we can conclude that these do not exist within DGD or BTC. There is no follow-up of the (increase in) gender expertise of personnel, to say nothing of controlling the (change in the) extent to which staff effectively integrate a gender dimension in their work. Among the indirect actors, VVOB is an interesting case, in the sense that the development of a gender policy, globally and per country, and the associated actions, clearly function as a reference within the organisation, and the implementation of this policy is also monitored (e.g. in Vietnam via a specific evaluation). In the case of OSB, hard incentives are not explicitly present, but gender has been integrated at all levels to such an extent that these really are unnecessary.

⁶¹ According to Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2010: 292) in reality there is more of a continuum from soft to hard, including for example the creation of coordinating committees and networks of civil servants for gender mainstreaming, compiling statistics itemised according to gender, checklists, manuals, handbooks, gender training, gender effect evaluation of policy, post-hoc monitoring and evaluation of maintaining efforts via the positive and negative sanctioning of civil servants.

While BTC had included the integration of the gender issue in assessment criteria for personnel in the 2010 strategy for gender mainstreaming, this intention was not implemented due to internal resistance (interviews). Recently, however, BTC paid greater attention to formulating job openings in a more gender-neutral way, and to pursuing a gender balance in the assessment committees. Knowledge of the gender issue is considered an advantage and sometimes even a crucial element, but it is not a decisive criterion for appointments (interviews). Belgian practice in this regard is not unique; the evaluation summary of the ADB already emphasised that development organisations have little integration of gender expertise and experience in recruitment processes, and that gender in general is not included as a cross-cutting theme when hiring non-gender specialists (African Development Bank Group, 2012).

We already mentioned above (section 2.3.4) that gender is not really considered important in assessing project or programme proposals within the framework of bilateral cooperation as well as within multilateral and indirect cooperation, and that good gender practices are not valued positively.

Concerning the soft incentives, both the DGD policy note and the 2010 BTC gender mainstreaming strategy foresee specific actions to communicate the positive results of gender integration as a way to convince personnel that gender mainstreaming efforts do make a difference. In practice, however, not much has been done in this area. This is also reflected in the results of the survey where 82.3% of the DGD and 87.5% of the BTC respondents believe that there is no or insufficient communication of the positive results of gender integration (compared to 71.4% and 53.9% respectively of NGO and academic respondents, and other respondents).

However, the visits to five countries demonstrated the importance (in the DRC, Bolivia) of thematic donor working groups on gender, which certainly have played their role as incentive, even if their effectiveness varies from country to country and period to period. In Benin, the above-mentioned action research communicated by the Attachés played a similar role. Furthermore, soft incentives de facto are present in those organisations that take gender integration seriously (for example MM, Solsoc, IFSI, LD); others (e.g. BD, APEFE, VVSG) mention the intention to develop a gender policy framework, but until now have not succeeded in doing so.

At the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the recently established Gender Task Force organised several awareness-raising activities in 2013. These contain among others a presentation by the Federal Institute for the Equality of Women and Men on the legal requirements concerning gender equality, and a presentation for the members of the Executive Committee. Furthermore, recently a daily news overview has begun encouraging all employees to focus more on the gender issue (interviews).

A final, very important incentive has to do with the way gender is valued within the specific organisation. The survey suggests in the first place that the leadership of the organisations in question is positive with respect to gender. More than half of the respondents did not agree with the statement that 'gender is not really important to the leadership of my organisation'. Many respondents also disagree with the statement: 'Explicitly dealing with gender is not rewarded/valued in my organisation'. This is especially the case for respondents from the categories NGOs, academics and others. We find more diverse answers at DGD and BTC, with a significant minority (36.4% at DGD, 28% at BTC) agreeing with the statement. However, there are no significant differences of opinion between management and programme staff.

2.5.4 Extent to which the resources made available were used efficiently

The use of resources may only be considered efficient if it resulted in actual changes. The discussion in the previous parts of this chapter taught us that efforts to better integrate gender has not always had the desired effects. A first reason appears to be an underestimation of the challenges of (sustainable) gender integration or, even the illusion that gender can be integrated without significant efforts and/or that one-off efforts (without follow-up) will suffice. This was confirmed by the survey results: 58% of the respondents believe that there are inadequate or no provisions (capacity

building, training, technical support, documentation, time) available to adequately integrate gender (with the differences between the various categories of respondents being small). However, 55% of the respondents find the offered instruments useful or very useful (here DGD and BTC respondents remain under the average – only 33.8% of the BTC respondents gave a positive assessment – while among the other actors, at least two thirds gave a positive answer). On the other hand, a significant minority (45%) seldom or never used the instruments (at the BTC this is even 59.4%), with especially the lack of sector-specific instruments or applicability being given as reason.

Stimulating synergies, networks and collective learning is another method to increase the efficiency of the efforts. Except for the cooperation between donors already mentioned above, there are only a limited number of cases where synergies explicitly were developed. Both multilateral programmes in the DRC (CHF and LVS) are good examples here. The CHF programme makes attention to gender a stringent requirement for funding, but at the same time encourages exchange, training and cooperation in technical clusters for the development of suitable instruments. LVS emphasises the coordination of efforts to combat sexual violence (but does not really succeed in this) and also encourages exchange and development as well as harmonisation of the approach. In Peru, both the VFS and the MSLF projects emphasised cooperation with all actors. On the other hand, there are projects (e.g. OSB in Vietnam) where opportunities were missed to more broadly share experiences, expertise and gender-related instruments. Finally, the gender platform set-up within the LISA II project in Benin and the action research in the same country already mentioned above are also examples of synergies and collective learning; the same applies to work sessions organised by BD in Bolivia on dealing with gender in the Andes culture.

Strengthening the presence and influence of women (in general as well as in the representation of target groups) in decision-making structures, and the structural embedding of gender in these structures were given attention in only a limited number of projects. In a number of cases (in particular projects or programmes with good gender integration) this was not really needed, but these are usually exceptions. While it is understandable that members of decision-making bodies are selected based on their position with respect to the project, it remains possible to allow room for defining and pursuing specific gender expertise and/or targets for the representation of women in these bodies (as MM does). Furthermore, it is obviously not enough to make use of a greater number of women if such efforts are not supplemented with the support of the parties concerned. In only one case (Global Fund) is there an explicit policy of equality (presence of women and representatives of the marginalised population) at all levels of the organisation.

In summary, it can be said that the level of commitment to unconditional implementation of the policy note with a view toward achieving gender equality differs from organisation to organisation, but remains limited in general. Where there is an unambiguous institutional commitment and leadership in respect to gender (this is the case, for example, among a number of NGOs), it does not appear to be too difficult to find sufficient human and other resources to implement a gender policy in line with the policy note. Where this clear commitment and leadership is lacking (in bilateral cooperation, for example), these resources frequently appear to be insufficient or are only present thanks to the efforts of committed individuals. As a result, not enough has been invested at DGD (and to a lesser degree at BTC) in integrating gender at organisational level (development of areas of responsibility, accountability ...), strengthening the gender capacity of personnel, and developing gender instruments and mechanisms. Institutional incentives to effectively mainstream gender generally are absent. Among the other actors, the situation varies strongly from organisation to organisation, with NGOs generally having the strongest score.

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

This question concerns the sustainability of the results of Belgian cooperation in the area of GAD. It is clear that the analysis concerning this question was limited to only those projects that were able to present results in the area of GAD. However, these results are at several levels:

- *The integration of gender in the policy and programme (i.e. project) cycles*
- *Progress in the area of capacity building*
- *The changes realised in the area of gender equality and empowerment of women (whether or not the result of a gender approach)*
- *The changes realised with respect to reducing and preventing sexual violence against women.*

As is known, guaranteeing the sustainability of the results achieved is an important challenge in development programmes; this applies a fortiori to results in the area of gender when gender is not one of the central concerns of those responsible for the programme. The findings related to the 50 case studies are, relatively speaking, fairly positive, with relatively good scores concerning the sustainability of the results of the integration in the intervention cycle and also concerning the results of the sustainability of the contributions to gender equality and empowerment of women.

Table 11: Sustainability of the results of Belgian cooperation in the area of GAD

	Score	N
Degree of sustainability of the results of the integration of gender at policy level and in the programme and project cycle	2.61	36
Degree of sustainability of the results in the area of capacity building	2.41	32
Degree of sustainability of the contributions to gender equality and empowerment of women	2.65	40
Degree of sustainability of the contributions to reducing and preventing violence against women	2.31	13
Global score	2.68	41

2.6.1 Degree of sustainability of the results of the integration of gender at policy level and in the programme and project cycle

At policy level, this evaluation yielded several examples of attempts at gender integration in which both thematic donor working groups and supporting missions from Belgium played a positive role. The significant progress made in this often proves quite fragile since it depends on the personal commitment of embassy staff who frequently lack the political support required for a strong anchoring of gender integration. The fact that the partner countries are not asking for this, is an additional obstacle. Several donor countries contacted during the field visits were faced with similar challenges. On the other hand, there are also positive factors, such as in Morocco where gender-sensitive budgeting is part of government practice that aims in this way to implement the international obligations agreed to by the country. In Benin, the involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture in the action research was a positive factor contributing to the anchoring of gender at a strategic partner organisation.

Overall, and unsurprisingly, it is clear that the sustainability of the many one-off actions that were taken to integrate gender in the cycle remained limited. Only when there is a

more broadly established and supported strategy, were results achieved that gradually became anchored. Such strategies generally are strongly linked to the vision and mission of the organisations in question (e.g. SolSoc in Morocco, VVOB and OSB in general and in Vietnam) that ensure that gender is included in all important policy and operational decisions.

In some of the organisations with good gender practice, gender has been embedded to such an extent that the sustainability of the integration in the cycle is no longer a challenge (OSB, MSLF, SolSoc, Juzoor). In other organisations (such as VVOB, but de facto also BTC and MM), the integration of gender is approached as a change process, and the existence of a clear strategy with corresponding action plan is absolutely necessary to the anchoring of gender. The unambiguous commitment of VVOB to make gender a spearhead undoubtedly benefits ultimate sustainability, certainly when (as is the case in Vietnam) the initiative is taken to have the efforts made evaluated externally and to further specify the change process based on the evaluation. Concerning BTC, the cases studied yield a double picture: the 'older' programmes score poorly in the area of the sustainability of gender integration in the cycle, even when (generally isolated or personal) attempts are made. In a number of (more recent) programmes, the more structural approach, among others due to the use of thematic experts (gender focal points ...), is more likely to yield sustainable results, even though it is still too early to draw conclusions. An important bottleneck here appears to be the discontinuity of key personnel, which again underscores the importance of genuine mainstreaming at all levels of the organisation in question, and the danger of making gender integration dependent on a few individuals.

Other important factors that can anchor the integration of gender in the cycle are the formulation and follow-up of gender-specific indicators, the integration of specific gender outputs within the intervention logic, and, especially for large programmes (such as FVS in Peru), good coordination with government policy. As the example of AD teaches, gender aspects, even in the absence of a formal gender policy, can be well integrated in the cycle via specific indicators (and if required a specific approach for men and women).

2.6.2 Degree of sustainability of the results in the area of capacity building

Almost all projects contributed to capacity building at individual and/or collective level. This applies in the first place to education projects that especially strengthened the individual capacities of men and women; few indications were found of problems with the sustainability of these results.

However, the situation is different at institutional level. The sustainability of the capacity building of course is closely linked to the institutional sustainability of the partner organisation as such. In a number of cases (but fewer than expected), this sustainability is under pressure, in particular when the partnership with the Belgian partner is threatened with termination. Specific capacity building in the area of gender also appears to be easier to anchor in non-governmental structures than in government structures.

NGOs that, for example, were strengthened in the area of gender via the CHF programme, in many cases have undergone an important transformation that they themselves claim is well integrated and has strengthened the organisation. This also applies to the farmer's organisation with which OSB is working in Vietnam. Other similar examples concern the integration of gender in grassroots organisations in the PPILDA and PASAB projects, or in the framework of LISA II of LD in Benin. Local structures (e.g. Juzoor in Palestine, partners of BD in Bolivia) appear to be able to create a dynamic of capacity development on their own via project funding.

However, the development and sustainability of gender capacity appears to be more difficult in government structures, as demonstrated by the experience of MM (DRC), PARZS (Benin) and VVOB (Vietnam). The attempts by BTC in RDC to support gender focal points and "division genre" are still too recent to be able to assess the sustainability of their effects. In these cases, it often concerns cumbersome institutions that are able to change only with difficulty and via the protracted deployment of a relatively high level of resources, and that, even so, are frequently strongly dependent on several individuals in the structures

in question. A positive example here is MAEP (Benin), where an in-house gender policy provides the framework for gender capacity building.

2.6.3 Degree of sustainability of the contributions to gender equality and empowerment of women

It was not easy for the evaluation team to assess this area, first of all because there was limited information available on the effects of the interventions in the area of gender equality and empowerment (see above), and also because an assessment on sustainability always implies a judgement on the future based on an up-to-date analysis. Moreover, the link between empowerment and greater gender equality is not always clear: can we speak of (sustainable) empowerment if it does not (ultimately) contribute to changes in gender relations? Can we for example accept that women have sustainably gained access to power when they experience economic gains, without a transformation of gender relations (within the family, within society) taking place? Or may we assume that economic progress will contribute to such a transformation in another way, at least indirectly? Or is it rather the reverse, that the economic progress of women cannot be sustained if it is also not accompanied by a transformation of gender relations?

Viewed globally (i.e. across the sectors), it is clear that projects that, in addition to their technical focus, also paid strong attention to strengthening organisations, awareness raising, training, leadership development ... – and to ensuring that these effects effectively extend to women – have a greater chance of generating sustainable results in the area of empowerment and gender equality. Such projects often lay the foundation for a spontaneous development process in which women, usually collectively, gradually (and with or without external support) become stronger and take their destiny into their own hands. In these cases, it appears to be a combination of internal, external and social or economic empowerment (individual and collective), in which the various processes reinforce one another and create a solid foundation for sustainable empowerment and greater gender equality. Good examples of this type of project were found in almost all countries visited.

