



BTC

**BELGIAN
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

***THE ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT***

***A VIEW OF 30 DEVELOPMENT
PROJECTS***



About BTC

The Belgian development agency, BTC, mobilises its resources and its expertise to eliminate poverty in the world. BTC contributes to the efforts of the international community and works towards a society that provides present and future generations with sufficient resources to build a sustainable and fair world.

Its staff members in Brussels and overseas embody the commitment of the Belgian State and other development partners to international solidarity. They support more than 300 cooperation projects and programmes in some 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

BTC listens, gives advice and puts the experience of its staff to the disposal of its partners. Its staff members look for innovative solutions to the challenges set by a continuously more complex environment. To support the development processes BTC provides services that are characterized by transparency and integrity, which are essential values in a relation of trust.

In Belgium BTC is presenting itself as a centre of excellence for development issues.

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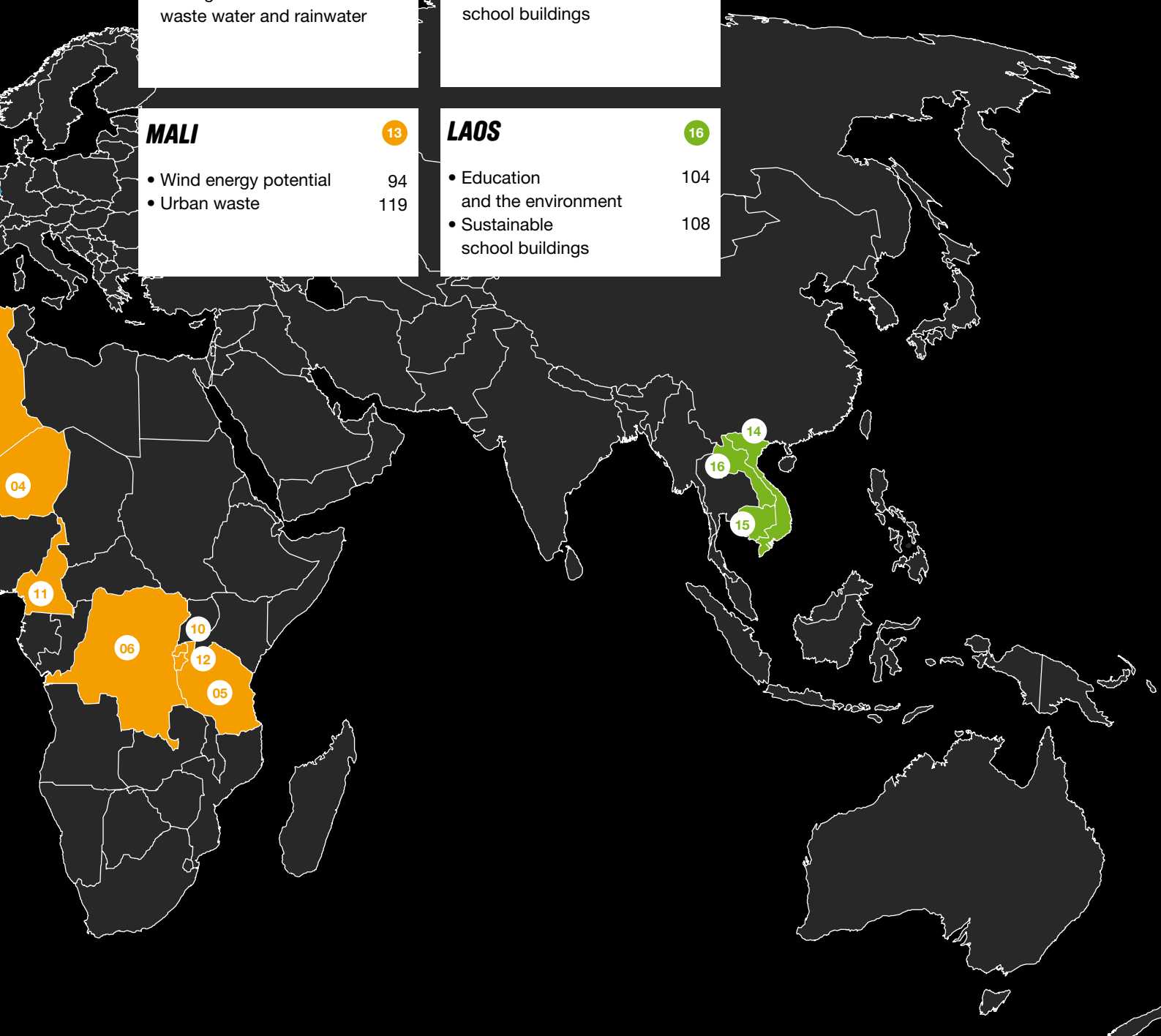
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INTRODUCTION

The issue of climate change has contributed to bringing environmental concerns to the fore. For industrialised countries and developing countries alike the challenge will be to rebuild their economies on new foundations using “low carbon” strategies. They will also have to implement policies to adapt to the effects of climate change (the poorest countries being the first and hardest hit).

Avoiding the effects of these climatic disruptions normally comes down to promoting environmental “good practices”: managing natural resources in a sustainable and rational way, supporting technological innovations that create less pollution (energy, transport...), strengthening the capacities of national institutions, supporting the definition and implementation of adaptation policies, and integrating ecological aspects into the development approaches and strategies.

