Ministry of Foreign Affairs

IOB Periodic Policy Review

Synergy in development

Coherence of Dutch policy and the effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries, 2016-2023

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September 2024

If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together

(African proverb)

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Management Summary

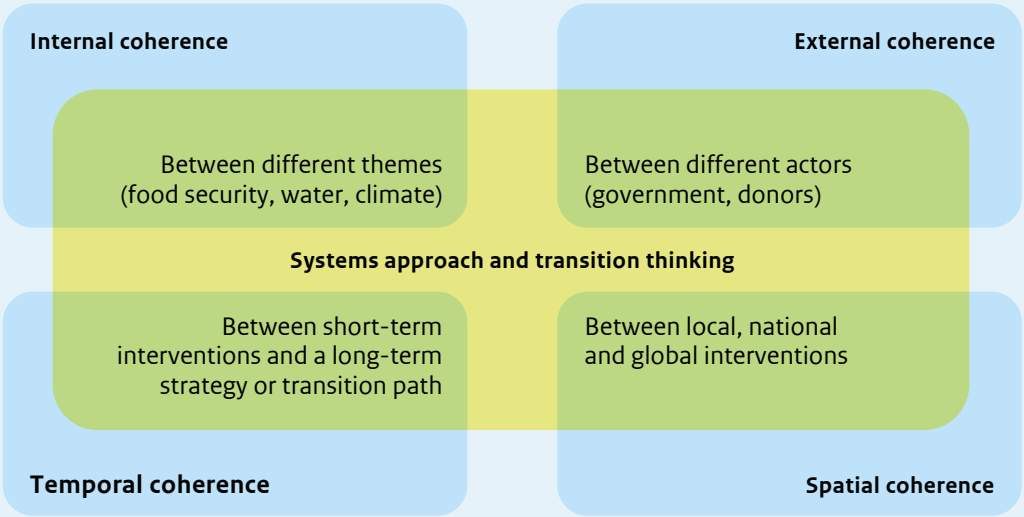
1. Introduction

Policy effectiveness and coherence

In recent decades, food security, water management and the impacts of climate change have become increasingly pressing global challenges. As these themes – and related issues – are closely linked, they require a holistic, integrated, well-coordinated policy approach. Therefore, in this study, the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken a broader approach – above and beyond individual policy themes – to evaluate Dutch development cooperation policy on food security, water management and climate ambitions. In addition to evaluating policy effectiveness, policy coherence is also examined as an important determinant for achieving sustainable results in an effective and efficient manner.

There is growing consensus that adopting a systems approach is crucial for achieving sustainable results in development policy. Applying a systems approach to food security, water, energy and climate policy programmes means addressing different aspects of the system, both separately and as part of a whole, taking into account the implementation context. In policy and evaluation literature, the systems approach is often combined with transition thinking: which changes, and in which direction, are needed from the current situation to reach a desired future situation? These two aspects – a systems approach and transition thinking – can be well captured in coherence, as illustrated in Figure MS.1 below: coherence between different thematic elements, coherence between different actors, coherence of short-term interventions in a long-term transition strategy, and coherence between local and national or even global interventions.

Figure MS.1 *Systems approach and transition thinking captured in four types of coherence*



Given the importance of coherence in applying a systems approach to achieving sustainable results, coherence has a central place in this evaluation. The analysis consists of (a) assessing the coherence of projects and policies and (b) the contribution of coherence to achieving results. Coherence is evaluated from four different perspectives:

1. Internal coherence: between different Dutch policies and activities;
2. External coherence: between Dutch policy and activities on the one hand and the policies and activities of partner country governments or other donor countries on the other;
3. Temporal coherence: between short-term projects and long-term strategies; and
4. Spatial coherence: between national level support and local support.

In addition to the OECD DAC[1] evaluation criteria of internal and external coherence, IOB added *temporal coherence* because of the need expressed by the ministry in the Strategic Evaluation Agenda to see whether Dutch development projects integrate well into available international long-term strategies. IOB added *spatial coherence* after preliminary research in Bangladesh indicated a potential mismatch between support at the national strategy level and support at the farmer and field level.

This periodic policy review

This periodic policy review (PR) with a focus on policy coherence is part of a series of the Strategic Evaluation Agenda published in 2021. Together with the PR on international climate policy 2016-2022 (2024), it serves to provide insights into the (conditions for) more effective and efficient development policy on food security, water and climate.

2. Evaluation objective, research questions and scope

Objective

This periodic policy review has two central objectives. The first is to evaluate policy results – in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability – and account for official development assistance (ODA) expenditure on food security, water management and climate ambitions. The second objective is to learn whether and how results have been affected by coherence – within and between food security, water and climate policy, and with other Dutch policies – and to develop recommendations for the Dutch government on how coherence could be strengthened with the aim of improving results.

Research questions

The two objectives of this evaluation are defined in the following central research question:
To what extent has Dutch policy contributed to food security, water management and climate objectives in developing countries, and how has policy coherence affected these results?

The sub-questions to guide this PR and answer the central research question are:

1. To what extent has Dutch policy and its implementation been effective, sustainable and cost-effective in achieving food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries?
2. How coherent has Dutch development policy and its implementation been for food security, water and climate?
3. To what extent has policy coherence affected development results?
4. What factors affected coherence or incoherence?
5. How coherent were other Dutch policies, specifically those on the import of commodities and value chain sustainability, and Dutch domestic (and EU) agricultural policy, with food security, water and climate objectives?

Based on the conclusions drawn from these sub-questions and the answer to the main research question, this report will further outline opportunities and recommendations to improve policy, policy coherence and implementation.

Scope

This periodic policy review covers Dutch development cooperation policy on food security, water and climate (Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, BHOS) article 2) between 2016 and 2023. For this period, Dutch expenditure on BHOS-2 amounted to approximately EUR 6 billion.

We selected three case study countries: Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia, and a total of 25 projects, addressing food security, water and climate[2] objectives. Together, the total value of these 25 projects was EUR 426 million, which constitutes 7% of the total BHOS-2 budget.

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1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee.
2 Climate objectives include renewable energy and forest management.

In addition to development cooperation policy for food security, water and climate, we selected two other policies to evaluate policy coherence:

1. Dutch policy on the import of commodities and value chain sustainability, which falls partly under broader development cooperation and partly under other foreign policies. We included three case studies: soy and deforestation in Brazil, flowers and water pollution in Ethiopia, and garments and water pollution in Bangladesh. This is not a comprehensive evaluation of Dutch policies on making international trade and value chains more sustainable.
2. Dutch (and, therefore, to some extent European Union (EU)) agricultural policy and its effects on agricultural development in developing countries, and biodiversity and climate change globally, which affect developing countries most.

This selection was based on a preparatory study executed by the European Centre for Development Policy Management, ECDPM, (2022b), which looked at developed countries' policies that have documented effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. The period under review is longer for these polices, from about 2000 until 2024. This longer timeframe is chosen to better understand the learning and changes in policy coherence and the effects on developing countries.

3. Research approach

Country and case selection and methods

The effects of coherence on food security, water and climate are best assessed at a partner country level. Three case study countries (Mozambique, Ethiopia and Bangladesh) were selected, in which the diversity of projects and the diversity of Dutch partner countries was well captured, and where the Netherlands had a large and long-term programme. The evaluation question required sources of information that provided insight into results and facilitated an analysis of the relationship between coherence and results. Projects were chosen as the unit of analysis and were selected based on various selection criteria, such as budget, relevance and the availability of – high-quality – evaluations.

Qualitative analysis was carried out through project assessments based on desk review (project evaluations and other relevant documents) and project-level interviews (to complement and triangulate findings). Project assessments were used to assess the results achieved and the effect of coherence on project results. Results were identified at the following levels: number of people reached, effects on people, institutional results, extent to which projects were continued or scaled up, and cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The effect of coherence on project results was evaluated using the four different types of coherence. The project review was complemented by more general interviews (at policy level) and a review of the most important scientific literature and policy documents.

A quantitative analysis was used to complement the results of the qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis consisted of a simple analysis of patterns between coherence and results.

Limitations in bias

The limitations of the research relate to the representativeness and bias of the selected countries and projects. Three limitations are worth mentioning. First, the selected countries are relatively stable (Bangladesh and Mozambique) or have an active and strong government (Ethiopia). This means that our conclusions and recommendations may not be entirely valid for fragile countries or countries with a weak government.

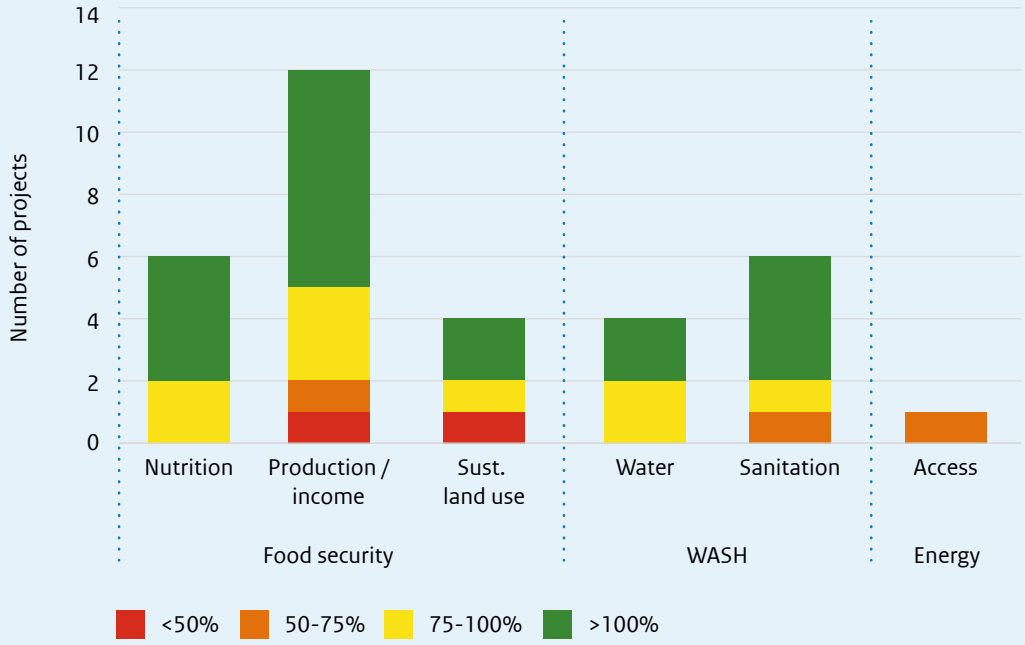
In addition, the selected projects were selected based on the availability of evaluations of sufficient quality and project reports, thereby allowing an analysis of the relationship between coherence and results. On average, the sampled projects are likely to be better designed, may represent a better practice and more often target final beneficiaries directly, than other projects in the BHOS-2 portfolio. In addition, climate projects (such as those addressing renewable energy and sustainable forest management) were under-represented in our sample, and more delegated programmes were included than central programmes. However, the sample was selected to include a variety of financing channels and implementing organisations, including embassy-managed and centrally-managed projects. This enables a valid identification of patterns between coherence and results.

4. Development results in food security, water and energy

4.1 Reaching target groups: on track

Eighteen of the 25 selected projects aim to reach a specific number of people to improve access to nutrition, energy or clean water. Most projects have multiple objectives, sometimes combining food security, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) ambitions. Project completion reports and evaluations show that of these 18 projects, most have reached or have nearly reached their target number of beneficiaries (Figure MS.2):

Figure MS.2 *Comparison of planned vs. actual number of people reached for different project objectives*

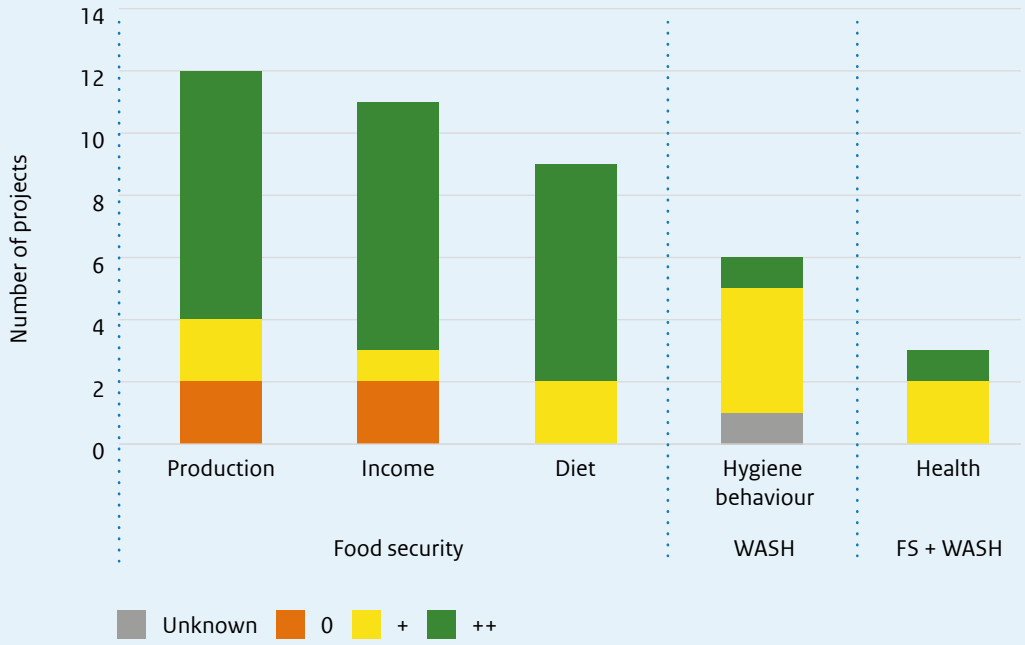


** Climate interventions (the third category in the figure) include interventions for renewable energy and sustainable forest management. In our selection of projects, one climate project – a renewable energy project – was included: the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme (ABPP).*

4.2 Effects: positive effects on the target group

Of the 18 projects that report on the number of beneficiaries reached, 16 also report on the effects on the target group. These reported effects are mainly positive, ranging from 'increased farm production' and 'higher income' and 'improved diet' for food security projects, to 'better hygiene behaviour' and 'better health' in WASH projects (see Fig. MS.3).

Figure MS.3 *Comparison of planned vs. actual effects for different project objectives*



++ Positive effect and good evaluation quality; + Positive effect, but limited evaluation quality; OR Partly positive effect and good evaluation quality; o Only some aspects are positive, most aspects show no effects; OR Only perception is positive; Unknown: effect of WASH access was not monitored or evaluated.

Food security: partial success

Of the food security projects included in this evaluation, most were agricultural projects. Evaluations report a positive effect on farm production and on farmers' incomes. About half of the projects also had a positive effect on food intake, measured, for example, by a reduction in the 'food gap' (i.e. fewer months per year without sufficient food), improved child feeding and breastfeeding, or dietary improvements. However, with the exception of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) project, none of the food security projects were evaluated for their impact on health and nutritional status.

Water, sanitation and hygiene: combining water, sanitation and hygiene with nutrition leads to better results

There are two kinds of WASH projects: (1) projects without a nutrition component and (2) projects that combine water and food security objectives (with a nutrition component). For WASH projects without a nutrition component, most reports and evaluations are limited to the level of project outputs. They extrapolate the number of water sources or toilets to the number of beneficiaries. The effects of access to drinking water or sanitation facilities at the beneficiary level are unknown, although there is anecdotal evidence from interviews in the Administration of Water and Sanitation Infrastructure (AIAS) evaluation of reduced rates of diarrhoea.

Evaluations of WASH projects that combine water and sanitation objectives with a nutrition or food security component include information on outcomes, including improved food intake and health. According to the underlying evaluations, these projects are effective, achieving, for instance, a 50% reduction in child malnutrition through the combined effect of improved water and sanitation facilities and improved nutrition.

Energy project: anecdotal information only

The monitoring and evaluation of the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme provided only anecdotal information on the effects on households. The most important reported effect is the increased and beneficial use of residual slurry as organic fertiliser in agricultural production.

4.3 Institutional capacity development: a mixed but overall positive picture

Seven of the 25 projects did not address final beneficiaries directly, but aimed to develop institutional capacity in government, the private sector and civil society. The other 18 projects also addressed institutional capacity development to some extent. Institutional capacity development was often combined with the introduction of new technologies and, in half the cases, with ecological sustainability aspects, such as integrated water resources management.

As may be expected, the specific perspective of the projects determined their main result areas. In private sector development projects, the business case and cost recovery systems appeared to be a weakness in several projects. In projects aimed at civil society development, those working directly with communities showed the best results.

In terms of environmental benefits, only seven projects successfully contributed to ecological capacity development (e.g. addressing sustainable water management, considering future freshwater availability or avoiding water overuse).

4.4 Cost-effectiveness: largely unquantified but some positive cases

In terms of cost-effectiveness, we found that only four evaluation reports monetised the benefits experienced by people. These projects – investments in agricultural production and income, and nutrition and WASH for health – were found to be cost-effective, with beneficiary-level effects in monetary value that clearly exceeded project costs. One outlier is the Sustainable agriculture, Food security, and Linkages (SaFaL) project, a non-government organisation project in Bangladesh that supports farm households in production, value chain development and nutrition. This project demonstrated the best benefit-cost ratio, with *annual* benefits of EUR 284 per farm household against *total* project costs over the 10-year project period of EUR 303 per household.

For 16 projects, the effects at beneficiary level could not be quantified in monetary terms. Overall, the cost-effectiveness here tends to be lower and/or more uncertain. Nevertheless, two projects achieved clear benefits at low cost per beneficiary. Other projects can be characterised as having 'unclear benefits for low costs' and 'clear benefits for high costs'.

Three of the projects that worked on institutional development are considered cost-effective due to their significant and long-term results compared to the relatively modest Dutch project costs, as well as the mobilisation of other funds from the local or national government and from other donors and multilateral development banks.

4.5 Sustainability: the main weakness of the selected development projects

We considered two aspects of sustainability: (1) continuation and scaling up after project funding ends, and (2) ecological sustainability, for example anticipating future water availability.

Although most projects were still ongoing or had entered a new project phase with Dutch support, 10 projects no longer received Dutch project support after project completion. Four projects are likely to continue after Dutch funding: one activity is being taken up by the private sector, and three projects are continuing with other donor funding. The continuation of four projects is uncertain: one successful irrigation project is struggling with the sustainability of the local water management organisations and the weak government water management board; one has set up private businesses that face competition from free government handouts; one civil society organisation can do much less without donor funding; and one multistakeholder initiative has insufficient incentives for continued collaboration. Finally, two projects are likely to be discontinued, either because of weak government governance or because of limited embedding in local organisations.

Moreover, few projects include ecological considerations about future water availability and water use. It is possible and even likely that because of this agriculture, WASH and integrated water resources management (IWRM) programmes will face water scarcity problems in the future.

5. Coherence of policy and implementation

5.1 Findings on the coherence of food security, water and climate policy

The coherence of Dutch development policy on food security, water and climate was evaluated at the level of Dutch policy and the Dutch multi-annual country strategy, at the project level (within projects), and at the portfolio level (between projects), and as a part of Dutch strategies to support beneficiary country national strategies. Coherence was evaluated from all four aforementioned perspectives, in terms of internal, external, temporal and spatial coherence. The findings reveal some positive examples to build on, but also show examples where there is room for improvement.

Coherence of Dutch policy and country strategies: good intentions

Generally, Dutch food security, water and climate policy and country strategies are coherent with national policies (external coherence) and with long-term strategies (temporal coherence). The coherence of Dutch country strategies show some limitations, where in some cases a compromise had to be found between alignment with Dutch policy (internal and temporal coherence) and with partner countries' national policies (external coherence).

Coherence at project level: good collaboration with government organisations

First, the analysis at the level of the *individual project* shows good external coherence and good spatial coherence: project assessments revealed a general alignment with partner country government policies and good collaboration with government organisations, and identified the linkage of local projects as input to national strategies. The analysis also found strong internal coherence *within* and *between* policy themes. However, projects generally scored low on internal coherence in terms of serving inclusiveness objectives. In contrast to the more positive findings, specifically for external and spatial coherence, temporal coherence has been weak. This was particularly the case for the alignment of project objectives with the overarching aspects of international long-term strategies, such as a systems approach and country ownership.

Coherence between projects: missed opportunities to link the many Dutch initiatives

Coherence between projects varied. There is generally a strong coherence when innovative Dutch pilot projects are linked to large government-led, multi-donor projects (external coherence). However, coherence between embassy projects and centrally-managed projects was often weak (internal coherence). Findings on the external coherence of Dutch projects with other donor-funded projects also leave room for improvement. Coherence is often intended in the design but limited in practice.

Coherence of projects as part of long-term national strategies: coherence at its best

Projects were also assessed as part of a larger whole: how well they aligned with long-term national strategies and with Dutch country strategies and development policy goals.
The analysis has shown positive results for projects that were designed as part of a strategy of Dutch support for more overarching, long-term national strategies. For example, in the Delta programmes, support for a long-term national (Bangladesh) or municipal (Mozambique) IWRM strategy was combined with short-term projects and investments funded by the Netherlands, the partner government or other donors. This approach contributed to good internal, external, temporal and spatial coherence.

5.2 The influence of policy coherence on policy effectiveness: a positive contribution

In the 25 projects assessed, coherence in its various forms contributed to the achievement of project objectives. Similarly, incoherence was found to have a negative effect on project results.

External coherence, in particular collaboration with the partner country government at the strategy and programme level, had the clearest effect on the project results (in all three countries). It was found to have a positive effect on the number of beneficiaries reached, on continuity, on cost-effectiveness and on institutional results.

Internal coherence was also found to be important for achieving results in the various projects. Internal coherence showed the clearest positive effect in terms of contribution to the number of people reached, the effect on people, and on cost-effectiveness. The existence of a contribution of temporal coherence to results was also found, mainly in terms of contributing to institutional effects and, as expected, contributing to the continuity of results.

Spatial coherence was found less frequently as a factor influencing results in the projects; where it was found, it mainly contributed to institutional results and the continuity of results. However, this is partly due to the fact that we considered a systems and landscape approach as part of temporal coherence rather than part of spatial coherence (see Reflection of this management summary).

Interestingly, there are projects that score high on internal coherence but low on continuity and scaling up, and similarly there are projects that score high on temporal coherence but low on effects on people. Looking into the projects behind these correlations, we see a trade-off between working with direct beneficiaries in the short term and working on institutional results in the long term.

5.3 Factors determining (in)coherence: use of a ToC, project scale, dialogue, embassy involvement and combination of large multi-donor programmes and innovation

The findings from Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Mozambique identified some important factors that contributed to coherence – and the absence of which led to incoherence – in projects, programmes, and policies, both in their design and implementation.

- The analysis revealed that having a clear theory of change (ToC) and results framework that identifies synergies and trade-offs between different objectives, with room for institutional results, contributed to coherence in the design phase. It also helped to validate assumptions, learn, and improve coherence and results during project implementation and in subsequent project phases.
- The scale of projects is the second factor determining coherence: large government programmes, embedded innovative projects and IWRM strategy development projects were the most coherent, in terms of all four types of coherence.
- Third, multi-stakeholder and policy dialogue played an important role in achieving all four types of coherence. The role of the local embassy, and to some extent project staff, in brokering and facilitating these dialogues was essential. More specifically, a greater role for embassies, country steering, and embassy-managed projects improved coherence in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia.
- Finally, coherence at the portfolio level was strong when innovative pilot projects were linked to large government-led, multi-donor programmes, as seen in Ethiopia. It was even stronger when support for long-term strategies was accompanied by Dutch and other donor projects contributing to this strategy, as seen in Bangladesh and Mozambique.

5.4 Coherence of Dutch policy on import and value chain sustainability, and domestic agricultural policy with food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries

The assessment is divided into two parts: (1) coherence with development objectives, which looks at the effects of current policies, and (2) coherence with international long-term strategies, which looks at the desired systems approach.

Improved coherence of Dutch policy on import and value chain sustainability with food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries

Dutch imports of soy, flowers and garments in our case studies have – in addition to the positive economic effects for these developing countries – also negative effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. To address this internal incoherence and to mitigate the negative effects, the Netherlands has contributed to interventions on the ground and in international fora, such as voluntary certification schemes, programmes applying a systems approach, national regulations, and the recent European Union (EU) Deforestation Regulation and the EU Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence. The impact of these new regulations still needs to be assessed. Some negative effects have indeed been mitigated: soy production in Brazil is causing less deforestation than before, and water use and -pollution have declined in the garment industry in Bangladesh and in floriculture in Ethiopia.

Improved coherence of EU agricultural policies with food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries, but challenges remain
In the past, Dutch and EU agricultural policies have had negative effects on agricultural development in developing countries. Agricultural policies also continue to have negative effects on global biodiversity and climate change. The coherence of EU agricultural policy with international development and global climate objectives has improved with the shift from EU product and export subsidies to direct income support for farmers in EU countries since 2003 and the recent EU Deforestation Regulation. However, coherence with long-term food system transformation strategies that align agricultural production with nutritional needs within planetary boundaries remains weak. The recent EU 'Farm to Fork' strategy reflects aspects of food system transformation strategies relevant to the EU, but it is still a work in progress and faces resistance due to the lack of a just transition pathway that addresses farmers concerns.

Successful efforts to mitigate the negative effects of production, but also a need to address consumption
Both in Dutch interventions on commodity imports and value chain sustainability, and in Dutch (and EU) domestic agricultural policy, we see successful efforts to mitigate the negative effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. However, there is still a lack of coherence at the system level. The impact is likely to be limited if, alongside work on sustainable production, insufficient efforts are made on sustainable consumption. This requires strong diplomatic efforts to involve other importing countries outside the EU in global agreements on sustainable trade. It also involves addressing consumption patterns in the Netherlands by promoting a more sustainable, more plant-based diet, and encouraging fewer but more durable goods.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Overall conclusions
Dutch development policy has contributed to food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries, but the degree of contribution varies between the evaluated projects. A few Dutch projects have contributed to some results in institutional development.

These results have been positively influenced to varying degrees by policy coherence. Here, external coherence between donor and recipient country policies had the greatest positive impact, especially when projects were selected to align with broader, long-term strategies and policies.

Other Dutch policies – more specifically, Dutch interventions for import and value chain development of three specific commodities and domestic agricultural policy – were found to be incoherent with development policy, with negative effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. Despite efforts to reduce negative effects through interventions in value chain sustainability and more sustainable production, some incoherence remains. International long-term strategies point to the limited attention for Dutch policy to link sustainable production with sustainable consumption in the Netherlands.

The detailed conclusions – in line with the five research questions – and recommendations of this evaluation are presented below.

To what extent has Dutch policy and its implementation been effective, sustainable, and cost-effective in achieving food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries? (Sub-question 1)

1. The sampled food security and water projects are generally effective: people are reached, there are positive effects on the target groups and some institutional results are achieved
The evaluation identified positive results in terms of people being reached and effects on people. Food security effects include increased farm production, higher incomes and improved diets. Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene effects include better hygiene behaviour and health. Some institutional results have also been achieved. While these results are certainly relevant, they were found very diverse and more difficult to qualify.

2. Cost-effectiveness is often not monitored, although some projects show very encouraging examples
Few projects monetised the benefits experienced by people. Where cost-effectiveness could be measured, some very encouraging examples were found. For instance, household-level benefits outweighed the ODA costs of projects within a few years, or modest initial Dutch investments leveraged large amounts of funding from multilateral development banks (MDBs).

3. The sampled food security and water projects showed that sustainability after Dutch funding ceased was a major challenge
Most projects scored low on sustainability. While many projects continued to receive Dutch support (e.g. in multi-phase projects), the continuation and scaling up of interventions and results after Dutch funding ended is the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, some projects do not pay sufficient attention to the ongoing maintenance of water infrastructure or to future water availability in anticipation of climate change. As a result, the long-term impact of projects that are no longer funded by Dutch ODA is mostly uncertain or even doubtful. In addition to the constraints on the sustainability of results, this also undermines long-term cost-effectiveness.

How coherent has Dutch development policy and its implementation been for food security, water and climate? (Sub-question 2)

4. Dutch policy and Dutch multi-annual country strategies are coherent with international long-term strategies and partner countries' policies
Dutch policy is mostly coherent with international long-term strategies (temporal coherence), while Dutch multi-annual country strategies are less temporally coherent and in some cases a compromise between alignment with Dutch policy (internal and temporal coherence) and alignment with partner countries' national policies (external coherence).

5. Dutch projects often collaborate well with partner government organisations, but the linkages between Dutch projects are often weak
Projects often collaborate well with national organisations (external coherence), combine themes relatively well, but pay less attention to inclusiveness (internal coherence), and often pay insufficient attention to long-term strategies (temporal coherence). Linkages between Dutch projects, especially between embassy-managed and centrally-managed projects, are often weak (internal coherence).

6. The strongest coherence was found when Dutch (innovative) projects were linked to national programmes or to the development of national strategies
There are examples where Dutch innovative projects are well embedded in large-scale, national multi-donor programmes. A special case is the Dutch Delta programmes where support for a national IWRM strategy was combined with short-term projects and investments, funded by the Netherlands, the partner government or other donors. This contributed to good internal, external, temporal and spatial coherence.

To what extent has policy coherence affected development results? (Sub-question 3)

7. The results of the selected projects in Mozambique, Bangladesh and Ethiopia were positively affected by coherence: external coherence, especially strategic collaboration with government organisations, showed the clearest effect
External coherence, in particular collaboration with governments at the strategy and programme level, as found in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia, showed the clearest effect on results. It has a positive effect on the number of beneficiaries reached, on continuity and on cost-effectiveness, as well as on institutional results.[3]

Internal and temporal coherence were also found to positively affect results. Internal coherence had a positive effect on the number of people reached, the effects on people and cost-effectiveness. Temporal coherence was found to have a positive effect, particularly on institutional results and the continuity of results.

[3] The effects of working with government organisations found in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia may be different in countries that are more fragile, have a weaker government or have policies that are not aligned with Dutch development objectives.

What factors affected coherence or incoherence? (Sub-question 4)

8. Coherence is positively affected by the existence (and negatively affected by the absence) of certain factors
There are five factors that positively affected coherence in the 25 selected projects, programmes and policies in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia, both in their design and implementation: (1) a clear ToC and results framework and flexibility to learn and adapt; (2) funding large-scale, government-led multi-donor projects and national strategies; (3) multi-stakeholder policy dialogue; (4) a larger role for embassies and country steering;[4] and (5) linking innovative projects to large-scale programmes or linking support to a long-term national strategy with short-term projects.[5]

How coherent were other Dutch policies, specifically those on the import of commodities and value chain sustainability, and Dutch domestic (and EU) agricultural policy, with food security, water and climate objectives? (Sub-question 5)

9. Efforts to mitigate the negative effects of Dutch import and domestic agricultural policy in developing countries have successfully focused on sustainable production, but not yet enough on sustainable consumption
Dutch imports of soy, flowers and garments have had positive economic effects for these developing countries, but also negative effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. In the past, Dutch and EU agricultural policies have had negative effects on agricultural development in developing countries and continue to have negative effects on biodiversity and climate change worldwide.

In Dutch policy on the import of commodities and value chain sustainability, and in Dutch (and EU) domestic agricultural policy, we see successful efforts to mitigate the negative effects. However, the impact is likely to be limited without adequately considering the whole system, without (1) sufficient efforts to involve other importing countries outside the EU in global agreements on sustainable trade, and (2) shifting consumption in the Netherlands towards a more sustainable and more plant-based diet, and towards fewer and more durable goods.

6.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for future development policy on food security, water and climate

1. Support national long-term strategies of partner countries
Building on the positive experience of the Delta plans in Bangladesh and Mozambique, where support for a long-term strategy is combined with short-term projects, the Netherlands could support partner countries in developing similar coherent long-term strategies in countries where this is possible and feasible. In the area of water, the Netherlands could pay more attention to analysing and monitoring the availability and use of surface and groundwater to avoid water over-exploitation. As for food security, the Netherlands could stress the need for a systems approach to ensure that optimal food is produced within (future) ecological boundaries. Embassies are best placed to define the scope and actors to be involved.

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4 Results not from our sample of 25 projects but from a previous IOB evaluation (IOB, 2017) indicate that central funding of multilateral projects can improve external coherence. This observation regarded multilateral projects carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), working with government and multiple donors..

5 Although we expect the factors affecting coherence found in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia to also be relevant in other countries, we acknowledge that country stability, strength of government and national policies, and staff capacity in Dutch embassies also determine the relevance of these factors and the feasibility to address them.

2. Continue policy dialogue and support the institutional capacity of partner countries
Policy dialogue with the government of the partner country and other stakeholders is a condition not only to stimulate country ownership, but also to achieve long-term results. The Netherlands could also promote better governance through policy dialogue, a long-term commitment for capacity development and support in accessing finance from MDBs and climate funds. Embassies are well placed to assess which organisations, and at which level, can best be engaged, depending on the country context.

3. Make long-term agreements for programmes
In countries with a relatively stable government, long-term agreements for programmes – based on a ToC with clear end goals, an outline of a strategy and mutual commitment – helps to build relationships, work on long-term structural solutions and ensure mutual accountability. Such a programme can then be fleshed out with short-term projects, public-private partnerships, technical assistance and diplomacy. Flexibility in project implementation helps monitoring, learning, and project adaptation.

4. Work from an integrated, systems-based vision on a differentiated approach
Achieving tangible results often requires addressing multiple challenges in combination, and some solutions may only become clear halfway through project implementation. A systems-based analysis and approach can support such an integrated, coherent mode of operation. A differentiated approach may be needed to reach the poorest people.

5. Strengthening the role of embassies
Embassy staff are best placed to assess the country context, set up relevant programmes, select the right partners and react to changing circumstances. They are also in a better position to set up collaboration with governments and other stakeholders. Embassies should have flexibility without rigid thematic budget spending instructions. A first step is a larger role for embassies in the design and monitoring of centrally-managed projects. A second step is to devolve a larger share of the total budget to embassies. This would require more staff capacity at the embassies, which can be partly achieved by reducing the overall number of Dutch projects active in a country.

6. Shift the focus of monitoring and evaluation from project to programme level
Projects are mainly evaluated individually, mostly in the last year of funding. This is often too early to measure impact, sustainability or changes at the system level. For longer-term programmes – consisting of a coherent set of parallel and successive projects and diplomacy, working in a specific sector and in geographical area – it is more useful to evaluate the programme as a whole. This would require an adjustment of the DGIS evaluation strategy, with more room for strategic, possibly multi-donor, evaluations of long-term sector programmes. Within such a programme, there is still a need to evaluate the impact, sustainability and efficiency of projects, but this can be limited to a selection of the most interesting or relevant projects. Large projects that are not part of a coherent programme would still need to be evaluated individually.

Recommendations for other Dutch policies: Dutch import and value chain sustainability, and domestic agricultural and food policy

7. Develop coherent policies that link production, consumption and environmental objectives
To reduce the negative effects of Dutch import of commodities and Dutch agriculture on food security, water and climate in developing countries, policies are needed that use a systems approach and take into account production, consumption and the environment. This requires (1) diplomatic efforts to involve non-EU importing countries in sustainable trade agreements, and (2) addressing consumption in the Netherlands: shifting to a more sustainable and more plant-based diet and importing fewer and more durable goods such as clothing. International long-term strategies for food system transformation provide useful input for new policies. Inter-departmental coordination for new policies is crucial, and opening Test Effects on Developing Countries (previously the Sustainable Development Goal test) to expert consultation will contribute to the coherence of new policy.

7. Reflection

7.1 Coherence as an integral part of a systems approach

This evaluation looked at four types of coherence as factors that can influence development results. In addition to internal and external coherence, which are defined as OECD DAC evaluation criteria, we added two new types of coherence:

- Temporal coherence was added because the ministry wanted to ensure that its short-term projects integrate well into what is internationally considered a good long-term strategy.
- Spatial coherence was added because our first field study in Bangladesh identified some potential mismatches in the scale at which policies and activities were operating: support for national strategies and support for farmer and field level activities, and support for water management at the local polder level and water management at the river basin level.

What have we learnt from adding these two new forms of coherence, and what would we recommend for future evaluations to discuss in evaluators' forums?

First, the two additional dimensions of coherence helped us to better identify the strengths and weaknesses of policy and implementation, and to link this to systems thinking. Internal and external coherence already provided insights into the linkages between different themes and between different actors. Adding temporal and spatial coherence provided additional insights into the linkages between short-term projects and long-term strategies, and between local activities and those at a national or even global level. These four dimensions of coherence helped to evaluate manageable aspects of a systems approach. In particular, the comparison with international long-term strategies has provided us with insights that we would not have seen as clearly if we had only evaluated internal and external coherence.

However, in our evaluation, the way we operationalised the four types of coherence revealed some overlap between them. The chosen categorisation has led to a slight over-representation of temporal coherence relative to spatial coherence: aspects of a systems approach were more often defined as temporal coherence than spatial coherence. This was caused by the fact that we classified the common aspects found in the international long-term strategies all under temporal coherence, while some would have fitted better under spatial coherence. An important coherence aspect that would fit under spatial coherence is land use planning and how to manage trade-offs between competing claims on land and water. This aspect did not emerge clearly in the long-term strategies or in the project evaluations. However, this does not affect our conclusion that development results are affected by coherence, the value of a comparison with long-term strategies, and the need to consider a systems approach to achieve optimal and sustainable effects.

Finally, one may question whether a comparison of government policy with international long term strategies – or with scientific knowledge in general – should be considered as part of coherence, where policies are usually compared with other policies, or as part of relevance.

While some caution must be exercised in interpreting the results when using these four types of coherence, the results provide valuable insights that would be missed by looking only at internal and external coherence. IOB would therefore like to open a discussion with other evaluators on how best to define and operationalise the temporal and spatial aspects of a systems approach in the OECD DAC evaluation criteria. Comparing international long-term strategies or scientific evidence on how best to achieve sustainable impact more broadly can help to address these temporal and spatial aspects of a systems approach.

7.2 The scope of policies in evaluating policy coherence and its effects

Evaluating the effects of all Dutch policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries is a potentially vast undertaking. To provide focus, the preparatory study by ECDPM[6] and the online expert meetings for each case study country helped us to select the most relevant policies outside of food security, water and climate development policies.

[6] The European Centre for Development Policy Management.

In this context, Dutch import of commodities and value chain sustainability emerged as highly relevant. Inevitably, we had to limit our evaluation research and selected three case studies: an elaborate desk review and interviews on soy and deforestation in Brazil; field visits and interviews on flowers and water pollution in Ethiopia; and a review including interviews of one project (the Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT)) working on water use and water pollution in the garment sector in Bangladesh.

In the field of international trade and value chain sustainability, however, Dutch policy covers much more than we were able to cover. There are different departments using ODA and non-ODA funding, complementing each other in different aspects, in the Netherlands, in the EU, at the global level and in partner countries, as described in more detail in Chapter 5.1.1.

While this study has already provided interesting insights, future opportunities for evaluation lie in evaluating the coherence of BHOS policy as a whole and its effect, through system change, on development objectives such as food security, water management and climate change, and even other SDGs. Expanding the evaluation to include a broader scope, with a more integrated analysis of all policies and interventions of different ministries and departments, will provide a more comprehensive insight into the coherence of Dutch policy on specific development objectives. In the case of sustainable value chains, this could include not only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Departments of Inclusive Green Growth (IGG), Sustainable Economic Development (DDE), International Trade Policy and Economic Governance (IMH), International Entrepreneurship (DIO)), but also of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (LVVN), and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (IenW), each with their international policy sections. Such an evaluation could also include and analyse more indirect effects of policy– which may be positive or negative – for example, achieving food security in developing countries through increased export earnings, jobs or a living wage, or achieving better water management through innovation and efficiency in production technologies. IOB is open to discuss with other departments the possibilities for evaluating policy coherence in the framework of the Strategic Evaluation Agenda.

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation

This periodic policy review (PR) covers Dutch development cooperation policy on food security, water and climate (BHOS[7] article 2) between 2016 and 2023. The objectives of this policy are increased food security; improved water management, drinking water, sanitation and hygiene; increased resilience against climate change; combating climate change; and sustainable use of natural resources.[8] Rather than taking a thematic approach, as was done in previous policy reviews[9] of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB), this study took a broader systems approach angle,[10] identifying policy coherence – the compatibility of interventions with other interventions and policies[11] – as a potential determinant for achieving sustainable results in an effective and efficient manner.[12]

7 *Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking* – Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

8 Rijksoverheid, 2021. Rijksbegroting 2021.

9 In previous years, IOB published policy reviews on water and sanitation (2012), renewable energy (2015), sustainable water management (2017) and food security (2017).

10 A systems approach considers a system of different components – including food, water and climate aspects – that influence each other, and as a whole are affected by their context.

11 See OECD, 2024. Evaluation Criteria.

12 We adopt the OECD DAC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee) definitions of coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is defined as the extent to which the intervention achieves, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results

We looked at four different types of coherence: internal coherence, between different Dutch policies and activities; external coherence, between Dutch policies and activities and those of the partner country government and other donors; temporal coherence, between short-term projects and long-term strategies; and spatial coherence, between local support and national level support.

In addition to the OECD[13] DAC[14] evaluation criteria of internal and external coherence, IOB added *temporal coherence* because of the need expressed by the ministry in the Strategic Evaluation Agenda to see whether Dutch development projects integrate well into what is internationally considered a long-term strategy. IOB added *spatial coherence* after preliminary research in Bangladesh indicated a potential mismatch between support at the national strategy level and support at the farmer and field level.

Applying a broader systems approach angle in this evaluation will serve to provide insight on all three policy themes. This periodic policy review is part of the Strategic Evaluation Agenda jointly developed by IOB and the Inclusive Green Growth Department (IGG) published in 2021. Both PRs focus on BHOS-2. The PR on climate policy pays more attention to central and multilateral programmes in renewable energy, while the PR on policy coherence pays more attention to embassy-managed food security and water programmes. Together with the PR on international climate policy 2016-2022[15] (April 2024), it serves to provide insights into the (conditions for) more effective and efficient policy. The overarching evaluation question is: to what extent has Dutch policy contributed to food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries, and how has policy coherence affected these results?

1.2 Development cooperation policy on food security, water and climate

The policy objectives of food security (BHOS article 2.1), water (BHOS article 2.2) and climate (BHOS article 2.3), although interrelated, are reflected in the three separate theories of change (ToCs) of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS[16]) for Food security, Water, and Climate (2018).

2.1. Food security (SDG[17] 2)
- Eradicate hunger and malnutrition for 32 million people by 2030 (SDGs 2.1, 2.2)
- Doubling the productivity and income of 8 million smallholder food producers by 2030 (SDG 2.3)
- Ecologically sustainable food production systems on 8 million hectares by 2030 (SDG 2.4), and conservation of agrobiodiversity by 2020 (SDG 2.5)
  - As enabler: knowledge and capacity building for food security

2.2. Water (SDG 6)
- Improved access to drinking water (30 million people by 2030), sanitation (50 million people by 2030) and hygiene (WASH) (SDGs 6.1, 6.2)
- Improved water productivity in agriculture (+25% by 2030) (SDG 6.4)
- Improved management of river basins and safe deltas (SDG 6.6)

2.3. Climate (SDGs 7, 12, 15 and 13: climate action)
- Access to renewable energy and clean cooking for 50 million people (revised target 2022: 100 million people) by 2030 (SDG 7)
- Reduced deforestation and sustainable land use (SDGs 12, 15)
- Adaptation in food security and water management (see 2.1 and 2.2 above)
- Increased international climate action, through negotiations
- A fair Dutch share of the collective commitment of USD 100 billion per year for climate action in developing countries

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across groups. Efficiency is defined as the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way (OECD, 2024).

13 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

14 Development Assistance Committee.

15 IOB, 2024. A good climate for development. Periodic review of international climate policy 2016-2022. This includes case studies on climate finance (2021), climate diplomacy (2023) and climate adaptation (2023).

16 In Dutch: *Directoraat-generaal Internationale Samenwerking.*

17 Sustainable Development Goal.

These separate ToCs refer to the interlinkages between the themes, with food security and water referring to climate change and the climate-relevance of activities and the nexus between the themes and the ToC on climate change referring to the other two TOCs.

Table 1.1 shows Dutch expenditure for BHOS-2. Over this period, Dutch expenditure of BHOS-2 totalled approximately EUR 6 billion. Dutch expenditure on these three policy objectives increased from EUR 681 million in 2016 to EUR 897 million in 2023 (Table 1.1). In particular, spending on climate has increased over time. The 'climate' budget is spent on renewable energy, forests and a number of specific climate funds. In addition to climate budget, climate objectives are also funded from the budget for food security and water. The last column in Table 1.1 shows the percentage of climate-related spending within the food security and water budgets respectively.[18] In the period 2020-2023, 47% of the food security budget, 47% of the water budget and 1% of the climate budget was delegated to embassies.

Table 1.1 *Expenditure 2016-2023 for BHOS-2, and climate-relevant share (in million EUR)*

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% climate
2.1 Food security	375	342	324	337	342	329	340	388	35%
2.2 Water	194	195	211	189	196	190	187	202	40%
2.3 Climate	112	128	176	197	211	239	290	307	86%
Total	681	664	711	723	750	757	817	897	50%

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs internal information system (MIBZ[19]).

