



Opinion of the Advisory Council on Policy Coherence for Development “Peace and Security”

1. Introduction

01. Through this opinion, the Advisory Council on policy coherence for development responds to the request from the federal Minister for Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecoms and Post to feed into the Belgian interpretation of the 3D-LO concept. The Advisory Council interprets this request as a supplement to an *intergovernmental approach*, in which it places the emphasis on the role of the government, albeit limited to the areas of development co-operation, foreign affairs, defence, policing and justice in fragile contexts.

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2. Presentation of the issues

2.1. What is a 3D-LO/Intergovernmental approach?

02. **A 3D-LO approach (development, defence, diplomacy–law and order) is designed to bring coherence to the organisation and actions of a government in the areas of defence, diplomacy and development co-operation, policing and justice.** A number of concepts are used in the same context: In addition (1) to the 3D approach¹, whether or not supplemented by Law and Order, there is also (2) Security, governance & development², (3) the comprehensive approach (e.g. EU³), (4) intergovernmental approach (or WoGA, e.g. OECD-DAC⁴) and (4) the integrated approach (e.g. NL⁵). There is no established definition, but in this opinion, the Board uses the definition used by the OECD-DAC. Indeed, DAC encourages Belgium to develop a sound approach in fragile contexts, to which reference is also made by the minister in his request for advice. *“a WoGA is one where a government actively 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”*⁶. Crucial elements in this definition are: a) active use of formal and/or informal networks, b) different agencies, c) coordinate design and implementations of interventions, d) increase effectiveness of interventions, e) desired objectives. In fragile contexts, the nexus development–defence–diplomacy (3D) is the most important, hence the research by the OECD-DAC. Other policy areas must be involved if they have a comparative benefit⁷.

03. **The term ‘whole of government’ does not mean that other actors (knowledge institutes, NGOs, business, both local and international) remain outside consideration.** Organisations and individuals other than government players have highly relevant knowledge, expertise and years of experience,

¹Government of the Netherlands, [International peace and security](#).

²Matthijssen, [Van 3D naar geïntegreerde benadering](#), in: Militaire Spectator, volume 183 number 5, 2014, pp 228-239.

³European Commission, [The EU’s comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crisis](#), 2013.

⁴OECD, [Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States](#), Paris, 2006, p14.

⁵[“Leidraad geïntegreerde benadering”](#). The Dutch view of a cohesive input to security and stability in fragile states and areas of conflict.

⁶OECD, [Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States](#), Paris, 2006, p 14.

⁷OECD, [Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States](#), Paris, 2006, p9.



that may be of great added value for a Western donor and can also contribute to the WoGA being carried by and based on the status of social needs.

2.2. What are the arguments in favour of a 3D-LO approach in fragile contexts?

04. **Given that in recent years Belgium has opted to concentrate mainly on fragile situations with its development co-operation, it also has to adjust the approach it takes to these contexts.** The underlying causes of conflicts have various dimensions, depend on one another, influence each other and cannot be considered independently. Such complex situations do not require single solutions, but need coordination and integrated cooperation. The challenges themselves are situated on a social, ecological, political and military level. It comes down to involving different areas of policy in defining contributions to solutions: development co-operation, foreign policy, defence, justice and policing, as well as, by extension, migration finance and trade (including on the level of federated states, such as in the context of arms exports)⁸.

05. **Increased effectiveness of development co-operation and, by extension, of our foreign policy is required.** A 3D-LO approach can contribute to a more effective foreign policy for the benefit of development. It needs to be seen as a means of maximising the effectiveness of all Belgian interventions in a specific country in terms of achieving the purpose of sustainable development, taking into account the strategic choices of the partner, of other Belgian players and other donors. As a result, such an approach may not be seen as a substitute for development co-operation. Nor does it necessarily mean that every policy instrument should also be deployed in equal measure. In order to guarantee increased effectiveness in favour of development, it is important as part of a 3D-LO approach (1) to be proactive and hence to deploy *conflict sensitivity*⁹, (2) to be consistent with other coherent players/sectors and at a local, national and global level, (3) in addition to general and long-term objectives, such as within the SDGs, also to use a context-specific approach, and (4) to be aware that this is not purely a technical process, but an inherently political one¹⁰.

06. **The partners and international organisations with which Belgium cooperates aim to have a WoGA.** In recent years, the need for co-operation between the various areas of policy has translated into at international level (SDG16:Peace, security and strong public services¹¹), within the OECD-DAC (the development of the WoGA¹², which is also included as a principle in the Fragile State Principles¹³) and within the EU (Lisbon Treaty¹⁴, 'The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts

⁸Also see the EU interpretation of the comprehensive approach: EC, [Joint Staff Working Document. Taking forward the EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises. Action plan 2015](#), April 2015.