The link between fighting poverty and the rational management of natural resources is becoming increasingly clear for many international development actors. Today, developing countries are already confronted at least to three major crises: The energy crisis, the food crisis and the water crisis. Climate changes will exacerbate these crises and make solutions even more complex. Add to this the context of the economic crisis, because of which financial resources for international cooperation become scarce.

As with the majority of European cooperation initiatives, Belgian cooperation decided (in the Law of 1999) that the environment should be a transversal theme, in other words environmental issues should be systematically integrated into all sectors of development cooperation and at all stages in the life cycle of initiatives (preparation, implementation, evaluation).

How far have we got after ten years? What progress has been made? What are the challenges? What are the ways forward?

In attempting to answer these questions, we wanted to present a range of initiatives, most of which do not have the environment as their core subject, but which have, in one way or another, incorporated this aspect in the overall strategy of the project, in the deployment of a specific component or in the choice of an approach or a technology. We thought it important to present and evaluate all these initiatives (and this book describes only a selection of them), which very often result from the initiatives of experts working in cooperation and their national partners.

This publication is intended for everybody who is interested in environmental issues and who are wondering what development cooperation actually does achieve in this field. We also believe in the “snowball” effect and are convinced that each initiative can lead to another one. But we are also clear-headed and convinced that more can and must be done, and that it must be done better. All too often, the environmental aspects are neglected or insufficiently acknowledged, budgets and specific indicators are lacking, and personnel are not trained well enough.

Finally, we clearly see the arrival of a new generation of development projects and programmes. Renewable energy, the management of natural resources, the fight against deforestation, the management of waste materials and urban sanitation, and institutional strengthening concerning climate issues are all themes recurring increasingly frequently and we must prepare for them with determination. This publication is a step down this road.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

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***THE ENVIRONMENT FINALLY MADE
A DECISIVE ENTRY INTO
THE CONFERENCE ROOMS OF NATIONAL,
EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL
DECISION-MAKERS IN THE 1990s.
HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH ENVIRONMENTAL
ISSUES CAN NO LONGER BE AVOIDED,
THE STRUCTURES PUT IN PLACE TO DEAL
WITH THEM HAVE NOT ANSWERED
THE CONCERNS AND HOPES VOICED.
TODAY, PEOPLE ARE SPEAKING OUT
TO ASK THAT OUR PLANET
BE PROVIDED WITH STRUCTURES AND
BUDGETS THAT REFLECT THE EXTENT
OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE
BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND WITHIN
SUPRANATIONAL BODIES.***

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES

SYSTEMATIC INCLUSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

In 2008, hunger riots shook the world from Haiti to the Philippines via Egypt, Morocco, and Indonesia. Faced with the significant challenge of soaring food prices, international and national development aid organisations suddenly revised their script, and particularly their approach to the environment.

Until recently, official development policies limited environmental involvement to following the three major agreements resulting from Rio in 1992: the battle against desertification, the protection of biodiversity, and the fight against climate change. However, too few resources and too little political attention have been brought to bear on these challenges with the current generation of political decision-makers failing to grow at the same rate as environmental issues. Faced with an emergency, the environment has gradually gained in importance and has complicated somewhat the aid paradigms, which were already under significant pressure. The question of bio-fuels alone suffices to make clear the complex ties and paradoxes that bind energy, food and the environment. As a result, development can no longer be planned in isolation. Everything is interrelated.

The environment in policies

This holistic approach is reflected in the new international strategies that emerged at the beginning of the new century. For example, the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) returned cooperation to the centre of attention, particularly in cities, and demanded additional resources. Goal number 7, dealing with the environment, underlines the efforts required in terms of access to water and sanitation and the issue of urban habitat. The World Bank's strategic poverty reduction frameworks include inevitable economic growth as part of a more global outlook. It was about time. The Stern report, which estimates the global cost of environmental damage at 5,500 billion euros, was partially to thank for this. However, these international frameworks are led by donors and remain insufficiently negotiated with partner development countries. In addition, while prospects are opening up, the environment still does not hold a pre-eminent position in international aid paradigms.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness barely reshuffled the deck. The OECD intends to limit aid by each donor country to two sectors per country, thereby hoping to encourage greater impact and less dilution of the aid granted. The increase in the number of

small projects is felt to be ineffectual overall, at least in terms of cooperation between States. The question arises as to whether the environment may not be the main loser of this measure. As a transversal concern rather than a sector of activity in their own right, environmental issues could be eclipsed by other priorities. Few resources and little political will would then be dedicated to it.

In addition, sector logic does not account for the full complexity of the context of interventions, which have logical frameworks and action planning methods that are far too linear to integrate this complexity. The development of a city, for example, is a challenge with innumerable dimensions. Improving water quality can mean moving people who are living in areas illegally, having an impact on the social fabric, organising new housing, waste collection and treatment, etc. And this involves many different players. Given this context, attempts to modify water distribution, housing, etc., lead to a series of chain reactions of which the effects and impact are difficult to predict and evaluate.

Political dialogue and institutional support

New aid mechanisms, and particularly budgetary support and the sector approach, may provide some opportunities. Technical advisors working with national authorities and other backers are well-positioned to plead in favour of consistently taking environmental challenges into account during the creation of strategies and implementation plans, and while preparing policy dialogue. The environment is explicitly included in most *policy papers*. However, translating this political will meets with obstacles including a lack of financing specifically dedicated to environmental issues.