1.3 Dutch strategy on policy coherence

The Netherlands aims to avoid negative side effects of its domestic and international policies on developing countries, referred to as 'policy coherence for development'. In addition, Dutch development policy aims at coherence through synergy, donor coordination and Southern ownership, referred to as 'policy coherence for sustainable development'.[20]

Policy coherence for development – do no harm

Since the 1990s, policy coherence has been an explicit theme and priority in Dutch policies. The ministry's quality assurance units had dedicated capacity to promote coherence: a dedicated coherence unit was integrated into the Quality Assurance Department (DEK[21]) in 2009, which was renamed the Department for Effectiveness and Coherence (DEC[22]).[23] Also in 2009, the Dutch cabinet set up an assessment framework for taking non-trade concerns and sustainability into account in trade agreements.[24] The focus of the work on policy coherence has been on preventing incoherence and inconsistencies: *do no harm*.

National attention to sustainable development, including social and environmental concerns, has also been institutionalised since 2009. Important examples of this are the annual statistical reports by Statistics Netherlands (CBS[25]) with the help of the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL[26]) and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP[27]), the 'Monitor Brede Welvaart' (a monitoring report on overall well-being in the Netherlands), since 2018, and its predecessor 'Monitor Duurzaam

18 The percentages of climate-related spending in the three categories are calculated using the 'climate markers'. The Netherlands follows the OECD DAC guidelines for the Rio climate markers to calculate climate finance. expenditure. Climate-relevant development aid is labelled as 'significant' (40%) or 'principle' (100%) climate relevant.

19 *Management Informatie Buitenlandse Zaken* – Management Information Foreign Affairs.

20 For a more detailed account of the international discussion on policy coherence and the history of coherence in Dutch policy, see is presented in the ToR, Chapter 3 and Annexes 1 and 3.

21 *Directie Effectiviteit en Kwaliteit.*

22 *Directie Effectiviteit en Coherentie.*

23 Hoebink, 2010. Verschuivende vensters. *WRR Report.*

24 State Secretary of Economic Affairs, 2009. Maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen.

25 *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.*

26 *Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.*

27 *Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.*

Nederland' (a monitoring report on sustainability in the Netherlands), since 2009.[28] It also contains information on the effects for future generations and effects elsewhere, for example the carbon and environmental footprint of the Netherlands due to the import of large quantities of raw materials from developing countries.

In 2016, the minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation published an Action Plan for Policy Coherence, which was updated in 2018 and 2022.[29] The themes most relevant to food security, water and climate in developing countries included sustainable value chains, climate change and food security in 2016; climate change and sustainable production and trade in 2018; and reducing the Netherlands' climate, land and water footprint in 2022.

Policy coherence for sustainable development – seeking synergies

The Netherlands endorsed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), which call for (1) ownership by developing countries, (2) alignment between donors, (3) harmonisation among donors to avoid duplication, (4) focus on development results, and (5) mutual accountability.[30]

In the elaboration of multi-annual country strategies (MACSs), in which Dutch embassies play an important role, the instructions and judgement criteria call for attention to a number of coherence-related aspects: avoiding contradictions between different policy areas, such as political affairs, trade, development cooperation and security; interconnectedness between results and result areas; synergy between thematic efforts, and between diplomacy and funding; positioning the Netherlands in relation to other actors; and cooperation with the European Union (EU) and with like-minded countries; and donor coordination.

1.4 Objectives, evaluation questions and scope

The first objective of this evaluation is to present the results – effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and sustainability – of a selected part of the official development assistance (ODA) expenditure on food security, water and climate (BHOS-2) for 2016 to 2023. The second objective of this evaluation is to learn whether and how coherence has affected results. In addition, the evaluation will develop recommendations on how coherence could be improved for more effective and efficient policies and more sustainable results.

The evaluation responds to the questions in the Regulation on Periodic Evaluation (RPE).[31] It also covers to a large extent the six OECD DAC evaluation criteria.[32]

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28 See CBS.nl for more information on Monitor Brede Welvaart and its predecessor Monitor Duurzaam Nederland.

29 Minister of BHOS, 2016. Actieplan en jaarrapportage Beleidscoherentie voor Ontwikkeling.; Minister of BHOS, 2018. Herzien Actieplan en Jaarrapportage beleidscoherentie voor ontwikkeling; Minister of BHOS, 2022. Letter to Parliament on the action plan on policy coherence for development.

30 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, adopted in 2005 by developing and donor countries responsible for promoting development and the heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions, and the Accra Agenda for Action, adopted in 2008.

31 The evaluation responds to the questions in the 'Regeling Periodiek Evaluatieonderzoek' (Regulation on Periodic Evaluation, RPE). Sub-question 1 addresses policy effectiveness and efficiency: what conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness and efficiency of the instruments within the Strategic Evaluation Agenda theme, and what side effects have been reported? Sub-questions 2-5 are used to provide insights into the conditions for achieving effective and efficient policy: what conditions have affected the results and how? Sub-question 5 also provides insights into the coherence of food security, water and climate policy with other Dutch policies and EU agricultural policy and the side effects of these other policies on food security, water and climate policy objectives. Finally, formulating opportunities and recommendations for policy improvement will respond to the RPE's request for insight into what measures can be taken to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of policy.

32 This evaluation covers the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability in terms of continued benefits and coherence in an elaborated form that also overlaps with aspects of relevance.

To answer the overarching evaluation question 'To what extent has Dutch policy contributed to food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries, and how has policy coherence affected these results?', we have formulated five underlying sub-questions :

1. To what extent has Dutch policy and its implementation been effective, sustainable and cost-effective in achieving food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries?
2. How coherent has Dutch development policy and its implementation been for food security, water and climate?
3. To what extent has policy coherence affected development results?
4. What factors affected coherence or incoherence?
5. How coherent were other Dutch policies, specifically those on the import of commodities and value chain sustainability, and Dutch domestic (and EU) agricultural policy, with food security, water and climate objectives?

The main focus of this evaluation is development cooperation policy on food security, water and climate between 2016 and 2023. We selected three case study countries: Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia, and selected and assessed a total of 25 projects for in-depth evaluation. Selection criteria and representativeness are explained in Chapter 2 Methodology.

In addition to development cooperation policy on food security, water and climate, we selected two other policies:

1. 'Dutch import and value chain sustainability', which falls partly under broader development cooperation and partly under other foreign policies. We selected three case studies: soy and deforestation in Brazil, flowers and water pollution in Ethiopia, and garments and water pollution in Bangladesh. For the purposes of this study, we did not evaluate all policies and interventions on import and value chain sustainability. In the 'Reflection' section at the end of the Management Summary, we consider these limitations and suggest that future policy coherence studies on sustainable international trade and value chains could be much broader in scope.
2. EU and Dutch agricultural policies, which fall under domestic policies. This selection was guided by a preparatory study that looked at developed countries' policies that have documented effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries.[33] The period under review is much longer for these polices, from about 2000 until 2024, to see the learning and changes in policy coherence and the effects on developing countries.

[33] ECDPM, 2022b. Discussion paper on the effects of developed countries' policies in developing countries. IOB commissioned the ECDPM study in preparation for the IOB coherence study. The ECDPM study and an accompanying IOB summary note are available on the IOB website.

2 Methodology

The methodology is briefly summarised below. More detailed information can be found in Annexes 1 and 2.

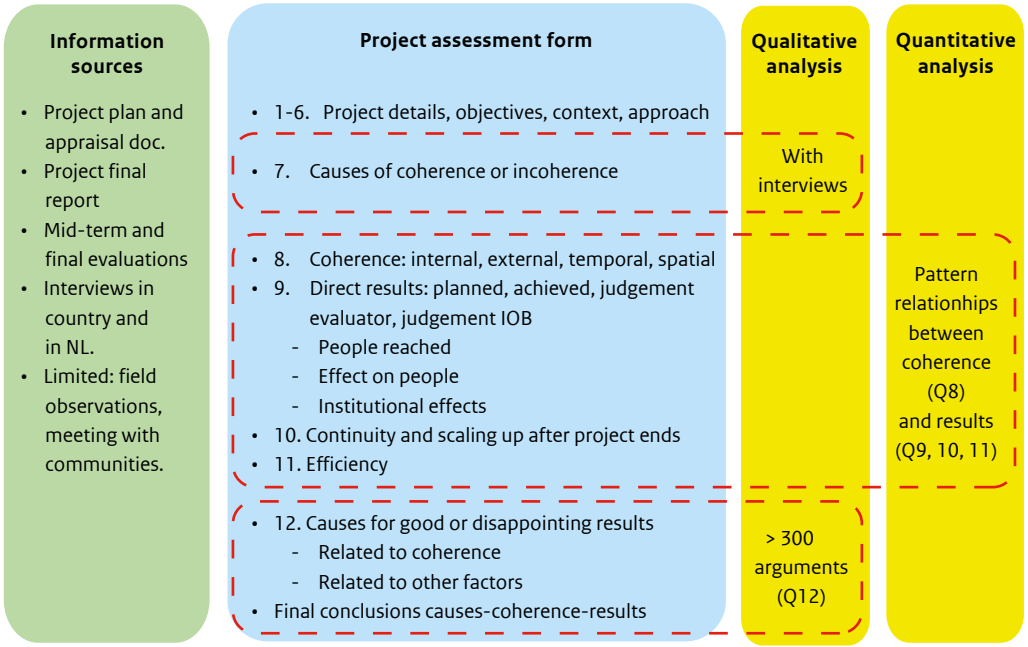
2.1 Analysis of the effect of coherence on project results

To answer the evaluation question 'How has coherence affected results', we needed sources of information that would allow us to analyse the relationships between coherence and results. As results are only well documented at the project level in, project evaluations and final reports, we take projects as the units of analysis. Two different types of analysis, one qualitative and one quantitative, were carried out to assess the relationship between coherence and results:

- The qualitative analysis is carried out for each project. Our project assessments review what results were achieved and how these project results were affected by coherence and other factors. Across the 25 projects, we identified patterns of the most common coherence-results relationships, both positive and negative, and examples that demonstrate these relationships.
- The quantitative analysis, which was used to underline the results of the qualitative analysis, consisted of a simple analysis of patterns between coherence and results.

The steps of data collection, project assessment and analysis are presented in Figure 2.1. For the qualitative analysis of the causes of coherence, an overview of causes from the project assessments (see project assessment form in Annex 2, question 7) was supplemented with causes discussed in more general interviews. For the qualitative analysis of the impact of coherence on results, over 300 arguments presented in the project assessment form (question 12 and conclusion box) were used. For the quantitative analysis of the relationship between coherence and results, each result (questions 9, 10 and 11) is related to our assessment of coherence (question 8).

Figure 2.1 *Data collection, project assessment and qualitative and quantitative analysis of the relationships between causes of coherence/incoherence, coherence and results, for the selected 25 projects*



The 25 projects that were selected in this evaluation are presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 *Overview of the 25 selected projects, country, project period, total budget and Dutch share of the budget*

no.	Short name	Project name (and phase)	C*	Period	Budget (m EUR)	NL share (x m EUR)
1	**AGP**	Agricultural Growth Programme (2)	E	2016-2023	565	20
2	**ISSD**	Integrated Seed Sector Development (2)	E	2012-2015	11.5	10.2
3	**EDGET**	Enhancing Dairy Sector Growth Ethiopia	E	2012-2018	14.5	9
4	**FDOV[34] 1**	Potato processing in Ethiopia	E	2012-2021	3	3
5	**FDOV 2**	Fair Planet initiative (vegetables)	E	2015-2021	2.2	1.5
6	**SMIS**	Small-scale and Micro Irrigation Support	E	2014-2020	20.7	10
7	**ISA**	Inclusive Sustainable Agri. development (1, 2)	M	2017-2023	42	31
8	**Blue Gold**	Blue Gold (water management in polders)	B	2012-2021	62.7	62.7
9	**SaFaL**	Sust. agriculture, food security, market link (2)	B	2012-2022	26,8	26.8
10	**GAIN[35]**	Improving Diets to End Malnutrition	W	2017-2022	62	62
11	**PSNP**	Productive Safety Net Programme (4)	E	2015-2021	3,200	67
12	**PLAN[36] 1**	Self-help sanitation (Plan 1)	E	2009-2014	8,5	4,5
13	**OneWASH**	One WASH National Programme (2)	E	2020-2026	512	22
14	**AIAS**	Org. Dev. AIAS and Cap. Dev. (1, 2, 3)	M	2013-2025	38.9	38.9
15	**PROOFS**	Profitable Opportunities for Food Security	B	2013-2017	8	8
16	**Max[37]**	Max Nutri-WASH (2)	B	2016-2021	9.6	6.8
17	**PLAN 2**	WASH, Food and Nutri Security, Ethiopia	E	2013-2018	2.6	2.6
18	**BDP**	Bangladesh Delta Plan, Support to Impl.	B	2014-2023	13.5	13.5
19	**BMP**	Beria Masterplan	M	2011-	14.6	14.6
20	**SRJS**	Shared resources, joint solutions	M	2015-2021	59	59
21	**IWRM-F**	Integrated Water Resources Management Fund	M	2019-2024	21	21
22	**ISLA**	Sustainable Land and Water Programme (1, 2)	E	2015-2023	105	45
23	**ABPP**	Africa Biogas Partnership Programme (2)	E	2014-2020	25.1	22.6
24	**ABSF**	Agribusiness Support Facility	E	2012-2016	2.8	2.8
25	**PaCT**	Partnership for Cleaner Textile (1, 2)	B	2012-2022	12.6	5

** C = country: Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Mozambique or Worldwide).*

Limitations of using project evaluations, which are usually carried out in the last year of project funding, is that limited information is available on the sustainability, continuation and scaling up of project results after project completion. This limitation is mitigated by (phone) interviews with embassy staff and others about projects that ended several years ago.

2.2 Operationalising results

We have distinguished five types of results. Under effectiveness, we distinguish: (1) the number of people reached, (2) the positive effects on these people, and (3) institutional capacity building, for example in government, the private sector or civil society organisations. Under sustainability we looked at: (4) whether projects continue or even scale up after project completion. Under cost-effectiveness we looked at (5) cost-effectiveness, comparing costs with benefits or efficiency in leveraging other funds.

[34] *Faciliteit Duurzaam Ondernemen en Voedselzekerheid* – Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security, the broader central programme of which Potato processing in Ethiopia is a project.
[35] GAIN is the implementing organisation: the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.
[36] Plan is the organisation implementing the project.
[37] Max, or the Max Foundation, is the implementing organisation.

1. Number of people reached
A simple comparison is made of the results presented in the evaluation or project completion report with the plan. We distinguish the number of people reached by objective, such as nutrition, production and access to drinking water, recognising that one project can contribute to more than one objective.

2. Effect on people
The effects, beyond having access to drinking water, for example, vary and are grouped as follows: production, income, food intake and hygiene behaviour as outcome indicators, and health as the ultimate impact indicator. The effects are only assessed if the effect was an explicit aim. In assessing the effects, we have taken into account the quality of the evaluation.[38]

3. Institutional results
We grouped these into five types of institutional capacity development: government, private sector and civil society, as the three organisations that could continue project activities after external support ends, and technical capacity and ecological sustainability, as two other aspects needed for continuation. The scores are our own expert judgement. Scores are only included in the analysis if the type of institutional capacity was mentioned in the project plan. The level of achievement is our expert opinion and interpretation of project evaluations and information from additional interviews.

4. Continuity and scaling up
We distinguish between projects where Dutch funding was discontinued and projects where funding was continued, such as in a follow-up project. In short, project evaluations, supplemented by (online) interviews, gave us an indication of the extent of continuation and scaling up. We looked at the continuation of activities by others, such as government, private sector or other local organisations, as well as whether other donors stepped in and the scale at which activities were continued, if they did. Annex 3 provides detailed results, offering more information on the aspects evaluated and how they are scored.

5. Cost-effectiveness and efficiency
We used three different assessments: two for cost-effectiveness and one for efficiency. (1) In a few cases, quantified benefits per person could be compared with project costs per person. (2) In many cases, benefits that were not quantified in monetary terms could be compared with project costs per person. In the case of pilot projects with relatively high costs per person, it was also taken into account whether or not the project was scaled up after the pilot phase. (3) And in the remaining few cases, we either assessed the leverage or multiplier effect of other donor funding through the Dutch contribution, or we assessed the institutional results in relation to the project costs.

For certain results, such as the number of people reached and the effects on people, the results in project evaluations and project completion reports can be compared with the plans outlined in the Ministry of Foreign Affair's (MFA) project appraisal documents or project plans. For other results, this was more difficult. Project plans are often vague about institutional results, partly because they are less under project control. Plans are even more vague about sustainability in terms of continuation and scaling up, and say nothing about efficiency or cost-effectiveness. In these cases, we had to develop our evaluation criteria, refine and calibrate them after a first round of assessing all projects, and come to a final judgement.

How the results are scored on a scale of 1 to 5 is shown in the project assessment form (Annex 2).

[38] We distinguished different qualities of evaluations based on (1) attribution of effects to the project (before-after and/or with-without project comparison) and (2) independence (external evaluation or internal monitoring data, or a combination).

2.3 Operationalising coherence

2.3.1 From a systems approach and transition thinking to coherence

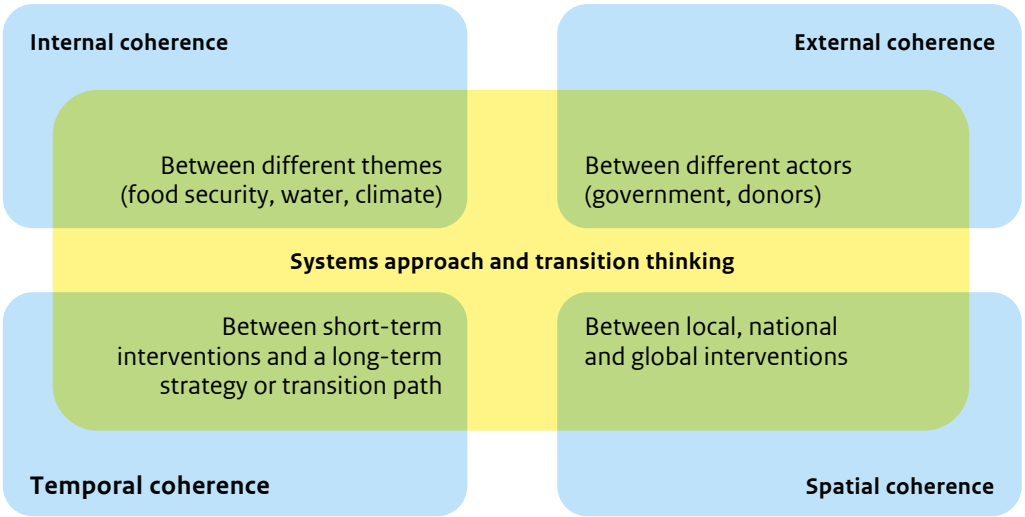
In many international, science-based long-term strategies for food security, water, energy and climate, a systems approach[39] is mentioned as crucial for achieving sustainable results at scale.[40] A systems approach is often combined with transition thinking: what changes, and in what direction, are needed to move from the current situation to a desired future situation? A common aspect of the systems approach in these strategies is that the desired ecological goods and services (food, water, energy and biodiversity) need to be produced in a sustainable manner, within ecological boundaries (agricultural land, water resources and limited greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions), also in the long term. It is only by looking at the whole system that the necessary shifts or transformations towards sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12) become clear.

For example, in integrated water resources management, the system could include transboundary and national rivers, agricultural land that uses irrigation water and a population that needs drinking water. The envisaged transition, anticipating population growth and a decrease of future freshwater availability, could include, for example, transboundary water management agreements, the introduction of regulation and monitoring to reduce and limit water use in agriculture, to ensure that water use does not exceed annual replenishment rates and to avoid water pollution, and regulations for equitable access and priority of domestic water over other water uses.

For food security, the system could include consumers and their nutritional needs, agricultural production, and the import and export of food. The envisaged transition could include, for example a desired diversification of diets from staple foods to more vegetables, support for diversification of agricultural production towards nutritious and affordable foods, and facilitation of regional food trade to mitigate fluctuations in food availability and food prices. Globally, a transition to diets with less animal-based food is needed, but in developing countries where animal-based food consumption is very low, an increase to modest levels may be desirable.

These two aspects, systems approach and transition thinking, can be well captured in the term coherence: coherence between different thematic elements, coherence between different actors, coherence of short-term interventions in a long-term transition strategy, and coherence between local, national and even global interventions (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 *Systems approach and transition thinking captured in four types of coherence*



[39] A systems approach considers a system as having different components that influence each other, and as a whole that is affected by its context. In the long-term strategies, components can be different actors or geographical locations, but also different objectives and outcomes that influence each other.

[40] ECDPM, 2022a. Inventory of long-term strategies for food security, water and climate. IOB commissioned the ECDPM study as preparation for the IOB coherence study. The ECDPM inventory and an accompanying IOB summary note are available on the IOB website.

2.3.2 Four types of coherence

Since 2019, OECD DAC has included 'coherence' as a sixth evaluation criterion, in addition to the five criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. OECD distinguishes between internal and external coherence. For this study, IOB added temporal and spatial coherence. The four types of coherence are briefly described below.

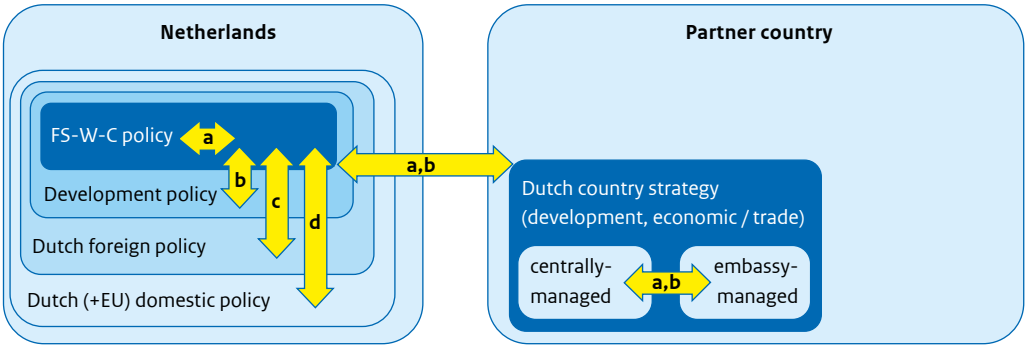
Internal coherence

Internal coherence refers to the alignment between different Dutch policies and interventions, encompassing all Dutch policies with a potential effect on food security, water and climate in developing countries. This coherence comprises four different layers (Figure 2.3):

1. Development policies on food security, water and climate (budget article BHOS-2).
2. Broader development cooperation policies
3. Other foreign policies, including foreign trade
4. Domestic policies, partly covered by EU policies, including trade and agriculture

Dutch embassies in developing countries have a multi-annual country strategy, which covers development cooperation and broader Dutch foreign policy. Within the Dutch programme in a country, there may be internal coherence issues between activities managed centrally and the ones managed by embassies.

Figure 2.3 *Internal policy coherence between different Dutch policies and the Dutch country strategy*

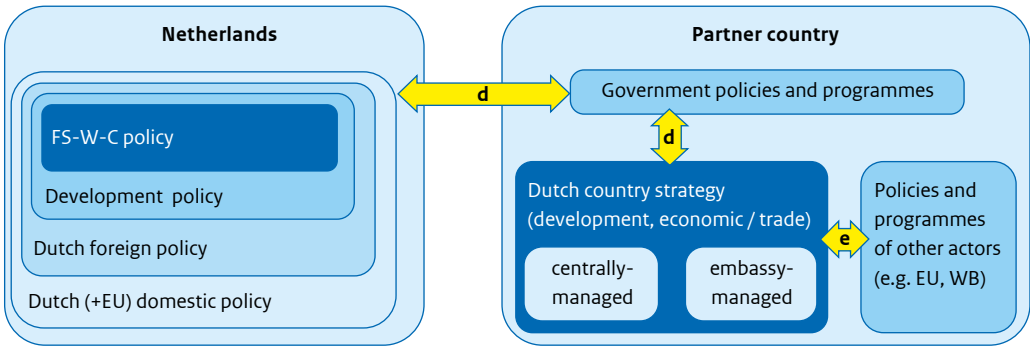


** The yellow arrows indicate the internal coherence issues that will be evaluated in this study: within and between food security, water and climate (a); between food security, water and climate policies and other development policies in the Netherlands or at the embassies (b), other foreign policies, and (c), domestic policies (d).*

External coherence

External coherence refers to the alignment between Dutch policy and policies of the host government and other actors in the partner country. This includes alignment and collaboration between Dutch projects and government organisations in the partner country.

Figure 2.4 *External coherence between Dutch policy and policies of the government and other actors in the partner country*

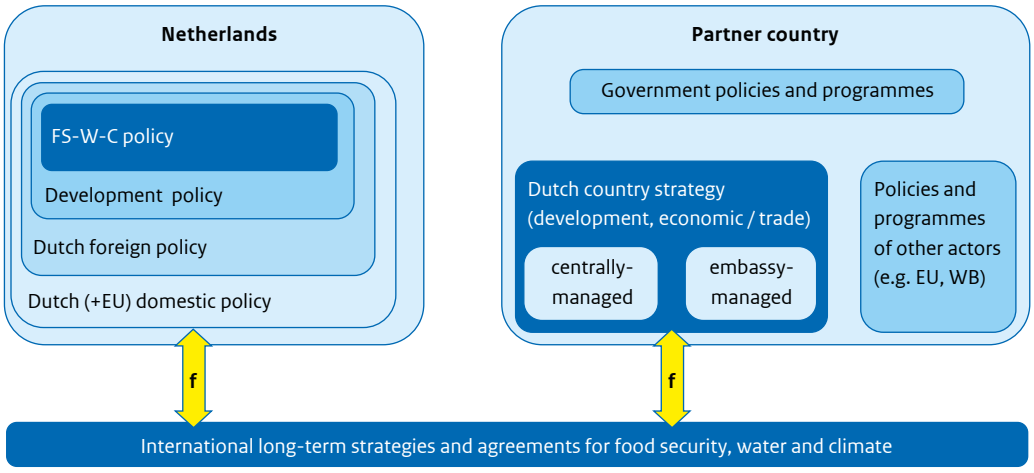


** The yellow arrows indicate the external coherence issues that will be evaluated in this study: between food security, water and climate policy in the Netherlands and in the Dutch country strategy, and partner government policies and programmes (d) and policies and programmes of other actors (e).*

Temporal coherence

Temporal coherence refers to the alignment between short-term activities and international long-term strategies and agreements on food security, water and climate. Long-term strategies are (i) at least until 2030, preferably beyond, (ii) based on science, with reference to scientific reports, and (iii) based on a certain level of scientific and political consensus. There are many international, global or regional long-term strategies available. In some cases, these strategies are thoroughly developed at the country level and adopted by the national government, in which case the national policy serves as a long-term strategy. In most cases, there are global or regional long-term strategies supported by scientific consensus, but these have not yet been translated into country-level strategies or adopted as national policies.

Figure 2.5 *Coherence with long-term food security, water and climate strategies*

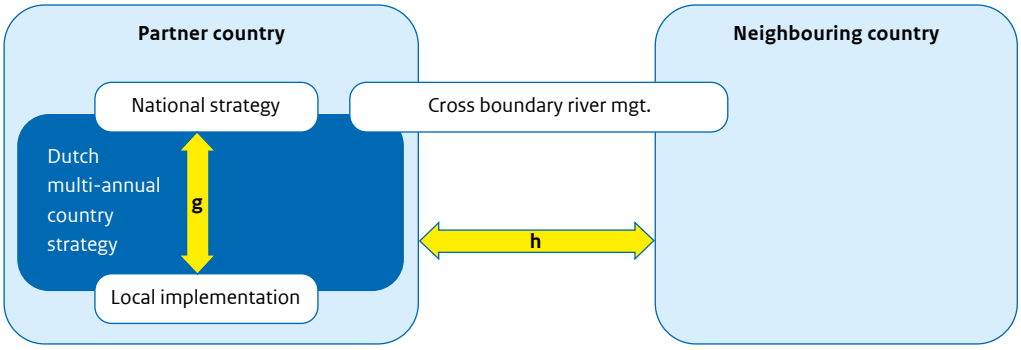


** The yellow arrows indicate the temporal coherence issues that will be evaluated in this study: between Dutch policy and Dutch country strategies, and international long-term strategies for food security, water and climate (f).*

Spatial coherence

Spatial coherence refers to the alignment between support for local activities and support for national or international strategies. Many interventions are local projects, working in a limited geographical area such as a few villages, a district, a group of farmers or a watershed. Spatial coherence implies that local interventions integrate into, or feed into, national (in some cases regional) strategies and preferably also contribute to national (or regional) results. Similarly, spatial coherence also implies that supported national strategies are not left on the shelf but are also implemented at a local level. Cross-border river management is an example of spatial coherence between neighbouring countries.

Figure 2.6 *Spatial coherence between national or international strategies and local implementation*



** Yellow arrows indicate the spatial coherence issues that will be evaluated in this study: between local implementation and support for (g) national and (h) international strategies, including cross-boundary river management.*

2.3.3 Preparatory studies to operationalise coherence

In preparation for this study, an inventory was made of the effects of developed country policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries.[41] This helped us to identify internal coherence focus points for our project assessment, and to select two policies outside the food security, water and climate policy for consideration: (1) Dutch import and value chain sustainability, and (2) Dutch and EU domestic agricultural policies.

A second preparatory study was an inventory of international long-term strategies for food security, water and climate.[42] This helped us to identify several thematic aspects (apart from food security, water and climate) and eight common aspects of these long-term strategies, which were used to assess temporal coherence: (1) a systems approach, (2) country ownership and governance, (3) addressing short and long-term objectives simultaneously, (4) targeting the poorest and most vulnerable, (5) fair access to technology, (6) enabling environment for private sector involvement, (7) consideration of costs and benefits, and (8) type of donor support in line with aid effectiveness principles. These eight aspects are explained in a five-page summary on the IOB website.[43]

After selecting the case study countries (see below for the selection of countries and projects), we organised a digital expert meeting with representatives from government, knowledge institutes and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to discuss the most relevant aspects of policy coherence. We used these as focus points in the project assessment forms.

2.4 Selection of countries and projects

1. Selection of case study countries

The effects of coherence on food security, water and climate are best assessed at country level. We therefore selected three case study countries in which we could capture the diversity of projects and the diversity of Dutch partner countries, focusing on those where the Netherlands has a large and long-term programme. Security was a condition for a field visit, which excluded, for example, more fragile states in the Sahel. The case study countries were selected as follows:

1. Two countries in Africa and one in Asia, the two most important continents for Dutch ODA.
2. Expenditure: total Dutch ODA expenditure on food security (budget article BHOS 2.1), water (2.2) and climate, energy and natural resource management (2.3); expenditure with a climate mitigation or adaptation marker, and a forest marker.
3. Likelihood of identifying policy coherence issues between food security, water and climate, in particular climate adaptation in food security and water activities.
4. Likelihood of identifying potential policy coherence issues with other Dutch policies mentioned in the ECDPM preparatory study and potentially present according to the Dutch MACSs.

(See Annex 1 for details on how different countries scored on these criteria)

2. Selection of projects

The selection criteria for the 25 projects ensured both the assessment of project outcomes and representation of project diversity:

1. Availability of an evaluation report (sometimes supplemented by a final project report) that presented results that could be compared with a plan, so IOB could judge the extent to which planned results had been achieved.
2. Inclusion of different themes, such as food security, water and climate, and different sub-themes.
3. Coverage of different implementation channels (first recipient of funds), including government entities, multilateral organisations, NGOs, public-private partnerships (PPPs) and knowledge institutes.

41 ECDPM, 2022b. Effects of policies of major and emerging economies policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries. IOB commissioned the ECDPM study as preparation for the IOB coherence study. The ECDPM study and an accompanying IOB summary note are on the IOB website.

42 ECDPM, 2022a. Inventory of long-term strategies for food security, water and climate.

43 Note that a systems approach and a landscape approach, where land use planning and potential competing claims for natural resources would align, are now considered under temporal coherence. As discussed in the reflection at the end of the Management Summary, part of this may have been more appropriate better under spatial coherence.

The 25 projects selected in the three case study countries were the best in terms of available evaluations and documentation of results at the case study country level. Taking Ethiopia as an example, there were a total of 72 food security, water and climate activities with expenditures in the period 2016-2023. Of these, only 23 projects had an evaluation report, in some cases supplemented by a project completion report, where the results could be compared to the concretely formulated project objectives. Of these 23 suitable projects, we selected 13, which covered different objectives and implementation modalities. This meant, for example, that only two NGO WASH projects were selected. Limitations are discussed in section 2.7 Representativeness and bias.

2.5 Project assessment

Following the field visits, IOB developed, tested and refined a project assessment form, in which each of the 25 selected projects was described and scored according to the four types of coherence (internal, external, temporal and spatial), five types of result (number of people reached, effect per person or per household, institutional results, continuity and scaling up, and cost-effectiveness). There is a brief section on what processes affected coherence, and a more elaborate section on how coherence and other factors influenced results positively or negatively. We have added our own conclusions on how coherence has affected results.

To assess internal coherence, we made use of the ECDPM study on the effects of developed country policies on food security, water and climate, the discussions of the digital expert meetings on coherence issues for each country, and analysed Dutch policies and Dutch MACSs. To assess external coherence, we made an inventory of the relevant policies of the case study country. To assess temporal coherence, we used the ECDPM study on international long-term strategies for food security, water and climate.

To assess results, the project plans in the project document or the MFA project appraisal document were compared with the results presented in the evaluation, often supplemented by results from the project completion report. Information was drawn from project appraisal documents, project plans, evaluation reports and final project reports, and supplemented by additional interviews after the first assessment.

All projects were initially assessed by one researcher, then the assessments were checked and discussed with a second researcher, and finally the assessments were calibrated with the other project assessments. An example of a project assessment form (for Ethiopia) is provided in Annex 2.

2.6 Sources of information: field visits and informants

The field visits in 2021 and 2022 were exploratory and provided us with input to finalise the project assessment form. We visited a selection of projects and held discussions and interviews with project staff, project beneficiaries, Dutch Embassy staff, and staff from government and other development partners. Discussion topics included long-term strategies, project results and expected sustainability, processes leading to coherence, perceived coherence and the perceived effects of coherence or incoherence. Approximately 50 people were interviewed in each case study country, including one online expert meeting per country prior to the field visit.

A further 30 people were interviewed in the Netherlands, from MFA departments (IGG, DDE, BIS, DAF, DAO)[44] and other organisations (RVO[45], FMO[46], LNV[47], external researchers and project staff). There were enough informants representing different stakeholders and independent sources to triangulate our assessment of processes, coherence and results.

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44 Abbreviations stand for the following departments. IGG: *Directie Inclusieve Groene Groei* – Inclusive Green Growth Department; DDE: *Directie Duurzame Economische ontwikkeling* – Sustainable Economic Development Department; BIS: *Bureau Internationale Samenwerking* – Office for International Cooperation; DAF: *Directie Sub-Sahara Afrika* – Sub-Saharan Africa Department; and DAO: *Directie Azië en Oceanië* – Asia and Oceania Department.

45 *Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland* – Netherlands Enterprise Agency.

46 *Nederlandse Financieringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden* – Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank.

47 *Ministerie van Landbouw, Visserij, Voedselzekerheid en Natuur* – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (now LVVN: *Ministerie van Landbouw, Visserij, Voedselzekerheid en Natuur* – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature).

After the field visits, initial findings were discussed with the embassies and with IGG. The draft report was discussed with the IOB peer review group, the external reference group and with IGG, and has been shared with the three embassies for their comments.

2.7 Representativeness and bias

Country representativeness and bias

The three case study countries receive a relatively large share of the BHOS-2 budget. In terms of BHOS-2 expenditure per country, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Bangladesh rank first, third and fifth respectively, and receive 27% percent of BHOS-2 expenditure that could be attributed to specific countries.[48]

In terms of bias, the three selected countries are relatively stable (Bangladesh and Mozambique) or have an active and strong government (Ethiopia) and are not representative of the coherence and the results of Dutch activities in other countries.[49] This means that our conclusions and recommendations, for example on external coherence – in particular on working with national government institutions – may not apply to more fragile countries or countries with a weak government.

Representativeness and bias of the selected projects

The 25 selected projects were the best for the purpose of analysing relationships between coherence and results. This selection is not representative of the entire BHOS-2 portfolio. As an indication, we present here the extent to which the total budget of the 25 selected projects, and an average project duration of six years cover the total expenditure of BHOS-2 in the eight-year period 2016-2023 (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 *Financial coverage of the 25 selected projects compared to total expenditure on food security, water and climate (BHOS-2) 2016-2023 (in million EUR)*

Budget article	total 2016-2021*	budget 25 projects**	coverage
2.1 Food security	2,777	253	9%
2.2 Water* **	1,554	162	10%
2.3 Climate** **	1,660	11	1%
	6,001	426	7%

** Source: MIBZ. ** Source: project appraisal documents. *** Some irrigation projects funded from the water budget contribute to food security objectives. **** Includes the strategic partnership SRJS that the Social Development Department (Directie Sociale Ontwikkeling, DSO) transferred to IGG.*

The overall budget coverage of our sample is substantial, about 7%. Thematically, food security and water projects are relatively well represented, while climate mitigation projects (renewable energy and forests, mainly centrally-managed projects) are underrepresented in our sample. Moreover, embassy-managed projects are well represented in our sample (17) and centrally-managed projects are less so (8). This is due to the availability of evaluations presenting results in our case study countries. Many evaluations of centrally-managed projects working in multiple countries had little or no information on results in our case study countries – so these projects were excluded. (See Annex 2 for the list of projects visited and Table 2.1 for the list of projects included in the assessment).

In terms of representativeness, this means we cannot generalise our conclusions based on our selection of 25 projects to the entire BHOS-2 portfolio, in particular not to the centrally-managed multilateral programmes and programmes working on renewable energy and forest management (climate mitigation).

In terms of bias in the results, our selection of projects, some of which have well-documented results that can be compared to a plan, will more often than the average for the BHOS-2 portfolio have results in terms of the number of people reached in food security and water, and the effects on these people. One might suspect that better documented projects with higher quality evaluations are generally more successful. However, we found no evidence of this in our overview of the longlist of all projects.

48 Source MIBZ, 2024. 59% of BHOS-2 expenditure 2020-2023 could be attributed to specific countries.
49 Even Mozambique and Ethiopia are currently classified as 'conflict-affected countries' by the World Bank.

In terms of bias in coherence, the relatively larger share of embassy-managed projects increases the average score for external coherence, due to the relatively better coordination and possible collaboration with government organisations facilitated by the embassy.

However, in terms of bias in the relationship between results and coherence, we do not expect the above biases to affect our analysis. The sample is selected to provide a variety of financing channels and implementing organisations, including embassy-managed and centrally-managed projects, to identify patterns between coherence and results.

3 Effectiveness, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of Dutch development policy on food security, water and climate

To what extent has Dutch policy and its implementation been effective, sustainable and cost-effective in achieving food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries?

Conclusions:

1. The sampled food security and water projects are generally effective: people are reached, positive effects on target groups are obtained and some institutional results are achieved.
2. Cost-effectiveness is often not monitored, although some projects provide encouraging examples.
3. The sampled food security and water projects have shown that sustainability after Dutch funding ends is a major challenge.

3.1 Effectiveness

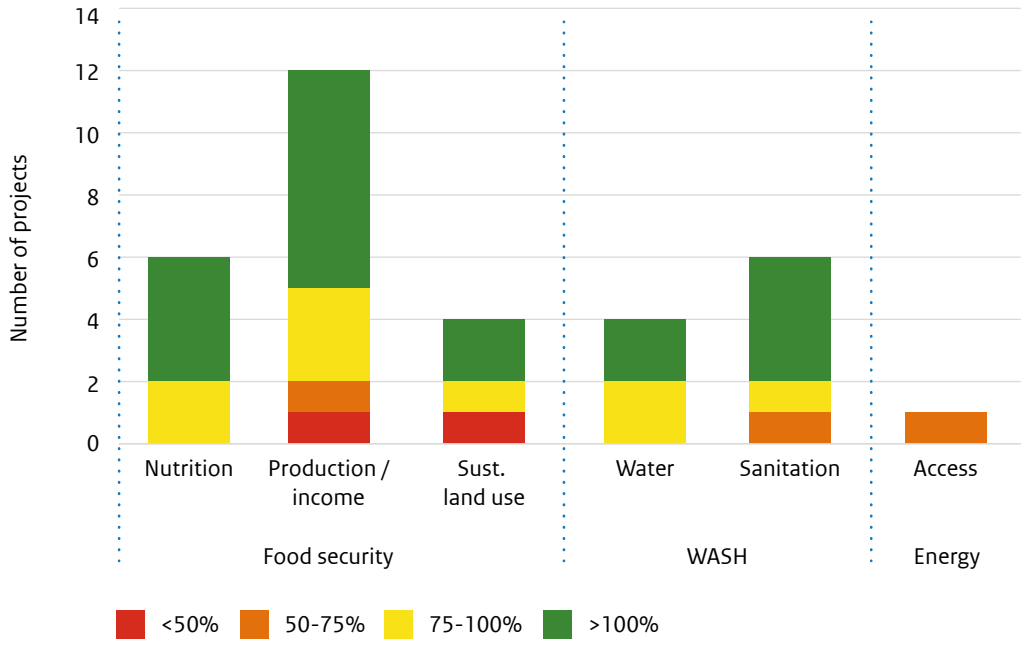
In terms of effectiveness, we looked at (1) the number of people reached, (2) the effects on people, and (3) institutional results.

3.1.1 The number of people reached

Main finding:
Most of the sampled projects reached the intended number of people.

The majority (18/25) of projects aim to reach a specific number of people for nutrition, WASH or energy (as part of climate interventions), or households for farm production and income. A few (7/25) projects do not; they target a landscape, municipality or country at the institutional level, for integrated water resources management (IWRM) or to support businesses in a particular subsector. Of the 18 projects that aimed to reach a specific number of people, most of the sampled projects have reached or almost reached this target, according to the project reports (see Figure 3.1). Note that most projects have several objectives, sometimes combining food security and WASH.

Figure 3.1 *Comparison of planned vs. actual number of people reached for different project objectives*



** Climate interventions (the third category in the figure) include interventions for renewable energy and forest management. In our selection of projects, one climate project – a renewable energy project – was included: the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme (ABPP).*

Comparing the achievements in 25 selected projects with Dutch targets for 2030

IGG has set targets for the number of people to be reached by 2030, following the SDG targets for food security, water and energy. While acknowledging that the 25 projects are not representative of the total BHOS-2 portfolio, it is still interesting to compare the achievements of these 25 projects with the Dutch long-term targets (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 *Number of people (p), farm households (hh), or hectares of farmland (ha) reached by the selected 25 projects compared to the IGG long-term targets*

		Sample of 25 projects		BHOS-2
	Indicators of reach	# projects	Achieved	Dutch target 2016-2030
Food security	Nutrition (p)	6	1,799,625	32,000,000
	Production, income (hh)	14	746,587	8,000,000
	Sustainable farmland (ha)	5	204,768	8,000,000
Water	Drinking water (p)	4	674,161	30,000,000
	Sanitation (p)	6	1,902,144	50,000,000
Climate	Energy (p)	1	60,750	100,000,000

Source: project completion reports and evaluations. In case of multiple funding sources, the number of beneficiaries presented is proportional to the share of Dutch ODA funding.

A number of things need to be taken into account when interpreting these results:

- The average project duration was 6.4 years; the Dutch long-term targets cover a period of 15 years (2016-2030).
- The coverage of the 25 projects in terms of BHOS expenditure 2016-2022 is 12% for food security, 14% for water, and only 1% for climate and energy (see Chapter 2). However, one important water management project (Blue Gold) is paid from the water budget but delivers on food security indicators.
- Renewable energy and clean cooking results are mainly achieved through centrally-funded programmes, which are less represented in our sample.

It is encouraging that – at least according to the evaluators' critical view of project documentation – projects reached the intended number of beneficiaries. In comparison with the long-term targets, and taking the above considerations into account, it is also encouraging that the results on nutrition and farm production and income from food security projects, which are well represented in our sample, are on track to meet the long-term targets. This is less the case for the other indicators, which is partly due to the lower representation of WASH and energy projects in our sample.