⁹ Saferworld, [Promoting conflict sensitivity among donor agencies](#). Policy Brief, 2012. This means the ability of your organisation to: (1) understand the context in which you operate; (2) understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; and (3) act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

¹⁰ Saferworld, ["Addressing conflict and violence from 2015. Issue paper 2: What are the key challenges? What works in addressing them"](#), 2013.

¹¹ [Sustainable Development Goals](#)

¹² OECD, [Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States](#), Paris, 2006.

¹³ OECD, [Principles for good international engagement in fragile states & situations](#), April 2007.

¹⁴ See article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. With the [Lisbon Treaty](#) (2007) a senior representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy was also appointed with responsibility for this cohesion



and crisis¹⁵, 'Capacity Building for Security and Development'¹⁶). NATO also realises that more intensive co-operation with civil partners and the EU and the UN is necessary at a political level.

2.3. What observations need to be made with a 3D-LO approach in fragile states?

07. What interests are given priority and what is the aim of certain strategic choices and interventions? For many Western donors—and particularly since 9/11—the security agenda of the specific country has a role to play in developing the strengthened integration of policy areas, such as diplomacy, defence and development co-operation in their relations with other (developing) countries. This is called the *securitisation of aid*, whereby the individual interest (often in the short term) takes precedence over the interests of the target group (often in the longer term)¹⁷. This demonstrates the importance of transparency on the part of the government regarding the considerations that are made between the various areas of policy and the common goal.¹⁸

08. The risks of securitisation of aid take clear shape in humanitarian programmes on the ground if the independence and impartiality of these programmes are not guaranteed. In addition, not respecting humanitarian principles endangers the security of humanitarian personnel. This has led to a significant increase in the number of victims since 2000.¹⁹

It may be abused to influence the involvement of the West in local conflicts. As a result, the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid reinforces the importance of the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.²⁰

09. A 3D-LO approach is a means and not an aim in itself. So the objective also has to be clear and specific. The overall objective is to contribute to sustainable human development. All too often, assumptions are used, such as the assumption according to which insecurity is created where there is no development (the security-development nexus). However, the interaction between security and development is in fact far more complex, and knowledge of this complexity is frequently lacking²¹.

10. The situations in which a 3D-LO can be applied are very varied and, depending on the context, require a different form of organisation and leadership. This involves a whole spectrum of situations, with military intervention, linked to a humanitarian and political aspect, comprising one extreme. At the other extreme are the development situations where an urgent conflict situation is linked to

¹⁵European Commission, [The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crisis](#), 2013. In this document, it is stated for the first time in relation to the EU what the Union understands by the comprehensive approach and the ways in which the EU is willing to interpret it. It includes the leading principles with which the EU wishes to direct its actions, particularly in the area of conflict prevention and crisis management. The [European Council](#) also confirmed in 2013 the importance of an integrated approach in which the EU and the member states use the tools available in a cohesive manner, based on a shared analysis. In May 2014, the European Council decided that the theory needed to be converted into practice with a number of [ambitious conclusions](#). In April 2015, the [European Commission](#) also published an action plan with a series of concrete and practical actions both for the EU and its member states

¹⁶European Commission, [Capacity building for Security and Development](#), 2015.

¹⁷Brown, Grävingsholt, *The securitization of foreign aid*, Rethinking International Development Series, 2015

¹⁸DIIS, ["Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States and Situations"](#), 2013, p6.

¹⁹474 victims in 2013 compared with 329 in 2014, of which 121 died, 88 were wounded and 120 were kidnapped. Source: Humanitarian Outcomes, [Aid workers security report 2015. Figures at a glance](#)

²⁰"humanitarians can best contribute to peoples protection, basic needs and their human security by remaining distinct and clearly distinguishable from the EU's political foreign policy interest. By respecting the complementarities of roles, mandates and expertise of instruments, their distinct objectives can be retained and attained" European Commission, [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#).

²¹Wild, Elhawary, ["The UK's Approach to Linking Development and Security: Assessing Policy and Practice"](#), in: S. Brown et al., *The Securitization of Foreign Aid*, 2015. Hence it is important that humanitarian aid can take place in a context of neutrality, impartiality and independence. Although rebuilding activities must be linked, where possible, soundly and in good time, to humanitarian aid from the viewpoint of effectiveness and to prevent a relapse into conflict situations. See: [Guide for an integrated approach. The Dutch view of a cohesive contribution to security and stability in fragile states and areas of conflict](#), 2014.



greater co-operation with defence and diplomacy. In this latter situation, the contribution of development co-operation must be decisive.

