



# The New Aid Approach and Challenges for NNGOs

## Opportunities and Constraints in Belgium

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## Outline

1. NGOs and development cooperation today and tomorrow
2. An overview of the Belgian context
3. Opportunities and constraints for change in current Belgian situation



# 1. NGO's & development cooperation today

	North-North	North-South	South-South
Technocratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poverty oriented projects and programmes</li> <li>• policy advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poverty oriented projects and programmes</li> <li>• technical advice (policy advise)</li> </ul>
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensibilisation</li> <li>• accountability gvt. (asymmetric information)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy dialogue</li> <li>• support southern partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensibilisation, empowerment</li> <li>• Accountability gvt. (democratic deficit)</li> </ul>

## ... and tomorrow: implications of the new aid approach

	North-North	North-South	South-South
Technocratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy advice</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">=</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poverty oriented projects and programmes</li> <li>• policy advice</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">↘</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poverty oriented projects and programmes</li> <li>• technical advice (policy advice)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">↗</p>
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensibilisation</li> <li>• accountability gvt. (asymmetric information)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">↗</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy dialogue</li> <li>• support southern partners</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">↗</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensibilisation, empowerment</li> <li>• Accountability gvt. (democratic deficit)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">↗↗</p>

# Important: NAA puts focus on the South

			<b>South-South</b>
<b>Technocratic</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poverty oriented projects and programmes</li> <li>• technical advice (policy advice)</li> </ul> 
<b>Political</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensibilisation, empowerment</li> <li>• Accountability gvt. (democratic deficit)</li> </ul> 

## 2. Belgian context: an overview

### Influence of **national historical evolutions & sociological structures + international developments**

- Colonial era: Catholic organisations & universities → technical assistance & community development
- Post-colonialism: ties with missionaries and colonies + political parties and labour movements create NGOs → partnerships
- Post-1968: structural socio-economic analysis of development → emancipation
- 1980-90s: professionalisation → humanitarian and technical aid

## 2. Belgian context: an overview

- “Pillarisation” of development NGOs
- Split between Flemish and Francophone part:
  - Separate umbrella organisations and federations
  - Flemish, Francophone and bilingual organisations
  - Differently structured NGO landscapes
- Strong links with parliament & politicians (lobby)
- **Fragmentation & politicisation of NGO landscape**

### 3. Belgian context: opportunities & constraints

- Constraints:
  - Fragmented NGO landscape
  - Estrangement between small and large players
  - Weak administration
- Opportunities:
  - International reform wave due to NAA
  - Reform willingness on side of Belgian gvt/administration
  - Tendencies, opinions of NGOs & steering role of umbrellas and federations?



### 3. Constraints: a fragmented NGO landscape

- 115 “authorised” NGOs
- Size:
  - Flemish part (42 NGOs) 75% of funds concentrated in ten NGOs, other €85 million scattered over 32 NGOs
  - Francophone NGOs even more fragmented: NGOs with budget < €500 000 = 36% (Flemish NGOs = 24%)
- Activities:
  - Geographical dispersion: e.g. 2008-2010 DGDC co-funds programmes in 62 countries (programme funding)
  - E.g. Philippines: in 2006 12 Flemish NGOs active with average budget of €25 thousand
- Disconnect with Belgian bilateral aid
  - Choice of area of action not linked to Belgian bilateral aid presence or absence, more to pre-existence of personal and organisational ties

### 3. Constraints: estrangement of small NGOs

Mostly small NGOs have difficulty adapting to new roles...

- More than half of NGOs sees a bigger role for Belgian NGOs in the South
- Smallest NGOs more inclined to see interventions (projects/programs) in the South as a future role for Belgian NGOs
- 44% of small NGOs agree that lobbying should be left to the bigger NGOs
- Small NGOs less implicated in international networks (60% vs. 85% larger NGOs)

...because of ...

- Organisational survival
- High NGO dependency on (federal) official funding (50-60%)
- Administrative costs proportionally higher → less resources (time, professional) for participation in debates on policy or quality of the sector

...but still receive a prominent place in co-funding scheme

- Federal balance (1/3 of Belgian NGOs are Flemish, 1/2 of Flemish NGOs have "programme" authorisation) % project funding toevoegen
- Service delivery projects are "easier" to assess and fund

### 3. Constraints: weak role of DGDC

- 2007: NGO-funding 8,6% of ODA
- All reforms (1991,1997, 2005) based on four objectives...

Professionalisation	Concentration
Programmatic approach	Administrative simplification

**Some, but not enough progress**

...but changes more regulatory than strategic:  
**autonomy** and **right of initiative** remain  
 underpinning of co-funding

### 3. Constraints: weak role of DGDC

- 2005 reform: “programme” and “project” NGOs  
... but:
  - PWC screening criteria lowered (58 programme authorisations)
  - DGDC lacks vision on indirect cooperation: oscillation between right of initiative and control → inconsistency in policy and dialogue with NGOs
    - DGDC – NGO dialogue based on financial accountability/technicalities instead of strategy/content
    - High administrative burden for NGOs and DGDC
- **Programmatic approach still not reality**
- Reform tiredness on both sides now...