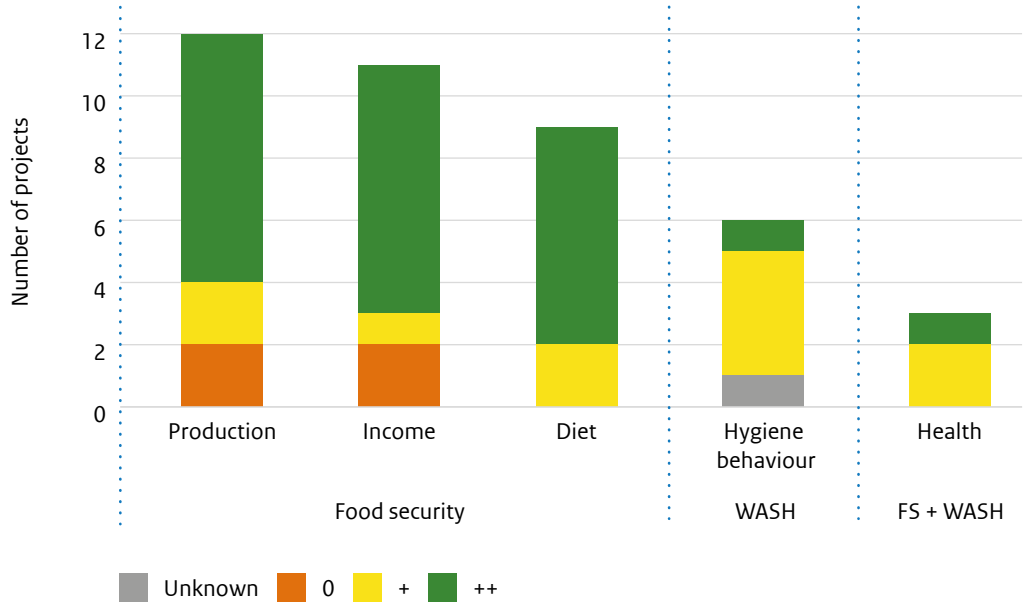
3.1.2 Effects on people

Main findings:

- Where effects are measured, they are usually positive (13 out of 16 projects).
- Measuring effects helps to achieve objectives, but limiting monitoring to outputs alone seems to reduce the attention projects devote to effects and sustainability.

Of the 18 projects that report on the number of people reached, most (16) also report on the effects on people. These range from increased farm production and income and improved diet for food security projects, to better hygiene behaviour and better health in WASH projects. The reported effects are mainly positive (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 *Comparison of planned vs. actual effects for different project objectives*



++ Positive effect and good evaluation quality.
+ Positive effect, but limited evaluation quality; OR Partly positive and good evaluation quality.
o Only some aspects are positive, most aspects showed no effects; OR Only perception is positive.
Unknown: effect of WASH access was not monitored or evaluated.

Food security projects

Most of the sampled food security projects are agricultural projects that successfully address farm production and income. About half of the projects also successfully address food intake, measured for example by food expenditure, the food gap (months per year without sufficient food), child feeding and breastfeeding, or diet. None of the food security projects, except GAIN in small studies, have evaluated their effect on health, for example nutritional status.

WASH projects

For WASH projects without a nutrition component, most reports and evaluations are limited to the output level: the number of water sources or toilets is extrapolated to the number of beneficiaries, without evaluating the effects of access to WASH at the beneficiary level. There is some anecdotal evidence of reduced incidence of diarrhoea from interviews in the AIAS evaluation. One reason why WASH projects do not have high scores is that the quality of monitoring and evaluation was limited.

Projects combining food security and WASH

Interestingly, projects that combine WASH with a nutrition or food security component tend to target more ambitious outcomes, including food intake and health. These projects are also effective. One project (Max) set the most ambitious objectives and has halved child malnutrition, a combined effect of enhanced WASH and improved nutrition. In other words, the highest level food security indicator – reduced malnutrition – can be achieved when food security activities, including child feeding activities, are combined with WASH activities.

Energy project

The Africa Biogas Partnership Programme (ABPP) collected some anecdotal information on household effects. The main effect identified by the evaluation, and an important motivation for installing a biodigester, is the use of residual slurry as organic fertiliser in agricultural production.

3.1.3 Institutional results

Main findings:

- A few projects worked exclusively on institutional results, but all other sampled projects also aimed for and achieved institutional results – government capacity building, private sector development (PSD) and civil society development – necessary for local ownership and continuation.
- Institutional capacity development focused primarily on technology and innovation. Only a few projects successfully contributed to ecological capacity development by studying and guiding efforts towards ecological sustainability. Future fresh water availability and the overuse of water for purposes other than human consumption appear to be the greatest risks.

All projects, especially those not directly targeting households or individuals (7/25), aim to have some institutional effects. This is particularly the case for IWRM projects that address a municipality or country at the landscape level, or even transboundary river management.

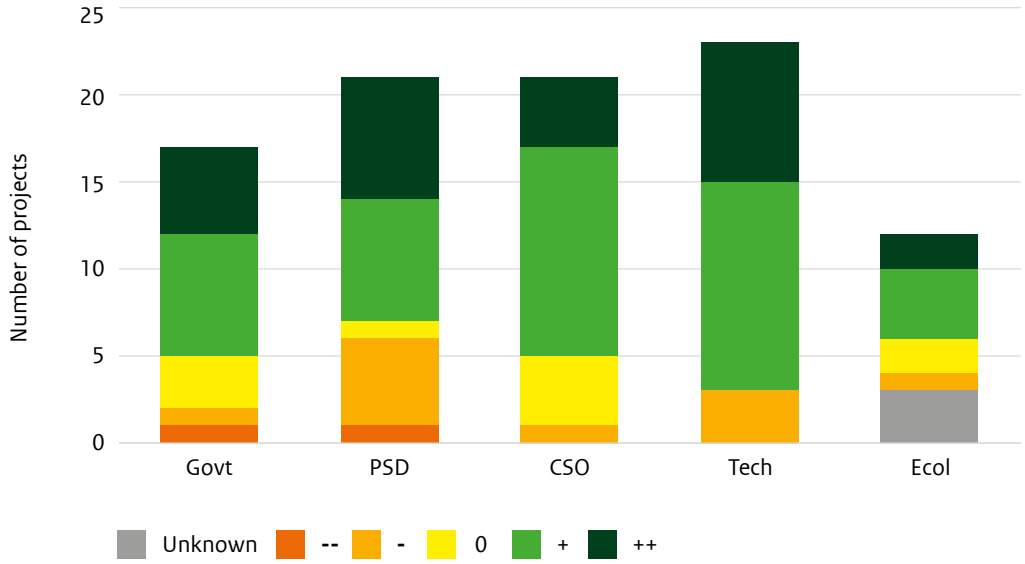
Although the institutional goals of the projects vary widely, their results can be categorised into five main types (see Figure 3.3). These categories correspond to three key institutional actors: government, private sector and civil society.

1. **Government capacity development**, at the national and local level. This can range from involving local agricultural extension workers to developing new national policies and strategies.
   - Projects working with government also achieved more results in terms of government capacity development, as expected. A few IWRM projects that built government capacity have leveraged significant multilateral development bank (MDB) funding for IWRM.
2. **Private sector development.** This includes the private sector, such as processors and traders, who can continue to operate after project funding ceases, but it also includes mechanisms to carry out operations and maintenance (O&M) on a cost-recovery basis, for example by collecting water tariffs from water users.
   - Projects that chose a market-based approach scored higher on PSD results and lower on government institutional results, as expected. However, the business case and cost recovery systems were identified as a weakness in several projects.
3. **Civil society capacity development**. This includes supporting local NGOs that become intermediaries between local populations and government or the private sector, but also for women's or farmers' organisations to relay messages.
   - NGO projects working directly with communities have the best results in terms of civil society capacity development and poor results in terms of government capacity development.

Moreover, capacity building often focused on technical innovation and on ecological sustainability.

4. **Technical capacity development**. This includes the introduction of innovations, such as new production techniques, or studies, such as a surface and groundwater inventory.
   - Technology development results are found in all types of projects, working with government, the private sector or NGOs.
5. **Ecological capacity development**. This involves the introduction of innovations, knowledge and practices to improve ecological sustainability, particularly of current land and water use.
   - The least attention is given to ecological development results. Only half of the projects had this as an objective, mentioning for example 'sustainable water management'. However, some of these did not provide information on ecological results in the evaluation or project completion report.

Figure 3.3 *Institutional capacity development results for government, the private sector and civil society, technology and ecology*



These five forms of institutional results correspond more or less to the five aspects often mentioned as requirements for sustainability: institutional, financial, social, technical and ecological sustainability. Indeed, one would expect these institutional results to contribute to the continuation and sustainability of project results after the project itself has ended.

3.2 Sustainability: continuation and scaling up

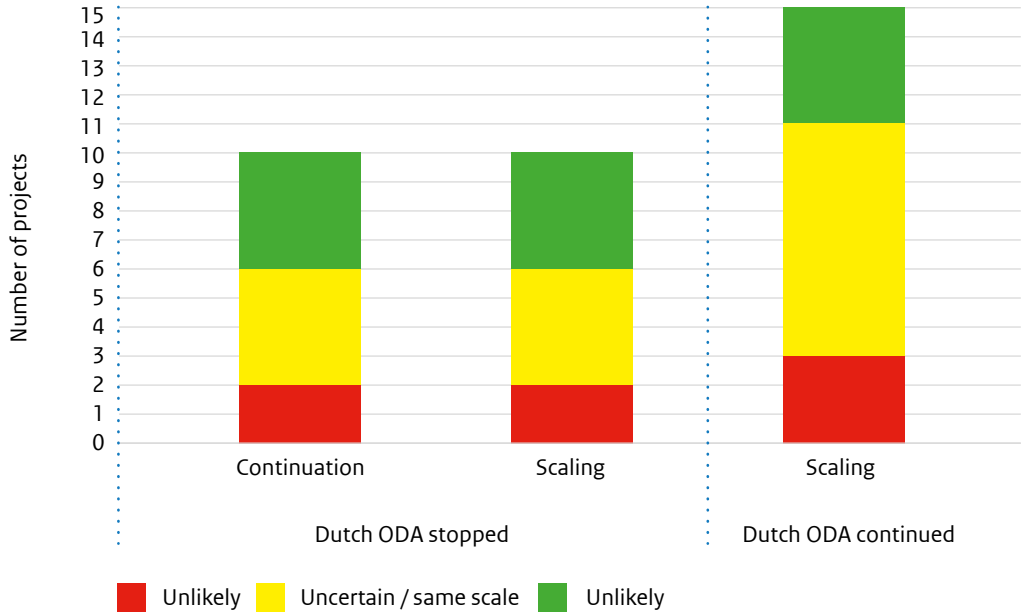
Main findings:

- The continuation of project results after Dutch funding ends is a major challenge. The MFA does not have an aftercare budget to address some remaining national or local institutional constraints. In addition, it is not always known whether a project has continued or not: the MFA does not monitor what happens after funding ends.
- Scaling up of successful project results is often not monitored and uncertain. Scaling up mainly occurs when Dutch ODA, other donors or larger companies continue to support the activity. Some pilot projects are linked to large government programmes that are supposed to support scaling up. However, several pilot projects are simply not monitored after the pilot phase.

The main drivers for continuity are (1) institutional capacity building of government, private sector and civil society organisations; (2) sufficient time for complex development trajectories; (3) longevity of facilities, and operation and maintenance of water infrastructure; and (4) continuity of Dutch policy.

We looked at what happened to projects after the project or project phase had ended. We found cases where beneficiaries, local organisations, government or the private sector continued the activities, and where other donors had stepped in. We also looked at scaling up: if it continued, whether this happened at the same scale, a reduced scale or an increased scale. Continuation and scaling up are assessed differently for projects where Dutch funding ceased and for projects where Dutch ODA support continued, for example in a new project phase (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 *Continuation and scaling up of projects where Dutch support ended and projects with continued Dutch support*



Ten projects were no longer funded by Dutch ODA.

- Four projects are likely to continue after Dutch funding: one project-initiated organisation is being taken over by the private sector, and three projects are continuing with other donor funding, by the same international NGO, through a new government programme or through the EU.
- For four projects, continuation of results is uncertain: one successful irrigation project is struggling with the sustainability of the local water management organisations and the weak government water management board; one project has set up private businesses that face competition from free government handouts; one civil society organisation can do much less without donor funding; and one multi-stakeholder initiative has insufficient incentives for continued collaboration.
- Two projects are likely to stop, either because of weak government governance or because of limited embedding in local organisations.

Fifteen projects have received continued support: projects that are ongoing, projects that will continue in a subsequent project phase or in a modified new project.

- In half of the cases, there are other donors, some of which have recently joined. Dutch diplomacy helped to leverage funds from other donors. Donor diversification is a good strategy to ensure continuation.
- Four projects are scaling up, while one is intensifying support.
- Eight projects are operating at the same level or scaling up is uncertain.
- Three projects are scaling down, of which one is intensifying support for a smaller number of people.

Sustainability and operation and maintenance of water infrastructure

A particular challenge found in several projects is the sustainability, operation and maintenance of water infrastructure. In WASH and water management for agriculture projects, a major concern is the quality and longevity of the facilities, and the continuity in the organisation of operations and maintenance. Many WASH facilities have been found to be of poor quality, with toilets collapsing and water wells drying up. Irrigation schemes often use sluice gates made of iron instead of composite materials, which lasts longer. O&M is definitely worthwhile when the cost of O&M is compared with the cost of rebuilding the water infrastructure if it is neglected, and, in the case of irrigation, when the large increases in farm production and income are compared with the relatively modest O&M costs. However, a financial mechanism that transfers public funds and funds from water users to O&M appears to be very difficult to set up. An IOB-commissioned study on the sustainability of water management organisations (WMOs) in polders in Bangladesh by van Steenbergen (2023) found that WMOs have been successfully set up, but after project funding ends, their functionality declines in terms of collecting fees for minor repairs. Meanwhile, government organisations are still too weak to continue the major repairs.

Sustainable water use anticipating climate change
As shown under institutional results, few projects take into account ecological considerations of future water availability and water use. It is possible or even likely that agriculture, WASH and IWRM programmes will face water shortage problems in the future. A few projects do take climate change and future water availability scenarios into account (BDP), work on soil and water conservation and reforestation (PSNP) or reduce industrial water use (PaCT), which makes them more sustainable.

3.3 Cost-effectiveness

Main findings:
- Investments in agricultural production and income, and in nutrition and WASH for health, were cost-effective, according to the few evaluations that monetised the benefits for people.
- Cost-effectiveness appears to be lower or more uncertain for the many projects that did not monetise the benefits for households or people.
- Although the effects of most IWRM projects cannot be quantified, some of them are cost-effective in achieving substantial institutional results with relatively modest Dutch funding and leverage government and other donor funding.

Cost-effectiveness 1: quantified benefits at beneficiary level compared to costs
Four projects quantified benefits in monetary terms, which we can compare with project costs, per household or per person.

SaFaL, an NGO project in Bangladesh that supports farm households with production, value chain development and nutrition, has the best benefit-cost ratio: the *annual* farmer benefits found in the evaluation (EUR 284 per household per year) almost break even with the *total* project costs over the 10-year duration of the project (EUR 303 per household).

The Agricultural Growth Programme (AGP), a large-scale government-led multi-donor project in Ethiopia, estimated in its mid-term review that productivity would increase by 10% after four years. This means that the annual farmer benefits (EUR 40 per household per year) would equal the annual projects costs (EUR 35 per household per year, for seven years).

Blue Gold, the agriculture and water management project in polders in Bangladesh, which cost EUR 418 per household, calculated the payback period: the duration after which farmer benefits from increased production would exceed project costs. Two Blue Gold reports show a payback periods of less than a year, and a payback period of two years.

The evaluation of Max Nutri-WASH, an NGO project in Bangladesh that combines WASH and nutrition, which cost EUR 40 per person, extrapolated the effect of measured reductions in child stunting to expected lifetime earnings, using data from the literature and found a positive benefit-cost ratio: for each Euro invested, a well-nourished child will earn an additional EUR 5.3 for the rest of his or her life.

Cost-effectiveness 2: unquantified benefits at the beneficiary level compared to costs.
Sixteen projects can be grouped according to (1) whether (unquantified) effects are clear or not, and (2) whether project costs per person are low or high.
- **Clear benefits, low cost per person.** Two NGO projects (PROOFS, Plan 2) used the proven approach of combining WASH and nutrition, similar to the Max project presented above with quantified effects. Their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is good and shows convincing results.
- **Unclear benefits, low cost per person.** Some large-scale WASH projects (OneWASH, AIAS) have little information on the effects on people who have access to WASH. This may be due to the fact that the Dutch policy objectives, and SDG 6, are limited to the output level: the number of people with access

to drinking water and sanitation. As positive impacts of WASH access can be reasonably expected, and costs per beneficiary are relatively low (EUR 10-70), we consider these projects to be moderately cost-effective.

- **Clear benefits, high cost per person.** There are some innovative pilot and demonstration projects in agriculture (FDOV 1 and 2) and irrigation (SMIS, ISLA) that work with small numbers of beneficiaries and therefore have relatively high costs per person (EUR 200-1,500). Two projects were later scaled up, by the private sector (FDOV 1) and in a large-scale government programme (SMIS), so we considered these pilots to be moderately cost-effective. The others were scaled up slightly with continued donor funding (FDOV 2) or did not scale up (ISA, ISLA) and were therefore not considered to be cost-effective.

Cost-effectiveness 3: Institutional results and leverage of other donor funds.
Five projects had institutional effects (no direct effects on beneficiaries), which were compared with costs, and leverage of other funding.

Three IWRM projects had significant effects: the Bangladesh Delta Plan working with national government (BDP), the Beira Master Plan working with the municipality government (BMP) and the Partnership for Cleaner Textiles working with the garment industry sector (PaCT). All three had significant institutional effects and managed to leverage other donor funds. The BDP had the best results, with important national-level policies and strategies, and government institutional capacity building. More than USD 9 billion finance has been committed, among others by the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to implement several large infrastructural works. The BMP has achieved similar results, but on a much more modest scale at the municipality level, and has leveraged USD 200 million (World Bank, KfW[50]) for water infrastructure. PaCT has leveraged the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and government funding, and other donors are joining, while the Netherlands is cutting back on support.

50 *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* – Credit Institute for Reconstruction (Germany).

4 Coherence as an explanatory factor for the results of development policy on food security, water and climate

First, the four types of coherence are assessed at the policy, project and portfolio (between projects) levels (4.1). The relationship between coherence and results – the key question of this study – is then assessed using a qualitative and quantitative analysis (4.2). This chapter concludes with a discussion of factors affecting coherence (4.3), which leads us to recommendations on how coherence can be improved to achieve better results in development cooperation.

4.1 Coherence of Dutch development policy on food security, water and climate

How coherent has Dutch development policy and its implementation been for food security, water and climate?

Conclusions:

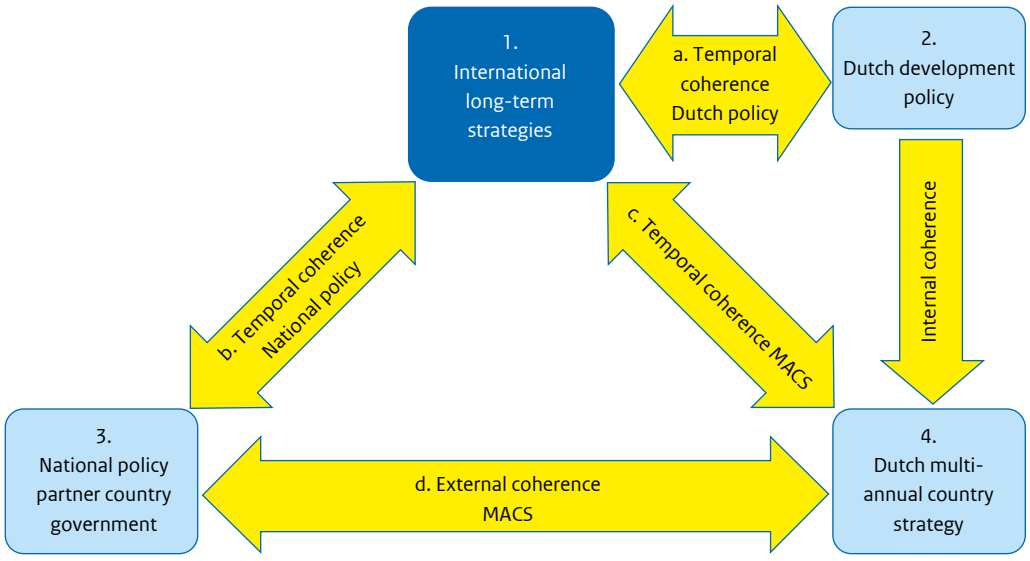
4. Dutch policy and multi-annual country strategies are coherent with long-term strategies and partner country policies.
5. Dutch projects often collaborate well with partner government organisations, but linkages between Dutch projects are often weak.
6. The strongest coherence was found when Dutch (innovative) projects were linked to national programmes or to the development of national strategies.

The first assessment of coherence is made at the policy and strategy level (4.1.1). The second assessment of coherence is made at the project level, using our 25 project assessments. Coherence is assessed for each project individually (4.1.2.), between projects (4.1.3) and between support for long-term strategies and short-term projects (4.1.4).

4.1.1 Coherence at policy and country strategy level

Before looking in more detail at the relationship between coherence and development results at the project level, where results are well documented, we can make a preliminary assessment of coherence at the policy and country strategy level.[51] Figure 4.1 shows the comparisons we make when assessing the coherence of Dutch policy and MACS.

Figure 4.1 *Coherence between Dutch policy, national policy and Dutch MACS, and long-term strategies*



a. First, Dutch development policy is compared with international long-term strategies (temporal coherence).
b. Then national policies are also compared to international long-term strategies, not so much to judge partner countries' policies, but to explain the choices that embassies have to make when drafting their MACS.
c. The Dutch MACSs of the three case study countries are compared with international long-term strategies (temporal coherence).

[51] A list of Dutch policy documents and national policy documents in the three partner countries is provided in the References.

d. The Dutch MACSs are compared with the national policies of these three countries (external coherence).

Coherence of Dutch policy with long-term strategies

The Dutch development policy on food security, water and climate for the period 2014-2023 was coherent with most of the long-term approaches found in the international long-term strategies. For example, a systems approach, which for food security implies linking nutritional needs with agricultural production within ecological boundaries, was gradually being incorporated into the Dutch development policy on food security. Although nutrition, production and sustainable land use were initially treated as separate objectives (2014), they were later clearly linked in the development policy on food security (2019). The Dutch national agricultural policy (2018) also mentioned reducing the potential negative effects of more circular agriculture in developing countries – a good example of a systems approach.

Coherence of host country policies with long-term strategies

Most national policies on food security, agriculture and water in the three case study countries include aspects that are well aligned with the long-term strategy approaches. For a few subjects, national policies are not as well developed yet. For example, systems thinking in food security, linking nutritional needs with agricultural production within ecological boundaries, is quite good in Bangladesh, reasonable in Ethiopia and not so well developed yet in Mozambique. The Netherlands, through key programmes such as GAIN and the Foresight for Food Systems Transformation (FOSTR), supports several partner countries in developing national roadmaps for food system transformation. Most national climate strategies have emission reduction targets, clearly linked to agriculture in Bangladesh and to forestry in Ethiopia, but not yet linked to sustainable production and consumption.

A major exception is Ethiopia's economic policy, with very strict regulations on imports, exports and access to foreign currencies, which discourages private sector participation in agricultural development, in contrast to most long-term food security strategies, which stress the need for local private sector development. Ethiopian policy does allow international companies, for example flower farms, to work on export crops that contribute to foreign currency and jobs, but this does not contribute to the local agricultural development necessary for food security.

Coherence of Dutch multi-annual country strategies with long-term strategies

Dutch multi-annual country strategies (2014, 2017 and 2023) refer to Dutch development policy and to host country policies, and then make choices about what the Netherlands, among other development actors, can best focus on. The MACSs contain a good context analysis, including an analysis of host country policies, and/or what other major donors are doing. The MACSs do not specifically refer to international long-term strategies. Nevertheless, they contain many approaches to long-term strategies, especially in IWRM.

One deviation from long-term strategies is that the MACSs do not refer to a food systems approach that links nutritional needs with agricultural production within ecological boundaries, even though the food security policy (2019) announced that food systems analyses would be included in the MACSs, if necessary. The Netherlands supports national food systems transformation strategies in partner countries (e.g. through GAIN and FOSTR), which is even better in terms of country ownership, but these strategies are not yet reflected in the MACSs, or, as we will see later, in Dutch projects. So far, there is much emphasis on agricultural production and markets, and separately on nutrition and social safety nets, without a clear link. Sometimes, the MACSs propose a value chain approach of a nutritious product, but without considering affordability for poor, food insecure consumers. For example, Dutch efforts to develop the dairy sector on large farms around Addis Ababa resulted in expensive milk being available in the city. From a food security perspective, other options, such as rural poultry that produce more affordable eggs, may have been a better choice.

The MACSs pay much attention to government capacity building and public policy in water management, but not in agriculture and food security, a sector that is left more to the private sector.

The coherence of Dutch strategies with the type of donor support recommended in long-term strategies varies. On the one hand, support for locally owned strategies, such as the Delta plans in Bangladesh and Mozambique, and contributions to large, national multi-donor flagship programmes in Ethiopia, are very coherent with the type of donor support recommended in long-term strategies. On the other hand, there are still many isolated and short-term projects, often from centrally managed programmes.

Coherence of Dutch multi-annual country strategies with host country policies

There are several themes and approaches where the MACS, host country policies and long-term strategies are well aligned.

Some themes show alignment between national policies and long-term strategies, but receive less attention from the MACS, as noted above. These include capacity building for public governance in food security and adopting a systems approach to climate change mitigation that links sustainable production with sustainable consumption.

Tensions between temporal and external coherence

In some cases, an international long-term strategy differs from national policy. What can the Netherlands do in such cases? In some cases, projects have simply ignored the constraints imposed by national policy, sometimes with disappointing results. If the Netherlands sees this as an incoherence that needs to be addressed, it seems best to work with other donors and international organisations in a policy dialogue with government. We present three examples: the enabling business environment in Ethiopia, the focus on wheat production in Ethiopia, and the focus on export to the EU versus intra-African food trade.

The enabling business environment in Ethiopia

As mentioned before, in Ethiopia the enabling environment for the local and international private sector is very limited. Access to finance is difficult, access to foreign exchange even more so. Ethiopia may have legitimate reasons for this, but it also limits import and export opportunities and slows down agricultural development. There is broad agreement among donors and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) that the private sector needs to be given more space. According to an Ethiopian researcher, supporting the enabling business environment would be much more cost-effective than supporting the current large agriculture and food security programmes. Nevertheless, the Netherlands supports various short-term projects with the private sector, or projects in which the private sector is expected to play a role, which often run into difficulties. More and long-term support is needed to improve the enabling environment and make policies more friendly for the local private sector and local agricultural development. The Netherlands cannot do this alone and is trying to influence policy through IFC and the World Bank, but progress is slow. According to one expert at the World Bank, donors should not contribute to the incoherence of Ethiopian policies. Donors could support national oversight institutions. The Ethiopian parliament, for example, has a mandate to scrutinise draft legislation and provide high-level oversight to examine the impact of legislation and possible inconsistencies. Donors could fund them to strengthen their capacity.

Focus on wheat production in Ethiopia

Currently, the Ethiopian government is promoting wheat production to substitute imports and eventually export wheat. Wheat is currently promoted even in irrigated areas where vegetables were previously grown, which are more profitable for farmers and contribute more to nutrition than wheat. Supporting wheat production for import substitution is seen by most as a good idea because importing requires foreign currency, while exporting wheat would not be a good idea because of the relatively high production costs in Ethiopia and the domestic shortage of other nutritious foods.

Exports to the EU or intra-African food trade

The Ethiopian government attracts investment in agriculture for export to create jobs and earn foreign exchange. Access to foreign exchange is very limited because the government controls it, keeps the exchange rate artificially high, and gives import and export licences only to a few privileged traders. However, many international and African long-term food security strategies stress the importance of intra-African food trade, as a buffer against local shortages and food price fluctuations. Agriculture and trade development should not only focus on exports to Europe, but also take into account the African Continental Free Trade Area.

4.1.2 Coherence at project level

For the 25 selected projects, we assessed internal, external, temporal and spatial coherence on a scale from 1 to 5. An overview of all coherence scores for all projects is presented in Annex 4. The interpretation of the scores, illustrated with examples of low and high scores, is presented in the subsections below. The names of projects are indicated in brackets, and refer to the project overview in Table 2.1, Chapter 2.

Internal coherence

Examples of coherence within a theme are combining agricultural production, nutrition and policy dialogue (SaFaL), or combining IWRM, livelihood for fishermen and policy dialogue (SJRS). Examples of the lack of coherence were agricultural production without attention for nutrition (ISLA), or sanitation without attention for drinking water and wastewater (Plan 1).

Examples of coherence between themes are combining irrigation agricultural production and climate adaptation (Blue Gold) or combining WASH and nutrition (Max). Examples of the lack of coherence are drinking water without attention to climate change (AIAS) or irrigation without attention to nutrition or climate change (ISLA).

Examples of coherence with inclusiveness objectives are applying low water tariffs for new connections to often poor households, or supporting local communities to speak out against government and private sector interest in river management (SRJS). Examples of incoherence with inclusiveness objectives are a dairy programme benefitting only the better-off livestock farmers and wealthier urban consumers (EDGET), or a biodigester design that is too expensive for most households (ABPP).

External coherence

Examples of strong alignment between project objectives and corresponding national policies include the national agricultural programme in Ethiopia (AGP) and the drinking water reform project in Mozambique (AIAS). Examples of poorer alignment with policy include local NGO WASH projects operating separately from the multi-donor, multi-government OneWASH programme in Ethiopia (Plan 1), and the water management programmes not being linked to the national water allocation plans (ISLA).

Examples of strong alignment between project objectives with other relevant thematic national policies include the work on water pollution, which was aligned with the national trade policy (PaCT), or the safety net project, which was aligned with the national policy on natural resource management and climate adaptation (PSNP). Examples where there was alignment are the agricultural project that did not take into account the national water policy to avoid overexploitation (SaFaL), or the dairy programme that did not take into account the national food policy on affordable nutrition (EDGET).

Many examples were found of practical collaboration between project and government organisations. Examples of good collaboration at strategic and capacity building levels include support for a national IWRM strategy in Bangladesh (BDP) and the joint monitoring and steering in the multi-donor, government-led WASH programme in Ethiopia (OneWASH). Examples of limited collaboration where only local agricultural extension workers or local health workers were involved in project implementation (FDOV1, Plan 1, Plan 2).

Temporal coherence

Examples of coherence with thematic aspects of long-term strategies are the biodigester project, which aligns with a long-term strategy for renewable energy (ABPP); the agricultural value chains for nutrition, which integrates into a long-term strategy for food systems transformation (SaFaL); the agricultural irrigation project, which focuses on water use efficiency, water use organisations; and climate adaptation (Blue Gold), which aligns with several long-term strategies. Examples of weak coherence were irrigation projects that did not consider sustainable water use in the long term (ISLA), WASH projects that paid insufficient attention to durability and long-term operation and maintenance mechanisms (OneWASH), or agricultural diversification projects with little attention to market development and inclusiveness (ISA).

Examples of coherence with overarching aspects in long-term strategies are the national IWRM strategy that combines long and short-term objectives, has strong country ownership, attracts multi-donor support and compares costs now with avoided costs later (BDP), or the seed sector development project that works with poor farmers on direct seed marketing and on policy dialogue on seed sector reform,

with strong country ownership (ISSD). Examples where coherence was weak were the private sector potato-processing project with no country ownership or sector approach (yet) (FDOV 1), or the dairy programme that did not target poor producers or poor consumers and had no sector approach (yet) (EDGET).

In terms of temporal coherence, there are examples of making project results more sustainable in the sense of continuing without project support, and more environmentally sustainable, in the sense of anticipating climate change, for example reduced water availability.

Spatial coherence

Examples of spatial coherence between local activities and national policy dialogue or national programmes include a value chain development project that informed export policy in Bangladesh (SaFaL), food fortification with the private sector that informed policy in Bangladesh (GAIN), an innovative irrigation project that informed the national agricultural programme (SMIS), the funding and testing a livelihoods component in a national safety net programme (PSNP), and field testing and national policy dialogue in the seed sector (ISSD), all three in Ethiopia. Examples of weak coherence include a local WASH project that did not incorporate government uptake and scaling up in Bangladesh (Max), or where national policies or programmes were not the starting point for local initiatives, limiting the interest and scaling up by national government (FDOV, PLAN, PROOFS, SaFaL, Max).

Other examples of spatial coherence between different scale levels are the water policy reform project working at national and regional government levels and with local private water operators (AIAS), or the work on cross-boundary river management in Mozambique and neighbouring countries (IWRM Fund). An example of weak spatial coherence is the water management and irrigation project in Ethiopia that initially aimed to address water use and pollution at lake level, then scaled down to a local level that was no longer relevant for the original problem (ISLA).

We found no examples of land use planning that effectively managed trade-offs between competing demands for land or water.

4.1.3 Coherence between projects

In this section, we present coherence between projects, based mainly on information from interviews. We see several types of relationships and coherence between projects: (1) internal coherence between Dutch-funded projects, (2) external coherence between Dutch-funded projects and other projects and activities, (3) coherence between small pilot projects (speed boats) and large government-led, multi-donor programmes (tankers), which affects external and spatial coherence. The coherence between Dutch support for a long-term IWRM strategy and short-term projects is a special case and will be discussed in the next section, 4.1.4.

Internal coherence between Dutch projects

In some cases, different Dutch projects reinforce each other. For example, the NICHE[52] education programme complemented the economic development project in Mozambique (ISA).

In some cases, projects operating in the same area could create synergies, for example Blue Gold's water management, SaFaL's value chain development and the Max Foundation's WASH in the same polders in Bangladesh, but synergies were not considered in the individual project evaluations.

In other cases, coherence between projects was not strong, reducing the internal coherence of the Dutch country portfolio. For example, the centrally managed GAIN project had planned to work on dairy in Ethiopia, which SNV[53] was already working on there, but GAIN was not convinced of SNV's approach. Similarly, SNV's dairy programme, which worked with existing commercial cooperatives for inclusion in the dairy programme, and the dairy component of AGP, which supported small cooperatives of smallholder dairy farmers, used different approaches. There are many centrally-managed projects that are not even known to the embassy, which reduces the possibilities for coordination and internal coherence.

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52 Netherlands Initiative for Capacity-development in Higher Education.

53 Netherlands Development Organisation (previously known as: *Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers* – Foundation of Dutch Volunteers).

External coherence between Dutch projects and the projects and activities of others

In several cases, a division of tasks and locations was foreseen. Where donor funding was available for different projects and communication was good, this worked well, for example the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for veterinary services and artificial insemination and SNV for feed and milk production and marketing (EDGET). In some cases, locations are divided between different projects or donors. For example, in Ethiopia, PSNP works in food insecure areas and AGP works in areas with agricultural surpluses. The government's PSNP does not work in districts where other donors work intensively. In some cases, the division of tasks and mandates was not clear, for example who was responsible for desilting canals and sluice gates in polders, WMO or the Bangladesh development Board (Blue Gold).

Donor-funded projects often needed to be complemented by government regulation and enforcement, which was still weak. For example, PaCT worked with large garment factories to reduce water use and pollution, but the government inspectorate lacked the capacity to monitor and motivate other, smaller factories to do the same. In Ethiopia, SNV works on milk quality and food safety, but the government is not yet enforcing regulations. It seems there is too little support and policy dialogue to enable government organisations to play their role.

Coherence between pilot projects (speed boats) and large programmes (tankers) or policy

There are various successful examples of pilot projects linked to large-scale programmes, often referred to as 'speed boats and tankers', especially in Ethiopia (see Table 4.1). It is good that some of these pilot projects are managed separately, including financially, to avoid bureaucracy and allow flexibility.

The downside of separate projects is that the linkages are sometimes weak, and large programmes do not always make good use of, or ask for, pilot project results – something the donor coordination group could assist in. Some projects mention replication and scaling up as objectives and have the potential to act as speed boats, but have not established linkages with larger programmes to ensure that successes are taken up.

Table 4.1 *Examples of linking pilot projects to large programmes or policy*

	Positive examples	Negative examples
Linking pilot projects to programmes or policy	Many examples in Ethiopia: • CASCAPE* and RAISE-FS** and irrigation pilot SMIS linked to AGP • REALISE*** linked to PSNP • Core funding plus TA for small studies in OneWASH • Direct Seed Marketing, introduced by ISSD, taken up in new seed policy In Bangladesh: • NL PaCT project with IFC on water in garment industry, meant to influence larger IFC programme In Mozambique: • Farmer Led Irrigation Development, introduced by Resilience, taken up by others (WB, African Union, IDRC****, Agriterra, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) Uganda)	• Isolated project, not linked to programme for scaling up (Dairy, Ethiopia) • Scaling up foreseen, but not built in (NGO WASH in Ethiopia) • Innovations not always demand driven (some CASCAPE results) • Guarantee Fund System developed for the Sesame Business Network not picked up by banks or government (Ethiopia)

** Capacity building for scaling up of evidence based best practices in agricultural production in Ethiopia*
*** Resilient Agriculture for Inclusive and Sustainable Ethiopian Food Systems*
**** Realising Sustainable Agricultural Livelihood Security in Ethiopia*
***** International Development Research Centre*

4.1.4 Coherence between long-term strategies and short-term projects

A specific case of coherence is between support for short-term projects and support for long-term strategies, as seen in the two Delta programmes in Bangladesh and Mozambique. They are atypical but interesting, and worth looking at because of their strong coherence.

Dutch support for long-term strategies

Long-term strategies for water management

Through the Dutch Partners for Water Delta Programme, the Netherlands has supported a number of long-term IWRM programmes several developing countries with river deltas. In our project assessment and field visits, we looked at two of them, the Bangladesh Delta Plan and the Beira Master Plan in Mozambique.

National or local governments are the initiators and owners of the long-term IWRM plan, actively managing its implementation, seeking coherence and combining their own resources with donor funding. The Netherlands has supported the strategies with technical expertise, process support for government coordination and decision-making, policy and donor dialogue, and a modest but long-term policy and financial commitment. In both countries, the Netherlands has built a good reputation for its long-term commitment and water expertise. In Bangladesh, the BDP has become national policy, is referenced in several other policy documents, and guides both national and donor strategies and implementation.

Several sub-strategies are developed under the overarching strategy. In Bangladesh, different volumes of the elaborate plan provide details for specific sectors, such as agriculture, and for specific geographical hotpots, such as the coastal area. However, certain strategies still need to be developed before concrete investments in infrastructure can be incorporated. For example, there is a need for a strategy on river sediment management that combines public and private interests and funding.

Several sector plans have been drawn up in Beira. For example, the Netherlands supported the Fund for Investment and Assets of Water Supply (FIPAG[54]) drinking water master plan for Beira. However, Beira still needs a wastewater and sanitation master plan, preferably covering the informal areas of the city. More importantly, Beira should develop an urban plan, based on the inundation map, indicating where houses can be built to avoid the current autonomous urban growth in flood-prone areas.

Each of these plans contributes to internal coherence, between IWRM and climate adaptation on the one hand, and agriculture (in Bangladesh) or urban development (in Beira) on the other; external coherence between the government and different donors; spatial coherence between different land uses and different flood-prone areas; and – perhaps most importantly – temporal coherence between short-term projects that align with a long-term strategy. The end result of the long-term plan plus short-term projects is systemic change: changes that go beyond the results of an individual project, that are owned by and embedded in national structures, that are sustainable and can withstand future shocks.

Long-term food security strategies

There are no national long-term strategies for food security yet comparable to the BDP for water management, for example. The Netherlands supports the development of national food system strategies, for example through the GAIN programme Nourishing Food System Pathways, FOSTR and the FAO[55]-WUR[56] 'How to feed Dhaka' project. Multi-stakeholder dialogue and knowledge, for example from the CGIAR SHiFT[57] programme, are key ingredients of this support. Nutrition, agriculture and trade are coming together – issues that have often been addressed in separate policies. However, these roadmaps do not (yet) link nutritional needs to natural resources, as the EAT Lancet report[58] (2019) does for the global food system. Adding a national landscape or land-use planning approach would help. Moreover, a discussion

54 *Fundo de Investimento e Património do Abastecimento de Água.*
55 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
56 Wageningen University and Research.
57 Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research Sustainable Healthy Diets Through Food Systems Transformation.
58 Willett et al., 2019. Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems.

is needed on what food the country could produce itself, and what could be imported and exported, given the risk of fluctuations in future food availability on the world market, exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Such a discussion is likely to conclude that the most perishable items in the diet, such as vegetables, are best produced locally, especially for remote rural areas where transport costs are high and purchasing power is low.

For a long-term national food security strategy, it is also important to consider how current policies, including agricultural subsidies and trade barriers for imports and exports, are positively or negatively affecting food security. The World Bank-IFPRI study[59] (2022) on repurposing subsidies in developed, emerging and developing economies shows how subsidies often reinforce the status quo and do not support the desired food system transformation, while repurposing support could both support food system transformation and ensure food affordability for the poor.[60]

Fitting short-term projects into long-term strategies

A critical aspect of fitting short-term projects into a long-term strategy is to build institutional capacity and inter-sectoral coordination to ensure transparent prioritisation and selection of activities to be funded. In Bangladesh, the Netherlands and the World Bank put a great deal of effort into and made progress with this capacity building. In Beira, management was left in the hands of a few individuals for too long, and the prioritisation and selection criteria for activities were not as transparent.

Several water infrastructure projects are being implemented in both Bangladesh and in Beira, Mozambique. The Netherlands has been successful in leveraging funding from other donors and MDBs. In Beira, the Netherlands, the EU, the World Bank and the German KfW jointly finance coastal protection and drainage. In Bangladesh, the Netherlands cooperates with the World Bank and the ADB in several large water infrastructure programmes, such as the Jamuna and Dhaka river management with the WB and the FRERMIP[61] river management with the ADB, which fit well into the overarching strategies. Of the planned 80 projects under the BDP, with a total budget of USD 27 billion, 30 programmes are being implemented with a total value of USD 9.5 billion. 42 projects have been completed and 32 projects are ongoing (as of February 2024).[62]

It is important to work simultaneously on short-term results with final beneficiaries in the field and on a long-term strategy. First of all because that is where the needs are and you do not want farmers to wait 10 years for the strategy to be ready. Second, because of the valuable interaction between field experience and strategy development. In terms of budget, much more is needed for field work than for strategy development. In Bangladesh, the Blue Gold project, which worked with 150,000 farmers in the polders and achieved concrete results, provided valuable input for the development of the BDP strategy.

In the area of food security, the absence of a national long-term strategy that links production and consumption within ecological boundaries casts doubt on some current projects. For example, looking at international long-term strategies for food security, the choice of large-scale dairy farming around Addis Ababa is questionable because milk is expensive and dairy farming uses a great deal of land and water. Most likely, poultry has more potential to increase the incomes of smallholder farmers, including in rural areas, while producing nutritious food (eggs) at more affordable prices than milk, but using less land and water and emitting less greenhouse gases.

Within a long-term strategy, there is room for different funding mechanisms: PPPs with subsidies and loans for companies working on market-based solutions, and pure development aid grants to ensure that the poorest people are served. In addition, multi-stakeholder dialogue and policy dialogue will bridge these short-term interventions to long-term results.

59 Gautam et al., 2022. Repurposing agricultural policies and support.
60 Gautam et al., 2022. Repurposing agricultural policies and support.
61 Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Programme.
62 Email communication from the Delta Wing to the Dutch embassy in Dhaka, February 2024.

4.2 How did coherence affect the results?

To what extent has policy coherence affected development results?

Conclusion:
7. The results of the selected projects in Mozambique, Bangladesh and Ethiopia were positively affected by coherence: external coherence has the clearest effect, followed by internal and temporal coherence. Spatial coherence does not appear to significantly affect results.

The first section (4.2.1) presents the rich harvest of coherence factors affecting project results from the qualitative analysis. The second section (4.2.2) adds some non-coherence related factors that also affected results. The third section (4.2.3) presents correlations between coherence and results from the quantitative analysis. The final section (4.2.4) presents a synthesis based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

4.2.1 Coherence factors that affected results

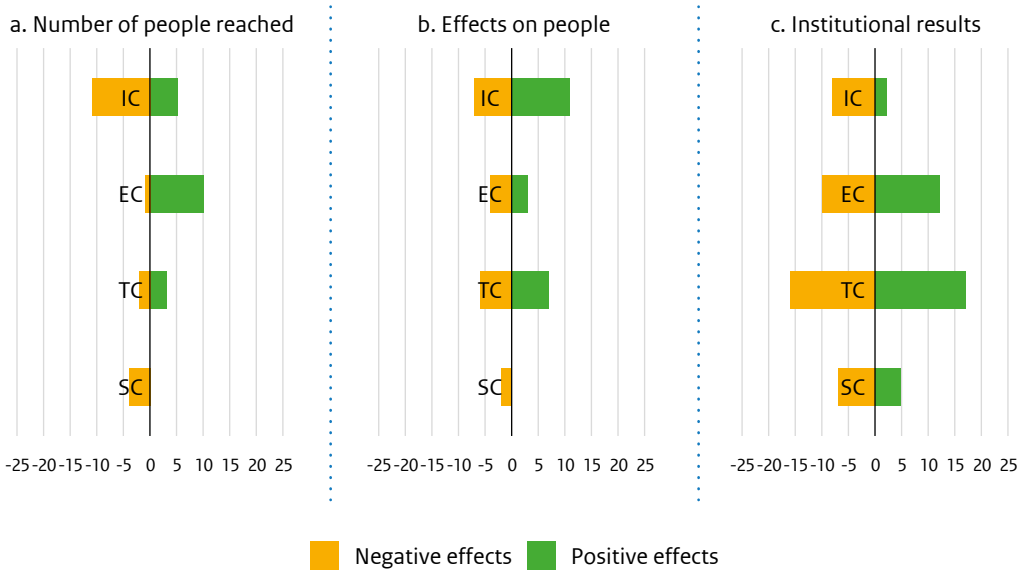
In the 25 project assessments, we identified over 300 factors that had affected results, based on our own IOB judgement and interpretation of evaluation reports, other project documents, interviews and observations. Many of these factors were related to coherence, while other factors were related to project management or context, for example. Below, we have grouped the coherence-related factors by the four coherence dimensions: internal, external, temporal and spatial. We found cases where strong results were explained by coherence (presented as a positive factor) and cases where suboptimal results were explained by the lack of coherence (presented as a negative factor). We indicate whether they affected results at different levels: number of people reached, effects on people, institutional results, continuity and scaling up, and cost-effectiveness. To put the factors into perspective, the graphs show the number of projects (out of 25) where these factors were found. Examples are then given of how coherence (or the absence of coherence) affected the results. More details are provided in Annex 5.

