# G4D | GOVERNANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

# A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH FOR BELGIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

# CONTENT

## Introduction

**Belgian development cooperation is undergoing multiple reforms towards more integrated actions** intending to improve the effectiveness of its interventions. In line with international debates and engagements, more coherent approaches are promoted. They include all different channels and actors and involve those best fitted to reach the objectives of Belgian foreign policy. In this context, the research group 'Governance for development' was asked by DGD to study two particular aspects: i) the trend towards a *Comprehensive Approach* (CA) that optimizes cooperation between actors, primarily the different federal departments, engaged in Belgian foreign action at large; ii) the implementation of an *integrated country policy* (or ICP) for development that optimizes collaborations between all actors of Belgian development cooperation around a country intervention strategy.

**This paper addresses the issue of the Comprehensive approach.** In the words of the ACROPOLIS call for proposal, what was then called the 3D-LO (Development, Diplomacy, Defence – Law and Order) approach "also contributes to a coherent strategy at the national level, a *unity of purpose* in which every instrument of our foreign policy plays its part while staying in line with its own objectives (…). [It is] a tool to achieve better effectiveness of interventions addressing (human) security issues, and a more integrated approach in contexts of fragility, crisis or conflict. It is also a step towards a more integrated country-level approach encompassing all government and non-governmental stakeholders". To succeed in such an ambitious reform, it is essential to clarify its context, meaning, and existing practices at Belgian level, as well as to look at international experiences from which lessons could be learned. In tackling all these aspects, this paper provides food for thought to Belgian stakeholders and wishes to lay the foundations for the debate and reforms carried out.

**The paper consists of two parts.** The first part synthesizes Belgian and international evidence on comprehensive approaches. It aims to answer the following questions: what is it, and why and how does it matter? What is called for in a CA? What is the significant practice of other donors (positive or negative)? The second part presents the results of the survey carried out between June and September 2017 with Belgian actors (public, private and civil society) involved in Belgian foreign policy, from development sector to foreign affairs, trade, police, justice, migration, etc. The survey focused on the perceptions, practices, and references of Belgian stakeholders on integrated approaches, both in regards to the Comprehensive approach (referred to as 3D-LO in the survey) or the ICP. The answers analysed in this evidence paper logically mostly originate from the answers provided for the questions relating to the CA. As such, 48 actors have been taken into account in the survey results analysis. Nonetheless, the answers from around 20 ICP questionnaires were also integrated in the analysis as they addressed CA related issues.

## Part 1: Evidence on the comprehensive approach for development interventions

### 1. What is a comprehensive approach and why does it matter?

#### 1.1. What is a comprehensive approach for development interventions?

Although there is no single definition of a comprehensive approach for development interventions, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) describes it, under the label of 'whole-of-government approach', as a situation "**where a government uses formal and/or informal networks across the different agencies within that government to coordinate the design and implementation of the range of interventions that the government's agencies will be making in order to increase the effectiveness of those interventions in achieving the desired objectives**" (OECD 2006, 14).

The idea of a comprehensive approach in development interventions is in close connection with **the reshaping of security after the Cold War, and the success of human security and human development as the new global notions promoted by international organizations active in the field of external aid** (Buzan & al. 1998). Due to a growing number of 'low intensity conflicts' in the least advanced countries of the world in the years 1990, the development community started to promote the use of development assistance to try and prevent conflict rather than just rebuilding after them (OECD, 2001), and came up with the idea of a nexus intertwining security and development (Duffield, 2001). At the same time, multilateral actors developed new modalities of coordination for their different streams of action in a given context. For example, Kosovo was one of the first contexts where North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations (UN), European union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) had to coordinate their action in the field. UN resolution 1244 (1999) created KFOR (Kosovo Force) as an international peacekeeping force dealing with classical military missions such as border security, but also enforcing security and public order, and supporting the establishment of civilian institutions such as the judicial and penal system, or the electoral process. It also created UNMIK (United Mission in Kosovo) as an international administration mission built on a four-pillars approach (police and justice; civil administration; democratization and institution building; reconstruction and economic development), sharing responsibilities between UN, EU and OSCE. This innovative comprehensive approach for international intervention was also developed in Iraq, Afghanistan and several sub-Saharan Africa countries, and became an important topic of reflection and discussion for both practitioners and academics.

These modalities for a better harmonization of the different actors in the field varies according to the type of actor concerned, and bears different labels such as 'integrated approach', '3D' or '3D-LO' approach, or else 'whole-of-government approach'. These concepts are not identical, and refer to specific and distinct contents, but **they all translate the idea that a unidimensional approach (and its multiplication by different actors) is not adequate to deal with complex and volatile contexts** (Wendling, 2010). **Comprehensive approach is a catch-all expression including all those ideas and generally referring to the recognition that peace and development are fundamentally intertwined** (Drent, 2011).

#### 1.2. Why and how does it matter for Belgium?

The adoption of a comprehensive approach for international interventions, especially in the field of development, is not a complete novelty in Belgium. The reform of the international cooperation, with the adoption of the long-expected law of May 25, 1999, already set the bases for such a larger perspective, by adopting *conflict prevention and consolidation of civil society, including support to human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms* (art 7) as the fifth priority sector for development cooperation, along with agriculture, infrastructure, education and health. Indeed, in the following years, **several**

**initiatives were undertaken, mainly in the Great Lakes region of Africa, implementing some kind of a comprehensive approach**: to name but a few of them, follow-up of the MDRP (Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Program) trust fund for DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration) in Central Africa; support to justice and police reform in Burundi; joint defence and development initiatives in support of the D.R. Congo army; etc. The progress of Belgium towards CA was, since then, scrutinized by the OECD peer reviews along the following years.

After a rather brief reference to CA in its 2005 report[1], the **OECD peer review of 2010** saluted Belgium to be "on the right track", due to the project to establish a Federal Council for Development Co-operation, the use of the EIDDD sustainability test[2], and, more saliently, the mechanisms linked to the connexion of security to other policy areas. The **weekly meetings of the interdepartmental working group on Central Africa were commended**, as well as the coordination efforts of Ministers of development cooperation, defence, justice and interior regarding civil and military engagement in Afghanistan and D.R. Congo (OECD 2010, 39-40). At the same time, the 2010 review underlined the **need for a clearer understanding of the concept of policy coherence**, since it saw some confusion between policy documents produced in 2005 (in which "coherence was described to mean efforts to link the very different policy fields of diplomacy, trade, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and foreign affairs with development goals") and more recent ones (2007 and 2008, where it was substantially reduced). **The 2009 policy note was acknowledged to make things clearer by "putting the emphasis on coherence within foreign policy (humanitarian aid, diplomacy and security), and within justice and finance, and again stressed its importance for state building in fragile contexts"**, but **without "specific vision for achieving this"** (OECD 2010, 37-38). The main problems pinpointed were the **lack of an entity "with the explicit task of overseeing policy coherence for development"** beside the Council of Ministers, and **the absence of a system to collect systematic evidence on the impact of specific policies on development, beside some targeted instruments** (i.a. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 implementation action plan, or environment-related development issues).

Another initiative in regards to a more comprehensive approach is the creation, in 2014 of an **Interdepartmental Commission on the Coherence of Development Policies (CICPD)** which mainly aims at elaborating recommendations for the Minister of cooperation as well as the other Ministers whose actions have a direct or indirect impact on development countries. Its focus has so far been on two themes: migration and peace & security. The CICPD has however only rarely met and its work been very limited. Collaborating with the CICPD, a **Consultative Council on the Coherence of Development Policies (CCCPD)** was also created in 2014, composed of experts from academia and civil society. The CCCPD provides recommendations on multiple topics (e.g. regional policy, peace & security, migration & development) and can be at the Council's initiative or answer to a specific demand by the Minister of Cooperation or other Ministers (e.g. Minister of Sustainable development).

The **latest peer review, in 2015**, addressed the comprehensive approach as its very first chapter. It acknowledged the **legal foundations put in place by Belgium to make its policies more coherent** (by enshrining the issue in the federal law), but still saw it as remaining a challenge, mainly due to the high ambition of the architecture (OECD 2015, 28). **The review called for priorities to be identified, and for a plan of action to be implemented**, focusing on "a few policy issues of strategic priority which it can influence and be pragmatic in how it uses institutional mechanisms" (*ibid.*, 17). It condemned the **lack of whole-of-government strategies that were expected for fragile states and exposed as a "missed opportunity" the fact that several specific initiatives** (cross-directorate teams for Mali and Niger, and for the Great Lakes region; contextual risk analysis for programming) **did not ended up bringing "all Belgium's foreign policy tools together to support a more effective response to fragile situations"** (*ibid.*, 64).

**Belgium is therefore seen as making gradual and specific efforts towards a comprehensive approach in its development interventions, but those efforts are either still formal, and require**

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[1] The 2005 peer review acknowledged the integration of broader perspectives (international trade, migration, security, etc.) in policy orientation documents produced by the Minister for development cooperation (OECD 2005, 43); it also commended Belgium engagement in international forums, such as the EU and OECD, to promote development policy coherence. At the same time, the report also stated that Belgium "could do more domestically", and that it would calls for "more systematic long-term strategic thinking" in general, and for "a better structuring of inter-ministerial consultation (and arbitration) mechanisms and the assignment of specialists to the task" (Ibid., 43-44), especially for sensitive areas (such as arms trade, anti-corruption measures and controlling illegal exploitation of and trade in D.R. Congo's resources).

[2] The EIDDD is the analysis of the impact of decisions on sustainable development.

**further implementation, or still punctual and require a broader dimension. The lack of an overarching entity to feed in and guarantee the CA is constantly perceived as an obstacle on the way towards better achievements.**

## 2. What is called for in a comprehensive approach of development interventions, especially in fragile contexts?

Since Belgium decided to focus its development cooperation in fragile states and situations, it must be highlighted that **adopting a comprehensive approach for development interventions bears specific consequences in these contexts**. The vast array of documents produced in that field underline **the complexity of such contexts, reaching "a wide range of domains** (e.g., provision of physical security, legitimate political institutions, sound economic management and the delivery of social services), **indicating the need for a mix of actors, instruments, incentives and interventions"** (OECD, 2006, 7).