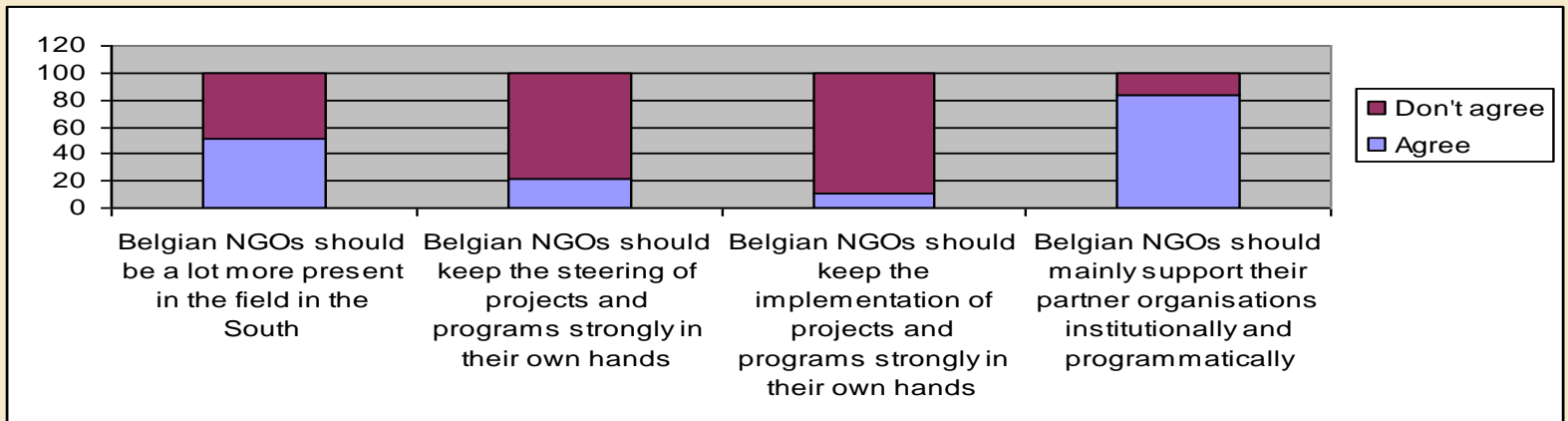
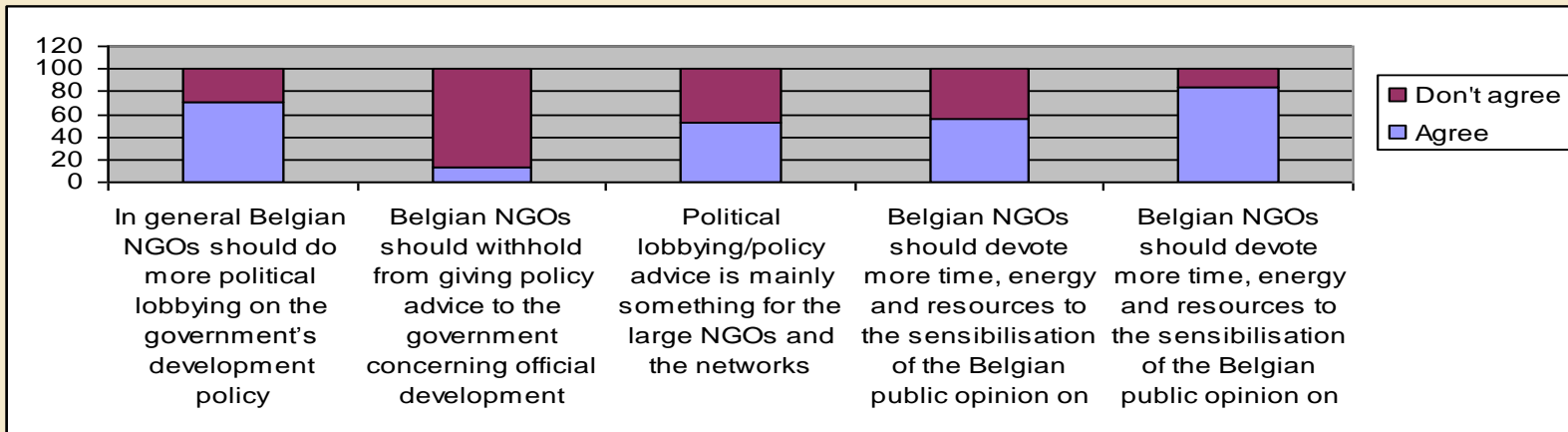
### **3. Opportunities: international reform wave**

- Context of Paris Declaration imposes international obligations on donors
- Many European countries reforming their cooperation schemes with NGOs
- NGOs increasingly involved in aid effectiveness debate (cfr. High Level Forum Accra)

### 3. Opportunities: Willingness of NGOs

- Drivers of change in NGO landscape determined to increase quality  $\neq$  defending interest of whole NGO-sector
- Many NGOs are:
  - Aware of weakened legitimacy, need for evolution in roles
  - Interested in improving quality, professionalising and collaborating with other actors

# Opinions of Belgian NGOs on their roles



### **3. Opportunities: Willingness of administration**

- Provision of enabling environment → pressure to improve quality, coherence and professionalisation appreciated by NGOs
- Increasing orientation of Belgian aid towards NAA
- Launch of consultations with indirect actors on synergy and aid effectiveness, to result in new “pact” by mid-2009



**Thank you !**



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