2.4. State of affairs in Belgium

11. **Belgium is not starting from zero. Our country already has commitments, frameworks and tools in place that provide an important starting point for developing a 3D-LO approach.** These include the international commitments that Belgium has already entered into (including the ‘NewDeal’ announced in 2011 in the context of fragile states²², Belgium’s activities in the INCAF), as well as the legal framework (the Belgian Development Co-operation Act, Art. 2§1)²³.

12. **The OECD-DAC advises Belgium, both in the Peer Review of 2010 and that of 2015, to develop a WoGA in relation to its fragile partner countries.** The OECD-DAC stresses the importance of coordination, coherence and complementarity, as well as the implementation of risk management and sharing of knowledge with other donors and also of increasing its own knowledge through research and the involvement of external actors. A strategy such as this must increase the opportunity for synergies and effectiveness, without undermining the autonomy of the various actors involved²⁴.

13. **At the same time, there are obstacles in Belgium that make the implementation of a 3D-LO difficult.** (1) There are tussles between the various ministries, as well as within the ministry of Foreign Affairs itself (including the cabinet and the BTC), including between Belgian missions abroad and central government. This leads to a geographic and functional spreading of actions and the multipolar development of strategic vision: any Belgian policy on fragile contexts is virtually non-existent. In Belgium, until now, the WoGA has been mainly an integration of development co-operation and technical programmes on security. There has been far less carefully considered coordination between development co-operation and diplomatic programmes. For instance, Belgium uses development co-operation as leverage for sound governance, although at the moment there is a lack of clear strategy or any link to Foreign Policy and other international donors. There is little provision for avoiding negative social impact in the event of aid being withdrawn.

(2) The differences in logic, strategy, language, objectives, work culture, etc. between the various ministries do not promote coordination. The coordination meetings, such as those for the Great Lakes and the Sahel, are currently nothing more than an exchange of information. Nor does external input from civil society or academics have any formal position. At the moment, the context analyses are too reactive, too poor and often not communal; nor do they result in communal recommendations. At the present time, development co-operation does not have sufficient means and expertise to make sufficient headway in coordination such as this.

(3) The Belgian political and institutional system, with its federalism and coalition governments may result in various sensitivities regarding the ministries and the mutual importance of political visibility for each another.

3. Recommendation

14. The OECD/DAC’s definition of a WoGA refers to the importance of the desired objectives. The other elements of the definition are putting these objectives into operation *networks, across different agencies, coordinate design and implementation of interventions*).

²² [A newdealforengagementin fragilestates](#), 2011.

²³ [Belgian Development Co-operation Act](#), 2013

²⁴ OECD-DAC, [BelgiumDACPeerReviewMain findings](#), 2010.



The recommendations of this opinion are also about the definition of common policy objectives and the way they are put into operation.

3.1. Common vision and policy objectives

15. The Advisory Council recommends that the principle of a 3D-LO approach in fragile contexts be formally adopted by the entire government with a view to strengthening the political legitimacy of this approach for development and encouraging the further ‘operationalisation’ of the communal strategic vision if it appears from further research that this is indeed the direction to take in such contexts.

16. The Advisory Council also recommends the development of a communal strategic vision and specific policy objectives for a 3D-LO in fragile contexts, taking account of the strengthening of the capabilities of the partner country to deal with internal or external shocks. This clarification should be made on a political, economic, ecological and social level. It should be explicitly referred to the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and must be implanted within the European context of *Capacity-Building for Security and Development*²⁵. The government will indicate how a 3D-LO approach fits into the overall communal foreign policy in relation to fragile contexts. The emphasis should in the first place be placed on the fragile partner countries of development co-operation.

17. The Advisory Council recommends that the government be permitted, via the definition of policy objectives of an effective 3D-LO approach, to give gradual shape to a communal vision of what Belgian Foreign Policy in its entirety wishes to achieve from a context-specific viewpoint for each partner country and for each region characterised by fragility.

18. The Advisory Council makes its recommendation for the purpose of achieving a communal strategic vision and policy objectives, as well as providing for a substantial increase in resources and capabilities.

