



New Aid Approach and Challenges for NNGOs

Opportunities and Constraints in Belgium

Leen Nijs

Nadia Molenaers

Huib Huyse

Brussel 5/3/2009

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
4. Conclusion

1. NGO's & development cooperation today

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



... and tomorrow

- Paris Declaration → rethinking the role of NNGOs in development (cooperation)
 - As donors
 - As part of 'global' civil society
- Paris → two interpretations
 - NGOs as instruments of bilateral aid
 - NGOs with distinct but complementary roles
- Paris principles: interesting for NGOs & partners?
 - Recipient ownership
 - Harmonization
 - Alignment
 - Resultsorientedness
 - Mutual accountability

... and tomorrow

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

Important: focus on the South

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

2. Belgian context: an overview

Structure of NGO-landscape is product of history,
4 phases:

- 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 NGOS
 - Differently structured NGO landscapes
- Strong links with parliament & politicians (lobby)
- **Fragmentation & politicisation of NGO landscape**

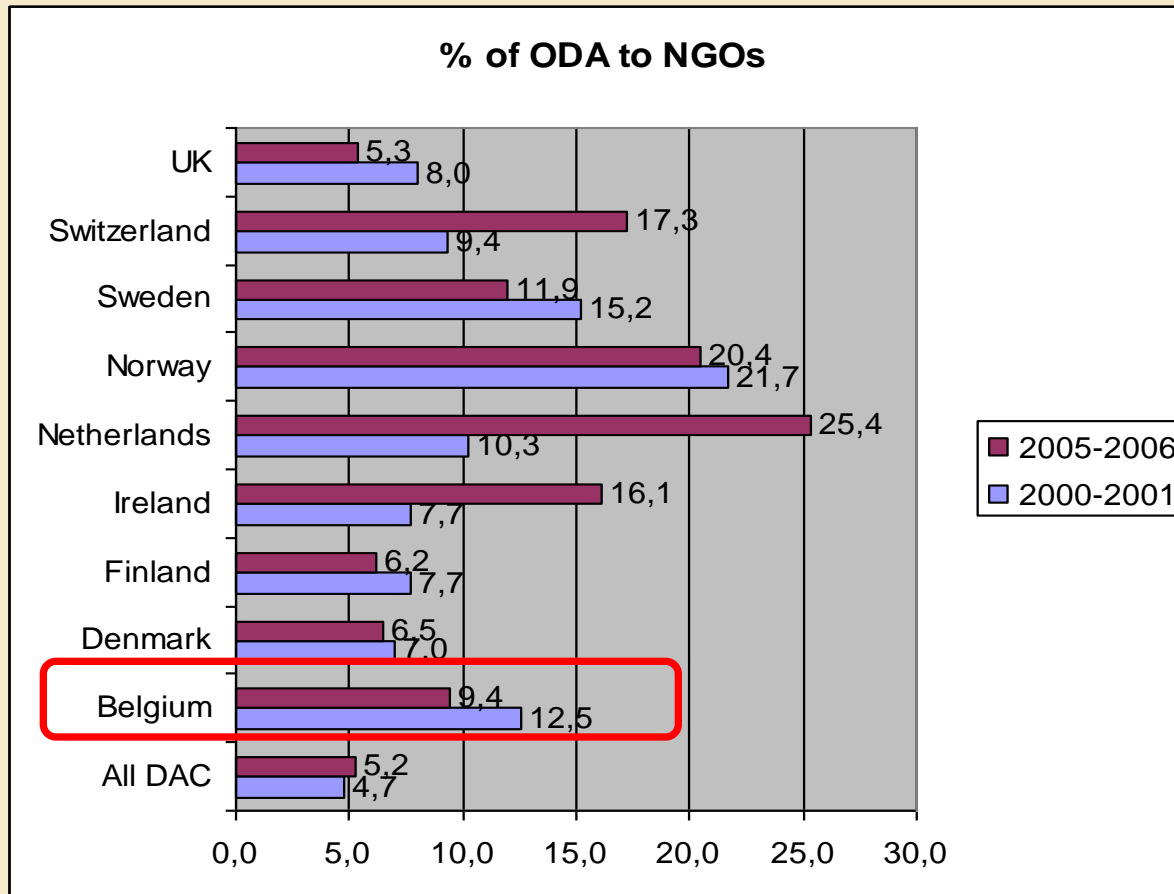
2. Belgian context: an overview

- Autonomy and right of initiative underpin co-funding
- Reform (1991, 1997, 2005) broadly based on four objectives...

