# The Sector Approach version 2.0: Getting Results as the World Gets Flatter

### Wilma van Esch, Marco Gerritsen, Carel de Groot, Mieke Vogels and Nils Boesen[[1]](#footnote-1)

## 1. Introduction

Is the sector approach still relevant to development assistance given the track record and the rapidly changing global context? Or is it time – again – to look for something new that might work better? This paper will argue that the sector approach continues to be relevant, but that it needs to become a “Sector Approach version 2.0”. This requires significant – and difficult - changes in how we work as donors.

In the mid-nineties, many donors moved away from stand-alone projects which tended to fragment efforts, operate on the margin of domestic institutions, and generate only temporary benefits to limited groups of people. Instead, donors adopted what was to become known as the programme-based or sector-wide approach (SWAp) or simply the sector approach. The Netherlands adopted the sector approach in 1999.

A good decade later the sector approach has only partially delivered as expected. It has brought donor support closer to the mainstream of the government machinery in partner countries– in some sectors sometimes too close for comfort. It has usefully focused on policies and the capacity of essential country systems, notably linked to public financial management. The approach has also helped to expand service delivery in quantitative terms - but it has not been sufficiently effective in enhancing the quality of services for the poor, and the expected ownership by national stakeholders has not emerged as expected.[[2]](#footnote-2)

At the same time the world has moved on since the 90’ties. New agendas about natural resources, food, security, migration, energy and climate demonstrate how connected the world has become, and new communication tools are breaking down distances, barriers, hierarchies and authorities across the planet at an amazing speed. The world is connected and connecting, increasing the complexity of both the challenges and answers to these challenges.

We have written this paper to argue that the sector approach continues to be relevant, because it is a fruitful “meso-level” between on the one hand the broader global and national arenas, and on the other the local arenas where people live and cope with vulnerabilities and poverty. To address its weaknesses, the sector approach has to move to a “version 2.0” where connectivity, collaboration, communication and horizontal knowledge acquisition become central. We will argue (in this order), that this entails five closely linked challenges:

* *Accepting the complexity of the task.* In the sector approach, we try to influence multiple, loosely coupled systems spanning from global agendas and networks to communities at local level in partner as well as in our own countries. We work with development processes that combine political, technical, institutional and socio-cultural elements.
* *Working proactively with the new global interconnectedness.* Aid cannot be seen as domain by and in itself, but has to factor in concerns about global public goods and also link more actively and creatively to our constituency in the Netherlands.
* *Paying more attention to knowledge, to dialogue, to quality and to results*. The sector approach needs to get more knowledge and evidence into the processes, and strengthen the links to what actually happens at the end of the chain from policy to service delivery. The sector approach need to invest more in gathering evidence that is relevant for accountability and learning, and – as importantly – ensure that it feeds back in the policy and planning cycles.
* *Adapting the sector approach to the specific context and sector, particularly in fragile situations.* The sector approach is not a blueprint prescription; one size does not fit all. On the contrary, the sector approach is precisely about ensuring a careful adaptation to the characteristics, politics, drivers and constraints in the specific situation and sectors. A sector approach in education will be different from one in agriculture. Good approaches to sector development – and to aid - in middle income countries are unlikely to work in fragile situations. Particularly in fragile situations, donors risk doing harm if they do not adapt carefully to the context.
* *Gaining leverage as brokers of knowledge and agendas.* To deliver on the four challenges listed in the previous bullets, we have to move beyond a technocratic and hierarchical attitude to our tasks as development partner staff. The multiple stakeholders, multiple agendas and multiple interests that coalesce in a sector require that we can act as “development diplomats”. Our task is to broker knowledge and contacts, facilitate negotiations or mediate the conflicts that are part and parcel of development and development assistance. This is a team task, often spanning beyond a single staff member or a single donor.

Before expanding on how to address these five challenges[[3]](#footnote-3), the paper will briefly argue the case for the sector approach, and list its weaknesses. The paper is based on our personal experiences as staff working with development assistance in the Ministry and in Dutch embassies, as well as on international lessons gathered over recent years. The paper also reflects the rich discussions with more than a dozen of our colleagues taking stock on the sector approach in a workshop held in Addis Ababa in November 2009. However, the viewpoints expressed are those of the authors only.