The environment is, therefore, not a priority sector of activity. However, positioning it transversally brings the risk of not giving it sufficient consideration or of simply adding a few green touches to development projects. These actions are certainly useful but can also become easy excuses to say that the environment is not being forgotten.

One of the important challenges related to the environment will be to shift from raising awareness to an integrated approach at every step of a project: design and planning, implementation, selection of approach and methodology, selection of technique and materials, staff training, impact evaluation.

For international cooperation as a whole, the challenge is to integrate the environment into its vision then into its policies and then to enable its experts to upgrade their skills through ongoing training. This theme must be omnipresent

yet time is needed to adopt a holistic approach. The rapid increase in the appearance of the climate change issue in international agendas and in public awareness over recent years and the budgets that apparently have to be dedicated to it (review of energy and transportation policies, globalisation of stakes, etc.) may operate as a lever and force every player to face up to their responsibilities. The greatest challenge remains the complete integration of the environment in the cooperation field, from design of development programmes to their implementation.

REFERENCE DATA

THE PARIS DECLARATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In the Paris Declaration, ratified in 2005, the governments of 90 countries and the heads of aid organisations committed to improving the effectiveness of aid and its impact on development. A concrete action plan was identified to reach this objective and 56 partnership agreements were announced, based on the following five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results, and mutual accountability.

The signatories encourage “a harmonised approach to environmental assessments” and recommend that environmental impact studies “go further and include the potential consequences of global environmental problems such as climate change, desertification, and loss of biodiversity.”

Implementation follow-up and evaluation of the progress made by the Declaration was scheduled in two stages. The first was held in Accra in 2008. The second will be held in 2010

TO FIND OUT MORE
www.ocde.org

TOWARD A WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION?

Climate change isn't just a threat to the equilibrium of the ecosystem. It is also a challenge to the heart of the global economic system and North-South relations. In Africa, global warming and declining precipitation are aggravating the problem of access to water and of agricultural non-productivity. More generally, the emergence of a multi-polar world suggests an exacerbation of global competition for access to natural resources with significant environmental and geopolitical consequences. For this reason, environmental issues are at the heart of development and international cooperation policies.

Scattered competencies

These complex and multi-faceted stakes were compiled in the 7th MDG which discusses the challenges of deforestation, CO2 emissions, ocean resources, biodiversity, access to water and sanitation, and shanty towns. Yet, although these environmental issues are interdependent, they relate to competencies that are scattered among several United Nations bodies and many secretariats of international environmental agreements. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is itself only a *clearing house*¹ which has neither a mandate nor the means to meet environmental challenges.

The multilateral institutional mechanism for the protection of the environment therefore suffers from a significant drawback: its incoherence, which results from the scattering of its competencies across multiple bodies. This institutional incoherency makes it difficult, even impossible, to enforce international standards adopted on the basis of jointly agreed principles. Yet, without mechanisms of this type, environmental challenges have a de facto tendency to be subordinated to problems managed by constraining institutions such as trade agreements for which the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is the guarantor.

1 | It processes, analyses, publishes and distributes environmental information

Trade and the environment

The United Nations held a Conference on Environment and Development in Rio from 3 to 14 June 1992. The goal of this "Earth Summit" was to "*establish a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of society and people*" and to work "*toward international agreements which respect the interests of all and protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system.*"² The result was a Declaration of 27 principles and an action plan called "Agenda 21" which set the main objectives to be achieved to make sustainable development a reality.

In terms of the environment, governments reconfirmed in Rio their commitment to the declaration of the United Nations Conference on the environment, adopted in Stockholm on 16 June 1972, and signed two international agreements on the climate and biodiversity. Progress was also made with two agreements on desertification and forests, signed in 1994. This dynamic led to the signature of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Its objective was to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 5% of their 1990 levels by 2008-2012.

2 | The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Report, A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I), United Nations, 12 August 1992

Unfortunately, these commitments led to several agreements that went unfulfilled because of a lack of institutional coherence. Governments decided to move forward in trade matters by creating the WTO following the Marrakech agreements signed in April 1994. The WTO, created from the ashes of the GATT, is a truly international organisation that includes an international trade court and the Dispute Settlement Understanding body (DSU) to which Member States can bring complaints against other States for hindering trade. The WTO became the first international organisation with truly enforceable rules.

A number of voices were then raised to deplore the fact that environmental issues, confined to ill-assorted agreements were, in fact, subordinate to the trade law guaranteed by the WTO. However, the decisions of the DSU have created a case law that enables States to apply trade measures to protect the environment. The so-called "shrimp/turtle" case laid the foundations for this case law. The dispute set four Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Thailand and Malaysia) against the United States following an American decision to curb imports of shrimps from countries whose fishing techniques did not adequately protect turtles. It led to a decision by the DSU that stipulated that governments can apply trade measures to protect the environment, and notably "to

protect human, animal, or plant life” (GATT Article XXb) and “to protect natural resources” (Article XXg)³.

The fact that the WTO accepts trade measures to protect the environment is considered by some to be sufficient guarantee that environmental agreements will be respected. However, leaving protection of the environment in the hands of an international organisation, which does not have this mandate, does not resolve the problem of scattered agreements. This gave rise to the idea of creating a true World Environmental Organisation (WEO).

