



From Environmental Assessment to Environmental System Governance

Mid-term assessment of the DGIS-NCEA framework contract 2017-2020

Ruerd Ruben & Nina Motovska



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Deze tussentijdse evaluatie van het raamcontract tussen de Nederlandse Commissie voor Milieueffectrapportage (NCEA) van het Nederlandse Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (MFA/IGG) is gevraagd om inzicht te geven in de voortgang en om het leren rondom impactpaden te ondersteunen inzake de beoogde resultaten van belangrijke NCEA-activiteiten op nationaal, regionaal en institutioneel niveau. Op basis van een realistische en gecontextualiseerde evaluatiebenadering en met gebruikmaking van voornamelijk secundaire gegevens over landenprogramma's, stelt het rapport dat opkomende uitdagingen in de externe beleidsomgeving aandacht lijken te vragen voor de besturing van milieusystemen. Daartoe worden er enkele praktische aanbevelingen gegeven om de reikwijdte en effectiviteit van NCEA-activiteiten te versterken.

This mid-term appraisal of the framework contract between the Netherlands Commission for Environmental assessment (NCEA) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA/IGG) has been requested in order to provide insights into the progress of, and to support the learning on, impact pathways and envisaged outcomes of the NCEA's major activities at country, regional and institutional levels. Based on a realist and contextualised evaluation approach and using mainly secondary data on country programmes, the report argues that emerging challenges in the external policy environment tend to require attention for environmental systems governance. Some practical recommendations are given to enhance the scope and effectiveness of NCEA activities.

Key words: Environment Assessment, Realist Evaluation, Capacity Development; Systems Analysis.

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Preface

The Dutch expertise in the field of environmental assessment services is well-known and widely used. This mid-term evaluation of the ongoing framework contract between the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA/IGG) has been requested in order to provide insights into the progress of, and to support the learning on, impact pathways and envisaged outcomes of the NCEA's major activities at country, regional and institutional levels. Such an assessment is considered helpful for enabling further appreciation of major internal and external factors that influence the achievement of key capacity-development goals.

Based on the expertise of Wageningen Economic Research in the fields of environmental assessment and impact evaluation studies, we developed an interactive framework for analysing documents and interview information on NCEA field activities and advisory programmes. Given Covid-19 restrictions, we had to rely mostly on internal NCEA reporting, and no fieldwork activities could be conducted. We are grateful to the NCEA office staff for supporting this evaluation with timely access to all requested documentation and to the NCEA team for their constructive participation in the webinars where our insights have been shared.



Prof.dr.ir. J.G.A.J. (Jack) van der Vorst
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List of abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
BHOS	Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking
CSO	Civil society organisation
DFCS	Dutch Fund for Climate & Development
ESP	Environmental System Performance
FAO	Food & Agricultural Organisation
FMO	Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank
GAFSF	Global Agriculture & Food Security Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICS	Inter-collectivité du Sourou
IDH	The Sustainable Trade Initiative
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IGG	Inclusive green growth
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department
EA	Environmental Assessment
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
DSU	Dutch Sustainability Unit
DGIS	Directorate-General for International Cooperation
DRIVE	Development Related Infrastructure Investment Vehicle
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MLF	Most Limiting Factor
MFA	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBA	Niger Basin Authority
NCEA	Netherlands Commission for Environmental assessment
NEMA	Kenyan National Environmental Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ORIO	Facility for Infrastructure Development
RVO	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
SDGs	sustainable development goals
SEA	strategic environmental assessment
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YREC	Yellow River Engineering Consulting China
WB	World Bank

Summary

S.1 Key findings

The NCEA requested a programme review through the appraisal of comparative country cases and an internal mid-term review in order to provide insights into the progress, scope and reach of ongoing activities and to support learning on impact pathways and envisaged outcomes of the NCEA's major activities at country, regional and thematic levels. Such assessment is considered helpful to enable a further appreciation of major internal and external factors that influence the achievement of key capacity-development goals.

The report highlights that, in the context of changing policy conditions, reinforcing resource governance and operationalising learning pathways towards capacity development are relevant to enhancing environmental systems effectiveness and development impact. Giving due attention to the Pathways of Change and interactive double-loop learning processes may be helpful to further reinforce the relevance and embeddedness of NCEA activities.

S.2 Complementary results

The NCEA portfolio review provides some practical recommendations for strengthening the demand for environmental assessment services and for enhancing the internal coherence and the external appreciation of NCEA activities. Given the available expertise, the NCEA could better reach its envisaged outcomes when capacity development is tailored to environmental system functions and individual processes.

In addition, it might be relevant to broaden the resource systems focus through stronger engagement with interactive and interdisciplinary appraisal methods and by explicitly considering social equity, economic incentives and gender empowerment as part of the Pathways of Change analysis.

S.3 Method

This report is based on a realist evaluation framework that highlights the dynamic impact pathways for influencing stakeholder behaviour in a complex system environment. Therefore, major attention is given to capacity development at different levels (using the 5C Framework) and learning processes that enable adaptive responses to environmental challenges.

The review process is based on three key activities: (a) Document review of key strategy papers, the NCEA portfolio overview and overview of the documentation of four selected country cases (Mali, Guinea, Kenya, Ethiopia); (b) Assessment via comparative appraisal of the projects (using a Pathways of Changes framework) and analysis of the environmental systems perspectives; and (c) Triangulation of findings with staff and exchange of results via webinar and report.

1 Introduction of the DGIS-NCEA cooperation programme & objective of the study

The NCEA is an independent advisory agency providing technical and capacity-building assistance and expert knowledge

The Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) is an independent party that can provide advisory services on the basis of extensive technical expertise and knowledge in environmental assessment. Established in 1987 as an independent advisory body, the agency has been supporting environmental authorities at various levels in terms of the scope and quality of environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA/ESIA) activities and in order to build capacity in environmental assessment in general. The NCEA prepares both mandatory and voluntary technical reports for these government bodies in order to appreciate the (socio-) environmental situation and effects of a particular development project, programme or policy. In that regard, the NCEA does not influence decision-making, nor does it include political considerations in their reports, but rather through advisory and capacity-building trainings, the NCEA aims to improve decision-making and performance related to environmental assessment as a whole.

Evaluation objective & rationale: drawing lessons from the 1st half of the NCEA's programme

Every five years, the NCEA signs a cooperation agreement with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA-NL), which provides funding to the NCEA for their intervention in the next period. The agreement contains information on rationale of intervention, specifying level(s) of intervention, actors to be involved and types of activities, with outputs and intended outcomes. Countries of intervention are aligned with the MFA-NL's directives. The cooperative agreement under present evaluation started in 2017 and is to be finished in 2022. To that end, the NCEA conducted a mid-term evaluation. The process contains two main parts. The first part of the evaluation was carried out internally, assessing overall progress and identifying possible changes in targets. The second part of the evaluation was to be performed by external consultants and was to focus on learning from the first half of the programme. To that end, Wageningen University & Research was invited to reflect on the progress and provide insights on general orientation at the mid-term, glean lessons from the beginning until the mid-term and conclude with reflection points to be integrated within the second half of the cooperative program.

The second part of the evaluation aims to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the lessons learnt from the first half of the programme?
- b. Has the NCEA followed-up on the nine lessons learnt from the 2012-17 programme evaluation?
- c. Has the NCEA geographical and thematic focus turned out to be relevant & efficient in reaching the planned objectives?

To gain a deeper understanding of the third research sub-question (question c), the NCEA proposed four country case analyses which might reinforce learning on specific aspects or processes that influence success or limit achievement of defined objectives. This report therefore presents a mid-term evaluation of the NCEA's programme for 2017-2022. Based upon the internal document review, case study analysis and a workshop with the NCEA staff including country technical secretaries, we have reflected on eleven concluding points. Implementation of these points might improve and thereby support the effectiveness, relevance and overall coherence of the NCEA's programme in the coming two years.

Important to note is that the current review takes place embedded in a period with fundamental shocks and shifts in the external policy environment that may trigger the need for flexible responses.

These shifts refer to the following:

- Progressive changes in the (inter)national **aid architecture**, where increasing poverty and inequality asks for innovative and coherent intervention strategies
- **Treats of resilience** that arise from climate change, Covid-19 pandemics and environmental degradation that increasingly ask for large-scale and long-term systems transformations
- **Increasing complexities** in designing, steering and implementation of policies and programmes from a multi-stakeholder perspective that combine push and pull governance principles

This paper starts with a detailed explanation of the methodology, followed by a brief explanation of the NCEA and its activities. The next section discusses policy context, within which the NCEA develops and implements its programme. Case study analysis and evaluation of overall progress visualised in portfolio scan allow us to conclude and reflect on the NCEA's situation at the mid-term of its programme's final chapter. Rather than advising on possible adjustments for the next five-year programme, which would be the case for an endline evaluation, the lessons learnt presented in this paper focus on a set of reflection points to be introduced within the current programme.

2 Review approach: Realist evaluation

No inferences can be made on impact without primary data. Realist evaluation nevertheless allows us to assess the NCEA's strategy and reflect on possible improvements for the second term of the NCEA's programme

To respond to the three research questions stated above, we have chosen a realist evaluation while focusing our attention on impact pathways. This mid-term review of the NCEA programme 2017-2022 is not an evaluation in *stricto sensu*, and rather it should be considered a stocktaking exercise that provides constructive feedback to NCEA staff on the general orientation and strategic activities undertaken during the first 2,5 years of the MFA funding arrangement.

In the absence of primary field data and direct stakeholder interviews, we mainly relied on secondary material to assess the **relevance**, the (potential) **effectiveness** and the **coherence** of the NCEA's activities within the framework of relevant changes in the environmental governance and the development cooperation architecture. Information on other DAC evaluation criteria (efficiency, impact, sustainability) has not been included. Instead of addressing the more operational question 'Is the NCEA *doing things right*?', we focus on the strategic question 'Is the NCEA *doing the right things*?'

The purpose and scope of this review has been explicitly framed as a **learning and adaptation process** that focuses on the likelihood of reaching long-term impact. We therefore relied on an evaluation framework that combines internal activity and progress data gathering (by the NCEA staff) with a critical methodological lens that provides a reflective practice on the underlying principles of the NCEA intervention strategy (as outlined in the ESIA and SEA system effectiveness papers).

The evaluation of the earlier NCEA grant over the period 2012-17 (S-FOR-S & ECFDC, 2017) focused on some shortcoming at the **demand side** of ESIA/SEA advice (partner choice, local context, unmet needs, support requests) and encourages a stronger **partnership framework** (partner budget, coaching, regional capacity development) within the framework of a broader mandate and more stringent learning and M&E practices (see Annex 3).

We followed a stepwise evaluation approach to reconstruct the NCEA's operational framework

The present evaluation revolves around research methods conducted in three consecutive phases:

- a. Document review: a reading of key strategy papers, the NCEA portfolio overview and review of the documentation of four selected country cases (Mali, Guinea, Kenya, Ethiopia) - review of project documents served for evaluation of the NCEA's approach in terms of its activities as well as broader insight into the NCEA's approach. Document review was also a main source of information on the four cases studied. Altogether, we have reviewed seven documents (the NCEA's programme, two documents on the NCEA's system approach, two proposals, final evaluation and internal review) along with specific country documents, altogether amounting to fifty sources (these include monitoring forms, annual reports, description of five-year engagement, policy briefs, relevant email communication where available and others).
- b. Comparative case study analysis: a comparative appraisal of the projects (using a Pathways of Changes framework) and analysis of the environmental systems perspectives; based on the preference of the client and ability to draw lessons, the four cases were pre-selected by the client, while comparative study served for analysis of inter-case similarities and differences. This part of analysis aimed at defining key stakeholders and key activities both planned & undertaken, as well as progress of country interventions. Evidence from the cases were compared in order to gain better understanding on major success & limiting factors contributing and validating main conclusions & reflection points. For this, we followed the Pathways of Change framework.
- c. Triangulation of findings with staff and exchange of results in webinar and report: findings from document review and comparative analysis of the four case countries were validated through exchange of information with the staff and technical secretaries during a three-hour workshop and

several other communications with the technical secretaries; the focus of such exchanges was to discuss preliminary conclusions as well as to check for the factual accuracy of the report. Our assessment (ad b) is based on the reconstruction of the NCEA programming framework:

- What are the main environmental and social problems (and their mutual relationships)?
- Which instruments are appropriate in order to address which type of problems?
- Who are the key stakeholders (actors) that influence system performance?
- Which results are achieved for different goals (poverty, environment, inclusion, etc.)?

We chose a realist evaluation framework that relies on a combination of three principles:

- a. Realist (or Contextualised) approach (Pawson & Tilly, 1997): importance of the context for determining '*What Works for Whom, Where and Why?*' (the so-called 5W questions)
- b. Double-loop learning (Argyris, 1991): dynamic understanding of *mental models* and the *organisational learning* to produce structural changes in policies, pathways and purposes
- c. Utilisation-focused evaluation (Quinn Patton, 2011): understanding strategies to support adaptive behaviour to satisfy multiple goals in a complex system environment

The subjective nature of our sources and a lack of primary data are the main limitations of this study

No primary data were collected for this study, as the evaluation relies predominantly on evidence found in documentation provided by the NCEA. Relying on secondary sources may effect the validity of the findings. Important to note is that monitoring forms and internal reviews that compile progress reports are outcomes of a subjective evaluation executed by the NCEA staff (there is no independent body involved to our knowledge). Given the complex character of the NCEA's interventions in terms of the range of activities and number of stakeholders, factual inconsistencies present a possible risk.

The volume and variety of sources used likely reduce the risk inherent in such limitations. Obtaining feedback from the NCEA staff as well as workshop sessions guarantees factual soundness of the information provided and relevance of the conclusions presented at the end of this report. Given that the present study is a mid-term review, reflection points at the end-term might provide a different picture, and the analysis is likely to be more elaborated. For instance, due to the availability of data and the scope of the study (no primary data collection), this mid-term appraisal discusses effectiveness, relevance and coherence of the NCEA's programme and is intended for learning purposes only (no conclusions on impact or causality). It is expected that a more detailed evaluation will take place after completion of the programme.

3 Characterisation of the DGIS-NCEA cooperation programme

In addition to its role at the national level since 1993, and with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MFA-NL), the NCEA expanded its SEA and EIA advisory services internationally, in the context of the Dutch development cooperation policy, assisting developing countries to secure the mainstreaming of environmental and social information in their decision-making processes. These advisory services to MFA-NL and partner countries are provided by the international department of the NCEA, consisting of a secretariat (12 staff members) and an advisory committee.