## 2. Sector Approach is Relevant for Sector Development, but…

There is no commonly agreed definition of a “sector approach” or a sector-wide approach (SWAp). In 2000, the Dutch government defined the objective of the sector-wide approach as “increasing aid effectiveness by enabling the recipient country to conduct its own multiyear policy – drawn up with participation from all the relevant actors in that country – with the support of several donors over a lengthy period. Donors act in concert under the direction of the government and make agreements with the government on how the sectoral programmes will be financed. A sector is defined as ‘a coherent set of activities at macro, meso and micro level in defined institutional and budgetary frameworks for which the government has formulated policy’”[[4]](#footnote-4). The sector approach is normally seen as a subset of “programme based approaches”, with a focus on a sector or sub-sector like e.g. (primary) education, transport, agriculture.

Though the sector approach concept was developed by donors, it is most useful when it is seen as *a way of working of all stakeholders to achieve sector development.* This rightly focuses on the broader domestic processes in a country and a sector, and to a much lesser extent on the narrower concerns about aid and aid modalities[[5]](#footnote-5). Aid and donors may be more or less important in a country or sector, and modalities matter a lot, particularly in aid dependent countries and fragile situations. However, if the sector approach is merely seen as a way to provide aid then it tends to crowd out the more important attention to what country stakeholders themselves can and will do to achieve sector development.

The sector level is a useful meso-level between the global and- national macro-levels, and the locally - localized micro-level. The sector approach is relevant for four additional key reasons:

* + The sector approach makes development challenges relatively manageable. It allows attention to details which national level approaches cannot handle or afford, while keeping a holistic perspective that is easily lost in project-type, narrowly localized interventions.
  + Compared to the national level, desired results, outcomes and impact are fairly specific and tangible at sector level and can thus bring the more evasive concept of “poverty reduction” down to earth. It is easier to monitor progress at sector level, and easier to learn from experiences. In addition lessons learned at sector level can have a larger impact compared to project results.
* Global concerns increasingly shape the agenda – but are often typically sectoral (natural resources, food security, health, education, energy, to some degree security), or apt for mainstreaming in sectors (gender, climate, accountability).
  + Working at the sector level allows the use of a mix of complementary aid modalities, from fully aligned, un-targeted budget support to e.g. project funding which can, when “on budget” and “on plan”, serve for experimenting, temporary by-pass of bottlenecks and support to non-state partners.

However, the relevance of the sector approach does not imply in itself efficiency and effectiveness. Recent Dutch evaluations[[6]](#footnote-6) confirm the findings reported in other reviews: The sector approach has lead to more policy coherence and better harmonization and alignment of donor support, but the intended transfer of ownership from donors to national stakeholders has not fully materialized. The transformation of policies and budgets to service delivery on the ground is still wanting – both because of inadequate policy frameworks and insufficient domestic capacity. As a result, the approach has had great difficulties in actually reaching the poor.

To complement the picture, we would from our experience add the following observations:

* The sector approach has often been excessively technocratic and formal, based on the belief that formal policies, plans and indicators combined with financial resources would transform into efficient and effective implementation. Instead of a profound and honest dialogue, negotiation takes over. Innovation and learning are immediate victims in such situations, and the key players in government and among donors lose the contact with the reality on the ground.
* The key actors have either not had or brought into play their understanding of the drivers and inhibitors of sector development, including those related to politics, local culture, traditions and the informal mechanisms which are active behind the façade.
* Instead of sector wide, the sector approach has often turned out to be sector-narrow, focusing too much on a narrow range of governmental actors and instruments – which, even if well performing, would not be able to deliver on outcomes without complementary action in other sectors or across and beyond government.
* Finally, the sector approach is often focusing strongly on aid modalities and aid effectiveness. Important as that is, it reduces attention to domestic policy, funding and accountability issues.

The Sector Approach version 2.0 seeks to address these weaknesses. It is no panacea, but it is, as we shall argue in the following sections, a way forward that builds on the strengths of the older version of the sector approach and opens it up to a world that is more complex and more connected than ever before.