In all four categories, we found both factors with positive effects and factors with negative effects on results (Figure 4.2). For example, in Figure 4.2a, we see that the *lack of* internal coherence negatively affected the number of people reached in 11 projects (top orange bar), while internal coherence positively affected the number of people reached in 5 projects (top green bar).[63]

The pattern is different for the effects on (1) the number or beneficiaries reached (Figure 4.2a), (2) effects on people (Figure 4.2b), (3) institutional results (Figure 4.2c), (4) continuity and scaling up (Figure 4.3a), or (5) cost-effectiveness (Figure 4.3b).

[63] It is possible that in a project, for example, both the absence of internal coherence was found to be a factor negatively affecting results and the presence of internal coherence was found to be a factor positively affecting results. Both indicate the importance of coherence for results. This project would appear both in the orange bar and in the green bar, so the sum of the orange and green bars could add up to more than 25.

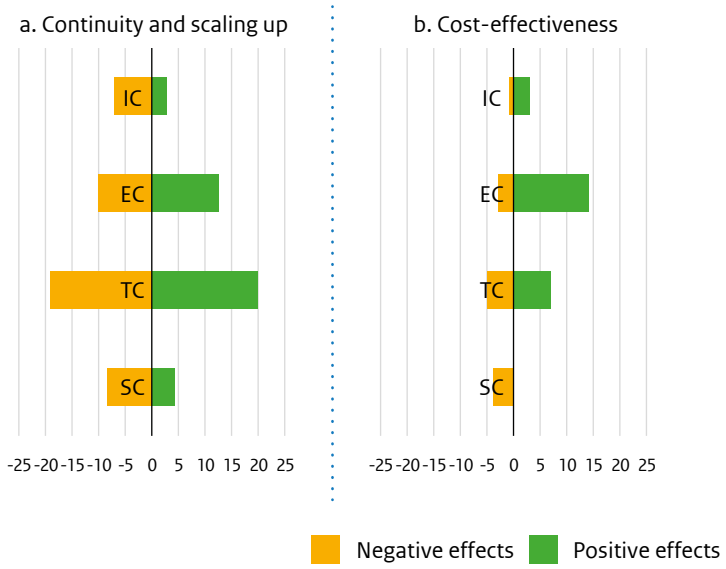
Figure 4.2 *Frequency (no. of projects out of 25) of coherence-related factors considered to have a positive or negative effect on project results, distinguishing between (a) no. of people reached, (b) effects on people, and (c) institutional results*



For the number of people reached (Figure 4.2a) and effects on people (Figure 4.2b), factors related to internal coherence were found most frequently. Effects on people (Figure 4.2b) are positively influenced by internal and temporal coherence, or negatively influenced by the lack of it. Institutional results are mainly influenced by temporal coherence or incoherence (Figure 4.2c).

For continuity and scaling up (Figure 4.3a), we see a very similar pattern to that for institutional results: factors related to temporal coherence were found most frequently. For cost-effectiveness (Figure 4.3b), where fewer factors were found, factors related to external coherence were often found to be positive. This is to be expected because external coherence is a positive factor for the number of people reached, which may reduce the ODA cost per beneficiary and thus improve cost-effectiveness. In the subsequent sections, we will look at the findings in more detail and interpret them.

Figure 4.3 *Frequency (no. of projects) of coherence-related factors considered to have a positive or negative effect on project results, distinguishing between (a) continuity and scaling up, and (b) cost-effectiveness*



Internal coherence: a strength and a missed opportunity for project results

The combination of sub-themes within a theme, such as agricultural production and nutrition (SaFaL), or nutrition and value chains for food security (GAIN), or drinking water and sanitation for water (AIAS), had a positive effect on project results. More often, the lack of attention to a sub-theme reduced project results: the lack of attention to affordability of healthy food (EDGET), nutrition and livestock aspects in agriculture (AGP), IWRM in irrigation (SMIS) or WASH (AIAS), or wastewater management in WASH (OneWASH) contributed to suboptimal or disappointing project results.

The combination of food security, water and climate, for example such as agriculture and irrigation (SMIS, Blue Gold, ISA), agriculture and value chains (SaFaL, ISA), WASH and nutrition (Max, PROOFS, Plan 2), and IWRM and climate change adaptation (Blue Gold, BDP) contributed to project results. However, in many cases, a lack of focus on other related themes diminished the project results. For example, insufficient attention to water management in agriculture (AGP, SaFaL) and misalignment between public and private interests (ISLA) influenced outcomes.

The most common negative internal coherence factor was the lack of inclusiveness, with insufficient focus on women (AGP, EDGET, FDOV, ABSF), youth (EDGET), marginalised groups (OneWASH) and food insecure lowland areas (PSNP), which undermined project results. Some projects failed to take account of the local context in their design and did not have a clear understanding of who the most vulnerable or food insecure people were (GAIN, ISLA), or introduced technologies (biodigesters) that were inappropriate and unaffordable for most households (ABPP). There are also positive examples where projects were successful in reaching specific groups with a specific project approach and activities, for example targeting food insecure highlands (PSNP), women as entrepreneurs for sanitation and hygiene (Max), landless households for food security (SaFaL, Blue Gold), or using adjusted lower water tariffs for newly connected, poor households (AIAS).

External coherence: working with government to increase reach and cost-effectiveness

The alignment of the Dutch project with host government policy is generally good: there is a clear convergence of SDGs and key strategies in the various national policies. Therefore, it is not surprising that policy alignment is not often found as a factor affecting results.

However, working with government organisations, whether at policy or field level, is very often found to have a positive effect on project results. Many projects worked at the policy level, in multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, often in government-led, multi-donor programmes, which increased ownership, commitment and chances of continuity (PSNP, AGP, ISSD, OneWASH, ABSF, ABPP, BDP, BMP, AIAS, PaCT, IWRM-F, GAIN). Large-scale, government-led multi-donor programmes are also more efficient in reaching large groups of beneficiaries (PSNP, AGP, OneWASH, AIAS). There are examples of a good division of tasks between government and donor projects (PSNP, EDGET). However, good intentions do not always work in practice. In several projects, the government was insufficiently involved or only functionally involved local government staff in project implementation (Plan, FDOV). In several cases, the government did not respect agreements on the division of tasks, for example artificial insemination or milk quality control by the government in a dairy programme, which diminished project results (EDGET). Several projects were insufficiently embedded in permanent organisations (Plan, Max, SRJS). There was a mismatch between Dutch funding rules and Dutch technical expertise on the one hand and local opportunities and demand on the other (BMP, IWRM-F).

Temporal coherence: a systems approach, governance and the private sector for long-term results

Four of the eight aspects of temporal coherence were found to affect results more frequently and are discussed below.

Systems approach

The lack of a systems approach is often identified as a weakness for institutional and long-term results. The most common weakness identified was the absence of analyses of current and future water availability in anticipation of climate change (AGP, OneWASH, Proofs, Blue Gold, Max, AIAS). Other weaknesses included a one-sided approach: farmers not receiving the full package needed to generate income to maintain irrigation infrastructure (AGP); sanitation without support for drinking water (Plan 1). Finally, the lack of national long-term strategies for river sediment management hampered the implementation of smaller projects (Blue Gold). A few projects demonstrated

a successful systems approach: using climate change scenarios in water management and a landscape approach (BDP), combining agriculture with soil and water conservation and forest and pasture management for climate change adaptation (PSNP), or combining irrigated agriculture, forest management and waste management for integrated water management (ISLA).

Country ownership and governance
Country ownership and governance is seen as a positive factor for institutional and long-term results. Capacity building of government and sector organisations, multi-stakeholder dialogue and support for inter-ministerial mechanisms, and the strengthening of networks with civil society to influence policies positively, all affected institutional and long-term results (SMIS, PaCT, BDP, IWRM-F, SRJS). Insufficient support and capacity building for relatively weak government institutions was often found to undermine the institutional and long-term results (AGP, OneWASH, Blue Gold, ISA).

Short-term and long-term objectives
The combination of short-term and long-term objectives affects long-term and institutional results. Several projects were handicapped by their short duration: maintenance of the water infrastructure was not ensured (OneWASH, Max, IWRM-F); priority was given to the number of water sources rather than their durability (OneWASH); farmer organisations were still weak or lacked trust (ISSD, FDOV 1, Blue Gold); sector organisations were not yet autonomous (ABSF); or people returned to unhygienic behaviour (Plan 1). A few projects combined short-term and long-term objectives well, for example by linking pilot projects to dissemination and large-scale programmes (GAIN), transferring assets and organising water users for maintenance (Max, Blue Gold); or introducing village savings and credit schemes for self-reliance (Plan 2).

Private sector involvement
The most common temporal coherence factor that affected results was private sector involvement. Several project plans had high expectations of the private sector, market linkages or water management committees working on a cost-recovery basis. However, when evaluated, the results were quite often disappointing. Either projects were too optimistic about the capacity of the local private sector or the enabling environment for the private sector, particularly in Ethiopia (AGP, EDGET, ABPP), or projects put too little emphasis on credit (AGP, ABPP, Max) or on developing business cases and accompanying private sector development (OneWASH, ABPP, SMIS, Max, BMP). As some mentioned: the activity remained too long in a donor-funded project mode of free handouts and no sanctions if loans were not paid pack (ISA). Other projects were successful in involving the private sector, which contributed to long-term results: capable companies, motivated by their own financial contribution (FDOV 1) or individuals with a good business training (Max), market linkages (AGP) and a profitable business case ensured continuation (FDOV 1, 2, SaFaL, ABSF, PaCT, ISA, GAIN).

An interesting case is the combination of private sector involvement and government public subsidies to make biodigesters more affordable (ABPP). This concept is also mentioned in long-term strategies and national policies as a cost-recovery mechanism for drinking water systems, but we did not find it in our selection of projects. The idea is that the majority of water users would pay water fees, while a subsidy would ensure that the poorest people are not excluded.

Spatial coherence: the challenge of linking different scales of intervention
Spatial coherence, as we assessed it,[64] is the least common factor affecting project results. Spatial incoherence, on the other hand, often emerged as a limiting factor. This was evident in local projects that have not been scaled up (yet) (SMIS, PROOFS, PaCT) or fail to address the root problems that lie outside the project area (Blue Gold, ISLA). In some cases, larger-scale strategies have not yet been translated into local plans with sufficient local consultation (BDP) or do not benefit local households yet (SMIS). Some projects were too dispersed, too thinly spread over a large area to have an impact (ISA, SRJS). On a positive note, there are projects that show spatial coherence, successfully working on several scale levels simultaneously (ISSD, AIAS) or starting with a long-term, large-scale plan and then successfully mobilising others to fund projects that align well with this plan (BDP).

[64] Spatial coherence was not often found to be a factor affecting results, but this is partly due to the fact that we considered the systems and landscape approach as part of temporal coherence rather than as part of spatial coherence. In our Reflection in the Summary, we suggest that this be reviewed.

The projects in our sample did not include results related to cross-boundary food trade or cross-boundary water management, which is one reason why spatial coherence was not often found to be a factor affecting results.

4.2.2 Factors other than coherence affecting project results

Our project assessments also found other factors, not related to coherence, that affected project results. They fall into two main groups: contextual factors, and project management factors. As we will see, some of the project management factors that affect project results also affect coherence, and will be therefore discussed in more detail in section 4.3. Annex 5 provides detailed examples of how these factors affected project results.

Contextual factors

Contextual factors, most of which are outside the control of the project, are grouped into three sub-categories: (1) natural hazards and conflicts, (2) economy, economic policy and markets, and (3) partner capacity and mandate. As might be expected, these were mainly identified as negative factors affecting results.

Of the three subcategories of contextual factors, natural hazards and conflict are *forces majeures* against which projects cannot do much. The other two categories: economy and markets, and partner capacity, are other frequently mentioned factors that negatively affect project results. These factors can be treated either as being outside the control of the project, with which the project has to live, or as constraints that projects could address (see the institutional results on government capacity and private sector development presented earlier). The findings suggest that these contextual factors are too often not recognised in project design and too often not addressed. While some projects may not be able to intervene in economic policy or government capacity, the Dutch country programme as a whole, including diplomacy and donor coordination, could perhaps do more to address these constraints. In the past, the Netherlands sometimes required the government to have sufficient partner capacity before starting projects.

Project factors other than coherence

Project design and management factors that fall under project control but are not related to coherence are grouped into three subcategories: (1) project setup and management, (2) the theory of change, results framework, and monitoring evaluation and learning, and (3) the duration of Dutch presence in general and projects in particular. There are some interesting project factors that are not captured in coherence that are worth considering in future projects and programmes. The second and third factors are also found as causes of coherence or incoherence, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.3.

4.2.3 Results quantitatively explained by coherence

In the second analysis, we first used a regression analysis with the data set of 25 projects to see whether there are relationships between the results, as presented in Chapter 3 and Annex 3, and coherence, as presented in Chapter 4.1.2 and Annex 4. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Annex 6. Of the 20 possible relationships between the four types of coherence and the five types of results, seven relationships emerge as significant and are illustrated in seven charts.

- The number of beneficiaries reached is higher in projects that are more externally coherent (Figure 4.4).
- Effects on people are higher in projects that are more internally coherent (Figure 4.5), but also in projects that are *less* temporally coherent (Figure 4.6).
- Continuity and scaling up are slightly lower in projects that are more internally coherent (Figure 4.7), but higher in projects that are externally coherent (Figure 4.8).
- Cost-effectiveness is higher in projects that are more internally coherent (Figure 4.9) and more externally coherent (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.4 *Relationship between beneficiaries reached and external coherence*

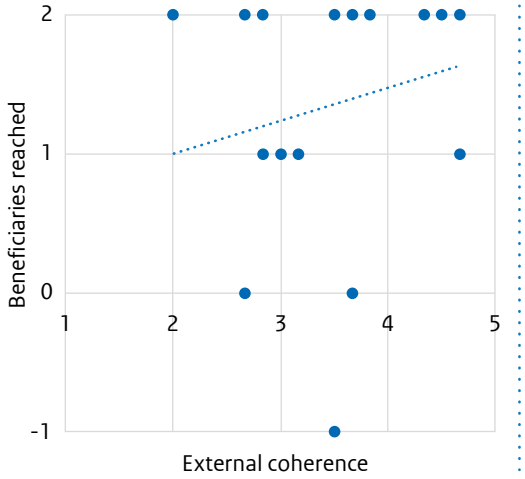


Figure 4.5 *Relationship between effects on people and internal coherence*

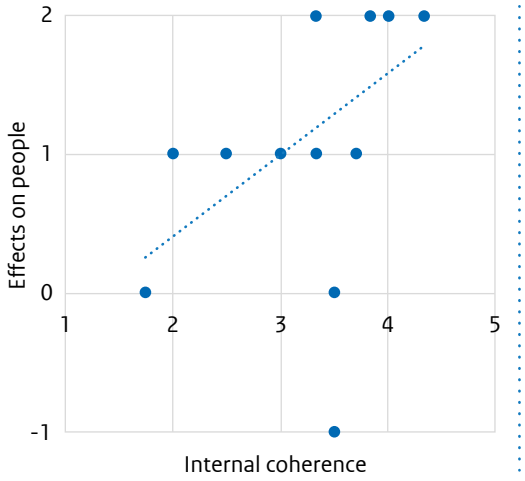


Figure 4.6 *Relationship between effects on people and temporal coherence*

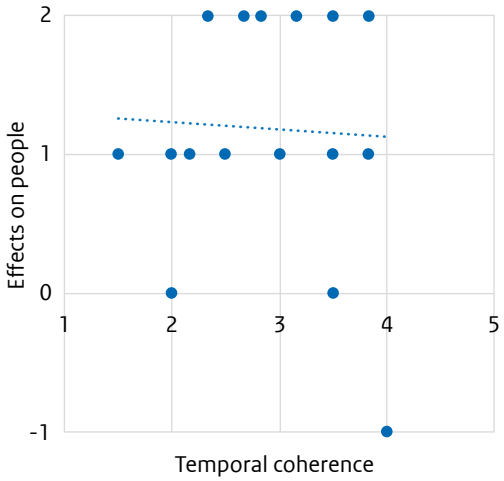


Figure 4.7 *Relationship between continuity and scaling up and internal coherence*

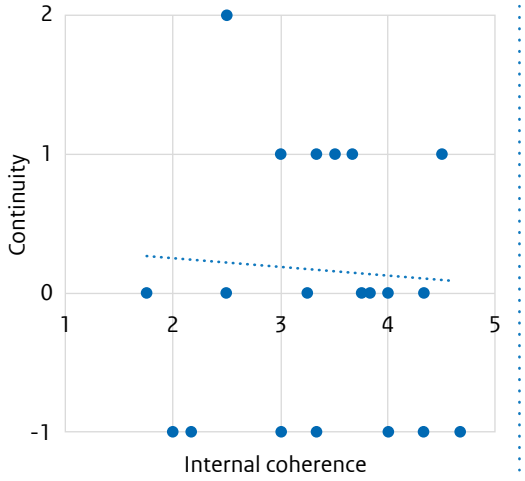


Figure 4.8 *Relationship between continuity and scaling up and external coherence*

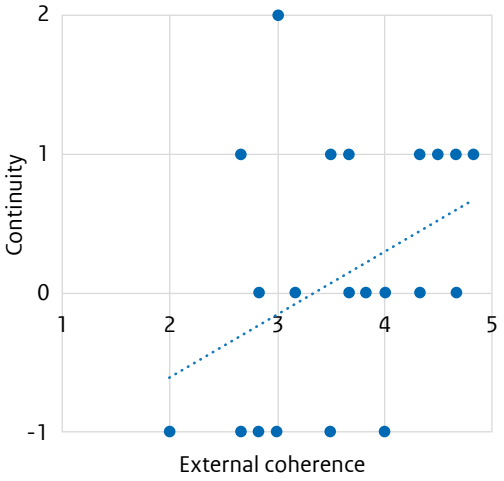


Figure 4.9 *Relationship between cost-effectiveness and internal coherence*

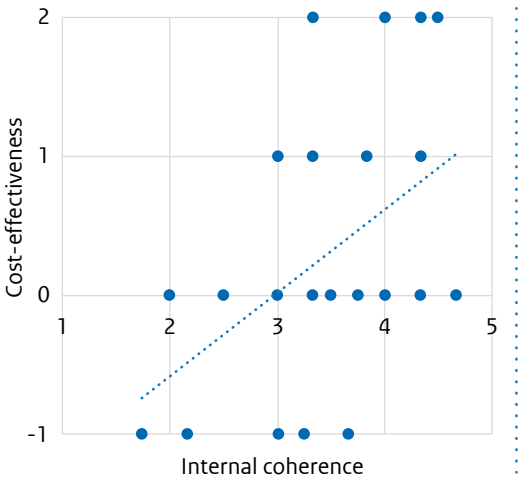
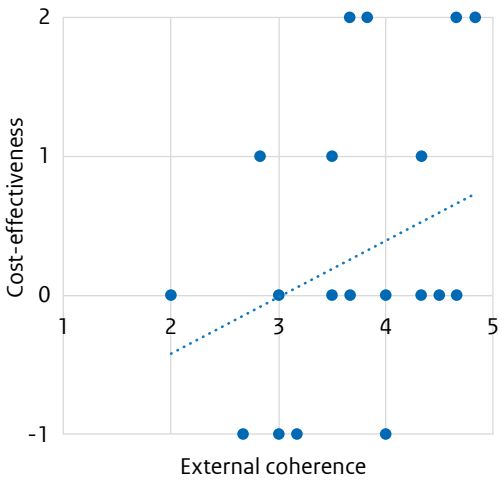


Figure 4.10 *Relationship between cost-effectiveness and external coherence*



We interpret these seven findings as follows, using some projects as examples:

The reach of beneficiaries is positively correlated with external coherence. This can be expected, because working with the government makes it easier to reach a larger number of beneficiaries.

- Positive examples are AGP and OneWASH, both government-led, multi-donor programmes that score high on external coherence and reaching beneficiaries.
- A less successful example is ISA, a regional government programme with several NGO and PPP activities, which scored lower on both external coherence and reaching beneficiaries.

Beneficiary-level effect is positively correlated with internal coherence and negatively correlated with temporal coherence.

- A positive correlation with internal coherence may indicate synergies when combining themes such as agricultural production and nutrition, water and sanitation, or nutrition and sanitation. A more detailed analysis suggests that internal coherence of elements within a theme (within food security or within water) has a stronger effect than the internal coherence between themes (between food security and water).
  - Positive examples are PSNP, SaFaL, Blue Gold, Max, which score high on internal coherence (combining objectives) and beneficiary-level effects.
  - A less successful example is EDGET, that scores low on internal coherence (focusing on a single objective) and on beneficiary-level effects.

- A negative correlation with temporal coherence may seem counter-intuitive.
  - An example is ISSD, which was temporally coherent (supporting policy reform), successful at the policy level, but less successful at the field level (ISSD farmers in Tigray suffered from drought during the impact study in 2016).
  - There are also examples of projects that score relatively low on temporal coherence, but achieve positive beneficiary-level effects: AGP and Plan 2, both of which pay little attention to long-term strategies for water and climate.

Institutional effects are not correlated with coherence, even though we found a relationship in the quantitative analyses.

Continuity and scaling up are positively correlated with external coherence, but negatively correlated with internal coherence.

- A positive correlation with external coherence can be expected when government organisations continue policy or implementation after project support has ended.
  - There are several positive examples that have worked intensively with government at the policy level and score high on continuity (BDP, AGP, ISSD, BMP and AIAS).
  - There are also less successful examples, where government involvement was limited to implementation at the local level and which score low on continuity (e.g. Plan 1).

- A negative correlation with internal coherence is not expected.
  - An example that scores high on internal coherence but low on continuity is SRJS, where the project duration was too short to consolidate results.
  - An example that scores low on internal coherence but high on continuity is FDOV 1, a relatively simple PPP that attracted a large company to invest in.

Cost-effectiveness is positively correlated with both internal and external coherence.

- A positive correlation between internal coherence and cost-effectiveness is related to the positive correlation between internal coherence and effects at the beneficiary level, as effects are part of the cost-benefit equation.
  - There are examples where internal coherence and cost-effectiveness were strong (SaFaL, Blue Gold).
  - There are also examples where internal coherence and cost-effectiveness were low (EDGET).

- A positive correlation between external coherence and cost-effectiveness is sometimes related to the positive correlation between external coherence and reach, because a reaching a larger number of beneficiaries reduces the cost per beneficiary, which is part of the cost-benefit equation.
  - There are examples where external coherence, reach and cost-effectiveness were strong (AGP).
  - There are examples where external coherence, reach and cost-effectiveness were relatively low (FDOV 2, ISA).

4.2.4 Syntheses of both analyses of the effects of coherence on results

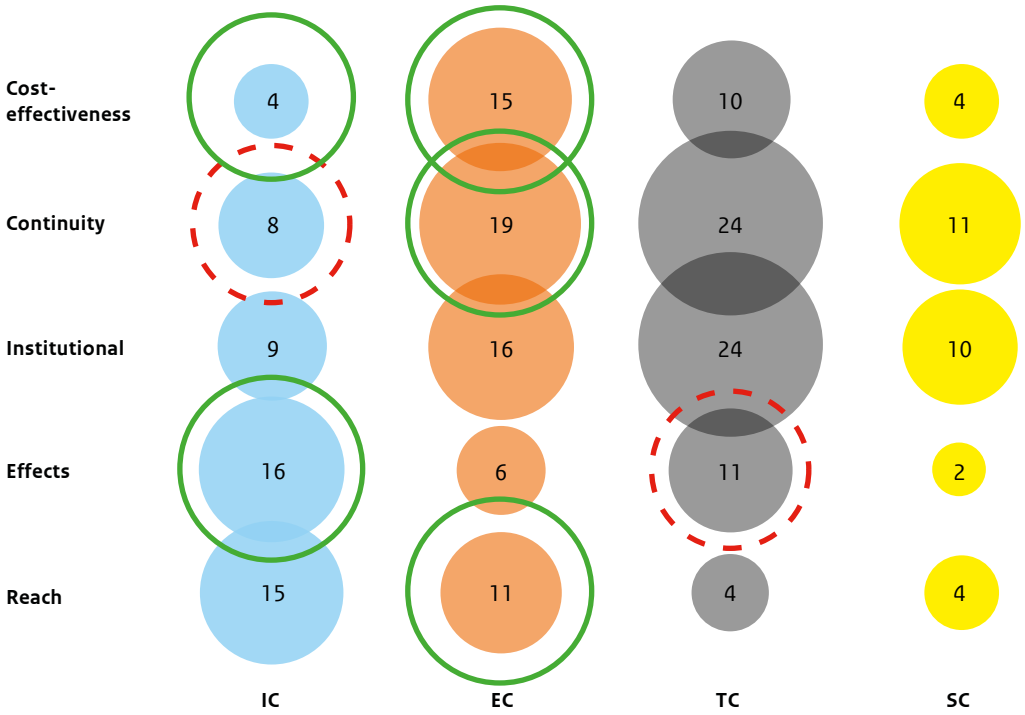
When combining the results of the qualitative analysis (4.2.1) with the results of the quantitative analysis (4.2.3), we have to keep the following in mind:

- Analysis 1 includes the evaluators', other stakeholders' and our analysis of how coherence has influenced results, a judgement made for each project separately. This gives us a rich harvest of cause-and-effect relationships.
- Analysis 2 shows quantitative patterns of correlations between coherence and results found through statistical analysis, which support the results of the qualitative analysis.

Figure 4.11 shows the synthesis of both analyses.

- Qualitative analysis. The solid circles linking a result, for example cost-effectiveness at in the top row, to one type of coherence, for example internal coherence in the left column, indicates the number of projects (in this case, four) where internal coherence was identified as a contributing factor to cost-effectiveness.
- Quantitative analyses. The open green circles indicate a positive relationship between coherence and results, while the dashed red circles indicate a negative relationship, based on the analysis of all 25 projects. For example, the circle in the top left corner indicates a positive relationship between internal coherence and cost-effectiveness.

Figure 4.11 *Overlay of results from analysis 1: number of projects, out of 25, where results were affected by coherence, and analysis 2: positive (green circle) or negative (red dashed circle) correlations between coherence and results, as support to the qualitative analysis*



Combining the results of the two analyses – (1) the effect of coherence on results, and (2) the correlation between coherence and results – the following conclusions can be drawn, ranked by importance:

- **External coherence** (the orange circles in the figure), particularly collaboration with government at the strategy and programme level, as seen in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia, has the strongest effects on the results. It positively affects the reach of beneficiaries, continuity, and cost-effectiveness (both analyses), as well as institutional results (qualitative analysis).
- **Internal coherence** (blue circles in the figure) has the second-strongest effect on results. It positively affects beneficiary level outcomes and cost-effectiveness (both analyses), as well as the reach of beneficiaries (qualitative analysis).
- **Temporal coherence** (grey circles in the figure) is clearly evident in the qualitative analysis, though not in the quantitative analysis, and shows an effect on institutional results and continuity of results, as expected.
- **Spatial coherence** (yellow circles in the figure) is not mentioned that often as a factor affecting results and was not found in the regression analysis either. Its main effect is on institutional results and continuity of results.

Interestingly, there are projects that score high on internal coherence but low on continuity and scaling up, and similarly there are projects that score high on temporal coherence but low on effects on people (the red dashed circles in the figure). Looking at the projects behind these correlations, we see a trade-off between working with direct beneficiaries in the short term and working on institutional results in the long term.

4.3 Factors affecting coherence

What factors affected coherence or incoherence?

Conclusion:
8. Coherence is positively affected by the existence (and negatively affected by the absence) of certain factors.
There are five factors that positively affect coherence in projects, programmes and policy, both in their design and implementation:

1. A clear ToC and results framework and flexibility to learn an adapt;
2. Funding large-scale government-led multi-donor projects and national strategies;
3. Multi-stakeholder policy dialogue;
4. A larger role for embassies and country steering;
5. Linking innovative projects to large-scale programmes or linking support to a long-term national strategy to short-term projects.

The factors and processes affecting coherence are important because they provide indications for recommendations on how to improve coherence for better project results. Based on the information in the 25 project assessments, which included a question on what factors had contributed to coherence, and the information provided in the previous chapters, including coherence between projects and the link to a long-term strategy, we identified five main factors affecting coherence. An overview of these and which coherence dimensions are affected is given in Table 4.2. These main factors are discussed in the following sections.

Table 4.2 *Main and detailed factors affecting four types or coherence*

Main factor	Detailed factors	IC	EC	TC	SC
1. Theory of change, results framework, and M&E	• Clarity of theory of change and results framework	X			
	• Managing multiple objectives	X			
	• Room for institutional results		X	X	
	• Learning from evaluations and other projects	X	X	X	X
2. Choice for type of projects	• Large government-led, multi-donor programmes		X		X
	• Large bilateral projects				X
	• Stand-alone innovative projects with PS				
	• Embedded innovative projects with PS	X	X	X	X
	• Local NGO projects	X			
	• Long-term strategy development projects	X	X	X	X
3. Multi-stakeholder and policy dialogue	• Multi-stakeholder dialogue in projects	X	X		
	• Coordination between different Dutch projects	X			
	• Government-donor coordination	X	X		X
4. Steering from The Hague versus steering from embassies	• Thematic steering from The Hague			X	
	• Country steering from embassies		X	X	X
	• Combined steering	X	X	X	X
5. Short-term project versus long-term programmes	• Projects too short for impact and sustainability				
	• Small pilots linked to large programmes		X	X	
	• Support long-term strategies and short-term projects	X	X	X	X

4.3.1 Theory of change, results framework and M&E

Clarity of theory of change and results framework
A clear theory of change and results framework, developed with partners in the local context, helps project staff, local government staff and beneficiaries to work towards common objectives, thereby improving coherence. For example, using child malnutrition as an indicator for the over-arching goal of nutrition and WASH clarified the project logic and motivated all stakeholders towards this common goal. However, in many project assessments, the lack of such an indicator was cited as a cause of incoherence. For example, an agricultural production and market approach was chosen without regard for target group needs or food security objectives; WASH projects focused on short-term outputs, the installation of WASH facilities, with less attention paid to sustainability and

the effects at the beneficiary level. In some cases, an overarching theory of change for a complex programme with several individual projects was missing or added late. Note that the value of a ToC and M&E framework lies only partly in the design phase, and much more in the learning that takes place during implementation.

Managing multiple objectives

When pursuing multiple objectives, there is a risk that some results will be assumed and not monitored. To be alert to potential side effects on other objectives, such as the effects of production, trade and export on local food security or water availability, the international literature on SDG interactions can help. The ECDPM study, commissioned by IOB, provides a valuable reference on the effects of various developed country policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries, is a useful reference. In Ethiopia, the Dutch embassy uses a 'coherence assessment framework' to decide whether or not to fund an activity. If there are negative side effects, the project will not be funded. For example, a proposal promoting monocropping strategies, in line with government policy, was rejected because it would not contribute to the diversification needed for nutrition and food security.

Room for institutional results

Embassy staff and project staff mentioned that the IGG results framework of a few key indicators for aggregating results does not encourage work on institutional results, such as sustainability in WASH, knowledge results, results of policy influencing (in Ethiopia) or results achieved by IWRM plans (in Bangladesh and Mozambique). Moreover, the Dutch water performance indicator '+25% crop per drop' does not capture the results of different irrigation programmes and is disproportionately expensive to monitor. Embassy staff were positive about the recently revised IGG water indicators, which now include qualitative monitoring and learning questions. A more fundamental question is whether global SDG targets should take priority (thematic steering) over country-specific development (country steering). DGIS uses both, but thematic steering dominates in budget allocation, project management and the results framework. From the perspective of the ministry's regional departments, country steering and country results reporting would make more sense, also for coherence.

Learning from evaluations and other projects

Successive project phases often build on established relationships, such as GAIN with the national government in Bangladesh. Successive phases often improve an approach, evident in the following examples:

- Max in Bangladesh, which since 2009 has gradually developed its WASH plus nutrition approach, making good use of its monitoring, evaluation and learning;
- PSNP-5, which added a nutrition component;
- PLAN, which moved from sanitation only to WASH;
- WWF[65], which moved from nature conservation by civil society to multi-stakeholder dialogue with the private sector and government;
- the new IWRM programme in Mozambique, which created a stronger link between IWRM and WASH; and
- SNV, which moved from dairy value chain development to sector development.

Although in most cases, there is an improvement in the subsequent phase of the project, improving temporal, internal and external coherence, there are a few exceptions. In Bangladesh, the successful combination of WASH and nutrition was discontinued because food security had to be phased out, reducing internal coherence. The ABSF project in Ethiopia worked through sectoral working groups on specific commodities, linked to the Chamber of Commerce. Its successor, TRAIDE, is more ad hoc, cheaper and faster, responding to requests from individual Dutch companies, but reducing external and temporal coherence.

In a few cases, new projects use an approach with which other projects have had good experience. One example is the Healthy Village approach developed by the Max Foundation in Bangladesh, which is now being used by several other projects in Ethiopia. The IKEA Foundation-funded OPITAVA[66] project

65 World Wide Fund for Nature.
66 One timad package validation.

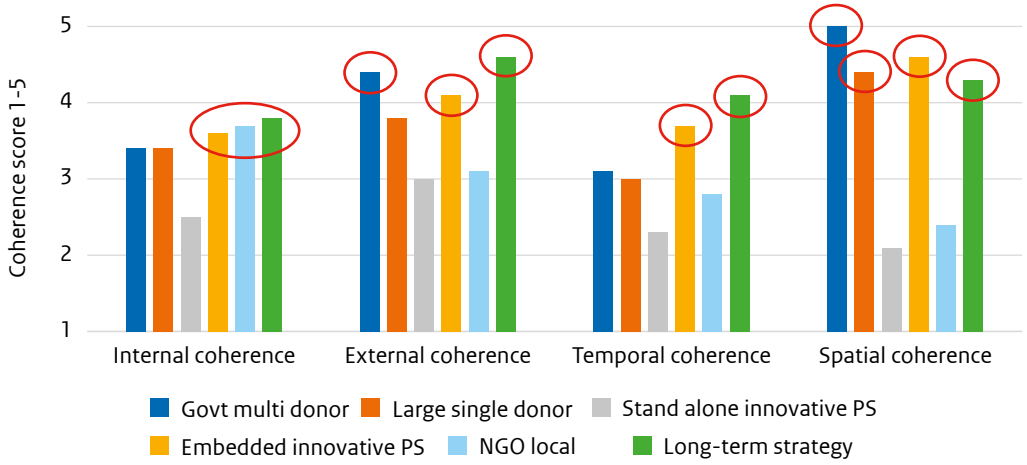
in Ethiopia builds on the experience of the Dutch-funded REALISE and CASCAPE projects. There are also cross-country thematic learning platforms, such as the separately funded Netherlands Ethiopia Dairy Programme, which shares experiences from dairy projects in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

4.3.2 Choice for the types of projects

Coherence at project level is the result of deliberate choices in project design. One type of project can be more coherent in one aspect and less coherent in another. This has brought us to the following typology of projects. The difference in coherence scores between large government-multi-donor programmes, large single donor projects, stand-alone innovative projects with private sector, embedded innovative projects with the private sector, local NGO projects, and long-term strategy projects, are presented in Figure 4.12. The red circles indicate the relative strength of each type or project.

There may be valid reasons to choose for a certain type of project even if a particular coherence is low. For example, in some countries or for some objectives, working with an NGO may be more appropriate than working with a government organisation.

Figure 4.12 *Coherence scores for five types of projects*



Large, government-led, multi-donor programmes

In an effort to reduce fragmentation, the Embassy in Ethiopia streamlined several activities into a few large, government-led, multi-donor flagships (AGP, PSNP, OneWASH). This improved country ownership, institutional capacity, donor harmonisation, cost-effectiveness and continuity. Such large multi-donor programmes are also less vulnerable if one donor withdraws. This also means that additional efforts may be needed in institutional capacity, which requires more time and preferably a multi-donor policy dialogue. For small pilot projects or studies linked to larger programmes, flexible bilateral funding may be easier. Some projects receive both core programme funding and additional earmarked funding for short studies and technical assistance (OneWASH). As expected, external coherence is strong. Spatial coherence is often effective due to the national scale of the programme and local implementation, often complemented by innovative projects.

These examples are embassy-funded projects. Our sample of 25 projects does not include centrally-funded multilateral food security programmes, such as those from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which work with national governments, are often funded by multiple donors, and exhibit strong external coherence.[67]

[67] IOB, 2017. Review FAO and IFAD: Strengths and added value for the Dutch food security policy. This study concludes (p. 25) the following: 'In spite of being slow or bureaucratic, implementing food security programmes through multilateral organisations has the advantages of being better aligned with government policies, embedded in the local context and culture, better targeting smallholder farmers, pooling donor funds and working on coherence within a large scale programme. This will eventually lead to a greater impact than a large number of individually funded, fragmented bilateral projects.'.

Large bilateral projects
Large bilateral projects often work with government (ISA, Blue Gold, AIAS, IWRM-F), sometimes creating opportunities for the private sector (ISA, AIAS), or work with the private sector and on policy dialogue (GAIN). All these projects work simultaneously at different scales and are therefore spatially coherent.

Stand-alone innovative projects with the private sector,
These innovative projects work in public-private partnerships on value chain development with commercially-oriented farmers (EDGET, FDOV, ISLA). Market-based approaches can contribute to continuity and temporal coherence. Private sector development or value chain projects may not be as inclusive as other projects. They often do not have a link with the national government. All four coherence dimensions are lower than in other project types.

Embedded innovative projects with the private sector
In contrast with the previous project type, these innovative projects working with the private sector are embedded through a strong link with government (ISSD, ABPP) or with a private sector umbrella organisation (ABSF, PaCT). These links contribute to all four coherence dimensions.

Local NGO projects
NGO projects work directly with communities and beneficiaries, and often involve local government staff to some extent. They tend to focus on poor and vulnerable people and have the flexibility to add project components as needed, which contributes to their strong internal coherence. However, they score lower on external, temporal and spatial coherence due to their limited collaboration with government agencies and country ownership, their short-term project approach and their limited, local scale.

Long-term strategy development projects
Two IWRM projects, the Bangladesh Delta Plan and the Beira Master Plan, have a long-term commitment (> 10 years), work with national or local government on strategy development, and use diplomacy to mobilise funds from central or local government and other donors and MDBs. These projects score higher on all four types of coherence.

4.3.3 Multi-stakeholder and policy dialogue

Multi-stakeholder and policy dialogue is the most frequently mentioned source of coherence in the 25 project assessments, and is mentioned frequently in the general interviews and discussions, contributing to external coherence, but also to internal, temporal and spatial coherence.

Multi-stakeholder dialogue in projects
At the project level, there is usually good consultation with local beneficiaries and government organisations on project design, which improves internal, external and temporal coherence. Some centrally-managed, multi-country programmes need more time for consultation and translation of the programme idea into the local context. During project implementation, multi-stakeholder dialogue plays an important role, for example in complex landscape programmes involving local communities, government and the private sector. Finally, policy dialogue is needed when project results are to be used for continuation in national programmes or policies.

Coordination between different Dutch projects
Embassy staff play an important, often informal role in coordinating Dutch projects. At the embassies, there is regular contact with staff working on development cooperation (food security or water), the agricultural council and the economic council (in Ethiopia), both of which focus on the interests of Dutch companies, as well as the PSD coach and business development coach at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, objectives and interests may differ and trade-offs need to be managed.

Coherence between projects managed by the Dutch embassy and those managed centrally from The Hague still requires special attention. Processes that contribute to coherence are the development of the MACSs, the project portfolio review and the annual work plan, in which the country team in The Hague and embassy staff work together. There is still some frustration at embassies about coordination with The Hague-based departments, although this has improved over the years. Coordination of programmes depends a great deal on personal relationships, which are good between the embassy in Addis Ababa and IGG, but not so good with other departments, such as DSO, which has

17 partnerships in Ethiopia that are not aligned with the MACS. There is apparently still no agreement on whether all Dutch activities should be aligned in the MACS, which was the expectation of the embassy. In general, it is difficult for embassies to monitor or even know about the large number of centrally-managed projects in the country. This reduces opportunities for synergies and increases the risk of duplication or introducing conflicting approaches, and undermines internal coherence.

Government-donor coordination

Government-donor coordination takes place in multi-donor programmes and at the policy level. In government-led, multi-donor projects, donor working groups help to ensure a consistent approach, achieve greater impact with lower transaction costs and reduce the burden on government capacity. It also creates delegated donor oversight and M&E. Participants can be project staff or embassy staff. National governments and other donors appreciate the active role that Dutch embassy staff and some experienced project staff play in government-donor coordination. In some cases, the Dutch embassy also provides financial support to the donor working group.

Government-donor policy dialogue and coordination working groups are the main mechanisms for dividing tasks, roles and locations among different project implementers. For example, the EU has developed a strategy to work with five river basin authorities in Ethiopia. The Dutch collaborate with the EU in three basins and the Italians in two. The EU then streamlines the overall plan and goals using the same standards and methodologies.

According to a World Bank staff member in Ethiopia, despite donor coordination working groups, there is still no full picture of who is doing what and where. More needs to be done to share information between all donors and projects working on the same (sub)theme and, where necessary, to align approaches. Such a working group can also be more effective in influencing policy. This requires more detailed coordination than is currently discussed in donor working groups.

The lack of dialogue with or low involvement of the government is cited as a missed opportunity to influence policies that are more conducive to private sector and agricultural development in Ethiopia, or to mitigate poor coordination between different government ministries and the lack of a long-term vision and priority setting in Mozambique.

A major coherence challenge is how to engage other international and influential actors beyond the usual donor suspects to avoid duplicating or undermining development objectives. For example, the presence of large Chinese fishing vessels off the coast of Mozambique has led to a significant reduction in catches by smaller Mozambican fishing boats. China, but also new private donors such as the IKEA Foundation, should be invited into donor-government working groups.

4.3.4 Thematic steering from The Hague versus country steering from embassies

The coherence of the Dutch project portfolio is partly determined by steering from The Hague and partly by steering from the embassies. Each type of steering has advantages and disadvantages, although overall the coherence of embassy-managed projects is better than that of centrally-managed projects. A particular group are the two Delta programmes that are supported by embassy-managed activities and diplomacy, and centrally-managed activities and monitoring, but where country or municipal steering was more important than thematic steering.

Thematic steering from The Hague

Steering from The Hague resulted in a greater role for the private sector and for Dutch knowledge in food security, water and climate projects. Moreover, the MFA in The Hague also encouraged a reduction in the number of activities and sectors.

Dutch PSD and Dutch knowledge approach

The Dutch focus on private sector development, in some cases involving Dutch companies, has several advantages: it brings innovation and knowledge, and works on market-based solutions that are more likely to last after donor funding ends. In some cases, too little has been done to develop viable business cases. Care must be taken not to lose sight of development objectives, such as food security and inclusiveness. Another risk is that most efforts are geared towards individual companies, and too little is done to improve the enabling environment for the private sector.

Dutch knowledge, especially in the water sector, is highly valued. It not only helps in the design of Dutch projects, but also contributes to larger programmes, strategies and policies (temporal and external coherence). It complements and mobilises much larger investments in hardware by others. One concern is that Dutch technical solutions do not always match local financial possibilities. In several cases in the water sector, the lack of knowledge on ground and surface water availability and water monitoring is mentioned as a constraint, and something that the Netherlands will invest more in in the future. With less ODA, the Netherlands remains relevant through knowledge.