The NCEA receives a subsidy of € 14.889.500 from MFA-NL Department for Inclusive Green Growth (IGG), covering an operational programme period of five years (from 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2022), with two main objectives (NCEA, 2017a):

- a. Assist Dutch Development Cooperation (ODA) partner countries in supporting the development and implementation of environmental assessment processes (EA programme component)
- b. Support MFA-NL with integrating sustainability considerations in its policies and programming for water and food security (referred to as Sustainability Advice Programme)

The NCEA's key activities take place within the framework of Dutch development cooperation objectives

In line with Dutch development cooperation objectives, the NCEA pursues the following main goals:

- Inclusive, transparent and informed decision-making on environmental and social issues
- Supporting governments, NGOs and private sector parties (in the Netherlands and abroad) to play their role in the environmental assessment system
- Improving the six essential functions of environmental assessment systems
- Contributing to better understanding of environmental assessment through the NCEA's knowledge products and services
- The MFA/DGIS/IGG- NCEA 2017-2022 framework contract should include five key work streams:
 - Environmental assessment programmes at country and regional level (35% of allocated funding)
 - Private sector development programmes (18%)
 - Sustainable finance (18%)
 - Knowledge, Learning & communication (15%)
 - MFA Sustainability advice (8%)

The NCEA is an independent advisory agency providing technical and capacity-building assistance and expert knowledge

Programme resources are allocated to three different types of NCEA activities that generate relevant outputs (as recorded in the SEA/ESIA M&E system):

- a. **Capacity strengthening** of EA actors & organisations (using the 5C approach):
 - Capacity strengthening of specific actors/agents/institutions
 - Individual capacity upgrading to perform ESIA/SEA tasks
- b. Better functions of ESIA/SEA system:
 - Support for regulatory frameworks
 - Awareness-raising & commitment for ESIA/SEA (including local co-funding)
 - EA Education & professional training (Curriculum development & training-of-trainers)
 - Advice for sustainability mainstreaming (Helpdesk MFA & Embassies)
 - Monitoring the implementation of ESIA/SEA instruments
 - Professional ESIA/SEA exchange
- c. **Improving ESIA/SEA processes** (with stakeholder engagement):
 - ESIA/SEA process coaching
 - Screening RVO (investment) proposals
 - Independent advice

The final outcomes of the (combination of) NCEA activities at different levels are envisaged to generate tangible results in terms of improved capacities by EA agents, better informed and more inclusive and transparent SEA/ESIA decision-making processes and higher quality performance of EA systems (regulation, funding and professional education). In the NCEA Theory of Change (ToC), improved governance and better policies & programmes are identified as main outcomes, under the assumption that good practice ESIA/SEA improves decision-making processes (in terms of inclusiveness, transparency and accountability).

The evaluation of the earlier NCEA grant over the period 2012-17 (S-FOR-S & ECFDC, 2017) focused attention on some shortcomings at the **demand side** of ESIA/SEA advice (partner choice, local context, unmet needs and support requests) and encourages a stronger **partnership framework** (partner budget, coaching and regional capacity development) within the framework of a broader mandate and more stringent learning and M&E practices (see Annex 3).

4 NCEA's Activities: what can we learn from the first half of the programme?

The following section presents a reflection on the NCEA's approach and its activities in light of the first half of the 2017-2022 programme period. Recalling the objective of the present evaluation in terms of assessing effectiveness, relevance & coherence of NCEA's programme, this mid-term review addresses some selective issues that influence NCEA performance. In line with the ToR, we focused attention towards areas for potential learning on four strategic issues:

- Overall goals & intervention strategy (updating Theory of Change)
- Effectiveness of activities & instruments (reasons for success & failure)
- Stakeholder engagement in environmental governance
- Multi-level capacity development for learning, linking & leadership. The NCEA programme is organised around a well-articulated Theory of Change (ToC) that links inputs and activities to outputs and outcomes. Three core areas of influence are defined: (a) capacity development, (b) ESIA/SEA processes and (c) EA system functioning & quality. Final results (in terms of environment and climate, poverty and conflict reduction and green growth) depend on key assumptions with regards to good governance practices (i.e. transparency, inclusiveness and accountability).

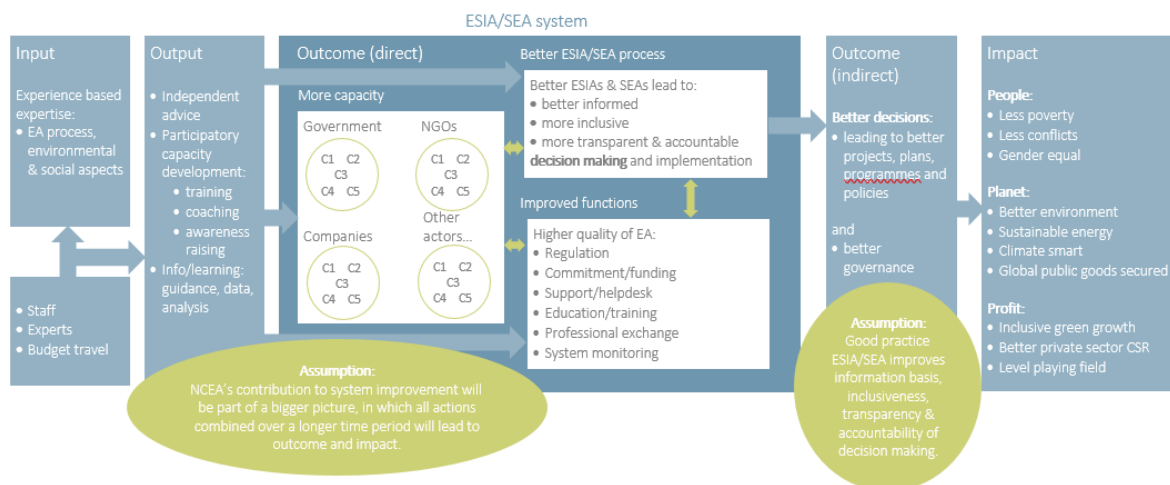


Figure 1 NCEA Theory of Change
Source: NCEA 'Theory of Change' (n.d.).

Pathway reconstruction allows for better selection of per-case activity packages

While the general NCEA Theory of Change gives room to a wide range of activities and permits a lot of flexibility in different settings, it is less appropriate for identifying a concrete portfolio of activities that could contribute to the envisaged outcome. It is therefore advisable to complement the general ToC with case-specific Pathways of Change that enable to select and compose the concrete mix and sequence of activities (from the overall NCEA portfolio) that contribute to an effective, sustainable and inclusive environmental system performance. The latter outcomes are usually the results of the interaction between (a) individual stakeholder capacities and (b) governance framework for multi-stakeholder cooperation.

This approach to environmental system performance (ESP) implies that the NCEA engages in local training and advice (focusing on behavioural change) in combination with institutional and organisational learning in such a way that supply-side (push) interventions match with demand-side (pull) requirements.

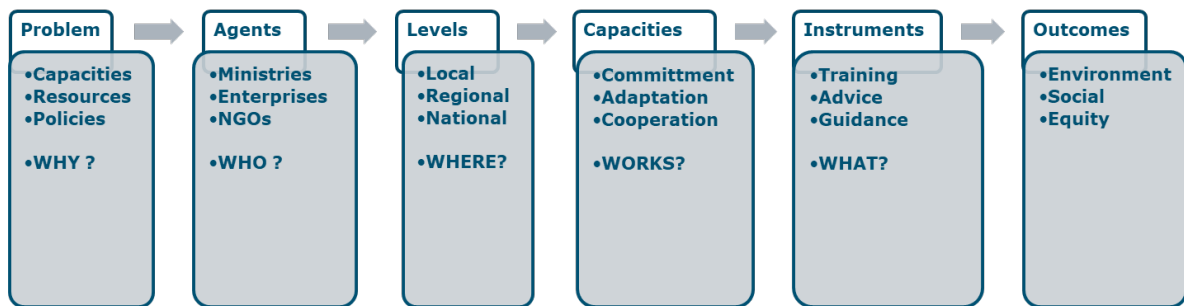


Figure 2 Pathways of Change
Source: Ruben (2015).

Tailored activities can be defined at a later stage with a flexible set of interventions introduced in the inception phase

The NCEA 'toolbox' provides a wide range of possible activities and instruments for reinforcing environmental assessment functions & processes. However, it is not always easy to identify and select the 'right' activities for supporting local (country/regional) environmental systems or to provide advice on the environmental dimensions of global programmes.

Instead of looking at individual instruments, it might be more effective to use a (flexible) set of interventions that can be tailored towards the local governance structure. As illustrated in the figure on NCEA strategic challenges, the same activity (training/advice or coaching) could result in different (even opposing) behavioural outcomes and thus may be less effective than a careful combination of different activities (e.g. capacity-building & awareness-raising). The latter strategy usually combines push and pull incentives of multiple stakeholders involved in environmental system governance.

NCEA challenges: from activity to process

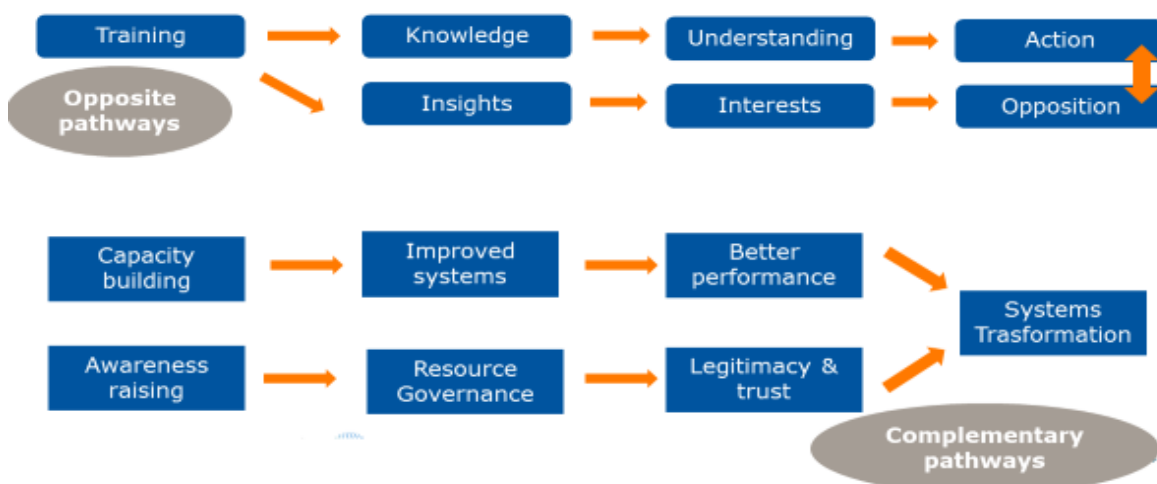


Figure 3 NCEA Challenges: From Activity to Process
Source: Author's own elaboration.

More explicit linking of capacity development to interventions for improved progrestracing

The NCEA environmental assessment framework is strongly embedded in a capacity-development approach that looks for advice, training and support towards different local stakeholders that shape the regulatory framework, the decision-making networks and the professional capacity of partners. The interactions between these components are outlined in the working papers 'System Approach to

SEA/ESIA Effectiveness' (2018 a, b) and its performance is traced in the NCEA M&E system. Tracking the linkages between capacity development of ESIA/SEA stakeholders – both individual actors and organisations - can be considered as one of the three core activities of the NCEA approach.

From the internal reporting, it remains unclear how this capacity-development framework is strategically operationalised at country, region and programme level. It is therefore important to encourage NCEA staff towards a more elaborated intervention framework that considers the activities and incentives required to support local cooperative and adaptive behaviour amongst key stakeholders.

In addition, current NCEA performance indicators are still strongly based on periodical internal reporting (by secretaries) and satisfaction surveys (from training participants), even while several more objective external sources were envisaged. Moreover, it remains difficult to unambiguously attribute system or process changes to NCEA activities.

MFA requested from NCEA the use of the **5C framework** (Keijzer et al., 2011; IOB, 2011) to trace progress and consistency in different stakeholder capacities required for the improvement of EA systems. The 5C framework distinguishes five core capacities:

- Capacity to Act & Commit (structure & leadership)
- Capacity to Relate & Attract (network, reputation & legitimacy)
- Capacity to Renew & Adapt (learning & flexibility)
- Capacity for Coherence (identity & mandate)
- Capacity for Delivery of results (knowledge & performance)

It might be helpful for NCEA to tailor the portfolio of activities more closely to different types of capacity development amongst partner staff and organisations. While in some occasions the main local demand might be for technical training (addressing knowledge gaps), in other settings supporting learning processes could be more relevant (on environmental functions and/or environmental system governance). It is therefore useful to distinguish different capacity requirements for particular stakeholders and to identify the optimal mix and sequence of capacity upgrading that contribute to the core output: the capacity to deliver on results (see table 1).

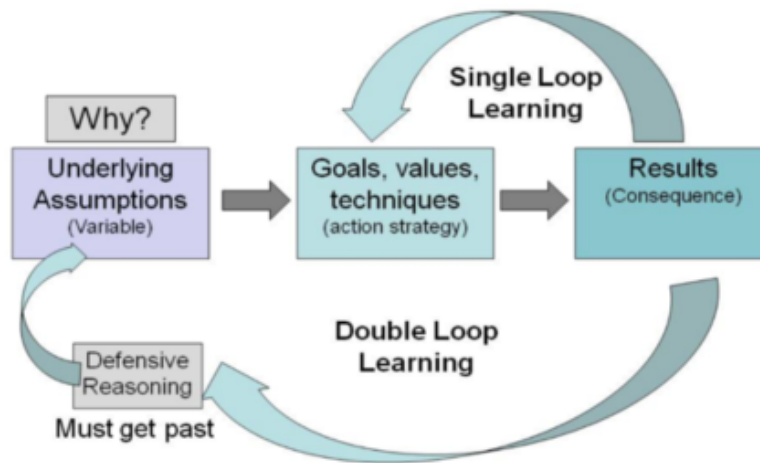
Table 1 *5C Framework*

Capacity	System Areas	Type of Information
Commit & Act	Individual partners	Technical training & knowledge
Relate & Attract	Governance	Organisational support
Renew & Adapt	Personal quality	Human agency learning
Diversity & Coherence	Networks	Relational cooperation
Deliver results for impact	Stakeholders	Pathway of Change (functional Theory of Change)

Effectiveness and relevance might be further improved with regular feedback and real-time monitoring in place

This framework could subsequently be used for M&E purposes to assess the effectiveness and (cost)efficiency for reaching final environmental and social outcomes and to support **double-loop learning** processes (Box 2). This means that key attention is given to mental maps (norms and values) and organisational learning processes that enable dynamic system adaptation and that can be supported through critical reflections on the institutional governance frameworks and the multi-stakeholder cooperative arrangements surrounding ESIA/SEA processes (Valters et al., 2016). Whereas the NCEA has almost every means available for steering such environmental governance processes, the interaction between country/region support with organisational learning and business & finance networks might still be further reinforced. Making use of dynamic monitoring and evaluation feedbacks could be helpful in order to identify behavioural constraints in a timely manner (e.g. resistance to change, fear of failure, overemphasis on control) and to support organisational learning processes that are crucial for guaranteeing the NCEA's impact.

Box 2. From single to double loop learning



Double-loop learning enables NCEA to take better stock of the registered M&E results for a second round of interactions with all local stakeholders concerning the key assumptions, goals and objectives underlying the SEAESIA request.

Source: Argyris & Schön

5 Explaining the development policy context: Supporting environmental systems

Prior to embarking on comparative case study analysis, we briefly outline some major adjustments taking place in the policy context where SEA/ESIA is used. These changes are important insofar as they influence the types of demands for environmental assessment services and shape the institutional framework for decision-making concerning the drivers for social and environmental change. Situating the NCEA's programme as well as conclusions stated in this paper in light of these developments is crucial. These not only provide a basis for the NCEA's mandate and set of interventions but also (together with contextual system characteristics) influence relevance and effectiveness of the latter simultaneously.