Professionalisation	Concentration
Programmatic approach	Administrative simplification

- 2005 reform: programme and project NGOs
- 115 authorised NGOs: 58 programme, 57 project

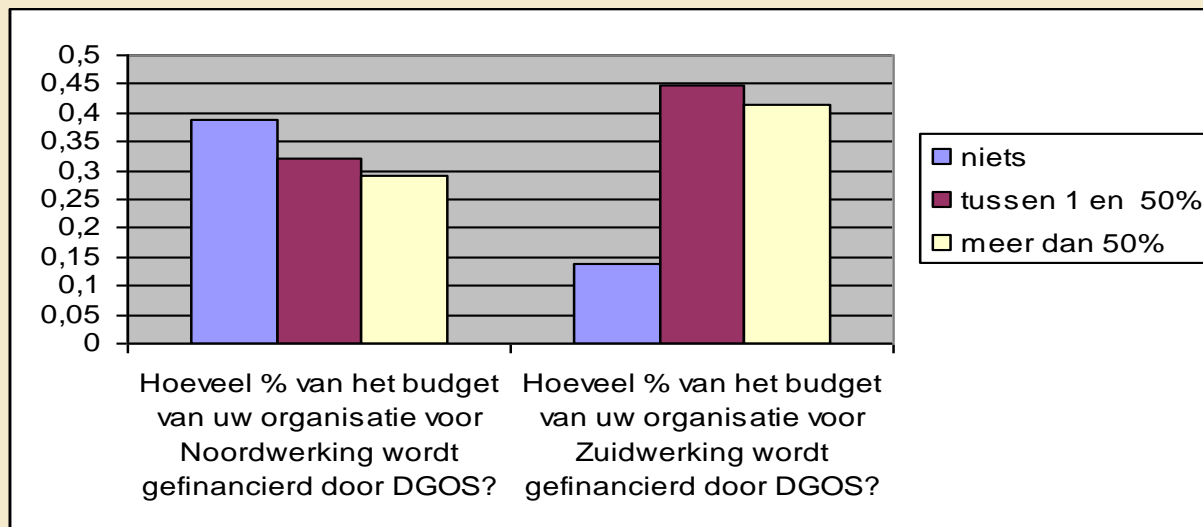
2. Belgian context: an overview



2. Belgian context: an overview

- Dependence on public funding:

Average revenues from official funding (European, federal, regional, local)	52.8%
Average amount of private funding	32%
Average dependency on one channel of funding	50%



N = 42

3. Opportunities & constraints in the Belgian context

- Constraints:
 - Weak administration
 - Fragmented NGO landscape
 - Estrangement of small NGOs
- Opportunities:
 - International reform wave due to new aid tendencies, Paris Declaration
 - Reform willingness on side of Belgian administration
 - NGOs leaning towards new aid tendencies

3. Constraints: weak role of DGDC

- Reforms (1991, 1997, 2005)

Professionalisation	Concentration
Not enough progress	
Programmatic approach	Administrative simplification

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. Constraints: weak role of DGDC

55% of NGOs think that the current subsidy arrangement is an improvement over past practices.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Administrative simplification (especially when it comes to reporting)
- Longer term funding/programmes
- No more reforms – already too much in the last years
- More flexibility for smaller NGOs
- Programme approach
- Partnership relation with DGDC
- Flexibility in funding of Southern partners' programmes

3. Constraints: weak role of DGDC

55% of NGOs think something should change in their relationship with DGDC.

