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EVALUATION OF NPT AND NICHE



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CONTENTS

1.	Executive Summary	I
2.	Introduction	1
3.	Theoretical Background and Methodology	2
3.1	Theoretical Background	2
3.2	Methodological Approach	10
4.	Overview over NPT and NICHE	15
4.1	Historical Background of NPT and NICHE	15
4.2	Objectives of NPT and NICHE	16
4.3	Description of the Target Group of NPT and NICHE	17
4.4	NPT and NICHE Preparation and Implementation Processes	20
5.	Findings of the Evaluation	25
5.1	Relevance of NPT and NICHE	25
5.2	Effectiveness of NPT	33
5.3	Efficiency of NPT and NICHE	49
5.4	Assessment of NPT and NICHE cost-efficiency	54
5.5	Impact of NPT	64
5.6	Sustainability of NPT	68
6.	Conclusions and Recommendations	74
6.1	Conclusions	74
6.2	Recommendations	75

Table of Figures

Figure 1:	Seven Elements of Capacity	4
Figure 2:	The Five Capabilities by Morgan	6
Figure 3:	Analytical Framework	9
Figure 4:	Phases of the Evaluation	10
Figure 5:	Dutch Organizations in NPT and NICHE	18
Figure 6:	Requesting Organizations in NPT and NICHE	19
Figure 7:	Preparation and Implementing Processes in NPT and NICHE	20
Figure 8:	Implementation of NICHE Policy Priorities	28
Figure 9:	Cooperation with other Donors under NPT and NICHE	30
Figure 10:	Motivation of Northern Partners to Participate in NPT and NICHE	30
Figure 11:	Motivation of Requesting Organisations to Participate in NPT and NICHE	31
Figure 12:	Analysed NPT Projects According to Sector	34
Figure 13:	Analysed NPT Projects According to Northern Partner	34
Figure 14:	Analysed NPT Projects According to Southern Partner	34
Figure 15:	NPT Output in the Field of Study Programmes	35
Figure 16:	NPT Output in the Field of Staff Development – Short-Term Training	35
Figure 17:	NPT Output in the Field of Institutional and Managerial Capacity Development	36
Figure 18:	NPT Output in the Field of Relations with the Professional Sector	37
Figure 19:	CDI – Capability to Act	40
Figure 20:	CDI – Capability to Adapt and Self-Renew	41
Figure 21:	CDI – Capability to Achieve Coherence	43
Figure 22:	CDI – Capability to Relate	44
Figure 23:	CDI – Capability to Deliver Development Results	46
Figure 24:	Acquired Skills and Expertise through Newly Established or Revised Courses	47
Figure 25:	NPT Cost Components at Programme Level by Year	50
Figure 26:	NPT Project Budgets by Country and Region	51
Figure 27:	NPT Budget by Sectors	51
Figure 28:	NPT Budget by Type of Contracted Institution	52
Figure 29:	NICHE Cost Components at Programme Level by Year	52
Figure 30:	NICHE Project Budgets by Country and Region between 2008 and 2011	53
Figure 31:	NICHE Budget by Sectors	53
Figure 32:	NICHE Budget by Type of Contracted Institution	54
Figure 33:	NPT and NICHE Activities with a Significant Variety in Role Assignment	56
Figure 34:	NICHE Level of Competitiveness in Tender Procedures	58
Figure 35:	Cost-Quality Ratio of NPT Main Project Outputs by Country (Northern Partners)	60
Figure 36:	Top 10 Cost-Quality Ratio in NPT Projects and Type of Dutch Organisation	61
Figure 37:	Cost-Quality Ratio of NPT Program Outputs by Country (Requesting Organisations)	61
Figure 38:	Top 10 Cost-Quality Ratio in NPT Projects and Type of Requesting Organisation	62
Figure 39:	Cost-effectiveness of NPT programme at country level	63
Figure 40:	Current Work Place of NPT Alumni	66
Figure 41:	NPT Alumni and Leading Positions	66
Figure 42:	NPT Alumni and Changes in their Organisations	67
Figure 43:	Sustainability of NPT Projects	72