Socio-environmental goals gradually play a more prominent role within the field of development cooperation in the Netherlands

Development cooperation is organised through multiple channels (bilateral and multilateral programmes, the private sector and civil society). Reporting on results takes place according to internationally agreed SDG indicators. The Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and North Africa become new focus regions, due in part to the high incidence of extreme poverty in these regions. A new climate fund is established for investment in developing countries (€40 million/year) and an additional €40 million will be spent on climate and development in other ways.)

Dutch development cooperation is increasingly paying attention to environmental and social goals. Recent policy letter *'Investing in Global Prospects'* (May 2018) by minister Kaag (BHOS) focuses on the following:

- structurally preventing conflicts and combatting instability and insecurity
- reducing poverty and social inequality
- promoting sustainability and climate action
- reducing irregular migration
- investing in global prospects for people and offering them new opportunities. A cross-cutting goal of BHOS policy is to advance gender equality and improve the position of women and girls. Within the framework of the Aid & Trade agenda, enhancing market access and supporting the Netherlands international earning capacity are part of the policy agenda.

Focus shifted towards programmatic action, where SEA/ESIA programmes aim for improved environmental bodies' decision-making

Whereas development aid for a long time was developed as a series of (investment) projects, the current aid architecture focuses more on building engagement and partnerships within the framework of programmatic action. This means that donors and receivers share some broad programmatic goals (not seldom of mutual interest) and commit themselves to co-funding of sets of activities that deliver on SDG outcomes.

While several SEA/ESIA activities are related to concrete investment/development programmes, at programme level most attention is asked for **governance mechanisms and incentives**. These governance structures are critical for influencing the (individual and collective) behaviour of environmental stakeholders. The NCEA engagement through programme cooperation requires close coordination with donor agencies (IGG, USAID, etc.), multilateral organisations (GEF, FAO, etc) and development banks (FMO, WB/IFC, IFASD, AfDB) that combine funding with capacity-building.

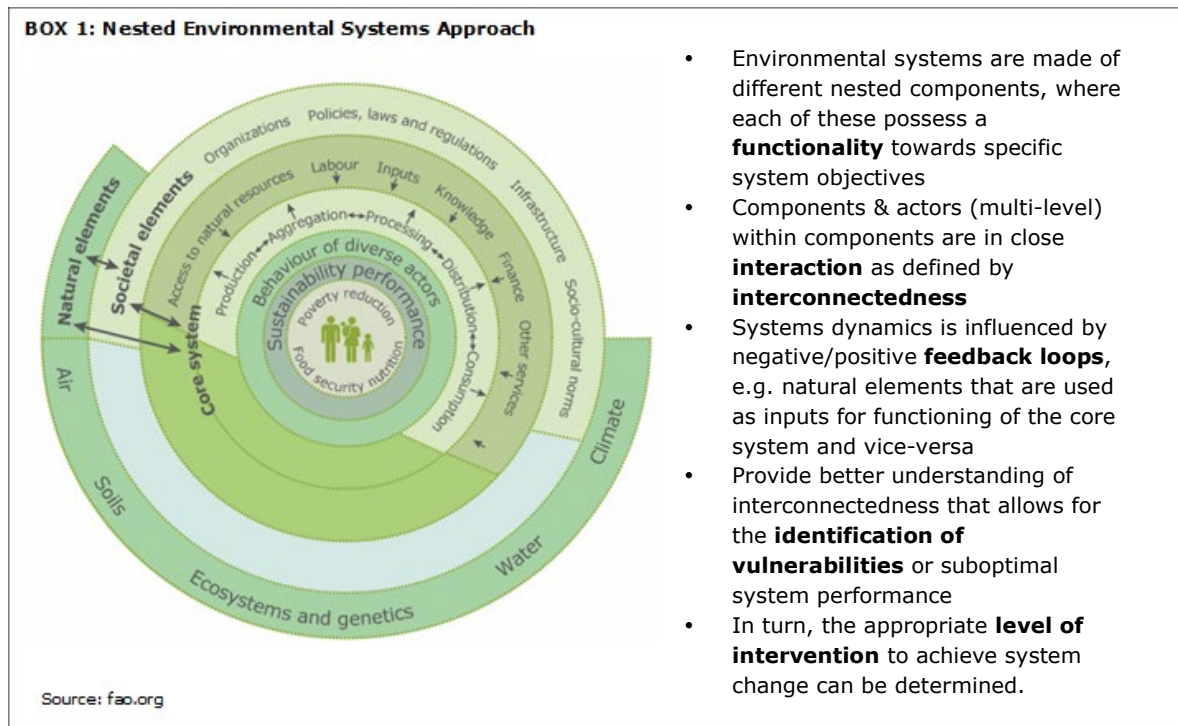
With more power given to regional authorities in many of the programme's countries, the NCEA designs its activities to advance decentralisation

In several countries, decision-making on natural resources has been decentralised to regional authorities. In some countries (such as Kenya), this is based on a rather elaborated framework that

includes some fiscal decentralisation. In other countries (like Mali and Ethiopia), decentralisation is more related to granting greater autonomy to local (ethnic) authorities.

Environmental assessments are organised differently under conditions of policy decentralisation, since the upstream and downstream linkages between local, regional and national authorities become more important. This implies that **governance structures and platforms** must involve stakeholders from multiple levels. Moreover, such platforms are increasingly used for reconciling different interests and also for engaging different types of (non-state) stakeholders.

Environmental management is progressively becoming a field of complex interactions between multiple (public, private, civic) stakeholders at multiple (local, regional, national) levels



Such complexity implies a need for good understanding of how these system components relate to each other and how their interactions are organised. Instead of linear systems, we may expect non-linear causality and nested relationships. This has important implications for the organisation of NCEA work. We need to clearly understand the interactions between stakeholders and governance levels in order to identify **the most limiting factors** (MLF) for specific environmental problems and the **leverage points** most critical for initiating a process of **trust-building** in environmental system transformation. Resource management is increasingly approached as a theory of systems innovation and change that tries to improve the interactions between components in order to improve system functions and contribute to system-wide objectives. This implies that understanding the **system dynamics** is more important than merely knowing the system components.

Given the system complexity, tailored country programmes and pursuing of participatory approach may enable environmental as well as social system transformation

Supporting resilience of environmental systems requires from the NCEA a focus on context-specific incentives that support equitable participation of disadvantaged stakeholders (smallholders, women, youth) and efficient coordination between different stakeholders. It is important to recognise that one-size-fits-all solutions do not exist for the multitude of different problems and interests. Putting a process of systems transformation in place asks for clever tailoring incentives towards commitment and action.

5C framework plays a vital part in the NCEA's work and supports improved governance objectives within the agency's programme

The NCEA approach to SEA/ESIA effectiveness is based on a well-elaborated framework distinguishing three interlinked levels:

1. the system functions level--key functions that should be fulfilled within a system to enable good practice ESIA/SEA
2. the organisation level--the capacities of actors and organisations with a role in the ESIA/SEA system
3. the process level--how individual ESIA/SEA processes are undertaken, which includes independent advice of the NCEA on those processes

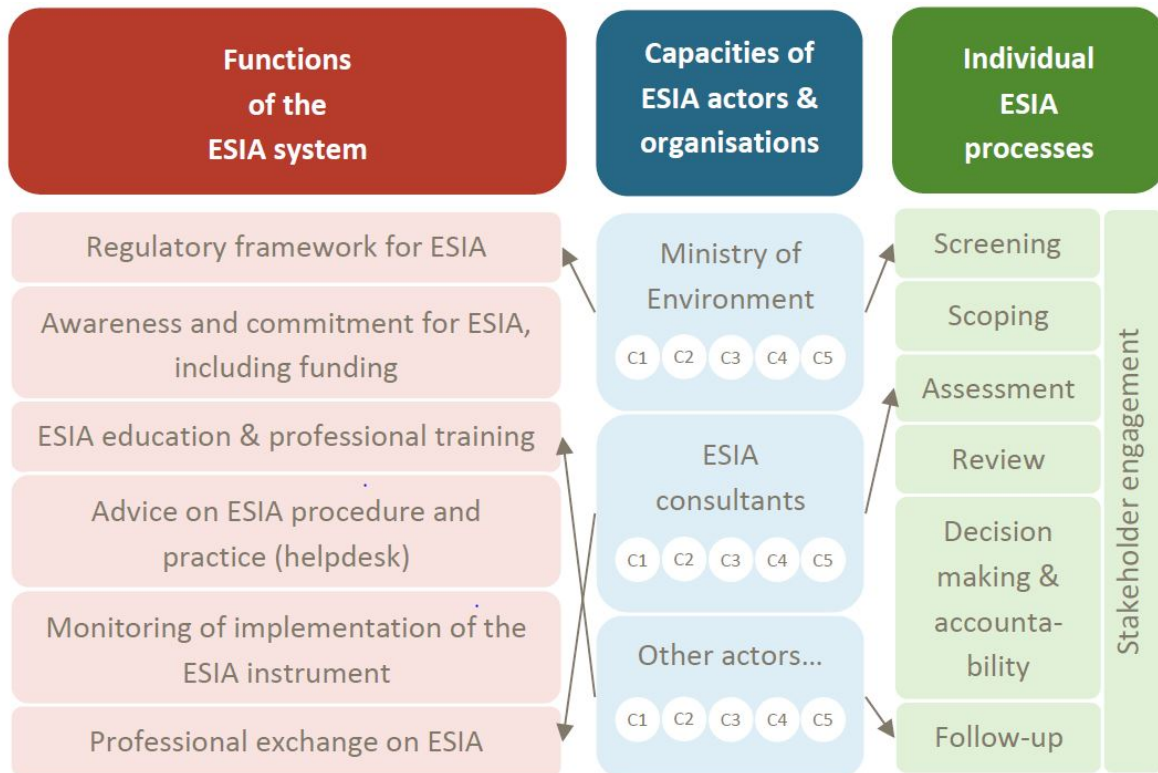


Figure 4 NCEA Systems Approach

Source: NCEA, 'A Systems approach to ESIA Effectiveness' (2018).

In addition to activities for reinforcing individual capacities and functional processes, it is important for the NCEA to focus the attention of governance regimes that provide key linkages and interactions. This refers to processes of policy bargaining (managing trade-offs), overcoming resource conflicts, creating trust between different interest groups and supporting more equitable power balances (Bruijn et al., 1998). Altogether, this may also be helpful to enhance the relevance of SEA/ESIA for realising payoffs in wider SDG areas, such as resilience, public health, gender & youth empowerment and voice. Such intersectionality increasingly receives interest in international development circles.

Reviewing the four cases, along with the NCEA's portfolio as a whole and interpretation of our conclusions shall therefore take place within the above-described evolution of development cooperation context. Focus on countries with increasingly decentralised power requires a systematic understanding of the conditions within which socio-environmental transformation shall occur. The following comparative analysis directs its attention to uncovering the limiting as well as successful aspects in each case, allowing for better comprehension of potential leverage points & the most limiting factors.

6 Comparative analysis: what can we learn from the four case studies?

In this section, we present our findings from the document review and interviews that focused on influencing results and outcomes from NCEA interventions that took place in the following four case countries. In order to better understand how context factors, stakeholders and (often opposing) incentives and interests unfold within the present development policy environment, and how the all of the aforementioned influence relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the NCEA's programme, we analysed the selected four case studies. These case studies were assessed within the Pathways of Change framework. In other words, we looked at what activities took place, for which stakeholders (internal vs external stakeholders, different level stakeholders) and within what context (what were the environmental problems to be addressed by the intervention). Starting with situation description and the NCEA's intended involvement, we have focused our attention on what has (or has not) been achieved, trying to uncover main underlying factors that influence success or limit progress in each of the cases, in order to draw lessons possibly applicable to a wider range of programme countries. A more detailed overview of reconstructed Pathways of Change can be found in table 2.

Additionally, we have further assessed progress in each of the five capacity themes. This is to better understand what capacity areas the NCEA has been focusing on and where further improvements can be made. In some cases, where intervention was rather limited and no evidence was present to assess per-theme capacity, we could not provide any conclusions.

6.1 Mali: Supporting the decentralisation process in Mali was the core component of NCEA engagement

The region around the Sourou river area, divided between Burkina Faso and Mali, is marked by instability and increased pressure on natural resources. The area is under significant land and water constraints and climate-related issues, and the project focused on improved irrigation in order to respond to increased internal migration and greater demand to expand the flooded area, mainly for rice cultivation (Woodhouse et al., 2000). This strenuous situation and the threat of potential conflict gave base for the NCEA's involvement in providing capacity to regional authorities, with later engagement of the relevant environmental authorities.

The Mali case prioritised capacity-development activities. Various coaching sessions took place over the course of two and a half years, beginning in 2017. Starting with awareness-raising training, the various stakeholders from all different levels of governance as well as donors and civil society organisations joined together to develop a joint agenda regarding the importance of SEA in the Sourou Valley, also confirmed by signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. Other capacity development took place through workshops/trainings focused on supporting the decentralisation process through capacitation of the ICS (*Inter-collectivité du Sourou*), while involving other important stakeholders such as the *Comité Interministériel*, whose role is essential for the approval of the SEA.

Multi-level intervention along with strong positions within networks were among the most important success factors in Mali

Given the success of the NCEA's involvement in Mali, the case attracted attention, which led to a publication of a policy brief discussing this engagement (Molenaar & Nooteboom, 2020). This brief provides some conclusions in terms of stakeholder alignment, process focus and inclusive participatory approach through involvement of all ethnicities of the concerned municipalities. Several other factors also played a role, based on our findings. First, the Mali case had a **very clear focus** in that the problem that needed to be solved was clearly defined. Although the environmental challenge was the point of discussion for the SEA as such, the NCEA's approach did not define solving of the environmental issue as central to its engagement, but rather support the decentralisation process as

its main point of attention. There was not only alignment between national and international stakeholders interests, but also alignment between NCEA support focus and ICS interests. Hence, the **multi-level intervention** was relevant for high-interest stakeholders and led to enhancement of functionality of the stakeholder interaction in the system.

A second important factor, reinforced by the former, was the successful **integration of the NCEA into the multi-stakeholder network**. Such integration was made possible because, as discussed by the NCEA technical secretary, the Dutch embassy's direct interest in the programme in the area was essential in terms of its support to the SEA process. This likely aided the NCEA with entering the network of influential stakeholders and merging their agendas with those of interested donors and the ICS. Another point to emphasise was the cooperation from the side of the national government. The NCEA was able to also engage the Ministry of Environment in the process. While the Ministry's initial lack of interest in the process was considered positive (no attempts of a complete control take-over), a non-collaborative behaviour would likely lead to delays and obstructions. Monitoring and stakeholder feedback was essential for understanding that the NCEA **gained trust** from the side of the ICS so that the Ministry's involvement did not inhibit local ownership of the process. Confidence in the NCEA and commitment of actors brought about by the participatory locally-owned process were the major indicators of the NCEA's well-established position in the network and effectiveness of its activities.