International discussions in Rome (2003) and particularly Paris (2005) identified **donor harmonization as a key issue to aid effectiveness, and the complexity of fragile contexts**, encompassing such various field as security, development, economy, politics, justice and others, make it to avoid useless replication in the field. **The Paris Declaration calls for a better synergy between the different stakeholders, especially the military and the civil actors but also in a same country or organisation between defence, diplomacy and development sectors** (Stepputat & Greenwood, 2013).

According to the international community, intervening in fragile situations **requires the involvement of at least four communities: humanitarian, human rights, development and security,** each of them having a different perspective on the way to resolve the problems (Crisis Management Initiative, 2008). **It is generally acknowledged that the actual mix of actors required for a comprehensive approach in a given context should depend on the context itself**. Adopting a comprehensive approach to make those actors operate together, however, implies more than the mere setting-up of an interagency work. It requires a particular mind-set, based on **two keystones: (1) the management of horizontal boundaries to enhance collaboration and prevent competition; and (2) the management of vertical layers of perceptions on issues, causes and consequences**.

### 2.1. Horizontal boundary management: enhance inclusive collaboration, avoid competition

The expansion of a comprehensive approach for development intervention has been seen as a potential danger by non-governmental actors since it requires them to work closely with the military and lead to a potential confusion of their respective roles (GRIP, 2002). It also threatens the perception of their neutrality by the local population and can limit the impact of their action. The growing demand for a comprehensive approach and a stronger link between security and development is also perceived as creating a potential subordination development to security objectives, especially since 9/11 and the expansion of counterinsurgency and anti-terrorism operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (Stepputat & Greenwood, 2013). **A key challenge for CA is therefore "to establish the limit between constructive cooperation and destructive collaboration between humanitarian workers and the military"** (Wendling, 2010, 89).

With the expansion of CA to non-security related issues, the vagueness of the lines and respective roles and priorities of stakeholders becomes ever more complicated to address. Indeed, beyond a vision of CA initially centred on 3D, or 3D-LO issues, the **globalization of world problems** and the growing link that is made between issues such as poverty, climate change and security, both in the North and in the South, further **unlocked the initial "peace and development" dimension of the comprehensive**

**approach and widened it to other aspects and actors (e.g. migrations, environment, etc.)** therefore calling for more reflection on *how*, and on *whom* to include in such an approach.

At the same time, other factors have also **pushed forward the creation of partnerships between relevant ministries and departments in favour of development cooperation**. The issue of specific tools and mechanisms allowing those partnerships to happen and to produce outcomes is therefore to be addressed, though BTC started to address the issue by multiplying the partnership agreements allowing it to mobilise specific sources of external expertise (police, domestic affairs, environment, civil status, universities, etc.) when required.

The **issue of funding is thus also a key for CA**, since implementing it often requires extra money to allow the necessary organizational changes and adjustments. It may therefore appear necessary to **share the costs** between the relevant stakeholders, a task which is hampered both by budgetary constraints due to the global economic context, and by the ODA spending constraints.

### 2.2. Vertical layers of perceptions: unity behind a central actor or document

The **increasing complexity** of the development interventions in fragile contexts **implies potential conflicts of interests and objectives between stakeholders**. A comprehensive approach thus requires **cooperation between different actors that may have contradictory objectives and comprehension of the situation.** There is a need of coordinating different organizational cultures on the ground and enhance internal cooperation between actors of defence, diplomacy and development, sometimes extended to police and justice, but also potentially to consular matters, tax and revenues, environment, economy and finance, etc., both in Headquarters (HQ) and on the field, and both between strategic planning and overview (DGD) and implementation (BTC). Priorities can be perceived differently from the ground and from Brussels. And finally, a successful CA implies not only coordination mechanisms *within* a single country or organization, but also carries a dimension of relationship *with* other external actors. **Rivalries and tensions can also occur at all these layers of perception and levels of cooperation, and may create fragmentations, at the opposite of a comprehensive approach**.

**In the field, the embassy has, and will increasingly have, a catalytic role in linking the relevant stakeholders**, but such a role is challenging. In an interview, a previous *attaché de cooperation* in Africa explained that he used to tease his ambassador by stating that their duties were opposed since he was not in place to represent Belgium interests in the country, but rather to defend the partner country's and its population's best interests. Even if it such a position does not necessarily meets a full consensus within DGD, it is a clear illustration of what can be at stake. Formally, the issue has been solved by the recent shift towards a **common status for the diplomacy, consular and development officers**, but the implementation is **too fresh to bear results and allow a proper evaluation** of its impact on policy coherence; and it does not solve the issue of **coordinating with other actors**, i.a. military *attachés*. Furthermore, it would be preposterous to assume that a formal top-down reform would be enough in producing a change of mind-set, and the interchangeability of actors has yet to be proven, especially in contexts of fragility.

**The role of an overarching actor, structure, concept or reference document around which the comprehensive approach could be built would therefore offer an obvious added value in the progress towards a CA.**

### 3. International experiences: what are the practice of other donors?

A brief overview of CA initiatives implemented by other donors, both multilateral and bilateral, is presented hereunder. It must be mentioned that, based on a literature review, the vast majority of the existing examples are presented as best practices by the donors themselves, and cannot generally be

backed by contradictory arguments. The opportunity of confronting those ideas to reality could present itself in the subsequent filed missions by ACROPOLIS researchers in Uganda and Burkina Faso.

### 3.1. Multilateral actors: EU, UN, NATO

*EU*

The EU adopted a form of comprehensive approach in its 2003 Security Strategy, linking development, defence and diplomacy around the search for coherence and coordination, the necessary adaptation to the context, and the respect of the skills of each departments and services within the organisation (Rouppert, 2015). According to the European Commission, the comprehensive approach is based on the elaboration and implementation of conflict-sensitive approaches in development cooperation and the need to address the roots of crisis (Pirozzi, 2013). After a growing number of references to CA in EU official documents, the Treaty of Lisbon is the first to truly highlight the will of the EU **to develop a more coherent external action, i.a. through the new responsibilities assigned to the EU High Representative/Vice President as the central authority in charge of a coherent external action**.

A Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD), integrated into the European external action service (EEAS) has now replaced the previous Civil-military Coordination (CMCO). It gathers specialists from different fields (military, police, judiciary, rule of law, gender and human rights) and aims to integrate civil and military actors in all the stages of crisis management. This civil-military coordination is backed up by strategic documents such as the Crisis Management Concept (CMC), developed by the CMPD, with the contribution of the EU military staff (EUMS), on COPS demand and enabling a civil and/or military operation to take place. The EU Crisis Management Procedure (CMP) tries to implement a better coordination between the different actors involved in crisis management, a better coherence within the EU and between the EU Member States, and also between the EU and other organisations potentially present in the field, such as the UN or NATO, even if the risk of competition cannot be fully avoided (Crisis Management Initiative, 2008).

**A sound illustration of an EU CA is the strategy it developed for Sahel**. In Sahel, the EU intervenes in different fields that incorporate the various objectives of a comprehensive approach: **first development, good governance and conflict resolution; then political and diplomatic action, security and rule of law; and finally, the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation.** Also, on the field, the EU needs to coordinate with other organisations, like MINUSMA (Rouppert, 2015).

**If the development of central reference documents and the creation of central reference actors and authorities has indeed been put into place by the EU, several obstacles still hamper the substantial efforts made towards a CA**. First of all, it seems that the **humanitarian aspects of the EU external action cannot be fully integrated since they are implemented by NGOs** that act separately from the military actors in general, and that can weaken the will of coordination and coherence of the EU in the field. At the **operational level, the different levels of decision are an obstacle to an effective coordination**, and even the existence of the EEAS, supposedly created to clarify the guiding of the EU external action, eventually added another layer of complexity to the Community- and intergovernmental methods. It introduced a third decision-making mode, in which there is a cut between Community and intergovernmental competences within the same policy-making strand (Drent, 2011). Moreover, both the EEAS and the Commission have an influential say on this issue, but their views and even respective mandates are still subject to discussion (Pirozzi, 2013). The **usual difficulty to coordinate all the member states'** views is, in the field of external intervention, unsurprisingly strong, making the member states one of the main obstacles to the EU CA, i.a. around the **key issue of funding**: will extra funds be made available, and how to distribute them between the different instruments?

**Recently, however, the EU initiated major innovations in its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**, contributing to a deeper CA. The **EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGSS)**, published in June 2016 under the supervision of HR Mogherini, set a deadline to implement an "**integrated approach to conflict**" before June 2017 (EU, 2016). It led to the creation of a **new EEAS division, PRISM (Prevention of conflicts, Rule of law/SSR, Integrated approach,**

**Stabilisation and Mediation**), in charge of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, which is seen as "the incarnation of the Integrated Approach within the EEAS" (Benraïs & Simon, 2017). At the same time, the Council adopted the decision establishing a **Military Planning and Conduct Capability** (MPCC) within the EU military staff of the EEAS, in order to assume command of EU non-executive military missions, such as the EU training missions in Somalia, Central African Republic, and Mali.

*UN*

**The UN was one of the first multilateral actors to adjust its crisis management routines by conceptualising a multidimensional approach.** The dramatic failure of interventions in the 1990's (Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, etc.) led to the publication of the Brahimi Report (2002), which promoted the idea of an "integrated mission taskforce". Such an idea was eventually implemented in 2005, with the main objective of bringing coherence between the different dimensions of the action of the UN for complex operations in post-conflict situations: political, development, human rights, humanitarian, rule of law and security (De Coning, 2008). Kofi Annan described it "An Integrated Mission is based on a common strategic plan and a shared understanding of the priorities and types of programme interventions that need to be undertaken at various stages of the recovery process" (UN, 2005, §4). The concept was refined by Ban Ki-Moon under the label "Integrated Approach".

The approach was backed up by several reference texts, such as the Civil Military Relations in Complex Emergencies (2004), which set the principal guidelines for an intervention during situations of humanitarian emergencies, and developed the way of cooperating for the civil and military actors in the field (De Coning, 2008), defining the respective mandate for each actor in order to avoid confusion and problems caused by diverging values, strategies and work approaches. A year later, the report 'Delivery as One' was published and produced a series of recommendations from the High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment. It was suggested that the **UN system should have a clear and coherent policy in each country of intervention with the "four ones": one leader, one programme, one budget and sometimes even one office**. It has been implemented for several years with mixed results, one of the limits being the rather variable commitment of Member States to it (Weinlich & Zollinger, 2012).