Moreover, a few specific indications can also be given concerning the interventions in a number of sectors:

- *Education projects*, as has already been indicated above, generally contributed to the empowerment of girls and women. Better education clearly contributes to an increase in internal and external empowerment, and better equips women and girls to, for example, take advantage of opportunities in the job market. The empowerment effects generated by these projects usually are sustainable; only in an environment that is very politically or economically unstable can it be difficult for women to put their increased knowledge and skills to use. In most cases, however, there are positive effects that emerged from the context, such as greater social acceptance (in all countries visited) concerning the access of women to secondary and higher education, and to (economically and socially) interesting jobs. The empowerment effects of these projects are located at individual level; whether these are translated into greater gender equality (at family level and more broadly) mainly depends on the strength and motivation of those concerned.
- *Projects in the healthcare sector* (at least those included in the random sample) played an important role in fulfilling the practical needs of women and girls; they have been of great importance without, however, contributing to greater gender equality in the process. The sustainability of the effects of these projects largely depends on the ability to further provide quality services in the future. For this, they usually are dependent on external funding (e.g. MM and AD in the DRC, MAR in Niger); in some cases, access to this funding appears to be certain (AD for example is part of a worldwide programme), while for other organisations this is strongly dependent on project or programme funding. Moreover, the local situation also plays an important role, and poverty in particular keeps the population in a situation of chronic dependence and vulnerability, which compromises access to even the most basic healthcare, especially for marginalised women (e.g. MM). When healthcare is supported at sector level and finds its context in an (effective)

- government policy (JHSS in Rwanda), the chances for sustainability are greater.
- *Economic development projects (in the agricultural sector, via microcredit ...)* provide the clearest examples of the (economic) empowerment of women, whether individual (e.g. Diaconia in Bolivia, via microcredit), or individual/collective. Economic progress is translated into changing gender relations especially in projects that also commit themselves to awareness raising, leadership development ... (focused on women but not necessarily from a gender perspective): e.g. OSB and ACC in Vietnam, LISA in Benin. The progress made also appears to be sustainable. Here it may also be noted that while transformation of gender relationships was not necessarily an explicit aim, such a change was indeed realised in practice. No projects were found in which the economic empowerment of women did not also translate de facto into changing gender relationships. However, these changes frequently are located only at micro level and do not concern changes in attitude and behaviour; if no changes take place in this area over time, the sustainability of the benefits gained remains fragile.

2.6.4 Degree of sustainability of the contributions to reducing and preventing violence against women

As was already indicated above (see 2.4.5), only a few projects contributed to reducing and preventing violence against women. Several projects have combating sexual (or family) violence as principal goal. In the case of LVS (DRC), the programme contributed to a number of sustainable institutional results (legislation ...), but that in themselves are only a small part of the solution. In the field, the political and institutional instability in Eastern Congo constitutes a significant threat to the sustainability of the results, despite the fact that the programme was developed in a balanced way, is strongly committed to prevention, and includes a focus on the perpetrators of sexual violence. The sustainability of the effects of the VFS programme (Peru) appear largely to be guaranteed thanks to the strong institutional embedding of the programme at national, regional and local level.

Other projects contributed only indirectly to reducing and preventing violence against women, for example by strengthening municipal services (CIC and ASF in Morocco), increasing the empowerment (negotiating position) of sex workers (IST Morocco), or by focusing on family violence (VVOB and OSB in Vietnam) or changing the attitudes of men (LISA, Benin). The extent to which there was evidence of clear effects and whether these are sustainable are not clear.

Finally, the qualitative impact study in Vietnam indicated a positive correlation between the economic empowerment of women and reducing domestic violence. It is important to mention here that in the projects in question (OSB, ACC), the support to women included aspects other than only the economic.

In summary, it can be said that there is a strong variation in the sustainability of the results of the integration of gender at policy level, in the project and programme cycle, and in gender capacity building. The progress made at policy level is frequently quite fragile in bilateral cooperation since results often are the outcome of the commitment of individuals (on the Belgian side), and gender integration typically is not perceived as an issue by local institutions. Only in cases where integration efforts are linked to the organisational structure are there good chances of sustainability of the updated policy, but also of strengthening gender capacity. At project and programme level, the formulation of gender-related outputs and effects, and gender-specific indicators is an important mechanism for anchoring the integration of gender in the intervention cycle; this seldom takes place, but the practice is on the rise.

The sustainability of contributions to gender equality and empowerment of women is relatively high, in particular in projects that have effectively integrated gender and/or that, in addition to their technical focus, also pay strong attention to organisational development, training, leadership development, and the like, with women effectively being involved as (joint) guiding actors. Such an approach is usually at the basis of a dynamism of developing empowerment at socio-economic, internal and external levels that reinforce one another and create a solid foundation for sustainable empowerment and greater gender equality.

2.7 Evaluation question 7: To what extent has the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 proven to be effective?

Security Council Resolution 1325 was unanimously adopted on 31 October 2000. The resolution calls for recognition of the role women play in conflict prevention, conflict management and peace building. It invites the UN member states to take the measures necessary to facilitate an increase in the participation of women in the aforementioned processes and to guarantee the protection of women before, during and after conflicts. In 2004, the Security Council also called upon members to develop their own National Action Plan to effectively contribute to the resolution's implementation.

The first Belgian National Action Plan for implementation of Resolution 1325 was drawn up in 2008 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Belgian Commission on Women and Development, the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, and the Institute for Equality of Women and Men. There is a Task Force 1325 that met to prepare and follow-up this first National Action plan and presently (mid 2014) is doing the same for the second plan. Reference is made in the action plan to the formation of a 'women, war and peace' working group within the Belgian Commission on Women and Development to focus on Resolution 1325. This working group organises activities to make Belgian public opinion aware of the importance of the gender dimension to the process of peace, security and development. The action plan contains a wide range of policy guidelines and actions in several (partly overlapping) domains: violence against women in armed conflicts, peace building and conflict prevention, development cooperation (in the narrow sense), peace missions, and monitoring and evaluation. With the exception of the peace missions, FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation is responsible for the implementation. The second action plan (2013-2016) was finalised in 2013 and submitted to the Council of Ministers of 19 July 2013. The plan includes a new structure and methodology, and six priority objectives: an international normative framework, integration of the gender dimension in the framework of Resolution 1325, the protection of women and girls against all forms of violence, the participation of women in peace processes and processes of peace building, support for implementation of Resolution 1325 and the National Action Plan, and follow up, reporting and monitoring.

An analysis of the implementation of the full action plan was not possible in the context of this evaluation; consequently, in consultation with the commissioning authority, it was decided to limit the analysis to the domain of 'development cooperation', but realising that the resolution is an issue ideally suited to an integrated approach of several domains.

Within the domain of development cooperation, the Action Plan refers in the first place to the broader framework of Belgian cooperation that integrates the equality of rights and opportunities of women and men and the empowerment of women as a cross-cutting theme, and moreover that makes a priority at operational level of protecting, caring for and reintegrating victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts and the fight against impunity. In this, the African Great Lakes region is a geographic priority. Within this global framework, in the section on development cooperation, the Action Plan calls for 13 specific actions that are formulated quite generally and that emphasise (among others) aid to international organisations and countries (and active networks of women there) that are plagued by conflicts.

2.7.1 Extent of follow-up of the policies of the National Action Plan (under the section Development Cooperation)

The implementation of Resolution 1325 is one of the four priorities to which Belgian development cooperation has committed itself with respect to gender equality and the empowerment of women, and preventing violence against women is a clear priority for the current minister. A total of 6 of the 18 Belgian bilateral cooperation partner countries are in an unstable situation: Burundi, the DRC, Niger, Uganda, the Palestinian territories and Rwanda. Concerning Resolution 1325, the first National Action Plan paid special attention to Burundi, the DRC, the Palestinian territories and Rwanda. In the second National Action Plan (2013-2016), specific attention is paid to Afghanistan (not a partner country!), the DRC and Mali. A scan of the ICPs of the countries not included in the random sample for the field study (Burundi, the Palestinian territories, Rwanda and Mali) shows that only the ICPs of Burundi and Rwanda refer to the Belgian and respectively the Burundian or Rwandan plans of action for the implementation of Resolution 1325 as documents with which account was taken in developing the ICP. However, concrete indications of this cannot be found in the ICPs. This is not the case for the DRC (included in the random sample), and the important focus on combating sexual violence is being concretised in a parallel process that has emerged in an important intervention (LVS, included in this evaluation) that was launched already in 2004 and is being implemented together with several other international partners. Thus, the situation in the DRC appears to confirm an internationally noted trend that Resolution 1325 often results in parallel processes instead of being integrated within existing processes.

Of the five focus countries in the first and second action plan, only the Palestinian territories and Mali have relatively more G-2 interventions and greater expenditures for these interventions (compared with the interventions and total expenditures for all 18 partner countries). Concerning the number of G-1 interventions and total expenditures for this, only the DRC has an average that is less than the 18 partner countries. However, there are no specific indications that would point to influence by the Action Plan on the policy choices made in the cooperation with the partner countries and elsewhere.

However, the first National Action Plan has no separate budget (only the Ministry of Defence has a specific budget reserved for its areas of responsibility). Thus, activities related to development cooperation conducted in the context of Resolution 1325 must be financed via the bilateral, multilateral or non-governmental cooperation channel, and included in the ICPs and programmes of the indirect actors. However, this appears not to have taken place, nor was a concrete framework developed to operationalise implementation of the resolution within development cooperation.

The SRHR policy document also mentions that one of the recommendations of Resolution 1325 'Women, Peace and Security' is the defence when needed of the implication of women in looking for solutions to conflicts. Also mentioned was that Belgium will ensure that the rules of sexual and reproductive rights will be respected by soldiers dispatched by Belgium in the context of peace operations or the training of foreign troops.

Finally, the multilateral cooperation policy document states that the Belgian contribution in support of sexual and reproductive rights will be increased and that Belgium will continue to draw international attention to the problem of sexual violence.

2.7.2 Degree of implementation of the National Action Plan (under the section Development Cooperation)

While diverse activities were carried out that fit in the National Action Plan, that latter did not directly play a role in selecting and implementing the interventions, partly because it did not have its own budget available. The Action Plan especially aims to establish strategic orientations and not to deal specifically with the operational level. Thus, activities in the area of combating and preventing violence against women tend rather to be initiated and implemented based on the specific 'internal' logic of the relevant Belgian

and local actors. In general, there is much interest in the issue of sexual violence, but without this being linked to or resulting from Resolution 1325.

A status report was drawn up in December 2011 that was used as basis for developing the second National Action Plan. This includes a number of examples of programmes that are financed in the framework of Resolution 1325, in particular the four focus countries. Belgium thus is contributing to the general funds of the international partner organisations that play a catalysing role in following up Resolutions 1325 and 1820, such as UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and OHCHR. Moreover, the sub-programme 'Knowledge Management and Gender' is part of the multilateral programme of Belgian development cooperation in partnership with the FAO for the period 2008-2011; the DIMITRA project is part of this (DIMITRA covers the region of the African Great Lakes (RDC, Rwanda, Burundi) and other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa such as Niger). Furthermore, a number of initiatives in the Palestinian territories were cited (among others the Juzoor and PGFTU projects were included as case studies in this evaluation) and in the DRC. It is also stated that Belgium attaches importance to the gender dimension of the refugee issue, and calls for the protection of women in refugee camps and ensuring that sexual and reproductive healthcare, and respecting the corresponding rights, are part of the humanitarian aid programmes and of the reconstruction programmes in countries in a post-conflict situation. Also mentioned is aid to programmes targeting a comprehensive and integrated response to the medical and psychosocial needs, and to the socio-economic reintegration, of the victims of sexual violence (largely in the African Great Lakes region), e.g. programmes carried out by UN organisations and the LVS included in the evaluation.

The second National Action Plan (2013-2016) indicates the department responsible for each line of action, which is seen as an improvement over the initial National Action Plan. Nevertheless, coordination between Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation is not good (interviews). The formulated monitoring instruments are not very concrete, which can complicate the proper monitoring of the implementation. Moreover, from the perspective of FPS Foreign Affairs, there is a clear overlap with the activities of the Gender Task Force (in particular concerning objective 2 of the National Action Plan). For the purpose of the operationalisation of the second National Action Plan, the Civil Society Development directorate (D2.5) of DGD is presently preparing a note "Women and Conflict", including a schedule that among others aims to prevent fragmentation (the action plan is seen as extremely broad and ambitious).

The evaluation team found no example of institutional actions for monitoring the National Action Plans: in neither bilateral cooperation nor in indirect cooperation. This indicates poor articulation between this action plan (and those that must develop and follow it up) and the 'machinery' of regular cooperation that is realised differently (via ICPs, action programmes ...). The insufficient attention paid to the problem of sexual violence mentioned above confirms this finding, which does not mean that ad-hoc attention is not being paid to the issue (e.g. at the level of the political leaders).

Box 10: Unexpected effects of a training programme

The APEFE programme in Bolivia funds among others a master's programme for teachers who are already active professionally.

The programme document pays no attention to gender. The field visit, however, revealed that the programme primarily reaches women, since especially women are active in primary education. The women interviewed stated that the education increased their self-esteem and self-confidence. The competencies acquired could be used in the contexts of both their family and their community. The parent committees also addressed problems such as domestic violence.

It is unfortunate, however, that APEFE is not following up these results.

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

The notion 'unexpected long-term results of the interventions' is difficult to define clearly. This applies in particular to unexpected positive results (we after all can assume that negative long-term results are always unexpected: if not, the intervention would have attempted to prevent them). A formal position in this regard is that each result that is not explicitly included in the intervention logic, or the project or programme proposal, is 'unexpected' (but this implies that the same effect will be seen as 'unexpected' in one project and as 'expected' in a different identical project, only because it was included in the description of the second project). On the other hand, one can argue that many (unexplicated) results indeed implicitly are 'expected'. This applies for example to the effects that are expected of education projects. The determination that these result in the empowerment of girls and women can hardly be categorised as "unexpected", even if the project proposals do not refer to empowerment; the same can be said for informal training and capacity building.

Thus, an unambiguous demarcation is not possible. We feel it is particularly important that the evaluation give a good picture of the (possible) unexpected positive and negative effects. For positive unexpected long-term results, this inevitably leads to a limited overlap with the findings that were described above in section 2.4.4.

2.8.1. What are the unexpected positive long-term results of the interventions?

Unexpected positive long-term results typically concern situations in which local target groups (in this case women) develop their own dynamic that leads to better gender relations, without the cooperation project itself playing a role here. The most striking example of this is the Tarija project in Bolivia (municipal cooperation with a view toward strengthening the fire department) where the project resulted in the empowerment of the women involved and in greater equality in gender relations, without the project having pushed for this in one way or another.

There are several other projects in the random sample with similar effects; thus for example, university projects can be a springboard for female academics to also play a greater role in the university decision-making structures; a similar effect was noted in Bolivia (see box). Economic success for women in Vietnam results in greater social and political recognition and an increase in the political weight carried by women (individually and as group). In Vietnam as well, the high-performing microcredit programme had a positive effect on the Women's Union, making it possible for it to expand and deepen its programme activities; the IFSI programme in Palestine resulted in a similar effect, with female trade union representatives being included in a national committee. The Diaconia project (Bolivia, also microcredit) generated similar effects at the individual level.

More generally, and across all countries and sectors, training efforts and participative methods appear to have a strong emancipating/transforming effect (whether or not explicitly intended). Women who participate in training and awareness raising gain confidence, strengthen their self-esteem and autonomy as well as their desire for more, in the personal as well as public realm.

2.8.2. What are the unexpected negative long-term results of the interventions?

In the 50 analysed interventions, only one example was found of negative side effects for women resulting from a gender-blind approach (the ASI project where a gender-blind approach to child abuse and sexual exploitation of children can result in negative effects for both boys and girls). However, our study remained too superficial to posit that such effects are not present to some degree in the other projects. Nevertheless, it can be stated that 'attention for women' has been quite well integrated and operationalised in the interventions, as evidenced among others in the good representation of women as target group. While this 'attention for women' does not imply a gender approach and certainly not the empowerment of women, the relatively high level of involvement of women at least appears to have been important as a factor in preventing negative effects.