3.2. Impetus for putting the policy objectives into practice and operation

19. The Advisory Council recommends making the various actors aware and working on strengthening mutual knowledge and expertise. Practical action points may include:

- Implementing the same use of language by guaranteeing ownership of the yet-to-be-developed Guidance Fragility by Acropolis on behalf of DGD.
- Making (continued) use of the detachment of staff to the other policy areas and vice versa
- Investing in research into specific cases, such as Burundi, checking to see where opportunities have been taken, or not, in order to draw lessons for the future
- Investing in communal training programmes, communal fact-finding missions or reconnaissance, the exchange of knowledge between donors via structures such as INCAF, etc.
- Other players, including national and international knowledge institutes, NGOs, institutional actors and business, will be involved without undermining the autonomy of the various players.

²⁵EuropeanCommission,[CapacitybuildingforSecurityandDevelopment](#),2015.



20. The Advisory Council recommends that the policy in relation to fragile contexts be embedded in Belgian Foreign Policy

- **A communal “Policy in Fragile Contexts”** could be set up in which Foreign Affairs, Development Co-operation and Defence, supplemented by Police and Justice would be represented. This unit could be located in the department of development co-operation. The reforms currently underway could represent an opportunity in this regard.
- **This communal unit could be charged with developing a communal vision about a 3D-LO policy in fragile contexts.** In so doing, the necessary sense of realism will be used: (1) the realisation that a fragility policy with the ultimate objective of increasing people’s resilience can only be achieved by long-term commitments (20 years and more) and (2) the realisation that you can never make a difference alone. Such a view must always be rooted in a broader international policy. As a result, Belgium must play a role in facilitating and strengthening donor coordination.
- **This communal unit would need to be given the necessary resources;** financial, human and political.

21. The Advisory Council recommends that the communal vision of a 3D-LO policy be translated into practical policy objectives for each partner country/region. These objectives would have to be set out in an action plan that will be monitored and evaluated. Three areas of work should be considered on this point in the short and medium term:

- **Diplomatic posts should be systematically reinforced by the appointment of a “context and risk analysis” adviser**
 - o Establishing such a mandate would make it possible to implement early detailed joint analyses for each country (or region) that will be updated regularly and hence can contribute to the *conflict sensitivity* of Belgian interventions, from planning, implementation and monitoring, through to evaluation. *Conflict sensitivity* is a parameter and condition in all interventions.
 - o This adviser, who would come under the responsibility of the Ambassador or the head of the diplomatic mission, would play a transversal role on the ground between the various actors involved in diplomacy, development and defence, as well as with BTC and BIO. He or she would also be in close contact with Brussels. External expertise, including the Belgian NGOs in place, would also come into the picture.
- **The Advisory Council recommends setting up coordination structures at a partner country/region in Brussels and at foreign diplomatic posts.**
 - o Structure
 - At a partner country level, in Brussels as part of Foreign Affairs and by way of a coordinating structure, the transversal department D0, D1 and B1, D2 DM, the EU representation, as well as BTC and the Cabinet, could be represented. Depending on the country, BIO, defence, justice and policing could also be added and, by extension, finance (World Bank).
 - On a regional level, the same thing would happen, with the addition of the directors of the various departments.



- A similar form of coordination could be assured at a partner country level, depending on the representation physically in place, as well as the “context and risk analysis” adviser present
- A sounding board group of external experts for each priority country (or region) could be set up to exchange knowledge informally
- Function
 - In the short term, these coordination structures could be responsible for monitoring the situation and making adjustments to any interventions underway
 - In the longer term, these structures could become responsible for increasing the *conflict sensitivity* of Belgian interventions and looking for communal policy objectives that boost the synergy and complementarity between the various actors, taking into account the autonomy of each player.
 - The coordination structures would have a permanent budgetline that would make it possible to carry out more specific additional analyses in addition to using the analyses of the “context and risk analysis” adviser.
- **The communal vision could obtain its interpretation in the yet-to-be-developed Belgian strategy for obtaining SDGs** (focussing on SDG16 regarding peace and security and sound governance).

22. **The overall ultimate objective of a 3D-LO approach would be to enable human sustainable development.** To guarantee that, it is necessary to take the following into account when putting it into operation:

- The importance of an autonomous budget for development co-operation
- The importance of having sufficient development co-operation expertise inside the unified vocation and hence within the diplomatic representation in the 14 partner countries at the highest level
- The importance of strengthening internal capabilities within DGD regarding the areas of peace and security and within the existing and yet-to-be-established coordination structures
- From development co-operation itself, there remains work to be done in sensitive sectors, such as policing and justice, all in collaboration with the relevant players.

23. **Institutionally, there is good alignment and division of labour** between existing coordination consultations (e.g. Great Lakes Region and Sahel), the yet-to-be-established Peace & Security working group within the Interdepartmental Commission for Policy Consistency for the benefit of Development, and the integration or establishment of the structures proposed in this opinion.