Also, one of the issue with the development of this new approach is the risk of competition between the different departments and services involved, especially between the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) at the Headquarter level and on the field. There is a risk of competition and thus a lack of coordination between DPKO and the UN Country Team.

*NATO*

NATO is presented here as an **illustration of the fact that a comprehensive approach in international interventions is not always pushed forward by humanitarian and development actors**. NATO's first step towards CA is arguably the 2003 Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Doctrine, stating that the success of an operation cannot happen without the contribution of civil actors, and explaining how the Alliance can collaborate with these actors in theatres of operations (NATO, 2003). It is the Danish influence that allowed the concrete development of a comprehensive approach within the Alliance in 2006 during the Riga Summit (Wendling, 2010), and subsequently in the following summits of the Alliance in Strasbourg Kehl (2009) and Chicago (2012). NATO CA has two orientations: 1) working with all the possible partners that can contribute to the operations and take into account their strengths and their roles. 2) contribute to the stabilisation and the reconstruction of the country or region of intervention through civilian capacity in cooperation with other relevant actors (Pirozzi, 2013). **NATO CA mainly takes the form of a cooperation with other organisations like the UN or the EU, and also with NGOs and organisations from the civil society**. Two main issues complicate the effectiveness of the approach: the difficult relationship with the UN, especially in military interventions undertaken without prior adoption of a resolution by the Security Council; and the military identity of NATO, worrying civil organisations for their legitimacy (as perceived by external actors) and for their possible submission

to a military lead. CA is also a challenge for NATO since the Alliance does not have any civilian capabilities per se, and because some member states are not completely comfortable with the actual orientations and/or by the extra costs they imply.

## 3.2. Bilateral actors

### *United Kingdom*

The United Kingdom is often acknowledged as a model in terms of comprehensive approach. The concept appears for the first time in the British Military doctrine in 2005, as a common effort for greater coherence of the different actors involved, and achieving better and more sustainable results (Wendling, 2010). **Different departments are integrated into the approach, namely the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the armed forces, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID), while the Prime Minister has the general leadership of the Comprehensive Approach**. Among the main supporting documents are the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) of October 2010. In July 2011, the UK adopted its B**uilding Stability Overseas Strategy (a MoD – FCO – DfID publication), a guideline to put together in a common strategic framework, defence, diplomacy and development structures, tools and objectives** (Below & Belzile, 2013). UK's CA relies essentially on the **Stabilisation unit, housed in DFID but which is under the joint supervision of the three departments involved**, and covering humanitarian, political, military and development aspects (Wendling, 2010), in particular in fragile and conflict-affected areas. In order to implement its CA, UK created **specific pooled funding mechanisms**: the Conflict Pool and the Africa and Global Conflict Prevention Pools, now merged as a **Stabilisation Aid Fund**.

However, the strategy developed by UK is not systematically based on context-driven orientations, and in spite of an easier collaboration between the different actors involved, significant discrepancies and frictions can still be observed between development and military actors, especially because of doctrinal differences and, again, by the fear of a military monopoly by the civil actors (Wendling, 2013).

### *Denmark*

Denmark influenced NATO to adopt its CA and has been a leading donor for innovations and practices in that field (Below & Belzile, 2013). The lessons learned after the Iraq intervention of 2003 (where DK deployed troops as part of the Coalition of the willing) urged the country to implement a new approach in crisis management, since military forces were obviously no longer the only instrument to ensure stability overseas. **The first step undertaken concerned cooperation between humanitarian organisations and the military on the field and led to the Concerted Planning and Action (CPA) 2004-2009 concept**, implemented by both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD). **The second step came through the 2013 new stabilization policy, taking into account the lessons learned in Afghanistan, and highlighting the importance of using the foreign affairs, development and military efforts together, under a periodically updated strategy**.

**DK CA is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) can give advice and recommendations to the Minister** on development issues, which allows to always have the development and cooperation objectives in head while implementing the CA. The country can rely on different structures and tools to implement its new strategy, like the **Centre for Global Politics and Security (housed in the MFA) specialised in fragile states, with different relevant regional departments and also a department for Stabilisation and Security Policy**. This Centre tries to promote a better synergy of the Danish policies and efforts in fragile contexts. DK also created a Whole-of-Government Board, alternatively chaired by MFA and MoD, holding monthly meetings with representatives from different ministries such as Justice or Development. **The ministers of Development, Defence and Foreign Affairs meet every year to determine political, thematic and geographic priorities** (Friis & Rehman, 2010). And in order to fund operations led under the comprehensive approach, **DK implemented a specific fund for stabilisation activities, the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund for development and non-development actions towards fragile states, with regional programs**.

*Switzerland*

**The case of Switzerland illustrates how a federal government may implement a CA.** The decision to adopt a whole-of-government approach in CH dates form 2009, with the 3C Conference held in Geneva (Mason & Lanz, 2009), and is linked to the massive reform of the Swiss federal administration after 2005, and the progressive focus of CH development policy on fragile and conflict affected countries. **The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) works in close cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), but also the State Economic Cooperation Office (SECO), or the Peacebuilding Department of the FDFA (Political division IV - PDIV)**. Switzerland believes it is necessary to engage as a single entity, with the cooperation of as many actors as necessary, and to present a joint strategy when possible (CH, 2012). **Its strategy for fragile states uses four main aid instruments: development cooperation, humanitarian aid (managed by the SDC, housed within the FDFA), economic cooperation (managed by SECO within the Federal Department of Economics Affairs), and human rights and peacebuilding work (managed by PDIV).**

In **Tajikistan**, the cooperation office has all four instruments of Swiss assistance under the same roof, enabling a coherent action in the country. In **Nepal**, the Ambassador is also the head of cooperation, which allows a greater interpenetration of the political and development action (CH, 2012). Switzerland also develops regional approaches, such as for **Burundi, Rwanda and Eastern DRC**, or for the **Horn of Africa**. This latter whole-of-government strategy combines different types of instruments : humanitarian and development instruments with the SDC, political and diplomatic instruments with the Human Security Division (HSD), the Sub-Saharan Africa and Francophonie Division (SAFD) but also the embassies on the field, migrations instruments with the Federal Office for Migrations (FOM), and finally security instruments with the Federal Department of Defence, Civil, Protection and Sport (DDPS) (CH, 2013). In order to facilitate the collaboration and the coordination between the different Swiss instruments/actors, Switzerland implemented a joint concertation mechanism supervised by SAFD to promote coherence and political steering on the overall Swiss engagement, with representatives of all departments involved (SDC, HSD, SAFD, DDPS, Federal Department of Justice and Police, and FOM) (CH, 2013).

In **Sudan**, facing the multiplication of Swiss agencies and organisations on the field, the country tried to increase the coordination and cooperation between them in order to have a more positive and sustainable impact, and therefore promoted agency interactions. For instance, in a Security Sector Reform (SSR) project, there was a joint mission of the DDPS and the FDFA in order to distribute the different tasks and to take advantage of the qualities and expertise of each. SDC expressed a usual concern about the issue of humanitarian neutrality and the links between civil and defence actors (Mason & Lanz, 2009), but the collaboration on the field went better than expected

**Switzerland shows that joint strategies are possible, that several distinct solutions have been set up for several distinct contexts, and that the political guidance and leadership is essential but in balance with consultations with different departments in order to build a clear strategy.**

*The Netherlands*

**The country has a strategic and broad approach to international development, which has been increasingly aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (OECD, 2017), and is often lauded by other donors**; international cooperation is one of the keys of the Dutch foreign policy; and the country started a long time ago to understand the importance of a more integrated and coherent approach in order to reach a greater impact. References to a form of comprehensive approach can already be found in documents such as *Development Co-operation in a World Perspective* (1980) or *The Quality of Aid* (1989), but it really started with the fusion of development cooperation and foreign policy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995, and with the creation, in 1996, of an inter-ministerial council of European and international affairs that gather various ministers on transversal subjects (Cardinal, 2007).

**The combination of the 3Ds has been in place for a long time in the Dutch foreign policy and is considered as an added value**. It sees security as a complex concept which needs multidimensional

answers combining different governmental departments (NL MFA, 2013). Many lessons have been drawn from the experience of the Dutch engagement in Afghanistan[3], with a decision to intervene taken jointly by the 3D ministries, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Development cooperation, all of them acknowledging the links between stability, security and reconstruction (De Graaf, 2010). The NL also believes that an effective CA depends on the cooperation with other international donors, which explains the country's strong involvement in multilateral diplomacy.

**CA in The Netherlands uses a wide range of instruments.** A cabinet-level minister is responsible for both development co-operation and international trade, but within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Director-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) unit continues to be responsible for development cooperation policy and for its coordination, implementation and funding (OECD, 2017). Several transversal meetings are regularly organised, such as the Working Council on International Affairs, chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which works on the international implications of Dutch policies proposals and can warn the Ministry when it has concerns over development policies. Besides, the NL created a Stability Fund in 2012, to allow a rapid, targeted deployment of financial resources for activities that support peace, security and development in conflict and former conflict regions (Camack, 2006). It is managed by the Stabilisation Unit within the Humanitarian and Stabilisation Department (DSH) of the MFA, and is intended at targeting the root causes of crises (OECD, 2017). The NL CA can also rely on a policy document called *Guidelines for a comprehensive approach* (Aulin & Vogelaar, 2015).

**The security focus adopted by the Netherlands for their CA is a factor of coherence and success, but is also a source of criticism, since NGOs and other civil society organisations see it as a potential risk towards securitization, or even militarization of development aid (Cardinal, 2007).**

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[3] Between 2006 and 2010, NL was a lead nation in the mission in Uruzgan, where thousands of soldiers and civilians were involved in the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) mission

## Part II: Survey results

In order to investigate the perceptions, practices, and references of Belgian actors (public, private, and civil society) involved in Belgian foreign policy, a survey was carried out between June and September 2017[4]. The questions can be found in appendix 1.

As stated in the introduction, the second part of this evidence paper is based on a survey sent out to numerous stakeholders both within and outside the Belgium development community. Its objective is to shed some light on the perceptions of actors regarding Belgium formal and informal practices of a 3D-LO / comprehensive approach. In this section, we present the results of this survey and analyse its content.

Methodologically, we have attempted to extensively translate the answers provided by the participants while filtering, regrouping and sometimes interpreting or translating its substance, e.g. surveys have been responded to in English, Dutch and French. It is therefore a qualitative analysis of the answers provided.