The unexpected long-term results that were observed in the projects mostly concern social developments that are difficult to predict and that were the result of contextual changes but also, at micro or meso level, of effects that emerge from the interventions themselves.

For example, at macro level, the resistance to the gender-concept in Bolivia resulted in an extra obstacle in the pursuit of gender equality, and the increasing integration of Vietnam in the world economy disrupts local economic and social systems, with negative consequences for the empowerment of women (increased migration from rural areas, low-quality employment of women in industry).

At micro-level, there are only a few reports of negative effects, which usually were corrected. Thus, for example, the activity of LVS for the benefit of victims of sexual violence initially was a cause of social jealousy in local communities (was corrected by involving the entire community in the actions), or in several cases the economic success of women caused an increase in domestic violence (Vietnam).

3. Conclusions and lessons learned

The conclusions proposed in this chapter are analytic in nature and take as point of departure the most important findings of this evaluation on the eight evaluation questions. The analysis aims at making the links between the most important findings, and providing in this way a coherent explanation for the results achieved, and in so doing indicating the most important factors that explain success and failure. In this, we have used as reference the theory of change presented at the beginning of chapter 2.

The starting point for our analysis below is the most important finding of this evaluation: **overall, Belgian development cooperation has not succeeded until now in making a significant contribution to gender equality.** Which is not say that it has made no contribution or that efforts have not been made. On the contrary, an attempt was made at many locations and in various ways to integrate gender and achieve greater gender equality. However, these results are largely due to temporary and coincidental configurations that were mainly at the initiative of motivated individuals. Only a limited number of organisations succeeded in integrating gender in a *structural and continuous* way such that a meaningful contribution was made to greater gender equality. Overall, however, we can only conclude that the extent and intensity of the efforts made, and the results achieved, are not in proportion to the magnitude of the specific problems that women in particular experienced in the South resulting from unequal and unjust gender relations. The fact that thematic gender evaluations in other countries came to similar conclusions suggests to us that development cooperation *in general* is finding it very difficult to effectively and sustainably contribute to better gender relations. Below we will use the experiences and findings of this evaluation not so much to repeat the conclusions that so many evaluations before us have made, but above all to search for explanations to guide our recommendations in the following chapter.

1. Societal and institutional support for full gender integration is limited, and has resulted in a situation in which adequate legal and policy frameworks have not been translated into good practice

Development cooperation does not take place in a vacuum, but is created and carried out via social institutions here and in the South. With the benefit of the hindsight, it can be stated that the theory of change on which the Gender Policy Note (implicitly) is based has taken insufficient account of the absence of strong societal embedding of the value and importance of gender equality, first and foremost in Belgium itself. This deficiency is also found in the organisational structure of most Belgian actors in development cooperation – at DGD, BTC as well as the indirect actors – and was (and still is) an important obstacle to efforts in favour of gender equality.

Nevertheless, the required initial legal conditions for effectively striving for greater gender equality are indeed present in Belgium: there is a legal framework that allows for taking gender, gender mainstreaming, and the prevention and reduction of sexual violence sufficiently serious. Moreover, the gender dimension is integrated *as cross-cutting theme*⁶² in the most important legislation concerning development cooperation (Acts of 1999 and 2013, Federal Act on Gender Mainstreaming). Belgium thus is able to meet its international commitments concerning gender equality. It was further established that in the countries visited, the GAD policy documents and associated legal frameworks generally were relatively well developed, and that coherence with other development and gender integration policy in general also did not constitute a problem (Bolivia is an exception here).

⁶² We will return to this later.

However, for Belgium as well as for many countries in the North and South, it is very difficult to translate the legal framework and associated policy intentions into an effective practice at policy level and into specific programmes and projects. While properly implementing policy is also difficult in other domains, this evaluation must conclude that in the case of gender, this challenge is particularly great. There appear to be additional barriers related to the heart of gender and gender mainstreaming, which in essence intends more just (power) relationships between men and women. This inevitably evokes great resistance, in particular if one wishes to implement *specific* changes; few in fact are prepared to willingly cede power or prerogatives. The evaluation found many examples of such resistance among individuals and in organisations and institutions in Belgium and in the South, in formal institutions but also in target-group organisations in the South and in families.

It is important to note here that changes in gender relations touch the essence and the life experience of each individual. Furthermore, gender is internalised from childhood, making it psychologically difficult for individuals to call existing gender identities and behaviours into question. Consequently, the resistance that (intended) changes invoke can be more persistent than for other change processes. Finally, gender and gender mainstreaming are at the same time challenging and difficult concepts to deal with; consequently, their translation at institutional and sector level is difficult (see also below).

Lesson 1. Converting policy on gender equality into a well-performing practice is a demanding job that was underestimated in the past. Certainly when strong societal support is lacking, the translation of formal/legal achievements into real changes in the lives of women and men is an extremely demanding and complex process with many dimensions and stages, which evoke resistance that cannot be eliminated via an instrumental approach alone.

2. Little or no attention was paid to the initial conditions designed to ensure implementation of the Gender Policy Note

A second explanation has to do with the Gender Policy Note itself. It was expected that this Note would enable full integration of gender in Belgian cooperation, and contribute in this way to greater gender equality. Despite the intrinsic qualities of the policy note, which was even ahead of its time on a number of points, its impact has remained extremely limited. This is due in the first place to an incorrect assessment of the complexity of the change process (see above). In addition, however, it is important to point out a number of more “traditional” gaps, not so much in the policy note itself but rather in its institutional embedding. Referring to the theory of change, we can see that insufficient attention was paid to a number of crucial assumptions of this theory; these assumptions concern (1) sufficient familiarity, acceptance and use of the policy note; (2) sufficient financial and human resources; (3) support on the part of leadership (political, DGD and BTC management), and institutional openness; (4) clear areas of responsibility, procedures and good instruments and (5) sufficient hard and soft incentives. These shortcomings have resulted in the policy note largely falling into disuse, and never being used *as such*.

However, it is important to emphasise that since the Note was drawn up, many – frequently valuable – initiatives have been undertaken that take gender and gender integration to heart. The extent to which the Note played a role in the emergence and development of these initiatives is unclear; however, few indications were found for this. In any case, there has never been a coherent, continuous campaign with sufficiently broad support to generate substantial and sustainable effects, while this is precisely what was needed given the complexity of the change process.

Lesson 2. An intrinsically good strategy (or policy) note is a necessary but insufficient condition for realising the goals set by the Note. Above all, the Note must be embedded in a policy environment and structure that guarantee fulfilment of the necessary preconditions, and that pay sufficient attention to the implementation and follow-up.

Thus, referring to the theory of change, we must conclude that a number of crucial assumptions were not met. As a result, the intended outputs (support of partner organisations and partner countries for gender integration; strengthening their own capacities) were achieved to only a very limited degree.

Finally, this evaluation identified another important, initial and complicating factor that negatively affected attempts at full gender integration...

3. Gender (equality) and gender mainstreaming are concepts that are interesting but difficult to use, which have given rise to extremely diverse practices, but that frequently were poorly understood and applied

The evaluation found that many efforts were made to introduce, explain and quantify the conceptual framework for gender and gender mainstreaming (via training, workshops ...). Nevertheless, it is quite shocking to note how poorly 'gender' continues to be understood, how many organisations and projects for example reduce gender to attention for the inclusion of women and girls in project actions. It is unclear why this is the case. Certainly the reasons given above are one explanation, but these appear not to be the only ones.

Because, on the one hand, gender and gender mainstreaming constitute a formal part of the policy and, on the other hand, for various reasons their full application is problematic (or at least experienced as such), an extremely diverse practice has emerged with the title "gender mainstreaming" being applied to very different situations, and gender mainstreaming being interpreted in very different ways, which frequently misunderstand the essence of the key concepts.

The most important finding is that in the past decade, a 'gender light' practice has emerged that has been used by many of the actors in question. This approach implies on the one hand that gender and gender mainstreaming have received the necessary (read: politically correct) attention, but on the other hand that this attention in fact meant an erosion of that which gender and gender mainstreaming in fact imply. Hence, the 'gender light' approach is not so much a form of confusion of ideas but more a (conscious or unconscious) **dilution of concepts** that strips the concept of its essence and primarily has resulted in the goal of gender mainstreaming – gender equality that implies social transformation – being lost from view or at least ignored. Instead of a means or a strategy, gender mainstreaming has degenerated into a goal in itself, that moreover, is being operationalised accordingly in a restricted manner. Stripped of its focus on the final goal, 'gender mainstreaming' in practice is reduced to a catchall with limited specific content and without a clear orientation to the daily lives of men and women.

A common example of the dilution of gender mainstreaming is the application of a gender *perspective* (in policy, in programmes) that translates itself among others into attention for gender as a 'cross-cutting' theme. Treating 'gender' as a cross-cutting theme in fact goes against the essence of the notion of 'mainstreaming', which means becoming a part of the mainstream", *belonging to the core* of development cooperation. Precisely this being a part of the core is crucial to achieving (or contributing to) gender equality⁶³. By treating gender as a cross-cutting theme, it is stripped of its transforming (in essence, political) power and reduced to an essentially instrumental process. Instruments, procedures ... in support of gender integration have an impact only when gender is integrated in the mainstream via *specific* actions, outputs and effects that explicitly intend the empowerment of women and gender equality.

⁶³ We noted above that the new Development Cooperation Act also treats gender as a cross-cutting theme. The Act (article 11, §2) on the one hand does explicitly refer to the goal of integrating the gender dimension, and in particular states that it intends the empowerment of women and equality between men and women in society.

Another illustration of a 'gender light' approach are analyses and a practice that emphasise women as a 'vulnerable group' and as cause of 'the problem', which not only ignores the potential that women have to bring change into their own situations but also, and especially, the problematic attitudes and behaviour of men who are the cause of inequality (and violence against women) and are an obstacle to changes in the direction of more equal gender relations.

As mentioned earlier, not everything is 'gender light' and, on the contrary, interesting examples were found of good practices in which it is striking that examples of good and bad practice can coexist side-by-side in the same organisation, without a problem. This indicates that within organisations with a weak policy or practice, there is still room for developing initiatives around gender equality.

Lesson 3. Gender and gender mainstreaming imply in essence social transformation (changing power structures) and their full application will only be realised when a wide range of conditions have been met at individual and organisational level. If these conditions are not met, their application inevitably will be diluted without, however, this excluding the development of good practices at a smaller scale.

Lesson 4. On the one hand, the experience with this evaluation suggests that consistent gender mainstreaming is impossible without a gender-friendly organisational structure. Adequate gender mainstreaming after all implies not only that sufficient resources are made available within the organisations in question, that gender expertise is present, that suitable instruments are developed ... It *above all* means that the organisational structure (including its *leadership*) displays at least an openness to gender and expresses the desire to create openness within the organisation for the transforming dimension of gender mainstreaming and to work accordingly. When this is not the case, gender mainstreaming frequently remains a matter for (committed) individuals, and the danger is real that change strategies will be limited to the instrumental level.

Returning to the theory of change, we can say that the three important conclusions made above, which reinforce one another to a significant degree, have resulted in only a very limited realisation of the effects intended by the policy note and the theory of change (increased integration of gender in interventions; increased attention for the inequality between men and women), in the context of which it must also be mentioned that the Belgian initiatives could not always count on sufficient political will among the instances in the partner countries. In addition, the awareness that there is limited enthusiasm in the partner countries, and in many cases even resentment against a donor interfering in gender relations, de facto strongly inhibits Belgian actors from placing gender on the agenda, certainly when it is not truly encouraged from within the organisation.

4. Belgian cooperation succeeded only to a very limited degree in properly integrating gender in policy dialogue and interventions

The attempts to integrate gender in the policy dialogue and development interventions no doubt are coloured to a large degree by the factors described in the three previous points; they constitute the most important cause of the process of policy evaporation that was also noted in other evaluations. At almost all organisations and in the majority of the interventions examined, gender is present as focal point, but rarely is there a comprehensive and coherent practice. Rather, we see gender appear "here and there", only to disappear later in the intervention cycle. A number of more technical shortcomings further complicated integration, such as the lack of clear guidelines concerning the integration of gender in the policy dialogue with partner countries but also with indirect actors. For example, few incentives are provided by DGD for properly integrating gender in indirect cooperation. If these actors do take gender seriously, this is the result of their own initiative and/or that of their local partners.

Since the underlying values and objectives of gender and gender integration fit well with the vision and values that are prominent at a number of NGOs (in the North and South), it is there that we also find the best examples of good gender practice. This

is much less the case among a number of other actors involved in the cooperation such as universities and BIO, while in multilateral cooperation, Belgium, for that matter rightly, has chosen to dialogue only at policy level and takes no position with respect to individual projects; in the absence of clear guidelines and a clear focus, gender typically is not included in its dialogue with these organisations.

Furthermore, it was found that the relatively recent attention paid to 'results based management' has made it difficult to properly integrate gender. While, seen from a gender perspective, the RBM approach offers clear opportunities, it appears that especially the obstacles have the upper hand. Thus result-oriented management in theory creates nice opportunities for formulating gender objectives and following up their realisation. However, there is no uniform approach that allows, within the different sectors, making a strong link between 'technical' project objectives (usually focused on fulfilling the practical needs of women and girls) and greater gender equality (in which the strategic needs and therefore gender relations must be given attention). Furthermore, a (long-term) focus on gender equality is not always consistent with the ambition (and the pressure, also from the side of the donor) to achieve short-term results. This frequently results in following 'the path of least resistance' in the direction of relatively easily attained results, at the expense of in-depth work (in the direction of greater gender equality) that is riskier, more demanding and more complex, inevitably evokes more resistance, and can produce results only with sustained efforts. Much time is needed to implement changes, especially in difficult contexts. Finally, the observation also applies to gender that development interventions are engaged only to a limited degree with measuring and monitoring the *effects* they intend; this applies a fortiori to gender results, since these are not part of the intended project goals and thus are also not monitored.

An immediate consequence of the only very partial integration of gender is that the Belgian contribution to capacity building in the area of gender remained limited. One can hardly expect organisations that are weak in the area of gender to succeed in strengthening their partner organisations in this area. Where a successful practice exists, it generally is located in the context of *specific* projects and programmes, without sufficient attention being paid to strengthening gender capacities within the organisations in question, making it impossible to guarantee the sustainability of the results achieved.

An important implication of the weak integration of gender in policy and practice is that little or no attention is paid to the issue of sexual (or more broadly, gender-related) violence. Nevertheless, gender-related violence is a serious problem in all the countries that were visited. Following on this, no success was made in bringing about a specific dynamic for combating and preventing sexual violence via the action plan implementing Resolution 1325. Furthermore, specific projects could only offer an inadequate answer. A number of positive experiences (for obvious reasons, found at organisations with a strong gender policy) teach us that combating and preventing gender-related violence can be addressed even in 'regular' projects, as part of a mainstreaming approach as well as via specific actions. Presently, however, it remains unclear when an intervention can (or should?) address this problem, not even in interventions in 'obvious' sectors such as reproductive healthcare.