List of Abbreviations

AET:	Agricultural Education and Training
CAS:	Complex adaptive systems
CDI:	Capacity development index
COCA:	Checklist for an Organisational Capacity Assessment
DAAD:	German Academic Exchange Service
EFA:	Education for All
IBO-IO:	Inter-ministerial Policy Review of International Education
IDTs:	International Development Targets
IE:	International education
IT:	Information technology
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MHO:	Joint Financing Programme for Cooperation in Higher Education
NFP:	Netherlands Fellowship Programmes
NFP/AP:	Academic Programme of the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes
NFP/TP:	Training Programme of the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes
NGOs:	Non-governmental organizations
NICHE:	Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education
NPT:	Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity
Nuffic:	Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee
PDA:	Provincial Department of Agriculture
POHE:	Profession Oriented Higher Education
PwC:	PricewaterhouseCoopers
RACI:	Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed
RNE:	Royal Netherlands Embassies
SIU:	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education
TEC:	Tender Evaluation Committee
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Background

The Netherlands' engagement in international education cooperation dates back to the 1960s but has changed over the past decades in regard to its focal points, targets and implementation processes. Already the predecessor programme of the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) and the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE), the Joint Financing Programme for Cooperation in Higher Education (MHO) introduced in 1993, was managed by the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic). The objective of the programme was to support the development of specific countries by generating technical and professional human resources, supporting higher education as well as research and extension activities. In this regard universities were considered crucial to the development of a country or region and cooperation with universities was seen as the best strategy to realize human resource development and institution building in the partner countries. For this purpose MHO concentrated its support on a limited number of southern organisations, each having various individual projects, rather than supporting individual projects at a large number of institutes.

In 1998 the Dutch government commissioned a study into the system of international cooperation in higher education – the Inter-ministerial Policy Review of International Education (IBO-IO). The IBO-IO report suggested to reform and modernise the Dutch international education (IE) programmes to realise a more efficient and effective organization of the Dutch IE programmes and to enhance the role of IE in Dutch international cooperation. To achieve this objective the report recommended aligning the IE programmes to the Dutch bilateral development cooperation policy priorities and to the needs and priorities of the southern partners. Furthermore, it advised that the selection of implementing institutions for the IE programmes should take place through competition to allocate funds in a more result-oriented, flexible and effective way.

As a result of the IBO-IO report a new IE policy framework was developed which focused on special sectors, countries and target groups of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as on the priorities of the recipient countries. In this new policy framework the number of programmes was reduced from the former seven to three consisting of NPT and the two Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP): the Academic Programme (NFP/AP) and the Training Programme (NFP/TP). In addition, the number of IE supported countries was also limited and MHO was phased out after a transition phase in December 2004, to be succeeded by NPT.

In contrast to MHO, NPT's overall objective was to improve the quality and quantity of trained professional staff in the respective sectors in the partner countries. By strengthening post-secondary education and training capacity, NPT aimed at capacitating the partner countries to generate their own training institutes and human power in the long run. Furthermore, to align itself with the recommendation of the IBO-IO report NPT introduced a tendering procedure for the selection of the implementing institutions and a demand articulation phase to identify the needs in the partner countries; thus guaranteeing within its implementation structures policy alignment, demand orientation, flexibility, competition and result orientation.

The NPT programme was evaluated in 2007. The evaluation criticised that the set-up of NPT did no longer fit in the trend towards harmonisation and alignment as agreed in the Paris Declaration. As a consequence NPT was phased out in 2009 and replaced by NICHE which followed the same objectives but focused more on labour market orientation, gender, policy alignment, continuous learning as well as technical and vocational training.