All of the elements below draw from two types of survey. One was aimed directly at staff outside the development community and only contained the questions discussed here. Another was sent to development actors for which the questions related to the 3D-LO / comprehensive approach was a sub-section of the survey.

Finally, we also drew, for all the questions except on the awareness of the steps taken by Belgium, from around 20 questionnaires on the Integrated Country Policy (ICP)[5] as answers or part of them contained relevant element pertaining to the comprehensive approach. This important number of contributions blending – or confusing – the nature or differences between of a 3D-LO / comprehensive approach and an integrated one is, however, already a conclusion in itself on the actor's perceptions of both processes.

### 1. Respondents to the survey

A total of 48 persons have taken part in the survey, 13 through the stand-alone survey on 3D-LO / comprehensive approach and 35 through the survey combined with the ICP component.

Out of the 48 respondents, 25 are personnel working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, either within DGD (15x), in other directions (7x) or in the field (3x). All Directions within DGD are represented (D0, D1, D2, D3, D4, D5). Other participants (22x) include personnel from the Ministry of Defence (4x), the Federal Police (3x), Immigration Office (1x), European External Action Service – EUCAP mission in the Sahel - Mali (1x), BTC (1x) as well as from multiple NGOs (12x). One survey was filled out anonymously.

**Table 1. Institutional origin of the respondents to the survey**

| Institution | Direction / Services / Organization |
|---|---|
| Direction of Development Cooperation (DGD) | D1.2 West Africa and the Arab world; D2 Thematic Direction; D2.1 Humanitarian Unit; D2.2 Inclusive growth; D2.3 Social development; D2.4 Climate, environment and natural resources; D3.2 Civil society North and West Africa, Arab world; D3.3 Civil society Central and Southern Africa; D3.4 Civil society Asia and Latin America; D4.2 Management of quality and results; D5.2 (and D0) Transitional development |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) | B1 Geographic Directorate – Africa; B2. Finexpo; M2 United Nations; S4 Office of the Special Evaluator; International Security Policy against terrorism; Cabinet |
| Field offices | Burkina Faso; Niger; United States (Washington) |

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[4] Survey results for the ICP part of the questionnaire are presented in a second evidence paper, which can be downloaded on G4D website: www.governance4development.org.

[5] cf. ACROPOLIS evidence paper on an integrated country approach for Belgian development cooperation.

| | |
|---|---|
| Ministry of Defence (MoD) | Operations; Strategy; Intelligence; Royal Military Academy |
| Federal Police | International police cooperation directorate; Detached to DCAF; CGI |
| Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) | 11-11-11; Broederlijk Delen; Caritas Belgium; Fairtrade; G3W-M3M; Memisa; Miel Maya Honing; MSI; IIAV; Oxfam Belgium; VECO International; VECO Congo |
| Others | BTC; Immigration Office; EEAS EUCAP Sahel Mali |

## 2. Awareness of steps taken by Belgium

**Question:** *Are you aware of the steps Belgium is taking towards a 3D-LO / Comprehensive approach?*

### 2.1. Awareness

To the preliminary question on the awareness of respondents on eventual steps taken by Belgium towards a 3D-LO / CA, a majority of respondents answered positively (around 62%). Nonetheless, it is important to note that around 30% of the participants declared not being aware of any such steps while three participants did not answer the question.

This awareness however varies across institutional background or affiliation. If all four respondents of the Ministry of Defence declared to be aware of steps taken by Belgium, this proportion drops to 70% within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including field offices and excluding DGD), to 50% within the NGO responding community and drops below the majority line within the major community reached, DGD (47%).

While we do not wish to over-interpret the answers from such a small sample group, it is also interesting to note that the awareness among NGO actors is more important in larger NGOs (or their umbrella organizations) than in smaller ones.

### Table 2. Awareness among actors

| Institutional Background | Answers (Y= Yes; N= No; NA=No answer) |
|---|---|
| **Overall** | Y= 30; N= 14; NA= 4 (Total 48) |
| **MFA excluding DGD (but including field offices)** | Y= 7; N= 2; NA= 1 (Total 10) |
| **DGD** | Y=7; N=5; NA=3 (Total 15) |
| **MoD** | Y=4; N=0; NA=0 (Total 4) |
| **NGOs** | Y=6; N=6; NA=0 (Total 12) |

### 2.2. Steps taken by Belgium

Respondents have often answered in great lengths to the question of the steps taken by Belgium towards a comprehensive approach. We have categorised these answers around four dimensions to emphasize their different nature.

1. The first category are general elements relating to the **direction or evolution** of the approach adopted (e.g. increasing links, bottom-up, etc.), and to the **commitments** made by the existing or pasts Belgium governments either internally (e.g. develop a global, interagency approach) or externally (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals, New Deal). In terms of actors concerned, participants to the survey mostly emphasized the links between the MFA (as centrepiece) and either MoD or DGD.

2. The second dimension, majorly present in the answers, are the **elements of structure** set up or used by different actors and considered, by the respondents, as steps towards a 3D-LO / CA. Different focuses can also be identified behind these structural elements:

   a. elements relating to the approach itself and considered as steps towards a 3D-LP/CA, either focusing achieving greater coherence of development cooperation within the 3D-LO / CA agenda (e.g. Interdepartmental Commission on the Coherence of Development Policies (CICPD), new direction within DGD on humanitarian aid and transitional development) or specifically on the 3D-LO approach (e.g. working group);

   b. structures – mostly meetings arrangements – focusing on specific countries (e.g. newly created task forces for Iraq or Mali) or regions (e.g. Central Africa, Sahel);

   c. a decentralized coordination mechanism for the defence bilateral partnership programmes; or

   d. a general institutional process (i.e. annual meetings of the committee of directors)

3. The third category of answers includes the strategic or policy documents that have been drafted and adopted by Belgium which are perceived by respondents as relating to the 3D-LO/CA. Logically, many participants included the note on the Comprehensive Approach recently drafted and adopted by the MFA. Some also mentioned the recent law on development cooperation and its accent on coherence or the geographically-based government strategic note on Central Africa.

4. Finally, we have identified a fourth category of answers that emphasizes specific actions or programmes involving either the quest for more knowledge or solutions (e.g. ACROPOLIS work, demand of an opinion to the CCCPD), the development of internal processes (e.g. joint mission, 3D-LO analysis for the preparation of development cooperation programmes), specific programmes involving cooperation (e.g. in D.R. Congo) or even human resources initiatives (i.e. unified career between cooperation and diplomatic staff).

A few preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the elements highlighted by the respondents. Firstly, the nature and timing of these elements suggest a clear will of political actors to move towards a 3D-LO/CA, especially on the sides of the MFA and DGD. The elements mentioned are, for the great majority, the result of (very) recent initiatives. A second important remark is the "ad-hoc" nature (or described as such) of almost all steps mentioned by participants. That is, actors from different departments devote part of their time to the collaboration while the structures do not involve dedicated staff members. Thirdly, considering what is often referred to as the "3Cs" (Coordination, Complementarity and Coherence)[6], the identified steps rather focus on the coordination of actors through meetings and exchanges of information rather, at this stage, of integrated or joint processes (except for the joint exploratory mission in Sahel or specific programmes between MoD and DGD). The level of integration reflected by these answers thus seems rather low at this point in terms of balancing the (multiple) objectives of Belgium towards a common direction (cf. figure 1). Also, and lastly, it is interesting to note the development of initiatives whose aim is usually to bridge individual, institutional and organisational cultures of the different departments involved (e.g. unified career, joint missions).

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[6] See ACROPOLIS Guidance on Fragility, *ACROPOLIS Policy Tools,* 2017, p. 42.

## Figure 1. Balancing objectives towards a common direction (source: Guidance on Fragility)

| Potential mechanisms or modalities for greater closeness in objectives |
|---|
| Coordination meetings, like the regular interdepartmental meetings organised by the Belgian foreign affairs Ministry, can foster greater coherence in the planning, and therefore objectives of the interventions |
| The identification of a leadership for co-ordination and of departments' respective roles to avoid a dilution of responsibility and a confusion of roles (Mason & Lanz, 2009). |
| Safeguards and firewalls at strategic and operational level to prevent instrumentalisation among departments especially as security-political aims have often trumped development concerns in fragile contexts (Baranyi & Desrosiers, 2012). An example is Denmark's Peace and Stability Fund for which the procedures are designed to make sure that ODA criteria are not breached (Stepputat & Greenwood, 2013) |
| An overall strategic framework for the national engagement in fragile situations, including a rationale for collaborative working and a high level commitment to do so. An example is the German "Inter ministerial guidelines for coherent Federal Government policy towards fragile states". |
| Integrated country strategies providing a management tool to facilitate the link between departmental priorities and overall external policy as well as guidance with objectives and priorities for HQ and the field (OECD, 2006). I.e. Belgium development cooperation has now engaged in that direction and is in the process of adopting integrated country policies for some of its partners. |

*Level of integration* (vertical label with downward arrow, left of table)

## Table 3. Categorization and major responses

| Categories | Major responses |
|---|---|
| **Direction/evolution & commitments** | • Expressed intention by the Government to develop a global, interagency approach<br>• Belgium's endorsement of the SDGs, incl. SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions as well as other international commitments (New Deal, etc.)<br>• Adoption of a bottom-up approach completed by a top-down approach<br>• Increase in the links between DGD and Foreign affairs<br>• Mostly steps taken between MoD and MFA |
| **Elements of structure** | <u>Theme/approach-based structures</u><br>• Creation of a working group on 3D-LO held at the MFA<br>• Creation of Policy coherence structures, namely the Interdepartmental Commission on the Coherence of Development Policies (CICPD) and Consultative Council on the Coherence of Development Policies (CCCPD)<br>• Creation of the department linking humanitarian aid and transition within DGD (D5)<br><u>Country/region-based structures</u><br>• Use and/or creation of the interdepartmental working groups on Central African and Sahel<br>• Holding of interdepartmental 2D (DGD / MFA) or 3D (MoD) consultations or coordination meetings<br>• Identification and creation of country task forces, in which the comprehensive approach is to be tested (list varying among answers: Iraq and Mali / Sahel; or Rwanda, Mali, Niger, Syria-Iraq, Tunisia)<br>• Holding of regular coordination meetings from political and development directorates<br>• Holding of periodic consultation between all federal entities working in Africa and where regional entities are also invited.<br><u>Decentralised mechanism</u><br>• Defence attaché coordinates the bilateral partnership programmes in coordination with other departments within the Embassy.<br><u>General institutional process</u><br>• Holding of meetings of the committee of Directors |

| Policy / strategic documents | • Recent adoption of a policy document on Comprehensive Approach as a new working method with the aim of having a better common approach to Belgium foreign policy by all Belgium stakeholders.<br>• Royal decree on development cooperation which explicitly includes policy coherence<br>• Adoption of a regional Strategic Note on Central Africa |
|---|---|
| Specific actions / programmes | • Request of the Minister to the CCCPD for an opinion on 3D-LO<br>• Belgium financial support to the EU Emergency trust fund for Africa which "incorporates development / resilience and anti-migration objectives"<br>• Unified diplomatic and development career<br>• 3D-LO analysis in the preparation of the new cooperation programmes<br>• Joint exploratory mission in Sahel to develop a common approach towards the region<br>• Specific projects between defence and development in Kananga, Kindu and Lokandu (DRC)<br>• Acropolis study, recommendations and implementation plan |