Finally, it is important to mention that a combination of factors, related both to the institutional context and the application of the Gender Policy Maker itself, have resulted in the incorrect use of the GPM in the ODA database. As a result, it can be concluded that Belgium does not always deliver truly reliable information concerning the extent of gender integration in its cooperation at international level.

Lesson 5. Full gender integration in the policy and intervention cycle requires a sustained commitment and effort on the part of the key actors involved, if they are to contribute to greater gender equality. The current context of gender policy evaporation and limited institutional and organisational incentives makes it highly unlikely that these conditions are met. On the other hand, the experiences of several organisations (NGOs especially) teach us that a clear choice for gender can lead to positive results without this requiring external incentives.

If we return to the theory of change, we might expect that the inadequate integration of gender in policy and interventions, and the lack of attention to the inequality between men and women, would lead to only very limited or no effects in the area of empowerment for women and greater gender equality. However, our findings are less clear.

5. Important gender effects can be generated even without the presence of gender integration, though their impact on the empowerment of women would be significantly greater with better gender integration

This evaluation has provided a significant number of examples of projects that achieve results in the areas of education, health and economics, and which at the same time generate broader effects in the area of gender equality, even when there is no gender integration in the interventions in question. An initial explanation lies in the fact that interventions succeed, better than in the past, in effectively reaching women and girls. Moreover, projects in the education and health sectors succeed in meeting especially the *practical* needs of women and girls, which leads to significant results mainly in the least developed countries with failing education and health facilities. These projects generally are limited to the level of providing better services, and do not address the *strategic* needs of women and girls. Because many of these projects are extremely meaningful to the local societies (men and women, boys and girls), they certainly miss good opportunities to link practical needs to a broader strategic agenda of gender equality. It also shows that these effects occur in interventions that have adopted a fairly broad approach, with attention for capacity building and awareness raising.

The case studies also provided a number of examples in which women succeed in influencing existing gender relations based on their own strength and initiative, despite the lack of a gender approach (and a lack of attention to existing inequalities). This was noted in particular in economic projects (for example microcredit), although it should be noted that in many cases 'empowerment' is limited to the individual level, and that the insufficient attention paid to gender in these projects also brings with it extra challenges, such as an increase in the workload of women. On the other hand, interventions with a clear gender-integration approach more easily and especially more harmoniously achieve gender effects because they do not ignore existing gender power relationships, and in this way better prepare men and women for the consequences of the changes in relations that the empowerment of women can bring with it.

Finally, despite the major challenges entailed by the integration of gender, this integration can also represent *an opportunity* in fragile contexts. Gender integration (via mainstreaming and specific actions) holds enormous potential, not only for achieving greater gender equality, but also for bringing about broader development and making a contribution to institutional development, peace and stability, via the strength of women and their organisations.

Lesson 6. Women (and women's groups) in the South frequently require only limited support to realise major improvements in their situation. Thanks to their strength and dynamism, positive results related to the empowerment of women and gender equality can be obtained, even without the integration of gender in initiatives to support them.

4. Recommendations

Our analysis in the previous chapters has revealed that the extent of gender integration within the cooperation differs strongly from actor to actor, and that internal differences even exist within large organisations, for example among the head office and the representation in specific countries. We also encountered many examples of good gender practice that predominantly are more the result of the initiative and commitment of individuals than of the organisation's policy. In any case, it is clear that the level of gender integration is insufficient and the contribution of Belgian cooperation to gender equality and the empowerment of women is limited. There is good integration in only a few cases (in particular NGOs). The different levels of gender integration make it very difficult to formulate tailor-made recommendations. Thus, it will be the task of each actor involved to make a translation for their own organisation of each recommendation.

Our recommendations below are situated at two levels:

- *General recommendations related to the global framework within which gender and gender mainstreaming are to be achieved; they apply to a large extent to all actors, and define to a high degree the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the recommendations at the other levels. These recommendations are developed most strongly since the most important obstacles are located at this level;*
- *Several recommendations concerning the integration of gender in policy development and dialogue;*
- *A few operational recommendations that build on a number of specific findings from this evaluation.*

The implementation of these recommendations demands an updating and correction of the gender policy note, which could be an important signal of renewed commitment to gender and gender equality (in this regard, see especially the first recommendation). This process can take the findings and recommendations of this evaluation as a starting point. In this, it is important to learn from the mistakes made – but also the positive experiences gained – in drawing up and applying the previous policy note.

Thus when formulating the policy note, broad participation on the part of the stakeholders must be ensured, the policy note must foresee clear means, targets, monitoring mechanisms and responsibilities, and must contain a combination of soft and hard incentives, with sufficient attention paid (where needed) to the necessary change to the organisational structure (see also recommendation 4) and the attitude of leadership with respect to gender. Attention must also be paid to the incorrect interpretation and use of basic concepts such as gender and gender mainstreaming (see also recommendation 2).

The policy note must also pay attention to the way in which Belgian cooperation communicates its vision and objectives concerning gender and gender equality to the outside world. Furthermore, the policy note must include attention for mechanisms of accountability regarding implementation of the policy, at all levels. Finally, it is important to harmonise the policy note with the dynamics associated with the gender action plan within the FPS Foreign Affairs (Gender Mainstreaming Act of 2007).

The implementation and adaptation of the gender policy note is best coordinated by the recently established Gender and Development Advisory Board and guided by the DGD Strategic Committee.

4.1 General recommendations

- 1. No gender integration without a clear institutional commitment.** For Belgian cooperation as a whole, it is first and foremost important to take as starting point **a clear political and institutional commitment to gender equality** at all levels of cooperation. Lack of political will is the most important explanation for the fact that many organisations fall short in the area of gender and gender integration, and this political will is needed since working on gender equality implies working on other power relationships.

This finding contrasts with the fact that our survey shows that there is strong commitment to and demand for improved gender practice at all levels of Belgian cooperation (DGD, BTC, indirect actors). Political and institutional commitment must be combined with a **pragmatic but ambitious approach** for which a long-term strategy has been defined. In this, Belgium must give preference to limited but institutionally feasible steps, in which it can learn from other smaller donors who are known for their commitment to gender integration (such as Swedish cooperation, in which gender commitment is a reflection of how the importance of gender equality has been integrated in Swedish society). Such an approach, however, does imply that gender and gender integration no longer (i.e. at any level) may be seen as optional guidelines, but rather as part of the task of all, for which each may be held accountable at his/her own level.

In this context, it may be noted that in our view, the Development Cooperation Act of March 2013 (amended in January 2014) insufficiently reflects this needed political and institutional commitment by treating gender and gender mainstreaming, in line with the practice of the past, as a cross-cutting theme. A change to the law in line with our recommendations (this means especially not defining gender as a cross-cutting theme, see the following recommendation) can be an important and powerful political signal of a changed commitment to gender and gender equality.

- 2. Correct existing misconceptions about gender mainstreaming’.** For several decades, the notions of ‘gender’ and ‘gender mainstreaming’ have been gaining currency in development thinking, policy and practice, but in many cases appear to have lost their original meaning due to a number of mechanisms. The disappointment concerning the failure of gender mainstreaming has even caused some to decide to throw this strategy overboard. This evaluation does not go that far, and recommends maintaining gender mainstreaming as a strategy, on the understanding that – unlike current practice – the consequences of mainstreaming are fully understood and that gender mainstreaming is more than integrating the gender perspective in the policy and programme cycle in a cross-cutting way, which in many cases is presently the dominant practice. Shaping the gender mainstreaming approach means explicitly viewing it as a means to reach the ultimate goal of gender equality.

In addition to developing a different organisational and management culture (in which attention for gender and gender equality is an important part of the values, vision, mission and daily practice - see also recommendation 4 below), mainstreaming – in the sense of integrating in the mainstream – also implies integrating gender objectives (and underlying activities and outputs) in development policy and interventions (see also the operational recommendations below).

As an aside, it can be noted that the fact that this change process is part of the mainstream will at the same time change the nature of this mainstream... In this sense, each programme must be understood as an opportunity to develop gender relations that are more just.

- 3. Explicitly develop a twin-track approach (combination of specific actions and gender mainstreaming).** The so-called twin-track approach – in which ‘full’ (see recommendation 3) gender mainstreaming is combined with specific actions (that must target men as well as women) – that is already included in the Policy Note must be retained (and reinserted where needed).

There are several considerations behind this recommendation. First, particularly in countries with low levels of development and high gender inequality, it is almost impossible to sustainably contribute to the empowerment of women without taking specific actions. Then the combination of both tracks into a single approach and strategy will create opportunities for developing synergies and complementarity that can help to ensure that the mainstreaming strategy effectively contributes to greater gender equality...

This recommendation implies that within the priority sectors (or programmes for the indirect actors), work must effectively be made of a twin-track policy in which both tracks are a part of a single coherent policy. This is possible by setting up specific projects and programmes, but also by integrating both tracks within the same intervention/programme.

- 4.** The challenges but also the possibilities in the area of gender and gender integration are enormous, hence there are many domains that invite action. Therefore, we recommend – in line with the Swedish, British or Spanish examples – formulating **clearly defined policy priorities and objectives concerning gender equality** (for Belgian cooperation in general and/or per country). These priorities must ensure that within the broad gender agenda and political commitment, clear and realistic objectives are established to which Belgian cooperation and its actors can refer, and which they can clarify in the dialogue with their partners.

A clearer definition of gender objectives should also allow gender to be integrated more consistently and correctly in sector and thematic policy notes and (insofar as these are drawn up) country strategy documents.

- 5.** Taking gender seriously implies for most Belgian actors that gender integration is defined as a **change process**, with all the requirements and challenges that ‘change’ entails. The intended institutional change will not come about of its own accord, and can (certainly in the case of gender) encounter resistance (especially from men but also from women).

For this reason, the intended change process must develop a **twin-track approach** of internal gender mainstreaming at organisational level accompanied by gender integration in development policy, programmes and projects. Gender mainstreaming within a specific organisation means among others that its leadership clearly supports the change process and can be held accountable for this (like all levels of the organisation), that all staff receive gender training, that commitment to gender is valued, and that staff members can count on good support when needed.

For most organisations (including DGD and BTC), this implies a significant additional investment in adequate human and financial resources (more than being presently used) that can be maintained over the long term. The specific way these extra resources should be deployed differs from organisation to organisation. A number of guidelines and suggestions in this regard are given below in this chapter.

- 6. Increased attention for and commitment to preventing and combating gender-related violence**, violence that represents a serious problem in many countries in the South (including the Belgian bilateral cooperation partner countries). This recommendation can be a part of recommendation 2 above and be implemented via specific actions, but must also be given a place in interventions that take place in *‘regular’ sectors*. How, where and under which conditions this must (or can) take place, are best answered by a specific study whose results preferably are included in the revised gender policy note (see following recommendation).

- 7. Integrate (attention for) men in each effort at creating greater gender equality.** Systematic attention for men is a difficult issue, even in organisations, policy and interventions that have integrated gender well. This lack of attention certainly has to do with existing views (see recommendation 2), but also with the

absence of good practices and experience in this area. It appears that in the existing circumstances, an extra effort is required to integrate men in gender analyses, and to formulate specific gender activities and objectives that target men and their specific needs and problems. It is important, among others, to analyse how gender inequality affects the attitude and behaviour of men, how men contribute to preserving gender inequality, and to propose corresponding actions and goals that can change these.

- 8. Being supported by and supporting local gender expertise.** In most countries in the South, there is an abundance and diversity (female – and male – leaders, activists, experts, organisations ...) of expertise available that is part of the local society, and that can adequately assess the cultural and other sensitivities as well as the potential for change, but is insufficiently known among development actors. Identifying these individuals and groups requires a focused effort. Supporting them is a priority in the broader framework of a gender strategy.

4.2 Gender in policy development and dialogue

The Belgian actors are involved in several forms of policy development and dialogue. For DGD this includes the policy dialogue in the partner countries, but also the dialogue with the indirect actors. The latter have their own mechanisms of policy development (in which, for example, their grassroots supporters but also partners from the South can play a role), but they do engage in dialogue when designing and implementing development programmes.

- 9. Gradually give gender equality a more central place in the political dialogue, the ICPs.** Due in part to the fact that many partner countries have not placed gender equality high on the political agenda, this is an ambitious recommendation that can be put into practice only gradually, to the extent (among others) that the staff members involved have acquired the necessary skills, and policy choices with respect to gender are made and operationalised (see among others recommendations 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 above). The development of a practical gender integration manual for the embassies and development cooperation offices should support this crucial process.

Improved integration of gender in the ICPs presupposes among others that (1) gender is well integrated in the basic memorandum and the country analysis concerning priority sectors, that (2) this analysis allows (a) the formulation of global gender objectives and (b) the making of clear choices, per priority sector, concerning interventions in which gender is integrated and specific actions; (3) it is examined whether and if so, how, Belgium institutional processes that target greater gender equality can be strengthened (via policy agenda setting, aid to local civil society, aid to the gender machinery, including ministries charged with gender equality ...); these processes can be situated globally as well as within the priority sectors.

- 10. Integrate gender in the policy dialogue with the indirect actors.** Gender is already being formally integrated in this dialogue, but little comes of this in practice. The recommendation to allow the indirect actors to define and justify the gender marker for their programme (see recommendation 11 below) can be used as a starting point for the dialogue. Gradualness also applies to this recommendation: where needed, indirect actors must be given the opportunity (and the resources) to gradually improve gender policy and practice. Finally, it is also important to show appreciation to indirect actors with a good gender practice.

11. Improve the use of the gender marker. The use of the gender marker (GPM) remains important from an international point of view and should therefore be continued.

However, for both internal and external use, it is important that it at least can be guaranteed that the projects are assigned the correct gender marker, and that a solution is found to the problems noted (see 2.3.5), among others via a minimum level of training and supervision of all staff members who must define or assess gender markers. The evaluation also recommends requesting the organisations responsible for the interventions to themselves indicate and justify a gender marker; this implies that the gender marker is part of the formats for project and programme proposals; we propose also including the marker in the reporting (since the situation during implementation can differ from the initial situation). The DGD expert then only checks the proposed marker and possibly modifies it; in so doing, the global aim is correct marking, even if this (via reporting to the OECD) presents a less favourable image of Belgium.

Our analysis also shows that ambiguity exists especially concerning the G-1 score/projects; it is therefore proposed that the guidelines on the use of the GPM clarify the issue. For G-1 projects, this might mean that a G-1 marker can only be given if gender-related objectives, activities and indicators are included in the logical framework.

Finally, and if there is enthusiasm for this in other countries, Belgium can organise a reflection at OECD/DAC level on the use of the GPM and possibly encourage the use of different categories (e.g. those of N. Kabeer: gender blind, gender sensitive and gender transformative).

4.3 The integration of gender in the intervention cycle

While the integration of gender in the intervention cycle presents its own challenges, this evaluation is of the opinion that real follow-up of the recommendations proposed above constitutes the most important factor in integrating gender in the intervention cycle. After all, the challenges at this level are more technical in nature and can rely on a significant number of instruments and experiences. In this, joint initiatives of reflection, exchange and learning in which several organisations participate can be an important incentive for gender integration, and can promote the quality of the process; here, at national level, the BE Gender Platform can play a role. Within the partner countries, affiliation is best sought with existing gender action platforms.