## 3. Accepting the Complexity of the Task

Development on its own has always been a complex affair, highly disputed and poorly understood.

Add multiple donors with multiple agendas to the plethora of regional, national, sector and local stakeholders. If looked upon as loosely coupled systems, the complexity is daunting: Actors who come from one complex political and institutional set of sub-systems (*in casu* the Netherlands and other donor countries) are invited and tasked to intervene in another system (the sector in a development country).

If this is not enough, then add to this that a “sector” is not a firmly delineated “thing” neither horizontally or vertically – different actors will have different ideas about the boundaries, and whether these should be defined by institutions, desired outcomes, actors, interests – or a mixture of these and other parameters.

To come to terms with a Sector Approach 2.0, it is therefore essential to accept that the challenge is to influence a set of very complex social systems so that they better contribute to achieving a set of objectives that is neither precise (except, mostly symbolically, in policy documents and programme matrices) nor stable. This has four consequences:

* Firstly, it requires that we understand that such systems do not move in a linear fashion or according to a grand design. They are inherently messy, and no single actor controls how the systems develop. Coordinating all significant actors through formal plans and agreements only is unlikely to work.
* Second, the connectedness of the various systems and subsystems means that it is not feasible to “insulate” one subsystem from the influence of others. Trying to carve out protected niches where we only work for poverty reduction and ignore other agendas is not likely to work.
* The complexity of the wider web of relations will often mean reduced efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. Health outcomes are a result of activities spanning environment, nutrition, education, water supply, lifestyle – and, eventually, the health system. We still have difficulties coping with these complexities in developed countries, and should thus accept that results do not come about easy in less generously endowed environments.
* Finally, working with the complexity of a sector approach means that risk-taking is inherent and should be accepted, also when it cannot be strictly calculated. We must of course be concerned about e.g. abuse and waste of our taxpayer’s money but we should not fool anybody. Trying to ring fence what we do will neither deliver sustainable results nor influence the systems we aim at influencing, but only provide the shallow comfort of producing rather insignificant results.

Dutch development practitioners – particularly those based in the field – have to position themselves somewhere between the Dutch context and the sector context, with an eye on the various actors, relations, events and drivers that make and shake the sector system.

It is little wonder that a traditional hierarchy, or standard operating instructions, are insufficient when it comes to select and interpret information, decide how much trust to invest in partners, systems and processes, and how to communicate and act. The idea of a web, of networking and of collaborating across country and system barriers is a necessary complement to hierarchy and procedures – and therefore a necessary part of the Sector Approach 2.0.

## 4. Working Proactively with the New Global Interconnectedness

Climate challenges, poverty, security, migration, trafficking, energy, trade and finances are global issues, shaping global agendas. They touch fundamental interests in the North and the South. Some of them – like a relatively stable climate – can be viewed as global public goods that require collective global action. Other agendas correspond to narrower particular interests of countries, institutions or groups (in North and/or South) – but they need to be factored in when we work with the sector approach.

We can no longer pretend to work separately for poverty reduction as if nothing else mattered. Other issues matter as much, sometimes even more, for the constituencies in developing countries as well as in our own country.

Sector Approach version 2.0 therefore requires that it incorporates Dutch (and others’) policy positions and concerns, and that it seeks to include all significant public and private actors, well beyond the traditional donors. Development is, after all, not primarily a business of development assistance.

Global agendas also produce global initiatives which often tend to focus on narrower issues compared to the sector approach. For some, this has led to a critical position to the so-called “vertical” global funds. We share the concern that such funds may distort allocation of resources at country level and attract staff and attention to issues which, though important, are not necessarily the only or most important issues in the sector. But the global funds also represent tremendous opportunities to harness resources that can address specific problems massively. Spreading attention evenly to every worthy issue in a sector can be as ineffective as focusing all attention on a few hot issues that command political and popular attention.

We draw three implications for the Sector Approach version 2.0. Together, they imply that the sector approach has to break with any tendency of introversion, where the sector – and sector working groups – becomes a zone of comfort and belonging, and where the wider world (including donor headquarters in distant capitals!) is perceived as a disturbing nuisance.

