

VLIR-UOS and D4D – D4D in project formulation and follow-up

In 2016 the approach towards working with intervention based programmes and identified crosscutting themes and activated expert groups such as in the domain, of ICT was revised. A new portfolio approach based on country strategies and country programmes was implemented. The role of the ICT expert group was no longer activated.

On the other hand, the focus was revised to integrate a number of policy themes in the portfolio approach, with focus on gender and environment as official transversal themes of Belgian development cooperation and the focus on a number of priority themes such as D4D and private sector development.

An approach towards integrating D4D in project development was chosen and flash Cards were developed during FYP 1

Flash Card:	
Digital for Development (D4D)	
Content	<p>VLIR-UOS asks applicants to think about ways to integrate “Digital for Development” (D4D) within their project/programme proposal. Also during implementation, VLIR-UOS asks interventions to report on D4D. As presented in the Strategic Policy Note on ‘Digital for Development’ (D4D) for the Belgian development cooperation’, three action areas are set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Better use of (big) data: a vast majority of VLIR-UOS interventions are data driven. Big data volumes are collected and analysed in innovative ways, thus producing actionable insights for higher education institutes and development actors. Open data can be instrumental to all stakeholders in society. ○ Digital for inclusion: VLIR-UOS interventions work on lowering the threshold for access to information for academic staff or students, and on the digitalisation of higher education (e.g. e-learning, digital student management, etc.). Multiplying tools can maximize the number of beneficiaries of an intervention. ○ Digital for inclusive and sustainable economic growth: within its scope of service to society, impact and sustainability policies, VLIR-UOS seeks to increase employment and social protection through digitisation and digitalisation,. Labour markets and private sector development are further connected to education and training. <p>D4D is not only about ICT infrastructure but also about energy (electricity), skills and expertise, good governance and leadership, and tools (platforms).</p>
Motivation	<p>According to VLIR-UOS, Information Technologies and Services (ITS) can improve the quality of learning and teaching, and radically expand the reach of learning environments supported by such technologies, also in the context of learning systems such as universities and university colleges. Moreover, ITS play an increasingly important role in diminishing the transactional distance between partners involved in developing, managing, implementing and monitoring programs and projects of interuniversity collaboration, such as those facilitated by VLIR-UOS. In the former case most of the learning is to the benefit of individuals, even though individuals often learn best in a socially relevant and interactive context. In the latter case the</p>

	learning takes place primarily at the organizational level and results, for instance, in improvements, at that level, in the implementation and management of projects.
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Best practices	Geographical information systems (GIS), social media, sensors, mobile money, digital identity, intelligent systems, open source platforms & crowdsourcing, sms-platforms & message applications, application program interface (API), bandwidth management, data management and analysis, distance learning, audio-visual learning mechanisms, datacentre design and management...
Available tools/links:	Kindling.be (online forum for the Belgian Digital for Development platform, D4D-Be) Strategic Note D4D (as published by DGD in September 2016) Info sheets on digital resources (on agriculture, health and governance published by Enabel)° 9 principles of digital development (help digital development practitioners integrate established best practices into technology-enabled programs).
Partners:	AGORIA, Startups.be, The Shift, Because Health, Educaid.be, Close The Gap, DGD, Enabel, BIO, EU
Questions for reflection on D4D:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any purchases of ICT-hardware foreseen (apart from the regular office machines)? If so, how will it contribute in achieving the identified objectives? • Is data to be collected? If so, what programmes will be used to do so? Is there a research protocol outlined including the data collection? • Will the collected data be shared with other stakeholders such as governmental and other development actors • Will the project continue on important ICT-infrastructure that was developed by previous projects? What specific issues will be further elaborated? • Will the project make use of and possibly contribute to larger ICT-structures e.g. university bandwidth, optic fibre, national programmes such as DHS, EMIS, EPI... • In case the project has an important teaching module, is any type of blended learning being considered, especially in a rural developmental environment?