The challenges for a WEO

The primary mission of a WEO would be to centralise the secretariat of the various environmental agreements and to enable a common doctrine to emerge, based on major concepts currently spread across various agreements (the polluter pays and precautionary principles, etc.). The WEO could take over the activities currently managed by UNEP but as a truly international organisation whose financing would be guaranteed by regular and compulsory contributions by Member States.

The WEO would also be a multilateral negotiation forum where new environmental agreements could be concluded. A World Environmental Court, a sort of environmental add-

3 | The Appellate Body of the WTO’s DSU ruled in favour of the Asian countries because the United States had not applied the “most favoured nation rule” and discriminated between Member States by giving the Asian countries only four months to comply whereas they had given Caribbean countries three years. However, the DSU decided that, regardless of the discrimination issue, the United States could apply measures to protect turtles according to Article XX of GATT.

on to the DSU with which a hierarchy of standards would have to be ensured, would legally guarantee all environmental agreements. The WEO could also manage the World Environmental Fund (WEF) and have a “financial arm” that would enable it to finance its own development projects.

The difficulty obviously resides in the fact that the creation of an international organisation is by its very nature hypothetical since it requires the agreement of a large number of governments. In addition, developing countries fear that such an organisation would create universal standards that would not take into account their level of development and, therefore, penalise their development efforts. Nevertheless, global challenges related to the environment have become such that the creation of a WEO is finding support with more and more people. In addition, to deal with the fears of developing countries, the guarantee of the polluter pays principle and the existence of financial compensation mechanisms guaranteed by the WEF would ensure that industrialised countries assume primary responsibility and that developing countries benefit from additional resources for sustainable development.

This WEO could thus become a powerful engine for sustainable development. At a time when emerging countries are wondering about the planet’s ability to support a Western-style model on such a vast scale, it could ensure that development successes do not lead to a global environmental crisis with multiple consequences.

*Arnaud Zacharie,
Secretary General of the National
Centre for Development Coopera-
tion (NCDC-11.11.11)*

REFERENCE DATA

A FUND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The World Environmental Fund (WEF) has existed since 1991. It brings together 178 countries in partnership with international institutions, NGOs and the private sector. This organisation deals with global environmental issues while encouraging sustainable development at the national level.

It is currently the primary source of financing for projects aimed at improving the world's environmental situation. The WEF is an independent body that provides financial assistance for projects in the fields of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, soil depletion, the ozone layer and persistent organic pollutants.

The WEF is also the financial mechanism for four international environmental agreements: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Stockholm Convention on POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The latter grants 250 million USD a year to renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable transport projects.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION STRENGTHENS ITS ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

In 2007, the European Commission's DG Development initiated a review of its environmental integration strategy in partnership with the representatives of the Member States and civil society.

The primary objective of the European Union's aid to development policy, described in 2005 in the European Consensus on Development, is the "*eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular*". The political undertakings in the European Consensus include the need to identify environmental challenges for each country and each region. In addition, the text identifies the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources as one of the nine areas of EC action. This means that this theme can become a focus area within national and regional programmes. In addition, a stronger approach to the integration of environmental sustainability as a transversal topic has been recommended. The Consensus also proposes systematic environmental assessments both at the sector and the project level. These activities are essential to improve the effectiveness of programmes and projects focusing on the environment and natural resources and to incorporate the environment as a transversal issue in other development cooperation programmes.

The environment as cooperation sector

As demonstrated by a recent programming experience⁴, there are certain practical constraints with respect to the choice of the environment as a focus area. Beneficiary countries and regions are asked to concentrate financing on one or, at most, two sectors of activity. The environment is not perceived as an urgent priority by most of these because of its relatively unimportant political weight and the lack of knowledge about environmental issues and their many impacts on social, economic and political areas. The tendency is, therefore, to provide little financing for the environment and natural resources.

Furthermore, the principle that development activities should ultimately be financially sustainable may be unrealistic for a range of environmental actions, particularly those dealing with public goods. In many cases there is no market for selling environmental goods and achieving financial sustainability. In many developing

4 | The national indicative programmes of the 10th EDF include about 126 million euros intended specifically for the environment, that is, around 1% of the total.

countries government budgets are insufficient to finance conservation measures and greater financial benefits, at least in the short term, can be derived from depleting the natural resources base (often the main asset), due to the fact that externalities⁵ are not part of the cost-benefit analysis. The importance of mainstreaming environment as a cross-cutting issue derives from the fact that disregarding environmental consequences can be detrimental for poverty reduction efforts across the full spectrum of development priority areas.

The environment as a transversal issue

Mainstreaming is necessary to ensure that all environmental impacts resulting from development activities (including indirect and long-term impacts) are taken into account and mitigated if necessary and in turn contribute to poverty reduction. For example, emphasis on production in agricultural programmes may lead to inadequate use of pesticides and fertilisers.

5 | The price of a product does not include costs of the production process that nature bears (water and air pollution, loss of biodiversity, etc.)

These unduly favour certain crops and types of production that are poorly adapted, with corresponding effects on poverty. Integrating environmental concerns in such programmes will help to ensure a more long-term sustainable production and to avoid over-exploitation, and also to diminish externalities like environment-related health problems. Mainstreaming the environment is to be done at two levels: first into development cooperation actions, and second into the domestic policy of the beneficiary country. It should be applied right from the stage of programming cooperation, during identification, appraisal and implementation, all the way through to ex post evaluation.

