

Terms of reference for policy-supporting research
SDG16
Sustainable Development Goal 16: Challenges and opportunities for the Belgian
Development Cooperation.

1. Context.

The strategic and operational priorities of the Belgian Development Cooperation concentrate on fragile states. Operational support is offered to 14 partner countries that are Low Income States. Financial support is dedicated through core funding to international organizations active in fragile situations. The achievement of the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with their targets and indicators is central to the Belgian Development Cooperation. Notwithstanding the overall accepted view on interlinkages between SDGs, it is recognized that SDG16 is of essence for the effective realization of the other SDGs and the universal objective of human development. Taking into account the broader SDG-context, SDG16 is often mentioned as SDG16+, which includes not only the 12 targets from SDG16, but also 24 targets from seven other goals that directly measure an aspect of peace, justice and inclusion and are especially important to reaching people, countries and communities at risk of being left behind.

According to Pathfinders for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, more than half a million people die from violence each year. Half of the world's children and at least a third of women are victims of violence. People living in conflict affected countries are confronted by multiple obstacles that block the path towards a durable peace and sustainable development. More than five billion people – two thirds of the world's population – lack access to justice. Some 1,5 billion people have justice problems that they cannot resolve, while more than a billion people lack legal identity. Corruption and illicit financial and arms flows threaten societies and economies, undermining democracy and the rule of law. No country can build a just society without doing more to protect human rights and to empower women and girls. Poor governance is a threat to the delivery of all dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. We cannot achieve our goals for people, planet, prosperity and peace without effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. Rising inequality and high levels of social, economic and political exclusion must also be addressed.

Realizing the targets from SDG16 not only helps to prevent conflicts between people and their communities, but is also instrumental to optimizing transition from humanitarian assistance to development, building sustainable post-conflict and overall more resilient societies.

2. Defining the problem and identifying fields of activity.

The 2030 Agenda sets out a vision of peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which are free from fear and violence. The first four years of the Agenda 2030 have seen important progress on the achievement of the SDG16+ targets, but their full delivery requires greater ambition, to which the Belgian Development Cooperation, in collaboration with Enabel, Bio and the other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders can make an effective contribution.

A first UN SDG summit was held in 2019 and the next UN SDG summit is planned in 2023. The UN 75 Years Anniversary in 2020 will take stock of the SDG implementation and its way forward.

SDG16 determines or is an underlying driving factor for a major part of the Belgian Development Cooperation. Nevertheless, the translation of SDG into Belgian Development Cooperation needs to be defined more explicitly, taking into account comparative advantages of the Belgian development actors and the Belgian contribution in a broader EU or other relevant context. SDG16 is a very complex issue and a good overview of its various components, opportunities and stakeholders is necessary in order to make the right choices for the design of future cooperation programs.

The research will focus on following aspects:

Research on Belgian current funding and support (Whole of Government) in full or partial relation to SDG16 issues, and opportunities with a particular focus on development in partner countries or regions of the Belgian Development Cooperation, where appropriate taking into consideration Belgian engagement within a broader EU or other relevant context.

This research should preferably be carried out in 2 parts:

- a. A desk study of all relevant documents, studies, activities ... with regard to SDG16 in some partner countries or regions of the Belgian Development Cooperation, taking into account principles of Belgian Foreign Policy and Comprehensive Approach (choice to be determined in consultation with DGD, preferably in the Sahel region).
- b. Consultation with relevant actors in Belgium who are involved in or are willing to engage in SDG16, mainly in development cooperation.

Based on the desk study and consultations, the following outcome needs to be produced:

1. A clear overview of most important SDG16 issues / problems / challenges in the selected Belgian partner countries or region for development cooperation (preferably in the Sahel region) and/or in broader EU or other relevant collaboration.
2. An overview of all relevant Belgian and international stakeholders (donors, private sector, public sector, non-governmental sector,...) working on the SDG16 in the selected partner countries or region.
3. An overview of international platforms and partnerships engaged towards implementing SDG16 and their core activities, with a view of identifying a suitable platform for Belgian participation.
4. An overview of opportunities / challenges regarding SDG16 in future cooperation programs.

This *Policy Supporting Research (PSR)* aims to finance the use of an academic expert for a period of 25 working days spread over three months, starting as soon as possible.

3. Expected results of policy support for Belgian Development Cooperation.

Policy support is expected on two different levels:

1. Policy support to define policy options for Belgian Development Cooperation, where possible taking into account aspects of coherence within the Comprehensive Approach.

- Recommendations and overview of opportunities (outcome of the research) should help the Belgian Development Cooperation in its policy-making process and implementation to effectively promote and support SDG16 in the partner countries or within broader EU or other relevant context.
 - The research should lead to an increased overall coherence and efficiency of the use of Belgian resources and valorizing Belgian know-how on SDG16 at global level in the context of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.
 - Identify a SDG16 platform for Belgian participation.
2. Policy support to determine positions of Belgian Development Cooperation in the international debate.
- Contributing with strategically sound arguments to support DGD (and by extension the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in determining the Belgian position in the context of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, more specifically related to SDG16, by defining measurable and achievable targets for Belgian development cooperation;
 - Contributing, by providing strategically sound arguments, to support DGD in determining the Belgian position on SDG16 in the broader EU or other relevant context.