Purpose of the Evaluation

A change in the orientation of Dutch development cooperation triggered a re-evaluation of both the NPT and NICHE programmes in 2011. In light of this the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to commission Rambøll Management Consulting to conduct an evaluation in order to account for the Netherlands' funding

provided for NPT in the period 2002-2010 and to assess the efficiency of NICHE management in the period 2008-2010. As such, it sought to establish accountability, show where learning opportunities for the players concerned exist and make recommendations on how a future successor programme could be further enhanced. The evaluation was conducted along the criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) and took place in the Netherlands as well as in six case study countries: Benin, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Ruanda, South Africa and Vietnam. It analysed NPT projects on three continents and in widely varying regions. Additionally, worldwide surveys among all participating northern partners, requesting organisations and Royal Netherlands Embassies (RNE) as well as a worldwide tracer study among NPT alumni were conducted.

2. Key Findings and Conclusions

The NPT and NICHE programmes are highly **relevant** for Dutch and international development cooperation and are much needed in developing countries as they contribute directly to the development strategies of the partner countries. The Dutch implementing organisations help their requesting organisation in capacity development and in qualifying – in qualitative as well as quantitative terms – needed human power for the respective sector by transferring their specific competencies and knowledge.

The participation of the Dutch implementing organisations is crucial to the relevance of the programmes as they provide added value in form of needed expertise and knowledge. They are seen by the requesting organisations as knowledge brokers and equal partners who know about the specific needs within post-secondary education. However, Dutch implementing organisations, particularly universities, face increasing difficulties in justifying their participation in the programme internally while private consulting companies consider the projects as not profitable. In addition, the current practice of monitoring the programme's results on an output-level does not foster mutual learning among the relevant stakeholders of the programme. This might threaten the relevance of the NPT and NICHE programme in the future.

Nevertheless, the relevance of the programmes could still be improved. From a post-secondary education perspective the relevance on the level of the requesting organisations can be increased by adopting a holistic approach to organisational development and by not only focussing on curricula development, infrastructure and academic training. From a sector perspective relevance can be strengthened by focussing more on the demands of the labour market (e.g. absorption capacities of potential employers) than on the needs of the higher education sector. NICHE is already moving in this direction. Furthermore, by adopting a sector-wide approach, as undertaken by NICHE, synergies between different projects can be created.

The coordination between Nuffic and the RNE in the partner countries is functioning well. Both programmes are coordinated within the bilateral and regional foci of the RNE. However, an active coordination with other Dutch development programmes as well as bi- and multilateral donors to generate tangible synergies did not take place under NPT. Under NICHE the coordination with bi- and multilateral donors as well as the RNE improvement and synergies might be realised in the future. This will likely have a positive effect on the linkage between the university programmes and the labour market in the respective sector.

On the policy level the **effectiveness** of the NPT programme is assessed positively. In countries where NPT projects took place on the educational policy level, NPT had strong effects on sector policy making. The adopted multi-level approach, the transfer of skills in advocacy and the active involvement of higher management in the relevant line ministries enabled the NPT programme in these projects to successfully establish new governance structures and to influence legislation in the post-secondary education sector.

On the level of the requesting organisations the NPT programme is most effective in strengthening human resources and teaching capabilities as well as in upgrading needed infrastructures. By conceptualizing and introducing new degree programmes NPT enables universities to produce comparatively well-educated graduates for

further research and for the labour market in the respective sector.

However, the NPT programme mainly aims at the development and revision of curricula and courses as well as at the improvement of the qualification of academic staff. It rarely seeks to change wider organisational structures and processes. As a consequence, it does not capacitate the requesting organisations to adapt their newly acquired knowledge to changing circumstances in the future as it does not apply a holistic approach to capacity development. This makes it challenging to sustain the initiated changes in the future as the programme does not embed the changes within the organisational set-up of the requesting organisations. As a result, in most of the reviewed requesting organisations the academic and institutional **sustainability** of the programme's results is not guaranteed. Furthermore, the financial sustainability is also not given in most analysed NPT projects. The lack of involvement of the management, a lack of ownership, a missing focus on the institutionalisation of training of trainers in the requesting organisations and the short duration of the projects were identified by the evaluation as the main impediments to their financial, academic and institutional sustainability.