Some specific mainstreaming tools have been developed, namely: *Strategic Environmental Assessments* (SEAs) and *Environmental Impact Assessments* (EIA). The SEA is the tool to be used systematically to ensure that environmentally friendly options are considered and that mitigation measures are included when designing the programme. The EIA enables identifying and evaluating environmental impacts of development projects, and working out proposals to mitigate negative impacts.

The evolution of aid delivery mechanisms, particularly the increasing use of budget support, poses particular challenges for environmental integration. It also offers many opportunities. As a first step, the environment should be put on the policy dialogue agenda of the development partners, in the case of general budget support as well

as for sector support programmes where environmental impacts are significant (such as e.g. infrastructure, communications and transport, water and energy, rural development, territorial planning, agriculture and food security). Supporting the design and implementation of environmental fiscal reforms or green budgeting would pursue environmental as well as fiscal objectives simultaneously (through e.g. reducing subsidies for less environmentally friendly measures and providing incentives for environmentally preferred ones).

Primary challenges

Based on the lessons of the past, a number of issues can be identified to update the strategy and make it more effective and operational:

1. One of the key issues remains the low level of attention for environment from the policy makers in developing countries. This issue can be tackled by improving knowledge and by developing capacity at the level of key stakeholders. In addition, it will be important to put greater emphasis on the need to work with other entities on the development and use of instruments allowing the economic value of environmental resources to be quantified, a more sustainable use of these to be promoted and the creation of more sustainable economic growth models to be encouraged. Plusieurs outils d'intégration environnementale (EIA, SEA) sont disponibles, mais leur mise en œuvre reste limitée. Une meilleure diffusion et une meilleure forma-

tion sont nécessaires dans ce domaine ainsi qu'un échange d'informations.

2. Several environmental integration tools (EIA, SEA) are available but their use remains limited. Better distribution and better training are needed in this area, as is information exchange.
3. The increased use of budget support as an implementation modality has led to a tendency to overlook the environment and natural resources sector. It is quite possible to take into greater consideration the subject of the environment and natural resources in budgetary aid programmes by including the environment's transversal dimension in sector programmes and projects.
4. Mainstreaming of the environment and natural resources should not only be done for "classic" cooperation sectors such as rural development and infrastructure, but also for newer subjects like the promotion of good governance, human rights and conflict prevention.
5. There is a frequent need for overview and analytical data on European Commission support for the environment in general or for specific themes such as climate adaptation, biodiversity, forestry etc. Because there are no agreed definitions of environmental support measures, there is a tendency for ad hoc data compilation, which is not the most efficient way to deal with this issue.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

The conclusions reached by the Council on 25 June 2009 invite the Commission and its partners to establish a suitable framework (consisting of the Commission and the Member States) to ensure preparation and follow-up of the implementation of the EU's approach to integration of environmental aspects. This will be presented to the Council by 2011 at the latest.

Excerpt from *Updating the Strategy for Environmental Integration in Development Policy*, European Commission, DG Development, 2009.

TO FIND OUT MORE

- See DG Development website pages on environmental issues:
http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/environment_en.cfm
http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/environment_fr.cfm
- The “Environmental Integration Handbook” can be downloaded from the website www.environment-integration.eu.

NEGLECTING THE ENVIRONMENT UNDERMINES THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele (Catholic University of Louvain) is a climate specialist. He is also Vice-President of IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the organization that won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. In September 2008, at the request of the minister for Development Cooperation, he presented a report entitled “Climate Change and the Belgian Development Cooperation Policy: Challenges and Opportunities”.

Development cooperation often operates in countries that are already experiencing climate change. In addition, it works with groups of people that are most vulnerable to the impact of current and future climate change. These issues inevitably impact, now and in the future, on development cooperation work. How can this recent parameter be taken into account? Is it possible to combat environmental issues and reduce poverty at the same time? If so, how? On the spot answers from a climate expert.

In your report, you recommend that Belgian Cooperation focus on climate change adaptation projects rather than on projects aimed at mitigation, that is, at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the South. Why?

Climate change is already having a significant impact on developing countries. Regardless of what we do in the area of mitigation, climate is like an ocean liner. Once it has been set on a course, time will be needed to redirect it. So warming will

continue over the next few decades and countries in the South will be more and more affected by it. This is why it is essential to respond to the urgent request from these countries and help them adjust to change. This is a priority.

Is this true for all sectors? Shouldn't cooperation projects in the energy sector, for example, target mitigation first?

Of course. But Belgian cooperation has undertaken relatively few projects in the area of large energy and other infrastructure. It manages less extensive projects such as institutional support and backing for education and health knowledge. Although mitigation can also be promoted through training and education, these fields are closer to adaptation than to mitigation. But my observation relates to Belgian cooperation. There may be other types of cooperation that should be focusing on mitigation. This is a case-by-case issue.

You recommend the implementation of transversal structures in cooperation structures. At what organisational level?

Cooperation's first priority is of course development. However, it must integrate environmental concerns. This does not mean turning the environment into a super department that dictates development but rather promoting a transversal vision. This is necessary to avoid creating three problems when solving one.