Main concern: nature of the dialogue with the DGDC:

- only on “paper”: not enough continuity in discussions, field visits would be good
- too hierarchical: mostly based on the fact that DGDC supplies funds, not a real partnership or exchange of ideas
- too focused on the financial issues and the details, not enough on policy or strategic choices

3. Constraints: a fragmented NGO landscape

- Size:

Revenues	Flemish	Walloon/Germanophone
Less than 500 000	25%	36,5%
Between 500 000 and 5 million	32,5%	44,20%
5 million and more	42,5%	19,20%

- South activities of programme NGOs:

19 NGOs	More than 6 countries
10 NGOs	More than 10 countries
5 NGOs	More than 15 countries

- Weak synergy with Belgian bilateral aid:

- Choice of area of action for a lot of NGOs not linked to Belgian bilateral aid presence (29%) or absence (11,5%), more to pre-existence of personal and organisational ties (75%)
- Actor in the field least cooperated with (35% no structured cooperation)

3. Constraints: estrangement of small NGOs

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

- More than half of NGOs see 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
- More than half (including small) NGOs agree that lobbying should be left to the bigger NGOs
- Small NGOs less implicated in international networks (60% vs. 85% larger NGOs)

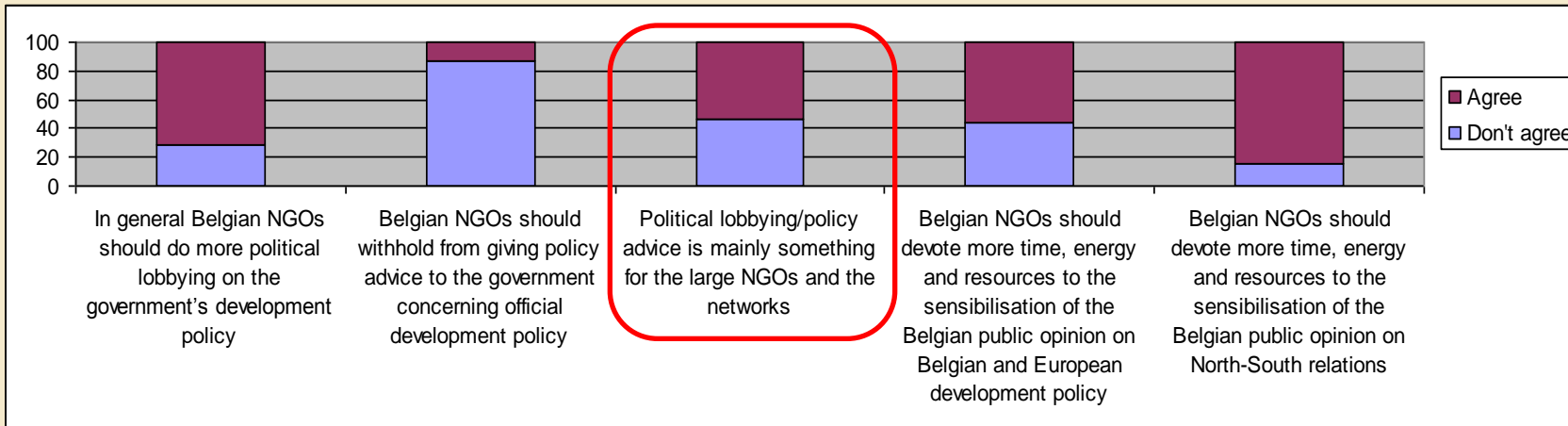
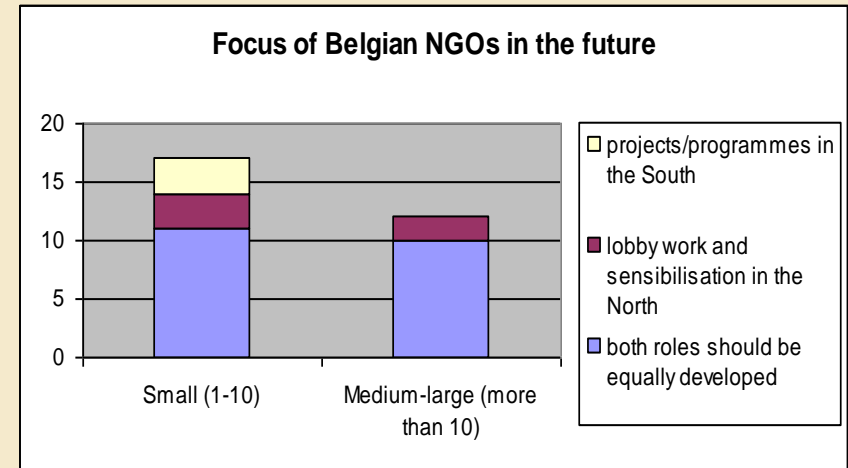
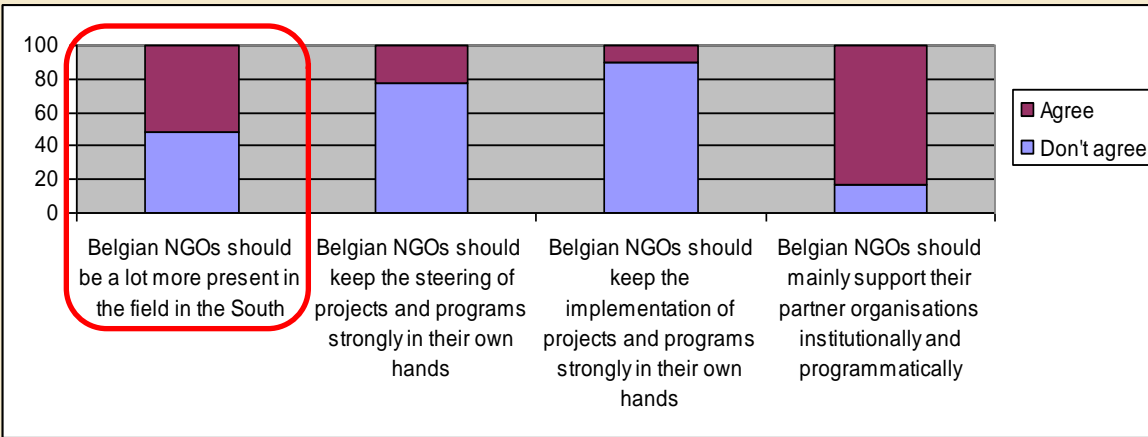
...because of ...