Evidence of the latter can be found in the monitoring forms noting that the achieved success in terms of legitimacy given to the ICS through the SEA process might not have materialised without the NCEA's support (NCEA 2019). Nevertheless, improved governance in itself is not a guarantee of improved-decision making. To that end, the developed capacities may or may not translate to finding effective solutions to the socio-environmental challenges in the Sourou valley. In other words, it remains to be seen whether the newly gained capacities will lead to development and implementation of **inclusive and sustainable solutions** to environmental issues and challenges in the Sourou Valley.

Significant capacity development took place in terms of improved environmental governance. Real long-term effect cannot be assessed.

C1: commit & act: NCEA activities bring together actors from different levels – national, regional and local. In addition, motivation is a factor leading to more interest from the Ministry of Environment (the participation of which is necessary for SEA approval). The main remaining questions are how this capacity will translate into decision-making and how this capability will contribute to improved results delivery.

C2: deliver results: It is as yet unclear how concrete socio-environmental objectives can be achieved in the long run. Is the ICS delivering on its socio-environmental objectives in the Sourou Valley? Who was engaged, and for what activities?

C3: attract & relate: The SEA is now better aligned with donor needs through furthering the SDG agenda. Bringing in and increasing the commitment of the Ministry helps with financial (fiscal) resource mobilisation. The ICS gained more legitimacy through the process supported by the NCEA, but the question remains whether this legitimacy will be maintained once the NCEA steps out. This requires capacity-building in EA system development. It is important to pay attention to network setup & efficient operation.

C4: adapt & renew: N/A

C5: coherence: The organisation now has vision/mission and tools to support activities through workshops & coaching activities; that said, it is also important to ask what the system activities are that ICS is performing—are these aligned with vision, mission & planning? ICS is a diverse body of actors, representing 26 municipalities—is it able to handle all these different interests & proceed effectively towards decision-making? Does it require further embassy support?

Kenya: Kenyan situation points to unpredictable political environment and reflects the need for power mapping

The NCEA's involvement in Kenya within the five-year programme was developed on the basis of weak institutional capacity of environmental assessment agencies in the country. Faced with high population growth and growing regionalised investments, concerns surrounding sustainability and inclusiveness of economic growth have been raised. While being a relatively stable country, Kenya shows higher levels of corruption. Limited capacities at a national and local level gave foundation to the involvement of the NCEA in this country context. Furthermore, low coordination between NEMA and the local environmental agencies was further mentioned as a reason for potential NCEA activities (NCEA, 2017a).

With **decentralisation** process in place after the 2013 elections, the NCEA intends to support the process through capacitation at county level. Following on its success with the Tana Delta project, the NCEA intended to continue with capacity development at a county level within the five-year plan with a specific focus on Kisumu county. Further engagement was to take place within the Lake Turkana area – a transboundary project between Ethiopia and Kenya in a form of an independent advice on the Lake Turkana SEA (NCEA, 2017a). This advisory trajectory never materialised, due to the political situation in Ethiopia.

At national level, the NCEA was made aware of an interest in capacity-building by the Kenyan National Environmental Agency (NEMA). While indication of possible collaboration did arise, an official request has not yet been passed. Nevertheless, awareness-raising training with SEA trainees as well as training for Kenyan Environmental Tribunal took place (NCEA, 2020).

Financing is an important element in incentivising regional environmental authorities to commit. The Tana Delta experience emphasises the need for focused scope

Support for the decentralisation process, with a focus on county land use plans, were determined as the central points of the Kenyan programme strategy. Nevertheless, a specific issue for which the potential SEA might be relevant requires further clarification. In other words, in order to better understand the relevance of the defined focus, more information on specific land use issues, stakeholders involved, potential beneficiaries of the NCEA's intervention and additional explanation on attention given to the transboundary projects might shed more light on relevance of the NCEA's strategy in Kenya. Changes at political level in terms of substitution of the governor in the Kisumu county decreased commitment and interest of the requesting party. Furthermore, uncertainty around receiving finances at the county level are likely to disincentivise environmental authorities from proceeding with SEA development and capacity-building activities. As such, the perceived gains from the process of SEA development by the environmental authorities might seem too small to increase any willingness to participate without a vision of obtaining finances. It is unclear whether the SEA process and related capacity-building activities could lead to more secured funding. Financial certainty seem to be an important factor for the effectiveness of the NCEA's approach in Kenya. Since capacity-building or improved governance through SEA training/coaching is not a priority, effectiveness will likely be negatively influenced in future activities.

The Tana Delta experience shows two important elements. First, the engagement was tackling a **specific issue** taking place in a specified area, which translated into an occurrence of conflict in an area under water and land scarcity that lacked proper management. In this case, the SEA process could support a process of potential **conflict resolution** by bringing stakeholders together through a **participatory approach**. It is also important to note that the focus in this instance was not necessarily to support decentralisation efforts *per se*, but rather on resolving the environmental issue in question. Second, **favourable political climate** as well as media attention and NGO presence in the area were jointly conducive to SEA development. Both of these points confirm the multi-level relevance and the effectiveness of multiple stakeholders in the intervention. Clear process focus and political engagement were two important success factors for the NCEA's involvement in Tana Delta example (similar to Mali).

Apart from the above, having a solid network with other stakeholders seems crucial in terms of commitment and collaboration. Such integration requires gaining trust and devoting time to defining

an effective 'entry point'. Whereas in the case of Mali, the Dutch embassy played a convening role in terms of supporting NCEA activities and network integration, Kenya's Dutch embassy (one that might be better connected to stakeholders) limited its role to facilitation.

Capacity progress points to the need for deeper understanding of how to stimulate commitment in an unforeseeable country context

C1: commit & act: As discussed above, commitment seems to be the main issue as the parties indicating interest never passed an official request despite communication from the NCEA. The SEA itself and projects/areas for which the NCEA's advice and expertise was proposed are most likely not a priority for the authorities.

C2: deliver results: Training for the Environmental Tribunal was appreciated by the requesting party and an increased capacity was concluded by NCEA after the training. A long-term question is whether the decision-making of the Tribunal has improved.

C3: attract & relate: SEA awareness as raised through workshops with trainees. The spread of information on the SEA reaching a wider net of stakeholders points to an improvement in the capacity to attract.

C4: adapt & renew: N/A

C5: coherence: N/A

6.2 Guinea: Despite failing to realise the initial set of activities, the participatory process of redefining the area of intervention was an essential step towards multi-level stakeholder engagement

The Guinea programme began with a transboundary project on the development of a dam in the Niger river. The location of the dam bears importance for the entire Sahel region and is most important for Mali, where the dam would directly affect the Inner Niger Delta – one of the largest wetlands and with a unique ecosystem. The wetland also provides livelihoods to 1-2 million people involved in fishing, agriculture and livestock. The impacts on the Inner Niger Delta might be severe in terms of land availability, affecting key activities of the local populations (Klemm, 2015). The area is managed by the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) comprised of representatives from the nine countries. The initial project proposal for building the dam was developed and financed by the World Bank. In 2017, China signed an agreement with Guinean government and the YREC (Yellow River Engineering Consulting China) developed a new project. From that moment on, the dam was to be built by the Chinese company. An announcement from Wetlands International (an NGO involved in the WB project) showed that the government informed no other stakeholders, including the Government of Mali. Given the possible far-reaching environmental consequences and a likely displacement of 48,000 people, this step left other stakeholders displeased. The new project developed by YREC has not yet been shared with the NCEA, and the World Bank withdrew. Nevertheless, the NCEA provided independent advice on the former ESIA, which led to discussions among ministry representatives and the NBA.

Capacity-building for the Bureau of Environmental Study & Evaluation was in its exploratory phase in the course of 2019. While the NCEA planned to begin with the latter activities in the same year, change in the political situation led to a reconsideration of these activities. Instead, the NCEA conducted an ESY-mapping workshop with representatives of various ministries, civil society organisations, mining companies and knowledge institutes in order to develop a mutual understanding of the process and agree on a joint agenda. Furthermore, an SEA awareness-raising workshop took place earlier in the same year, during which participants from ministries, NGOs and knowledge institutes identified a potentially more urgent case in which SEA might play an essential role.

Recent developments in the case of Guinea limit detection of substantial case-specificities. Nevertheless, agreement between key system actors and their collaboration on the development of a mutual agenda provides a solid long-term foundation

As it only began in 2018, the programme in Guinea provides a more limited time frame that can be better assessed in terms of important factors for future success of the SEA/ESIA in the country. The political layer plays a significant (if not the most prominent) role in continuation/discontinuation decisions, and effectiveness of the NCEA's activities is greatly reflected in the present case. In this example, two politically-related events occurred. First, in terms of ESIA advice for the Fomi Dam project, withdrawal of funding for the Fomi Dam ESIA as well as unfavourable development of the political situation (with regards to the NBA) meant that only the scoping study was conducted. Second, a planned training with the Bureau of Environmental Study & Evaluation did not take place due to political reasons.

Nevertheless, the NCEA was able to make stakeholders agree and amend its activities to understand how the change affects its programme in the country and what type and for which stakeholders the needs for capacity-building trainings could be identified during the ESY-mapping workshop. During this workshop, six ministries were present, along with CSOs and representatives from both the private sector and knowledge organisations. By bringing together stakeholders from various system components, such interactive and participatory approaches will likely enhance relevance and effectiveness of future agreed-upon activities. Furthermore, the presence of various stakeholders demonstrates interest in SEA/ESIA related activities, which increase commitment and possibly the ability to act if granted support by future capacity trainings.

A SEA awareness-raising workshop was also successful in attracting ministry officials, as well as representatives from non-governmental organisations, among others. This workshop led to a deeper understanding of the SEA itself and how such processes can lead to greater sustainability of project development. A major conclusion was made during this workshop: the identification of a specific case, the Moyen-Bafing area project, where urgency for SEA is higher. Participation of ministry representatives and other actors demonstrates the ability of the NCEA to be proactive and mobilise stakeholders, as well as to adapt its approach according to the evolution of circumstances in the context of Guinea. Project identification and maintaining focus proved important in the above discussed examples. At the same time, understanding whether support is given on the governance side (decentralisation process support like in case of Mali) or technical assistance as such (provision of independent advice) are further points for consideration to enhance NCEA functionality (and different levels) in such a way that it will positively influence dynamic system change and resilience.

Current events in Guinea point to serious stakeholder interest in NCEA activities. Given the constrained time frame, only a few reflections can be made on capacity development

C1: commit & act: The participation of eight ministries during the SEA awareness workshop and six ministries during ESY-mapping shows high interest in SEA development for the identified project and improved commitment through better SEA understanding.

C2: deliver results: N/A

C3: attract & relate: A participatory approach with actors from different layers legitimises future activities and helps develop a mutually identified set of activities in terms of capacity-building activities as well as supporting SEA for the Moyen-Bafing area.

C4: adapt & renew: N/A

C5: coherence: N/A

6.3 Ethiopia: Similar to events in Kenya and Guinea, changes in the political sphere have profound effect on the NCEA's planned set of activities. Adaptation is key

The engagement in Ethiopia was based on the NCEA's initiative to renew its activities in the country, where Dutch farmers are an important partner in terms of water-intensive (and possibly pollutive) horticulture production. Indications from agencies at federal and regional level led to exploration of how the NCEA could assist in environmental assessment. At the onset of the programme, the NCEA did not have a specific vision for the types and categories of authorities or the different investment projects in which it could assist, but rather the NCEA wanted to gain a better understanding of what possible areas of support could be available in the country.

Meanwhile, two major events in the policy landscape took place. First, changes at federal level in terms of transformation and integration of the former environmental agency into the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change could have opened new possibilities for collaboration. While the situation in terms of cooperation with the Ministry of Environment remains undetermined, the Ministry of Water showed interest in SEA integration into its Water Policy with the NCEA's assistance. According to the latest information, no official request has been passed.

Second, personnel changes at the post of the Director General at the Amhara regional environmental agency led to an official request received by the Embassy. Nevertheless, a new Dutch horticulture development project was later approved by the government to start in the Amhara region. The NCEA took the project as an opportunity to link the capacity-building activities in Amhara with the Gunsila horticulture development (in Amhara). A training with the Amhara authority in 2017 led to a development of a three-year programme and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The latter includes a variety of trainings and sessions with an aim of organisational and individual capacity enhancement. Apart from these, three ESIA's still need to be drafted for the Dutch investment projects, for which an independent advice has been offered by the NCEA as an option in the MoU.

The Ethiopian case further confirms the importance of multi-level stakeholder involvement when the situation requires a shift in focus. Joint collaboration stimulates commitment and is likely to enable the NCEA's progress

While some activities already took place, the Ethiopian example has a variety of activities planned in the coming years. Indications from the previous training and requests for additional capacity-building activities (such as the IFC training requested after the ESIA workshop a few months earlier) point to an interest and **commitment** from the side of the regional environmental authority. A conflict-prone area with investment interests provides a good case on which to focus and a potential site for contributing to resolving a socio-environmental issue in the area through the SEA process. Maintaining **a narrow scope** in terms of intervention proved to be the strength of the approach (as confirmed also for both the Sourou and Tana Delta examples).

Given the substantial stakes of private **investors** and their potential influence over public decision-making (Amhara authority's approval of ESIA's, delivery of authorisations), their **active multi-stakeholder involvement** and agreement on a common agenda are important factors to take into account. Furthermore, maintaining **a participatory approach** in a region with high ethnic diversity proved an essential element (as was the case in Mali or the Tana Delta project in Kenya). In terms of political environment, the potential destabilisation due to the upcoming elections and possible consequences for implementation of the project activities cannot be disregarded.

Commitment and capacity to deliver at regional level were advanced. With more activities to take place in the years to come, more evidence will be provided to further assess capacity-development efforts in Ethiopia

C1: commit & act: Political commitment is demonstrated.

C2: deliver results: The Amhara regional authority's capacities increased through training sessions and IFC training.

C3: attract & relate: Growing SEA awareness was raised through workshops.

C4: adapt & renew: N/A (sensitive to political turmoil)

C5: coherence: This is linked to private investment programmes & Dutch policy focus on supporting decentralisation processes in Ethiopia.

