



A SWOT analysis of the water sector in the Belgian development cooperation programs

In the framework of the Water Nexus project, stakeholders active in water and development cooperation were invited to discuss the elements of a water strategy for the Belgian Development cooperation. This workshop took place at DGD on Thursday the 24th of October 2019. About 25 actors from NGO, development agency, universities and civil services participated. Four groups were formed and asked to conduct a SWOT analysis about the current implementation of water-related activities in the development cooperation programs. The document hereby provides and itemized list of the elements mentioned by participants during the SWOT analysis.

STRENGTH

Knowledge and Know-how

- Experience and expertise of Belgian actors
- Strong expertise on access to drinking water and water for productive use
- Multi-dimensional academic cooperation: joint research, capacity building, education, info provision
- Realization of infrastructures e.g. Dredging's activities worldwide

Implementation framework

- Country portfolios – approach targeting different sectors
- The lack of framework gives us the opportunity to align with the local context = flexibility
- Common strategic frameworks (function according to location).
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Partnership

- Cooperation with other Belgian organisations – staff of other organisations supporting ENABEL
- NGOs work with local partners, which allows for good connection with local issues
- When possible, we coordinate with the other actors. Synergies are created naturally when in the field

Miscellaneous

- Mobilize funds for humanitarian crises
- Successful example of good coordination: Belgian Fund for Food Security program (BFFS)

2. WEAKNESS

Partnership

- Mismatch between scientific and NGO experience and (future) partner countries
- Missing integrated cooperation (global strategy knowledge)



- Still difficult to work together (between organizations, with partner countries, etc.). Differences of point of view and cultural. We do not speak the same language.

Implementation framework

- Short term project approach instead of long term programs – Lack of follow-up on use/management of water infrastructure leading to non-use, difficulties in maintenance and continued operation
- Water sector is not very visible in country portfolios – but can also an opportunity
- Monitoring and Evaluation, and reporting on SDG6 is scattered
- No system/integrated approach
- Coherence is not easy due to the fact that we have to report to multiple agencies
- BFFS: success, but demands substantial time and resources! We must strike a balance between action and coordination

OPPORTUNITIES

Knowledge and know-how

- Increasingly young people asking for education and knowledge
- Expertise and approach can be transferred to other areas
- Successful case studies to learn from. E.g. Bénin: collaboration on large water infrastructures has taken place with interesting results. Real transfer of expertise.
- Good international reputation of Belgium. Small country, humble and non-threatening. It is listened to. Can have a mediation role.
- Suited for pilot cases, R & D

Implementation framework

- Acquisition of EU & GCF funding – ENABEL accredited for GCF
- Reporting tool on SDG6 – allows to better monitor what is achieved
- Belgian water platform can be broadened

Partnerships

- More importance to social dimension and wide participation
- Now coherent approaches in development among VLIR-UOS projects and NGO's (WWF common strategic framework e.g.. water and natural resources)

Miscellaneous

- Increasing attention for water
- Innovation in water projects through academic cooperation e.g. contaminant removal in drilled water, ecological toxicity indicators – but ensure also that local communities can keep using it ... threat for tools requiring electricity

THREATS



Knowledge and know-how

Implementation framework

- Different visions on 'sustainable' agriculture, climate change
- 'ad hoc' political priorities (missing strong civil society)
- The water strategy would be an additional administrative constraint (secretariat, etc.)
- Bad governance