Qualified personnel and basic competencies are required to implement an interdisciplinary approach. So is a readiness, even if an expert in one sector, to listen to people from other sectors, to accept other ways of doing things, other approaches. This transversal approach must allow sector competence to retain its importance. The two approaches must be balanced out. In any event, one of my main recommendations is to increase human resources. Qualified people must be given time to talk to people in other sectors.

It appears that the cooperation field lacks environmental competencies. Why did we miss this train 35 years after Stockholm [United Nations Conference on the Environment] and 20 years after Brundtland?

Is this so surprising? Not really. Everything that happens in cooperation is as human as what happens elsewhere. Knowledge in itself is not sufficient for ideal action. All institutions suffer from inertia. And, until now, the climate and the environment have not been priorities. We hadn't fully understood that neglect of the environment would undermine the very foundations of development.

Didn't the cooperation sector face an additional difficulty: Couldn't environmental protection linked to a cessation in resource exploitation, for example, appear to put the brakes on poverty reduction?

That played a part. At the same time, the United Nations General Assembly gave a mandate to the Brundtland Commission in 1984 to write a report on the environment AND development in preparation for the Rio conference. Fifteen years after Stockholm, it became apparent that it wasn't possible to focus solely on the environment without taking into account other issues such as poverty reduction. The two issues had to be brought to the table at the same time. Brundtland's central hypothesis is that increased well-being can be uncoupled from increased pollution. If we don't do this, we will saw through the branch on which development sits, given that the

foundation of human well-being is always physical and natural.

Here is an example with the most alarming figure in the latest IPCC report: an increase in global temperature of 1.5 to 2.5 degrees compared to 1990 would mean an increased risk that 20% to 30% of the planet's living species, particularly in tropical areas, will disappear. This is what we are heading for, at the very least. Can we really believe that this won't have consequences for the human race? What's more, reducing poverty is the number one priority but it must be taken into account along with the other issues. Or else, sooner or later, they will catch up with us and lead to even greater poverty than we started with.

What approach should we take in the agricultural sector, particularly with respect to agrofuels?

I am convinced that biomass has an important role to play in energy challenges, but the way farm and forestry operations are run causes many problems which have an indirect impact on human food. And the benefits to the climate are extremely limited.

How can development projects take climate change into account?

We have to start with the people who are very familiar with the regions where cooperation is active. They know the geographical, social and cultural context. They can be given selective training on the way in which climate change in the region may impact

certain contextual elements. These people are extremely well-positioned to pay close attention to in the selection of development projects. It is important to be aware of all of these data, including uncertainties.

In the Sahel, for example, projects are based on one or two climate models, which forecast precise changes in the amount of rainfall in the region. However, the colour used for the Sahel in IPCC graphs is white because the IPCC believes that there is too great a discrepancy between the results of the various models. We don't even know the sign (+ or -) for the expected change in rainfall in this region. It is important to explain this uncertainty about changes in climatic conditions. Hydrological parameters are very important but often unreliable. All of this can be explained to the people in the field to be taken into account in development projects.

But regions in the South often lack scientific information about their climate.

Knowing that there isn't enough information is valuable information in itself. It's better to know this than to use a very small amount of available but unrepresentative data. Or else, what will happen if actual climate change does not coincide with this data? But it is true that it is also essential to improve data acquisition and climate research in the South. The goal of the Third World Climate Conference, which took place in September 2009 in Geneva, was precisely to

develop a global framework for climate services in order to consolidate the production, accessibility, supply and application of services and science-based climate forecasts.

You have referred to “a new international cooperation architecture”. Why?

There are many tools, institutions, and funds in the climate field alone, but there isn't much in the way of actual money. Is the creation of specific funds for one goal or another really effective? On one hand, this new architecture requires simplification of the institutions that redistribute money in the cooperation field, and on the other, much more finance in the neediest regions. We don't need more fund structures, but more funds with money!

How can this be accomplished?

We use the “polluter pays” principle. If this principle were implemented internationally, the money gathered could finance adaptation needs and help countries in the South participate more fully in mitigation efforts. It seems fairly logical that the countries responsible for climate change and, therefore, for its consequences, should assume responsibility.

We have a unique opportunity with the auctioning of CO2 quotas (via ETS, the European Emissions Trading Scheme). These CO2 quotas were previously distributed free to companies. They will now have to buy a larger and larger portion of the quotas through auctions. Each country still has to decide what it will do

with the sums collected. It would be legitimate to add them to the State's general budget but there is also merit in the idea that part of the money could be used to increase the cooperation budget to support adaptation and mitigation projects.

*Comments recorded
by Olivier Bailly*

THE 13 AREAS OF COOPERATION WORK

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele made 13 recommendations in his 2008 report “Climate Change and the Belgian Development Cooperation Policy: Challenges and Opportunities”.

AT THE POLICY LEVEL

1

Start with a precise diagnosis. Reformulate the environmental strategy note of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGDC) to identify “climate” as a priority within the transversal environment theme.

2

Increase the development aid budget (0.7% of GNP).

3

Be involved in an in-depth review of development cooperation. Apply the “polluter pays” principle and contribute to the creation of conditions to ensure that developed countries assume their obligations by gradually releasing new sources of financing to meet needs.

AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

4

Draw up a clear strategic framework for the integration of climate policy in development policy. There are three ways: promote the transfer of clean technologies (mitigation); support the creation of adaptation policies; contribute to improving capabilities.