12. Full integration of gender in the intervention cycle. Full gender integration in the intervention cycle is an important task that each actor must implement in a different way. For DGD, this recommendation implies that when assessing projects and programmes (bilateral, multilateral, indirect), gender-integration must be made a much more explicit criterion than has been the case until now. In general, this recommendation requires a sustained commitment and effort on the part of the key actors involved, if it is to result in greater gender equality.

13. Integrate gender in the results based management (RBM). In recent years, work has been done at several levels on developing an RBM approach and instruments. While this process is far from complete and RBM entails a number of risks (such as incorrectly interpreting management *for* results as management *by* results, leading to a focus on sectors, countries, interventions that offer an easy and quick result), it remains an important instrument to increase the effectiveness of cooperation.

The formulation of gender objectives at global and intervention level must be integrated in a management *for* results approach by defining specific gender objectives, outputs, activities and indicators. Such specific gender objectives go beyond the integration of women in activities and guaranteeing their access to the benefits of the interventions, and ultimately aim at realising quality changes (in among others the attitude and behaviour of men and women, but also in the area of empowerment at personal and societal level).

Moreover, the effective integration of gender in RBM is also an important factor in increasing the effectiveness of the aid itself. In this, it is important to also pay attention to the effects (outcome) level (real change concerning gender equality and the empowerment of women) and in so doing, to realise that the adapted objectives and indicators defined will need to be regularly re-examined in the future.

The integration of gender in RBM of course must lay the foundation for developing adequate monitoring of progress in the area of gender (in which the women and men involved must play an important role) and for integrating gender in evaluations. It is important especially in the area of the targets at outcome level to remain realistic and to realise that changes frequently take a long time.

14. Need for *adapted* instruments. A multitude of instruments have been developed in recent decades that can support the integration of gender. These instruments undoubtedly have their value, but they are frequently extremely *generic* in nature and thus must be made more sector specific and 'contextualised' according to local realities and needs. This adaptation to both the institutional and social context is frequently demanding and is best done with expert support.

Annexe 1 Terms of reference

B. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Gender and Development in Belgian Cooperation

B1. Introduction

B1.1. International context

B1.1.1. International resolutions

After 1975, the United Nations (UN) worked to make the promotion of women and gender equality a worldwide concern. The UN launched the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) and, every five years, organises worldwide conferences which adopt action plans with a view to improving the position of women in all fields of social, economic and political life. The "Declaration of the Rights of Women" is the keystone for all of the United Nations' programmes in favour of women. At the Beijing Conference, precise commitments were taken in favour of gender equality.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit (September 2000), Heads of State and government came together to adopt a series of development goals designed, among other things, to reduce absolute poverty by half by 2015. The Declaration set specific goals to reduce the maternal mortality rate and to help equal access by girls to all levels of education. Furthermore, the commitment was made to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The aim of this resolution was to ensure that women and children are protected during situations of conflict that the instigators of violence against women during situations of conflict are prosecuted, and that women are able to participate in decisions about questions of peace and security on an equal footing. The [United Nations' Member States developed 26 global indicators](#) to track and monitor the implementation of Resolution 1325⁶⁴.

Gender equality is consecrated by the Treaty on the European Union and by the Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Union's roadmap for gender equality makes the promotion of gender equality in external affairs and development one of the six priorities for the period between 2003 and 2010. The European Consensus on Development highlights the importance of gender equality in the field of development.

⁶⁴ The indicators are based on four pillars which are: Prevention, Participation, Protection and Assistance, and Recovery. These indicators were then sorted into categories which reflect the speed with which they are able to be used in the field and the data collected. These indicators are supposed to serve as a common basis for the presentation of reports on the implementation of Resolution 1325 in 2010 and beyond by the UN's entities, regional and international organisation and Member states.

B1.1.2. The implementation of international resolutions

Yet, despite these international positions, there is increasing reticence in adopting the United Nations' resolutions in favour of gender equality and in their implementation by certain member states.

For example: at the last session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2012, no final solution was adopted. A global policy-making body, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) dedicated exclusively to the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women. Every year, representatives of the member States meet at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York to evaluate the progress made in terms of gender equality, identify the challenges, establish worldwide standards and draw up concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women throughout the world.

The final text of the 2012 session concerned the actions to be undertaken to improve the condition and status of girls and women in the rural world, namely a quarter of the worldwide population.

Oppositions to resolution's adoption focused, in particular, on all the terminology concerning sexual and reproductive health and the notion of gender - a concept which, for critics would favour the promotion of homosexuality. Certain representatives of the States present at the UN's session raised religious, cultural and moral arguments to block negotiations on the final text.

Insufficient involvement by governments and pro-choice associations also appear to have played a role in the failure of this 56th session of the CSW.

For some, it is also necessary to see what an increasingly large number of women's organisations denounce: the lack of financial means, which, by hindering their participation, prevents them from organising themselves and mobilising themselves to play a major role in international bodies, contrary to anti-choice movements, which benefit from large-scale financial support.

B1.2. Belgium's commitment

B1.2.1. On an international and European level

Belgium adheres to the principles laid out by international conventions, including those of the United Nations and European undertakings. Belgium is part of a series of conventions and commitments on an international level which concern gender equality. In particular, it has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985⁶⁵.

Belgium is an elected member of the UN Women Executive Council from January 2013 to the end of 2015. In parallel, since 1984, Belgium has been an uninterrupted member of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations standard-setting section on gender.

Thus, adhering within the United Nations, as much to the standard-setting section as the operational sector in the field of women's rights and equal opportunities, Belgium is showing a clear commitment. In terms of gender, our country also stands out in other respects: it was one of the first countries to adopt a "Women, Peace and Security" action plan based on resolution 1325 (and later resolutions) by the United Nations Security Council, it has been a pioneer in the DRC in funding the fight against sexual violence and

⁶⁵ See the 2012 CEDAW Report for Belgium: "Summary project of measures designed to implement the Convention's different articles and to meet the recommendations formulated by the CEDAW Committee"

is also implementing, as quickly as possible, and with great care, the recommendations formulated in the frame of the inherent report on the Convention of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). These initiatives are also reflected directly in the functioning of development cooperation.

Finally, in the frame of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) organised by the United Nations' Human Rights Council (of which Belgium was a member up until the end of 2012), recommendations concerning women's rights are systematically sent to other countries: during the first cycle of the UPR, Belgium intervened for 94 countries. In other terms, 94 countries received a recommendation from Belgium concerning women's rights which should be implemented in four years time.

As part of the EU, Belgium also contributes to the execution of the EU's "Gender Action Plan"⁶⁶.

Twenty-one United Nations (UN) member states, including Belgium, as well as ten other EU member states, have a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325⁶⁷. Belgium's one, adopted in 2009 for the 2009-2012 period, provided for an intermediate evaluation in 2010.

B1.2.2. The new paradigms of Aid

In recent years, the worldwide context and the paradigms of international development aid have changed. In 2005, the donors – including Belgium – and developing countries approved the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. The Paris Declaration proposed to "[increase] the impact aid has in reducing poverty and inequality (...) and accelerating achievement of the MDGs." It recognises that "Similar harmonisation efforts are also needed on other cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality".

The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) in 2008 goes even further by recognising that gender equality is one of the factors enabling the achievement of sustainable effects on living conditions and the prospects of women, men and poor children; and identify specify measures.

Paragraph 20 of the Final document of the international conference on aid effectiveness held in Busan in December 2011, stipulates: "We must accelerate our efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women through development programmes grounded in country priorities, recognising that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to achieving development results".

B.1.3. The Belgian context

The Belgian Constitution of 17 February 1994 comprises the implicit recognition of gender equality. However, it was only in February 2002 that explicit reference to this principle of equality was added to the Constitution in order to provide for compensation in cases of discrimination and to guarantee women and men respect for their rights and liberties, in particular, the right to occupy, on an equal footing, elected and public positions.

On 12 January 2007, Belgium adopted a very ambitious law, the so-called "gender mainstreaming law" concerning the structural integration of the gender aspect into all policies defined and carried out on a Belgian federal level. The foundations of the "gender mainstreaming" strategy are the recognition of the cross-cutting character of gender and its integration by all the stakeholders concerned at different stages in the

⁶⁶ In 2000, a European directive forbidding discrimination on the basis of religious or philosophical belief, disability, age and sexual orientation was adopted. This directive aims to guarantee equal treatment in the field of employment, working conditions and professional training. In Belgium, this directive has been transposed to national legislation with the Act of 10 May 2007 regarding the fight against certain forms of discrimination.

⁶⁷ http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/binaries/avis_notes_strategie_fr_tcm313-66266.pdf

development and implementation of policies. The law of 12 January 2007 imposes new obligations as much on federal political leaders as administrative leaders. However, it should be noted that all the Implementation decrees of this act have not yet been adopted.

The promotion and protection of women's rights, equal opportunities and gender equality is one of the priorities of Belgium's foreign policy and constitutes a cross-cutting theme in Belgian development cooperation (law CD 25/5/1999). The draft bill defines gender, alongside sustainable development, as one of the two priority themes for the action of Belgian development cooperation.

B1.4. Gender and Development in Belgian international cooperation

B1.4.1. Development policies

The Law of 25 May 1999 on Belgian International Cooperation defined Belgium's cooperation priorities and highlighted the importance of gender equality as one of the four cross-cutting dimensions to be integrated into development programmes, regardless of the sector concerned. The act stipulates that the priority objective of Belgian international cooperation is 'human development'; with five sectors of concentration and three cross-cutting themes: the balancing of the rights and opportunities for men and women; respect for the environment and the social economy.

The new draft law on Belgian International Cooperation by the Minister Paul Magnette was voted on by the Chamber of Representatives on 20 December 2012 and submitted to the Senate (which has 60 days to draw up any amendments). The draft law integrates new elements in accordance with the new paradigms of development cooperation. In particular, it founds Development Cooperation on an approach based on the rights (of children, of women, and of men), in which economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights as well as the right to development play a central role. The draft law stipulates that Belgian Development Cooperation integrates the gender aspect in a cross-cutting manner in all its interventions.

The strategy note "**Equal rights and opportunities between men and women**" (2002) defines the global strategy for Belgium in terms of gender equality. The paper specifies that: "*The objective of Belgian international cooperation is to support the efforts deployed by its partners regarding equal rights and opportunities for men and women through the integration of the gender aspect in all its policies, programmes and projects. To that end, it is necessary to reinforce the DGDC's specific capacities.*"

The "*gender mainstreaming act*" of January 2007 also concerns the FPS Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation. It should be noted that the law of 12 January 2007 provided for the gender aspect being integrated into **budgetary preparations** and specifically imposes the obligation to establish for each draft general expenditure budget a **gender paper** which presents the credits concerning actions designed to ensure gender equality. This obligation applies to all departments, independently-managed state services, state companies and organisations of public interest. The FPS Foreign Affairs applies the provisions of this *gender budgeting*.

In 2001, Belgium drew up its first action plan on violence against women. For the first time, the actions to be carried out in the frame of the fight against violence to women were established in consultation and in a coordinated manner. On the basis of this first 2001-2003 plan, a new action plan was drawn up for the 2004-2007 period. Contrary to the first plan which concerned violence in couples and also sexual violence, violence at work or even the fight against human slavery, the 2004-2007 plan only targets violence between partners. In 2006, the decision was taken to establish a national action plan common to Federal government, Communities and Regions.

In September 2007, the DGD published a Strategy note on "Sexual and reproductive health and rights". The paper highlights the fact that sexual and reproductive health is a human right, it is essential for a person's well-being, not only in terms of procreation but also in terms of sexual relations and personal fulfilment. Nevertheless, problems of reproductive health are one of the main causes of morbidity and mortality in developing countries. They constitute - because they mainly affect women and young people - a major obstacle to the socio-economic development of communities and countries.

The integration of gender and the promotion of women's rights are also highlighted in the policy papers of successive Ministers in charge of development cooperation.

B1.4.2. Implementation of the policy

According to the Strategy note "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men" (2002), the objective of Belgian international cooperation is to support the efforts deployed by its partners regarding equal rights and opportunities for men and women through the integration of the gender aspect in all its policies, programmes and projects. To that end, it is necessary to reinforce the DGDC's specific capacities⁶⁸.

"The integration of the gender aspect aims to ensure the consideration of gender equality in all policies, analyses, and programmes in a cross-cutting manner (regardless of the sector concerned) and in a longitudinal manner (in the programming phase and in all stages of interventions).

However, depending on the context, it is sometimes necessary to carry out "positive actions" expressly targeting part of the disadvantaged population (women or some of them) in order to ensure positive discrimination in their favour, guarantee their access to development opportunities and their rights. These measures are temporary actions offering underprivileged groups the opportunity to make up for lost time in the field of equality, for example the fixing of quotas for their participation in activities from which they are excluded. Positive actions in favour of women should be examined in the light of the goal of gender equality.

These two approaches – integrated approach and positive actions – are complementary and reinforce each other.

The strategy comprises three lines:

- *support for efforts by partner countries in the field of gender integration*
- *support for efforts by international organisations and the stakeholders of non-governmental cooperation in the field of gender integration*
- *reinforcement of the DGDC's institutional capacities."*

The implementation of this strategy is detailed in an action plan which is an integral part of the Strategy note.

The main lines of this strategy still apply (except for specific "positive actions" in favour of women) as indicated in the analysis of the presentation of the reasons for the 2012 budget proposal.

Belgian international cooperation implements GAD actions on three levels⁶⁹:

- Political action: questions of gender equality are dealt with in political dialogue with Belgium's partner countries with international partner organisations, as well as with Belgian and local indirect partners (NGOs, scientific institutions, universities, etc.).
- Cooperation action: the key role played by women in terms of growth and poverty reduction and the constraints they have to face, as well as national policies in the field, are taken into account when drawing up, implementing and monitoring the Indicative Cooperation Programmes concluded with partner countries.

⁶⁸ http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/politique/cooperation_au_developpement/

⁶⁹ Sources: Gender note. Budget proposal DGD 2012

- Reinforcement of the DGD's institutional capacities⁷⁰ : methodologies and tools for the integration of gender are collected and distributed among the staff – at head office and in the field; and targeted training courses are organised during the hosting of International Cooperation Attaché Days, as well as for the different department's staff.

In accordance with these lines of action, a major effort has been made in recent years with a view to reinforcing the integration of the gender aspect into sectoral policies and strategies, as well as in **different cooperation channels**.

Thus, gender equality and the "*empowerment*" of rural women constitute the fourth pillar of the new Belgian development cooperation strategy in the sector of agriculture and food safety (2011). This strategy, which offers the frame for the effective realisation of Belgium's commitment to increase the share of agriculture in its public development aid to 15% by 2015, indeed considers rural women as key players in development. Belgium's interventions specifically aim to reinforce rural women's economic empowerment and capacities by ensuring, in particular, their access to resources and production methods, as well as to decision-making at all levels.