6.4 The NCEA's success greatly depends on contextual developments. Planning, focused participatory collaboration & monitoring increase relevance and effectiveness of interventions

When comparing the important factors from the four cases and following the PoC reconstruction (table 2), several observations can be inferred regarding the NCEA's programme:

- Investing in **reconnaissance** proved important in two areas: stakeholders exposure and improved network integration. If a programme presents new country engagement or renewed cooperation, reconnaissance is essential for needs assessment and development of an appropriate activity portfolio.
- Involving stakeholders from **multiple levels** and **multiple layers**, instead of targeting authorities at one level (i.e. in Kenya), increased effectiveness. Supporting collaborative and participatory approaches improved success (as was the case in Mali); even while the intervention focused on an inter-regional body, the Ministry and other stakeholders actively participated in the process. In a similar vein, Tana Delta in Kenya was an example of multi-level collaboration. Hence, involvement of all interested parties, especially on the donors side, is recommended in terms of future activities in Ethiopia. Such an approach is likely to increase interest and accountability of each stakeholder through establishing a **joint agenda** and shared understanding of the process as a collective effort.
- **Needs assessment** before intervention plan (relevance)—Guinea was one of the cases where an awareness-raising workshop with multiple stakeholders (NGOs, private sector, various ministries) allowed for mutual consensus on an urgent case where sustainability can benefit from SEA development. Such a starting point was not the case elsewhere, where environmental authority expression of interest oftentimes did not materialise. Holding a workshop with all relevant stakeholders in cases where environmental authority indicates a possible official request may help the NCEA identify specific areas of intervention & capacity instruments. Pathways of Change can be a useful tool for transitioning from stating problems through stakeholder identification, to selecting activities based on the identified needs.
- **Narrowed scope** (effectiveness). Instead of a large variety of stakeholders and different set of activities (Kenya case), maintaining a clear focus on a specific project, one for which a specific socio-environmental issue has been identified, can improve the effectiveness of activities. Both Mali and the former Kenyan Tana Delta projects each had a specified scope; in the case of Mali, this scope was ICS legitimisation and empowerment for better management of a conflict-prone area under resource pressures; in Kenya, under the Tana Delta project, the SEA instrument was already developed to prevent future resource and land conflicts; in the case of Guinea, Moyen-Bafing presents a particular situation in which the NCEA can likely provide vital support.
- **Monitoring & feedback** of the NCEA's involvement and coaching/training sessions may provide important learning lessons on success and limiting factors. A review of monitoring forms from Mali on NCEA advice gave better insight on participants' perception of the NCEA's advice (this was not available for other countries). For instance, some things expressed included local ownership support, stakeholder trust and the essential role the NCEA played. Although monitoring forms might be available for other countries or become available at a later date, it is strongly encouraged to perform more in-depth feedback monitoring to gain deeper insights. While requesting party satisfaction is an

important indicator, it cannot explain why a requesting party was satisfied and what other stakeholders perceived as important aspects of a given activity.

- **Political climate and governance failures may disable continuation of the NCEA's activities**
 - this factor mentioned in the cases of Guinea, Kenya and Ethiopia had a major influence on what activities continued and at what level. Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (Mali, Ethiopia) may prevent a pause in or discontinuation of activities. Furthermore, multi-level and multi-layer stakeholder engagement increase commitment and interest levels of various stakeholders, which may limit withdrawal or suspension. Even though the NCEA establishes five-year programmes, such changes may occur in the course of its involvement, i.e. the Fomi Dam example in Guinea. Dependence on the contextual factors as such does not necessarily decrease with time. Dynamic monitoring, including documenting changes and stakeholder feedback, can help with understanding the possible strategies when political developments inhibit planned activities.

Table 2 Pathways of Change

Case	Problem	Agents	Levels	Capacities	Instruments	Intermediate Outcomes	Final Outcome – Capacities For What?
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacities: insufficient land use management in the Sourou river valley, weak governance But also a resource problem as such: land scarcity -> increase pressures on the land due to rice cultivation, livestock & increased migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National - Ministry of Environment Committee Inter-Ministeriel Inter-regional – Intercollectivite du Sourou Local – local tribal leaders NGOs – Care Donor – Dutch embassy Local expert <p>→ Alignment of interests successful: international (SDGs for donors), national (drawing attention from the CIM),</p> <p>BUT</p> <p>A transboundary project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the Burkinabe authority involved in the SEA trainings (relevant authority: Burkina Sourou Valley Development Authority) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All levels represented Focus on the regional level & facilitation and training mainly between national and regional level To further decentralisation process – the need identified by ICS 	<p><u>C1: commitment</u> - Through motivation: national gov. more committed through bringing stakeholders together: cooperation: more cooperation also through increased commitment between national & regional actors</p> <p><u>C2: deliver results:</u> ICS capacities developed, long-term delivery on socio-environmental outcomes unknown</p> <p><u>C3: relate & attract:</u> improvement in terms of possible attraction of funding; ICS-increased legitimacy</p> <p><u>C4: adapt & self-renew:</u></p> <p><u>C5: internal coherence:</u> organisation now has vision/mission and tools to support stuff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching sessions to support SEA while bringing together stakeholders from different levels -> important for capacity development Awareness-raising through workshops and trainings -> important for motivation Reconnaissance missions -> important for network integration of the NCEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction on the side of the requesting party Improved decision-making Advice leading to action (increased investment of Ministry to EA); setting up of a webpage Improved awareness Decentralisation considered successful BUT has governance been improved? – how is this monitored/reflected; i.e. corruption, effectiveness, transparency,... How will the legitimacy of ICS be perceived after the NCEA's exit? 	<p><i>'By 2029, the 29 territories of the Sourou Basin have improved their livelihoods through the development of socio-economic and environmental activities in order to strengthen their resilience'</i></p> <p>Equity: what are the distributional effects?</p> <p>Environment: what are the outcomes at environmental level?</p> <p>Profit: how will this process be conducive to inclusive green growth?</p>
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacities: governance bodies at every level weak institutionally, higher corruption index Resources: increased population pressures -> increased pressures on resources & insufficient management Policies: overlapping policies at different levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National: Kenya environmental authority (NEMA) Environmental Tribunal – request due to higher number of SEA-related requests Ministry of Water & Irrigation in KE County level: Kisumu county authorities NGOs – UNEP – funder and requesting party for Lake Turkana 	<p>Different levels but for different types of interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National: capacity-building of NEMA & Tribunal Local: Kisumu county authorities training planned – but this never took place 	<p><u>C1: commitment</u> - No commitment capacity improved</p> <p><u>C2: deliver results:</u> Environmental Tribunal some capacity improved through workshop</p> <p><u>C3: relate & attract:</u> awareness on SEA through training of 30 SEA trainees</p> <p><u>C4: adapt & self-renew:</u> NA</p> <p><u>C5: internal coherence:</u> NA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for the tribunal (capacity for SEA-related cases) Awareness training on SEA for 30 trainees Reconnaissance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction of requesting party on Environmental Tribunal planning Improved awareness through trainee workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the NCEA: contribution to greener economy & development

Case	Problem	Agents	Levels	Capacities	Instruments	Intermediate Outcomes	Final Outcome – Capacities For What?
Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fomi Dam – water management, transboundary project with consequences on ecosystems and communities on Mali side as well Capacities: BGEEE capacity-building -> did not take place; instead an SEA awareness led to identification of the Bafing area for the NCEA's engagement 	<p>Fomi Dam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests (MEEF) – requesting party World Bank - withdrawal UNDP – funding Wetlands International CERE YREC <p>SEA awareness/capacity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau of Environmental Study & Evaluation (BGEEE) Various Ministry representatives Local experts (all activities) REGUISE CSOs Private sector companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National level: ministries Private sector: mining companies NGOs/CSOs WB, UNDP, Wetlands International for the Fomi Dam, which now seems to be put on hold for the NCEA's engagement 	<p><u>C1: commitment</u> - High ministries representation and awareness increase commitment</p> <p><u>C2: deliver results:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>C3: relate & attract:</u> enhanced participatory SEA awareness workshop & ESY-mapping</p> <p><u>C4: adapt & self-renew:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>C5: internal coherence:</u> N/A</p> <p>→ Other capacities to be determined at a later stage of programme implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fomi Dam scoping study & advise (unclear whether future involvement will take place) SEA awareness & ESY-mapping for ministries, CSOs, private sector, experts Reconnaissance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requesting party satisfied with outcomes SEA awareness allowed for identification of an urgent case that can benefit from SEA development ESY-mapping important for needs assessment of various stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term vision: Increased pressures on water resources may lead to a potential conflict. Improved ESIA/SEA may be a tool to prevent conflict & support sustainable economic growth.
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacities: governance bodies at every level weak institutionally, higher corruption index Resources: increased population pressures -> increased pressures on resources & insufficient management Policies: overlapping policies at different levels 	<p>Federal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change Ministry of Water (water policy advice, did not take place) <p>Capacity at regional level (later Ginsela programme in the region):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amhara Environment, Forest and Wildlife Protection and Development Authority Dutch embassy Dutch investors Debre Berhan University (SEA awareness & pilot) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal level: Ministry of Water: support with SEA integration into the Water Policy – no official request made Regional level: Amhara EA authority – capacity-building, ESIA's learning and support in development of remaining three ESIA's for Dutch investors project (in the coming time) 	<p><u>C1: commitment</u> - increased commitment between national & regional actors</p> <p><u>C2: deliver results:</u> improvement in terms of</p> <p><u>C3: relate & attract:</u> organisation now has vision/mission and tools to support staff</p> <p><u>C4: adapt & self-renew:</u></p> <p><u>C5: internal coherence:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only at Amhara regional level: Training on ESIA MoU signed with Amhara regional authority, planned activities developed SEA awareness ESIA & IFC training, including gap-analysis on the two ESIA's for Ginsela programme In the future: three remaining ESIA's Possible independent advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction by requesting party on: Both capacity trainings Signing of an MoU SEA awareness seminar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term vision: Help improve environmental governance towards better management of increased pressures on land, water resources to attain increased food security and reduced poverty.

The NCEA Portfolio Scan complements preliminary conclusions of the comparative analysis.

Through assessment of the 5C development for each country within the 2017-2022 programme, we aimed to better comprehend what capacities are predominantly targeted by the NCEA. This was to complement the preliminary conclusions of the comparative analysis on capacity targeting within country strategies.

By comparing the 2015-19 programme results, we find that adaptation and coherence are lagging behind, thereby further confirming case study evidence. That said, the latter two capacities are substantial for long-term impact.

Our findings point to a slight focus on two extreme capacities - **delivery** and **commitment** (visualisation provided in table 3, Annex 4). The majority of capacity development trainings targeted organisational capacities, with improvements in performance and (potentially) decision-making. Awareness-raising activities supported stakeholders in cooperation and ESIA/SEA implementation. Far less attention was given to **coherence** and **renewal/adaptation**, whereas an improved capability to attract offers mixed results. It has not been entirely clear how the capacity to adapt is being targeted. Nevertheless, some conclusions could be made about likely improvements due to the possible interrelationships between these different capabilities.

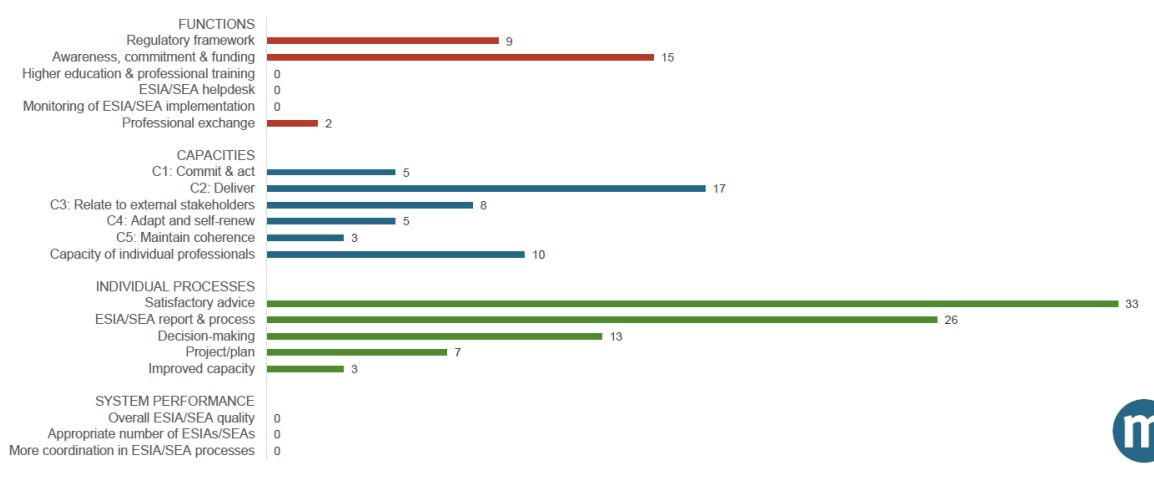


Figure 5 NCEA Frequency of results

Source: NCEA 'Outcomes 2015-2019'.

Figure 5 provides some information on the frequency of NCEA activities and results in the overall portfolio. It shows that delivery of advice and individual capacity development were at the forefront in the monitoring period between 2015-19. Even though results delivery might have a precedence, coherence and adaptation are highly essential for long-term development and effectiveness of this environmental authority. Furthermore, social targets (gender, inequality-related) might get a greater consideration if capacity to adapt and renew were to receive more attention.

It should be noted that our review did not look explicitly at the thematic activities (sustainable finance, private sector development, MFA sustainability advice). These activities comprise some 40% of NCEA funding but cannot be assessed with the available material. Most activities focus on training and document screening that are notably difficult to assess in terms of impact.

To conclude, monitoring proves to be an important part for reflection and internal learning, thereby allowing the NCEA to improve its strategy. Defining the NCEA's role within the process of environmental system change might influence how the agency plans and implements its intervention in the future

The following findings can be derived from the four country case studies and the portfolio scan for further reflection:

- The NCEA activities seem to focus mainly on two types of capacity development: the capacity to **commitment** and the capacity to deliver **results** (mainly in terms of regulation and institutionalisation). There is a secondary focus on the capacities to be coherent, to relate and to attract; however, it is not clear how the concept of renewal & adaptation is being targeted. It is not feasible to link capacities to deliverables, since sometimes several capacities may be interrelated, and no specific focus can be detected. The NCEA work on capacity-building is focusing both on systems and on persons, whereas the relationship between both (orgware) can be further improved.
- The phase in which the programme starts and takes off is likely to determine the **timeliness** of realisation and the portfolio of activities included in the mid-term evaluation. Some projects present a new or renewed programme in a sort of exploratory phase (Ethiopia), while the 'take-off' of activities may therefore require more time. Several other projects present continued collaboration (the Philippines) where several outcomes may have been achieved before the launch of the project. Still other programmes are 'phasing-out' their engagement (Indonesia), and as such the activities (and therefore capacities targeted) were either reduced to a minimum or were fully concluded.
- Even though capacity development is considered one of the key activities that the NCEA provides (in addition to independent advice, awareness-raising & support for improvement/establishment of regulatory framework), the four cases studied showed that capacity-building activities were central to the NCEA's engagement. Furthermore, capacities are also (albeit indirectly) addressed through awareness-raising (relate & attract) and independent advice (relate & attract, delivery of results and possibly even achieving coherence). It might therefore be important for the NCEA to collectively define where and **which type of capacity-development activities** are relevant in particular settings and phases and include a more deliberate approach of timing of activities.
- Vital for the NCEA might also be to reach a better understanding of the extent to which assisting with SEA/EIAS processes and SEA development is an end in itself or **an instrument towards achievement of system (governance) change**, and to what extent is the system change (through possibly increased governance functionality) underlying activities in the programme countries (i.e. in Mali, the instrumental aspect of SEA/EIAS process for system changes a strong focus, but it is fairly unclear whether this was the case in Kenya).

7 Lessons learnt & challenges ahead

Bringing the evidence together, we identify the following reflection points, including possible future limitations

Our partial appraisal of NCEA activities in several selected countries and the review of the NCEA portfolio as reported by the programme staff gives room for some reflections on the possible pathways for reinforcing the NCEA's relevance, effectiveness and potential impact in coming years. Our comments are based on some major developments in the field of environmental systems governance and our understanding of the current policy shifts that shape the context for the NCEA's activities (as outlined in section 3). These comments could also be understood in relation to the earlier recommendations from the 2012-2017 NCEA evaluation (see Annex 5).