5

Organise integration axes into a hierarchy. In the short term: improve the adaptation measures of projects underway. In the medium and long term: implement “clean” projects in which greenhouse gas emissions are reduced (through technology transfer).

6

Make it a priority to give adaptation greater weight in bilateral projects. Integrate the importance of adaptation at every stage of project development.

7

Tightly control forestry protection projects. Ensure that the financial advantages granted in exchange for forest protection benefit local populations.

8

Tightly control energy crop projects. Manage these projects using precise criteria and subject them to a guarantee of food safety and sovereignty.

9

Adhere to the original spirit of the Clean Development Mechanism. Only use “carbon”⁶ credits as a complement to greenhouse gas reduction measures.

⁶ | The carbon credit (equivalent to a tonne of CO₂) is a “saved” greenhouse gas unit to be bought (or sold) to achieve objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

10

Initiate pilot mitigation projects in the alternative energy field.

12

Create an “environment-climate” cell within the DGDC. This should provide a real impetus and follow-up with adequate competencies and resources.

11

Contribute to increasing the legibility, simplicity and coherence of multilateral financing instruments for the fight against climate change. Take a stand in the dialogue aimed at bringing together and providing coherence to the proliferation of funds in the fight against climate change.

13

Introduce the issue of climate change during meetings with partners at all levels. Promote the issue of climate change in policy dialogue with partners and the participation of Belgian political bodies in international conferences on climate change.

REFERENCE DATA

TWO RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

MITIGATION: *Projects intended to reduce the sources of green gas emissions or to expand carbon sinks.*

ADAPTATION: *Projects intended to adapt to climate change in order to lessen potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities provided and to deal with consequences (for example, by adapting infrastructure, equipment, and health, agricultural, environmental, and other policies).*

BTC, AN ENVIRONMENTAL PIONEER

BTC has developed a proactive policy toward environmental management since it began operations in 2000. The environment is one of the transversal items written into the law that created BTC. One of the strategic directions taken to achieve this goal was to implement a management system which takes into account the ecological impact of activities, notably those carried out at or led by the headquarters in Brussels.

This was important for the credibility of the institution itself: how could people in the field and development partners be convinced of the importance of taking environmental issues into account unless BTC itself demonstrated its ability and willingness to implement this principle? BTC's starting point was the belief that leading by example is extremely important in the environmental field.

This willingness was first demonstrated through membership of the Brussels region's Label Entreprise Ecodynamique with the signature of an Environmental Charter in 2001 and the awarding of the system's first star in 2002. BTC continued with this approach and received the Label's third star in March 2009.

In 2005, the Belgian federal government made a commitment to the European Commission that it would promote the gradual creation of EMAS-style (*Eco-Management & Audit Scheme*) environmental management systems for all federal bodies. A group of five federal institutions which have already made progress in this area were identified. BTC was a member of this first EMAS⁷ pilot group.

Obtaining membership of the EMAS system was a long and complex undertaking. Its framework is similar that of an ISO standard (in

this case ISO 14001) with procedures, document registers, an action plan and results indicators. In addition, EMAS requires perfect regulatory conformity (adherence to all environmental laws must be demonstrated), transparency of information (publication of an annual environmental statement) and active participation by staff.

It took one year to put certification in place, in particular to gather the required documents. BTC became EMAS-certified at the end of 2006. The following two years were dedicated to implementing and pursuing existing activities in a more structured way.

The main actions carried out as part of EMAS were:

- Improvement of environmental integration in development projects supported by BTC
- Management of direct environmental impacts (water, paper, and energy consumption, etc.) at headquarters
- Staff training and internal and external communication on the environment
- Implementation of a sustainable mobility policy for staff

A carbon assessment was carried out in 2008 and a CO₂ strategy was identified that same year. BTC then purchased carbon credits in order to compensate for its air travel, its main source of CO₂ emissions.

Concrete results

This environmental approach also led to a focus on many "small" details. They were part of the staff's increased awareness and of a concrete approach to more global challenges. Among other things, we systematically print our publications on ecological paper (recycled, FSC, not chlorine bleached, etc.) using vegetable inks. BTC sorts most of its waste (household waste, printer and toner cartridges, electronic and electrical appliances, batteries, bulbs and neon lights). Product purchases take into account social and environmental criteria. The use of "clean" transportation is encouraged.

Three items of consumption are particularly closely monitored: water, electricity and paper. The building's heating and cooling systems are common to several organisations and, therefore, BTC cannot currently provide precise gas consumption statements. However, messages are sent to staff on a regular basis encouraging them to make moderate use of heating and air conditioning, with the environment in mind.

7 | With the Prime Minister's Chancellor, FPS Science Policy, SPP Sustainable Development and the Federal Planning Bureau

REFERENCE DATA

WHAT IS EMAS?

*EMAS (**Eco-Management and Audit Scheme**) is a European environmental management and audit system. This approach is accessible to every organisation that wants to evaluate and improve its environmental performance. The proper functioning and improvements of this management system are checked annually through an external audit.*

TO FIND OUT MORE

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

MANAGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Claude Croizer is an environmental advisor for BTC. Starting in 2002, he initiated the creation of the Environmental Management System and since he has piloted the EMAS process within the organisation.