Steering on fewer sectors and activities

To better manage and monitor Dutch activities and increase their impact, the ministry wants to reduce the number of activities. In some countries, certain sectors are being phased out. From a country perspective, the results seem paradoxical. In Bangladesh, food security is being phased out, reducing synergies, for example between WASH and nutrition. Opportunities for short-term knowledge-building activities are limited, which in turn diminishes coherence in large multi-donor government programmes. On the other hand, embassies with limited capacity still face too many centrally-managed activities in their country, of which they have insufficient knowledge of and cannot monitor.

Country steering from the embassy

About half the budget for food security and water (47% and 47% in 2020-2022) is managed by embassies. The ministries' water cluster in The Hague would prefer to delegate a larger share to embassies. However, absorptive capacity is low in Mozambique, for example, and even lower in more fragile countries, which explains the relatively large share spent centrally. Almost all of the climate budget is managed centrally. Embassy-managed projects are more coherent externally, and often more coherent in time and space. Embassy-managed projects tend to work well with central or local government and have stronger country ownership. In some cases, projects are even requested by the government.[68] This increases the chances of continuation and scaling up.

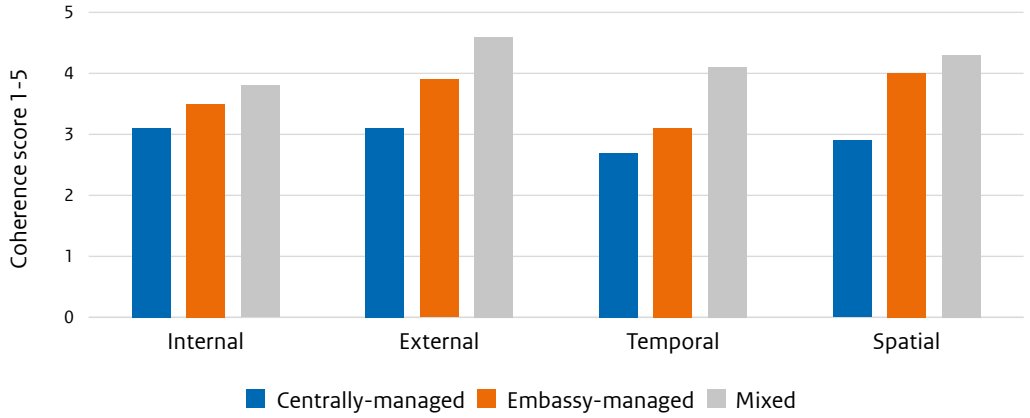
Combined steering

The two Delta programmes in Bangladesh and Mozambique are a special case. They received a mix of central and delegated funding and management. These Delta programmes score highest on all coherence dimensions, particularly with cross-SDG aspects of temporal coherence, which includes aspects such as country ownership and a systems approach. Continuity of management is important, and in some cases is better ensured by local embassy staff, and in some cases by ministry staff who remain in place for more than five years. The Delta programmes are characterised by context-specific country (or regional) management rather than thematic management.

Figure 4.13 compares the coherence of embassy-managed, centrally managed and mixed-managed projects is presented.

[68] Note that centrally-funded multilateral programmes, working with government and multiple donors, which were not included in our sample, are also externally coherent. See the comment made under 4.3.2. Choice for the types of projects.

Figure 4.13 *Differences in coherence scores between centrally-managed and embassy-managed projects and Delta programmes using a mix of central and delegated funds*



Several IOB evaluations argue for country steering and a greater role for embassies

Other IOB evaluations have come to similar conclusions as this coherence study: coherence is best ensured through embassy country steering. For example, the evaluation of Dutch policy on aid, trade and investments (2022) recommends the following: 'Provide room, means and capacity to embassies to fulfil their brokering role to bring aid and trade together'.[69] The three case study countries visited for this coherence study were relatively stable (Bangladesh, Mozambique) or had a strong government (Ethiopia), making it relatively easy to work with government organisations. These countries are not representative of all countries in which the Netherlands works. For example, fragile countries and countries in conflict will require a different approach and may make it difficult to work with government organisations. However, even in fragile states, country steering is likely to be more coherent than thematic steering. The IOB evaluation of the Dutch contribution to stability, security and the rule of law in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (2023), which looked at Afghanistan, Mali and South Sudan, recommends: 'The MFA and implementing partners should ensure that policy priorities, objectives and programmes are demand-driven and based on the national context and local needs. This also implies rethinking the thematic funding structure within the MFA in favour of country-specific interventions for fragile contexts. More decision-making power, budgets and capacity should be delegated to embassies, supported by strengthened country teams in The Hague, to better tailor interventions to local contexts.'[70]

4.3.5 Short-term projects versus long-term programmes

Projects too short for impact and sustainability

Project duration is often cited as a cause undermining temporal coherence. The short duration of most projects, 4-5 years, seems to be an administrative necessary evil that undermines long-term results, impact and scaling up. As seen in the chapter on project results, project evaluations come too early to say anything about long-term results.

A limited project duration encourages a focus on short-term visible results and limits the time for good scoping and feasibility studies, for institutional capacity building, or for setting up operation and maintenance mechanisms for the sustainability of water infrastructure. For example, the Integrated Seed Development Project had several phases of 2 and 4 years of funding, each of which was insufficient to invest in government capacity. Regional governments were only involved in project management. Had the project been assured of 10 years of project funding in advance, it would have invested more in government capacity for continuation and scaling up.

69 IOB, 2022. Gedeelde belangen, wederzijds profijt? Beleidsdoorlichting BHOS-begroting art. 1 (p. 26).
70 IOB, 2023. Inconvenient Realities. An evaluation of Dutch contributions to stability, security and rule of law in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (p. iii).

Two studies, commissioned by the Dutch Embassy in Bangladesh and by IOB[71], looked at the sustainability of water management organisations and operation and maintenance in polders in Bangladesh that received intensive project support. Sustainability after project funding ends is a major concern. The embassy foresees a three-year post-project bridging period to prevent the results achieved from collapsing.

Small pilot projects linked to large programmes

A positive exception is the case where short-term innovative pilot projects are well embedded in large, often long-term, government-led multi-donor programmes because of the successive project phases. This is the case, for example, in Ethiopia, where the results of the Small Scale and Micro Irrigation Support project or the testing of new farm practices project (CASCAPE) have fed into the large Agricultural Growth Programme (AGP).

Support for long-term strategies and short-term projects

Long-term political and financial commitment has made the Netherlands a trusted partner of national governments, especially in the area of integrated water management in Mozambique and Bangladesh, and in the area of food security in Ethiopia.

The set-up is unique in that it involves a long-term political and financial commitment (> 15 years), which is rare in development cooperation, with a modest budget, and combines the development of a long-term strategy with the government with short-term projects supported by the host government, the Netherlands and a number of other donors. The Netherlands plays an important role with technical assistance and knowledge, as well as in policy dialogue and donor coordination.

During the interviews conducted both in the case study countries and in the Netherlands, we asked various respondents to comment on the concept of supporting a long-term strategy that can be flexibly supplemented with short-term projects funded by the Netherlands and other donors. The BDP in Bangladesh and the BMP in Mozambique were used as examples. The reactions were unanimously positive, but there were concerns about (1) whether it was administratively possible to make financial commitments, even for modest budgets, over a long period, for example 15 years, and (2) how to develop a good M&E system to report on both short-term and long-term results.

In Bangladesh and Mozambique, the Netherlands has been successful in organising round tables to mobilise funding, for example from MDBs for the long-term IWRM strategies, both at the national level in Bangladesh and at the local level in Mozambique.

How to set up M&E for a long-term portfolio?

An outstanding question, which this report will not answer, is how to organise monitoring and evaluation of a portfolio that consists of a long-term strategy and various short-term projects. We present here a brief summary of the discussion we had with several stakeholders.

To date, the M&E has focused on individual projects:

- M&E of the development of a long-term strategy focuses more on the processes, with an approved or adopted strategy document as the end result.
- M&E of short-term projects, which may align with the long-term strategy, is done individually for each project. However, the project duration is often too short to have an impact or to be scaled up. There is no overview of how projects reinforce each other or contribute to overall long-term goals.

Ideally, project M&E is complemented by portfolio M&E, which looks back over a longer period of time, has a better chance of observing impact, scaling up and continuation, and can evaluate the complementarity of different projects and diplomacy in the portfolio, as well as the contribution to the overarching long-term goals.

[71] Van Steenbergen et al., 2023. Food Security and Sustainability of Institutional Interventions in Coastal Zone in Bangladesh. *Contribution to IOB Coherence Study.*

The ministry and embassies are currently discussing how this might be done. Most advanced, but still in its infancy, are activities at the Sustainable Economic Development Department. DDE has recently launched the programmatic approach to sustainable economic development (PADEO) in five countries. It combines trade, investment and private sector development efforts to strengthen the business climate at the country level. The aim is to achieve results beyond the direct results of short-term projects and individual companies, and to contribute to systemic change in a sub-sector at country level. One of the aspects of their current M&E system is monitoring for learning and adjustment during implementation. Whether and how planning, monitoring and evaluation will work best will become clearer in the coming years. It will require political will to give this approach sufficient time, at least 10 years, to develop and be evaluated. Such a long-term country strategy would need to be included in several subsequent MACSs.

With more effort on long-term portfolio evaluations, using of a portfolio-level theory of change that could include a limited number of good-quality impact evaluations, individual end-of-project evaluations could become simpler, without the ambition to measure – against all knowledge – impact, scaling up and sustainability.

5 The coherence and effects of other Dutch policies

In addition to the Dutch development policies that have food security, water and climate as their main objectives, as discussed in the previous chapter, there are other Dutch policies that have potential side effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. The ECDPM discussion paper (2022b) on the effects of developed countries' policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries led us to look at two coherence issues:

1. **Dutch import of commodities and policy for value chain sustainability.** ECDPM highlighted the negative side effects of agricultural commodity imports on deforestation and climate change, the negative side effects of the import of garments and water-demanding crops on water pollution, and the import of water-intensive crops on local water availability, water pollution and food security.
2. **Dutch and EU domestic agricultural policies.** ECDPM highlighted the negative side effects of EU agricultural exports on local agricultural development, and – related to the previous point – the import of livestock feed on deforestation and climate change.

These two issues form a relevant extension of the scope of this study on the coherence of Dutch policy. They show the extent to which other Dutch policies and interventions are coherent with Dutch development (and EU) policy in achieving results on the ground (answering sub-question 5 of the evaluation), in order

to pursue more coherent Dutch policy. These two issues are discussed in sections 5.1 and 5.2, each with their own conclusion and recommendation. Moreover, we have formulated an overarching conclusion and recommendation for these two Dutch policies together.

We first look at the internal coherence of these other policies with Dutch development policy and the possible side effects on developing countries, and then at the coherence with international long-term strategies (temporal coherence), in which system transformation plays an important role.

How coherent is Dutch import and value chain sustainability policy and Dutch domestic (and EU) agricultural policy with food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries?

Conclusion:
9. Both in Dutch policy on commodity imports and value chain sustainability, as well as in domestic (and EU) agricultural policy, we see successful efforts to mitigate the negative effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. However, the impact is likely to be limited unless consumption in the Netherlands also shifts towards a more sustainable, more plant-based diet and focuses on fewer, more durable goods.

5.1 Commodity imports and value chain sustainability

How coherent is Dutch policy on the import of commodities and value chain sustainability with food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries?

Conclusion:
9a. Dutch efforts to mitigate the negative environmental effects of imports of soy from Brazil, flowers from Ethiopia and garments from Bangladesh have been effective: the effects on deforestation and water pollution have decreased. However, these effects are likely to be limited because not enough is being done to engage other importing countries outside the EU in global agreements on sustainable trade and to adequately address sustainable consumption in the Netherlands.

The preparatory study by ECDPM (2022) showed that international trade can have negative side effects that are incoherent with development and climate policies. Our case studies show that Dutch imports of soy, flowers and garments, while having positive economic effects for developing countries, also have a negative effect on food security, water and climate in developing countries.

To address this internal incoherence and mitigate the negative effects, the Netherlands has contributed to chain sustainability by using ODA to support pilot initiatives and multi-stakeholder dialogue to set sustainability codes and standards. This has led to voluntary certification schemes, a landscape approach, national regulation and indirectly contributed to the EU Deforestation Regulation. Negative effects have indeed been partly mitigated: soy production in Brazil causes less deforestation than before, and water use and pollution have decreased in the garment industry in Bangladesh and in floriculture in Ethiopia.

However, the effects have been limited because Dutch efforts have focused on sustainable production in other countries, without involving other, non-EU consumer countries in global agreements on sustainable trade, and without adequately addressing sustainable consumption – i.e. reducing consumption – in the Netherlands itself. Dutch efforts in other countries are still spatially incoherent with Dutch domestic policies.

5.1.1 Introduction

Potential negative side effects of Dutch commodity imports in developing countries

The ECDPM study on the effects of developed countries' policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries (2022) identified a number of negative side effects of producing goods for export to developed countries. Negative side effects relevant to this study (affecting food security, water and climate objectives) include:

1. deforestation and biodiversity loss, linked to export crops such as soy and palm oil, that contribute to climate change.
2. reduced food security due to reduced local food availability and the challenges smallholder farmers face in benefiting from exports; and
3. high water use in water-stressed areas by export products such as flowers or avocados, and water pollution from the garment and leather industries, for example.[72]

ECDPM concludes that some developed country trade and investment policies[73] are incoherent with development and climate goals. In addition, the lack of corrective policies by developed countries – to address the negative impacts of producing goods in these sourcing countries – also creates incoherence with development and climate goals.

Dutch policy on import and value chain sustainability

To make Dutch trade and investment more sustainable, the Netherlands has funded projects and programmes in producer countries to help smallholder farmers produce more sustainably and enable farmers and traders to comply with stricter EU trade regulations. For sustainable value chains, the Netherlands focuses mainly on palm oil, cocoa and garments, and also on other products through partners and projects, such as Solidaridad, IDH[74], FNV[75] and CNV[76] and FWF[77] (funded by DDE and IGG). In addition, Dutch policy also includes the funding of standards programmes (such as STDF[78]) for capacity building in developing countries, and it engages in (diplomatic) interventions for more sustainable trade and investment agreements at WTO[79] and EU level – for instance, the efforts by the Department of International Trade Policy and Economic Governance (IMH[80]) in the negotiation and implementation of EU trade and investment agreements. The MFA also works with other Dutch ministries, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (LVVN) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ). Dutch experience in producer countries is fed back into discussions at Dutch, EU and international trade fora. Dutch policy pays attention to regional food trade, which is crucial for buffering local fluctuations in food production and food prices. One example is the Dutch support to TradeMark East Africa. This aligns well with the international long-term strategies for food security, as identified in ECDPM's mapping exercise.

72 There are other Dutch sustainable value chain initiatives that focus on labour conditions and safety, for example in the garment industry in Bangladesh, which are not discussed in this study.

73 ECDPM distinguishes between policies that facilitate the import of agricultural commodities leading to deforestation, policies that facilitate the production and trade of water-intensive agricultural commodities leading to water scarcity, and policies that facilitate the production in developing countries of water-intensive industrial products (such as clothing). In the Netherlands, programmes such as PSOM and PSI have supported the export of such agro-commodities.

74 *Initiatief Duurzame Handel* – Sustainable Trade Initiative.

75 *Federatie Nederlandse Vakbondvereniging* - Netherlands Trade Union Confederation.

76 *Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond* – National Federation of Christian Trade Unions.

77 Fair Wear Foundation.

78 Standards and Trade Development Facility, under the WTO.

79 World Trade Organization.

80 *Directie Internationale Marktordening en Handelspolitiek.*

The Netherlands also supports the EU's voluntary international standards on corporate responsibility. More recently, the Netherlands has committed to the legally binding EU Deforestation Regulation (EU DR), adopted in 2023, and the EU Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive (EU CSDDD), adopted in 2024. Expectations are high, but the impact remains to be seen. EU companies and importers are now responsible for the potential negative social, environmental and economic side effects of their upstream value chain activities, including production and processing in developing countries. Especially in the CSDDD, there is room for partnership and collaboration with governments of production countries (more than in the EU DR), and additional support to help producer countries and producers to comply with these new EU regulations.

Selection of three case studies

Three case studies were selected to evaluate the impact of Dutch policies and interventions on food security, water and climate on the ground. The selection of these cases was guided by the ECDPM preparatory study – as discussed – and by what could be found in the case study countries. It covers cases that have been a defining issue and recurring theme in the work and funding of MFA projects on the nexus of development cooperation and trade.

A first selected case study is the Ethiopian flower production for export to the Netherlands and related water pollution issues. The floriculture study is based on our field visit to a flower farm and a nearby community, a discussion with the horticulture sector organisation EHPEA, and numerous interviews in Ethiopia and in the Netherlands.

The second selected case study is the garment production in Bangladesh for export to the Netherlands and related water pollution issues. The garment study is based on project evaluations of the Partnership for Cleaner Textile programme (2017, 2020), and interviews with different stakeholders in The Hague and Bangladesh. PaCT is also one of the 25 project assessments presented in the previous chapters.

The third case study selected is Brazilian soy production for export to the Netherlands and the associated deforestation. The third case study was not selected based on fieldwork (Brazil was not one of the three countries visited). The soy case study was chosen because it proved to be the most important case in terms of its side effects on deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate change.[81] The case study included an additional, broader desk study not linked to a specific project. The soy study involved document review and interviews, including online interviews with people in Brazil.

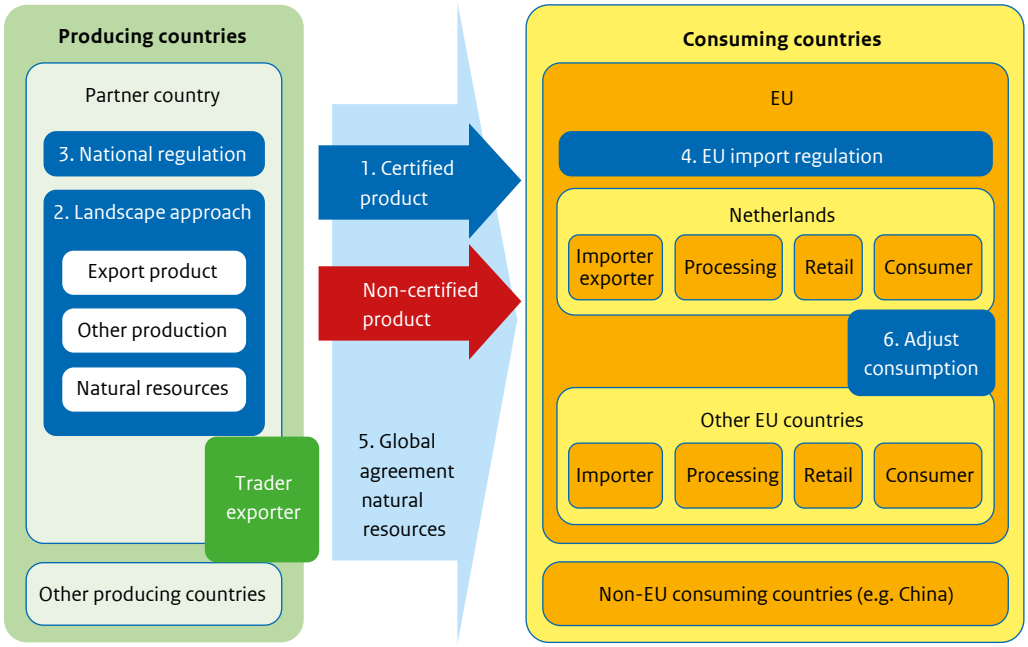
Within the selected case studies, we focused on the environmental effects of soy production, flower production and the garment industry, and not on social and economic aspects, such as working conditions and safety, and living wages, for example on flower farms and in garment factories – aspects that Dutch development cooperation also works on.

Framework for chain sustainability

For the purposes of this study, we developed a simplified analytical framework consisting of six steps for achieving chain sustainability (Figure 5.1).

[81] WWF, 2022. The impact of Dutch imports on nature loss worldwide. Our land footprint for soy, palm oil, maize, coconut, cocoa, coffee, beef & leather and timber.

Figure 5.1 *Six-step framework for achieving chain sustainability*



This six-step framework is largely derived from our case study on soy and deforestation in Brazil, and is presented here in a generalised form. Not all steps are required, nor must they follow this specific order. The first four steps fall under our assessment of development policy coherence. As we will see in the case studies, these four steps are indeed being addressed. The last two steps fall under our assessment of coherence with international long-term strategies.

Coherence with development objectives

The first four steps focus on reducing the negative environmental effects in developing countries by making production more sustainable.

1. Voluntary certification schemes

Mitigating the negative effects of commodity imports often starts with voluntary certification to a sustainability standard. The standard is often developed by a group of lead companies and environmental or social NGOs, and brought together by a facilitating organisation with ODA support. The idea is that the demand for certified products from industry or consumers in consuming countries will gradually increase, resulting in a larger market share and a reduction in additional costs. Although this approach increases internal coherence between trade and development objectives, there is a risk that a large proportion of non-certified products sold to other consumers or other countries will still have the same negative effects (spatial coherence). Moreover, national governments are often not involved at this stage (external coherence).

2. Landscape approach

In several cases, making the production of a product more sustainable at field level has proved insufficient to address the environmental problem. For example, other agricultural activities may also be contributing to deforestation or to water overuse. In response, programmes such as the IDH's ISLA programme have introduced a landscape approach, in which different agricultural activities and the natural resources in question, such as a forest or a river basin, are jointly managed by farmers, communities and local government. This is a big step forward in terms of spatial and external coherence. However, if these landscapes are small and not scaled up, the overall impact will still be limited.

3. National regulation in producing countries

Pilot schemes for voluntary certification by international companies are sometimes accompanied by a national policy dialogue in producing countries, as a contribution to national sustainability regulations. In most cases, national governments set national standards to which all producers must adhere, for example on how much land must remain under forest cover or how to treat waste water before it can be discharged. When national and international standards converge or are jointly developed (external coherence),

this creates a level playing field for all producers in that country (spatial coherence). However, in some countries, a national standard has not yet been developed, is lower than what European importing countries are aiming for or is hardly enforced.

4. Import regulations in importing countries

A clear example of an import regulation is the EU Deforestation Regulation. Products produced on recently deforested land cannot be imported into the EU. An advantage is that it creates a level playing field for all producing countries, and the scale of the impact is far greater than that of the previous steps. A disadvantage, however, is that it is being developed unilaterally, not together with the governments of producing countries (externally incoherent), and that producing countries, particularly smallholder producers, may be excluded from EU imports unless additional support measures are taken. There is also a risk that producing countries with sufficient alternative markets outside the EU will continue with business as usual. Spatial incoherence undermines sustainability.

Coherence with international long-term strategies

International long-term strategies point to the need to link production, consumption and the environment. This requires not only paying attention to making production more sustainable in producing countries, but also paying attention to making consumption more sustainable in importing countries.

5. Global agreement on natural resource management

If some importing countries and the EU have stringent sustainability standards, while other importing countries, such as China, do not, the net effect on sustainability may be limited; spatial coherence is low. Similar to the international agreements on climate change and biodiversity, there could be an international agreement on sustainability standards for internationally traded goods at the global level, with the main producing and consuming countries. This would improve spatial and external coherence.

6. Adjustment of consumption in consuming countries

Finally, even if production becomes more sustainable, we may still be overusing our natural resources such as land, biodiversity, water and space for greenhouse gas emissions at current high and growing levels of consumption. Several long-term strategies, both for food security and climate, stress the importance of matching sustainable consumption with sustainable production. In some cases, this may require a shift in the products we consume, for example less beef and more fish and plant-based proteins, and in the quantity and durability of the products we buy, for example fewer new clothes that last longer or are made from different or recycled materials. This would improve temporal coherence with long-term strategies for sustainable production and consumption.

The evaluation questions

The four evaluation questions used for the food security, water and climate development activities in the previous chapters have been slightly adapted for the value chain sustainability interventions:

1. What have been the negative side effects of trade in the specific commodities in the past?
2. What efforts have been made to improve value chain sustainability?
3. What are the effects of these efforts?
4. What processes steer value chain sustainability and corresponding coherence?

5.1.2 Three case studies

1. Addressing deforestation in soy production in Brazil

Dutch support for sustainable soy from Brazil has gradually become more coherent and effective, and has contributed to the recently adopted EU Deforestation Regulation. However, the risk remains that unsustainable soy will be exported to non-EU countries and that deforestation will continue.

Introduction
The Netherlands has a policy ambition to help reduce deforestation in tropical rainforests: the Amazon, the Congo Basin and the forests in Southeast Asia. In 2020, the Dutch policy ambition was to stop deforestation by 2030, mainly by making value chains more sustainable.[82] At the same time, the Netherlands still imports many agricultural commodities such as soy, palm oil, cocoa, beef and timber that contribute to deforestation.[83] Aware of this internal incoherence, the Netherlands has supported projects and diplomacy to make this supply chain more sustainable.

Context of soy in Brazil
A few decades ago, soy was a major driver of deforestation in the Amazon. Following the Amazon Soy Moratorium, a voluntary agreement between the major international soy trading companies and civil society organisations to stop trading soy from deforested land after 2008, soy cultivation expanded in the Cerrado, an open savannah south of the Amazon. The Cerrado does not qualify as a true forest, but its conversion to soy is still leading to the loss of trees and biodiversity, as well as high greenhouse gas emissions. In the Amazon, deforestation has decreased and is now mainly caused by illegal logging, land speculation and cattle breeding for the local market, rather than soy.

Since 2008, Brazil has had a forest code that states that private land in dense forests, such as the Amazon, can only be cleared to 20%, while private land in open savannahs, such as the Cerrado can be cleared to 80%. Brazil has a land registry where farmers themselves can indicate their property boundaries, a system that could be used to develop a traceability system to see whether products have been produced on recently deforested land.

Coherence with development policy
The steps in this section address the sustainability of soy production in Brazil, including EU regulations to stop the import of soy that contributes to deforestation.

Phases in the Dutch efforts to make the soy supply chain more sustainable
In theory, there are several phases in making supply chains more sustainable: (1) first, a small number of pioneering companies and environmental organisations jointly develop voluntary sustainability standards;

(2) then, a growing number of companies feel pressure from other companies and consumers – mainly in the United States and Europe – to adhere to these standards; (3) finally, governments in producing countries enact legislation that all producers must comply with.

The Dutch efforts, involving IDH, Solidaridad and the Amsterdam Declaration Partnership, more or less adhere to these three phases, although there are differences in the third phase. A review of these phases also shows a gradual improvement of the different types of coherence (see Figure 5.2).

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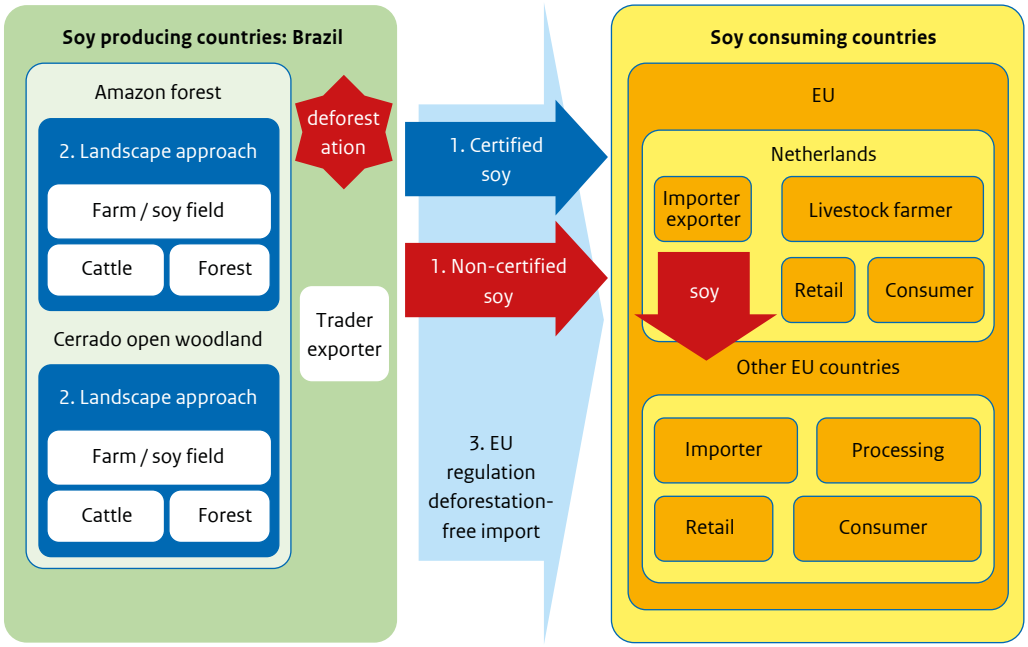
82 Ministers for BHOS and LNV, 2020. Kamerbrief over internationale inzet voor bosbehoud en bosherstel.
83 Greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and land conversion related to Dutch soy import equals 12% of total Dutch greenhouse gas emissions (WWF, 2022. The impact of Dutch imports on nature loss worldwide. Our land footprint for soy, palm oil, maize, coconut, cocoa, coffee, beef & leather and timber).

Figure 5.2 *Three phases of chain sustainability. 1: Voluntary certification; 2: Landscape approach; 3: EU deforestation regulation*



1. Voluntary sustainability standards

The Netherlands has been involved in discussions about sustainable soy since the 1990s, which led to the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) in 2006 and the RTRS production standard in 2010.[84] Currently, 60% of soy imported as livestock feed for use in the Netherlands is RTRS certified,[85] but soy imported in the Netherlands for transit to other European countries is not. In 2015, the Amsterdam Declarations for responsible supply chain management to preserve primary forests, and high conservation value areas were launched. The Amsterdam Declarations Partnership facilitated the process, with several European countries committing to import deforestation-free products. Nevertheless, much unsustainable soy from Brazil found its way to countries outside Europe where sustainability was less of a priority.

In terms of coherence, this is a first step: better internal coherence between Dutch soy imports and Dutch policy to reduce deforestation.

2. A landscape approach

Meanwhile, it has become clear that sustainable soy does not prevent deforestation for cattle farming or poor forest management in general. This triggered the landscape approach in 2014-2015, implemented by IDH in Mato Grosso. In small pilot areas, multi-stakeholder agreements were negotiated between local governments, local communities, large farms and agribusinesses to agree on an integrated approach to sustainable arable farming, livestock and forest management. These are still small-scale initiatives that have been replicated elsewhere, but have not yet influenced large-scale deforestation.

In terms of coherence this is a second step: better spatial coherence between croplands, grazing lands and forests; and better external coherence by working with local governments.

3. EU Deforestation Regulation

In 2023, partly in parallel with earlier initiatives, the EU regulation banning imports of products that cause deforestation came into force. This has a potentially huge impact. For soy, it means that soy produced on land that was deforested after 2020 cannot be imported into Europe. The regulation applies

[84] The RTRS certification uses a mass balance system. The certified product may still come from deforested land but will be accompanied by a certificate for deforestation-free production elsewhere (WWF, 2021. Gecertificeerde soja en ontbossing (certified soy deforestation).).

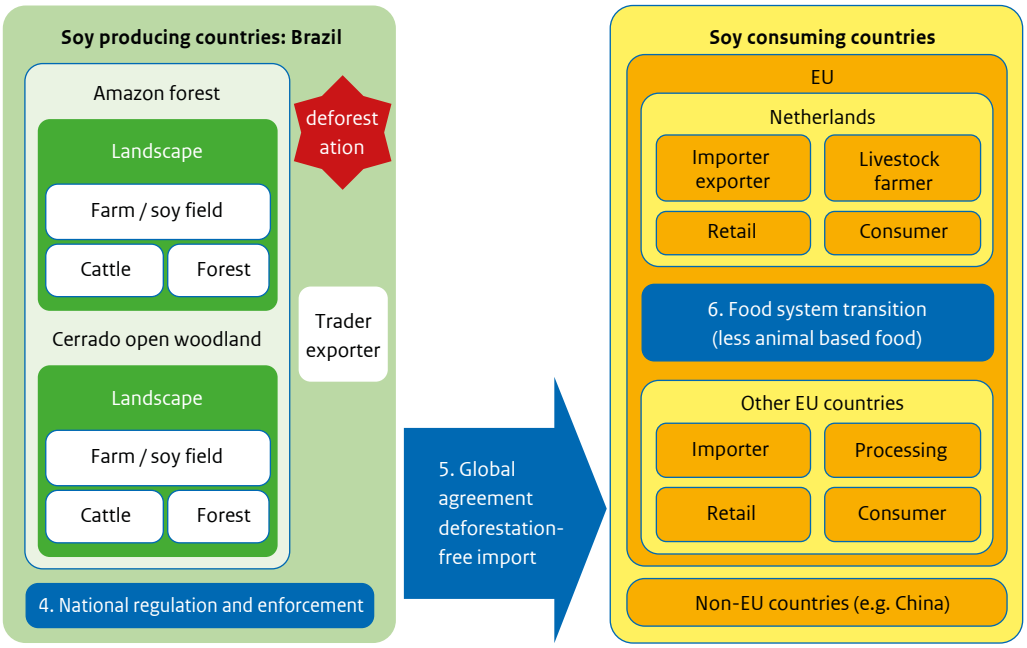
[85] The other 40% of Dutch livestock feed soy is European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC) certified, which allows legal deforestation and deforestation in the Cerrado (WWF, 2021. Gecertificeerde soja en ontbossing.).

to dense forest, which includes the Amazon but not the Cerrado, something that will need rethinking when the regulation is evaluated after one year. The expectations about the effects of the regulation on deforestation are mixed. Compared to previous initiatives, the effect could be significant, especially if the Brazilian government and large companies see an advantage in bringing all production and exports into compliance with the regulation, including soy that is not exported to the EU. However, the effect of the regulation could be nullified if Brazil chooses to separate sustainable soy for the EU from non-sustainable soy for export to non-EU countries, in which case deforestation would continue.

In terms of coherence, this is a third step: a potential spatial coherence between areas that already produce sustainable soy and other areas that would ideally choose to produce sustainable soy as well.

Remaining risks of deforestation
Despite the progress made in the three phases, there are three remaining risks and dimensions of incoherence that could lead to continued deforestation, and which require Dutch and European attention (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 *Three remaining risks. 4: National regulation in Brazil; 5: International agreements with consumer countries; 6: Transition of the food system to a less animal-based and more plant-based diet*



4. National regulation and enforcement
According to Dutch policy officers, the Brazilian government and the governments of other producing countries should have been more involved in the joint development of the regulation. The EU regulation and the Brazilian forest law are not yet externally coherent. The EU is only a small and declining soy market (15%) for Brazil, so there is a risk that unsustainable soy will be exported to non-EU countries. The EU could help the Brazilian government, for example, to develop its land registry into a traceability system and facilitate compliance with the EU regulation.

Coherence with international long-term strategies
In addition to production, this section also looks at consumption in importing countries.

5. International agreement on deforestation-free imports
The second risk is the import of unsustainable soy by countries outside the EU. If Brazil chooses to export sustainable soy to the EU and unsustainable soy to other countries, deforestation will continue. There is a lack of external coherence between the policies of the EU, Brazil and non-EU countries. The EU could use diplomacy and support to persuade other large importing countries, such as China, which imports 70% of Brazil's soy, to work with Brazil and other producing countries to develop

deforestation-free trade regulations, in partnership with producing countries. This would require a similar diplomacy effort to that used in the international climate negotiations and could build on the global biodiversity agreement.

6. Domestic food system transition

The third risk, reflecting the internal and spatial incoherence of Dutch policies, is that the Netherlands has focused all its efforts on making production in Brazil more sustainable. However, it has not yet made sufficient efforts to promote more sustainable consumption in the Netherlands, including reducing overall consumption. As we will see in the next chapter, the Dutch agricultural policy (2018) and the EU's Farm to Fork strategy call for more circular agriculture, which would reduce the need for imported soy and reduce the pressure on natural resources such as the forests in Brazil. Beyond the scope of this study: the effects on developing countries, Dutch domestic support for the livestock sector, which uses much of the imported soy, is internally incoherent with Dutch domestic health policy, which promotes a more plant-based diet, and Dutch and EU environmental policies, including targets to reduce nitrogen deposition. There has been little effort yet to develop a coherent Dutch food policy and food system transition. As with global emission reduction targets, the Dutch contribution to reducing deforestation may be small, but it is necessary in international negotiations to solve global problems that also affect developing countries.

2. Addressing water use and pollution in floriculture in Ethiopia

Dutch support for Dutch floriculture companies in Ethiopia has contributed to employment and foreign currency for Ethiopia. But floriculture has also led to increased water use and water pollution, and conflicts over land. Dutch policy has evolved over time, especially in terms of internal coherence. Support to the sector organisation, the EHPEA, has led to agreements and codes to improve labour conditions and water use, but has not contributed to local agricultural development or food security.

Coherence with development policy

The steps in this section address the sustainability of flower production in Ethiopia.

The Netherlands has supported Dutch floriculture companies to start and expand floriculture in Ethiopia. This has so far been done with modest ODA private sector development grants.[86] In addition, the Netherlands continues to support companies with economic diplomacy and business support services. Dutch efforts have contributed to the development of a large sub-sector, with about 80 Dutch floriculture companies. The Ethiopian flower sector employs about 80,000 people, 80% of whom are women, and generates an annual export value of about USD 500 million from a relatively small land area. Flowers are Ethiopia's third largest export earner, after coffee and gold.[87]

In terms of our assessment of external coherence, Dutch trade and investment policy was found to be externally coherent with Ethiopian policy: the Dutch trade and investment policy of promoting international earning capacity and investment by Dutch companies in Ethiopia has been coherent with the Ethiopian policy objectives of generating export earnings and employment for Ethiopia. However, the evaluations of the selected projects and programmes in Ethiopia[88] and interviews with various stakeholders in Ethiopia and the Netherlands also show that the presence of Dutch companies has contributed to increased risks of land conflicts, diminishing water availability and water pollution.

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86 Dutch (and later non-Dutch) companies could obtain moderate funds – at a maximum of 750,000 euros (and 900,000 for fragile states) – through the subsidy programmes the 'Programme for Co-operation with Emerging Markets' (PSOM) and its successor, the 'Private Sector Investment programme' (PSI). The programme aimed to foster innovative private sector pilot investments, together with local business partners in upcoming markets. PSOM and PSI ran from 1998 to 2014.

87 For 2022 (latest OEC data), Ethiopian export earnings equalled USD 4.24 billion. Export earnings were led by coffee (USD 1.6 billion worth of export value), gold (USD 546 million) and cut flowers (USD 255 million). Source: OEC. world (2024) 'Ethiopia'.

88 See Annex 3 for an overview of selected programmes and projects in Ethiopia.

In terms of internal coherence, significant steps have been taken. In earlier years Dutch trade and investment policy showed strong incoherence with the Dutch development policy objectives of water and food security. For example, international and domestic flower companies were held accountable for the problems of water contamination and water source depletion in the surrounding areas. Dutch companies may not have been the biggest contributors to the water problems – most are more efficient and cleaner than many local irrigated farms – but they were more visible and easier to blame.

Dutch policy is changing, with some important developments since the integration of the aid and trade agenda in 2013.[89] In recent years, Dutch responsible business conduct (RBC) policy has focused on reducing the incoherence between trade and investment policy and development policy. For instance, by facilitating and signing as a partner (together with Dutch companies and civil society) to the Dutch floriculture agreement in 2019.[90] Since 2013, the Netherlands has also provided ODA support to the sector organisation the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA),[91] which includes most Dutch floriculture and horticulture companies. EHPEA has discussed with the Ethiopian government the development of a national water quality standard, which was approved in 2022. This water standard is compulsory for all commercial export farms. EHPEA has also developed a voluntary Code of Practice. This is a quality management system that takes into account good agricultural practices, environmental protection, occupational health and safety and employment practices. It has different levels of ambition (bronze, silver and gold) and buyers may require a certain minimum level. Interviews with different stakeholders confirmed that there is likely to have been an improvement in the export floriculture sector.

However, interviews with different types of stakeholders also revealed that there are still doubts about how much the floriculture sector contributes to food security through increased income for Ethiopians. Wages are low: around USD 35-50 per month, which is above the minimum wage but below a living wage. Workers are unlikely to be able to buy enough healthy food for their families. In discussions with the Ethiopian government, EHPEA had proposed raising the minimum wage. This was resisted because it would mean that the Ethiopian government would also have to raise the wages of its own lowest-paid workers. In addition, higher wage costs would make Ethiopian exports less competitive. EHPEA recommends a 'cluster minimum wage' to its members, which varies by zone and region. This has resulted in fewer negotiations, conflicts and strikes.

In terms of our assessment of spatial coherence, although there are now more Ethiopian experts and service providers for the sector in the areas where horticulture is concentrated, such as Ziway, the fieldwork showed that there is not much spillover (no spatial coherence) from the development of the high-tech horticulture sector to local agricultural development. This is because Ethiopian policy – which controls and restricts imports, exports and access to foreign currency – creates a strict separation between export agricultural development and local agricultural development. Consequently, Ethiopian economic policy (formulated at the federal government level) does not align with the objectives of regional governments and local communities – to promote local agricultural development and food security.

In terms of our overall assessment of policy coherence, discussions and interviews with local community members, other donors and Dutch policy officials revealed a general consensus that investing in food production would be more beneficial to food security than promoting floriculture for export, despite the jobs and income it would generate. Supporting food production would also align with Ethiopia's priority to invest in small and large-scale wheat production to substitute the current wheat import, which is also a burden on the balance of payments. In addition, flower exports are not in line with international long-term food security[92] strategies, which advocate more regional food trade rather than exports to Europe,

89 In 2012 (under the Rutte II cabinet), development cooperation, trade and investment policies were combined for the first time into one policy agenda, 'the new agenda for aid, trade and investment'. The new ministerial post and accompanying policy agenda merged policies on trade and investment that were previously the responsibility of the MEA with the policies on development cooperation and private sector development in developing countries, the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IOB, 2021, p. 13).

90 In 2019, Dutch companies, the Dutch government and civil society signed the Dutch floriculture agreement ('IMVO-covenant Sierteeltsector'). The agreement includes arrangements for water use, the use of pesticides and minimum wages.

91 Approximately EUR 11.4 million, distributed between 2016 and 2023 (MIBZ, 2024).

92 See ECDPM study (2022a).

and long-term climate strategies, which advocate reducing greenhouse gas emissions, for example from air transport. Support to the wheat sector would thus be both externally coherent, and more internally, temporally and spatially coherent than support to the floriculture sector.

Coherence with international long-term strategies

International long-term strategies emphasise the need to link production, consumption and the environment. However, there is limited policy focus or discussion among policymakers about the desirability of importing flowers or the possibility of reducing flower imports from developing countries, to reduce the negative environmental effects. Clearly, there are trade-offs between economic interests and food security, water and climate.

3. Addressing water use and pollution in the garment industry in Bangladesh

The Netherlands has successfully helped to reduce water pollution in a number of large garment factories in Bangladesh. However, the Netherlands has pulled out early. The Bangladeshi government now needs further support to enforce the water regulations needed for large-scale implementation in the many smaller garment factories. There has been limited effort to make consumption in the Netherlands more sustainable, for example by promoting the purchase of fewer and more durable garments.

Coherence with development objectives

In this section, the emphasis is on making production more sustainable.

For the garment sector in Bangladesh, Dutch trade and investment policy was found to be externally coherent with Bangladeshi policy: the garment industry in Bangladesh is an important sector that creates opportunities for Bangladesh and the Netherlands and serves the policy objectives of both countries. On the Bangladeshi side, the garment trade, particularly exports, creates opportunities for employment and economic growth. On the Dutch side, the garment trade, particularly the sourcing of garments and investment in the garment industry, creates opportunities for the earning capacity of Dutch companies and investors. In 2022, the Netherlands imported EUR 1.53 billion worth of garments from Bangladesh (85% of the total Dutch import volume of garments; EUR 1.8 billion).[93]

Our assessment of internal coherence reveals incoherence between trade and investment policy and development cooperation policy. While the garment industry has positively contributed to development cooperation objectives by creating employment, it has also had negative effects on these objectives. The sector is characterised by high employment rates, but it also suffers from poor and unsafe labour conditions, low wages, high water use and water pollution.

To overcome this incoherence, the Netherlands has made efforts to enhance responsible business practices in the garment industry. This has occurred through diplomatic efforts at the bilateral and multilateral levels, and through various projects and programmes. For example, to overcome water pollution and reduce water use, the Netherlands and IFC[94] supported a multi-stakeholder dialogue programme – the Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT), phases 1 and 2, between 2012 and 2022 – with a selection of about 200 large garment factories, the government and international clothing brands. With concessional loans from IFC and 'green loans' from the Bangladesh government, factories have invested in wastewater treatment facilities. This not only reduces water pollution and water consumption, but also saves chemicals and energy, and lowers production costs.

However, to reduce the environmental impact and resource consumption, the entire garment sector in Bangladesh, consisting of over 2,000 factories, would need to adopt these practices and comply with the government regulation on wastewater. For this to happen, smaller factories need access to knowledge and finance for investment, international brands and retailers need to take more responsibility in their

93 CBS (2023). 'Trade Netherlands – Bangladesh'.
94 Later joined by other donors.

supply chains (currently enforced by new EU regulations), and most importantly, the government's capacity to inspect water – in terms of staff and resources – needs to be strengthened. The Netherlands has pulled out of this programme early, but IFC and other donors have continued.

