

Terms of Reference Reflection PPPs in FDOV and SDGP

Introduction

The recent Food Systems Summit highlighted the need for multi-actor approaches and systemic change to realize SDG 2 and related goals. There is a growing interest in Food System thinking and the idea that a wider array of stakeholders are needed to sustainably solve food security and related issues. Therefore working in PPPs is expected to remain relevant in delivering policy objectives in different fields. Since 2012 the FDOV and since 2018 the follow-up program SDGP aim to support PPPs contributing to sustainable solutions for issues related to food security and entrepreneurship in developing countries. Target groups are specified as poor households, small-scale farmers or fishers, vulnerable groups, local SMEs and local civil servants. With 10 year of experience it is important to draw lessons learned, which has been done through project level evaluations, external impact assessments and internal reviews focusing on results, in relation to the PPP approach. Although several 'evaluative' activities have been executed on the PPP approach, a more elaborated analysis is required to shed light on the practical experiences, the SWOT and the potential of the approach, while taking into account contributing to policy objectives, as well as long(er) term effects/systemic change.

Background FDOV and SDGP – PPP rationale and requirement

FDOV (Fonds Duurzaam Ondernemen en Voedselzekerheid) and SDGP (SDG Partnershipfacility) are Public Private Partnership instruments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both instruments are part of the agenda for aid, trade, and investment, aiming to contribute to SDG 2 (ending hunger), SDG 8 (providing decent jobs and economic growth), and SDG 17 (partnerships for goals). Moreover, there is also a specific focus in SDGP on three major cross-cutting themes: gender, circular economy, and climate, relating to SDG 5, SDG 12 and SDG 13.

FDOV was launched in 2012 and had two calls in 2012 and 2014. SDGP was launched in 2018 and had two calls in 2018 and 2019. The majority of the FDOV projects are in its final stage while the SDGP projects are starting their implementation. FDOV and SDGP have a similar set up although several modifications and improvements were incorporated into SDGP. The central pillar of both programs is the PPP approach. Problems relating to sustainable enterprise and food security are complex and often involve wide-ranging interests. As a result solutions cannot usually be developed or funded by a single party. FDOV and SDGP encourage the formation of public-private partnerships made up of public bodies, businesses, NGOs and knowledge institutions. By combining their individual strengths they can develop sustainable solutions to these problems.

Dutch PPPs are expected to permit knowledge, expertise, and financing to be pooled. The private sector's efficient and market-oriented approach is coupled with civil society organizations' knowledge of local circumstances. The research institutions contribute expertise and the government is essential for their role in creating an enabling environment and potential sector / systemic change. In fragile states or in countries where the institutional conditions for economic development are still weak, partnerships between public and private parties are a particularly suitable instrument for strengthening the business climate.

This model has become known as the "Dutch diamond". In Dutch development cooperation, a PPP is broadly defined as "a form of cooperation between government and business (in many cases also involving NGOs, trade unions, and/or knowledge institutes) in which they agree to work together to reach a common goal or carry out a specific task, jointly assuming the risks and responsibilities and sharing their resources and competencies".

This implies working with consortia consisting of at least one Dutch partner, one partner from the target country, one company, one NGO or knowledge institution, and one public partner. Together, these partners develop a collaborative initiative that aims to contribute to sectoral change. Such PPPs should help create an 'enabling environment', with results that can be scaled up and achieve sector-wide impact.

The beneficiaries of this grant programme are SMEs, farmers and fishers, and where possible the local government. Special attention is devoted to strengthening entrepreneurship by and for young people, including agricultural and horticultural entrepreneurs. Vulnerable groups such as the very poorest, women and girls of, for example ethnic minorities are also part of the target group. All activities supported by FDOV and SDGP should contribute to improving the living standards of one or more subgroups within the target group.

Purpose and questions of the assignment

The purpose of the assignment is to reflect on the functioning of PPPs, document and validate experiences and lessons learned about the modalities of operation, roles of the different partners, and the internal as well as external collaboration. Practical underlying questions are, why are we working in PPP's, what are the assumptions of what a PPP will accomplish, how is the contribution to a business case, sustainability, scalability and systemic change of a project and how is it practically shaped by projects on the ground. All of this should be viewed in light of the overall policy goal of FDOV/SDGP to also consider the effectiveness of partnerships in relation to their functioning. In general terms the contribution to the policy objectives will be looked at, but not at project level.

This assignment is not meant to be an evaluation of project results (what project did well and what project did not perform), and is not geared towards accountability of public funding. The focus is on *general learning opportunities* that can feed into policy dialogues as well considered for adoption by existing SDGP PPPs/wider sector. The idea behind the assignment is that RVO aims to share its insights and lessons learned, based on practical experiences in its FDOV and SDGP portfolio.

Resuming the presented information above the **main question** can be formulated as: *"What are the practical experiences of working in PPP's so far and what can be said on the value of the PPP vehicle for the objectives of our instrument?"*

Sub questions are (but are not limited to):

1. Mapping and inventory of FDOV and SDGP PPP's, specifying type of public actor (national, regional or local government representative, alternative actor filling in the role of a public partner), type of private partners (multinational, national company, SME or farmer cooperation), NGO's and knowledge institutes?
2. What role do the different partners have? How do they cooperate, what relation and interdependencies can you see? Are the clear differences in intentions and interest or are they compatible (commercial objectives vs inclusiveness?) Are there success stories of well-functioning partnerships and what was the reason?
3. Specifically on the public partner, what can be said on the role and participation of a public partner? When did it really strengthen the project? And vice versa, when did a project support or strengthen the public partner? Or when is the project (possibly) counter effective for a public partner? What can be concluded about the role of the public partner in the context of fragile states? If and how does the public partner contribute to a more enabling environment and systemic change?
4. Based on the roles and practical experiences of the partners, what can be said more generally on what worked well? What roles generated clear added value to reach the project goals and why? Where is possible room for improvement? (Is there a theoretical model available to 'plot' PPP's to be able to reflect on how PPP's relate to each other?)
5. What can be concluded on the use of the PPP vehicle for the FDOV and SDGP programme objectives (such as nutrition, resource management, job creation)? What is the added value of the PPP and the roles of partners to have an impact on these objectives (in short, the relation between the goal and the means)? What can be said on the roles of PPPs in bringing about systemic change?