How has staff responded to the implementation of an environmental management system?

Very positively. Environmental values are very close to development cooperation values. Those that want to work in cooperation are for the most part sensitive to environmental issues. This awareness enables us to have fairly good control over our environmental impact. Staff have been very disciplined and follow practices put forward. Some would even like to go much further on these issues. The idea is for the whole of BTC to move forward in stages.

The gains attributable to this management are primarily environmental. Are there other gains for BTC? At the financial or organisational levels?

I have become increasingly aware that the environmental issue is communicated by every person at his or her own level of responsibility. BTC employees integrate the environmental issue as one of their work criteria. The system is slowly but surely becoming a part of our internal culture.

To date, there has been no analysis of potential financial gains. BTC has seen a fairly significant reduction in its electricity and water consumption. However, these budget items are fairly small compared to other costs.

In addition, BTC sometimes makes choices that prove more costly by opting for environ-

mentally friendly products. But it makes gains in quality, image and staff comfort. This policy can have an impact on the type of projects that are entrusted to us. Partners ask us about environmental management because we have credibility thanks to our commitment and we are pioneers as a federal institution.

Is air travel one of the main areas BTC has to work on?

It's a big challenge. How can you avoid taking flights since, by definition, BTC works with faraway countries? We have the telephone, Skype, the internet and other tools, but nothing can replace face-to-face contact. BTC employees travel little in relation to our overall business, although this data is difficult to estimate. We carried out a carbon assessment (or footprint) in 2008⁸. Air travel was, in fact, a significant element of this assessment. We then translated this assessment into a CO₂ strategy or a "climate strategy". It is based on three principles: reducing emissions (via good environmental practice), promoting innovation and compensating for the remaining emissions. On this last point, we are currently making use of trade compensation (purchase and cancellation of 2,500 Gold Standard certificates) with the goal of promoting one or several projects which could eventually generate green certificates in our partner countries.

8 | Validated assessment of overall CO₂ emissions

Is it more difficult to integrate EMAS in southern countries?

The EMAS system is still very cumbersome from a documentary and administrative point of view and it requires time. It is not suited to all situations. I think that to get involved with the type of management EMAS offers, the company introducing the process must already have reached a certain degree of environmental maturity, often generated by significant environmental stress⁹, operate within a constraining legal framework and be supported by positive techniques, sectors and company organisation.

In Western societies, for example, we can now require advanced selective sorting because effective collection is in place as are collection, reuse, recycling and treatment sectors. But we tend to forget that all this is quite recent. These collection systems are still rare in the countries in which BTC works. As a result, there are many frustrations since awareness is not followed by the creation of high-performance management systems. Sorting batteries is all very well but what do you do with them when there isn't a company in the country to recycle them? From a more practical standpoint, many techniques, technologies and products can be promoted within the framework of our projects. In

9 | A high level of pollution and strong social pressure are pushing authorities to pass laws in this area: civil society at large (associations, intellectuals, the medical profession, artists, etc.) is demanding measures to improve living conditions

addition, all activities leading to a reduction in consumption can be encouraged. More responsible buying can be supported as much as possible and there are also simple alternatives.

Will field projects also be included in EMAS?

The EMAS registration perimeter was BTC headquarters in Brussels (which can easily be reviewed by an outside auditor). However, BTC is very aware that its primary environmental impact lies in its projects and programmes. Environmental issues should therefore be as closely integrated with development projects as possible. We are proposing actions, indicators, the systematisation of impact studies and staff training. However, with over 200 projects in 20 or so countries, we still have a lot of work to do in this area.

Could the EMAS system lead BTC to reject a project?

This is not the purpose of an environmental management system. It must continue to further this environmental culture and provide more technical solutions such as the inclusion of a system to study the environmental impact of projects. With these tools, objective and measured criteria of the potential danger of a project can be taken into account. They will not necessarily lead to a refusal but the reworking of a project via adaptive, corrective or compensatory measures is possible.

In addition to the environmental benefits, is the pedagogical

value of this type of management also significant?

Of course. And the commitment value certainly is too. Since all staff are involved in the process, it's impossible to turn back. BTC is committed to continuous improvement and is always compelled to go further. What has become the norm today could have seemed very strange five years ago. For example, in 2007, the decision to carry out a carbon assessment was self-evident. BTC wants to be a responsible and innovative company and environmental management is a part of this.

What's more, the issue of coherence between our various activities is very important. We have a lot of work to do at the project design level in order to integrate the environmental dimension further upstream.

Aren't existing tools, and notably the logical framework, adequate?

It is rarely the tool but its use, which provides the "limitation". For example, environmental indicators are often absent from logical frameworks (although other planning tools are present). And suitable markers are not always used. For now, we should be using existing tools in a thorough and systematic way. This will enable us to understand their limitations. We also note with some satisfaction that our younger colleagues integrate the environmental dimension more easily during project design because they are more aware and better trained in these issues.

Do you think that development cooperation will be different in 10 years thanks to the influence of a process like EMAS?

I think that environmental issues are radically changing society and therefore also North-South relations. Climate change is becoming an unavoidable subject and we must deal with it in a very determined way. A great deal of learning is required on the part of all cooperation stakeholders. An environmental management system such as EMAS translates and organises efforts but to a large extent these are still dictated by changes in society at large.

Comments recorded by Olivier Bailly