## 3. Relevant experiences and lessons learned on CA

**Question:** *Can you share any relevant experiences (good practices but also failures, lessons learned) that can contribute to a 3D-LO / Comprehensive Approach? By Belgian actors/international actors*

### 3.1. Belgian actors

Interestingly, participants to the survey provided numerous experiences, both positive and negative, that they perceive as possibly contributing to a 3D-LO/CA, outside the current 'formal' process developed by the MFA (i.e. strategic note on comprehensive approach). We have first separated what was described as a positive or a negative experience and then attempted to categorise the answers of the participants.

Positive experiences

1. Overwhelmingly – and coherently with the nature of the sample of participants – respondents underlined successful **initiatives of interdepartmental collaboration at the headquarter level**. The initiatives or structures of coordination mentioned by the respondents vary across hierarchical levels (e.g. regular executive level meetings, annual meetings of directors), or objectives, which can be for strategic or organizational purposes (e.g. regular high level meetings), for coordination purposes in a specific context (e.g. Task force Sahel, Interdepartmental meetings for Central Africa, contribution of the immigration office to development programmes in Tunisia), or more particularly for the drafting of a specific document (e.g. Belgium implementation plan of the SDGs) or the support to a Belgian command of a United Nations mission (i.e. support cell for MINUSMA)

2. The second major category of answers relates to **interdepartmental collaboration beyond headquarter level**, either through the exchange of information between HQ, the field and Belgium representation in multilateral fora, through HQ-field joint missions or through the embassy level policy in many countries to unite 3D-LO actors in the same location.

3. Thirdly, respondents mentioned multiple **programmes and bottom-up collaborative initiatives** (which should be understood as field-HQ initiatives) as relevant and good experiences of 3D-LO/CA (e.g. common projects in D.R. Congo) along with **3D-LO analysis** in certain contexts by one type of actors (e.g. Niger).

4. A fourth category of responses is actually a three-folded experience by one participant who emphasized the positive experience that are **pre-deployment** (i.e. with Belgium stakeholders at HQ), **in-deployment** (i.e. with Belgium stakeholders in country) and **during visits in Belgium** (i.e. with relevant services) briefings and debriefings.

5. Finally, a respondent to the survey underlined the benefits of a common access to **training programmes** which allow for cross-departmental socialisation, exchange of views and common thinking.

Negative experiences

The negative experiences cited by the participants to the survey are mostly along two lines.

1. First, on the limited actual comprehensiveness of a key 3D-LO product of Belgium, its regional strategic note on Sahel and the lack of interest of certain actors to take part in the supposed-to-be collective exercise on the SDGs (i.e. Defence and Justice).

2. Second, some respondents highlighted limits and absence of in-country successes (e.g. B-Fast Nepal, Joint mission Sahel) by emphasizing either the dissonance between the need for appearance v. effectiveness or the lack of common reflection despite the jointness of the initiatives.

What clearly stands out of these elements is the diversity, patchwork nature of the different elements provided by the survey participants, scattered around multiple levels and actors within HQ and multiple settings in-country. Logically, these elements also concur with the previous question on the steps taken by Belgium and largely remain experiences of **ad-hoc coordination and/or bottom-up implementation initiatives** of 3D-LO/CA.

## 3.2. International actors

Participants to the survey have also provided a certain diversity of experiences from other international donors, however all positive or to the least, mixed ones. Two major categories stand out.

1. Experiences that emphasize the **approach adopted by certain donors** which specifically contributes to or aims at a 3D-LO/CA (e.g. the United States, The Netherlands, the EU Global strategy, the United Kingdom) or **organisational elements** which can foster it (e.g. presence of detached military staff within the department of international development cooperation of the French MFA). The experience of the United Nations was however not only presented as positive, participants stressing the varying success in different countries of its "Delivering as One" and comprehensive approach policies as these are still in their infancy and have difficulties translating in the field partly due to bureaucratic issues.

2. Participants also highlighted experiences of other donors in **specific countries or contexts**, such as EU's civilian mission in the Sahel which implement its comprehensive and integrated approach or more specifically the international coordination efforts between OCHA and security forces present in the Diffa region in Niger facing Boko Haram.

From these elements, we can see that participants bring to the fore – in what they perceive as positive experiences – elements relating to **financial aspects** (i.e. common resource allocation), **trickle down** aspects (i.e. translation of a global policy), **secondment of personal** (i.e. military in development cooperation) and more generally of the benefits of **bringing actors together**.

## 4. The ideal 3D-LO / Comprehensive Approach

> **Question:** *How should an integrated country approach ideally look like?*
> *What should be guiding **principles** or **objectives**?*
> *What **actors** should be involved?*
> *How should **cooperation** between actors be organised?*

## 4.1. Guiding principles and objectives

Participants have provided an important number of responses to this question of guiding objectives for a 3D-LO/CA. Once more, we have attempted to categorise their great diversity into six major different themes.

1. First are the answers that concern the objectives of the approach, that is the **principles that should guide the conduct of the approach itself** (e.g. "CA should not be an end in itself, rather a means"; "only the Development component of the 3D-LO should matter"). The mentioned objectives that should guide a CA also differ in nature between objectives that are internal (e.g. "bring value to all parties involved"; "ensure an absence of contradiction"; "set the national interest forward", etc.) and external (e.g. "focus on the country's priorities"; "central attention to the needs of the beneficiaries"; "CA used as leverage with other partners", etc.).

2. The second major category of responses are the principles related to **objectives that should be sought through or with** the 3D-LO/CA. These principles range from the agreement on both common and separate interests, the identification of priorities and the adoption of more realistic expectations, the building of greater coherence and synergies between Belgian actors to ultimately ensure more impact on the field.

3. A third type of answers given by the participants are principles that concern to the **collaboration of actors**. That is, what should guide actors in their work towards a 3D-LO approach. We have broken down this category in three separate elements.

   a. Firstly, on the principles that focus on the nature of the collaboration, some participants for instance emphasising the importance of increasing collaboration between certain specific actors (e.g. Diplomatic and BTC), the importance of reciprocity in the sense that no policy area should be the instrument of another, the importance of having a common picture among departments but also an understanding of each other's perspective on it and a clear sense of the responsibilities between them, or the importance of having a political leadership of the CA process.

   b. Secondly, a participant highlighted that the collaboration should also be guided by the limits that the humanitarian principles impose on the extent of this collaboration, giving the independent nature of the humanitarian work.

   c. Thirdly, multiple respondents stressed the importance of transparency, either on the objectives (i.e. "no hidden agendas"), on the policies and programmes or in the information sharing process.

4. The fourth major category relates to the **management of programmes and policies** within a 3D-LO/CA. Participants to the survey produced a series of elements relating to: (1) general principles that should guide a 3D-LO/CA approach such as moving away from a project-approach towards a process-approach involving all actors, starting from what exists or a good context analysis, or engaging in a bottom-up, output-driven and context-specific approach; (2) flexibility both in respect to programming and financial regulations as well as to a more "decentralised" decision-making in the field; (3) specific analysis in the preliminary phase of policies or programmes such as complementary and do no harm checks from the 3D perspectives or an identification of projects which can be developed in a 3D approach; (4) the monitoring and evaluation for which some respondents highlighted the need for a global monitoring of programmes with a common grid of indicators.

5. A fifth kind of principles set forward in the survey responses concerns the **information management systems** among departments. Some participants stressed the importance of real time information exchange or the need for compulsory knowledge sharing mechanisms.

6. Finally, a sixth category of answers rather focused on principles regarding **human resource management** for which some respondents drew attention to the need to adopt greater professional mobility among the different departments or ministries, the importance of joint efforts in the preparation of Belgium staff about to enter in an international mission or the importance of pre-deployment briefing by all 3D-LO/CA departments.

This question of guiding objectives is essential to decrypt and untwist as it is most revealing of the different perceptions among different actors (both within and in-between their departments or organisations) of what should guide a 3D-LO/CA, what should be sought with it, what should be the nature of the collaboration between actors or how it should translate in the definition of programmes and policies. And indeed, the answers provided are not only diverse but can also appear (and be) in tension with one another. Most notably, the end point on which the 3D-LO/CA should be built is far from

unanimous. Three specific tensions in regards to this ultimate objective of the CA should be noted. Firstly, should the objective of the approach be internal (e.g. national interest, added value to all parties, etc.) or external (e.g. sustainable development, needs of the beneficiaries)? While these may overlap, they can also – and are often – in tension. Secondly (if internal), whose (if any) perspective should prevail among the different actors? Indeed, some respondents stressed the need for the embedment of development into a wider foreign policy perspective; some the need to only focus on the development pillar with the others in support; or some the need for the CA to bring added value to all parties. Thirdly, the different perceptions on the nature of the collaboration that should an 3D-LO/CA approach induce reveal a tension between respondents focusing on better ways to "work together alone" (e.g. agree on strategic common and separate interests, division of responsibilities, do no harm check) and respondents revolving around ways to "jointly work together" (e.g. joint programmes, common funding).