1) In the frame of governmental cooperation, in February 2011, new ministerial instructions for the preparation of Indicative Cooperation Programmes (ICP) and Combined Commissions with partner countries have been sent to diplomatic positions. These instructions focus, more than in the past, on effective gender equality in the IPC preparation process, in particular in sectoral analysis. They also confirm the goal of reserving 50% of bilateral grants for research and work placements for female candidates and 50% of micro-intervention programmes for the benefit of local communities, for activities designed to promote the empowerment of women. Finally, the budget allocated to "Delegated Cooperation" aims to finance programmes outside the sectors of cooperation, in particular those which meet cross-cutting problems, such as gender equality, violence against women, etc. With a view to the successful implementation of these instructions, "gender" training courses are organised on a regular basis for Attachés and country managers. In the DGD and the BTC, people are in charge of the thematic monitoring of the gender issue.

Furthermore, in the frame of Research supporting the policy entitled "Improved aid architecture and aid effectiveness", in 2009 and 2010, Antwerp University's Institute of Development Policy and Management developed methodologies for the better integration of gender in the preparation of IPCs and Joint Commissions, in particular in the agricultural/rural development sector. On the basis of this research and the lessons learned, a working group was created to draw up guidelines.

Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC) includes the gender aspect in all the projects and programmes it implements for the Belgian state (gender mainstreaming⁷¹). At the same time, specific projects are undertaken in terms of empowerment and greater independence for women. Thus, in the Dosso region in Niger, a programme has been implemented which aims to support women on a personal and collective level, with a view to helping them to obtain loans designed to help them to start income generating activities. In this context, literacy classes for women and men are a must. The BTC also implements projects supporting the participation of women in the process of conflict prevention, peace consolidation and the reconstruction of socioeconomic and political life.

Over the coming years, the BTC wants to accord special attention to the training of its staff in Belgium and overseas in order that the gender aspect is taken into account in all activities. In this way, the BTC meets the provisions of the Act of January 2009 concerning the integration of the gender aspect in Belgian federal political structures. Gender equality is no longer an optional undertaking

⁷⁰ The former AGCD's "women and development unit" was renamed the Gender unit and has been integrated into the DGDC's strategies department. Following the DGD's internal reorganisations, the integration of gender is monitored within the "consolidation of society" (D2.5) thematic service. A gender advisor is allocated within the BTC's operations department.

⁷¹ "Gender Mainstreaming in BTC". Saskia Ravesloot. 2010.

2) In the frame of multilateral cooperation, since January 2009, multilateral budget contributions by Belgian cooperation have been reserved for financing partner organisations' general resources. Therefore, Belgian cooperation no longer finances specific programmes concerning gender equality. In this new context of the maximum contribution to the general resources of multilateral organisations, cooperation ensures that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are part of the objectives of the UN's multilateral agencies and that the gender aspect is included in a cross-cutting manner in their future development policies, strategies and actions, as well as the assessment of their results. The question of gender is considered during annual consultations with these organisations and at executive boards.⁷²

3) In the frame of indirect cooperation, following the Agreement signed on 8 May 2009 between the Minister of Development Cooperation and Belgian development NGOs, a new grid for assessing NGOs programmes and projects was drawn up. Gender is included as a cross-cutting assessment criterion for new multiyear programmes and projects, and generally considered during "political dialogue" with these organisations.

4) The new Belgian Fund for Food Security, created by the Act of 19 January 2010, places gender equality and women's empowerment at the heart of its multidimensional strategy to fight for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa.

5) Note should also be taken of the consideration of gender in **humanitarian aid**, and the priority accorded to sexual and reproductive health.

In Belgium, the DGD leads or supports through third parties many awareness-raising actions (information campaigns, publications, conferences, films, etc) targeting Belgian public opinion on the theme of gender equality.

Finally, the DGD finances operating costs and ensures secretarial services for the **Commission on Women and Development (CWD)**, an advisory commission created in 1993 to support and reinforce the taking into account of gender equality in the formulation and implementation of the Belgian Development Cooperation policy. On request by the Minister of Development Cooperation, an independent assessment of the CWD was carried out in 2011⁷³.

Note that Belgium (via the DGD) is a member of the GENDERNET network (managed by the DAC/OECD) and adheres to the DAC's general principles for gender equality.

B2. Justification for the Evaluation

The first recommendation of the evaluation of the Commission on Women and Development targeted the Minister for Cooperation. It recommended reinforcing the implementation of Belgium's contribution to gender equality. The evaluation also recommended proceeding with the evaluation of the Belgian international cooperation policy as a whole in the field of gender equality in order to understand its results in all the actions financed and implemented and to learn lessons from all the stakeholders concerned.

Indeed, it can be seen that gender mainstreaming in all Cooperation actions is an ambition in political and operational terms with a view to contributing to achieving the objective

⁷² In July 2010, the General Assembly of the United Nations created UN Women, the United Nations' entity for gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women is the result of a merger of four distinct components of the United Nations' system devoted exclusively to gender equality and women's empowerment. The DGD has entrusted UN Women with the implementation of certain projects (including in Mali) in the frame of its delegated cooperation.

⁷³ The final report is available on the website:
http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/binaries/rapport_evaluation_cfd_tcm313-156206.pdf

of gender equality and women's empowerment. However, despite the commitments made on an international level, in Belgium, as in most other donor countries, the actual and full implementation of this strategy remains a challenge.

"Action carried out in the field in favour of gender equality and the environment may be intensified in certain partner countries. Although it refers to cross-cutting questions in Belgium's indicative fields of cooperation, the team in charge of examination observed, during its visit to Burundi, that, in practice, very little appeared to be done in these fields. The integration of cross-cutting questions is seen more as a theoretical expectation by central services than as a source of new possibilities. Belgium would be advised to provide practical tools and to equip the DGDC with the capacities needed to support the integration of cross-cutting themes. The preparatory mission carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo by the Men-Women Equality Advisor during the setting up of the new programme in 2009 is an example to be followed. Belgium should ensure that funding is available to reproduce this initiative⁷⁴".

The Act of May 1999 concerning Belgian international cooperation provides for Sectoral and thematic papers to be evaluated and adapted at least every four years in the modified context of international cooperation.

Article 11, § 2 of the new draft bill on development cooperation⁷⁵ stipulates that:

"Belgian Development Cooperation integrates, in a cross-cutting manner, in all its interventions:

1° the gender dimension aiming women's empowerment and equality between men and women in the society ;
(...) ."

The draft bill no longer provides for the evaluation and adaptation of Strategic sectoral and/or thematic papers.

However, article 32 stipulates that: *"With a view to achieving Belgian Cooperation Development goals, such as those defined in chapter 2, the results are evaluated in light of the principles laid out in chapter 3 and on the basis of the criteria defined by the OECD's DAC, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, feasibility, and impact, as well as on the basis of sustainability.*

To that end, a coherent approach will be drawn up with a view to enabling the reporting of results and management focused on results. A standardised reporting system should also enable the systematic monitoring of the results obtained or not.

Furthermore, account will be taken of these results when deciding the future of the actions undertaken."

In 2013, Belgian Cooperation's strategy note *"Equal rights and opportunities between women and men"* will be 11 years old. In view of the growing importance of the Gender theme in the context of international relations and development, it is high time to evaluate this theme with a view to improving the Belgian strategy for integrating gender and its implementation.

The Royal Decree of 25 February 2010 concerning the creation of a Special Evaluation Office of International Cooperation specifies in article 2 that *"The special evaluation office is qualified to evaluate all Federal State activities recognised as public development aid by the OECD's DAC. Further on, the same article specifies that "Evaluations may be sectoral or thematic..."*

⁷⁴ Report on the examination by the DAC of Belgium's policies and programmes in the field of development (2010)

⁷⁵ The draft bill on development cooperation was approved by the Chamber on 20 December 2012 and was evoked by the Senate which has 60 days to produce any amendments.

Changes in the international and European context which offers new opportunities in the field of GAD but which also experiences certain setbacks also justifies evaluating GAD strategies in the light of these changes.

B3. Subject of the evaluation

The evaluation is **thematic and strategic**. Its object is the integration of the gender aspect by Belgian international cooperation with a view to reinforcing gender equality and reinforcing women's empowerment.

It concerns the implementation by Belgian cooperation of the Gender and Development (GAD) policy and the "*gender mainstreaming*" strategy as defined in the Strategy note "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men (200) into the one on "Sexual and reproductive health and rights", and in the "*gender mainstreaming*" act of 2007.

All Belgian federal cooperation channels (as defined in B1.4.2.) will be taken into account in the analysis (including Indicative Cooperation Programmes).

A selection of interventions representative of the GAD cross-cutting theme, different forms of cooperation (including non-governmental and BIO programmes⁷⁶) and different stakeholders in different countries will serve as case study. The entire project cycle for these interventions⁷⁷ should be taken into account (including political dialogue and Indicative Cooperation Programmes).

B4. Objectives of the Evaluation

The main objectives of this evaluation are summative (reporting on results) and formative (drawing lessons from the past in order to do better in the future).

The evaluation will assess in what way and **with what results** Belgian international cooperation integrates the gender aspect in sectoral policies and strategies, as well as in the different cooperation channels⁷⁸.

It will assess how and with what results Belgium supports its partner countries and its implementation partners in integrating gender into their development strategies and programmes.

The evaluation will analyse in what way this taking into account of gender is **relevant**; namely **coherent** with the partner countries poverty reduction and development policies and strategies, the needs and rights of women in partner countries, and the GAD policies of other donors.

The evaluation will assess the **relevance** of tools and practices developed by the different stakeholders of Belgian cooperation (working in Belgium and in partner countries) with a view to a better integrated consideration of gender. It will assess in what way these tools and practices are coherent with the goal to reinforce gender equality and empower women as defined in the different political and strategic documents referred to in point B.1.4.1.

It will verify how and with what results the Action Plan of the Strategy note "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men" has been implemented by the DGD. It will assess the **effectiveness** of gender mainstreaming in achieving the goals of reinforcing

⁷⁶ Belgische Investeringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden – Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries

⁷⁷ Identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring & evaluation

⁷⁸ As described in B1.4.2.

gender equality and empowering women. Indeed, this approach implies that gender equality is a component of ordinary policy and not just a theme limited to certain specific questions. Therefore, the evaluation will compare this approach with the one which aims to finance specific projects and programmes designed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The evaluation will assess the extent to which financial and human resources have been mobilised and spent **efficiently**.

The evaluation will highlight whether and how the commitments of Belgian development cooperation in terms of GAD cited in B1.4.2. have been translated into direct or indirect, positive or negative, anticipated or not, immediate, short-, medium- and long-term **results** (impact).

B5. Expected results of the evaluation

The evaluation will shed light on the concepts used by Belgian cooperation (such as Gender and Development, "Gender mainstreaming", gender equality, women's "empowerment") and the changes required on a strategic and practical level in order for these concepts to be truly integrated or not into policies and strategies, but also into development actions. It will provide an analysis of recent changes in the international context, with the new challenges to gender equality, in particular, as a result of conservative trends.

On the basis of its conclusions, the evaluation will provide political decision-makers (Parliament, Ministers, etc.) with **motivated recommendations** designed to improve the consideration of gender in development policies and strategies, in particular with a view to pursuing and reinforcing "*the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of decision-making processes designed to incorporate the aspect of gender equality in all fields and at all levels, by the stakeholders generally involved in setting up policies*". It will provide recommendations with a view to an integrated and cross-cutting approach to gender equality in such a way that it is a component of the ordinary development cooperation policy and not just a theme limited to certain specific questions.

It will provide the DGD with detailed recommendations with a view to drawing up an updated GAD strategy which, in particular, takes account of the new paradigms of international cooperation and the new European commitments (EU Gender Action Plan) and (Busan) and the Gender Action Plan, which includes a large section on Gender Budgeting.

It will make recommendations with a view to improving and/or better using required and/or restrictive tools, instruments and mechanisms to ensure efficiently and coherently the taking into account of gender in Cooperation Programmes with partner countries and in development actions.

B6. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation concerns interventions which are reportable as Official Development Assistance (ODA), financed by the Belgian Federal State (with the exception of State-to-State loans) in its partner countries between 2002 and 2011. These interventions are dispersed over a multitude of DAC/CRS codes.

60 interventions will be subject of an in-depth documentary study, 35 of which will be selected - as case studies - in five partner countries⁷⁹ and will be the subject of field visits.

B.6.1. Inventory

B.6.1.1. "Gender equality policy marker"

In order to be able to determine the progress made in the field of the consideration of the Gender aspect in its activities, the DGDC has decided to use the notification system of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee, called the *Gender Policy Marker*. This comprises a notification system based on three values:

- Value 2: This concerns an intervention, the main objective of which is gender equality.
- Value 1: This concerns an intervention which contributes to gender equality (significant objective) but the main objective of which is not gender equality.
- Value 0: This concerns an activity not focused on the objective of gender equality.

Absence of values 2, 1 or 0: This absence of a marker may be used to indicate several things:

1. Either that the information contained in the file does not help to determine the extent to which the intervention integrates the gender dimension.
2. Or that the intervention has not yet been examined with regard to the Gender dimension and, therefore, its marker has not yet been determined.
3. Or that, for the type of intervention, the marker does not apply. This is particularly the case of actions concerning debt and the donors' administrative costs. They are referred to as "unmarked" and correspond to the field NYF (Not Yet Field) in the ODA database.

This marker does not apply to certain types of assistance, such as State-to-State loans, actions concerning debt.

Therefore, gender is not considered as a sector, but only as a cross-cutting theme: Although some cooperation interventions are specifically focused on an objective of reinforcing gender equality and empowering women (value 2), as in the OECD's other DAC member countries, in particular Nordic countries, Belgian cooperation privileges gender mainstreaming rather than specific interventions, which is translated in budgetary terms by a very large proportion of interventions notified according to value 1 (significant objective).

Statistics on gender equality and women's empowerment exclude "assistance in the form of products" (DAC code 530), "actions concerning debt" (DAC code 600), and "donors' administrative costs" (DAC code 910). However, they include budgetary assistance (DAC code 510), as well as humanitarian assistance (DAC code 700) and emergency interventions (DAC code 720) which, generally, are not considered in the DAC's statistics because some of its members do not apply the marker to these types of assistance. The DAC CRS purpose code 15164 also does not apply to Support for institutions and organisations (governmental and non-governmental) which work for gender equality and empower women.

B.6.1.2. Inventory

The consultant will establish a sample of interventions which integrate directly or indirectly the gender aspect with a view to contributing to reinforcing gender equality and reinforcing women's empowerment. To that end, he will pre-select 400⁸⁰ interventions

⁷⁹ Belgian cooperation is concentrated currently in 18 partner countries: South Africa - Algeria - Benin - Bolivia - Burundi - Congo (Dem. Rep.) - Ecuador - Mali - Morocco - Mozambique - Niger - Uganda - Peru - Rwanda - Senegal - Tanzania -

⁸⁰ For the choice of the sample size, refer to the program: <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>

(marked 2, 1, 0 or NYF) chosen from the DGD's ODA database⁸¹ by simple random sampling.