* First, the sector approach must work proactively with global initiatives. They are necessary, often co-funded by ourselves, and here to stay, anyway. They cannot replace a sector-wide perspective, but a sector-wide perspective cannot replace focused global (or national) initiatives either. The challenge is to optimize the synergy between the two and making the inevitable tension between them productive.
* Second, both global and national agenda items cut across sectors. Child mortality, climate change, gender, and anti-corruption are examples. Sector approaches must therefore not only incorporate these agendas in the sector, but also reach out and up and link closely to the political and policy dialogue at higher levels. For donors, this means ensuring a close collaboration between those working with support at sector level, with those supporting national poverty reduction strategies and global initiatives, so that policy dialogues at the different levels reinforce each other.
* Finally, the Sector Approach version 2.0 has to establish direct communication links to constituencies in donor countries. Projects were photogenic, sector approaches are often perceived only to produce statistics and dull pictures of seriously dressed people in serious meeting rooms. Embassy staff has traditionally perceived their job to be directed at the country and sector level, rather than at their fellow Dutch citizens. A modern sector approach has to get in touch with the ground realities and use creative communication tools and media platforms to connect back to relevant target groups and the broader public. This will demand resources, but it is part and parcel of linking the global and local – both when the local is in the South and when it is in the North.

These requirements expand the demands on both field and headquarter staff. We will look closer at these implications at the end of this paper.

## 5. Putting Effective Sector Development at the Fore

So far, we have painted a picture of the Sector Approach version 2.0 as plastic, fluid, flexible, risk-taking, non-bureaucratic and adaptable…and these words by themselves may frighten as much as they comfort: what about getting not only to results, but also the right results that enable people coping better with poverty and eventually get out of it? Where is the beamer that keeps the sector approach focused amidst the turbulence of cross-cutting aspects, overloaded agendas and overcrowded meeting places where multiple stakeholders fight for their multiple interests?

Conventionally, the beamer is expressed in the demand that sector development and donor support to sector development must be results-driven. Few will disagree, and detailed performance frameworks prosper on paper. However, the much more difficult challenge is to identify the drivers that actually will transform results from intentions to realities.

Three closely interlinked issues stand out:

* Making policy dialogue more effective
* Putting more emphasis on accountability
* Focus on monitoring and quality assurance

*Policy dialogue* is often confined to donors and the sector ministry. Formal policy documents and results frameworks– often drafted by consultants - may be wish-lists shaped to earmark or channel donor funding. To avoid tensions, they often accommodate too many interests, and nobody may in the end feel committed to the policy. Moreover, parallel informal but more important policy processes may emerge where haggling over resources and priorities end up being a continuous and not transparent game, played with all kind of subtle weapons.

To break with this pattern it is, firstly, necessary that we get a much better understanding of the sector and of the difference that a policy can or cannot make in a particular context. Secondly, we must focus on strengthening domestic policy processes rather than the narrow donor-government dialogue. The sector approach must include working with parliamentarians, organized social/economic groups; civil society etc. that might put power behind a policy or plan. Thirdly, we must work to strengthen the evidence and knowledge base for policy making. This would include strengthening e.g. universities and semi-autonomous think-thanks; and enabling links to global as well as Dutch knowledge centers of relevance. Support through analytical and advisory activities linked directly to policy processes can be helpful short term measures, but such support needs to be harmonized and conducted in a manner that ensures buy-in.

*Strengthening mutual accountability* is high on the international agenda. Partner-to-donor accountability in practice often crowds out domestic accountability, often implying monitoring and reporting made in addition to or outside national systems.

The Sector Approach version 2.0 can be informed by ongoing efforts to take a much more systematic approach where existing strengths, incentives, opportunities, weaknesses and vulnerabilities are detected and discussed[[7]](#footnote-7). This would make it much more straightforward to include important stakeholders (e.g. service users, parliamentarians, local authorities, professional bodies, watchdogs and checks-and-balance institutions) in a meaningful role in the sector approach. Mutual accountability should be further enhanced through more emphasis on transparency – including about donor commitments - at all levels of the sector system, as a key means to engage citizens to claim the services they were meant to get.