**Table 4. Categorization and major responses**

| Categories | Major responses |
|---|---|
| **Principles regarding the objectives of the approach** | Internal objectives<br>• CA should be guided by the national interest of the contributing country and the respect of international human rights standards in the supported country<br>• A fourth D should be added to the CA, the impact on Domestic affairs.<br>• CA should ensure that every institution can realise fully or partly their objectives<br>• CA should bring added value to all parties involved<br>• The CA should only be a one D approach, Development. The others (MFA, MoD and L&O institutions) should only play a supportive role in some specific circumstances<br>• CA should ensure that Belgian policies and practices do not contradict each other<br>• CA should be guided by the embedment of development cooperation in a wider foreign policy perspective<br>External objectives<br>• CA should not just be an extension of the government's foreign policy (focus on in-country priorities)<br>• CA should be guided by sustainable development<br>• CA should be guided by the unbound nature of assistance<br>• CA should be guided by the actual needs of the beneficiaries (and not the Belgian needs)<br>• CA should be used as a lever to pull the partners who are hesitating on board<br>Others<br>• CA should be guided by clear objectives<br>• CA should be a means and not a purpose in itself<br>• CA 'mind-set' should be present for every single government level activity and the decision to continue or not on a CA track for an activity should be carefully and commonly assessed rather than within a single department |
| **Principles regarding the objectives to be sought with the approach** | • CA should lead to the agreement on strategic common and separate interests (determine level of involvement) and a choice of unique partner list.<br>• CA should lead to the adoption of more realistic expectations<br>• CA should lead to the building of a long-term vision and a move away from political arbitrariness<br>• CA should lead to policy coherence between the operations and strategies of all actors involved, and if possible to joint strategies in geographical focus areas of interest<br>• CA should allow to identify common interests, strategic priorities and countries at the Belgian level<br>• CA should allow to identify what is to be done and where Belgium can add value.<br>• CA should allow to identify the challenges and determine the end goal and objectives of Belgium, taking opportunities into account, and only then |

| | |
|---|---|
| | establish priorities and allocate resources in accordance with national strategy<br>• CA should allow for the search of synergy between actors<br>• CA should lead to more Impact on the field. |
| **Principles regarding the collaboration of actors** | Nature of the collaboration<br>• Necessity of reciprocity (one policy domain should not be the instrument of the other)<br>• Consultation and implication of all relevant Belgium stakeholders<br>• Definition of a common picture of the situation at stake and of the different angles of the different departments<br>• Reinforcement of the collaboration between the diplomatic and cooperation world (representatives of the BTC)<br>• Necessity to take into consideration security in a larger sense, including defence forces to the development process<br>• Importance of political leadership<br>• Definition and clearness of responsibilities between all actors involved<br>Limits to the CA<br>• The humanitarian principles, the European consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the Belgian humanitarian Strategy should guide the limit of the CA in regards to the pursue of other political, economic and military objectives<br>Transparency<br>• A maximum degree of transparency about the different plans and operations at all political and administrative levels, as far as security clearance allows.<br>• A full transparency, more openness with no hidden agendas<br>• Transparency in information sharing |
| **Principles regarding the management of programmes / policies** | General principles<br>• Common structure, common culture, common leadership, common (partly) funding, common lessons learned process.<br>• Move away from the project approach for a process approach in which all actors contribute to a well-defined result and all interventions are mutually supportive in this regard<br>• Start from what exists on the ground to create a state of mind<br>• The approach should be bottom-up, output-driven and context-specific<br>• Start with a good context analysis<br>• CA should allow for the mutualisation of efforts (preparation; means on the ground; common evaluation mechanisms)<br>Flexibility<br>• Budget management should respect the views and solutions of the specialists in the field, meaning that the approach (content and practical organisation) should be less overseen by a rigid bookkeeping philosophy and be more practical and flexible<br>• Flexibility in programming processes and financial regulations<br>Programming and identification<br>• For all new support initiatives: do a prior complementarity check and a do-no-harm check from the 3 perspectives<br>• Identify through the working group of each country the projects which could be developed in a 3D approach<br>Monitoring & evaluation<br>• Monitoring of programmes should be envisaged globally, not only through the prism of diplomacy and maintaining 'good relations' with the partner, especially where there is no will on the partner's side or that it does not respect human rights principles.<br>• Objectives should be evaluated according a common grid of indicators |
| **Principles regarding the information management systems** | • Exchange of information in real time between the concerned agencies<br>• Belgian experts in the field should report more and better<br>• Knowledge sharing should be compulsory (via briefings, debriefings, in writing) |

| Principles regarding human resources | • Greater professional mobility between staff in the different pillars of the 3D-LO/CA approach<br>• Joint efforts in the preparation of candidates for a specific function in an international mission.<br>• Before deployment, briefings for all the CA-departments concerned |
| --- | --- |

### 4.2. Actors to be involved

The issue of the involvement of actors in the 3D-LO/CA has sparked a very heterogeneous – again – set of answers by participants. These responses not only vary along the line of the nature of participants as we shall explore below but also on other different grounds. In fact, the nature of participants should not be the criteria of involvement but rather, for some participants to the survey: (1) the timing of the approach (i.e. an invitation can be made – on a case-by-case basis – to NGOs once the CA is "mature"); (2) the presence of actors in the field, their relevance or the role they play based on the local context; (3) the management or political level of actors (i.e. "working at a too high level is not efficient"); or (4) more trivially "only people who know what they're talking about…".

Looking now at the answers based on the nature of actors, these vary (greatly) along a minimalist-maximalist spectrum. On the minimalist end of the spectrum are the administrations of the 3D (DGD, MFA, MoD). From there on, the participants to the survey identified a series of additional actors which we categorise below:

1. **Other institutions and agencies:** BTC, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, external trade actors (as part of MFA), trade promotion (subnational entities), Migration office, Customs, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, FEDWEB (portal of federal employees).

2. **Political actors:** Ministerial cabinets, Ministers or Secretaries of State, the Prime Minister's office and Parliamentarians.

3. **External actors:** EU delegation, other EU Member States, multilateral organisations and more broadly the international community in the country in question, the authorities of the host country.

4. **Non-governmental actors:** NGOs, civil society, universities and academics, experts, private sector, communities (culture, education, prevention of radicalisation).

### 4.3. Organisation of the cooperation between actors

The question of the organisation of the cooperation between actors provides some insights into the perceptions of the survey participants in regards to what they stress or focus on for such organisation. The answers provide two major categories of focus.

1. Firstly, many participants associated the organisation of actors with the need to identify a lead department or agency, whether it is based on the specific context or the sector. A participant also affirmatively gave that role to the MFA.

2. Secondly and in a more complex and diverse manner, a number of contributions emphasised a certain nature of coordination structure in the implementation of a 3D-LO/CA. This diversity relies upon the structure of the mechanism and recurrence of its encounters with suggestions ranging from a needs-based structure, regular consultations among Ministers, a semi-permanent strategic planning and coordination structure at administration level with very frequent meetings, a permanent structure overseen by the Prime Minister's office or a supervisory committee assisted by working groups for specific contexts.

3. On top of these two major categories, participants to the survey also mentioned other forms and places of coordination. Some respondents stressed that coordination should be held or led at country level, with greater staff in the field and with greater decentralised decision-making power. Also, an interesting idea of the identification of a virtual pool of expertise to be mobilised within departments was suggested.

Again, a few conclusions can be drawn from the answers provided by the participants. Mostly – and similarly to the question of the guiding principles, certain lines of tensions can be identified. Already hinted above is the tension around the formal and flexible nature of the coordination mechanisms (e.g. permanent or semi-permanent) and their political or administrative inclusivity. Also, a potential tension exists between the "anchoring" of this coordination, at HQ level or in the field. There are also quite radically different perceptions among certain participants on the equilibrium of power or influence within these coordination mechanisms, especially in regards to their leaderships, some stressing the role of the MFA, others for instance the stake-based attribution of such role. The dividing issue of a thematic v. geographic coordination mechanism (or a combination of both) is also present in the answers.

### Table 5. Categorization and major responses

| Categories | Major responses |
|---|---|
| **Focus on leadership** | <ul><li>Identification of a lead department and meetings at this department</li><li>Identification of a lead department based on which one has the largest stake, interest or risk in the country.</li><li>Organization of general planning meanings (identification of a lead) and sectorial planning meetings (lead based on general planning and co-lead based on sector)</li><li>CA coordination structure led by MFA</li></ul> |
| **Focus on the type of coordination structure** | <ul><li>Semi-permanent Strategic Planning & Coordination Group at administration level, which must integrate experts and academics, whose members must be officially designated and which meets on a very regular basis.</li><li>Creation of a supervisory committee and country/region-specific working groups (including abroad within embassies)</li><li>Coordination at the highest political level (Ministers or Secretaries of State) with an overhead lead (cabinet of the Prime Minister or another recognized actor)</li><li>A permanent structure depending on the cabinet of the Prime Minister</li><li>A programming and monitoring committee in which each department has a word and where MFA is at the same level as the others.</li><li>Needs-based structure depending on the context and the specific needs of coordination and collaboration.</li><li>Regular consultation between Ministers, academics and civil society actors towards optimising policies and based on follow-up and impact reports in developing countries</li></ul> |
| **Other key elements** | Focus on existing initiatives<ul><li>Existing working group and task forces</li></ul>Focus on ad-hoc elements<ul><li>Creation of a virtual pool of expertise and related experts within each department who can contribute to the implementation of initiatives and can be called upon, when needed.</li></ul>Other suggestions<ul><li>Coordination at the local level</li><li>Coordination at country level (requiring a reinforcement of Embassy staff)</li><li>Decentralisation through increased ground level decision making</li><li>Development of South-South triangular cooperation</li></ul> |

## 5. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Risks

**Question:** *In your opinion, what are the **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities**, and **risks** related to implementing a 3D-LO / Comprehensive approach*

### 5.1. Strengths

The analysis of the answers provided by participants on the strengths and weaknesses related to the implementation of 3D-LO/CA should be analysed in contrast with each other. Indeed, without overly anticipating the next question, it is important to note that while participants overwhelmingly provided answers corresponding to *potential* benefits of implementing the approach – which may seem coherent with the infancy status of the Belgian CA process – the answers dispensed to the weaknesses, in opposition, largely focus on the *actual* weaknesses.

Good interpersonal and interdepartmental relations, Belgium commitment and expertise have been mentioned as the key actual strengths. Potential strengths can be classified in different categories (see table 4). Such an approach could/should (1) **Benefit the context** in which Belgium deploys its foreign policy interventions (fragile contexts, SDGs); (2) increase **efficiency and effectiveness**; (3) increase **coherence**; (4) increase **leverage and credibility**; (5) increase **quality**.