1. From intermediary outcomes to final results

The Theory of Change underlying the NCEA framework contract is mostly based on the reporting concerning intermediary outcomes in terms of individual advice & knowledge upgrading, institutional capacity development and operational functions (regulation, awareness, etc.). Whereas this is certainly relevant in the SEA/ESIA process, it remains rather distant from the final results to be reached in terms of **environmental system performance**.

It is therefore recommended to complement the current systematic (albeit general) ToC approach with a more concrete and operational **Pathways of Change** framework that outlines the linkages between multiple agents with different demands and interests that cooperate and interact at multiple levels. This will enable the NCEA to identify more concretely which activities can be undertaken for reinforcing specific aspects of capacity development required for strengthening the likelihood of impact.

2. Demand articulation (who needs EA?)

The NCEA offers a good set of products and services that need to be tailored to specific situations in order to demonstrate their usefulness. It is risky if the outside world considers the NCEA's services only as a 'toolbox' and fails to understand its abilities for contributing to local environmental governance. In some country programmes, the NCEA offer is focused on an 'unmet need', whereas in other instances the offer seems too much like 'a product in need of a client'.

It is therefore important to spend considerable time and attention on the phase of **project preparation** in order to support an adequate scoping of the NCEA's activities in the reconnaissance phase. This is particularly the case for country/region engagement, but the same also holds true for screening activities of FMO, RVO-ORIO and DRIVE proposals and IGG programmes. The uniqueness of the latter demand articulation is certainly at stake, since other providers offer similar services as well.

3. Organisational capacity development (multi-level)

The NCEA effectiveness framework for SEA/ESIA support rightly focuses on capacity development as a major intermediary outcome. Whereas most training and coaching activities are tailored towards individual capacity development, the additional instruments for organisational and **institutional capacity development** remain largely undetermined.

Further positioning of NCEA capacity in the field of organisational capacity strengthening requires serious attention. This usually implies undertaking joint activities with local partners engaged at **multiple levels** of decision-making (local, regional, national) and may have to deal with opposing interests. The Dutch 'polder mentality' might be an interesting entry point for steering multi-stakeholder processes.

4. Power analysis & interest mapping (recognising stakeholder interests)

The process of SEA/ESIA support can be substantially reinforced if an explicit *ex ante* mapping of stakeholder interests is included in the procedure. This is important in order to recognise the different

motives for engagement in the environmental assessment process and also enables identification of opportunities for overcoming **different (opposing) interests**.

Whereas the NCEA is basically a 'technical' agency that provides operational support, such service does not take place in isolation. The insight in and recognition of policy interests and power imbalances might enable a more balanced appreciation of the feasibility of the NCEA's involvement in particular countries and projects. Several useful approaches are available in order to assess power issues in development programmes (see Petit 2013 for a useful overview).

5. Focus on governance of policy dilemmas (sustainability vs. inclusion)

The image of the NCEA as an 'environmental agency' is favourable for its engagement in natural resource management problems, but this image may overlook the importance of **resource rights and ownership**. Often, access and distribution of land and water resources can be major disincentives for sustainable environmental management. Therefore, it might be vital for the NCEA to reach a better understanding of the extent to which assisting with SEA/EIAS processes and SEA development is an end in itself or **an instrument towards achievement of system (governance) change**, and the extent of the system change - through possibly increased governance functionality - underlying activities in the programme countries (i.e. in Mali, the latter is a strong focus, but it is fairly unclear whether this was the case in Kenya).

It is therefore important to explicitly recognise the socio-economic and cultural drivers of resource degradation and to pay attention to the potential trade-offs (or complementarities) between resilience and inclusion at local and regional level. The NCEA might position itself as a third-party organisation that is capable of supporting such multi-stakeholder negotiation processes.

6. Combining awareness-raising with capacity development

Much attention is given in the NCEA's programmes for capacity development at different levels, whereas resources for awareness-raising are fairly limited (6.5% of the country programmes and 2% of the NCEA portfolio). As shown before, the combination of awareness-raising and capacity upgrading is an important vehicle for building a breeding ground for environmental assessment.

It is important to recognise, however, that both workstreams could be better tailored but also require different capacities. The right combination of soft skills (communication, psychology, anthropology) with hard skills (engineering, infrastructure, incentives) from local and (inter)national sources could support the environmental governance framework required for adequately embedding environmental assessments. The typical combination of **hardware, software and orgware** skills that support creative innovation processes might offer the NCEA a competitive advantage (Transforum, 1998).

7. Operational product mix & sequence (supply of services)

The NCEA 'toolbox' includes a wide variety of instruments and methods that might be required to set into motion a local environmental assessment activity. In practice, the current mix and sequence of NCEA activities looks quite similar in different settings, and it might be more effective to tailor service demands to different stages of environmental governance.

It is worth encouraging the identification of a more strategic and responsive 'planning' of NCEA involvement at different stages and levels of SEA/ESIA development. This strategic planning is also important in order to support upstream and downstream **linkages and feedbacks** between key environmental stakeholders and thus contribute to better anchoring of SEA/ESIA into sustainable local governance structures.

8. Broad resource system focus

Almost all of the NCEA's programmes focus on natural resources (especially water management and far less on energy and biodiversity), whereas insights in socio-economic drivers (poverty, gender and age inequalities, constrained access to land, etc) and equity implications (poverty, nutrition, health) are less prominent or less visible.

Of utmost importance is that NCEA appraisals pay due attention to both environmental and socio-economic aspects of resource management and governance. Doing so could further contribute to NCEA credibility and relevance.

9. Combination of technical & procedural expertise (mixed team?)

The internal organisation of the NCEA portfolio could benefit from more frequent information-sharing and joint learning. The division of the country/region portfolio over single managers might inhibit a broader approach that addresses both environmental and governance problems in mutual interaction. Since this type of approach requires specific expertise, it is recommended to share country/region programmes between two managers, preferably ones with different professional backgrounds.

In addition, the M&E system needs to be more closely linked to internal learning and stocktaking activities. This would enable **double-loop learning** practices that focus on the relationships between key environmental interests and values underlying the design of policies and programmes. Current impact evaluation studies are scarce—only a draft report from Mozambique (NCEA, forthcoming) is available—and draw on outcome harvesting that gives few insights into causality and attribution.

10. Economic/financial dimensions (pricing, tariffs, co-funding)

Most of the NCEA's reporting considers environmental problems as a starting point. Beginning with an environmental problem statement tends to focus attention on public regulation and might limit interest in **market-based solutions**. However, for sustainable NRM systems, it is of critical importance to organise the financial mechanisms for raising stakeholder contributions for investment and maintenance activities.

There is increasing interest in finding **business models** capable of supporting sustainable resource management. This ranges from user fees to payments for environmental services systems. The NCEA could become more engaged in climate finance (IFC, GEF, GAFSP, etc.) and link its environmental assessment expertise with sustainable finance strategies (e.g. the Dutch Fund for Climate & Development/DFCD managed by FMO and IDH FarmFit fund).

11. Improve monitoring & feedback functions

Tracking success of the NCEA's programmes in the course of implementation in individual countries provides an important source of information for identifying success/failure aspects as well as identifying important points for either enabling the NCEA's engagement or presenting potential bottlenecks. In addition, understanding the satisfactory (or unsatisfactory) feedback coming from requesting (and possibly other participating) parties, often in a rather subjective manner, helps determine strengths and/or weaknesses of per-country and per-activity involvement.

Second loop learning goes a step further and uses M&E and feedback to improve NCEA engagement. Insights are therefore needed not only whether requesting parties show satisfaction with NCEA training but also in terms of comprehending why NCEA support was requested and how insights are embedded and anchored. Internal sharing of the results might also contribute to knowledge exchange and probably enhance effectiveness.

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Appendix 1 ToR

Mid-term review over het Environmental Assessment Programme 2017-2022 - Plan van aanpak

Achtergrond

De doorlooptijd van onze huidige subsidiebeschikking (kenmerk 4000000390) is op 1 januari 2020 voor de helft verstreken. Hoewel volgens de beschikking geen mid-term review vereist is, willen we toch graag een mogelijkheid creëren om lessen te leren over de eerste helft van ons programma en deze te integreren in onze plannen voor de tweede helft. Bovendien werd in de externe evaluatie over onze vorige subsidiebeschikking de aanbeveling gedaan om (meer) 'periodic independent evaluations' van ons werk te doen. Op die aanbeveling hebben we positief gereageerd.

Voornemen

Om deze redenen voeren we in de eerste helft van 2020 een mid-term review van ons programma uit. Een deel van de dataverzameling en -analyse hiervoor doen we zelf (waar we denken dat uitbesteding onnodig veel werk kost en weinig extra oplevert). Een deel – met name het verder uitdiepen van een paar cases en het formuleren van leerpunten – laten we uitvoeren door een onafhankelijke consultant.

Focus En Vragen

We stellen de volgende inhoudelijke focus voor, waarbij deel 1 voornamelijk intern wordt opgepakt en deel 2 wordt uitbesteed aan een consultant.

1. Enerzijds richt de review zich op doelbereik van het environmental assessment programme: 1.1. In hoeverre zijn de overkoepelende doelen van ons programma gerealiseerd? Hier refereren we aan de vier doelen die voor het programma als geheel zijn opgesteld door IGG & NCEA, met indicatoren op output- en outcome-niveau. Het gaat daarbij over o.a. het percentage aanvragers dat tevreden is met ons advies en het percentage organisaties waarbij de capaciteit versterkt is door onze activiteiten.

1.2. In hoeverre zijn de doelen per activiteit op outcome-niveau al gerealiseerd in relatie tot de uitputting van gebudgetteerde middelen voor die doelen? 1.2.1. In hoeverre is elk van de specifieke doelen ('envisioned outcomes'1) in ons 5-jarenvoorstel gerealiseerd?

1.2.2. Wat zijn de redenen voor het achterblijven van bepaalde doelen? Is bijvoorbeeld de context veranderd, of was ons werk niet effectief?

1.2.3. Welke andere doelen en activiteiten dan genoemd in het voorstel hebben we sinds 2017 ontplooid, en met welke redenen?

1.3. Op basis van bovenstaande punten: welke doelen moeten bijgesteld worden voor de tweede helft van de overeenkomst? Welke nieuwe doelen zouden we moeten opnemen?

2. Anderzijds heeft de review een leer-functie. Op basis van de informatie uit deel 1 worden de volgende vragen beantwoord: 2.1. Welke lessen kunnen we trekken uit ons werk in de eerste helft van de overeenkomst, en hoe kunnen we die integreren in de tweede helft?

2.2. Hoe hebben we opvolging gegeven aan eerder geleerde lessen, specifiek de negen 'lessons learnt' uit onze inhoudelijke eindrapportage 2012-2017 en de lessen uit de onafhankelijke evaluatie van de vorige beschikking?

2.3. Werken we in het juiste aantal landen en regio's? Met andere woorden: in hoeverre is onze huidige (geografische) focus optimaal voor het bereiken van onze doelen? Zouden we meer kunnen bereiken als we intensiever inzetten op minder landen, thema's of partners, of juist als we onze inzet spreiden over een groter aantal?

Bovenstaande vragen gelden in principe voor ons hele m.e.r.-programma. Bij een paar casussen willen we echter meer de diepte ingaan om de redenen/mechanismen achter het succes of falen van de activiteit in beeld te krijgen. Daarvoor hebben we twee activiteiten geselecteerd die op het eerste oog succesvol zijn (coaching van het SEA voor het Sourou-gebied in Mali en landenprogramma in Rwanda) en twee activiteiten die om onduidelijke redenen lijken te stagneren (ons advies over het ESIA voor de Fomi Dam in Guinée en landenprogramma in Kenia). Deze case studies zijn bedoeld om het leeronderdeel van deze mid-term review te verrijken.

Planning en taakverdeling

Wanneer?	Wat? (met verwijzing naar bovenstaande vragen/doelen)	Wie?	Input	Methode & opmerkingen
Februari- maart	'Envisioned outcomes' in ons voorstel (www.ncea.nl) reviewen <i>Resultaat: benodigde data voor antwoord op vraag 1.2.1</i>	Elke technisch secretaris (TS) voor zijn/haar landen/ componenten	0,5 dag per TS (inclusief Rob en KLP); 6 dagen totaal	Analyse op basis van eigen projectmonitoring
Maart- april	Inventariseren van redenen voor achterblijven van gestelde doelen, en voor evt nieuw gestelde doelen/activiteiten <i>Resultaat: benodigde data voor antwoord op vragen 1.2.2 en 1.2.3</i>	M&E-manager	8 dagen	Interviews met TSen
	Inventariseren van doelbereik op overkoepelende doelen van ons voorstel qua output en outcome <i>Resultaat: benodigde data voor antwoord op vraag 1.1</i>			Analyse op basis van projectmonitoring, parallel aan opstellen DGIS-jaarverslag
	Inventariseren van benodigde bijstelling van doelen <i>Resultaat: benodigde data voor antwoord op vraag 1.3</i>			Interviews met TSen
April/mei	Analyse en rapportage over bovenstaande <i>Resultaat: conceptrapport over doelbereik (deel 1)</i>	M&E-manager	2 dagen	
Mei/juni	Inlezen (5-jarenvoorstel NCEA, conceptrapport over doelbereik) Desk review van case studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mali – coaching van Sourou SEA • Rwanda – landenprogramma • Guinée – advies over ESIA voor Fomi-dam • Kenia – landenprogramma <i>Resultaat: case-beschrijvingen</i>	Consultant	12 dagen	Desk review op basis van stukken van NCEA en (waar nodig/mogelijk) eigen dataverzameling op afstand
Juni	Teamworkshop(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentatie van bevindingen case studies • Discussie over geografische focus • Inventarisatie van geleerde lessen en follow-up-acties <i>Resultaat: benodigde data voor antwoord op vragen 2.1, 2.2 en 2.3</i>	Hele team	0,5 dag per TS (inclusief Rob en KLP); 6 dagen totaal	
	Analyse en rapportage over geleerde lessen (deel 2) <i>Resultaat: eindrapport mid-term review (deel 1 en deel 2)</i>	Consultant (facilitatie + presentatie)	2 dagen	
		Consultant	2 dagen	
Totale input consultant(s)			16 dagen	

Appendix 2 Mid-term review of course cases

15 Mali

15.1 Outcome reported 2017-2019

15.1.1 Annual report 2017



Coaching

SEA for the Irrigation Plan of the Office du Niger

Input: €86 (M&E)

Output: Coaching of this SEA (2014–2016)

Outcome: In 2017, the government unofficially announced that the planned irrigation scheme will no longer be implemented. Partly this is due to the fact that the government has become aware that irrigation at this scale is not sustainable. The irrigation officer at the Office du Niger reports that the NCEA's advice has played a role in making the government aware of this.

Following this SEA, the government has also increased its investment in the environmental assessment authority of the Office du Niger. Moreover, the government indicated that SEA as an instrument to influence planning has gained importance on the agenda of the environmental assessment agency.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- The requesting party was satisfied;
- The advice has been adopted and led to concrete action.
- Improved decision making:
 - Recommendations from the SEA have now been included in the decision making process.
- Improved awareness, commitment and funding:
 - High level decision makers more actively participate in SEA processes or events.