*Monitoring and quality assurance* are essential to enhance the relevance of policy making, ensure accountability and strengthen performance. Sector approaches have traditionally focused too much on upstream policy making and monitoring of expenditures, and not enough on the service delivery on the ground. To break away from the tradition of micromanaging their support many donors have focused only on wider outcomes in their monitoring, leaving a “missing middle” between short term financial audits and longer term impact.

In the Sector Approach version 2.0, our concern should be that the sector stakeholders – rather than donors – strengthen the monitoring of quality of processes (e.g. PFM, procurement), of development of capacity (including at local levels), of efficiency, of outputs, outcomes and, ultimately, impact. However, this potentially enormous agenda has to be wisely tamed, scoped and sequenced. Monitoring needs to be practically relevant for managerial decisions, for learning or for accountability purposes. Donors can in many settings play a particularly helpful role insisting not only that relevant evidence is collected in appropriate doses, but also that a reflection takes place on how the evidence is used in decision making and how (and by whom) it is gathered.

## 6. Adapting the Sector Approach, particularly in Fragile Situations

Is the sector approach relevant in all sectors? In successful emerging economies, in middle-income countries, in those trying to achieve the MDGs? In particular, are they relevant in fragile states?

The short answer is yes. But the ‘yes’ has to be qualified: The sector approach will put emphasis on different things in different sectors and contexts. The approach is, however, relevant because it is not a “thing”, but “*a way of working of all stakeholders to achieve sector development”.* The sector approach is essentially a pair of “analytical lenses” that will consider how and by whom policies are made; how policies and plans are translated into budgets or – where government budgets are less significant – into regulatory frameworks; how budgets are transformed into services or enforcement of regulations; how governance, accountability and oversight is performed; how state and non-state actors cooperate – and how donors, should they be around, supports the domestic processes. The sector approach is a systematic way of asking important questions that enable stakeholders to find viable answers that fit the specific situation – also in countries and sectors that do not receive development assistance at all.

In better functioning or strongly progressing countries, the country’s own capacity to ensure that aid fits will often imply that donors may simply be asked to facilitate access to specialised knowledge that is not easily available. The sector approach is really a domestic affair, with little reason for donors to do much more than providing the requested support. Project and direct funding may be the appropriate modalities for support – if the support is “on policy”, then it matters less if it is “on plan” and “on budget”, provided it is of relatively little financial importance.

At the other end of the spectrum, in fragile situations, much more is at stake. Donors often weigh much more in policy and financial terms, given the weaknesses of the state and of state-society relations. This implies that donors risk doing more harm if their support is not closely aligned to the situation: to the formal and informal politics, the capacity of administrative systems, and the capacity to coordinate stakeholders.

So the sector approach is even more important in fragile situations (and in situations where aid plays a significant role). Unfortunately, it is also much more difficult to make aid fit in fragile situations. We suggest that there are three key implications for the sector approach to be drawn from this:

* *Accepting tension between objectives:* Donors – individually and collectively - pursue different objectives: long term poverty reduction and development goals are mixed with regional or global security concerns with a shorter horizon. Urgent humanitarian needs and concerns for rights may be at odds with the need to ensure stability through political compromises. Calling for clear objectives is not an option; the challenge is to manage the tensions pragmatically and prudently.
* *Operating with extreme care on the margins of country systems:* The multiple, often very ambitious short term agendas, when matched with a severely limited state capacity, inevitably lead to interventions which operate on the margins of country systems. An overstretched agenda may have the effect that donors end up even deeper sunk into the driver’s seat, competing to safeguard their projects through hiring of the few qualified staff working in government – thereby undermining capacity even further. Putting these pitfalls and risks openly on the agenda between donors and partners, and building on the experiences from what has worked better or worse in other situations, are fundamental components in fragile situations.
* *Harmonising and building on intimate knowledge:* Aid is always a bargain chip in politics, but in fragile situation it may be an enormous bargain chip. The sector approach entails being even more keenly aware of this in fragile situations, and it demands even more intimate knowledge about the play and the players. Harmonisation with other donors (and, when relevant, external armed forces) becomes even more important – and more difficult.