It is questionable whether reducing water pollution in the current size of the garment industry will be sufficient to address water-related problems in Bangladesh. It is also possible that part of the garment industry will move to low-income countries once Bangladesh has become a middle-income country and loses the preferential EU trade status it had as low-income country under the EU's Everything but Arms scheme.

Coherence with long-term international strategies

In this section, we discuss the linkages between production, consumption and environment.

In terms of our assessment of spatial and temporal coherence, incoherence exists that deserves attention and further discussion. From a global and long-term perspective, the current fashion industry is not sustainable. The global garment industry produces about 100 billion items of clothing per year, with production increasing each year. A substantial portion of these items is never worn, and many are discarded after only a few months, long before they are worn out. This raises the question of whether Dutch policy should focus only on production elsewhere or also on consumption in the Netherlands. This would address the spatial and temporal coherence between producing and consuming countries, and the temporal coherence that also emphasises the link between sustainable production and sustainable consumption for natural resource management and climate change mitigation.

5.1.3 Synthesis

According to the four evaluation questions for this subject, this section (1) summarises the negative effects in the past, (2) reflects on the Dutch efforts and the (3) expected effects according to the six steps of our chain sustainability framework, and (4) on the processes contributing to chain sustainability and policy coherence.

Confirmation of the negative environmental effects in the past

Literature and interviews confirm the negative environmental effects of soy production on deforestation in Brazil, flower production on water scarcity and water pollution in Ethiopia, and the garment industry on water pollution in Bangladesh.

Dutch efforts and effects following the six steps of our value chain sustainability framework

Reflecting on the six steps of the chain sustainability framework we developed for this study, we see several steps where the Netherlands has made a good contribution, and others that are worth considering in future work. A distinction needs to be made here between coherence with development objectives – where most attention is given to sustainable production (steps 1-4) – and coherence with international long-term strategies – where attention is given to the system, including sustainable production and sustainable consumption (steps 5-6).

Coherence with development policies (steps 1-4)

This section focuses primarily on sustainable production in developing countries.

1. The development of voluntary standards and voluntary certification schemes by leading private companies and an industry association, supported by an ODA-funded facilitating organisation, has been effective in all three case studies: the efforts have helped to reduce deforestation and water pollution. As expected, the impact of this first step alone was limited.

2. A landscape approach is an extension of the single product sustainability standard.[95] It has shown strong local results in forest and land management in Brazil, and the approach is being replicated on a modest scale in Brazil and in other countries. The Netherlands has put the landscape approach on

[95] The IDH, IWLMA (Intergrated land management and WASH) and ISLA programmes.

the agenda, for example in Ethiopia, where the government is developing water allocation plans and, with support from the Netherlands, river basin monitoring and regulation. The impact on reducing deforestation in Brazil or water use in Ethiopia at the national level has been limited thus far.

3. National regulation either already existed, on forest management in Brazil (2008), or was developed through policy dialogue in parallel with the project work on voluntary standards: wastewater management in Ethiopia (2022). The main advantage of such national regulation is that it creates a level playing field for all companies in the country, but the deforestation standards in Brazil are low from our European perspective, and government enforcement of the wastewater and water use regulation in Ethiopia and Bangladesh is weak.

4. EU import regulation, here limited to the EU Deforestation Regulation, has the advantage of creating a level playing field for all producing countries and has a potentially large-scale impact. However, it has been imposed unilaterally and has not been developed with the governments of producing countries. Moreover, non-EU importing countries have not been involved, with the risk that unsustainable production will continue for export to non-EU countries, creating trade diversion rather than more sustainable trade.

Policy officers working on international trade and value chain sustainability see the recently adopted EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD – June 2024) as a very welcome next step in making EU import and value chains more sustainable, providing more scope for partnerships with producer countries than the EU DR did and aiming to create a level playing field for EU companies.

Coherence with international long-term strategies

This section looks at the system, including sustainable consumption in importing countries.

5. Global agreements for natural resource management have not yet affected our case study products soy, flowers and garments. To address the limitations of EU regulations at the global level, ideally a global agreement on sustainable production and trade would be reached, at least with the major producing and consuming countries. This would require negotiations similar to the international climate negotiations and could build on the global biodiversity agreement.

6. Sustainable consumption, beyond the promotion of certified products, was not part of the value chain sustainability efforts in our three case studies. Most efforts, including in the EU CSDDD, are aimed at improving the sustainability of production in other countries, not at sustainable consumption in the Netherlands or the EU. Various studies and experts confirm that, even if production becomes more sustainable, high and rising levels of consumption – such as soy used for livestock feed in meat and dairy production, or fast fashion clothing – will continue to negatively impact natural resources such as land and water, and contribute to global climate change. Focusing on production alone is insufficient to achieve the internationally agreed global environmental goals,[96], [97] to adapt Dutch resource use to planetary boundaries,[98] or to meet the Dutch policy goal of halving the ecological footprint by 2050.[99] A transition to sustainable production and consumption and a more circular economy also requires changes in our consumption patterns.

For food consumption, this may mean switching from beef to fish or chicken, or eating less animal-based food altogether;[100] for garments, it may mean switching from fast fashion to buying fewer clothes that are more durable, easier to repair and to easier to recycle.[101]

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96 Lucas et al., 2020. Insights from Global Environmental Assessments: Lessons for the Netherlands. PBL Report.
97 United Nations Environment Programme, 2024. Bend the trend. Pathways to a liveable planet as resource use spikes. Global Resources Outlook 2024.
98 Lucas and Wilting, 2018. Towards a Safe Operating Space for the Netherlands. Using planetary boundaries to support national implementation of environment-related SDGs. PBL Report.
99 Van Oorschot et al, 2021. Halveren van de Nederlandse voetafdruk. Reflectie op een nieuwe ambitie voor het Nederlandse nationale en internationale natuurbeleid. PBL Report.
100 Willett et al., 2019. Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems.
101 European Commission, 2022 Strategy for sustainable and circular textiles.

Processes leading to value chain sustainability and policy coherence
Reflecting on the processes leading to value chain sustainability, we see that private sector initiatives have been a good first step, but that government regulations, both in producing and importing countries, are needed to ensure a level playing field and impact at scale.
Looking forward and considering long-term strategies that point to the need to link sustainable production to sustainable consumption, more diplomatic efforts would still be needed to align the development of regulations in producing countries with regulations in importing countries, and, ideally, for the EU to sufficiently involve other non-EU importing countries. So far, Dutch and EU efforts in the three case studies have focused on making production more sustainable, but not yet on making consumption more sustainable. Recent EU initiatives under the Green Deal, such as the circular economy strategy and the Farm to Fork strategy, have met with resistance and have not yet led to new policies.

5.2 Dutch and EU domestic agricultural policy

How coherent is Dutch (and EU) domestic agricultural policy with food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries?

Conclusion:
9b. Current Dutch and EU agricultural policies have become more coherent with agricultural development objectives in developing countries. However, they are not yet coherent with long-term strategies for food system transformation and will therefore continue to contribute to biodiversity loss and global climate change, which affect developing countries the most.

The coherence of EU agricultural policies with international development and global climate objectives has improved with the shift from EU product and export subsidies to direct income support since the 2003 and the recent EU Deforestation Regulation (2023). Currently, EU and Dutch agricultural policies have fewer negative effects on agricultural development in developing countries, but may still contribute to biodiversity loss and deforestation in third countries, and continue to contribute to global climate change.

Coherence with long-term strategies for food system transformation that align agricultural production with nutritional needs within planetary boundaries is still weak. The recent EU Farm to Fork strategy reflects aspects of food system transformation strategies relevant to the EU, but is still a work in progress with uncertain outcomes.

The political economy of food system transformation makes it difficult to address trade-offs between short-term and long-term interests, between private and public interests, and between domestic and developing countries interests. Resistance and protests show that more efforts are needed to translate the long-term coherent vision of the Farm to Fork strategy into a medium-term 'just transition' pathway that adequately addresses the concerns of EU farmers and consumers.

This sub-chapter is divided into two sections: (1) coherence with development objectives, which describes the negative effects in the past, the improvement of policy coherence, and the effects on developing countries thus far; and (2) coherence with international long-term strategies, which explains the transformation of the food system, describes new policy initiatives and their expected effects, and explains the processes that contribute to policy coherence.

5.2.1 Coherence with development objectives

Negative effects of Dutch and EU agricultural policies on developing countries in the past

Dutch and EU agricultural policies have discouraged agricultural development in developing countries and contributed to biodiversity loss and climate change.

The ECDPM study[102] on the effects of developed countries' policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries identified two negative effects: (1) agricultural subsidies distort the world market and make food cheap, which is good for poor consumers but can discourage farmers and agricultural development in developing countries, and (2) the import of agricultural commodities, including soy for livestock feed, contributes to deforestation and biodiversity loss in producing countries and to greenhouses gas emissions and climate change worldwide, which affect vulnerable developing countries the most.

Two studies confirm the large environmental and climate footprint of the Netherlands in other countries, in particular deforestation, land degradation and water over-exploitation caused by the import of major commodities such as food, animal feed, biofuel and also clothing.[103], [104]

Agricultural production itself contributes to global climate change and accounts for about 11% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions. Although emissions fell between 1990 and 2005 as a result of energy-saving measures, they have remained stable since 2005. Most emissions come from methane from livestock (43%), followed by nitrous oxide from chemical fertilisers (38%) and animal manure (15%).[105] As production has increased, the emissions per kg of product have decreased.[106]

Progress in coherence and the effects of EU and Dutch agricultural policies

Coherence with international development policies has improved

The coherence of the EU's domestic agricultural policy with international agricultural development policies has improved considerably since product price support was replaced by area-based subsidies for certain products in the 1990s, which were subsequently decoupled from products in 2003. Export subsidies were gradually phased out between 2001 and 2015. These reforms made EU agricultural policy less market-distorting and reduced unfair competition with farmers elsewhere, including in developing countries.[107]

Specific case studies on milk powder, chicken meat and tomato paste showed only limited effects of EU subsidies on competition with local production. For milk, current EU policy continues to result in high milk production and thus a relatively low price. However, competition from EU milk powder was found to be due to the substitution of butter by cheaper fat, which is not caused by EU subsidies. Chicken meat from the EU is still more expensive than in other producing countries, such as Brazil. The price of tomato paste from the EU is only marginally reduced by EU subsidies.[108] In conclusion, EU agricultural policies have become less market-distorting. Nevertheless, many African countries are still too dependent on cheap food imports and need further agricultural development to become more resilient in food security. Remaining negative effects on agriculture in developing countries are no longer caused by EU agricultural policies, but rather by trade agreements (WTO or bilateral EU) on processed food and high quality standards. In fact, they sometimes create trade barriers for developing country agricultural producers to integrate into global value chains.

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[102] ECDPM, 2022b. Effects of major and emerging economies policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries. IOB commissioned the ECDPM study as preparation for the IOB coherence study. The ECDPM study and an accompanying IOB summary note are on the IOB website.

[103] CBS, 2022. Monitor Brede Welvaart.

[104] Van Oorschot et al., 2021. Halveren van de Nederlandse voetafdruk. PBL Report.

[105] European Environment Agency, 2022. Progress and prospects for decarbonisation in the agriculture sector and beyond.

[106] A note of caution: some people interpret low emissions per kg of product as a measure of sustainability. However, this reasoning is incomplete: a sustainable food system needs to (1) produce sufficient nutritious food, (2) within ecological boundaries, so that future generations can also produce sufficient food. Efficiency can help within these two requirements.

[107] Matthews and Soldi, 2019. Evaluation of the impact of the current CAP on the agriculture of developing countries.

[108] Matthews and Soldi, 2019. Evaluation of the impact of the current CAP on the agriculture of developing countries.

Coherence with international forest and climate ambitions

The EU recently adopted the Deforestation Regulation, which prohibits the import of goods produced on recently deforested land, with the aim of reducing deforestation in producing countries. It applies to cattle, wood, cocoa, soy, palm oil and rubber, and concerns dense forests, not open savannah woodland. For EU agriculture, it is expected to reduce the negative impact of imports of soy for livestock feed. As explained in the previous sub-chapter on value chain sustainability of soy, deforestation and biodiversity loss will depend on whether more effort is made (i) to support governments and farmers in producing countries to produce according to EU regulation, and (ii) to encourage large non-EU importing countries, such as China, to adopt similar regulations, and (iii) to reduce soy consumption in the EU, for example through more circular agriculture and dietary changes. If these efforts are not successful, deforestation may continue despite the EU regulation.

5.2.2 Coherence with long-term strategies

Long-term strategies for food system transformation

Coherence of agricultural policies can be improved by using long-term strategies for food system transformation: an agricultural system that produces sufficient nutritious food, within ecological boundaries.

ECDPM's inventory of international long-term strategies for food security, water and climate (2022a) presents several strategies for food system transformation. These strategies align agricultural production and food consumption within ecological planetary boundaries.

One strategy that is often referred to is the EAT Lancet report[109] of 2019. The study starts with the nutritional needs to feed a global population of 10 billion people in 2050, considers planetary boundaries including land and greenhouse gas emissions, and identifies matching diets and production systems. It presents several scenarios, including a shift to a healthier diets, reduced waste and improved production practices. The study concludes that producing sufficient nutritious food within planetary boundaries is possible, but would require a shift in diet towards more plant-based foods, especially vegetables, legumes and fruits, and more fish but less other animal-based foods. Note that this is based on an average global diet, while in many developing countries, food-insecure people may need more, not less, animal-based products.

Two studies have calculated how the EU could feed itself with a healthy diet while minimising greenhouse gas emissions and land use. The first option is to transition towards circular agriculture. Waste is used as livestock feed and compost, reducing the need for imported feed, pasture and chemical fertiliser. Beef production would decrease, eggs and dairy production would remain stable, while pork and fish production would increase. The second option is to also adjust diets – more plant-based and less animal-based – as recommend by the 2019 Eat Lancet report. Beef and pork production would fall sharply, egg production would fall slightly, and dairy and fish production would remain stable. Both studies show large decreases in greenhouse gas emissions (22%-70%) and agricultural land use (44%-71%).[110], [111]

Although the need for a global food system transition is recognised, current agricultural policies do not support this. Various international studies show that the current agricultural support and subsidies, which amount to about USD 800 billion per year globally, perpetuate the status quo in agriculture and hinder food system transformation. These studies advocate repurposing agricultural support and subsidies, for example from the current EU per-hectare income support to investment in (1) research and development of more sustainable agriculture, and (2) support for current farmers to make the transition. Simulations show that this would result in lower greenhouse gas emissions, more and more affordable food produced on less land and thus reduce the need for further land clearing and deforestation worldwide.[112]

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[109] Willett et al., 2019. Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems.

[110] Van Zanten et al., 2023. Circularity in Europe strengthens the sustainability of the global food system.

[111] Simon et al. Circular food system approaches can support current European protein intake levels while reducing land use and greenhouse gas emissions.

[112] Gautam et al., 2022. Repurposing Agricultural Policies and Support. Options to Transform Agriculture and Food Systems to Better Serve the Health of People, Economies, and the Planet. IFPRI - World Bank Report.

New Dutch and EU policy initiatives

Dutch policy coherence lags behind

A plea for a food policy since 2014
The Netherlands still lacks a coherent policy linking production, consumption and the environment. As early as 2014, the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR[113]) pointed to the need to develop a coherent 'food policy', in which production, consumption and the environment are addressed in an integrated manner, rather than as separate policy objectives. The shift towards a less animal-based and more plant-based diet would contribute to both ecological and public health objectives.[114]

Food policy
In response to the WRR's advice, the Ministry of LNV, and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS[115]) jointly elaborated a 'food policy letter' in 2018.[116] It includes interventions to encourage consumers to choose more healthy and sustainably produced food, such as more fruit and vegetables. However, it is not as ambitious and coherent as the WRR recommendations. It does not explicitly aim to reduce the production and consumption of animal-based products and does not link policy objectives for consumption (a healthy diet) with policies and interventions in production.

Circular agriculture
A next step was the 2018 agricultural policy 'Agriculture, nature and food: valuable and linked'.[117] It introduced circular agriculture as a way to reduce environmental sustainability and the need to reduce reliance on imported livestock feed, sometimes produced in an unsustainable way in other countries.

Food system transformation in development policy
The Dutch development policy on food security for 2019 is quite ambitious and already mentions the need to link production, consumption and the environment in a food system transformation strategy, not only in developing countries, but also globally and in the Netherlands.[118] The Netherlands supports national strategies for food system transformation in several developing countries, but does not have one yet itself. The Dutch 'Roadmap to global food security'[119] announced that a Dutch food system transformation strategy would be developed in the 'Agricultural Agreement'.

The draft Agricultural Agreement
The draft Agricultural Agreement[120] (2023, currently on hold and without a formal status) between the Ministry of LNV, farmer organisations, the agro-sector, and nature and environmental organisations, paid more attention to environmental concerns than previous Dutch agricultural policies. It focused on production and aimed for more circular agriculture. This included the ambition to reduce livestock numbers and feed livestock more with residual flows and locally grown feed, and less with imported feed. This would have a positive effect on forests and climate change worldwide.

However, there was no clear link to potential effects on farmers in developing countries or global food security. Therefore, Dutch NGOs wrote a manifesto[121] calling for the agreement to take more account of the effect on smallholder farmers in developing countries. Beyond the focus of this coherence study – effects on developing countries – it is worth noting that the draft Agricultural Agreement did not yet consider

113 *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid.*
114 De Vries et al, 2016. Towards a Food Policy. Translation of the in 2014 published *Naar een voedselbeleid*. WRR report.
115 *Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport.*
116 Ministers of LNV and VWS, 2018. Voedselbeleid.
117 Minister of LNV, 2018. Landbouw, natuur en voedsel: waardevol en verbonden. Nederland als koploper in kringlooplandbouw.
118 Ministers of BHOS and LNV, 2019. Voedselzekerheidsbrief 2019.
119 Minister of BHOS and LNV, 2022. Voedselzekerheidsbrief 2022.
120 De akkoordpartijen, 2023. In beweging. Concept Landbouwakkoord 2040.
121 BothEnds and Oxfam Novib, 2023. MANIFESTO: The Dutch Agriculture Agreement reaches further than the Netherlands: offer prospects for sustainable farmers and consumers worldwide.

production for healthy consumption, so in that sense it was not yet the food policy that the WRR advocated in 2014, or a coherent strategy for transforming the food system, as the EU Farm to Fork strategy is. It is uncertain whether and how the new Dutch government will work on a new Agricultural Agreement.

EU policies becoming more coherent

Coherence with long-term food system transformation strategies
Until recently, EU agricultural policy was not coherent with long-term strategies for food system transformation. The focus has been on production and farm incomes, food safety and the environment, but not yet on producing what is needed for healthy diets while mitigating climate change.

The EU Farm to Fork strategy, part of the Green Deal, is the first coherent long-term strategy that integrates production, consumption and the environment.[122] The Farm to Fork strategy is more of a long-term vision than a clear transition path and still needs to be translated into national strategies and policies. The overall objective is to sustainably produce sufficient nutritious food at affordable prices. The strategy includes a detailed section on sustainable production, European food security, on promoting sustainable processing and retailing, healthy food consumption and reducing food waste. This strategy foresees an important role for the development of an EU standard for healthy and sustainably produced food.

This EU standard would set standards for imported food to ensure a level playing field between EU and third-country farmers and have a positive impact worldwide. However, third countries, including developing countries, have already expressed concerns about the EU restricting imports. The progress and implementation of the Farm to Fork strategy are uncertain, given the resistance and protests from farmers, and the recent European Parliament and national elections.

If implemented in one form or another, the Farm to Fork strategy could have several effects, including on developing countries. First, it would reduce imports of livestock feed, reducing pressure on forests and land elsewhere and thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Second, EU agriculture would shift to more circular and sustainable production and emit fewer greenhouse gases. Third, if the new EU sustainable production standard is also applied to imported food, this could potentially lead to more sustainable production outside the EU.
But there are also risks. Making production more sustainable would only have limited impact if consumption is not also made more sustainable. This requires interventions in the food environment to encourage consumers to choose a healthy and sustainably produced food. If consumption is not addressed, more unsustainably produced food may be imported, resulting in even more emissions outside the EU than are saved within the EU.

Although outside the scope of this study, which focuses on the effects in developing countries, the food system transformation in Europe will also have positive effects on the environment, nutrition and public health – and related public health costs – in Europe.

The political economy of food system transformation
Policymaking processes and political dynamics in the EU and its Member States make it difficult to address trade-offs between short-term and long-term interests, between private and public interests, and between domestic interests and interests in developing countries. More efforts are needed to translate the long-term coherent vision presented in the Farm to Fork strategy into a medium-term 'just transition' strategy that takes into account the concerns of farmers and consumers.

This section first describes the process contributing to policy coherence in the EU and then in the Netherlands.

[122] European Commission, 2020. Farm to Fork Strategy.

New voices contributing to policy coherence in the EU

The processes for achieving more coherent EU agricultural policies have improved.[123] More and different voices are heard for the Farm to Fork strategy: more responsibility has been given to the Commissioners for Environment and for Health and Safety than to the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Although the Farm to Fork strategy serves as a coherent long-term vision, there is still a long transition path to go to develop this into EU legislation and to translate it into national legislation in the Member States. There are still many uncertainties that understandably generate resistance from farmers and vested interests. Will production fall, will food prices rise and how would this affect farm incomes? What will happen to the 2.6 million European farmers who currently depend at least in part on livestock or feed production? How will farmers be able to repay loans used to invest in agricultural intensification? Will reduced production be replaced by increased import? These uncertainties have led to farmer protests in several European capitals and to politicians quickly distancing themselves from certain aspects of the Farm to Fork strategy. Thus far, insufficient attention has been paid to a 'just transition' that addresses the concerns of current European farmers, who see little business perspective and fear loss of income, and current (poor) consumers who fear rising food prices and EU interference in their dietary preferences. More time is needed to negotiate and accommodate trade-offs between short-term private and long-term public interests.

Greater attention to healthy eating and public health would require Member States to involve their public health ministries when developing their national food strategy and policies. To encourage consumers to eat healthy foods, more effort is needed to change the food environment: improving the availability, price, taste and attractiveness of healthy foods, as well as their location.

Limited involvement and publicity on policy coherence processes in the Netherlands

The Dutch government has a number of mechanisms to improve policy coherence and avoid negative effects of Dutch policies on developing countries, such as the Policy Coherence Action Plan, the SDG test in the Policy Compass, and the interministerial coordination for international climate policy. These mechanisms and policies have been effective in making production more sustainable elsewhere, but not yet in making consumption more sustainable in the Netherlands.

The development of new policies is guided by the policy compass. This includes the SDG test: questions about the effects on developing countries, in order to avoid negative effects. Currently, only policy officers carry out the SDG test, and policy officers can also decide that these questions are not applicable. External expertise, for example from NGOs or universities, is not used. The results of these SDG tests are not made public. It is likely that negative effects on developing countries are overlooked. For example, no SDG test was carried out for the draft Agricultural Agreement, which is why Dutch NGOs published the manifesto calling for effects in developing countries to be taken into account.

For policy coherence, EU and Dutch agricultural policies should take into account (1) potential effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries, and (2) greenhouse gas emissions and climate effects worldwide, which also affect developing countries. This requires a long-term food strategy that brings together different domestic interests, and the interests of developing countries and the world as a whole. The Netherlands does not have such a long-term food strategy yet. There are international long-term strategies for transforming the food system, linking production, trade and consumption within ecological boundaries, which could well serve as guidelines for a future coherent Dutch food policy.

The process of improving policy coherence by including the interests of developing countries in new EU policies is complex. The IOB study 'Insight in Policy Influence. Evaluation of Dutch influence on EU policies 2016-2022' (forthcoming in 2025), provides further insights into these EU policy development processes.

[123] Matthews et al., 2013. The Political Economy of Food System Transformation in the European Union.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Overall conclusion

Dutch development policy has contributed to food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries, but the degree of contribution varies between the projects evaluated. A few Dutch projects helped to achieve some results in institutional development.

These results have been positively affected to varying degrees by policy coherence. Here, the external coherence between donor and recipient country policies has the greatest positive impact, especially when projects were chosen to into broader, long-term strategies and policies.

Other Dutch policies – more specifically, Dutch interventions for the import and value chain development of three specific commodities and domestic agricultural policy – were found to be incoherent with development policy, with negative effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. Despite efforts to reduce negative effects through interventions in value chain sustainability and more sustainable production, some incoherence remains. International long-term strategies point to the lack of Dutch policy to link sustainable production with sustainable consumption in the Netherlands.

The detailed conclusions – in line with the five research questions – and recommendations of this evaluation are presented below.

To what extent has Dutch policy and its implementation been effective, sustainable and cost-effective in achieving food security, water and climate objectives in developing countries? (sub-question 1)

1. **The sampled food security and water projects are generally effective: people are reached, target groups experience benefits and some institutional results are achieved.**

The evaluation identified positive results in terms of people being reached and effects on people. Food security effects include increased farm production, higher incomes and improved diets. Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene effects include better hygiene behaviour and health. Some institutional results have also been achieved. While these results are certainly relevant, they were diverse and more difficult to qualify.

2. **Cost-effectiveness is often not monitored, although some projects show very encouraging examples.**

Few projects monetised the benefits on people. Where cost-effectiveness could be measured and monetised, some very encouraging examples were found: household level benefits outweighed the ODA costs of projects within a few years.

3. **The sampled food security and water projects showed that sustainability after Dutch funding ceased was a major challenge.**

Most projects scored low on sustainability. While many projects continued to receive Dutch support (e.g. in multi-phase projects), the continuation and scaling up of interventions and results after Dutch funding ended is the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, some projects do not pay sufficient attention to the ongoing maintenance of water infrastructure or to future water availability in anticipation of climate change. As a result, the long-term impact of projects that are no longer funded by Dutch ODA is mostly uncertain or even doubtful. In addition to the constraints on the sustainability of results, this also undermines long-term cost-effectiveness.

How coherent has Dutch development policy and its implementation been for food security, water and climate? (Sub-question 2)

4. **Dutch policy and multi-annual country strategies are coherent with international long-term strategies and partner country policies.**

Dutch policy is mostly coherent with international long-term strategies (temporal coherence), while Dutch MACSs are less temporally coherent and in some cases a compromise between alignment with Dutch policy (internal and temporal coherence) and alignment with partner countries' national policies (external coherence).

5. **Dutch projects often collaborate well with partner government organisations, but the linkages between Dutch projects are often weak.**

Coherence within projects. On average, internal coherence between food security, water and climate objectives is generally strong, but coherence with inclusiveness objectives is weak. External coherence, both in terms of policy alignment and collaboration with government organisations in partner countries, is strong. Temporal coherence, particularly with the overarching aspects of international long-term strategies, is relatively weak. Spatial coherence, especially the link between local projects and subsequent input into national strategies, is strong.

Coherence between projects. Coherence between embassy-managed and centrally-managed projects is generally weak. Coherence between Dutch-funded projects and projects funded by others is often intended but limited in practice.

6. The strongest coherence was found when Dutch (innovative) projects were linked to national programmes or to the development of national strategies.

There are examples where Dutch innovative projects are well embedded in large-scale national multi-donor programmes. A special case is the Dutch Delta programmes where support for a national (in Bangladesh) or municipal (Mozambique) IWRM strategy was combined with short-term projects and investments, funded by the Netherlands, the partner government or other donors. This contributed to good internal, external, temporal and spatial coherence.

To what extent has policy coherence affected development results? (Sub-question 3)

7. The results of the selected projects in Mozambique, Bangladesh and Ethiopia were positively affected by coherence: external coherence, especially strategic collaboration with government organisations, showed the clearest effect.

External coherence, in particular collaboration with government at strategy and programme level, as found in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia, showed the clearest effects on the results. It has a positive effect on the number of beneficiaries reached, on continuity and on cost-effectiveness, as well as on institutional results.

Internal coherence has the second-clearest effect on results. It has a positive effect on the effects on people and on cost-effectiveness, as well as on the number of people reached.

Temporal coherence has an effect on institutional results and continuity of results.

Spatial coherence is not found as often as a factor affecting results. Its main effect is on institutional results and the continuity of results. However, this is partly due to the fact that we considered a systems and landscape approach as part of temporal coherence rather than part of spatial coherence.

There are projects that score high on internal coherence but low on continuity and scaling up, and others that score high on temporal coherence but low on effects on people, suggesting a trade-off between working with direct beneficiaries in the short term and working on institutional results in the long term.

Note that the (positive) effects of collaborating with national and local government organisations in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia may be very different in other countries, for example in more fragile countries, countries with weaker governance or with policies less aligned with Dutch development objectives.

What factors affected coherence or incoherence? (Sub-question 4)

8. Coherence is positively affected by the existence (and negatively affected by the absence) of certain factors.

There are five factors that positively affected coherence in projects, programmes and policy, both in their design and implementation: (i) a clear ToC and results framework and flexibility to learn and adapt; (ii) funding large-scale, government-led multi-donor projects and national strategies; (iii) multi-stakeholder policy dialogue; (iv) a larger role of embassies and country steering; and (v) linking innovative projects to large scale programmes or linking support to a long-term national strategy with short-term projects.

(1) A clear ToC and results framework and flexibility to learn and adapt

A theory of change and results framework that allows for synergies and trade-offs between different objectives, as well as room for institutional results, has helped to ensure coherence at the design phase, and more importantly, to validate assumptions, learn and improve coherence and results during project implementation and subsequent project phases.

(2) Funding large-scale, government-led multi-donor projects and national strategies

The selection of projects in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia had implications for coherence:

- Large-scale, government-led multi-donor programmes were more externally and spatially coherent;
- Large-scale Dutch bilateral projects were more spatially coherent;
- Standalone innovative projects, often with the private sector, were less coherent overall.
- Embedded innovative projects, on the other hand, were coherent in all respects.
- Local NGO projects working with communities were internally coherent but externally, temporally and spatially less coherent.
- Long-term IWRM strategy development projects were the most coherent in all aspects.

(3) Multi-stakeholder policy dialogue

The embassy, and to a lesser extent some project staff, played an important and much appreciated role, confirmed by governments and other donors, in multi-stakeholder dialogue, in multi-donor programme working groups, donor coordination and policy dialogue. This contributed to all types of coherence.

(4) A larger role for embassies and country steering

The balance between Dutch thematic steering and embassy country steering should be adjusted to improve external coherence. Dutch policy preferences to use private sector development and Dutch knowledge contribute to temporal coherence. However, Dutch instructions to embassies to reduce sectors and activities have undermined embassies' ability to work on synergies, while the number of centrally-managed projects, of which embassies have little knowledge, remains too high. Embassy-managed projects in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia were more externally, temporally, and spatially coherent than centrally managed projects. There are centrally-funded, multilateral, government-led multi-donor programmes that are externally coherent but were not included in our sample.[124] Interestingly, the strongest coherence was found in the two Delta programmes in Bangladesh and Mozambique, which were both embassy-managed and centrally-managed, but where geographical (country or municipal) steering was more dominant than thematic steering.

(5) Linking innovative projects to large-scale programmes or linking support to a long-term national strategy with short-term projects

Standalone short-term projects were often not very coherent and rarely achieved long-term results; they were also not in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which the Netherlands endorsed. An exception was when short-term innovative projects were well embedded in large, usually long-term, government-led multi-donor programmes, which improved external and spatial coherence, and contributed to learning and long-term results, as in Ethiopia. The two long-term IWRM Delta programmes in Bangladesh and Mozambique were special cases. They were highly coherent and gradually achieved long-term results, such as government and other donors co-investing in large-scale water infrastructure. This approach involved simultaneous support for a national long-term strategy and short-term projects funded by different donors contributing to these strategies, with ample scope for interaction and learning. It required long-term (> 15 years) political and financial commitment (even though the Dutch budget was modest), Dutch diplomacy, knowledge and donor coordination to mobilise national and other donor funding. A major challenge, besides long-term funding, is how to set up an M&E and learning system.

Although we expect the factors affecting coherence identified in Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia to be relevant in other countries, we recognise that country stability, strength of government and national policies, and staff capacity at Dutch embassies also determine the relevance of these factors and the feasibility of addressing them.

[124] IOB, 2017. Review FAO and IFAD: Strengths and added value for the Dutch food security policy.

How coherent were other Dutch policies, specifically those on the import of commodities and value chain sustainability, and Dutch domestic (and EU) agricultural policy, with food security, water and climate objectives? (Sub-question 5)

9. Efforts to mitigate the negative effects of Dutch import and domestic agricultural policy in developing countries have successfully focused on sustainable production, but not yet enough on sustainable consumption.

Dutch imports of soy, flowers, and garment in our case studies have had positive economic effects for these developing countries, but also negative effects on food security, water and climate in developing countries. To address this internal incoherence and mitigate the negative effects, the Netherlands has contributed to voluntary certification schemes, to a landscape approach combining agriculture, forestry and water management, to national regulation and indirectly to the EU Deforestation Regulation, recently complemented by the broader EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. Negative effects have indeed been partly mitigated: soy production in Brazil is causing less deforestation than before, and water use and pollution in the garment industry in Bangladesh and in floriculture in Ethiopia have decreased. The impact of the two recent EU regulations remains to be assessed.

Dutch and EU agricultural policies have had negative effects on agricultural development in developing countries in the past and continue to have negative effects on biodiversity and climate change worldwide. The coherence of EU agricultural policies with international development and global climate goals has improved with the shift from EU product and export subsidies to direct income support since the 2003, and the recent EU Deforestation Regulation. However, coherence with long-term food system transformation strategies that align agricultural production with food demand within planetary boundaries remains weak. The recent EU Farm to Fork strategy reflects aspects of food system transformation strategies relevant to the EU, but it is still a work in progress with uncertain outcomes and faces resistance due to the lack of a just transition pathway that takes into account farmers' concerns.

In both policy domains, the primary focus is on making production more sustainable, but there is a lack of a long-term systems approach that integrates production, consumption and environmental objectives. In addition, there are insufficient efforts to (1) involve other importing countries outside the EU in global agreements on sustainable trade, and (2) shift consumption in the Netherlands towards a more sustainable and more plant-based diet, and towards fewer and more durable goods.

6.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for future development policy on food security, water and climate

1. Support national long-term strategies of partner countries

Long-term strategies, such as the Bangladesh Delta Plan supported by the Netherlands, contribute to better coherence between short-term projects and a long-term strategy (temporal coherence); between climate adaptation, water and food security (internal coherence); between policy and implementation of the partner country, the Netherlands and other development partners (external coherence); and between activities in different locations and support to a national plan (spatial coherence). Building on this Delta Plan experience, the Netherlands could support partner countries in developing similar, coherent long-term strategies in countries where this is possible and feasible. In the area of water, the Netherlands could pay more attention to analysing and monitoring the availability and use of surface and groundwater – especially if others do not – to avoid water over-exploitation. As for food security, the Netherlands has recently been supporting national strategies for the transformation of the food system, with a focus on value chain development and nutrition. The Netherlands could pay more attention to a landscape approach, ensuring that optimal food is produced within ecological boundaries, taking climate change into account. Embassies are best placed to define the scope and actors to be involved. (IGG, Embassies)

2. Continue policy dialogue and support institutional capacity of partner countries

Policy dialogue with the government of the partner country and other stakeholders (donors, private sector and civil society) is a condition, not only because of the Dutch commitment to more country ownership in the context of the aid effectiveness agenda, but also for long-term results. In principle, the government of the partner country should be in the driver's seat, through the democratic process, policy development, regulation, inspection and enforcement, and accountability. This should include creating an enabling environment for the private sector and civil society. In the past, the Netherlands has shifted from sectoral budget support to project support, paying much less attention to building government institutional capacity. To achieve sustainable results, the Netherlands should refocus its attention on government and other permanent institutions, such as those responsible for water management.

Embassies are in the best position to assess which organisations and at which level are most appropriate, depending on the country context. Without being too prescriptive, as the World Bank and IMF have tended to be in the past, the Netherlands could promote better governance through policy dialogue, long-term engagement in capacity development and support in accessing finance from MDBs and climate funds. The question is to find a better balance between concrete activities with direct results for people and institutional capacity building for long-term results. (Embassies)

3. Make long-term agreements for programmes

In countries with a relatively stable government where this is feasible, the first step is to make long-term agreements for programmes in outline, including financial commitments, for a period longer than the usual project period. Such a programme has clear end goals, an outline of a strategy, with mutual commitment. Such a programme can then be fleshed out with short-term projects, public-private partnerships, technical assistance and diplomacy. The long duration makes it easier to build relationships, work on long-term structural solutions and ensure mutual accountability. Flexibility helps to monitor, learn and adapt, and to solve problems and seize opportunities step by step, for example through short-term studies. For specific activities, there is room for phasing: design, investment, aftercare to ensure handover, maintenance and sustainability; something that is often lacking when a project ends abruptly. This requires the ministry (DGIS) to allow financial commitments to be made for periods of about 15 years. Irrespective of the overall budget available for development cooperation, spreading it out over a longer period increases the chances of achieving long-term results. (DGIS, Embassies)

The Netherlands can achieve more by linking and aligning local projects and beneficiaries with government and other organisational support at the national level. This applies not only to Dutch-funded activities but also to other initiatives. While the need for these connections is clear for integrated water management, they are equally important for food security to ensure both short-term and long-term outcomes.

4. Work from an integrated, systems-based vision, on a differentiated approach

Achieving a seemingly simple outcome, such as healthy nutrition or clean drinking water, often requires a combination of challenges, some of which may not become apparent until halfway through the project. For example, combining drinking water and sanitation, nutrition and health, involving the private sector in maintenance, access to credit, and involving local health workers in monitoring. Systems analysis and a systems approach support such an integrated way of working. Although the initial analysis is complex, we in the Netherlands do not have to do everything ourselves. Different aspects are already done by others or can be done by others. This requires clear agreements on the division of tasks, collaboration and coordination, and the flexibility to fill gaps when they arise. It requires clear demarcation, prioritisation and focus. (Embassies)

Different target groups often need different types of support. For example, subsistence farmers producing for their own consumption will benefit from different support than commercial smallholders producing for the market. A water utility may charge higher fees to middle-income users than to poor users in order to maintain equipment and ensure financial sustainability. Many projects in the past, with the exception of social safety net projects, have often failed to benefit the poorest. A differentiated approach is needed to also reach the poorest. (IGG, Embassies)

5. Increase the role for embassies

Embassy staff are best placed to assess the country context, set up relevant programmes, select the right partners and react to changing circumstances. They are also in a better position to set up collaboration with governments and other stakeholders. Coordination between centrally-managed projects from The Hague and embassy-managed projects has improved in recent years, but could be improved further. A first step is to give embassies a greater role in the design and monitoring of centrally-managed projects. A second step is to devolve a larger share of the overall budget to embassies. This would require more staff capacity at the embassies, which can be achieved partly by reducing the overall number of Dutch projects active in a country and partly by increasing staff capacity. Moreover, embassies should have flexibility without rigid instructions that a certain budget can be spent on food security but not on water, or vice versa. In essence, this means more country steering and less thematic steering. Private sector development funds, which are now managed centrally to facilitate access for Dutch companies, should be made more accessible to embassies that can link them to local private sector. (DGIS, Embassies)

6. Shift the focus of monitoring and evaluation from project to programme level

In line with the previous recommendation to set up long-term programmes, a coherent set of projects and diplomacy, this recommendation is about how to adapt monitoring, evaluation and learning to such a long-term programme. Within the ministry (DGIS), there are two different discourses: one for monitoring at the SDG level – results at the beneficiary level – and one for monitoring at the institutional or system level. Both are necessary. However, DGIS should reconsider what level of indicators can reasonably be monitored in what time frame, and to what extent these results can or must be attributed to the Netherlands, without compromising the practical feasibility and reliability of monitoring. To date, projects are mainly evaluated on an individual basis, often in the last year of funding, which is too early to measure impact, sustainability or system-level changes. In the case of a longer-term programme consisting of a coherent set of parallel and successive projects and diplomacy, working in a specific sector and geographical area, it may be more useful to evaluate the programme as a whole. In particular, where a long-term strategy with a set of overall objectives has been developed, it is important to monitor results against these long-term objectives, in order to learn and adjust the programme. This would require an adjustment of the DGIS evaluation strategy, with more room for strategic, possibly multi-donor, evaluations of long-term sector programmes. Within such a programme, there is still a need to evaluate the impact, sustainability and efficiency of projects, but this can be limited to a selection of the most interesting or relevant projects, including, for example, innovative pilot projects, a few years after project completion. This means less evaluation of individual projects than is currently the case. Large projects that are not part of a coherent programme would still need to be evaluated individually. (DGIS, BIS, IGG)

Recommendation for other Dutch policies: Dutch import and value chain sustainability, and domestic agricultural and food policy

7. Develop coherent policies that link production, consumption and environmental objectives

To reduce the negative effects of Dutch import of commodities and Dutch agriculture on food security, water and climate in developing countries, policies are needed that use a systems approach. These policies should take into account production, consumption and the environment, including encouraging a shift in the Netherlands towards a more sustainable and more plant-based diet and importing fewer and more durable good such as clothing. International long-term strategies for food system transformation provide useful input for new policies. Diplomatic efforts are also needed to involve other importing countries outside the EU in global agreements on sustainable trade.

For the Netherlands, the further development of a coherent food policy combining agricultural production, environment food consumption and public health would be welcome. For the EU, elements of the Farm to Fork strategy that link sustainable production, healthy consumption and environmental concerns need to be integrated into a 'just transition' strategy that addresses the needs of both producers and consumers. Globally, the Netherlands, ideally through the EU, could advocate for international agreements on

sustainable production and consumption of food and other commodities, building on the international agreements on climate and biodiversity. Dutch influence on EU policy is a complex process, and the findings of the IOB evaluation on this issue may provide insights into how this can be achieved.[125]

To improve coherence and consider a systems approach, both in value chain sustainability and in domestic food policy, inter-departmental coordination is crucial. For greater policy coherence in the Netherlands, incorporating the input from external experts through the SDG test for new policies and being transparent about unavoidable trade-offs would be beneficial.

[125] IOB, forthcoming in 2025. Insight in Policy Influence. Evaluation of Dutch influence on EU policies 2016-2022.

Beschrijving 20% intensiverings- en besparingsscenario

Inleiding

Alle beleidsdoorlichtingen die vanaf 2015 worden opgesteld moeten volgens de Regeling Periodiek Evaluatieonderzoek (RPE) één of meer zogenaamde 20%-besparingsvarianten bevatten. Deze varianten voegen een vooruitkijkend element toe aan de beleidsdoorlichting en laten zien wat de gevolgen zijn van een significante daling van het budget. Naast besparingsvarianten is het ook mogelijk om intensiveringsvarianten op te nemen en de mogelijke gevolgen hiervan te beschrijven.

De varianten hieronder zijn opgesteld door de Directie Inclusieve Groene Groei (IGG), die het budget beheert voor artikel 2 dat centraal staat in deze evaluatie. IOB heeft hiervoor suggesties aangeleverd die IGG heeft overgenomen.

Relatie tussen bevindingen IOB en eventuele intensiverings- en besparingsvarianten

Afgemeten aan de beleidsdoelen op gebied van water, voedselzekerheid en klimaat heeft het kabinet in de drie door IOB onderzochte landen over het algemeen goede resultaten bereikt. IOB heeft de resultaatbereiking door een coherentie-lens bekeken en zo factoren geïdentificeerd die succes bevorderen en belemmeren. Hierbij komen met name de, door IOB als 'special case' betitelde delta-programma's, waarin watermanagement een rode draad is, positief naar voren. Deze programma's combineren centraal (via het departement in Den Haag) en decentraal (via de ambassades) gefinancierde activiteiten. Ze gaan gepaard met een beleidsdialoog waarin de Nederlandse ambassade en de overheid in het partnerland een belangrijke rol spelen en waar ook andere donoren bij aan kunnen sluiten, wat bevorderlijk is voor de continuïteit. Ze scoren goed op de diverse vormen van coherentie, en bereiken ook goede resultaten.

IOB beveelt aan om dit type programma's te repliceren: sluit aan op de context in de partnerlanden, werk vanuit een geïntegreerde benadering en binnen lange termijn ontwikkelingsstrategieën.

Overwegingen in het geval van intensivering of besparing

De evaluatie van IOB heeft belangrijke inzichten opgeleverd over coherentie-gerelateerde factoren en hoe die resultaatbereik positief, dan wel negatief beïnvloeden. Op grond van die inzichten schetst het kabinet welke intensiveringen het meeste opleveren en welke besparingen het minste afbreuk doen aan resultaatbereik, met inachtneming van de uitvoeringspraktijk. Het kabinet ziet in de algemene conclusies en aanbevelingen ten aanzien van artikel 2 geen basis voor gedifferentieerde besparingen of intensiveringen op de afzonderlijke subartikelen 2.1 Voedselzekerheid, 2.2 Water en 2.3 Klimaat. In de scenario's hieronder worden extra middelen en besparingen evenredig verdeeld over de drie subartikelen.