Coaching

SEA for the Land Use Plan of the Sourou area

Input: €22,517

Output: Coaching activities to support this SEA. Specifically: workshop for 24 participants from government, private sector and NGOs to design a roadmap for the SEA and land use plan (October 2017)

Outcome: All participants considered the workshop in October useful or very useful for their work on environmental assessment. More broadly, our coaching has helped to set up a cooperation between influential actors with a role in this planning process. These actors are now more aware of the added value of a transparent and participative planning process. It is likely that the steering group and working group – which now have a formal mandate – will continue to act for a longer period, also after the SEA has been finalised.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- The requesting party was satisfied.
- Improved awareness, commitment and funding:
 - High-level decision makers more actively participate in SEA processes or events.
- Improved capacity to commit and act (C1):
 - The organisation's mandate is more clearly defined in legal texts.
- Improved capacity to relate to external stakeholders (C3):
 - The organisation coordinates/cooperates more with relevant stakeholders.
- Improved capacity of individual SEA professionals to perform their tasks:
 - Individual SEA professionals have more relevant knowledge/expertise.

Reconnaissance

Input: €13,580

Output: Participation in a trade mission and in the Invest in Mali Forum (December 2017)

Outcome: Through engagement with private sector parties and investors in Mali, we acquired valuable new contacts, as well as better understanding of the perspective and context of the private sector in this country. This also gave us the opportunity to increase awareness of our helpdesk on ESIA/SEA, in which some attendants showed great interest.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Input: €257

15.1.2 Annual report 2018

Coaching

SEA for the Land Use Plan of the Sourou area

Input: €111,023

Output: Various coaching outputs. Specifically: training for parties with a responsibility in the SEA process (April 2018), advice on the process for this SEA (May 2018), coaching visit (July 2018), SEA introduction training for the 'comité inter-ministeriel' for the SEA (September 2018), independent advice with a working group for scoping for this SEA (November 2018), and mission to present this advice (December 2018).

Outcome: Our advice recommended to make the scoping decision official and published, so that it can serve as a reference for later review of the SEA itself; to institutionalise the organisation responsible for the SEA and the plan, so that they will continue to exist during implementation of the plan; to better substantiate the decision to realise large-scale irrigation; and to further explore alternative options based on rain-dependent agriculture. The requesting party appreciated our advice. Following our advice, a website (<http://souroumall.org>) has been launched by the steering group for the SEA, on which the scoping report is published. The website also gives access to all underlying data for the scoping report, which greatly increases transparency of this SEA and planning process. Moreover, an international consultant involved in the SEA process repeatedly indicated that the main breakthroughs in this process depended on the advice and coaching by the NCEA.

Outcome measured on indicators (in addition to what was mentioned in Annual report 2017):

- Satisfactory support:
 - The requesting party was satisfied;
 - The advice has been adopted and led to concrete action.
- Improved SEA report and process:
 - The assessment and/or comparison of alternatives is now more complete;
 - The SEA is now better integrated in the process of plan design.

Reconnaissance

Input: €1,660

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Input: €6,303



15.1.3 Annual report 2019

In Mali, we have been involved for several years now in the SEA and land use plan for the Sourou. This process was originally planned to end in 2018, then prolonged to mid-2019 (based on which we included a small budget in our annual plan 2019), and then finally prolonged to the end of 2019. Since the process has taken longer than expected, we have been involved for a longer time and our expenditures on this coaching process have increased. Our involvement has however proven effective: the 'Sourou approach' is broadly considered a successful example of decentralised planning, and together with DGIS we are currently looking for cases where the same approach can be applied. Because this approach was so unique, we have extensively evaluated it - together with our partners - to make sure that lessons learnt will be used in the future. We thus contribute to the sustainability and durability of our results in this case, but also in similar processes to come.

Our involvement in the Sourou process has also raised an interest among our partners in setting up a multi-annual cooperation programme. To that end we have signed an Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in November 2019, and prepared for an ESY-mapping (undertaken in January 2020) to create a joint understanding of the aspects of Mali's ESIA system that need to be strengthened.

 see Mali country page



Coaching

SEA for the Land Use Plan of the Sourou region (PDIDS)

(continued)

Outcome measured on indicators (other than reported in Annual reports 2017 and 2018)

- Improved SEA report and process:
 - Stakeholder participation and transparency of the process have improved.
- Improved decision-making:
 - Recommendations from the SEA have now been included in the decision-making process;
 - SEA has increased support for the plan in the decision-making process (see M2 form).
- Improved plan:
 - The plan is more environmentally friendly and/or socially acceptable (e.g. provisions for biodiversity, ecosystem services, access to water and sanitation, etc.)
 - Better mitigation measures have now been included in the EMP/implementation plan (plan is made adaptive for changing circumstances)
 - Stakeholder concerns are now better incorporated in the plan.
- Improved capacity to relate to external stakeholders (C3):
 - The organisation more actively participates in exchange platforms/networks/coalitions;
 - The organisation is more willing to share information (e.g. via website souroumali.org).
- Improved capacity to maintain coherence (C5):
 - The organisation has now developed a vision/strategy/multi-annual plan;
 - The organisation has now made tools/guidance available to support staff tasks.
- Improved capacity of individual SEA professionals:
 - Individual SEA professionals feel more confident to perform their tasks (e.g. to make their case for donors and ministries).

Coaching

SEA for the Land Use Plan of the Sourou region (PDIDS)

Budget: €20,289

Expenditures: €68,412

Pipeline budget: €10,193

Output: Various coaching outputs. Specifically:

- Three-day workshop with competent authority on review of the SEA (March)
- Coaching mission (May)
- Workshop with ca. 50 stakeholders to evaluate the process (September)
- Contributions to (draft) policy brief by Clingendael on the added value of SEA for conflict prevention in the Sahel (October)
- Workshop with the donor community (16 participants) to evaluate the process (November)
- Article on the Sourou approach for Water Governance (November)
- Internal presentation and discussions at NCEA on the Sourou approach (December)

Outcome: The Sourou case is broadly considered to be a successful example of decentralised planning, and the first example of effective decentralisation in Mali. The setup of the SEA has been instrumental in this success. The contribution of the NCEA was crucial, as was indicated by multiple stakeholders. First of all, no plan would have been made if it were not for the SEA being undertaken; and no SEA would have been undertaken if we had not been involved. More specifically, our involvement has led to among others better consideration of transboundary issues influencing water availability, of adaptive planning to accommodate for changing conditions, and to a better organisational setup for implementation of the plan. The evaluation meeting with donors has also proven valuable: not only are donors made aware of the benefits of integrating SEA and land use planning, but they were also impressed by the impact of the NCEA's coaching advice on the inclusive governance capacity of local authorities. This has built a solid basis for development of a country programme and MoU (see also under Reconnaissance).

(continued on next page)

Reconnaissance

Budget: €5,096

Expenditures: €19,053

Output:

- Ongoing reconnaissance for new activities
- Participation in NWP Mali platform (July)
- Workshop with a delegation from Mali (October)

Outcome: Reconnaissance has revealed the interest in a cooperation programme, and has helped to mobilise stakeholders and donors for this programme. There are also various new opportunities which we are currently exploring further, such as an SEA in the cotton sector and a possible project with VNCL.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Budget: €2,039

Expenditures: €12,582

Output:

- Ongoing planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Development of country programme
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding for the country programme (November)

Capacity development

Organisational capacity

Budget: €0

Expenditures: €10,358

Pipeline budget: €39,175

Output: Preparations including Terms of Reference for ESY-mapping workshop (undertaken in January 2020)

13 Kenya

13.1 Outcome reported 2017-2019

13.1.1 Annual report 2017

Capacity development Organisational capacity

Input: €1,026

Output: Follow-up contact and monitoring for a training on SEA for 7 members of the Environmental Tribunal of Kenya (given in January 2017)

Outcome: This training was requested because of the growing number of SEA-related court appeals that the Tribunal was facing. Participants indicated that the training was very helpful, and that the higher appeal bodies in Kenya could benefit from the same training.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- The requesting party was satisfied.
- Improved capacity to deliver (C2).
- The organisation's expertise is more fit to perform its tasks.



Independent advice SEA for Lake Turkana project

Input: €1,069

Output: Communications regarding preparation of this SEA, including advice on a tender document for SEA consultants (July 2017)

Outcome: The NCEA's comments on the tender document have all been followed up. Since the SEA itself has not yet started, further outcome cannot yet be reported.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- The requesting party was satisfied;
- The advice has been adopted and led to concrete action.

Reconnaissance

Input: €2,736

Output: Preparations for a visit in March 2018, intended to restart our capacity development activities in the country.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Input: €171

13.1.2 Annual report 2018

Capacity development: system functions Regulatory framework

Input: €828

Output: Preparatory meeting on guidelines for county planning, with a focus on Kisumu county

Outcome: The SEA for Kisumu did not (yet) start because the supporting governor was replaced. The guidelines have therefore not yet been prepared.

Independent advice SEA for Lake Turkana project

Input: €117

Output: Ongoing communications regarding the planned SEA for this transboundary project

Outcome: Despite repeated indications from our counterparts that this SEA is about to take off, this has not yet happened in 2018. We have maintained contact with our counterparts, to make sure that we can offer our contributions for this SEA for a highly controversial plan as soon as the process starts.

Capacity development: system functions Professional exchange

Input: €8,584

Output: Training of 30 SEA trainees at a National SEA seminar (joint effort with the Swedish supported SEA international training programme)

Outcome: The SEA trainees have become SEA trainers and are ready to provide training for SEA awareness raising. Together they also form a platform for exchange of SEA knowledge.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Improved professional exchange on SEA:
- A professional exchange platform on SEA has been put in place.

Reconnaissance

Input: €20,384

Output: Two reconnaissance missions (February and March 2018)

Outcome: Despite clear signals that the Kenyan environmental authority (NEMA) was interested in a capacity development programme, our repeated attempts for cooperation have not yet resulted in concrete activities in 2018.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Input: €110

13.1.3 Annual report 2019

The NCEA has a long track record in Kenya, with as one of the highlights our involvement in the award-winning Tana Delta SEA and land use plan. For 2019, we planned to build on this experience through capacity development activities for the SEA core team for delta planning. This would help to secure lessons learnt, and to further develop good-quality SEA practice.

In 2019 however, no concrete request has been made by our partners in Kenya. The budget planned for organisational capacity has therefore not been used. On the other hand, we have been in contact extensively with our partners involved in preparations for the Lake Turkana SEA, a high-profile political planning process involving Kenya and Ethiopia which can be of great importance to regional stability. This SEA had been planned to start several years ago, but is repeatedly being delayed due to its political sensitivity. In 2019 it appeared to finally take off, but after a baseline study being drafted by IWMI the process was again put on hold due to political issues in Ethiopia.

Reconnaissance

Budget: €2,039

Expenditures: €8,869

Output:

- Contact with partners, mostly for the Lake Turkana SEA

Capacity development

Organisational capacity

Budget: €23,154

Expenditures: €0

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Budget: €2,038

Expenditures: €833

9 Guinea

9.1 Outcome reported 2017-2019

9.1.1 Annual report 2017

No activities/ no reporting for Guinea in 2017

9.1.2 Annual report 2018

NB: In July 2018, our country programme in Guinea started. Below are listed only the activities that took place under that country programme – i.e. in the *second half* of 2018. Activities that took place in the first half of the year are listed under 'Reservation: Guinea'.

Independent advice

ESIA for the Fomi Dam project

Input: €70,078

Output: Scoping advice on the ESIA (Dec 2018)

Outcome: Both the DG for the Fomi project and the Environmental DG are satisfied with our advice. The advice has led to an official mandate for the Niger Basin Authority in the ESIA process, which will increase the (regional) institutional basis for this process. More outcome is expected later, when the actual ESIA is finalised.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Satisfactory advice:
 - The requesting party was satisfied;
 - The advice has been adopted and led to concrete action (follow-up of a main recommendation, improvement of the coordination between Guinea and the Nile Basin authority in the following steps of the ESIA process).

Reconnaissance

Input: €29,077

Output: Reconnaissance mission including mapping of the ESIA system (January 2018); additional reconnaissance mission (August 2018); drafting of country programme 2018-2022

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Input: €1,146

9.1.3 Annual report 2019

Our strategy in Guinea is based on four pillars.

Firstly, Guinea plays a significant role when it concerns availability of natural resources, and specifically water, to the Sahel region. For countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria, sustainable management of Guinea's resources is crucial. We aim to support ESIA/SEA processes through which we can help secure the availability of such resources in the long term. An example is the Fomi Dam ESIA, on which we have advised earlier and for which we continue to offer our support.

Secondly, Guinea's regulatory framework for ESIA is being updated, and we are available for support where necessary. In 2019, the new Environmental Code has been approved, paying ample attention to ESIA and SEA. The drafting of the new Environmental Code has been done by UNDP, after the NCEA had connected UNDP to the Guinean authorities. A more active role for the NCEA is expected in the next phase, when the ESIA and SEA statute will be revised.

Thirdly, we aim to increase the capacity of relevant organisations for implementing ESIA processes. A training on ESIA review for the environmental assessment authority was planned for 2019, but priorities changed at the authority due to contextual circumstances. Instead, we did an ESY-mapping workshop (under Reconnaissance) in order to create joint insights in which aspects of the system need to be strengthened, and to explore opportunities for specific activities under our cooperation programme. Also under this pillar, we aimed to cooperate with the organisation of ESIA professionals (REGUISE) to possibly develop an ESIA platform. We have been in contact but for political reasons this activity has not yet taken place.

Fourth and last, we aim to raise awareness on SEA, since SEA experience is very limited in Guinea but can greatly help strategic planning processes. To this end, we organised an SEA awareness raising workshop and explored the opportunity to cooperate with UNDP in supporting the SEA for Bafing region. For further details, see below under Awareness, commitment & funding.

 see Guinea country page

Reconnaissance

Budget: €10,095

Expenditures: €40,794

Output:

- ESY-mapping workshop
- Reconnaissance for various activities and initial contacts with REGUISE

Outcome: The ESY-mapping created joint insight in the system's strengths and weaknesses. This is a basis for further activities within the country programme.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Budget: €2,039

Expenditures: €4,118

Independent advice

ESIA for the Fomi Dam project

Budget: €45,289

Expenditures: €10,625

Output: Follow-up of our earlier advice on ToR for this ESIA (December 2018)

Outcome: Our advice has led to an important discussion among the authorities in Guinea regarding the roles and responsibilities between multiple ministries as well as the regional Niger Basin Authority. These discussions have not yet been concluded, and their influence on the ESIA process are yet unknown.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Satisfactory advice:
 - The requesting party was satisfied;
 - The advice has been adopted and led to concrete action (discussions on roles and responsibilities).