The sector approach in fragile situations is essentially about more awareness about the risks of doing harm; more flexibility; lowering ambitions and accepting that it is much harder to make the right choices ex ante. Adjusting actions based on constant reflection of why things may have worked is always important – but it is critically important in fragile situations. Smartly used, the sector approach can deliver on that.

## 7. Gaining Leverage as Brokers of Knowledge and Agendas

We have argued that the Sector Approach version 2.0 implies acceptance of complexity and uncertainty; more attention to global agendas and to our own constituency; more focus on knowledge and evidence; as well as better and more flexible adaptation to the political and institutional drivers in the specific situation. It is by bringing these elements together that we can positively influence how sector (and country) systems develop so that they ultimately deliver to their citizens, including the most vulnerable.

This demands new competencies of our organization and us. There are three key ingredients:

* *Understanding the setting.* This includes recognising and seeing the drivers, motives and patterns of influence behind stakeholders and networks, the power dynamics as well as the cultural and institutional givens that will not change overnight. Obviously, such an understanding cannot be obtained only from behind a desk.
* *Ability to deal smartly with processes of development.* The sector approach 2.0 requires active – and sensitive - engagement with the often messy political realities of sector development, also as these unfolds in streets and rural areas. Empathy, communication and networking skills are essential, including “broker”-skills like conflict mediation.
* *Sector-specific knowledge.* It is relatively easy to agree on noble targets (e.g. the MDGs), but it is much less easy to identify feasible, efficient, effective and sustainable strategies for achieving these targets. The Sector Approach version 2.0 must reinstate the sector expertise that has become diluted over the last years. The sector expertise needed is no longer the hands-on, concrete skills of e.g. a medical doctor or a construction engineer, but the wider knowledge of how a health system, or the systems fostering agricultural growth, can work.

It would be rare to find that an individual would possess all these skill-sets. Therefore, the challenge in the Sector Approach 2.0 is as much organisational as it is individual. There are three basic elements that have to be strengthened and developed:

* *Teamwork – beyond and in individual embassies.* We have outlined our perspective on a modernized sector approach – but this is not an exclusive Dutch perspective. We cannot, and should not, see ourselves as isolated actors. Both our commitment to the Paris agenda and common sense implies that we have to act together with other EU member states, as well as other external actors. Inside our own system, we need to foster a strong teamwork among those who work with global agendas, national level issues and sectors, respectively, whether they are based in The Hague or in partner countries. We need in particular to include and value the contributions of our colleagues recruited in the country – they know their country, know who knows whom, and who knows more than they know.
* *A reflective praxis rather than hierarchy.* Dealing with complexity cannot be done by instructions or manuals. Like soccer-players, effective brokers cannot first ask superiors about how to kick the ball when it is coming. Hierarchy and instructions continue to have their place, but enabling us to “play the game” requires constant learning through reflection, coaching by superiors, increased acceptance of risks, and a culture that accept errors as an opportunity for improvements.
* *New collaborative platforms.* Running a Sector Approach version 2.0 on stand-alone computers or on highly protected and closed networks is simply not possible. Accessing and brokering knowledge across the planet, linking actors to each others, and collaborating and communicating horizontally is both necessary and technically possible. Communicating with Dutch constituencies through blogs, videos and audio clips; participating in communities of practice and contribute to resource corners are all part of the Sector Approach 2.0, and we need the requisite knowledge management and communication platform to do this.

Gaining leverage in the sector approach is about picking battles strategically and contributing to sector development by deploying the broad array of skills that adds value to the money offered by donors. Money will not contribute by itself. Adding value requires flexibility, teamwork – and staff time. Recognising this is not a plea for more time to deal with bureaucratic work, but a plea to recognize that what embassy staff do and should do is actually highly important and necessary development work.