In contrast, the reviewed NPT projects in the evaluation have proven to have a high technical sustainability. The newly introduced or upgraded infrastructure is still in use and is maintained on a regular basis by the requesting organisations. Most requesting organisations have allocated budgets and/ or employed personnel to maintain the newly acquired equipment.

The **efficiency** of NPT and NICHE can be assessed positively, although major sources of inefficiency could be identified. The availability of human resources in the northern and southern partner organisations, the involvement of regional stakeholders, and the diversity of organisational types of Dutch implementing organisations all contribute to an efficient programme and project implementation. Therefore, the opening up process of NPT and NICHE has caused positive effects on the efficiency of both programmes. Sources of inefficiency that have been identified are related to the role distribution in the programme and project management cycle,

the time of involvement of Dutch partner organisations, and the low level of competitiveness in the tendering procedure. Moreover, the evaluation found out that the cost-efficiency of the projects is not dependent on certain partner countries and type of implementing Dutch organisations, but rather dependent on specific project circumstances. The cost-effectiveness of the evaluated NPT projects is related to a certain extent to the level of income in the partner countries.

The **impact** of the NPT programme is positive. The majority of the NPT projects enable the requesting organisations to increase the availability of human power for the specific sector in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Graduates from revised or newly established NPT courses or programmes are often employed and find employment in the sector in which they have received their education. Half of them occupy positions in which they either have thematic or human resource responsibility. The majority of them initiate organisational changes by restructuring work processes or introducing new teaching methodologies in their respective organisations. However, most of the graduates are employed in universities, confirming a weak linkage of the NPT programme to the labour market. In this light, the adopted focus within NICHE on the labour market as well as technical and vocational training is seen as a remedy to this shortcoming.

Strengths of NPT and NICHE

The NPT and NICHE programme's relevance lies in its usage of existing Dutch expertise and knowledge to solve pressing development needs in the partner countries. Their demand-orientation helps to give greater prominence to the needs and concerns of the requesting organisations and partner countries. The similar background of the Dutch organisations means that they have a variety of access points and approaches to the requesting organisations enabling them to establish partnerships on equal footing. In addition due to their programme conceptualisation, NPT and NICHE are well coordinated with the RNEs and aligned with the bilateral and regional foci of Dutch development cooperation. Under NICHE possible synergies could be realised with other Dutch development programmes and with programmes of other bi- and multilateral donors.

The NPT programme is effective in particular because the Dutch organisations have been able to introduce new degree programmes in the requesting organisations. This is most evident in the areas of curricula and course development, teaching methodologies and academic qualification of staff. In those countries where NPT projects took place on the policy level, the programme has also been able to help the requesting organisations to establish new governance structures or to influence national legislation through its multi-level approach and its transfer of advocacy skills.

Both NPT and NICHE involve regional stakeholders in their project implementation which adds value to an efficient project implementation and goal achievement through applied knowledge and costs benefits.

Weaknesses of NPT and NICHE

NPT and NICHE do not pursue a holistic approach towards capacity development. By focussing almost exclusively on curricula and course development, upgrades to the infrastructure and academic qualifications of the staff, other important aspects of organisational development (e.g. the development of processes and structures) are not targeted by both programmes. As a consequence the requesting organisations are not capacitated to adapt their knowledge to changing circumstances and to develop strategies to cope with shifts in their working environment. They only learn to apply the newly acquired knowledge, but not to adapt it to changing external conditions.

The exclusive bottom-up approach of the NPT programme in most cases excludes the involvement of the management, which results into a lack of ownership on the side of the requesting organisations. High staff fluctuation in the requesting organisation which is not adequately targeted by most of the projects' activities reinforces this phenomenon. In addition, the lack of knowledge on the side of the northern partner as to how to structure strategy and organisational development processes, as well as the neglect of the need to strengthen networks of the requesting organisations with relevant stakeholders, compounds this challenge.