Approach

The assignment is a combination of desk research / portfolio review and brainstorm/interviews with partnerships (process oriented). The assignment should be carried out in close cooperation with staff of RVO. In principle, RVO staff are the point of entry to get more information from the partnerships. Part of the assignment is to guide RVO staff in reaching out to partnerships and ask

the right questions; as well as to process this information. To deepen insights, it is also possible to reach out directly to partnerships by organizing well-structured brainstorm sessions with partner/partnerships. Possibly, interviews can be done together with RVO staff. No travel is foreseen for this assignment.

The assignment should be implemented in co-creation with RVO staff. RVO advisors have good knowledge of the partnerships and projects. However, RVO staff needs to be guided on how and what further information should be collected from partnerships. Components of co-creation that are foreseen include:

- Guiding about 10 RVO advisors in small questionnaire / interviews with partnerships and processing these results (possibly interviews can be done together). *Other suggestions are welcomed on how to extract the relevant information* (joint workshop? Mapping of the PPP's to categorize them with input of the PA's?).

Making use of knowledge and expertise of project implementers. Also with the purpose to reflect on the draft report. Ideas could be, but are not limited to:

- o Organize a 'think tank' or advisory committee: project implementers, MoFA, RVO.
- o Organize brainstorms with project implementers / thought leaders
- o Interviews with key persons in the partnerships

The assignment consists of at least the following elements. Please note that this is a preliminary set up. *The contractor is encouraged to propose additional questions and elements.*

- A description of the FDOV and SDGP portfolio: what are the main characteristics of the partnerships implementing the projects? What type of actors participate (going deeper than just 'NGO', 'Public', 'Private' and 'Knowledge')? Are there differences between the two instruments? The specific role of public partners is of interest, see sub questions.
- An analysis of the practices, lessons and obstacles of PPP cooperation: what works well (lessons learned / 'portfolio learning')? What are interesting PPP approaches? What are the main challenges?
- What can be said on how the composition of partnerships and the roles the partners play effect the contribution to the different policy themes? For which policy themes can a PPP vehicle be of added value? For example nutrition, food production increase, circular agriculture, biodiversity and the creation of (decent)jobs¹? What can be said on the roles of PPPs in bringing about systemic change?

Important to note is that the assignment is not an evaluation of the outcomes of the FDOV/SDGP projects itself. These will be studied in other (e.g. IOB) initiatives. The findings of this assignments could be used as input for evaluation studies, but the main objective is for reflection and learning for RVO staff, the MoFA and the project implementers.

We expect that the contractor is familiar with the PPP vehicle, as well as the relevant policy themes and has expertise in the countries where FDOV and SDGP project are being implemented. Submitting a joint proposal, with a partnering contractor who has complementary knowledge, is an option.

Complementarity

There have been several studies touching on partnerships and how they do or do not work well. RVO did a 'light scan' of the existing literature and the risk of overlap. *It is expected that the contractor knows or will get acquainted with the existing literature. A prerequisite for this assignment is that it is additional to the existing literature.* When starting the assignment RVO will provide a compilation of the literature to serve as a starting point. Input of the contractor on this assignment and the (sub)questions based on the insights of the literature is encouraged.

Existing documentation and literature

- Several PPP lab studies on partnerships and roles of different partners
- Midterm review FDOV
- Project proposals, annual and final reports, evaluations

¹ Er is voor deze afbakening gekozen gezien de beleidsprioriteiten achterliggend aan SDGP en FDOV. Tevens is er voor andere beleidsthema's al ervaring en expertise opgebouwd binnen andere instrumenten, zoals bijvoorbeeld energie. Daarom is deze scope gekozen.

- NGWN assignment 'Lessons learnt from the Dutch Diamond approach in Food and Nutrition Security'
- SEO impact studies FDOV
- IOB impact evaluation
- FDOV internal review

Deliverables

The assignment needs to result in short reports with reflections, best practices and lessons learned for a) the MoFA and b) the project implementers. More specifically the deliverables are:

- Concept note of research, describing approach of the assignment
- Guidance for RVO advisors to get the right information from the partnerships
- Draft note for MoFA
- Draft report for project implementers
- Organize / lead a webinar or workshop for project implementers, MoFA and interested parties
- Workshop report
- Final reports (MoFA note and report for project implementers) in RVO style guide and in 'native' English
- Power point or infographic (catchy overview with main findings for communicational purposes)
- It is important the final reports are not an academic report but is very close to and based on the practices and experiences of the partnerships in the field. Therefore close interaction with RVO and the project implementors is necessary.

Contact

RVO wants to be regularly informed on the progress of the assignment and would like to have meetings at least:

- at the start of the assignment to discuss the approach
- receive a specific plan / concept note of research on the suggested approach, including planning (more detail than the quotation) and discuss own suggestions of the executing party for this assignment.
- contact on the interviews that are planned (reflect on interview questions)
- midterm: to discuss the first draft of the report and the workshops preparations
- end of the project: to discuss the final (draft) report + prepare and organize webinar/workshop

Contact person at RVO: Ianthe Nieuwenhuis ianthe.nieuwenhuis@rvo.nl

Budget

Max of EUR 50.000 excluding VAT