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

...but still disproportionately prominent place in co-funding scheme

- Embedded in Belgian society → public support for development
- Federal balance (1/3 of Belgian NGOs are Flemish, 1/2 of Flemish NGOs have "programme" authorisation)
- Service delivery projects are "easier" to assess and fund

Opinions of Belgian NGOs on their roles in the future



**Survey
Belgian
NGOs**
N = 42

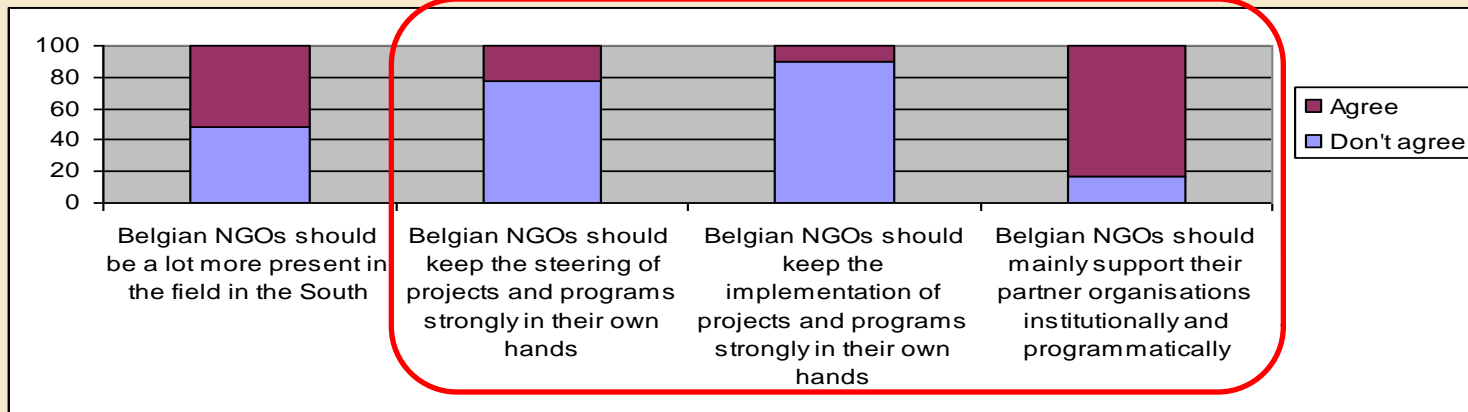
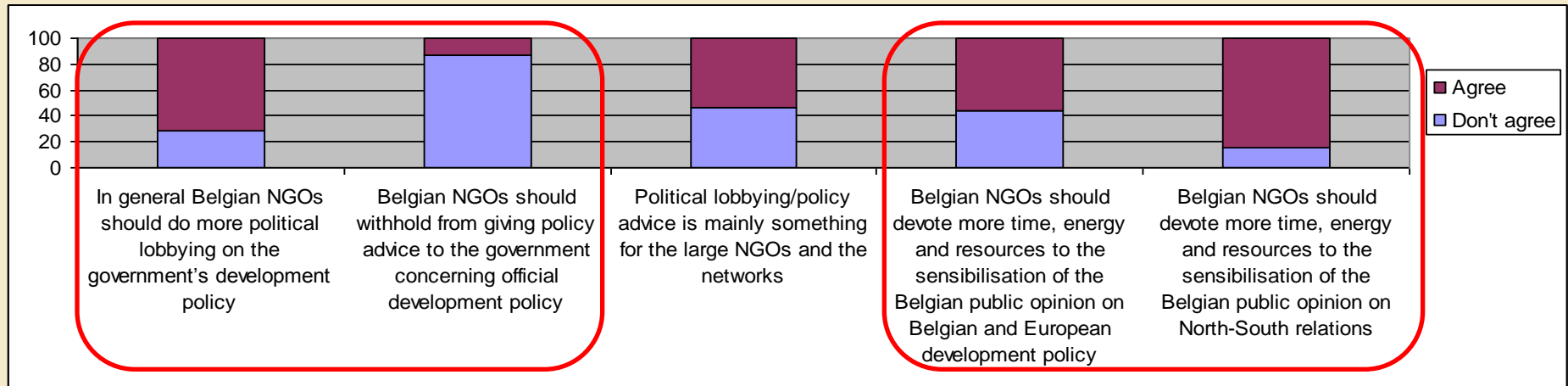
3. Opportunities: international reform wave

- 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: NGOs leaning towards NAA

- Drivers of change in NGO landscape determined to increase quality
- Interest in discussion indirect cooperation's effectiveness: NGO framework for increased effectiveness
- Many NGOs are:
 - Aware of need for evolution in roles
 - NGOs' view on adaptations they should make:
 - More and better communication
 - More cooperation between NGOs & other actors, also internationally, North and South
 - Become closer to their societal base
 - Design a internal quality control system
 - Increase and enhance their political work
 - Improve quality & professionalisation
 - Flexible support to Southern partners

Opinions of Belgian NGOs on their roles in the future



Survey
Belgian
NGOs

N = 42

3. Opportunities: Reform 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

Conclusion

- Tension between professionalisation and popular legitimacy
- New aid tendencies particularly interesting for
 - ‘big’ NGOs
 - Advocacy & lobbying NGOs
- Room for small NGOs & projects if
 - NGOs focus & have specific expertise
 - Add value North & South
 - Finance ‘new style projects’

New style projects

- Projects: act micro, but think macro
- Useful if they...
 - Produce innovation, learning linked to informing/influencing higher levels (policy influencing or policy making)
 - Are integrated in wider policy processes
 - Stimulate the use evidence based expertise smartly
- Harmonize !!
 - Mapping exercises
 - Sharing information
 - Coordination (avoid transaction costs for partner)
- Align with partner where possible

Verder verloop van het onderzoek

Focusgroepen (week van 16-20 maart)

Paper met o.a. meer gegevens mbt:

- beschrijving NGO-landschap (typologie, evoluties)
- relatie met opkomende vierde pijler
- evaluaties

Publicatie alle landenstudies:

Eind 2009

Bedankt!

Commentaar, suggesties, vragen:
leen.nijs@ua.ac.be
nadia.molenaers@ua.ac.be
huib.huyse@hiva.kuleuven.be