**Table 6. Categorisation and major responses – Strengths**

| Categories | Major responses |
|---|---|
| **Actual strengths** | • The interpersonal relations are a main strength of the 3D coordination today.<br>• Good will of the administration and good relations between the Ministries<br>• Belgium is one of the few European countries to develop a national CA.<br>• Belgian expertise |
| **Potential strengths** | Benefit for the context<br>• In fragile states: peace building will only be possible through a coherent approach with the right mix between security providers, institution builders, humanitarian and development actors (failure of one can mean failure of the whole process)<br>• 3D-LO is a translation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development<br>Increased efficiency and effectiveness<br>• Better resource allocation, resulting in a greater effectiveness<br>• Better cost efficiency<br>• Joint efforts: sharing of services (no double work)<br>• Will encourage the departments to analyse and reflect on content<br>• Coordination and et pooling of resources. Non-duplication of engaged resources.<br>Increased coherence<br>• Better coherence in the external policy<br>• Unity of efforts. Avoid overlap. Avoid one off action, outside strategic priorities. Lever for joint action. Increased visibility and improved opportunities for communication<br>• Coherence (Policy, execution, priorities ...)<br>• Unity of efforts<br>• Do not contradict each other<br>Increased leverage and credibility<br>• Leverage can be increased<br>• Credibility at national and international levels<br>• Singular discourse and dialogue with local and international partners.<br>Increased quality<br>• Will encourage the departments to analyse and reflect on content<br>• Better understanding of Belgium's overall engagement in a certain context; possible win-win collaborations<br>• Actors speak the same language.<br>• The comprehensive approach should reinforce the initiatives and improve their success and sustainability.<br>• Better informed actions, stronger capacity<br>• Better joint understanding of the situation in a country, possibility for cooperation between the different sections within an embassy.<br>• Dialogue among the different actors involved makes everyone more aware of the different roles that Belgium plays in a certain area and of the |

importance of the different objectives. It can help identify opportunities for interventions that contribute to a combination of those objectives; or that better address gaps.

## 5.2.    Weaknesses

From the variety of individual answers, the following categories of weaknesses can be presented as the main obstacles to the development of a 3D-LO / CA approach: the lack of a strategic vision and communication – or according to some respondents the existence of conflicting visions and interests, the limited implementation of the approach, the current institutional obstacles, the insufficient capacity and resources, the coordination cost (time, resources) producing increased inefficiency.

It is interesting to stress two different – but interconnected – levels at which respondents identify weaknesses. The **strategic level** (e.g. common vision, political will and commitment) and **operational level** (e.g. implementation, institutional obstacles) can be analysed in the light of the key issues of legitimacy and effectiveness discussed in the evidence paper on governance networks for Belgian development cooperation.

### Table 7. Categorisation and major responses – Weaknesses

| Categories | Major responses |
|---|---|
| Actual weaknesses | Lack of strategic vision/communication<br>• Absence of vision<br>• Inability to think on the long term and to develop strategies<br>• Focus mostly on "execution short term planning", "no real strategy, long term planning and policy"<br>• Inability to communicate strategically about the initiatives and the successes<br>Limited implementation<br>• "Little"; "in practice, not that much"<br>• "lot of talking, lot of dreaming"<br>• "limited to bottom-up initiatives"<br>• Current steps "remain purely declaratory"<br>• "The merely three or four meetings of the working group in a year are not going to change much"<br>• Ten years ago, the 3D concept was already promoted, but in the field little effects are felt.<br>• Been talked about for a long time in Belgium, without fundamental changes in ways of working, so progress might be slow<br>Institutional obstacles<br>• Lack of coordination between the people on the field, the operational planners and the decision makers at the top level<br>• Often a lack of presence of the different actors in important and high-level meetings<br>• Regular changes / turnover of the representatives and represented services making coherence and continuity more difficult<br>• Different institutional cultures<br>• Overall still rather "siloised" approach between line ministries with an external focus |
| Potential weaknesses | Different visions and interests<br>• It is inappropriate to put development, Defence and Diplomacy at the same level as development objectives should provide the framework within which diplomacy, military and law enforcement can play a supportive role.<br>• The readiness of one partner to lose for the sake of the others<br>• Only works well if everyone's intentions are good and real.<br>• Individual ego's and hidden agendas often jeopardize success.<br>• Difficult understanding of national issues by the different 3D-LO partners due to the cultural differences (within the institutions) and the overall comprehension of the situation.<br>• A government made of a coalition with different interests |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Intra-department rivalry, fear of having to share political success<br><u>Insufficient capacity</u><br>• Lack of flexibility for different departments or partners<br>• Lack of capacities and openness of the different actors<br>• Policy Coherence Structures are presently in their infancy<br>• CA risks to get lost in another administrative turmoil and so the starting-up might prove not so easy<br>• The importance of open communication, well-considered choices (feasibility studies, estimating possible effects on the basis of study reports instead of the desirability and 'wet finger') is not always currently obvious.<br><u>Insufficient (joint) resources</u><br>• Lack of funding<br>• High level of ambition / compared to low level of means<br>• No common budget and common structure so initiatives are mostly based on the interpersonal relations, convictions and wishes to spend departmental budget to a common project in a context of permanent budgetary cuts<br>• The terrorist threat at home draws most of the available Defence resources<br><u>Costly, time consuming and inefficient</u><br>• Heavy to manoeuver<br>• High transaction costs in certain cases<br>• Coordination is very time consuming and not always efficient<br>• The weakness could be that it slows done projects since a lot of actors are involved, bureaucratic structures etc.<br>• Cumbersome in terms of coordination, combining different work cultures<br>• "Small talk", where only notes are compared, without operational discussions. CA should promote action, not slow down action.<br>• Avoid dispersing resources in sometimes very different domains. |

## 5.3. Opportunities

Respondents' answers in regards to the opportunities of implementing a 3D-LO / CA approach can be divided between internal (in the sense of Belgian) and external opportunities. Internal opportunities are identified as deriving: 1) at a strategic level, from the current and foreseeable political commitment and context and 2) at a more operational level, from the current search for more coherence and efficiency in a context of budgetary constraints.

External opportunities mentioned by the respondents can be linked with the general international context (regional issues calling for CA, SDGs), the development of EU strategies and instruments (CDSP) and partners interdependence.

### Table 8. Categorisation and major responses – Opportunities

| Categories | Major responses |
|---|---|
| **Internal opportunities** | <u>Political commitment and context</u><br>• The momentum is good. There have been several attempts in the past. This one is the first which receives enough support. The note approved by the Ministers reinforces the momentum.<br>• May want to learn lessons from other European countries on policy coherence in order to optimise Belgian experiences<br>• Decision more focus on security and national interest agenda<br>• Sense of urgency (huge challenges ahead should motivate to go ahead)<br>• The new national strategy on civil crisis management.<br><u>Search for more coherence</u><br>• Unity of effort and action, synergy, visibility, building up momentum, improve internal coordination and make Belgium more operational and visible partner in international context<br>• Less duplication<br>• government coherence in its actions, as well at the national as the international level<br>• Joint analysis |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <u>Search for more efficiency</u><br>• The momentum of budgetary cuts should be the leverage to understand that a bigger common effort is from the highest importance.<br>• Develop new processes oriented approaches<br>• Budget constraints forces us to better spend<br>• Mutualize efforts<br>• Once the approach is approved and tested in real projects it can be used in other countries, with modifications according to the specific situation.<br>• By encompassing several areas, we avoid forgetting certain elements and thus strengthen the sustainability aspect of the proposed improvement solutions.<br>• The need to train and to equip<br>• Organise common training sessions for actors<br>• Take advantage of the international network of our embassies to coordinate this approach in the field by locating 3D-LO actors on the same sites |
| **External opportunities** | <u>International context</u><br>• The current situation in the Sahel + MENA (jihadist threat)<br>• The sustainable millennium goals are an opportunity to integrate DGD more in the projects with Defence and the MFA.<br><u>EU strategies and instruments</u><br>• The European CSDP: the necessity of deployment and coordination of military and civil means in a crisis situation<br>• The European CSDP: nexus development-security<br><u>Partners interdependence</u><br>• The policy toward one country, especially countries where the partners alone are weak but united stronger |

## 5.4.    Risks

As for the opportunities, the respondents' answers in regards to the risks of implementing a 3D-LO /CA approach refer to both internal risks and external risks. The focus is however clearly on internal risks. The lack of political will and a transparent shared vision, the predominance of some actors and the prospect of aid being "instrumentalised" were largely seen as the major risks. The specificity of humanitarian aid and the risk of increased inefficiency are also significant categories of answers.

Answers addressing external risks address the role of the partner countries and the EU. Regarding the partner countries, it is interesting to note that respondents refer both to the fragility of the context (weak capacity and political instability) and to the lack of interest of the partner that is seen has benefiting from the lack of coordination and transparency.