Intensiveringsscenario: inzetten op nationale strategieën en langdurige samenhangende multi-donor programma's op gebied van water en voedselzekerheid.

Als meer budget op artikel 2 beschikbaar komt, zal het kabinet, waar relevant en afgewogen tegen eventuele andere urgente opties, meer investeren in nationale en regionale strategieën en in daarin passende integrale programma's op gebied van water en voedselzekerheid. Mogelijk aan te vullen met korte studies en innovatieve pilotprojecten die de integrale programma's voeden (aanbevelingen 1, 2 en 3). Daarbij kan ook meer aandacht worden besteed aan een exit-strategie, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van technische assistentie die (de financiering van) duurzaam gebruik en onderhoud van waterinfrastructuur ondersteunt. Dat vraagt wel om voldoende capaciteit en continuïteit op de Nederlandse ambassades, en in sommige gevallen wellicht aanvulling van deze capaciteit (aanbeveling 5).

Het vraagt ook om geschikte omstandigheden waarin zo'n benadering kans van slagen heeft. Zo staan op gebied van voedselzekerheid de door IOB genoemde langetermijnstrategieën, de zogenoemde *National Food System Pathways* in opvolging van de *UN Food System Summit* van 2021, in veel landen nu nog in de kinderschoenen. In de toekomst kunnen die wel een goed aangrijpingspunt zijn. Op het gebied van water kan worden voortgebouwd op de door IOB als positief voorbeeld genoemde delta programma's.

Tabel 1 *Artikel 2: Intensiveringsscenario - verhoging 20% (in EUR mln)*			
	Begroting 2025	**20%**	**Totaal 120%**
2.1 Voedselzekerheid	359	72	430
2.2 Water	170	34	204
2.3 Klimaat	380	76	456
Totaal artikel 2	**909**	**182**	**1091**

Besparingsscenario: afschalen van geïsoleerde kortlopende projecten.

IOB heeft in Bangladesh, Mozambique en Ethiopië projecten aangetroffen waarvan de duurzaamheid van de resultaten onzeker was (conclusie 3). Dit had vaak te maken met een korte duur en beperkte opvolging van het project, en met gebrek aan onderscheidende karakteristieken ten opzichte van veel andere projecten op hetzelfde thema in hetzelfde partnerland, zonder goede inbedding in een groter samenhangend programma of in permanente overheids- of andere organisaties (conclusie 8ii). Het kabinet zal bij een besparing op artikel 2 met name dit soort projecten afschalen, tenzij korte-termijn voordelen zo zwaar wegen dat financiering toch wenselijk is.

Tabel 2 *Artikel 2: Besparingscenario - korting 20% (in EUR mln)*			
	Begroting 2025	**-20%**	**Totaal 80%**
2.1 Voedselzekerheid	359	-72	287
2.2 Water	170	-34	136
2.3 Klimaat	380	-76	304
Totaal artikel 2	**909**	**-182**	**727**

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Annexes

Annex 1 Detailed methodology

In addition to the methodology described in Chapter 2, more detail is presented here:
1. Analysis of how results are affected by coherence
2. Coherence assessment criteria
3. Selection of countries
4. Field visits to case study countries
5. Sources of information and triangulation

1. Analysis of how coherence affected results

There were two causal claims to be tested. The most important one was between coherence and results, and the second one was between various factors affecting coherence and coherence.
The evaluation of the effect of coherence on project results is based on a qualitative analysis and a quantitative analysis.

For the qualitative analysis, we used information from the project assessment under question 12: what are the causes for positive or negative results, and what causes are related to coherence and what causes are related to other factors. For each project, this section contains our judgement, based on the evaluations and interviews, of which type of coherence (or lack of coherence) had a positive or negative effect on which type of result. These arguments were grouped, and for each argument we counted the number of projects (out of 25) to which this argument applied.

For the quantitative analysis, we conducted a multivariate regression analysis, in which we explained one result variable at a time (score 1-5 for the number of people reached), as presented under question 9 of the project assessment, using the four coherence scores (1-5) provided under question 8. Multivariate regression analyses with all four coherence scores in a single model proved more effective than simple regression or correlation analyses with only one coherence score at a time, due to the correlations between the coherence dimensions. We acknowledge the small sample size (25 cases) and the absence of other explanatory factors for project results, so we do not claim causality. Instead, we use the correlations identified to explore some of the significant relationships and validate the findings of the qualitative analysis.

To assess the effect of processes or causes of coherence, we used the qualitative information from the 25 project assessments (question 7) together with the information from the many interviews in which this was discussed. A single cause could affect one or more types of coherence. Rather than counting the frequency with which arguments mentioned, we grouped and presented them for analysis.

2. Criteria for judging coherence

Internal coherence

For internal coherence, we collected points of attention that were mentioned in the online expert meetings that we held before each country visit, and points of attention that emerged from ECDPM's study on the effects of developed country policies on developing countries. We looked at three types of internal coherence:

- Coherence *between themes*. We also looked at whether a project working on one theme, for example food security, took into account possible side effects (positive or negative) on other themes, such as water or climate.
- Coherence within a theme. Similarly, we looked at whether projects working on one sub-theme, for example WASH, paid attention to possible side effects on another sub-theme, for example IWRM.
- Inclusiveness. We looked at whether inclusivity was considered: to what extent poor households, smallholder farmers, poor consumers, women or youth benefitted from the project.

It is certainly not necessary for a project to do everything, but there should at least be a reason why other aspects, themes or potential target groups are not considered.

For internal coherence, we also assessed the coherence between project objectives and the MACS, which was usually quite strong, but we did not use this information in our analysis.

External coherence

For external coherence, most of the points came from a desk review of policy documents on agriculture, food security, water and climate in the three case study countries. We looked at two types of coherence:

- Alignment. Initially we expected to see the most in the alignment of project objectives with national policies. Alignment is judged across all three main themes – food security, water and climate – where these were judged to be relevant (which was not always the case).
- Collaboration. However, we later realised that the level of collaboration with government organisations was at least as important a determinant of results, and projects were quickly reassessed for this. Scoring from 1 (low) to 5 (high): 1) informing government only; 2) involving local level government staff in implementation; 3) good with other donors, or reasonable with government; 4) strategy with government or reasonable with government and donors; 5) strategy with government and with other donors.

Temporal coherence

For temporal coherence, the focus points came from the ECDPM study on long-term strategies, which the IOB divided into thematic focus points (for food security, water or climate), and 'cross-SDG approaches', covering aspects such as the use of a system approach and country ownership (see separate IOB summary of this EDPM report). We looked at two types of temporal coherence:

- Coherence with SDG-specific recommendations, separately for food security, water and climate, from the long-term strategies.
- Coherence with eight cross-SDG approaches summarised by IOB: systems and landscape approaches, governance, combining short and long-term goals, targeting the poorest, access to technology, private sector involvement, consideration of costs and benefits, and type of donor support. The score depended on the number of positive aspects minus the number of negative aspects.

Spatial coherence

For spatial coherence, the relationship between local projects and national strategy was assessed in two directions:

- A local project that subsequently provides input to a national policy or strategy. The small-scale innovative projects providing input for large national programmes are special cases.
- A national project, for example at the policy or strategy level, which creates a link by also supporting local implementation.

3. Selection of countries

The case study countries were selected according to the following criteria:

1. Two countries in Africa and one in Asia, the two most important continents for Dutch ODA.
2. Expenditure: total Dutch ODA expenditure on food security (budget article 2.1), water (2.2) and climate, energy and natural resource management (2.3); expenditure with a climate mitigation or adaptation marker, and a forest marker (see Table A.1).
3. Likelihood of finding potential policy coherence issues with other Dutch policies mentioned in the ECDPM preparatory study and potentially present according to the Dutch MACSs (see Table A.2).
4. The likelihood of finding policy coherence issues between food security, water and climate, in particular climate adaptation in food security and water activities (see Table A.3).

The security situation was a condition for a field visit.

The three tables below show the scores on the selection criteria for the eight most promising countries. For the countries marked in yellow, there is a shortlist for each criterion. Combining the scores for these criteria resulted in the selection of Bangladesh, Mozambique and Ethiopia.

Table A.1 *Expenditure per country, total 2017-2021 (million euros)*

Country	Food security (2.1)	Water (2.2)	Climate, NRM (2.3)	Climate adaptation	Climate mitigation	Forests
Ethiopia	216	23	0.8	67	15	9
Rwanda	103	34	0.2	39	4	1
Bangladesh	49	84	0.0	49	3	5
Mozambique	53	41	5.9	31	8	
Benin	33	55		34	9	
Kenya	34	35	2.1	23	5	3
Uganda	57	9	1.1	23	5	
Ghana	41	20	0.0	17	9	

Source: MIBZ.

Table A.2 *Policy coherence hotspots identified by ECDPM, mentioned in MACSs*

Hotspots, shortlist from ECDPM	Be	Et	Gh	Ke	Mo	Ug	Rw	Ba
A1. Subsidy for fossil in dev countries.					1			
A4. Biofuel (deforestation)								
B1. Infrastructure (emissions, natural resource degradation)	1				1		1	
B2. Hydropower dam + international water diplomacy		?			?			?
B3. Large-scale Irrigation (small-scale farm, over-exploitation)								1
B4. Grey flood protection								1
C1. Export soy, palm oil (deforestation)			1					
C2. Agro-commodities export (cocoa: dependency; horti: water use)	1	1	1	1		1	1	
C3. Textile and water pollution								1
C4. EU ag. subsidies, cotton, export chicken meat	?		?					
C5. FDI ag./food sector (shift to unhealthy diets)		1		1	1		1	
Extra: export, labour conditions		1	1	1		1		1
Extra: leading to conflicts		C5			A1			

Source: ECDPM, 2022b.

The combination of Mozambique, Bangladesh and either Ethiopia or Ghana covers the largest range of potential coherency issues.

Table A.3 *Relevance for climate adaptation: number of activities with climate adaptation marker (2016-2020) addressing these adaptation aspects*

Different climate change adaptation interventions		Benin	Ethiopia	Ghana	Kenya	Mozambique	Uganda	Rwanda	Bangladesh
1a	Ecosystems		2		2	4		4	2
1b	Disaster Risk Reduction		1			9		1	
1ci	Infra general		1		2	7		4	7
1cii	Cyclone shelters					2			
1d	Land plan; tenure	3	1		2	11	1	3	3
2a	Water efficiency	1		1	1	1		2	2
2b	Water accounting		1		1				
2c	Adapted practices	2	7			1		2	2
3a	Drought-resistant practices	1	6	1	2			2	
3b	Soil and water conservation	1	11		3	3		6	
3c	Agroforestry		1	3	4		1	1	
3di	Weather information								1
3dii	Weather-based insurance								
4a	Integrated water management		4		4	8		3	9
4b	Large dams								
4c	Governance rivers		4	1	4	8	2	4	2
4d	Governance transboundary					1		3	
5a	WASH	7	14	4	13	6	6	5	2
5b	Micro catchments		11	2	3	8	1	5	5
6ai	Farm diversification		8	1	1	5	4	2	3
6aii	Value chain development	8	19	12	11	3	10	10	4
6aiii	Food and nutrition security	5	11	4	12	6	9	2	2
6b	Income, jobs	5	4	8	2	4	7		3

Categories adaptation by IOB. Number of projects from MIBZ.

4. Field visits to case study countries

We collected information on 24 projects during country visits. Fifteen were visited in the field, and nine were discussed only with local project staff and others without a field visit. The selection of the 15 projects to be visited was based on (1) their coverage of different themes: food security, water and climate, and in particular climate adaptation; (2) their coverage of potential coherence issues, in particular between PSD and export agriculture and local food security (Bangladesh, Ethiopia); (3) the fact that the projects were still ongoing, although this meant that in some cases no evaluation was available. The main purpose was to discuss coherence and processes affecting coherence.

There is some overlap between the projects visited or discussed during the field visits and those later selected for an in-depth assessment. Of the 24 projects visited or discussed during country visits, 11 were also included in the 25 projects selected for a project assessment. The remaining nine were only used to assess coherence within the Dutch programme and to examine processes affecting coherence.

Bangladesh
Researchers: Pim de Beer and Joep Schenk, December 2021.
Visited projects:
- Southwest Area IWRM Project (ADB)
- Blue Gold (Mott McDonald)
- SaFaL (Solidaridad)

Discussed projects:
- Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100
- PROOFS (Cordaid – ICCO)
- Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP) (IFAD)
- FRERMIP (ADB)

Mozambique
Researchers: Ferko Bodnar, May 2022; Pim de Beer and Jelmer Kamstra, July 2022 ; Martine de Zoeten, intern, May-July 2022.
Visited projects:
- Beira Master Plan (including Beira Municipal Recovery and Resilience Plan; various sub-projects)
- Resettlement programme (UNDP)
- FIPAG
- ISA-ZVDA (various sub-projects including Apsam Vale, Resilience)
- Young Africa (education)
- FACE (waste management)
- Farmer organization (Solidaridad)
- Shared Resources Joint Solutions (WWF)

Discussed projects:
- SDUB, part of BMP.

Ethiopia
Researchers: Martine de Groot and Ferko Bodnar, November 2022.
Visited projects:
- PSNP (WB Multi-Donor Trust Fund)
- ILMWA (WLRC-SNV)
- Refooture-Otipava (SWR)
- IWRM-WASH (VEI)
- Friendship flower farm, and community

Discussed projects:
- Benefit and ISSD (SWR, WUR)
- TRAIDE, successor of ABSF
- BRIDGE (Building Rural Income through Inclusive Dairy Growth), successor of EDGET (SNV)
- EHPEA

5. Sources of information and triangulation

In addition to the project documents, Dutch policy and country strategy documents, national policy documents of the case study countries and long-term strategies selected by ECDPM, we interviewed people in different organisations and at different stages of this evaluation.
- Interviews with staff from IGG, BIS, DAF, DAO and DDE, and online with the three Dutch embassies, to discuss coherence issues, and to select projects and organisations to visit.
- Online expert meetings, mainly with external people (not involved in the embassy or in Dutch-funded projects under evaluation), organised before each of the country visits.
- Interviews during the country visits, with embassy staff, project staff, government staff and external people, for example from other donors, and group discussions with people affected by the project.
- Interviews to complement the 25 project assessments, often two people per project, with staff from IGG, RVO, the Dutch embassies and external experts to discuss the expected sustainability of the project and the main coherence issues.

- For the desk case study on soy and deforestation in Brazil, interviews were held with IGG, LNV, IDH project staff in Brazil, the Dutch Embassy in Brazil, experts from Aid Environment, the Amsterdam Declaration Partnership, and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL).
- For the desk case study on EU and Dutch agricultural policies, interviews were conducted with LNV and Wageningen University and Research Center.

Table A.4 *People interviewed, categorised by country*

	Bangladesh	Mozambique	Ethiopia
Embassy	8	3	10
Project	15	23	24
Government	13	18	5
External	14	8	9
Projects discussed with communities	3	3	4

Table A.5 *People interviewed categorised by MFA or other*

MFA		Other	
IGG	10	**RVO**	4
DDE	2	**FMO**	1
BIS	1	**LNV**	1
DAF	1	**Researchers, external**	8
DAO	1	**Project**	1

The question is whether there were also enough independent respondents. The online expert meetings in particular provided input from external experts who were independent of the Dutch projects to be evaluated. But even at the Dutch embassies and ministries, we noticed sufficient critical and even self-critical reflection on the coherence and results of the Dutch-funded projects. In conclusion, we believe that we have succeeded in including sufficient independent and critical informants in this evaluation.

The exception Is the desk study on Dutch and EU agricultural policies agricultural policies, for which only a few ministry and university staff were consulted. In this case, we may have interviewed enough independent informants, but not enough dependent informants: Dutch farmer organisations that are currently protesting against the rules on manure use and against the new EU Farm to Fork strategy and the EU.

The most important triangulation will take place in the project assessment, where information from project reports, external evaluations, interviews with ministry and embassy staff and sometimes an external expert, and in a few cases our own field observations, are combined to form an IOB judgement on coherence and results. Often the information confirms or complements each other. It has happened that interviews were more critical than the evaluation report, or vice versa. Positive and negative arguments are included in the descriptive part of the project assessment form, after which IOB makes a final judgement that we discuss with at least one other IOB colleague who knows the project.

Annex 2
Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)

Form A.1 *Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*						
Information sources used:	**B** = BeMo (assessment memorandum), **MTR** = mid-term review, **E** = External end evaluation, **PCR** = Project completion report, **I** = interview, **V** = field visit.					
1 + 2. Project ID	- Name: - Act. No: - Project period: - Implementing organisation: - budget of NL: - Budget total (for multi-donor): - Single project evaluation / project evaluation + programme evaluation					
3. Project objective	- SDG / Sub-theme: - Description of objective:					
4. Dutch policy	- IGG policy / Other development policy / MFA policy / Other Dutch policy					
5. Channel	i. Central / delegated: ii First recipient: iii. Implementation by:					
5b. Country context of Ethiopia	Difference partner country's national policy vs. Long term strategies: *Mostly aligned. Well-developed policy. No clear vision on food security and agricultural transition yet.* Other: *Dutch focus on PSD and Dutch companies, for local and export value chains. Yet, Ethiopia provides little space for PSD (difficulty to obtain forex, difficulties with imports and exports).*					
	(to be formed after completing this form) **IOB conclusion**: To what extent has the project taken account of country context in the design and implementation of the project?					
6. Project approach						
7. Factors causing (in) coherences	Causes of coherence: Q@E, donor-government dialogue, good cooperation embassy/department/RVO/ other parties (e.g., for knowledge sharing), reference to previous phase, principles, local ownership, complementarity to existing interventions. Refer to which of the 4 types of coherence this factor has had an effect.					
	Causes of incoherence: Refer to which of the 4 types of coherence this factor has had an effect.					
	IOB conclusion (with most important arguments, +, -):					
	++	**+**	**0**	**-**	**--**	**comments**
Causes for coherence / incoherence	Analysis and dialogue with: target group and (2) national govt; (3) Lessons from previous project/ phase; (4) regular policy/ donor dialogue	Sufficient use of analysis and dialogue, few weaknesses.	Some strong and some weak aspects.	Several missed opportunities	No reference to policies, context analyses about the target group; no learning from previous project phase; no regular policy-donor dialogue.	

Form A.1 *Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*						
8. Coherence						
8a. Internal Coherence	Food Security: *Points of attention ECDPM (Mark: green: covered, positive effect; red: not covered, leading to negative effect; blank: not covered, but not necessary, no negative effect expected):* Nutrition, income, agriculture/economic development/jobs, food prices/ food purchasing power, sustainable agriculture, agriculture downstream (dam), climate adaptation in agriculture, cash crop export for food import, diversification, land competition/land rights/conflict.					
	IOB conclusion on food security:					
Internal coherence	Water: *Points of attention ECDPM*: water downstream, water distribution, political aspects, climate adaptation in water, water pollution, overexploitation.					
	IOB conclusion on water:					
Internal coherence	Climate: *Points of attention ECDPM*: renewable energy, long term strategy, climate adaptation, availability climate finance for adaptation, forest and landscape management, involvement private sector, energy consumption/ emissions.					
	IOB conclusion on climate:					
Internal coherence	Effects on inclusiveness: *Points of attention ECDPM*: inclusiveness, displacement (water dam), inclusiveness PSD/trade.					
	IOB conclusion on inclusiveness:					
Internal coherence	**IOB overall conclusion**:					
Type of coherence	**++ Synergies aimed for**	**+ Trade-offs optimised**	**0 Neutral (independent)**	**? Not mentioned, missing?**	**- Not aligned. OR Not mentioned, is needed.**	**-- Antagonistic**
Internal Between different Dutch policies	Policies are aligned, synergies are aimed for (positive effects maximised).	Policies are aligned, trade-offs are optimised (negative effects are minimised).	Policies are not aligned (or one policy is not even mentioned), but this does not seem to be necessary.	Other theme not mentioned. Unknown whether this is necessary.	Policies are not aligned (or one policy is not even mentioned, while this seems to be necessary. OR: Other theme is not addressed while needed.	Policies are antagonistic.

Form A.1	*Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*
8b. External coherence	Food security: *Points of attention of Ethiopian policy*: **2.1** food sovereignty, safety net, school feeding **2.2** food insecurity analysis and targeting, food safety, diversification (vegetables, fruit, tubers, animal products), fortified food; behavioural change; food prices animal sourced food **2.3**: labour productivity, livestock; land use rights/land admin. **Inputs**: private sector and coops, market. Fertiliser: chemical and organic; adapted to agro-ecology, soil maps. Production in ET and Streamline import and quality control. Integrated pest management. For livestock: genetics, feed, health; role PS, domestic feed production. Mechanisation. **Agricultural extension**: govt + PS extension service; market led, fee for service; participatory, location specific. **Financial services:** allow coop banks, new policy to allow banks; rural micro finance; land use rights as mortgage, insurance. **Markets:** Linkages, infra, electronic trade. **Domestic markets:** from spot to organized markets, contract farm law, warehouse receipt, forward marketing, VCD, producers minimum prices. VCD nutrient dense foods, agricultural commodity clusters; Poultry, dairy, meat; scavenging poultry most promising. Both large scale and smallholder tracks. Import substitution: milk, horticulture; competitiveness. **Export:** specific VCD, incl. horti. Policies: more predictable export bans, international agreements, market info, quality, reduce export costs. **Processing** horti and agro; byproducts as feed **Non-farm employment** from family farms to rural jobs, incl horti. **Targeting** Diversified target groups (smallholder, large scale, pastoralists; urban ag. Inclusive: youth, women). **Farmer organisation** Coop support and reform (more autonomous); horticulture outgrower schemes; Cluster value chain approach. attention to fragile areas, nature based solutions, land use planning, land rehabilitation. **Resilience to climate change**, weather models, disaster risk mgt. Drought and heat resistance; irrigation, conservation agriculture, Soil and water conservation, agroforestry; stall feeding, sustainable grassland; natural resource management, payment for ecosystem services. Reduce food loss, by pests/diseases, in horticulture by processing. **Climate change mitigation**: organic soil fertility, poultry to substitute non-dairy ruminants; reduce growth in numbers of cattle / oxen / substitute by tractors; improve feed to reduce methane. **2A:** policies, NDC; rural infra for agriculture; role for PS coops, and PPP **Governance:** Quality control, food safety control; make policies more agri-friendly; adjust foreign currency policy for ag dev; avoid double VAT; reduce fees on import agri-equipment; easier export livestock (traceability, food safety, animal health) **Role private sector**: to be easier, esp. for inputs
	IOB conclusion on food security: Describe and assess cooperation:
External coherence	Water: *Points of attention of Ethiopian policy*: **6.1. Drinking water**. Household (HH) needs priority, then livestock, environment, then other users. OneWASH. Focus on most vulnerable. Self-supply, local water storage, participatory WRM. **6.2. Sanitation** Minimum standards, guidelines, water saving sanitation; urban sewerage and storm drainage; involve NGO; involve private sector (PS). Waste water treatment. User pays [for O&M]. **6.3. Water quality**. Quality standards for lakes; Code of practice flower sector. Standards and control to avoid pollution and depletion. **6.4. Water use efficiency/ general**: efficiency, sustainable use, economic and social benefits, optimum allocation, and redistribution, transfer, storage. **/agriculture** rainwater harvesting; **Irrigation**: include drainage; small dams for self-sufficiency; large dams for NS food security and export, and agro-industry; good analyses and plans (climate resilience, participatory, EIA); funds and accelerate installation; food prod has priority, then economy, and other. Water use associations, strengthen O&M; Cost recovery irrigation schemes / water fees. **Dams** part of overall development plan; water transfer to dry areas; user pays; hydro; transregional hydro based on mutual understanding. **6.5. Integrated water mgt**. water shed/basin. Long term vision. Multiple uses. Allocation agreements. WRM info system (meteo, hydro), esp. for agriculture. Water pricing, while subsidizing this for poor. Long-term ground water balance and accounting; map. Transboundary agreements. **6.6. eco syst**. Conserve, buffer, wetlands; EIA before infra. **6a. dev coop**. Strategy; WRM capacity, standards; localized water harvesting techniques; participatory local ownership; Coordinate projects; guidelines (license, certificate) for external experts. Self-financing and self-supporting O&M. Central WRM fund (no separate projects). Credit for local investment. Partnerships.
	IOB conclusion on water: Describe and assess cooperation:

Form A.1 *Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*						
External coherence	Climate: *Points of attention of Ethiopian policy*: **13.1. Resilience**. Risk profiling, early warning, insurance, protection against floods; social production, income diversification, resettlement and migration. Forests, sustainable land and water use, payment for environmental services. **13.2. Climate change (CC) in policies**. Cooking, reforestation, land restauration, renewable and biomass energy, waste management; urban planning; replace clinker in cement. CC and health. **13.3. Institutional** Climate and meteo info. **13a.** Mobilise international climate finance. Involve PS. Carbon markets. **7.2 Renewable energy**. Diverse renewable energy mix. From unsustainable biomass stoves to renewable. Rural electrification. **7.2. Efficienc**y. (Energy efficiency, and biomass efficiency, including cookstoves) Clean cookstoves priority.					
	IOB conclusion on climate: Describe and assess cooperation:					
	IOB overall conclusion on external coherence:					
Type of coherence	**++** **Synergies aimed for**	**+** **Trade-offs optimised**	**0** **Neutral (independent)**	**?** **Not mentioned, missing?**	**-** **Not aligned. OR Not mentioned, is needed.**	**--** **Antagonistic**
External Between Dutch policies and policies of national government and other donors	Policies are aligned, synergies are aimed for (influence each other).	Policies are aligned (but don't influence each other).	Policies are not aligned, but this does not seem to be necessary.	Other actors not involved. Unknown whether this is necessary.	Policies are not aligned, while this seems to be necessary (risk of negative effect). OR Other actor not involved while this is needed.	Policies are antagonistic (negative effects are expected).

Form A.1	*Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*
8c. Temporal coherence 1	Fits in with long-term strategies Food security: *Points of attention from ECDPM long-term strategy study* **2.1 End hunger.** Nutrition policy. Map food insecurity, direct action most vulnerable, safety net, coping with conflict, natural disaster; early warning. **2.2. Malnutrition** (all forms, also obesity). Food safety (map and address), gender. Nut policy and food environment. Diversify: vegetables and animal source food. Cold storage and processing. Behavioural change, exclusive breastfeeding. Revalue traditional crops and fish, affordable nutrition. **2.3. Production and income.** Land and labour productivity; smallholder income, sustainable agriculture, role livestock; land tenure, forest fisheries; access to natural resources. Monitor rules to support agri-food system transformation. **Inputs:** adapted fertiliser and seeds, soil maps. Input value chain. Local public seed development, and role PS in hybrid seed production and marketing. **Knowledge.** Research for locally adapted inputs and practices; capacity for research and dissemination. **Finance.** Government institutional capacity for public and private finance. **Markets.** Market access, value chain development, food quality, value chains for local and regional food markets; inter-Africa trade. Fair share of value addition. Address constraints for smallholder farmers and SMEs in value chains. **Non-farm employment**. Off farm, rural jobs, SMEs decent work. Cross boundary pest management; plant and animal health. **2.4 Sustainable agriculture**. Resilience, within ecologic boundaries. Natural resource management (NRM) governance, nature based solutions. Sustainable fisheries/aquaculture. Increase consumer demand for sustainably produced food. Climate change resilient agriculture; early warning. Reduce food loss, recycle food (feed). Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Policies needed for biofuels, avoiding competition with food crops. **Gender in agriculture.** **2a** Responsible investment, invest in smallholders. Country-led investment plan. 10% government budget for agriculture. Public-private partnerships (PPPs). Rural infrastructure; ports roads, electricity. Technical cooperation and South-South cooperation. Access MDB and climate finance. Access to technology, Intellectual property rights (IPRs). **2b.** Transparent and equitable negotiations about world trade. **2c.** Reduce food price volatility. Regional trade, pooling risks and resources. Larger role for PS (incl wheat import), for functioning input and food markets, and lower food prices. **Governance.** Macroeconomic policies to reduce inflation (depth and balance of payment); ease of access to foreign exchange; ease of access to import licenses for enterprises and new investors. Agri-friendly policies. Develop nutrition policy, inter-ministerial coordination, multistakeholder dialogue, capacity building. **Role for private sector.** Government works on enabling environment, instead of crowding out PS; multisector and multistakeholder; encourage competition between public and private input supply. More consistent and transparent policies. Regionally differentiated food system approach. **Donors.** 0.7% GDP to ODA; coordination, country led investment plans, programmatic support (no isolated projects). **System approach.** Link agriculture to nutritional needs and ecological boundaries. **Twin track approach**: Simultaneously (1) immediate needs (nutrition), (2) development (agriculture environment) (possibly different areas, different target groups).
	IOB conclusion on food security:
Temporal coherence 1	Water: *Points of attention from ECDPM strategies* **6.1/6.2. WASH**. Prioritise marginalised. Monitoring. **6.3. Water quality.** Policy. Monitor, reduce pollution, treat waste water, recycling. **6.4. Efficiency**. Reduce use and address scarcity; address leaks; manage trade-offs between different uses. Price water, stop subsidies in water and agriculture, while assuring water access for poorest. Attract investments. Water accounting. Disclose water footprints. Rainwater harvesting. **Irrigation** for food and nutrition security: modernise, farmer-led, inclusive, recycle wastewater, involve PS, microcredit, research, M&E and knowledge transfer. Soil and water quality. **6.5. National and cross boundary water mgt**. governance, water info, hydro, water resource study, economic accounting. Long-term water security and climate change. Water sharing, watershed management. Coordination for small scale fisheries and aquaculture. Nexus water food energy. **6.6. protection wetlands, green basin and storage development.** Treat water as global common good, protect collectively. **6a. Knowledge generation, access tech.** Institutional capacity building. Finance and technical assistance (TA) for water; invest now to avoid pollution and higher costs in future. Partnerships, multistakeholder, PPP. Involved PS; access to credit. **6b. Participation.** Inclusive stakeholder participation (women, youth, local communities). Farmer-led irrigation development.

Form A.1	*Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*
	IOB conclusion on water:
Temporal coherence 1	Climate *Aandachtspunten uit ECDPM (lange-termijn) strategieën* **13.1 Resilience**. Adaptive capacity, manage risks, biodiversity and nature based solutions, climate resilient agriculture, resilient cities, reduce deforestation, social protection. Increase forest cover by efficient agriculture. **13.2. (various policies) NDC, LT-LEDS, sustainable forest management**. National action plans. Ownership by government and stakeholders. Climate resilient dev.; scale up successes. Shift to sustainable production and consumption: sustainable food systems (low meat diet, globally). **13.3. Strengthen governance**. Climate info. Climate related cap build. Tech transfer. 13a. Mobilise resources. Loss and damage [funds from rich countries]. Keep Paris promises: access to climate finance. All financial flows to Climate objectives. **7.2. Renewable energy, hydro**. **7.3. Reduce energy demand and improve energy efficiency**. 7a. Access to technology; increase investment in renewable energy. 7b. Digitalisation: new services, integrating consumers in grid (e.g. electric vehicles); decentralised power supply. **System approach**: More sustainable production and consumption. Food system, transition in diet: more nutrition, less natural resource (water) use.
	IOB conclusion on climate:
Temporal coherence 1	***Cross-SDG strategies:*** • **System approach**. Different (sub-)goals influence each other, e.g., agricultural production, nutrition and ecological boundaries. Integrated water management and water availability for WASH. Wrong incentives (subsidies) for efficient water use. Agricultural and economic development, and reducing GHG emissions and/or forest protection. Transition to sustainable production and consumption. • **Governance**. Country ownership, multistakeholder, inclusiveness, inter-ministerial coordination, institutional capacity building, accountability, • **Targeting.** Target poor/vulnerable countries, areas and people. E.g., food insecure people and areas, women and youth, people and areas vulnerable for climate change. *Note: sometimes it is OK if one project targets the poorest whilst another targets e.g. middle income commercial farms, but this should be explained. In our conclusions of the whole portfolio we assess whether the poorest people have been sufficiently targeted.* • **Access to technology**. Research and capacity building for technology development and transfer at fair conditions (IPRs); North-South and South-South cooperation. • **Landscape approach**. Land tenure to encourage smallholders to invest in agriculture; manage trade-offs between different uses of land, water and forests. • **Private sector involvement**. Encourage local MSMEs. PPPs. Combine public and private investments. • **Type of donor support**. Country-led; programme (no isolated projects); Coordinate and harmonise govt-donors; Results based; Mutual accountability. 0.7% (0.2% Least-developed country; • **Combine short and long-term objectives**. E.g., (1) nutrition, access to WASH; (2) integrated water management; agricultural and economic development; sustainability. • **Costs and benefits**. Calculations showing investments now avoids higher costs later.
	IOB conclusion on temporal coherence 1:
8c. Temporal coherence 2	**2. Continuity of Dutch programme** (number of years, incl. years of current project, on same theme in same area, may be subsequent projects).
	IOB conclusion on temporal coherence 2:

Type of coherence	**++ Synergies aimed for**	**+ Trade-offs optimised**	**0 Neutral (independent)**	**? Not mentioned, missing?**	**- Not aligned. OR Not mentioned, is needed.**	**-- Antagonistic**
Temporal (1) Between policies addressing short term results and long-term strategies.	Short term implementation fits and informs long-term strategies (synergy aimed for).	Short term implementation fits partly in long-term strategy. Deliberate trade-off short and long-term results.	Short term implementation does not fit in long-term strategy, but this does not seem to be necessary.	Long-term strategy not mentioned. Unknown whether this is needed.	Short-term implementation does not fit in long-term strategy, while this seems to be necessary. OR Long-term strategy not mentioned while needed.	Short-term implementation goes against long-term strategy, and delays the transition path.

Form A.1 *Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*						
Temporal (2) Continuity of Dutch programme (theme and area)	Medium/ long-term commitment (since 5y and expected to continue).	Recent commitment (started <5 y ago), expected to continue.	Past commitment >5y), but future commitment (>3y) unclear.	Unknown	Past commitment >5y), but will be phased out (<3y).	Two or more changes (on/off) in past 10y and coming 3y.
8d. Spatial coherence	Dutch support for *national* intervention (policy, strategy) → subsequently Dutch support provided for *local* implementation (think of implementation of national strategy).					
	Dutch support for local intervention → subsequently this influences (and Dutch support of intervention for) national level (policy, strategy) (Think also of the speedboat and tankers approach).					
Type of coherence	**++ Synergies aimed for**	**+ Trade-offs optimised**	**0 Neutral (independent)**	**? Not mentioned, missing?**	**- Not aligned. OR Not mentioned, is needed.**	**-- Antagonistic**
Spatial Between local implementation and policies addressing national and international issues	Local implementation and national policies inform and strengthen each other (synergy aimed for).	Local implementation influences national policies.	Local implementation appreciated by national policy.	(unknown)	Local implementation not appreciated by national policies.	Local implementation goes against priorities of national policies.
	IOB overall conclusion on spatial coherence:					

9. Direct results	**9a. Plan**	**9b. Results**	**9c. conclusion evaluator**	**9d. IOB conclusion**
Reach (person, household)				
Effect per p, hh				
Institutional (descriptive)				

	++	**+**	**0**	**-**	**--**
Results: reach	>100% of plan	75-100% plan	50-75% plan	25-50% plan	<25% plan
P/HH-level effects	Positive effect, AND good quality evaluation	Positive effect, AND limited evaluation quality. OR Partly positive, partly nil effect; AND good evaluation quality	Only some aspects are positive, largely no effects. OR Only perception is positive.	No positive effects.	Negative effects.
Institutional results, distinguishing govt, PSD, social, tech. and ecological aspects.	Average score of planned results between + and ++.	Average score of planned results between 0 and +.	Average score of planned results between - and 0.	Average score of planned results between - - and -.	No institutional effects.
Evaluation quality	Type of evaluation (evaluation method).				
	Causal claim of intervention to results.				
	Independence of evaluation and bias.				

Form A.1 *Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*

10. Continuity and scaling up	**Make the distinction (what applies): Dutch funding has stopped vs. Dutch funding is ongoing/there is Dutch follow-up funding.**					
	IOB conclusion on continuity:					
	++	**+**	**0**	**-**	**--**	**comments**
Continuity and scaling up – Dutch funding stopped	Continuation / scaling up by others: (government, PS or other local organisation), without donor support.	Continuation/ scaling up by others: (government, PS or other local organisation), with other donor (not NL) support.	Continuation by same local organisation, same scale.	Local organisation continues on smaller scale.	Local organisation stops; Benefits stop.	Continuity and scaling up – Dutch funding stopped
Continuity and scaling up – Dutch funding ongoing	(n/a: no ++ with Dutch funding)	Scaling up by others, using domestic funds (government, local private sector, other), besides Dutch funds.	Scaling up OR larger effect, by same organisation, (~same donors), using Dutch funds.	Same scale, same number of beneficiaries, same level of effect, using Dutch funds.	Benefits decline (fewer benefi-ciaries, less effects), using Dutch funds.	Continuity and scaling up – Dutch funding ongoing
11. Efficiency	**Costs/benefits**					
	costs/utility (or costs/person, HH)					
	Leverage through government funding (% government contribution)					
	Leverage through private sector funding (% PS contribution)					
	Other aspects of efficiency:					
	IOB conclusion on efficiency:					
	++	**+**	**0**	**-**	**--**	
Efficiency 1: Quantified beneficiary-level effects compared to project costs (Cost-benefit analysis).	Annual quantitative benefits outweigh annual project costs.	Annual quantitative benefits are positive but do not outweigh annual project costs.	Annual quantitative benefits are nil/ negligible AND Cost per beneficiary seem reasonable	Annual quantitative benefits are nil/ negligible AND Costs per beneficiary seem high.	..	
Efficiency 2: Non-quantified beneficiary-level effects compared to project costs (unit costs). Note: in case of effective pilot projects that are scaled up in a relatively cheap way: increase the score +1.	(++ only for quantified positive benefits)	Positive benefits, not quantified AND Costs per beneficiary seem low.	Positive benefits, not quantified OR positive benefits very likely AND Costs per beneficiary seem reasonable.	Positive benefits (perception at minimum), not quantified. AND Costs per beneficiary seem high. OR Benefits unclear, AND Costs per beneficiary seem reasonable.	Benefits nil/negligible or unclear. AND Costs per beneficiary seem high.	

Form A.1 *Project assessment form (example for Ethiopia)*					
Efficiency 3: Only institutional-level effects. Institutional effects compared to project costs AND/OR leverage of other funds by Dutch funds	High institutional effects for relatively low costs AND Leverage of other funding more than ten-fold Dutch funding.	Reasonable institutional effects for relatively low costs AND Leverage of other funding more than twice Dutch funding	Reasonable institutional effects for relatively low costs AND/OR Other funding increases while Dutch funding decreases	Disappointing institutional effects for relatively high costs AND/OR Limited leverage other funds, not increasing.	No institutional effects. AND/OR No leverage other funds.
12a. Causes for good results	i: that are coherence-related				
	ii: other causes				
12.b. Causes for disappointing results	i. that are coherence-related				
	ii. other causes				
	IOB conclusion on causes of results:				
End conclusion	Most important and distinctive aspects on coherence and results (that must certainly be included in overarching conclusions for Ethiopia and for the total set of 25 projects):				

Annex 3 Detailed results of 25 selected projects

1. Overview of projects

In the three case study countries, 25 projects were selected for in-depth analysis of results, coherence and the relationship between coherence and results. Most of the projects worked in one country only. For projects working in more than one country, depending on the availability of evaluations, we considered either only the part in one case study country (FDOV, ISLA) or the programme as a whole (GAIN). Information on projects is presented in two overview tables: one with the full name, country, project period, overall budget and Dutch share (Table A.6), and one with the main implementing organisation: government, NGO, public-private partnership or knowledge institution – a university in this case; whether funding comes from The Hague (central budget) or from embassies (delegated budget); and what the main and combination of project objectives are: agriculture, land management, nutrition, drinking water, sanitation, integrated water management, renewable energy and support to industry in the agro sector and the garment sector (Table A.7).

Table A.6 *Overview of the 25 selected projects, country (C: Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Mozambique or Worldwide), project period, overall budget and Dutch share of the budget*

Nr	Short name	Project name (and phase)	C	Period	Budget (m EUR)	NL share (m EUR)
1	**AGP**	Agricultural Growth Programme (2)	E	2016-2023	565	20
2	**ISSD**	Integrated Seed Sector Dev. (2)	E	2012-2015	11.5	10.2
3	**EDGET**	Enhancing Dairy Sector Growth Ethiopia	E	2012-2018	14.5	9
4	**FDOV 1**	Potato processing in Ethiopia	E	2012-2021	3	3
5	**FDOV 2**	Fair Planet initiative (vegetables)	E	2015-2021	2.2	1.5
6	**SMIS**	Small-scale Micro Irrigation Support	E	2014-2020	20.7	10
7	**ISA**	Inclusive Sust. Agri development (1, 2)	M	2017-2023	42	31
8	**Blue Gold**	Blue Gold (water management in polders)	B	2012-2021	62.7	62.7
9	**SaFaL**	Sust. agri., food security, market link (2)	B	2012-2022	26,8	26,8
10	**GAIN**	Improving Diets to End Malnutrition	W	2017-2022	62	62
11	**PSNP**	Productive Safety Net Programme (4)	E	2015-2021	3,200	67
12	**PLAN 1**	Self-help sanitation (Plan 1)	E	2009-2014	8,5	4,5
13	**OneWash**	One WASH National Programme (2)	E	2020-2026	512	22
14	**AIAS**	Org. Dev. AIAS and Capacity Dev. (1, 2, 3)	M	2013-2025	38.9	38.9
15	**PROOFS**	Profitable Opportunities for Food Security	B	2013-2017	8	8
16	**Max**	Max Nutri-WASH (2)	B	2016-2021	9,6	6.8
17	**PLAN 2**	WASH, Food and Nutri Security, Ethiopia	E	2013-2018	2,6	2.6
18	**BDP**	Bangladesh Delta Plan, Support to Impl.	B	2014-2023	13.5	13.5
19	**BMP**	Beria Master Plan	M	2011-	14.6	14.6
20	**SRJS**	Shared resources, joint solutions	M	2015-2021	59	59
21	**IWRM-F**	Integr. Water Resources Management Fund	M	2019-2024	21	21
22	**ISLA**	Sust. Land and Water Programme (1, 2)	E	2015-2023	105	45
23	**ABPP**	Africa Biogas Partnership Programme (2)	E	2014-2020	25.1	22.6
24	**ABSF**	Agribusiness Support Facility	E	2012-2016	2.8	2.8
25	**PaCT**	Partnership for Cleaner Textiles (1, 2)	B	2012-2022	12.6	5

Table A.7 *Thematic grouping of 25 projects, funding (central or delegated budget), channel (government, NGO, knowledge institutes [uni], or public-private partnership) and main objectives*

Group		Project (short name)	Centr. /deleg.	Channel	Agr. prod, income	Land management	Nutrition	Sanitation	Drinking water	IWRM	Energy	Industry, trade
Agri prod.	1	**AGP**	del	gov	+							
	2	**ISSD**	del	uni	+							
	3	**EDGET**	del	ngo	+							
	4	**FDOV1**	cen	ppp	+							
	5	**FDOV2**	cen	ppp	+							
	6	**SMIS**	del	gov	+							
Agri and land	7	**ISA**	del	gov	+	+						
	8	**Blue Gold**	del	gov	+	+				+		
Nutr. and agri	9	**SaFaL**	del	ngo	+	+	+					
	10	**GAIN**	cen	ngo	+		+					
	11	**PSNP**	del	gov		+	+					
WASH	12	**Plan 1**	cen	ngo				+				
	13	**One WASH**	del	gov				+	+			
	14	**AIAS**	del	gov				+	+			
WASH and nutr	15	**PROOFS**	del	ngo	+		+	+				
	16	**Max**	cen	ngo			+	+	+			
	17	**Plan 2**	cen	ngo	+	+	+	+	+			
IWRM	18	**BDP**	del	gov						+		
	19	**BMP**	cen	gov						+		
	20	**SRJS**	cen	ngo						+		
	21	**IWRM-F**	del	gov					+	+		
	22	**ISLA**	cen	ppp	+	+				+		
Energy	23	**ABPP**	cen	ngo							+	
Industry	24	**ABSF**	del	gov	+							+
	25	**PaCT**	del	ppp						+	+	+

Different levels of results

2. Number of people reached

Planned and actual numbers of people (or households) reached are presented for the 18 projects that directly targeted people. Projects are grouped by theme: food security, WASH and energy.
A few explanatory notes:

- Some projects distinguish between direct reach, with a high contribution from the project, and indirect reach or reach with a lower contribution from the project. In such cases, we only present the direct reach with a high project contribution.
- The Netherlands is often the main donor of a project, but sometimes it is only one of the donors in a multi-donor project. To put reach into perspective, we present the share of project reach that corresponds with the share of Dutch ODA in the overall ODA budget of the project. Our score is based on a simple comparison of the results achieved with those planned (Table A.8). An assessment of reach in relation to the budget is included in the presentation of 'cost-effectiveness' below.