The 400 interventions selected will be the subject of "screening". The aim of this examination is to provide elements with a view to:

- proposing interventions which will be the object of an in-depth documentary study and field visit (see B6.2);
- completing and adjusting the evaluation questions;
- preparing the interviews to be held.

B6.2. Sampling

B.6.2.1. Selection of interventions for the documentary study

The selection of the 50 interventions which should be the subject of an in-depth documentary study will take account of the following criteria:

- representative coverage of all sectors of Belgian cooperation;
- representative coverage of cooperation channels (see B6.5);
- temporal coverage (2002>2011);
- geographic coverage (in 18 partner countries);
- coverage of projects integrating the gender dimension with a view to reinforcing gender equality and reinforcing women's empowerment.

These criteria will be discussed and refined at the second meeting of the Steering committee. Consultants will also provide comments about the use of *Gender Policy Markers* in the ODA database.

B.6.2.2. Selection of case studies

The selection of five countries and 35 programmes/projects which will be the subject of a field visit, will aim to be as representative as possible and avoid sampling bias as far as possible. To this end, the selection will take into account the following data:

- Representation of all cooperation channels (BTC, BIO, non-governmental stakeholders, with the exception of State-to-State loans).
- Geographic breakdown according to the diversity of women's situations (see B6.2).
- Proportional distribution of the types of intervention: especially project aid, several programme aids but also voluntary contributions to international organisations, study funds, consultancy funds, BIO, State-to-State loans, other holders of Belgian Federal budgets (FPS) (potentially) delegated cooperation.
- Representation of a maximum number of different activities according to the DAC CRS purpose codes.

Interventions where the selected consultants have already been involved in the identification, formulation and/or implementation will be discarded.

The choice of interventions to visit in the countries selected will be realised on the basis of the result of the documentary study and in consultation with Belgian Cooperation Attachés, implementation partners and local partners. The key selection criteria will be the case study's potential contribution to the achievement of the evaluation's objectives. Interventions that were finished a long time ago will only be taken into account if the institutional memory of these interventions can be contacted in some way by the consultants.

⁸¹ Which consultants will be able to access directly via a computer available to them at a FPS Foreign Affairs office.

The final selection of the 35 interventions (and 5 countries) for field visits and will be submitted to the Evaluation Steering committee for their opinion.

B6.3. Geographic coverage

The evaluation will concern the activities of certain stakeholders in Belgium, the main objective of which is the integration of the gender dimension with a view to reinforcing gender equality and empowering women in the partner countries of Belgian cooperation.

The interventions which will be the subject of a case study will be selected in **5 partner countries** of Belgian cooperation.

The criteria governing the choice of these countries are as follows:

- > diversity in the level of the countries' development (less advanced country and country with intermediate revenue, fragile states);
- > diversity of context in terms of the women's situation and more specifically in terms of gender equality;
- > sufficient geographic diversity: at least one North African country, one Latin American country, one Asian country and two Sub-Saharan African countries.

The final selection of countries will be made on the basis of the results of the critical inventory and will be ratified by the Evaluation Steering Committee.

B6.4. Time coverage

Regarding the time limit, the evaluators will consider all interventions that have been the subject of expenditure between 2002 and 2011 that may have a (positive or negative) connection with the consideration of GAD. It is necessary to go back in time to 2002 in order to identify any development following the publication of the strategy note.

The consultant will provide a contextual analysis of the changes experienced in the field of GAD in Belgium during the period (by linking these changes to changes in the international context in the field).

B6.5. Coverage according to the type of assistance, partner and cooperation channels

In the choice of interventions to visit in the field, the consultant will ensure that it has the greatest possible diversity according to:

- > the type of assistance used (project aid, sectoral programme, technical assistance, etc.);
- > the implementation partner (BTC, non-governmental stakeholders, BIO, etc.);
- > the cooperation channel (governmental cooperation, indirect cooperation, Belgian Fund for Food Security, etc.).

Considering that, since January 2009, the contributions of Belgian cooperation's multilateral budget are reserved for financing the general resources of multilateral partner organisations (MO), the evaluation does not provide for intervention visits implemented by the MO. However, consultants are asked to assess how and the extent to which Belgium ensures that the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are part of the objectives of the multilateral agencies which it finances and that the gender dimension is included in a cross-cutting manner in their future development policies, strategies and actions, as well as the assessment of their results.

Also, the consultant will ensure, if possible, that it retains for the selection of 50 interventions, a certain number of *earmarked projects* in progress or completed financed by Belgium and implemented (between 2002>2011) by a Multilateral Organisation (MO).

B6.6. "Benchmarking"

Considering that the main subject of the evaluation is the Belgian cooperation strategy in the field of gender equality, it has been decided not to opt for a combined evaluation. However, it is intended that the evaluation compares the policies and practices of Belgian cooperation with those of three other bilateral and/or multilateral donors in the countries visited.

B7. Evaluation questions

The evaluation should answer a series of evaluative questions based on the DAC's five criteria⁸². To answer these questions, consultants will have to use, but not necessarily limit themselves to the proposed sub-questions. The consultants should base themselves on the questions and sub-questions which follow. However, these are proposed as an indication and an illustration.

Tenderers can therefore add or modify the questions and sub-questions so as to achieve all the aforementioned evaluation objectives. Where possible, the Consultant will use 'SMART' indicators to establish his response to these questions. The Consultant will be responsible for proving that it is not possible to use such indicators, question by question.

B7.1 Relevance

B7.1.1. To what extent is the strategy note still relevant in view of changes in the international context?

To what extent is the Strategy note coherent with the international commitments made by Belgium in the field of gender and GAD⁸³?

To what extent is the Belgian "*Gender mainstreaming*" strategy note still relevant in the current context of the Paris Declaration (PD), the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) and budget support?

To what extent does the strategy note constitute a reference framework and/or relevant dialogue for all the stakeholders of Belgian cooperation?

To what extent has the strategy note contributed to an improved internal coherence for Belgian development policies and actions in favour of GAD?

B7.1.2. To what extent is the taking into account of gender by Belgian cooperation coherent with the international commitments taken by Belgium in the field of the integration of gender and GAD, as well as international principles and standards in the field?

⁸² Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

⁸³ Among others: the Beijing declaration and action platform of 1995, the Declaration of the OECD's DAC entitled Gender Equality: Towards sustainable development focused on the individual (1995), the resolution of the Council of the European Union concerning the integration of gender questions in development cooperation (1995) and the United Nations' Millennium Declaration (September 2000).

B7.1.2.1. How many times does Belgian cooperation mention the United Nations' different resolutions (especially 1325) in Cooperation Programmes (PIC)?

B7.1.3. To what extent is the taking into account of gender by Belgian cooperation coherent with the policies and strategies of poverty reduction and development in partner countries? To what extent and in what ways does Belgium integrate the taking into account of gender in political dialogue with partner countries?

B7.1.4. To what extent is the taking into account of gender by Belgian cooperation coherent with the needs of women in partner countries?

B7.1.5. To what extent is the taking into account of gender by Belgian cooperation coherent with the GAD policies of other donors, as well as the different action plans resulting from these policies? Is there coherence between these plans?

B7.1.6. To what extent is the taking into account of gender by Belgian cooperation integrated into other priority sectors? To what extent is this taking into account carried out in a truly cross-cutting manner?

B7.1.7. To what extent does the taking into account of gender by Belgian cooperation consider Belgian cooperation's other priority themes (environment, children's rights, social economy/consolidation of society)?

B7.1.8. What synergies do the interventions and different Belgian and local stakeholders develop between each other with a view to taking account of gender?

B7.2. Effectiveness

B7.2.1. To what extent and with what results has the Action Plan of the Strategic paper "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men" been implemented by Belgian cooperation (and the DGD in particular)?

What are the results of the support of Belgian cooperation in the efforts of partner countries in the field of the integration of gender?

To what extent is Belgian governmental cooperation able to influence political dialogue (especially around Indicative Cooperation Programmes) with partner countries with a view to greater integration of the gender dimension in their national and sectoral development strategies?

What are the results of support for international and non-governmental organisations in the field of the integration of gender?

What are the results of the reinforcement of the DGD's international capacities and GAD interventions?

B7.2.2. To what extent and with what results has gender been integrated into the DGD and at all levels and in all Belgian cooperation channels?

What are the expected results (in the short, medium and long-term) of interventions supported by Belgian cooperation which aim to reinforce gender equality and empower women?

To what extent and with what results has DGCD used the notification system of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee, called the *Gender Policy Marker* in order to be able to determine the progress made in the field of the consideration of the Gender aspect in its activities?

To what extent and with which results, the Belgian cooperation uses Gender indicators to formulate, monitor and evaluate its interventions to reinforce gender equality and empower women?

B7.2.3. To what extent has Belgian Development Cooperation helped in the setting up in partner countries of the conditions required to reinforce gender equality and empower women.

To what extent has Belgian cooperation supported partner countries in integrating the taking into account of gender in their policies, strategic planning and legislation?

To what extent has Belgian cooperation supported partner countries in complying with and implementing multilateral conventions on GAD and international recommendations in the field of GAD?

To what extent and with what results has Belgian Development Cooperation supported the setting up, in partner countries, of the necessary conditions for reducing and preventing violence against women?

B7.2.4. To what extent has Belgian assistance to centralised and decentralised public institutions, grassroots civil society organisations, professional organisations, and the private sector contributed to gender equality?

B7.2.5. To what extent has Belgian assistance to centralised and decentralised public institutions, grassroots civil society organisations, professional organisations, and the private sector contributed to women's empowerment?

B7.2.6. To what extent has Belgian assistance to centralised and decentralised public institutions, grassroots civil society organisations, professional organisations, and the private sector contributed to reducing and preventing violence against women?

B7.3. Efficiency

B7.3.1. What are the budgets spent for interventions concerning Belgian ODA which specifically targets gender equality (gender policy marker: value 2)? To what extent have these budgets been spent efficiently? Are they sufficient for achieving the results defined?

B7.3.2. What financial, human and other resources are mobilised by Belgian cooperation for the implementation of the GAD strategy?

B7.4. Sustainability

B7.4.1. To what extent are the immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term results (impact) producing lasting effects?

B7.5. Impact

B7.5.1. To what extent and with what results has Belgian cooperation contributed to achieving the Millennium Goal No.3: Promote gender equality and empower women?

Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Monitoring indicators

9. Proportion of boys/girls in primary, secondary and higher education

10. Literacy rate for women aged from 15-24 years compared to men

11. Percentage of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
12. Share of seats occupied by women in the National Parliament

B7.5.2. What is the impact of the Belgian Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325?

B7.5.3. What are the long-term direct or indirect, positive or negative, anticipated or not, interventions involving Belgian ODA specifically targeting gender equality (gender policy marker: value 2 and 1)?

B8. Approach and method: Evaluation phases and reporting

B8.1 Approach and method

The evaluation is summative and formative. It aims both to report results and contribute to learning. Therefore, the method proposed should take account of these two objectives. This means that evaluators are asked not only to inquire about the level of the result achieved by taking into account gender in Belgian cooperation strategies and interventions, but also to analyse, as far as possible, the decisive factors which explain the successes or failures in achieving these results (analysis of the contribution and, to a lesser extent, of the awarding thereof).

The methodology should enable an understanding of the theory of change which governs cooperation strategies in the field of gender mainstreaming, as well as an analysis of causal relationships. The evaluators will use the results chain adopted by the SEO:



Immediate results (outputs): Qualitative, quantitative and functional (direct or indirect, positive or negative, anticipated or not) modifications to the environment caused immediately or in the very short-term by the cooperation intervention.

Short- and medium-term results (outcomes): Qualitative, quantitative and functional (direct or indirect, positive or negative, anticipated or not) modifications to the environment caused in the short- or medium-term by the cooperation intervention.

Long-term results or impact: Qualitative, quantitative and functional (direct or indirect, positive or negative, anticipated or not) modifications to the environment caused in the long-term by the cooperation intervention.

The evaluation is based on the five criteria defined by the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

On the basis of these criteria and the evaluation questions proposed (B7); the evaluators will draw up a more precise evaluative framework with sub-questions and indicators. The method submitted in the technical tender should enable evaluators to answer these questions and reach a decision together.

The evaluation will use the case studies selected for all financing methods and partners mobilised in the frame of Belgian Development Cooperation. The choice of countries and case studies will be carried out taking account of the evaluation’s scope (B6).

B8.2 Evaluation phases

B8.2.1. First step: preparation phase

- Writing and approval of the terms of reference (S4 and Partners).
- Public procurement procedure by general call at European level.
- Assessment of tenders (assessment committee presided over by S4).
- Notification of the contract to the Consultant.
- Establishment of a steering committee⁸⁴

The preparation phase ends with a kick-off meeting or first steering committee. During this meeting the Consultant will essentially present his technical tender.

B8.2.2. Second step: start-up and descriptive inventory

The second step will involve drawing up a descriptive inventory of Belgian interventions eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA), financed by the Belgian federal State (with the exception of State to State loans) in its 18 partner countries between 2002 and 2011 (see point B6.).

On the basis of this inventory, the consultant will propose 50 interventions which will be the subject of an in-depth documentary study, 35 of which as case studies in five partner countries and which will be the subject of field visits.

During this period, the Consultant should also structure and detail his evaluative approach and the methodology.

The second meeting of the steering committee will result in:

- a discussion about the consultant's methodological approach (Methodological note completed);
- a discussion about the results of the inventory and the selection of 50 interventions;
- a discussion about the methodology and the criteria which will be used with a view to selecting 35 case studies.

B8.2.3. Third step: research phase

In Belgium, the research phase comprises an information collection and analysis step combined with a step to collect and analyse opinions. The research phase commences at the start of the evaluation and continues throughout the evaluation process. The consultant will undertake all the necessary approaches with a view to collecting relevant documents and data. The Special Evaluation Office will act as an intermediary to help it to access databases and documentation managed by the DGD and the BTC. With a view to facilitating the request for and collection of documentation, the consultant will draw up a table.

The list of documents proposed above is not chronological or exhaustive.

Documents to be analysed:

- The Gender Mainstreaming Law and the manual for its implementation within the Belgian federal administration;
- Documents relating to the DGDs GAD strategies, including, among other things: the strategy note "Equal rights and opportunities between women and men" (2002)

⁸⁴ The definition, composition and role of the steering committee are explained in point B9

- The SEO's evaluation report on the Women and Development Committee⁸⁵,
- The reports of the 2010 survey on the use of the gender policy marker within the DGD;
- Documents relating to the strategies and interventions of the Belgian partner implementation organisations, with a specific focus on the consideration of gender in the negotiations with the BTC and partner countries (drafting of ICPs) and the political dialogue with non-governmental bodies (NGOs) with a view to developing their multi-annual programmes.
- The drafting of the 18 partners' ICPs must be dynamically analysed. It is particularly important to verify whether and how the comments of the department responsible for the thematic have been taken into account during the preparation process and in the implementation (changes between 2002 and 2011).
- Documents relating to the strategies and interventions of the international partner organisations with, for organisations where GAD is a cross-cutting theme, specific focus on the consideration of the GAD issue in annual meetings concerning the funding of multilateral organisations.
- Documents relating to the strategies and programmes of the countries that will be the subject of a field study (and more specifically all that concerns GAD).
- Documents relating to the interventions in these countries.
- Public documents relating to the strategies and programmes of the donors to be benchmarked.
- Working documents given to the consultants by steering committee members and implementation partners.
- The ODA.be database.
- The database of DAC-OECD evaluations (DEREK).
- The minutes of the first and second steering committees (see points B9.3).
- Other relevant databases.