In addition the unclear role distribution in the programme and project management cycle, the time of involvement of Dutch partner organisations, and the low level of competitiveness in the tendering procedure cause inefficiencies in both programmes.

3. Recommendations

Based upon the findings of the evaluation the following six areas for recommendations for how to further develop NPT and NICHE are advanced.

First: Programmes such as NPT and NICHE that promote capacity development in the higher education sector and its targeted thematic sectors should be continued. The adopted labour market focus and sector-wide approach under NICHE should also be maintained so that the relevance for the thematic sectors can be increased.

Second: NICHE and its successor programme should be based upon a holistic approach towards capacity development to strengthen the effects and the sustainability of the initiated changes. The adopted theoretical model in this evaluation could be a basis for such an approach.

Third: The roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders should be defined more clearly in NICHE and its successor programme. To avoid inefficiencies Nuffic should clearly communicate to the programme's stakeholders their roles and responsibilities.

Fourth: The participation of the Dutch organisation is crucial for the success of the programme and should be preserved. A successor programme should introduce proactive measures for their participation.

Fifth: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nuffic should develop and introduce a results-based management instrument aimed at fostering mutual learning among the relevant programme stakeholders.

Sixth: The coordination of NPT and NICHE should place an emphasis on generating tangible synergies between their funded projects as well as between Dutch development programmes and programmes of other bi- and multilateral donors to strengthen their impact on sector level. Where this happens, the RNE should play a key coordinating role.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned Rambøll Management Consulting to conduct the evaluation of the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) and the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE). The objectives of the evaluation are, first, to account for the Netherlands' funding and other inputs provided for NPT in the period 2002-2010. Second, the evaluation should assess the efficiency of NICHE management in the period 2008-2010 and third, to gain lessons for future policy development and implementation based upon its findings. The evaluation thereby assesses the relevance and efficiency of both programmes as well as the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the NPT programme.

The main users of this evaluation are – next to the Netherlands' government, parliament and the general public – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic). Other users include the participating Dutch organisations and requesting organisations in the partner countries.

The evaluation was undertaken from September 2011 until May 2012. Within this given timeframe the evaluation team of Rambøll Management Consulting conducted an in-depth analysis of all relevant documents and data, in-depth interviews, an international comparison study, a worldwide survey of all Dutch organisations and requesting organisations, a tracer study among NPT alumni and focus groups to validate the evaluation's findings. Furthermore, six case studies in Benin, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Rwanda, South Africa and Vietnam constituted a central part of the analysis of this evaluation. Based upon the findings of the evaluation, Rambøll Management Consulting developed recommendations for the future development of NPT and NICHE. A detailed description of the applied methodology can be found in chapter 3.2 and annex 2.

The following report presents the results of this evaluation. It is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 3** explains the theoretical background to this evaluation and its methodological approach.
- **Chapter 4** gives an overview of the NPT and NICHE programmes and their historical genesis.
- **Chapter 5** presents the results of this evaluation. It analyses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of NPT as well as the relevance and efficiency of NICHE.
- **Chapter 6** draws conclusions and gives recommendations for the future development of NPT and NICHE.
- The **appendix** includes the bibliography, an overview over all conducted interviews and the description of the methodological approach to this evaluation.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The following chapter presents the theoretical background and the methodological approach for this evaluation. It highlights the current trends in global post-secondary education and summarizes the state of the art regarding the measurement of capacity development with a special emphasis on measuring capacity development in post-secondary education. From this overview the methodological approach for the evaluation is induced. A more detailed description of the methodology and the used operationalisations of key evaluation terms can be found in annex two.