## 8. Conclusion

*“It is not the quantity but the quality of our contribution to a world in which people and countries are self-sufficient and in which international public goods are adequately safeguarded, that should be the point of departure for what we now still refer to as development aid, but what may later be referred to as ‘global development’. Global development is about targeted strategies, the capacity to work in various fields at the same time, knowing when to hold back, and differentiating between goals and thereby between levels of intervention. It is about combining ambition with the awareness that you can only play a modest role”. (WRR - Scientific Council for Government Policy, report no. 84, The Hague, 2009)*

We broadly concur with the statement above – which is the final statement in the recent review of Dutch development policy by the Scientific Council for Government Policy.

We have tried to draw the implications of making this ambition operational in relation to sector approaches, as an input to the debate in and beyond the Dutch context. We should stay the basic course set out in 1999 when the Netherlands adopted the sector approach as a favored (though not exclusive) way of providing aid. But the sector approach needs to become a version 2.0 that is more dynamic, inclusive and politically informed; that adapts better to the concrete situation; that delivers much better results on the ground and which reflects that the world is ever more connected and entangled.

This is a tall, but not impossible agenda. It requires that we adopt the mindset and tools of a world where much more is, virtually, within sight and reach.

### References

Boesen, Nils and Desiree Dietvorst. 2007. *SWAPs in Motion.* Accessed at http://www.swisstph.ch/fileadmin/user\_upload/Pdfs/swap/swap456\_Boesen\_2007.pdf

Campos, E. and Pradhan, S (eds). 2007. *The Many Faces of Corruption.* Washington: The World Bank.

European Commission. 2008. *Analysing and addressing Governance in Sector Operations.* Brussels: Europe Aid.

Fritz, Verena, Kaiser,K. and Levy,B. 2009.*Problem Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis.* Washington: The World Bank.

IOB. 2006. *From Project Aid towards Sector Support. An evaluation of the sector-wide approach in Dutch bilateral aid 1998–2005.* The Hague.

IOB. 2008. *Sectorsteun in milieu en water - Een evaluatie van de toepassing van de sectorale benadering in de bilaterale hulp in milieu en water. IoB evaluaties no 317.* The Hague.

Unsworth, Sue. 2008. Framework for Strategic Governance And Corruption Analysis (SGACA). Designing Strategic Responses Towards Good Governance. Prepared by the Clingendael Institute for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs Conflict Research Unit. Accessed at <http://www.minbuza.nl/dsresource?objectid=buzabeheer:43185&type=org>

Reesch, Ellen van. 2008. *Ten years into the sector-wide approach, did we do what we intended to do?* A Rich Menu for the Poor # 30. The Hague

Round Table 8. 2008. *Enhancing Results by Applying the Paris Declaration at Sector Level. Outcome Document. Final Draft*. Accessed at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/36/16/42041443.pdf>

Vaillancourt, Denise. 2009. *Do Health Sector Wide Approaches Achieve Results?* IEG Working Paper 2009/4Washington: The World Bank

Williamson, Tim and Catherine Dom. 2009. *Sector Budget Support in Practice. Synthesis Report. Final Draft.* London: Mokoro/ODI.

WRR. 2010. *Less Pretention, More Ambition. Development Aid that Makes a Difference. Conclusion of Report WRR 84.* The Hague.

1. The authors (except Nils Boesen) are staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, currently working in headquarters or in embassies in developing countries. Nils Boesen is a consultant. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. IOB (2006), Mokoro/ODI (2009), Vaillancourt (2009), Round Table 8 paper (2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We have deliberately not included a discussion on aid modalities and their relative merits in the sector perspective, e.g. general budget support, sector budget support, pooled funds/baskets, and project modalities. This is an important discussion on its own, deserving more that a short reference. Our focus is limited to the challenges for the sector approach so to speak “before” the modality issue become central. See Mokoro/ODI (2009) for a recent and comprehensive review of sector budget support as aid delivery mechanism. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Though confusing, this widely used definition accepts decentralization as a “sector”, and in practice, the sector approach is also applied to decentralization/local governance development efforts. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Boesen & Dietvorst (2007) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. IOB (2006, 2008), van Reesch (2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Several donors, including the Netherlands, the World Bank and the EC, have developed specific approaches to sector governance and corruption vulnerability analyses (Unsworth (2008), Fritz et.al. (2009), EC (2008), Campos and Pradhan (2007)). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)