People to meet with:

This list is not exhaustive:

- One (or several) member(s) of the strategic unit of the Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation.
- DGD members qualified in the field of GAD (currently D2 5 Sectoral programme funds) and the case managers of the selected interventions.
- BTC members qualified in the field of GAD or case managers of the selected interventions.
- Non-governmental bodies (CWD86, NGOs, universities, scientific institutions and other partners) active in the field of GAD or implementing the selected interventions.
- The Federal Council for Sustainable Development (the people who wrote the opinions on the strategy notes).
- The DGD (responsible for monitoring gender and managers)
- Conseil des Femmes francophones de Belgique / Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad van België
- The FPS Foreign Affairs Gender Task Force

⁸⁵ The final report is available on the website:
http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/binaries/rapport_evaluation_cfd_tcm313-156206.pdf

⁸⁶ La Commission Femmes et Développement : http://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/politique/cooperation_au_developpement/CFD/

The research phase will give rise to a provisional intermediate report written according to the structure presented in point B11.2. The report will be presented at the third meeting of the steering committee. Written comments on the provisional intermediate report along with the comments made at the third steering committee will be incorporated into the final version of the report.

It will serve as a basis, among other things, for a decision with regard the 5 countries/regions that will be the subject of a case study based on a proposal made by the consultants.

B8.2.4. Fourth step: field mission phase

The preparation of field missions: can only begin after the second steering committee which will designate the countries/sub-regions that will be the subject of a case study. For international and regional/local consultants, this will consist in conducting a detailed study of the interventions to be visited and organising the missions on a practical level (programme, appointments, travel arrangements, etc.)

The field missions themselves can only begin with the formal and written authorisation of the evaluation's Managing Officer.

Categories of respondents:

- National respondents in the countries concerned assume a particular importance and must be favoured:
 - DGD Attaché(s)
 - Local Representative of the BTC
 - Local Representative of other implementation partners.
 - Ministries concerned by the theme
 - The Gender thematic group (political dialogue between partner countries and donors) if it exists; or failing that, donors that are active locally in the Gender and development theme and open to a visit to one of their interventions in the partner country.
 - Mixed Local Consultation Structure (MLCS) Representatives
- Locally
 - Project managers (Belgian and national) and technical assistants
 - Local authorities (if appropriate)
 - Local and beneficiary organisations

This list is not exhaustive.

Field visits:

In addition to the meetings with the various categories of respondents, the Consultant will dedicate an equal part of his time to visiting the achievements in the field. These visits will be the opportunity for valuable contact with the direct recipients of interventions financed by Belgium and/or other donors.

The field visits may be accompanied by a representative of the contracting authority. Their mandates and terms of reference will be communicated to the consultant and discussed with them.

The first field mission must be conducted by the team leader, ideally accompanied by the evaluation's Managing Officer. If, during this first field mission, last minute changes to the methodology or analysis programme are deemed necessary, these must be approved by the contracting authority representative. As an indication, the level of effort required in terms of physical presence for the field mission is fifteen working days

excluding national and international travel; which corresponds to three calendar weeks (visits to the actions of other donors and preparation of the local restitution included). Long local trips will preferably be scheduled over weekends. The field missions should be conducted by an international expert accompanied by a regional or local expert.

The Field missions will lead to the drafting, on-site, of an aide memoire that will be discussed and validated at a meeting (1/2 day) if possible, with representatives of all the categories of people met. In order to involve the authorities and organisations concerned in the countries/regions to be the subject of a case study, each field mission will give rise to a local restitution. In addition to the Cooperation Attachés, representatives from local authorities involved in the thematic, implementation partners, other interested donors and where possible, recipients will be invited to this meeting. In the event that a field mission is conducted in several countries, such restitution needs to be planned for each country concerned.

The country reports will be presented during the fourth steering committee and sent to the Cooperation Attachés in the Embassies of the countries visited. The written comments on the provisional mission reports along with the comments made at the fourth steering committee will be incorporated into the final version of the mission reports.

B8.2.5. Fifth step: summary phase

In accordance with the agreed timetable, the Consultant will write a proposed final report following the structure provided in point B11.3. In addition to covering each of the evaluation elements, the final report should include a section summarising the evaluation's main overall conclusions and recommendations.

So that the diagnoses, analyses and recommendations are properly assimilated and in anticipation of future "dissemination seminars", the proposed final report will be submitted for the opinion of the Cooperation Attachés.

The proposed final report will be presented to all parties involved in a seminar which will also be the fifth steering committee. The written comments, along with the comments made at this fifth steering committee will be incorporated into the final version of the report. The reasons justifying why certain comments have not been taken into consideration should be explained in a specific appendix.

B8.2.6. Sixth step: Approval, distribution and retroactive process

The final definitive report will be subject to contracting department's approval, based on the assessment grid used by the European Commission's Evaluation Unit.

The final definitive report will be presented during a day-long seminar at the offices of the contracting authority in Brussels. The purpose of this seminar will be:

- on the one hand, to present the results, conclusions and recommendations to the political advisers of the Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation, the DGD Department concerned with this subject and partner implementation organisations. A managerial response will be requested from the Minister for Development Cooperation
- on the other hand, to begin the evaluation's retroactive process with the administration and the Minister's political advisers. This process involves writing a managerial response and following up the application of the agreed recommendations

The final definitive report, including the managerial response, will be made public and posted on the FPS Foreign Affairs website among other places.

B9. Responsibility for the evaluation's management and monitoring

B9.1. Managing Officer

The Special Evaluation Office (SEO) is responsible for launching the evaluation and the administrative management of the contract. It represents the contracting authority and as such is the evaluation's Managing Officer. In this sense, it checks the evaluation's compliance (based on the legal framework and the specifications) but also the quality of the process and outputs of the evaluation.

SEO manages the entire evaluation process from start to finish and in doing so it:

- is responsible for the public procurement procedure (preparing the specifications, awarding the contract, managing invoices, etc.).
- ensures the compliance and coherence of the evaluation process, from the terms of reference to the printing of the final report and its distribution
- coordinates and manages the activity of the various actors (steering committee and evaluation team); prepares and chairs the meetings, drafts the minutes, manages potential conflicts, etc.
- supervises and verifies the quality of the work in the different phases (including ensuring that the conclusions have solid methodological and factual foundations)
- guarantees the smooth running of the evaluation (including facilitating the consultants' work and their access to information sources)
- guarantees the independence of the consultants. However, the MO ensures that the stakeholders' comments and opinions are taken into account and those that are not are the subject of a justified response from the consultants.
- validates the final report using the assessment grid (and approves the final payments for services).
- organises the distribution of the evaluation results and generates the managerial response. Organises the final restitution sessions.

SEO, in its capacity as Managing Officer is solely responsible for the management ("running") of the evaluation process.

B9.2. Stakeholders (or actors concerned)

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or organisations that have direct or indirect responsibilities and/or interests in the subject of the evaluation (project, programme, sector, country, etc.). They may or may not be affected by the evaluation. They are consulted at certain steps in the evaluation in order to give their opinion on the evaluation's terms of reference and its outputs (including: provisional reports). In some cases, their cooperation is required for information collection (and for organising field missions). The evaluators may also listen to them in the absence of SEO or other stakeholders. Some of these stakeholders may be members of the steering committee and/or the local group. Their selection/invitation to participate in a steering committee or a local group is the responsibility of SEO.

In accordance with this definition, the Special Evaluation Office is not a stakeholder.

B9.3. Steering committee

The Special Evaluation Office will constitute a steering committee (SC) comprised of representatives of the actors concerned and independent experts. This committee contributes to the evaluation's quality, credibility and usefulness. It gives an opinion on the methodology considered for the evaluation along with the evaluation's observations, conclusions and recommendations. If necessary, it completes or corrects the evaluators' information.

The members of this committee will include (the list is an example and is not exhaustive⁸⁷):

- The members of the FPS Foreign Affairs "Gender Task Force"
- A minimum of 2 members from the Special Evaluation Office
- Several members of the DGD involved and/or interested in the thematic.
- Representatives of the BTC, the DGD, indirect stakeholders, the CWD
- One independent expert, hired by the SEO

The SC is called, prepared and chaired by the Special Evaluation Office which drafts the minutes for it.

The SC is a "technical" working group which has a discussion and proposition role. It is responsible for monitoring, supporting and facilitating the evaluation process. Through its diverse composition, the SC enhances the evaluation process with its various perspectives. The SC guarantees the consultants' access to useful sources of information (documentation, databases and people). SC members act as an interface between the services, departments and institutions to which they belong (DGD, BTC, NGO, etc.). So, they inform their service and/or department of the evaluation's processes and outputs and facilitate access to information, help to organise interviews, etc.

As part of the SC, the stakeholders directly concerned with the evaluation are encouraged to take ownership of the evaluation's results. However, the Special Evaluation Office will ensure a balance between the participative nature of the evaluation and the efficiency of the process (meaning that the evaluation produces results in good time).

B10. Evaluation team

The team of experts must have in-depth knowledge and experience of the following fields:

- Belgian Development Cooperation in general
- Thematic evaluation in Gender and development and in development cooperation project/programme evaluation.
- Practical management of field evaluations
- Fields concerned by the Gender and development theme and gender mainstreaming.
- A good understanding of the documents drawn up by the Belgian Administration and in the various partner countries that require active knowledge within the team of international consultants of French and Dutch (native language level), and English and Spanish (advanced level)
- The same linguistic conditions are required for publishing the different translations of the final reports (see point B13.8).

⁸⁷ International cooperation Attachés at Belgium Embassies are not members of the SC but, nevertheless, they may be consulted after each meeting of the SC.

Diversity within the team is essential.

The team leader must have experience of managing thematic evaluations of a similar size, of evaluation steering and coordination and team management. He should also be aware of international debates and the various views expressed in international debates on GAD issues.

In each country/region to be the subject of a case study, an experienced local/regional evaluator, selected and paid by the Consultant, but approved by the organiser, will be an integral part of the team. The qualifications and experience of the local/regional consultations will be complementary to the qualifications and experience of the international consultant(s). The local consultants should be involved before the arrival of the international Consultant and potentially, after his departure (reading documents, making contact with partners and the Belgian Embassy, resource person for the local situation, active involvement in drafting the aide memoire).

B11. Reporting

B11.1. Nature of the reports

The evaluation outputs are:

- One intermediate report at the end of the research phase.
- Five aide memoires; one for each country/region that is the subject of a case study.
- Five mission reports; one for each country that is the subject of a case study.
- One final report.
- One 2-page summary of the principal lessons and conclusions.
- The intermediate report, the mission reports and the final report should be presented to the steering committee as a PowerPoint presentation. These presentations will be considered as evaluation outputs in the same way as the hardcopy reports.

B11.2. Structure of the intermediate report:

The intermediate report will propose the appropriate methods for collecting data in the field and will present a detailed and appropriate methodology for the collection and analysis of the collected data and information, and specify any limits to these methods.

The intermediate report will also present:

- Initial observations.
- The justified list of interventions that will be the subject of a field visit.
- The evaluation questionnaires that will be used in the meeting with each category of respondent in the field.
- The framework (same for each mission) that will be used to draft the aide memoire and the mission report.
- A timetable for the field visits and the subsequent evaluation phases.

The intermediate report is a working document that will contain the following sections:

- a) Introduction
- b) Evaluation structure:
 - Evaluation questions accompanied by their respective comments.
 - Judgement criteria relating to each question.
 - Proposed indicators for each criterion.
 - In the appendix, the construction of the logical diagram and method for drafting the questions, criteria and indicators.
- c) Data collection and presentation:
 - The collection method actually used (plan, strategy, tool), the limits, bias, risks and problems still to be resolved in the field.
 - The presentation of the data, in relation to the evaluation questions and the judgement criteria and corresponding indicators. At this stage, the data must fuel the response to each of the evaluation questions and allow hypotheses (several per question if necessary) to be developed that will be tested in the field.
 - The presentation of the data will help to clarify the overall issue of the evaluation beyond each of the evaluation questions.
- d) The data collection method in the field:
 - The main problems of data collection to be resolved in relation to the data already available.
 - A justified list of the most interesting interventions to be visited in the countries/regions selected for the case studies.
 - The field work plan.
 - The collection tools that will be used and their associated risks or limits. The evaluation questionnaires that will be used in the meeting with each category of respondent in the field: Indicate how the data will be cross-referenced; indicate how the data collection will be standardised across the 5 countries/regions to be visited; the analysis strategy that will be applied in the field along with the tools to be used (with the limits and risk analysis).
- e) Structure of the case study results: The framework (same for each country/region) that will be used to draft the aide memoire and the mission report.
- f) Timetable: a timetable for the field visits and the subsequent evaluation phases.

B11.3 Structure of the final report:

The detailed structure of the final report will be agreed during the evaluation. The following sections will, however, appear in the report's outline:

- Summary
- Evaluation background
- Answers to evaluation questions
- Observations
- Lessons (as per the meaning of the definition in the DAC Glossary)
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Compulsory appendix 1: Terms of Reference

The final report should be short (75 pages excluding appendices at most). Additional information on the background, programme or overall aspects of the methodology and analysis will be placed in the appendices.

The appendices should include: the logical diagram; the methodology; the judgement criteria; the list of people met; the documentation list; the ToR; the comments given on the proposed final report that have not been taken into account by the consultants and the reasons justifying this; all other information used as a basis for the analysis or tables (for example: tables with economic and social indicators).

B11.4. Layout of the final report

All versions of the final report will be presented in a standard format and style used for all Special Evaluation Office reports, the model of which will be communicated to the consultants awarded the contract.

B11.5. Quality

The reports must be of a very high quality. The results, analysis, conclusions and recommendations must be detailed. They must reflect a methodological approach which clearly indicates the reasoning process. Realistic and operational recommendations must be presented in order of priority (if necessary by group). They must also be supported by a presentation of the various possible options and the risks and limits related to each option.

The reports will be subjected to a quality assurance grid by the Managing Department.

B11.6. Punctuality

The contracting department should be in the possession of the reports to be assessed by the different steering committees at least six working days before the date set for the committee by joint agreement.

B11.7. Language of the reports

The aide memoires and mission reports should be written in the international language in use in the countries concerned.

The inventory, the intermediate report and the appendices to the final report should be written in French or Dutch or English (depending on the native language of the team leader).

The final definitive report will be written either in French, Dutch or English and translated into the other 2 languages.

The 2-page summary should be drafted in French, Dutch, English and Spanish.

The PowerPoint presentations should be partly in French and partly in Dutch, with some balance between the 2 languages.

The translations should be edited by the Consultant; for the French and Dutch versions, this **must be done** by a team member whose native language is French or Dutch.



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