1. Nutrition, agricultural production and income, sustainable land management

Most agricultural and food security projects reach the intended number of beneficiaries. The SMIS project, which tested different types of irrigation schemes, worked more at the institutional level and reached fewer farms than planned. Once a suitable irrigation scheme was found, it could be scaled up in the AGP project, which has a much wider reach. The ISA project reached fewer beneficiaries than planned, partly because less attention was given to developing a good business case and value.

Table A.8 *Planned vs. actual number of beneficiaries of agriculture and food security projects reached*

		Planned reach			Actual reach			
No.	**Project**	**Nutri (p)**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Land (ha)**	**Nutri (p)**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Land (ha)**	**Score**
1	**AGP**		56,000			80,500		++
2	**ISSD**		150,410			171,770		++
3	**EDGET**		40,300			34,720		+
4	**FDOV1**		2,500			2,282		+
5	**FDOV2**		717			1,607		++
6	**SMIS**		4,608			1,560		-
7	**ISA**		31,820	1,369		20,720	2,479	0
8	**Blue Gold**		150,000	160,000		150,000	160,000	++
9	**SaFaL**	425,000	85,000	32,000	509,865	88,509	35,615	++
10	**GAIN**	130,000	91,000		164,000	96,000		++
11	**PSNP**	174,300		no target	168,000		6,552	+

White cells: no project objective

2. Water and sanitation and nutrition

All WASH projects more or less reached the target number of beneficiaries. Some projects combined WASH objectives with nutrition objectives. The Plan 2 project reached fewer farmers with production and income, a project component that received less attention.

Table A.9 *Planned vs. actual number of beneficiaries of WASH and nutrition projects reached*

		Planned				Actual				
No.	**Project**	**Nutri (p)**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Water (p)**	**Sanit (p)**	**Nutri (p)**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Water (p)**	**Sanit (p)**	**Score**
12	**Plan 1**				636,000				710,200	++
13	**OneWASH***			222,600	132,300			218,091	236,622	++
14	**AIAS 2**			130,000	47,800			130,000	74,521	++
15	**PROOFS**	340,000	80,000		306,000	340,000	80,000		285,000	++
16	**Max**	205,900		217,970	313,110	252,760		296,070	340,800	++
17	**Plan 2**	376,000	20,000	24,000	357,000	365,000	6,400	30,000	255,000	+

White cells: no project objective

3. Integrated water resources management (IWRM)

Most IWRM projects do not target a specific number of people, but focus on institutional results, which will be presented later. One IWRM project, the ISLA project in Ethiopia, also targeted a modest number of farmers, land area and forest area after scaling down its landscape and institutional ambitions.

Table A.10 *Planned vs. actual number of beneficiaries of the IWRM project ISLA in Ethiopia reached*

		Planned			Actual			
No.	**Project**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Land (ha)**	**Forest (ha)**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Land (ha)**	**Forest (ha)**	**Score**
22	ISLA 2 (ET)	387	151	387	370	123	108	+

4. Energy

Only one project in our selection, ABPP in Ethiopia, supported households with biogas installations as a renewable energy source. This project also targeted farming households to use biodigester slurry as organic fertiliser for crops. The number of biodigesters installed in this project is lower than planned because they are relatively expensive, despite a government subsidy.

Table A.11 *Planned vs actual number of beneficiaries of the biogas project ABPP in Ethiopia reached*

		Planned		Actual		
No.	**Project**	**Energy (p)**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Energy (p)**	**Prod inc (hh)**	**Score**
23	**ABPP**	99,000	18,900	60,750	12,150	0

Industry and trade, with agriculture or water management

Two projects, ABSF and PaCT, targeted companies in specific sub-sectors (ABSF) and garment factories (PaCT), but not individuals or households.

3. Effects on people

Beneficiary level effects are presented per household (farm production and income) or per individual (nutrition, WASH behaviour and health). In some cases, project monitoring includes effect indicators such as farm production; in other cases, the evaluations assess effects, for example through a survey. Effects are presented as scores (+, -). A grey background colour indicates that the effect was not planned in the project appraisal document.

1. Farm production and income, individual food intake and health

Most food security projects are agricultural projects that successfully address farm production and income (Table A.12). There are a few exceptions worth noting. ISSD showed disappointing effects at the household level due to the drought in 2016 and negative interference from the government seed sector. EDGET showed no results, according to the survey, partly because the informal milk sector was equally profitable, but in interviews respondents were more positive. GAIN is different. Most of its work is not in agriculture but in the availability of nutritious food, for example through large-scale fortification (availability). PSNP is a safety net programme that works only indirectly on farm productivity by preventing poor people from selling assets and through a small livelihoods sub-programme.

Table A.12 *Effects on farm production and income, food intake and health*

Nr	Project	Production	Income	Food intake	*Expend.*	*Food gap*	*Child feed.*	*Diet*	Health	Eval quality*	Final score
1	**AGP**	++	++	++				++		2.5	++
2	**ISSD**	0	0							3	-
3	**EDGET**	0	0							2	0
4	**FDOV1**	++	++							1	+
5	**FDOV2**	++	++	+				+		1	+
6	**SMIS**	++								1	+
7	**ISA**	+	+							1	+
8	**Blue Gold**	++	++	++		++				2	++
9	**SaFaL**	++	++	++			++	++		2.5	++
10	**GAIN**	(++ availability)		0/++			0/++		0/++	0.5	0
11	**PSNP**	(? small part)	++	++	++	++	++	0		3	++

** Evaluation quality on the attribution claim varies from poor (0.5) to very good (3)*

White cells indicate that income or food intake were not project objectives.

About half the projects also successfully address food intake, measured for example by food expenditure, the food gap (months per year without sufficient food), infant feeding and breastfeeding, or diet. None of the projects, except GAIN in small studies, have evaluated their effect on health, such as nutritional status. One reason why food security projects do not evaluate health is that more is needed than just nutrition, such as WASH. GAIN often did not measure outcomes but extrapolated outputs (availability), except in two good, small-scale studies: (1) one study found no effect on children's egg consumption, and (2) one study found a reduction in anaemia among garment factory workers who received a healthy lunch.

The final rating took into account both the effects and the quality of the evaluation: how plausible is it to attribute the reported effect to the project? Half of the evaluations were of sufficient quality (quality 2 and 3) to draw firm conclusions about effects at the beneficiary level.

Table A.13 *Scoring of evaluation quality: plausibility that the presented effects are caused by the project*

3.	Double difference, comparing treatment with control group and baseline with endline.
2.	Comparing baseline with endline, without control group, interpretation independent evaluator.
1.	Comparing baseline with endline, project monitoring data, without independent evaluator.
0.	Desk study and qualitative interviews. No beneficiary-level data on outcome.

For an overview of the 25 projects evaluation quality see Annex 2.

In conclusion: those projects that aimed to increase production, income or food intake were effective. It is a missed opportunity not to consider food intake (e.g. diet) at the household or individual level when designing and evaluating food security projects, because production and income do not automatically contribute to nutrition. Health, particularly malnutrition, is only an appropriate indicator if other constraints besides nutrition are also addressed.

2. WASH and nutrition

In WASH projects without a nutrition component, most reports and evaluations are limited to the output level: the number of water sources or toilets is extrapolated to the number of beneficiaries, without evaluating the effect of access to WASH at the beneficiary level. There is some anecdotal evidence of reduced incidence of diarrhoea from interviews in the AIAS evaluation.

Table A.14 *Effects on WASH behaviour, food security and health*

		WASH	Food security*			FS+WASH		
No.	**Project**	**Behaviour**	**Prod**	**Income**	**Intake**	**Health**	**Eval qual**	**Score**
12	**Plan 1**	+					1	+
13	**OneWASH****	?					0.5	?
14	**AIAS*****	+					1	+
15	**PROOFS**	+	++	++	++	+	2	++
16	**Max**	+	++		+	++	1.5	++
17	**Plan 2**	++	+	++	++	+	1.5	++

** Food security detailed indicators: PROOFS: Food intake: diet, food gap, affordability, FiS index. Health: health expenditure. Max. Production: vegetable gardens, poultry. Food intake: breastfeeding, complementary feeding, 3 meals a day. Health: child stunting, women anaemia. Plan 2. Food intake: diets, breastfeeding, infant feeding. Health (no target): diarrhoea (perceived); (stunting not measured).*

*** OneWASH: no effect evaluated.*

**** AIAS: anecdotal evidence of reduced diarrhoea in evaluation.*

White cells indicate no objective in project proposal.

Interestingly, projects that combine WASH with a nutrition or food security component (PROOFS, Max, Plan 2), evaluate outcomes: production, income and food intake, and even impact: health (Max). These projects are also effective. The Max project is the most ambitious in its objectives and has achieved a halving of child malnutrition, a combined effect of improved WASH and improved nutrition. In other words, the highest level food security indicator – reduced malnutrition – is achievable when food security activities (including infant feeding activities) are combined with WASH activities.

3. Energy

The ABPP Biogas project only collected anecdotal information on household-level effects, not through a household survey but through interviews. The focus of the project was more at the institutional level, building a viable business case for constructors and households in conjunction with a government subsidy scheme (see below under Institutional Effects). The main household-level impact identified by the evaluation, and an important motivation for installing a biodigester, is the use of slurry as organic fertiliser in agricultural production.

Table A.15 *Effects on agriculture, living conditions and environment*

No.	Project	Slurry as organic fertiliser	Reduced indoor pollution	Reduced workload	Light at night	Saving costs for fuelwood	Toilets connected	Reduced deforestation	Eval qual	Score
23	**ABPP**	++	+	0	0	+	-	?	0	+

Projects without beneficiary-level effects

Most IWRM projects and the projects addressing industry (PaCT) and agricultural businesses and trade (ABSF), don't show household or individual-level effects. These will be discussed below in a separate section on Institutional Effects.

4. Institutional results

The table below shows the scores for five institutional results as found in the evaluations (and interviews). The relative importance of institutional results varies from 1 for projects that mainly aimed for household-level results to 5 for projects that only aimed for institutional-level results. White cells indicate specific institutional results that were not aimed for in the proposal, but which could still be scored if information was available. However, the average score for the institutional result only takes into account the scores for results that were aimed for.

Table A.16 *Institutional results divided into five subcategories for the 25 projects*

No.	Project	Importance (1-5)	Govt	PSD	Social	Tech	Ecol	Avg score*
1	**AGP**	2	0	-	0	-	-	-/0
2	**ISSD**	5	++	-	+	-	-	0/+
3	**EDGET**	2	- -	+	-	+	- -	-/0
4	**FDOV1**	1	- -	++	+	+		+/++
5	**FDOV2**	1	- -	++	+	++		+/++
6	**SMIS**	3	++	-	+	++		+/++
7	**ISA**	3	+	-	+	+		0/+
8	**Blue Gold**	3	+	+	+	++		+/++
9	**SaFaL**	1	0	++	++	+	0	+/++
10	**GAIN**	3	+	++		+		+/++
11	**PSNP**	2	0	- -	+	+	++	+
12	**Plan 1**	1	-	-	++	+		0/+
13	**OneWASH**	2	+	0	+	-	-	0/+
14	**AIAS**	4	++	0	0	+	-	0/+
15	**PROOFS**	1	- -	+	+	+		+
16	**Max**	1	0	++	++	+		+/++
17	**Plan 2**	1	0	+	+	+		+
18	**BDP**	5	++	++	0	++	++	++
19	**BMP**	5	++	+	0	++	+	+/++
20	**SJRS**	4	+	+	++	++	+	+/++
21	**IWRM-F**	4	+	-	0	+	+	0/+
22	**ISLA**	4	-	+	+	++	0	0/+

Table A.16 *Institutional results divided into five subcategories for the 25 projects*								
23	**ABPP**	2	+	- -	0	+	+	0/+
24	**ABSF**	5	+	++	+	+		+/++
25	**PaCT**	5	+	++	0	++	++	+/++

** The average score only includes results that the project aimed for, indicated by the blue cells, and excludes the white cells.*

As expected, projects that only or mainly aimed for institutional results (importance score 4 or 5) scored higher than projects that mainly aimed for household level results.

Looking at the IWRM projects in more detail, we identified eight specific IWRM results, based on project proposals and evaluations:
1. Water management plan at landscape level
2. Flood protection
3. Water use (reduction)
4. Water use efficiency
5. Water sharing agreements
6. Maintenance of water infrastructure
7. Drainage of excess water
8. Reduction of water pollution (chemicals, salinisation)

The project scores for these eight IWRM institutional results (Table A.17) have been taken into account in the five generic institutional results presented above. Some of these IWRM projects also had household-level effects (ISLA, SRJS), which are presented above, while the Blue Gold irrigation project, which addresses household-level results, also has important IWRM results and is therefore included here.

Table A.17 *Institutional results of IWRM projects*									
No.	**Project**	**Mgt plan**	**Protect**	**Water use**	**Efficiency**	**Sharing**	**Mainte-nance**	**Drainage**	**Pollution**
8	**Blue Gold**	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
18	**BDP**	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	1
19	**BMP**	3	1				2	2	
20	**SRJS**	3	3			3			
21	**IWRM-F**	2	1			1	1		
22	**ISLA**	1		1	3				
25	**PaCT**			3	3				3

Scores. 1: planned; 2: implemented but effects small or unknown; 3: implemented and positive effects. White cells indicate that this was not an intended result.

5. Continuation and scaling up

A distinction is made between projects that have stopped receiving Dutch funding and projects that have continued to receive Dutch support, for example in a follow-up project.

Projects that stopped receiving Dutch funding
For the projects where Dutch funding has stopped, we looked at a combination of:
- Continuation by others: government, private sector or other local organisation.
- Whether there is support from other donors. Continuation without donor support is a strength.
- Whether activities are scaled up, continued at the same level, reduced or stopped.
- (Other arguments)

Table A.18 *Continuation and scaling up of projects after Dutch funding stopped*

No.	Old project	Continuation by	Other donors	Scaling up	Other arguments	Score
4	**FDOV1**	+ new PS	No	+ increase	0	++
5	**FDOV2**	+ same NGO	NGO	+ likely increase	0	+
6	**SMIS**	+ govt	No	+ increase	+	+
7	**ISA**	- gov (PS)	WB	- likely decrease	-	-
8	**Blue Gold**	0 WMO (Gov)	No	0 same	0	0
15	**PROOFS**	0 uncertain	No	0 same	0	0
17	**Plan 2**	- no	No	0 uncertain	0	-
20	**SRJS**	0 civ. Soc. Org.	No	- decrease	-	-
22	**ISLA**	0 uncertain	No	0 uncertain	-	-
23	**ABPP**	+ gov+EU	EU	+ yes	-	+

Projects with continued Dutch funding

For projects that receive follow-up funding through a new project or a second phase with Dutch support, we assessed the following combination of factors:

- Continuation by others (in addition to the Dutch follow-up project)
- Whether, in addition to Dutch funding, there is also funding from the government, the private sector or other organisations or donors.
- Whether activities are continued on a larger or smaller scale.
- Other arguments, in particular what happened to the results of the old project phase; open.

Where Dutch funding has continued, we have given a maximum score of + for 'continuity' (see project assessment framework in Annex 2).

Table A.19 *Continuation and scaling up of projects with continued Dutch funding*

No.	Old project	New project	Continuation by	Other donors	Scaling up	Other arguments*	Score
1	**AGP 2**	FSRP	Gov	WB, others	+ increase	++	+
2	**ISSD**	ENSP	Gov PS	No	0 (unknown)	++	+
3	**EDGET**	BRIDGE	NGO	No	0 increase	+	0
9	**SaFaL 2**	SMHF, S+IWRM	NGO, PPP	No	0 same	+	0
10	**GAIN**	Market based sol.	NGO, PS, Gov	No	+ increase	++	+
11	**PSNP 4**	PSNP 5	Gov	WB, others	0 same	+	0
12	**Plan 1**	Plan 2	NGO	No	- decline	-	-
13	**OneWASH 1**	OneWASH 2	Gov	WB, others	0 same	-	0
14	**AIAS 2**	AIAS 3	Gov (PS)	No	+ increase	+	+
16	**Max**	BWBP	NGO	No	- decline	0	-
18	**BDP+SIBDP**	(Modest EKN)	Gov	WB, ADB, ...	0 same	++	+
19	**BMP**	(Ongoing)	Gov	WB, EU, KfW	0 same	+	+
21	**IWRM-F**	New project	Gov	WB (uncertain)	0 (unknown)	+	0
24	**ABSF**	Traide	PS	No	- decline	0	-
25	**PaCT 1**	PaCT 2	PS Gov	IFC, others	+ increase	++	0

**For more detailed arguments for continuity, see Annex 2.*

6. Cost-effectiveness and efficiency

Cost-effectiveness 1: quantified beneficiary-level benefits compared to costs

Table A.20 *Quantified beneficiary-level benefits compared to ODA costs*

Project	ODA / benef.	Unit benef. effect	Quantified beneficiary effects	Score
SaFaL	EUR 303	HH. prod, inc, FS	284 EUR/HH/y	++
AGP	EUR 246	HH. prod, inc	40 EUR/HH/y	++
Blue Gold	EUR 418	HH. prod, inc	(payback period 0.8-2 years)	++
Max	EUR 20	Pers. WASH, nut	(extrapol. life earnings B:C = 5.3)	+

Cost-effectiveness 2: non-quantified beneficiary-level benefits compared to costs

Where benefits can be assessed but not quantified in monetary terms, a comparison with ODA costs still gives an indication of cost-effectiveness (Table A.21).

Table A.21 *Non-quantified beneficiary-level benefits compared to costs*

No.	Project	ODA / benef.	Unit, what	Non-quantified benefits	Score
3	**EDGET**	259	HH. prod, inc.	0 survey; + perception	-
4	**ISSD**	60	HH. prod, inc.	0 survey (high instit. effects)	0
5	**FDOV1**	1,315	HH. prod, inc.	+	-
6	**FDOV2**	931	HH. prod, inc.	+	-
8	**SMIS**	6,369	HH. prod, inc.	+	-
20	**ISA**	1,500	HH. prod, inc.	+	-
9	**ISLA***	3,333	HH. prod, inc.	+ (low instit. effects)	-
1	**PSNP**	400	Pers. FS	+ (plus land management)	0
15	**PROOFS**	24	Pers. FS	+	+
25	**gain²**	378	Pers. FS	0/+ (limited effect eval.)	0
11	**Plan 1**	6	Pers. Sanit	+/0	0
10	**OneWASH*****	70	Pers. WASH	? (WASH assumed effects)	0
12	**Plan 2**	10	Pers. Sanit., nutri.	+	+
23	**AIAS-2**	66	Pers. WASH	? (WASH assumed effect)	0
21	**SRJS****	694	Pers. NRM use	? (medium inst. effect)	0
13	**ABPP**	372	Pers. Energy	+	0

** ISLA Ethiopian budget underestimated, no share overhead costs*

*** GAIN, SRJS: beneficiaries and budget of whole multi-country programme.*

**** OneWASH Phase 1 results (NL did not fund), calculated with 4.2% NL Share ODA as in phase 2.*

We may underestimate cost-effectiveness simply because we have too little information on the effects. WASH projects often do not report on beneficiary-level effects (and are not asked to) (OneWASH, AIAS), only reporting on outputs. Similarly, GAIN (2017-2022) mainly reported on activities and outputs, with the exception of two small, good-quality studies of some of its activities. This was not enough for us to base a cost-benefit calculation of the programme on.

Table A.22 *Institutional results compared to costs, leveraging of other donor funding and project management*

No.	project	Institutional effects	Leverage, costs, mgt	Score
19	**BDP**	++	++ USD 9 b	++
22	**BMP**	+	+ USD 200 m	+
18	**PaCT**	+	+ more donors join	+
7	**ABSF**	0	+ low costs	0
24	**IWRM-F**	+	- inefficient project management	-

Annex 4 Detailed scores of coherence of 25 projects

The detailed scores for the 25 projects are presented in Table A.23. The judgement criteria for scoring coherence are presented in the Project Assessment Form, in Annex 2.

Table A.23 *Coherence scores for the 25 projects*

			Internal				External				Temporal				Spatial		
No.	Project	Centr/Embassy	Within	Between	Inclusive	Overall	Main theme	Other themes	Collaboration	Overall	Main theme	Other themes	Cross-SDG	Overall	Nat->loc	Loc-> nat	Overall
1	AGP	E	4	2.5	3	3.3	5	4.0	5	4.7	3	2.0	3	2.7	5	5	5.0
2	ISSD	E	3		4	3.5	5		4	4.5	4		4	4.0	5	5	5.0
3	EDGET	E	2	2.0	1	1.8	4	2.5	3	3.2	3	2.0	1	2.0	1	4	2.5
4	FDOV1	C	3		2	2.5	4	3.0	2	3.0	3		1	2.0	1	2	1.5
5	FDOV2	C	4	4.0	2	3.7	4	2.0	2	2.7	4	3.0	2	3.0	1	2	1.5
6	SMIS	E	3	3.5	4	3.3	3	3.5	4	3.5	3	3.5	4	3.5	5	5	5.0
7	ISA	E	3	3.5	2	3.0	2	3.0	3	2.7	2	3.5	2	2.5	4	3	3.5
8	Blue Gold	E	4	4.5	5	4.3	3	4.0	4	3.7	2	4.5	4	3.5	5	4	4.5
9	SaFaL	E	5	2.5	4	4.0	5	2.5	4	3.8	5	2.5	3	3.5	1	5	3.0
10	GAIN	C	4		3	3.5	4		5	4.5	4		3	3.5	4	5	4.5
11	PSNP	E	5	3.5	4	4.3	5	4.0	5	4.7	4	3.5	4	3.8	5	5	5.0
12	Plan 1	C	1		3	2.0	2		2	2.0	2		1	1.5	1	3	2.0
13	OneWASH	E	2	2.5	4	2.5	5	4.0	5	4.7	2	2.0	3	2.3	5	5	5.0
14	AIAS	E	3	1	5	3.0	5	3.0	5	4.3	2	2.5	2	2.2	5	5	5.0
15	PROOFS	E	4	3.5	4	3.8	3	3.5	2	2.8	4	2.5	2	2.8	1	2	1.5
16	Max	E	5	3.5	4	4.3	4	3.5	3	3.5	3	3.5	3	3.2	1	2	1.5
17	Plan 2	C	3	3.5	4	3.3	3	3.5	2	2.8	3	3.0	1	2.3	1	2	1.5
18	BDP	E	5	4.5	3	4.5	5	4.5	5	4.8	4	4.5	5	4.5	5	4	4.5
19	BMP	E	3	4	2	3.0	4	4.0	5	4.3	3	4.0	4	3.7	4	4	4.0
20	SRJS	C	5	4	5	4.7	3	3.5	4	3.5	4	4.0	3	3.7	5	5	5.0
21	IWRM-F	E	3	4	3	3.3	4	4.0	4	4.0	3	3.0	4	3.3	5	4	4.5
22	ISLA	C	2	2	3	2.2	2	4.0	3	3.0	1	3.0	2	2.0	2	4	3.0
23	ABPP	C	4	3.5	1	3.3	4	3.0	4	3.7	5	3.5	3	3.8	4	4	4.0
24	ABSF	E	4		4	4.0	4		4	4.0	4		2	3.0	5	5	5.0
25	PaCT	E	4	5	2	3.8	4	4.0	5	4.3	4	4.0	4	4.0	5	4	4.5
	Average		3.5	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.7	3.2	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.9	3.7

- Large government multi-donor programmes: PSNP, AGP, OneWASH
- Large bilateral projects: IWRM-F, AIAS, GAIN, ISA, Blue Gold
- Innovative projects with private sector: FDOV 1 and 2, EDGET, PaCT, ABSF
- Local NGO projects: Plan 1 and 2, PROOFS, SaFaL, Max, SRJS
- Long-term strategy projects: BDP, BMP

Annex 5
Details of project results

For each type of coherence, arguments from the project assessments are listed as examples of how coherence has affected project results. This complements Chapter 4.2.1.

Internal coherence

For internal coherence, we identified three subcategories: (1) coherence within a theme, food security, water or climate (energy); (2) coherence between themes, food security, water and climate; and (3) coherence between any of the themes, food security, water and climate on the one hand and inclusiveness on the other (Figure A5.1).

Figure A.1 *Internal coherence aspects affecting project results*

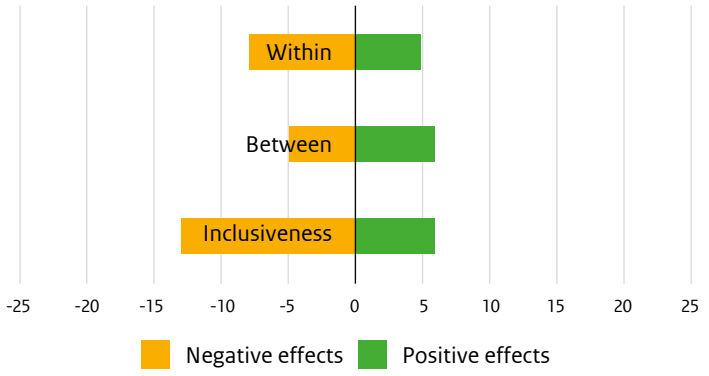


Table A.24 *Number of projects and examples of internal coherence as positive or negative factors for project results*

	#	Positive effects due to combinations of:	#	Negative effect due to insufficient attention to:
Within themes (FS, W, E)	5	• Diversification – production • Nutrition – VCD • Nutrition – targeting under-five children • Water management – infra • Water and sanitation	8	• Nutrition, affordability • Livestock aspects • Mechanisation • Local plant breeding • IWRM (in irrigation; in WASH) • Disconnect water, sanitation and wastewater
Between themes (FS, W, E)	6	• Agriculture and irrigation • Agriculture and value chains • Value chain and landscape • WASH and nutrition • Water and climate adaptation	5	• Irrigation and water management in agriculture • No long-term strategy water-climate • Misalignment private and public objectives • Water management in agriculture • disconnect WASH and IWRM
With inclusiveness	6	• Women (sanitation) • Landless (food security) • Whole village approach (WASH) • Marginalised communities • Low water tariff for new connections	13	• Gender • Youth • Marginalised groups • Marginalised, food insecure areas • Relevance local context • Relevance poorer households • Slums, informal area • Poorer smallholder farmers

External coherence

For external coherence, we distinguished between (1) the alignment of the Dutch project with the policies of the partner country government, and (2) the collaboration between the Dutch project and organisations of the partner country government and, in some cases, with other donors (Figure A5.2).

Figure A.2 *External coherence aspects affecting project results*

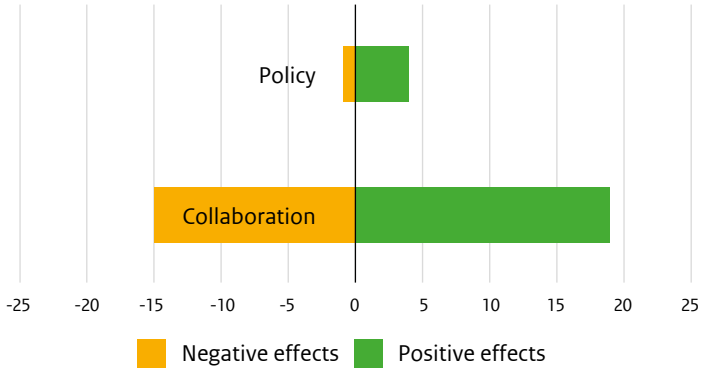


Table A.25 *External coherence aspects affecting project results*

	#	Positive effects due to:	#	Negative effect due to:
Policy alignment	4	• Relevance for government • Continuation by government • Local ownership • Anticipating future policy	1	• Government economic policy undermines PSD efforts
Collaboration	19	• Ownership, demand driven • Involve government staff and university • Task division • Large-scale, efficiency • Multi-donor-govt prog. • Options for policy dialogue • Transboundary water management	15	• Insufficient ownership • Government less interested • Government does not keep to agreements • Insufficient policy dialogue • Disconnect different government agencies • Dependency on collaboration (and co-funding) is a risk • Insufficiently embedded in permanent organisations • Mismatch Dutch funding rules and local opportunities • Mismatch Dutch offer and local demand

Temporal coherence

For temporal coherence, we used the eight cross-SDG approaches that we had identified in the international long-term strategies: (1) systems approach, (2) governance, (3) combination of short-term and long-term objectives, (4) targeting the poorest, (5) private sector involvement, (6) consideration of costs and benefits, and (8) type of donor support (Figure A.2).

Figure A.3 *Temporal coherence aspects affecting project results*

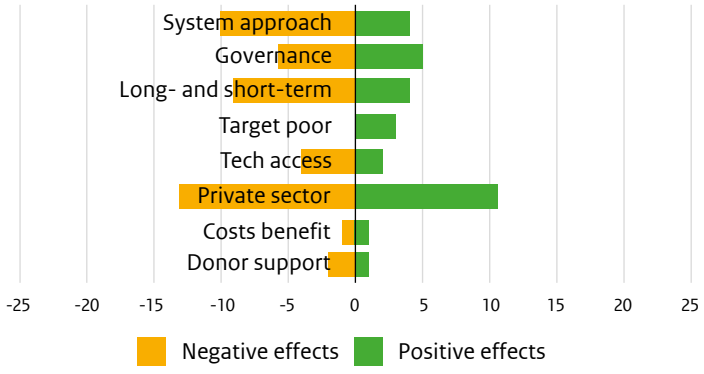


Table A.26 *Temporal coherence aspects affecting project results*

	#	Positive effects due to:	#	Pegative effect due to:
System approach	4	• Sustainable agriculture and climate adaptation • Agriculture and reforestation	10	• No analysis ground and surface water for future water availability for irrigation • Without value chain development and farm income no maintenance irrigation • No anticipation climate change in WASH; • Disconnect IWRM-WASH
Governance	5	• Capacity building for continuation • Inter-ministerial mechanism • Municipality land registry and tax collection • Organised sector organsiation	6	• Insufficient capacity building • Insufficient funding for government agencies • Macroeconomic policy not adjusted • Little attention for O&M
Long-term and short-term benefits	4	• Self-reliance with VSL* credit • Organised water use groups for maintenance • Building pilots in large programmes	6	• Insufficient attention for maintenance water infrastructure • WASH: quantity connections undermines quality and sustainability • Insufficient capacity water use organisations for maintenance • Fall back on unhygienic behaviour
Target poor	3	• Communities involved in project planning • Use of local farm knowledge	0	
Access to technology	3	• Learning and dissemination • Good quality studies • Well-documented pilot, input for large programme	6	• Poor quality seed introduced • Poor quality water sources • Poor quality toilets • No cost benefit analysis new tech (biodigester) • No long-term strategies for water mgt • Irrigation maintenance too expensive
Private sector development	12	• Link prod-market • Good business case • PS continues act. • Local PSD for diversification and nutrition • Self-reliance with credit • Market and public subsidy • Development and cost reduction	14	• Poor credit facilities • Too little support to PS for continuation • Invalid assumption PS would continue • Poor value chain dev • No good business case • Mismatch business case and poor target group • Govt gives no room for PS • Farmer organisations without business mindset • Mismatch Dutch PS and local demand
Costs and benefits	1	• Investment in water treatment saves costs later	1	• No cost and benefit analysis for innovation (biodigestor)
Donor support	1	• Capacity building government increased revenue for maintenance water infra	2	• Project mode, no viable business case; credit scheme failed • Desire to involve Dutch water sector did not match demand

** VSL: Village Savings and Loan Associations*

Spatial coherence

For spatial coherence, we distinguish between three subcategories: (1) linking local level results to national strategies and implementation, (2) linking national strategic interventions to local implementation, and (3) other linkages between interventions at different scales (Figure A.3).

Figure A.4 *Aspects of spatial coherence affecting project results*

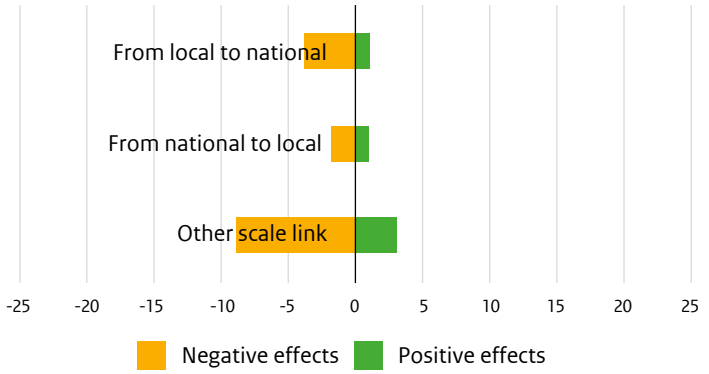
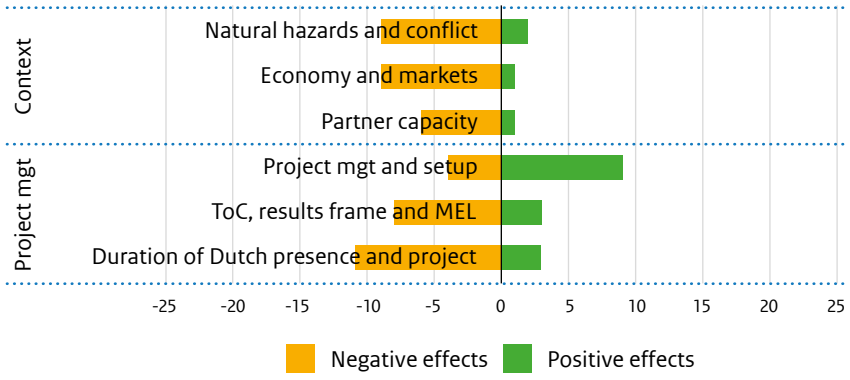


Table A.27 *Aspects of spatial coherence affecting project results*

	#	Positive effects due to:	#	Negative effect due to:
From local to national	1	• Local field work and national policy dialogue	4	• No effect beyond local scale (agri) • Larger scale problems not addressed (water)
From national to local	1	• Develop national strategy and contact with local projects	2	• No effect at household level • No coherent set local projects • No involvement local communities
Other scale link	3	• Involve all stakeholders in a landscape • International knowledge for national programme • Masterplan as starting point for projects • Work at different levels simultaneously	9	• Too small scale, less impact and relatively expensive • Too fragmented, no synergy • Problems outside project area not addressed • No scaling up • Disconnect hydro unit and water use group • Master plan missing

Other factors affecting results

Figure A.5 *Factors other than coherence affecting project results*



Context

Table A.28 *Factors other than coherence affecting project results*

	#	Positive effects due to:	#	Negative effect due to:
Natural hazards and conflict	2	Covid-19 increased demand for hygiene products Cyclone triggered attention for flood protection	9	Covid-19, delays Drought, poor yield Conflict (in Ethiopia), mistrust cyclones damage Locust, crop damage
Economy and markets	1	Growing demand for vegetables and potatoes in Africa	9	Informal market competes with formal market (milk) Macro-economic instability and devaluation Economic policy: no forex for import (Ethiopia) Little room for PS (Ethiopia) Poor quality inputs No financial autonomy for decentralised agencies (water) Poor access to markets (agri) No business case for sanitation
Partner capacity	1	Watershed committee in community	6	Limited capacity govt Limited capacity PS High staff turnover Poor collaboration between ministries Municipality cannot handle urban growth Limited co-funding Limited mandate

Project management

Table A.29 *Project management*

	#	Positive effects due to:	#	Negative effect due to:
Project management and setup	9	Experienced staff Flexibility to adjust approach, partners, and address problems Good targeting and monitoring beneficiaries	4	Bureaucracy, delays No clarity on project management, roles and procedures No clarity on long-term budget
ToC, results frame and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	3	ToC in local inception phase Learning from previous projects Impact indicator (stunting) brings focus	8	No clear overarching ToC or results framework Too ambitious objectives (reach and scale) MFA monitoring indicators not appropriate for local project Confusion about different indicators for different MFA departments Evaluation too early for impact Project M&E inappropriate for outcomes and impact
Duration of Dutch presence and project	3	Dutch long term presence and reputation Long-term project support	11	Project period too short for capacity building, irrigation and O&M, scaling up, institutional reform, ambitions at national scale and impact Lack of technical follow up, low budget, after intensive project support Slow start and delays undermine results

Annex 6 Regression analysis to identify relationships between coherence and results

In the analyses, we explain one result at a time: reach, beneficiary effect, institutional effect, continuity or cost-effectiveness, as the dependent variable, by the combination of internal, external, temporal and spatial coherence, as a set of four independent variables, using the following formula:

*Result = a*IC + b*EC + c*TC + d*SC + Constant*

Due to the small number of cases (25 projects), we could not include too many explanatory variables in an analysis and therefore could not look into the effect of the many subcategories of coherence. The results are summarised in Table A.25.

Table A.30 *Effects of coherence on results*

	Type of coherence			
Result:	**Internal**	**External**	**Temporal**	**Spatial**
Reach of beneficiaries		+		
Effect at beneficiary-level	+		-	
Institutional effects				
Continuity	-	+		
Cost-effectiveness	+	+		

+ or -: coherence as positive or negative factor for results; significant at p<0.100

These results point to seven relationships that are worth exploring. These relationships are presented in charts in chapter 4.2.3.

Annex 7 Abbreviations

ABPP	African Biogas Partnership Programme
ABSF	Agribusiness Support Facility
ADB	African Development Bank
AGP	Agricultural Growth Programme
AIAS	*Administração de Infraestructuras de Água e Saneamento* – Administration of Water and Sanitation Infrastructure (Mozambique)
AU	African Union
BDP	Bangladesh Delta Plan
BENEFIT	Bilateral Ethiopia Netherlands Effort for Food Income and Trade
BHOS	*Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking* – Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
BIS	*Bureau Internationale Samenwerking* – Office for International Cooperation
BMP	Beira Master Plan
BRIDGE	Building Rural Income through Inclusive Dairy Growth
CASCAPE	Capacity building for scaling up of evidence based best practices in agricultural production in Ethiopia
CBS	*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* – Statistics Netherlands
CGIAR SHFT	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research Sustainable Healthy Diets Through Food Systems Transformation
CBS	*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* - Statistics Netherlands
CNV	*Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond* – National Federation of Christian Trade Unions
CSDDD	Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DAF	*Directie Sub-Sahara Afrika* – Sub-Saharan Africa Department
DAO	*Directie Azië en Oceanië* – Asia and Oceania Department
DDE	*Directie Duurzame Economische ontwikkeling* – Sustainable Economic Development Department
DEK/DEC	*Directie Effectiviteit en Kwaliteit* – Effectiveness and Quality department. Later reorganised into the *Directie Effectiviteit en Coherentie* – Department for Effectiveness and Coherence
DGIS	*Directoraat-generaal Internationale Samenwerking* – Director-General for International Cooperation
DIO	*Directie Internationaal Ondernemen* – International Enterprise Department
DSO	*Directie Sociale Ontwikkeling* – Social Development Department
DR	Deforestation regulation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EDGET	Enhancing Dairy Sector Growth in Ethiopia
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EHPEA	Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
EZ	*Ministerie van Economische Zaken* – Ministry of Economic Affairs, previously *Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat* – Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDOV	*Faciliteit Duurzaam Ondernemen en Voedselzekerheid* – Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security
FEFAC	European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation
FIPAG	*Fundo de Investimento e Património do Abastecimento de Água*- Fund for Investment and Assets of Water Supply

FMO	*Nederlandse Financieringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden* – Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank
FNV	*Federatie Nederlandse Vakbondvereniging* - Netherlands Trade Union Confederation
FOSTR	Foresight for Food Systems Transformation
FRERMIP	Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program
FWF	Fair Wear Foundation
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IenW	*Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat* – Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
IDH	*Initiatief Duurzame Handel* – Sustainable Trade Initiative
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IGG	*Directie Inclusieve Groene Groei* – Inclusive Green Growth Department
ILMWA	Intergrated land management and WASH
IMH	Directie Internationale Marktordening en Handelspolitiek – Department of International Trade Policy and Economic Governance
IOB	*Directie International Onderzoek en Beleidsevaluatie* – Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
ISA	Inclusive Sustainable Agricultural development
ISLA	Initiative for Sustainable Landscapes
ISSD	Integrated seed sector development
IWRM	Integrated water resource management
IWRM-F	Integrated Water Resource Management Fund
KfW	*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* – Credit Institute for Reconstruction (Germany)
LNV	*Ministerie van Landbouw, Visserij, Voedselzekerheid en Natuur* – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (now LVVN)
LVVN	*Ministerie van Landbouw, Visserij, Voedselzekerheid en Natuur* – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature (previously LNV)
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MACS	Multi-annual country strategy
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
MDB	Multi-lateral development bank
MIBZ	*Management Informatie Buitenlandse Zaken* – Management Information Foreign Affairs
MS	*Management samenvatting*/Management Summary
MvT	*Memorie van Toelichting* – Explanatory Memorandum
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NICHE	Netherlands Initiative for Capacity-development in Higher Education
O&M	Operations and maintenance
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPITAVA	One timad package validation
PaCT	Partnership for Cleaner Textile
PADEO	*Programmatische aanpak duurzame economische ontwikkeling* – Programmatic approach to sustainable economic development
PBL	*Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving* – Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
PPP	public-private partnership
PR	Periodic policy review
PSD	Private sector development
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
PSI	*Private Sector Investeringsprogramma* – Private Sector Investment programme
PSOM	Programma Samenwerking Opkomende Markten – Programme for Cooperation with Emerging Markets
PROOFS	Profitable opportunities for Food Security

RAISE-FS	Resilient Agriculture for Inclusive and Sustainable Ethiopian Food Systems
RBC	Responsible business conduct
REALISE	Realising Sustainable Agricultural Livelihood Security in Ethiopia
RTRS	Round Table on Responsible Soy
RPE	*Regeling periodiek evaluatieonderzoek* – Order on Periodic Evaluation
RVO	*Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland* – Netherlands Enterprise Agency
SaFaL	Sustainable agriculture, food security, and linkages
SCP	*Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau* – Netherlands Institute for Social Research
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMIS	Small Scale and Micro Irrigation Support
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation (previously known as: *Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers* – Foundation of Dutch Volunteers)
SRJS	Shared Resources Joint Solutions
SWR	Stichting Wageningen Research
STDF	Standards and Trade Development Facility
TA	Technical Assistance
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar
VSL	Village Savings and Loan
VWS	*Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport* – Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WMO	Water management organisations
WB	World Bank
WLRC	Water and Land Resource Centre
WRR	*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* – Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy
WTO	World Trade Organization
WUR	Wageningen University and Research
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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Colophon

This evaluation was carried out by a team from the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The team's members consisted of Ferko Bodnar, Martine de Groot, Pim de Beer and Joep Schenk, and received support from IOB colleagues Jelmer Kamstra and Cecile Reinkingh, and from intern students Romy Brockhoff, Martine de Zoeten and Jonas Jeunink.

ECDPM carried out two literature reviews in preparation for the IOB study, one on the effects of developed country policies on food security, water and climate in developing countries, and one on long-term strategies for food security, water and climate in developing countries. MetaMeta conducted a study on the sustainability of water use organisations in the polders of Bangladesh.

To enhance the quality of the research, an external reference group provided advice. The external members of the reference group were Rob D. van den Berg, Visiting Professor, King's College London; Gerardo van Halsema, expert water management, Wageningen University; and Paul Lucas, expert SDGs and planetary boundaries, PBL. Members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included: Marcel Beukeboom, Permanent Representation in Rome; Jeroen Rijniers and Carel de Groot, later replaced by Maarten Gischler, IGG; Martine Rutte, later replaced by Marie Christine Siemerink, BIS; Vasant Bhoendie IMH; Jaco Mebius, later replaced by Valerie-Anne Houppermans, FEZ. Members from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality included: Ralf van de Beek and Marcel van Nijnatten. Members from the Ministry of Finance (IRF) were Carolien Klein Haarhuis and Jurian van der Bijl, later replaced by Rianne van Staalduinen and Michel van Dalfzen. IOB would like to thank the members of the reference group for their commitment and constructive feedback. The internal IOB advisory group that provided regular feedback consisted of Rafaela Feddes, Bas Limonard, Alexander Otgaar, Rob van Poelje as chair. Final responsibility for this report rests solely with IOB.

Published by:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB)
PO Box 20061 | 2500 EB The Hague

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Lay-out: Xerox | OSAGE

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IOB wishes to thank the members of the external reference group for their advice: Rob D. van den Berg, Visiting Professor, King's College London; Gerardo van Halsema, expert water management, Wageningen University; and Paul Lucas, expert SDGs and planetary boundaries, PBL. Members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included: Marcel Beukeboom, Permanent Representation in Rome; Jeroen Rijniers and Carel de Groot, later replaced by Maarten Gischler, IGG; Martine Rutte, later replaced by Marie Christine Siemerink, BIS; Vasant Bhoendie IMH; Jaco Mebius, later replaced by Valerie-Anne Houppermans, FEZ. Members from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality included: Ralf van de Beek and Marcel van Nijnatten. Members from the Ministry of Finance (IRF) were Carolien Klein Haarhuis and Jurian van der Bijl, later replaced by Rianne van Staalduinen and Michel van Dalfzen.