**Table 9. Categorisation and major responses – Risks**

| Categories | Major responses |
|---|---|
| **Internal risks** | <u>Lack of political will and transparency</u><br>• Insufficient transparency in government dealings or lack of political will<br>• Lack of organisation and lack of political will<br><u>Different visions and interests</u><br>• Absence of a common vision! Differences of views of the political parties represented within the Government.<br>• Avoid a certain naivety by not taking into account the wishes of the different stakeholders, especially the different poles of influence.<br>• Decision only focus on security and national interest agenda<br>• Belgian interests take the upper hand, and needs in partner countries become subordinate.<br>• Some "short minded" people could feel threatened by a diminution or loss of own power and decisional initiative<br>• Strengthening the national approach to the detriment of an integrated approach with other international partners (hidden agenda)<br><u>Politisation and instrumentalisation of aid</u> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul><li>Predominance of one of the D's over the others / The development policy in general should in the first place be guided by the national development agenda of the partner country, not by political interests of BE (such as migration, security, etc.).</li><li>Instrumentalisation of development policy and its objectives in relation to poverty reduction and tackling inequality</li><li>Risk that development cooperation is instrumentalized for diplomatic interests that may divert focus from the partner country's development</li><li>Instrumentalisation of aid (and aid actors) which in the long run and especially in fragile context will lead to "politization" of aid, reduce its effectiveness, lose credibility and even lead to risks for aid actors and staff.</li><li>Risk of blurred definition of responsibilities. Risk of instrumentalizing aid for political/military purposes</li><li>Project could be grounded on purpose by those not believing in it.</li></ul>Specificity of Humanitarian aid<ul><li>Conflict prevention and humanitarian aid (to be given on the basis of humanitarian needs) are not always complementary (conflict prevention is not the same as do no harm).</li></ul>Increased inefficiency<ul><li>Bureaucracy and talk shop</li><li>Impasses will happen more</li><li>can become a "fourre-tout" for political expediency</li><li>Too much of static comprehensive approach</li><li>Too narrow view on crisis management</li><li>No coordination between different / parallel initiatives</li><li>Sustainability should not be forgotten / long term perspective should remain open</li><li>Risk of an "All win or all lose" because of the concentration of efforts (i.e. if it goes wrong or if bad choices are made, it will go wrong very badly and for all involved)</li><li>Discussion at a too high level with nothing concrete</li><li>No time / no expertise to develop a strategic communication</li><li>The risk is the timing of implementing projects, this should be streamlined but every ministry/expert have their own way of working with specific procedures.</li></ul> |
| **External risks** | <ul><li>Lack of interest of the partner country as this would require a lot of transparency from their side while authorities often see more interest in playing out their international partners against each other</li><li>All risks linked to the fragility of security and institutions, absence of strong national counterparts</li><li>Political instability in partner country</li><li>EU pressure: reinforcement of a geopolitical agenda, and less human development or "purely expert" projects</li></ul> |

## Conclusions

Throughout this evidence paper, we have explored the meaning and context of existing Belgian and international practices of (or towards a more) comprehensive approach (CA). This CA was understood here in its wider sense which involves channels and actors not only from development cooperation – cf. Evidence Paper on an Integrated Country Policy for Belgian Development Cooperation – but also from other areas such as Defence, Foreign Affairs, Police, migration, external trade, among others. The paper consists of two major parts, one synthesising Belgian as well as international CA experiences or approaches, and one presenting the results of the survey on the CA carried out between June and September 2017 with Belgian actors (public, private and civil society) involved in Belgian foreign policy.

Associated with the reshaping of security after the Cold War along with the success of the concepts of human security and human development, the development literature and practice has increasingly called for more complementary and coherence among the different networks across the departments and agencies of a donor country or organisation to increase the effectiveness of interventions. Whether it is under the label of "whole-of-government", "3D-LO" or "comprehensive approach", the idea is that a unidimensional approach is not adequate to deal with the complexity and volatility of the contexts of developing countries, even less so fragile ones. Since the end of the 1990s, Belgium has engaged in a series of initiatives or steps towards the implementation of a CA (i.e. subsequent laws on development cooperation, policy notes, interdepartmental commissions or working groups, specific interventions, etc.). Nevertheless, these efforts are either still formal, and require further implementation, or still punctual and require a broader dimension. The lack of an overarching entity (actor, structure, concept or reference document) – at least at the time of the survey, to feed in and guarantee a more CA is constantly perceived as an obstacle on the way towards better achievements.

The review of the literature and practices on what is actually called for in a CA indeed suggests the need for a mix of actors, instruments, incentives and interventions to converge in fragile settings. This convergence should not only imply the mere setting-up of interagency work but even more, the adoption of a min-set based on two key elements: the management of horizontal boundaries to enhance constructive cooperation (not destructive collaboration) and prevent competition, and the management of vertical layers of perceptions on issues, causes et consequences. To move towards the management of these boundaries and layers, Belgium can be inspired by the lessons learned from international practice. This paper presents experiences from both multilateral actors (i.e. European Union, the United Nations and NATO) and bilateral actors (United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland and the Netherlands). These practices have allowed to reflect on both opportunities or limits of different financial and institutional mechanisms, empowerment of actors and structures, or strategic and conceptual advances.

Compiling input from around 70 questionnaires, the results of the survey held with Belgian stakeholders presented in the second part of this evidence paper largely concurs with the initial reflections discussed earlier. Indeed, the aggregation of surveys suggests a clear (recent) will of political actors to move towards a CA but an overwhelming ad-hoc nature of the initiatives deployed in that direction. Likewise, these initiatives are largely dealing with the coordination of actors but rarely tackling issues of coherence or complementarity, reflecting a rather low level of integration between departments.

The survey results however also provide a much finer understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of perspectives among actors, both within the development community (governmental and non-governmental) and between the development community and other actors from other departments or institutions (BTC, Ministry of Defence, Federal Police, etc.). Very strikingly for instance, the responses in regards to the actors to be involved in a CA varies widely not only along the line of the nature of institutional belonging but also on other different grounds, i.e. the timing of the approach, the presence of actors in the field, their relevance or the role they play based on the local context, the management or political level of actors, or more trivially "only people who know what they're talking about…". Similarly, the organisation of the cooperation between actors in such a CA hints at multiple lines of tensions between the answers provided on the formal or flexible nature of mechanisms, their thematic geographic basis, on the departmental rooting of this coordination, or on the equilibrium of power or influence that should prevail between departments or actors. Overall, the survey results are a very rich resource from which we can engage in raising the relevant normative questions as well as in assembling the pieces of a Belgian comprehensive approach puzzle.

This paper is part of a series that includes two other papers (on an integrated country policy and on governance networks for Belgian development cooperation – see our website: https://www.governance4development.org) and is the first step of a research process, which lays the theoretical bases and draws preliminary lessons for our future work. In particular, a green paper is expected at the end of the project (end 2018) which will provide with more operational elements (principles, indicators, and actions) related to the development and implementation of a comprehensive approach within Belgian development cooperation.

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# Appendix 1 – Survey questionnaire

## Survey on the Comprehensive Approach

*Belgium wishes to implement a comprehensive approach to development cooperation. In this context, DGD has asked the ACROPOLIS research group on 'Governance for Development' (www.governance4development.org) to study two aspects: (i) the search for an integrated country approach (or Integrated Country Policy - ICP) that enhances more cooperation between development actors, and (ii) the promotion of 3D-LO approach that optimizes cooperation between Development, Diplomatic, Defence and Law and Order actors, amongst others.*
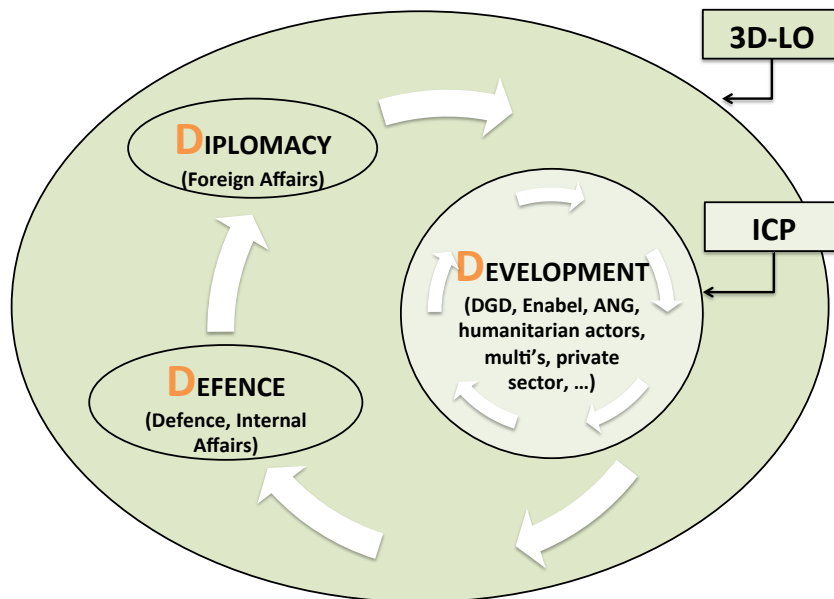


*This survey is a first step in our research work and includes few general questions in order to collect preliminary information on the perceptions, practices and references of Belgian stakeholders on this comprehensive approach. For this reason, it is addressed to a large panel of actors, from governmental, non-governmental cooperation and the private sector.*

*The results of the survey will be integrated in evidence papers that will be published and presented to a wide public during a workshop at the end of September 2017.*

*Your participation to this survey is essential to make the evidence paper as relevant as possible. Please return it completed by the 30th of June to Jessica Martini:* jmartini@ulb.ac.be*.*

*Thank you in advance for your participation!*

First name:
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Last name:
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Organisation:
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Service: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Function:
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………

A. INTEGRATED COUNTRY POLICY

Are you aware of the steps Belgium is taking towards an integrated country approach? If so, can you describe what steps have been taken?

☐ *yes* ☐ *no*

*Description:*

Can you share any relevant experiences (good practices but also failures, lessons learned) that can contribute to an integrated country approach?

*By Belgian actors*

*By international actors*

How should an integrated country approach ideally look like?

*- What should be guiding principles or objectives?*

*- What actors should be involved?*

*- How should cooperation between actors be organized?*

In your opinion, what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks related to implementing an integrated country approach?

| *Strengths* | *Weaknesses* |
|---|---|
| *Opportunities* | *Risks* |

Are there any documents that provide useful guidance on an integrated country approach that you want to share?

*Belgian documents*

*International documents*

B. 3D-LO APPROACH

Are you aware of the steps Belgium is taking towards a 3D-LO approach? If so, can you describe what steps have been taken?

*☐ yes ☐ no*

*Description:*

Can you share any relevant experiences (good practices but also failures, lessons learned) that can contribute to a 3D-LO approach?

*By Belgian actors*

*By international actors*

How should a 3D-LO approach ideally look like?

*- What should be guiding principles or objectives?*

*- What actors should be involved?*

*- How should cooperation between actors be organized?*

In your opinion, what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks related to implementing a 3D-LO approach?

| *Strengths* | *Weaknesses* |
|---|---|
| *Opportunities* | *Risks* |

Are there any documents that provide useful guidance on 3D-LO that you want to share?

*Belgian documents*

*International documents*

*More in-depth interviews will be held at the end of August / beginning of September.*

*Would you be available to further discuss this topic with us?* ☐ yes ☐ no

*Would you like to suggest colleagues or other organizations we should contact on this topic?*
*………………………………………………………………………………………………*
*………………………………………………………………………………………………*

*The results of the survey will be integrated in evidence papers that will be published and presented to a wide public during a workshop at the end of September 2017.*

*Do you want to be invited for this workshop?*     ☐ yes          ☐ no

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