Capacity development

Organisational capacity

Budget: €15,097

Expenditures: €536

Output: Exploration of concrete activities for capacity development, leading to the choice to first undertake an ESY-mapping (see Reconnaissance)

Capacity development: system functions

Awareness, commitment & funding

Budget: €22,135

Expenditures: €42,617

Output:

- SEA awareness raising workshop with a focus on coastal zones, for 40 staff from 9 ministries, NGOs and knowledge institutes (September)
- Preparations for support to the SEA for the Bafing region (with UNDP), planned for 2020

Outcome: The workshop created awareness on the added value of SEA, and especially on the benefits of interministerial cooperation for coastal development planning. It also resulted in concrete ideas for SEA implementation.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Satisfactory support:
 - The requesting party was satisfied;
 - The input has been adopted and led to concrete action (plan to undertake an SEA for Bafing region)

Capacity development: system functions

Professional exchange

Budget: €3,058

Expenditures: €0

7 Ethiopia

7.1 Outcome reported 2017-2019

7.1.1 Annual report 2017

Capacity development

Organisational capacity

Input: €34,917

Output: Training on scoping for ESIA, for the Amhara regional government (July 2017); Needs assessment for and development of three-year cooperation programme

Outcome: The manager of the Environmental Bureau reported important outcome of the training. Originally, the decision to grant an environmental permit for a project was based solely on the scoping results – without an actual ESIA carried out in which environmental effects were studied and mitigation planned. After the training, it has been decided that decision making on a permit will now be done after the ESIA. As a result, decision makers will much better be able to take social and environmental considerations into account in their decision.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- The requesting party was satisfied.
- Improved capacity to deliver (C2):
 - The organisation's expertise is more fit to perform its tasks.



Capacity development: system functions

Regulatory framework

Input: €86

Output: Communication on possible input in SEA guidance & regulations

Reconnaissance

Input: €605

Output: Reconnaissance and exploration of opportunities for cooperation on SEA for regional agricultural development

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Input: €43

7.1.2 Annual report 2018

Capacity development

Organisational capacity

Input: €56,814

Output: MoU for cooperation programme drafted and signed (February 2018); concrete programme activities developed; workshop on ESIA review for 28 participants (July 2018); follow-up visit (November 2018)

Outcome: The ESIA review workshop was highly appreciated: the majority of participants reported that the workshop helped them to increase their level of knowledge and skills. Specifically the presented methods and tools for review were considered very useful. Further outcome will be reported later in the programme.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Satisfactory support:
 - The requesting party was satisfied.

Independent advice

ESIA for Günsela Hortihub project

Input: €8,339

Output: Informal advice to RVO regarding the ESIA (December 2018)

Outcome: RVO was satisfied with our advice, and the (Dutch) investors in the project appreciated the information that we provided regarding the ESIA procedure. Our input on ESIA components in contracts for the project has been used.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Satisfactory advice:
 - The requesting party was satisfied;
 - The advice has been adopted and led to concrete action.

Capacity development: system functions

Regulatory framework

Input: €143

Output: Follow-up and monitoring of our earlier support for integration of SEA into a new water policy

Outcome: The new version of the water policy is not yet available, so we cannot yet assess the extent to which our input has been used.

Reconnaissance

Input: €12,185

Output: Participation in knowledge event on water & landscapes; reconnaissance mission (April 2018) and mission with IGG and NWP (December 2018)

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Input: €1,660

7.1.3 Annual report 2019

In Ethiopia, we have been working on several aspects of the ESIA system in the past years, including in 2019.

Firstly, we are working closely with authorities in Amhara region to increase the capacity for ESIA. We had only planned two concrete activities for 2019 (two training activities for staff of the Amhara Environment Bureau), but in addition to this three other opportunities for capacity building came up. See below under Organisational capacity for more details.

Secondly, we continue to be involved in the five ESIA's for the Gunsila horticulture project. We budgeted for an independent advice in 2019, but when this advice was requested the timeline was too narrow to allow for good-quality advice and meaningful follow-up by the authorities. Instead, we gave a training on application of the IFC performance standards; this knowledge will help the environmental officials to better understand and oversee the ESIA processes.

Thirdly, the Ministry of Water aims to integrate SEA in its new Water Policy and had announced a request for the NCEA's input therein. We have however not received the request nor the draft policy, and therefore the reserved budget for Regulatory framework has not been used.

Fourthly, we are working on SEA awareness, mainly focusing on Amhara region where we already have a strong network of partners through our work on ESIA. In 2019, we organised an SEA seminar with a focus on urban development, together with Debre Berhan University. The university indicated to be interested in follow-up activities.

Capacity development: system functions

Awareness, commitment & funding

Budget: €0 Expenditures: €8,503
Pipeline budget: €11,154

Output: SEA seminar focused on urban development (June)

Outcome: The seminar resulted in consensus on the necessity to apply SEA in Amhara region, which indicates that awareness on the benefits of SEA has been increased. Participants indicated to now have a good first insight in what SEA is, but not yet sufficient to be able to manage SEA processes themselves. For this reason a concrete proposal for an SEA pilot has been developed. Debre Berhan University (which co-organised the seminar) indicated to be interested in follow-up.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Improved awareness, commitment and funding.
- High-level decision-makers more actively participate in SEA processes or events.

Capacity development Organisational capacity

Budget: €32,386 Expenditures: €79,861

Output:

- Training on ESIA scoping and review for 25 environmental officers of Amhara region (March)
- Training on IFC performance standards and ESIA for 20 environmental officers of Amhara region (October)
- Preparations for a study visit (which was cancelled due to visa problems of the Ethiopian delegation)
- Comments on ESIA guidelines (preparation for Regulatory framework activities in 2020)

Outcome: The workshop in March was highly appreciated and helped to build the capacity of environmental officers: 80% and 68% of participants feel that they now have sufficient knowledge/skill on respectively ESIA scoping and review. The training in October was also received positively. Not only did the training raise the awareness of participants on ESIA, the training report also included a gap analysis outlining omissions in the Gunsila ESIA's. This analysis has been given to the project proponents with the instruction to improve the ESIA's.

Outcome measured on indicators:

- Satisfactory support:
 - The requesting party was satisfied (both training activities);
 - The input has been adopted and led to concrete action (IFC PS training).
- Improved capacity to deliver (C2):
 - The organisation's expertise is more fit to perform its tasks.

Independent advice ESIA for Gunsela Hortihub project

Budget: €45,385 Expenditures: €4,051

Output: Communication on the ESIA's (leading to request for IFC PS training, see Organisational capacity)

Reconnaissance

Budget: €7,096 Expenditures: €3,915

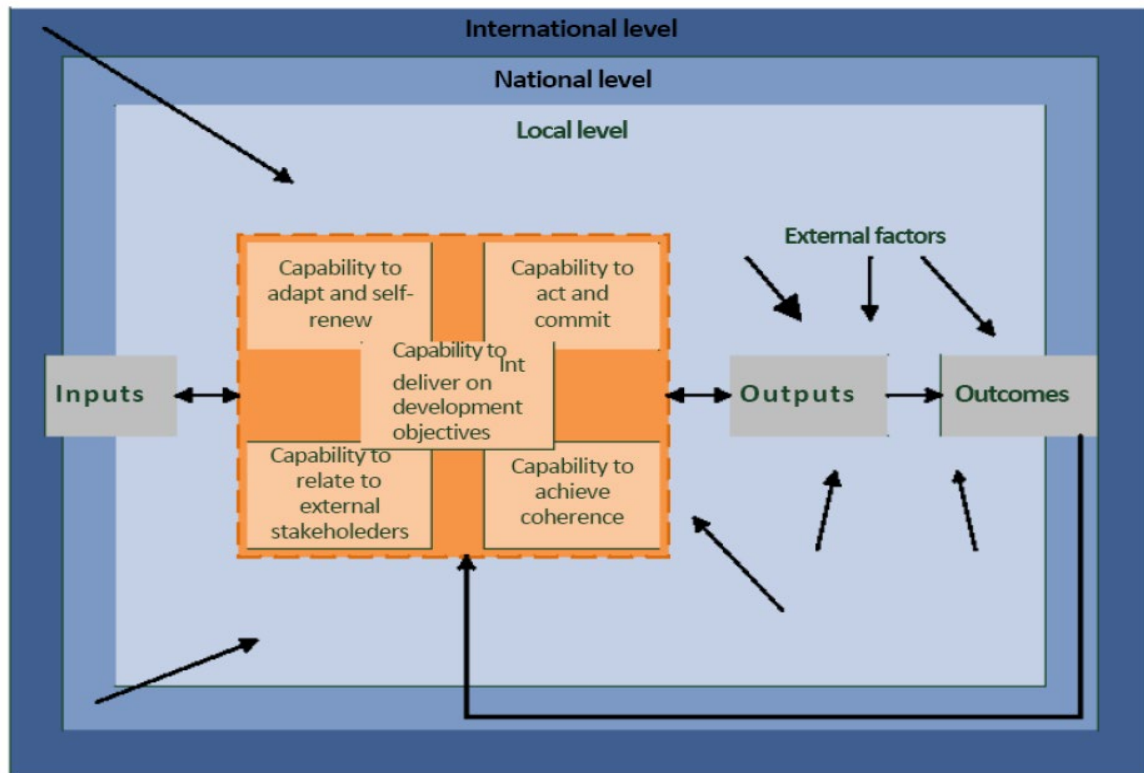
Output: Visit of Ethiopian delegation (January)

Outcome: The visit created enthusiasm for SEA for spatial/urban planning, and led to the organisation of an SEA seminar (see Awareness & commitment).

Planning, monitoring and evaluation

Budget: €10,193 Expenditures: €4,219

Appendix 3 5C Framework



Capability to act and commit

This capacity is about the ability to work properly: to plan, take decisions and act on these decisions collectively. For this capacity to be successful, an organisation needs, among other things, the following:

- Structures that can function efficiently with available resources
- Ability to properly mobilise financial, institutional and human resources
- Committed, stable, inspiring and action-oriented leadership (and the acceptance of leadership's integrity by staff)
- Executive structures with a legal basis to make binding commitments
- Effective monitoring of the work plan

Capability to relate to external stakeholders

This capability is about building and maintaining networks with external actors. Relevant factors in this capability concern but are not limited to the following:

- Relational competencies to build and maintain networks with domestic actors
- The ability to build and maintain relationships within its own setup/ structures
- The ability to build and maintain relationships with international organisations
- Political legitimacy, social credibility and reputation
- Integer leadership and staff
- Operational credibility /reliability
- Participation in coalitions
- Adequate alliances with external stakeholders

Capability to achieve coherence

A main factor here is the strength of an organisations' identity, self-awareness and discipline which includes but is not limited to the following:

- Clear and coherent mandate, vision and strategy, which is known by staff and used by its management to guide its decision-making process
- Well-defined internal organisational principles on mandates, operations and human resources management
- A PM&E system geared to monitoring fulfilment of operational principles
- A leadership committed to achieving coherence between values, principles and operations
- An ability to balance stability and change
- A consistent quality, style and reliability of management

Capability to adapt and self-renew

The ability of an organisation to learn internally and to adjust to shifting contexts and relevant trends is mostly influenced by the following factors:

- Internal openness to learning (including acknowledgement of mistakes)
- Active pursuit of internal (organisational) learning on performance and strategy
- Confidence to change: leaving room for diversity, flexibility and creativity
- Ability to analyse current political trends, awareness of external market development and understand the consequences for the organisation
- Use of opportunities and incentives

Capability to deliver on development objectives

This core capability concerns the organisations' skill to ensure that the organisation is producing what it is established to do. To deliver on development objectives it is important, among others, to have access to the following:

- Current and future financial resource base and the ability to generate own financial resources (members, services/ products, or subsidies)
- (External) knowledge and information sources
- Human resources
- Adequate facilities, equipment and premises
- Agreed-upon standards and performance measures = results

Appendix 4 Portfolio scan table

Table 3 visually complements our findings of the NCEA's portfolio scan. We have developed a (subjective) heatmap (see table 3) on progress reached in each of the 5C capacity development areas. The progress information in the NCEA's internal mid-term review was used for the visual assessment. Two important remarks have to be considered. First, there is no scientifically sound methodology used for the table as it relies on subjective (non-verifiable and non-quantitative) information provided by the NCEA; the marked progress is purely based on subjective evaluation of the authors. Second, the portfolio scan should serve as an overview and a visual indication of the main targeted capacities by the NCEA and should thus be interpreted within its limitations.

Table 3 NCEA Portfolio Scan

Country	Commit & Act	Relate & Attract	Renew & Adapt	Achieve Coherence	Deliver results
Bangladesh					
Benin					
Burundi					
Egypt					
Ethiopia			?		
Ghana			?		
Guinea					
Indonesia					
Iraq*					
Jordan					
Kenya					
Lebanon*					
Mali					
Mozambique			?		
Myanmar					
Niger			?		
Palstinian Territories*					
Philippines	Only independent advice planned				
Rwanda			?	?	
Senegal			?		
Tunisia*					
Uganda			?		
Central Africa					
West Africa			?	?	?
Thematic Components					
Private Sector Development					
Sustainable Finance					
Knowledge & Learning: Organisational capacity					
Knowledge & Learning: Products & Services					
Knowledge & Learning: Communication & Networks					

Note: *travel restrictions/conflict area

Guidelines for our assessment were as follows. We assessed the capacity development in each country per intervention (i.e. what capacity has the respective activity targeted). We were guided by either explicit statements of progress (explicitly named improvement of a specific capacity or indication of

progress/achievement within a specific area of intervention, through which specific capacities were addressed). The colour coding follows a pattern: green identifies capacities achieved, orange implies capacity in development (whether mild or more significant) and red fields show no recorded progress. On several occasions, no evidence was presented to be able to make a conclusion. In such cases, the corresponding field contains a question mark.

The present table is a simplification of capacity-building activities in each of the programmes. Another factor not entirely captured is the different stages in which the country programmes found themselves during the time of the evaluation. While some programmes present a new or renewed programme in a kind of an exploratory phase (Ethiopia), several other country programmes are a continuation of previous collaboration (the Philippines), and still other programmes are in the 'phasing-out' stage (Indonesia). The table takes into account only results presented in the internal mid-term review and thus does not reflect on achievements from the previous five-year engagement. It registers, however, still higher achievements compared to the 0/1 indicators recorded in the current NCEA's M&E system.

Appendix 5 Nine lessons learnt from 2012-2017 evaluation & current appreciation

Lessons learnt	Current Appreciation
The right partner choice is crucial for the effectiveness of country programmes.	Still valid. A suggestion is to focus more on multiple stakeholders and their governance networks.
Effectiveness strongly depends on context ; multi-annual programmes may decrease context dependency.	Increasingly relevant, even more so with decentralising governance in several countries and complex (and sometimes) corruptive political regimes.
A broader mandate increases the effectiveness and productivity of our work.	Needs further attention. A unique NCEA mandate could be defined more in terms of environmental governance.
Providing budget to partners increases our options but weakens our position and effectiveness.	Strange recommendation. A mixed funding from local and external sources could reinforce effectiveness.
Requests for DSU support have been relatively small in focus, primarily on climate change.	Still the case, even while climate funding is growing fast.
We have to invest more in learning and in impact measurement .	Little follow-up. M&E systems are in place but little used for learning. Impact measurement is too limited.
Additional to independent advice, coaching of individual ESIA's and SEAs is an important new support we offer to our partners.	Well taken. Could be embedded in a wider portfolio of NCEA services during different SEA stages.
Regional capacity-development programmes require 1) a strong regional partner network with 2) access to the necessary budget.	Not studied. River basin management requires multi-country involvement. Cross-country learning could be potentialised.
We need to invest more in reconnaissance to identify the unmet demand for NCEA support.	Prime relevance. Key attention might be given to demand articulation.

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