3.1 Theoretical Background

3.1.1 Trends in Global Post-Secondary Education and Challenges for Developing Countries

According to Stephens (Stephens 2009b), since about the 1990s, the global higher education sector is characterised by six major trends: First, a massive increase in demand for higher education, second, a real decline in public expenditure on higher education; third, an increase in cost recovery measures (e.g. tuition fees); fourth, the widespread introduction of student loans; fifth, the mantra of privatization; and sixth, an actively and purposefully carried out internationalization. These developments have had distinct historical and geographical starting points and their specific forms vary across countries. However, virtually every country on the globe is affected by these trends in higher education and faces the challenges and opportunities that they pose. The literature agrees on the observation that the tertiary education sectors in many developing countries face substantial difficulties to keep pace with these trends and that in the past two decades, the gap between Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and many developing countries has been widened in terms of research and education (for example Burnapp 2011b).

As Kenneth King (King 2009) points out, the massive expansion of universities in combination with government and donor cutbacks on education has led to a major and under-researched university crisis in Africa, resulting in a deterioration of quality and relevance of the higher education institutions. This, in turn, has led to an increasing number of academics in the South leaving their countries. The underfunding of universities and insufficient remuneration of university staff has also led to a stagnation or decrease in the number of enrolled graduate students and PhD students in many of developing countries (King 2009). Furthermore, increasing numbers of students pursue their studies abroad if they find the means of funding. These trends are even more profound in the "hard" sciences such as natural sciences than in the "soft" sciences (law, business administration, etc.).

A recent report of the OECD agrees that the internationalization of higher education can increase the phenomenon commonly referred to as 'brain drain' and therefore contribute to developmental backlashes in the South (Vincent-Lancrin 2007). Additionally, the introduction and increase of tuition fees and the high individual costs of studying have made it harder to afford tertiary education for poorer parts of the population and therefore undermine poverty reduction and perpetuate inequality. This observation holds true for low income countries like Kenya (King 2009) as well as for upper-middle income countries like Colombia (Murakami & Blom 2008).

Internationalization is not only an issue affecting higher education but also (technical) vocational education and training. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggests in its Revised Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (UNESCO 2001) to make effective use of the on-going scientific, technological and socio-economic development, particularly globalization and the revolution in information and communication technology in the field of technical and vocational education. Similar to these recommendations, Hiebert and Borgen (Hiebert, Borgen 2002, p. 5) state that rapid technological developments in the early years of the twenty-first century as well as forces of globalization lead inevitably to radical changes in the working environment. This trend is observable in both urban centres and rural communities. In order to keep in step with these societal changes, it is important to adjust TVET programmes to this changing environment: Employment in technical, managerial and professional occupations is rising. Skills and qualifications at the post-secondary

level are demanded more and more which lead to a growing pressure for diversification of types and modes of provision at this level. Therefore, an expansion and diversification of new post-secondary vocational programmes can be observed in many countries (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2006, p.29).

A further consequence of globalization can be observed in regard to the relationship between skills imparted by the national education system and the demand of employers. During the past several decades the relationship has become increasingly imbalanced. The integration of new technologies in almost every field of professional activity fostered this development in the recent years with the result that the gap between education and the world of work has widened over the time. There is also a greater need for specialized education and training, but in some countries a tendency to persist with traditional priorities leads to a shortage of workers in certain specialized fields (Hiebert & Borgen, 2002, p.13). Vocational guidance and counselling as a solution is nowadays widely accepted as a powerful and effective method to narrow the gap between education and demanded skills (Hiebert & Borgen, 2002, p.5).

3.1.2 The Concept of Capacity Development in Development Cooperation

The emerging focus on aid effectiveness and its central role in poverty reduction has led to a new consensus, articulated among others in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), that "capacity development is one of the most critical issues for both donors and partner countries" (OECD, 2006, p. 4). At the core of this consensus, according to Mizrahi, is the assumption that, "transference of resources from rich to poor countries, although important, is not sufficient to improve the performance of public and private organizations in developing countries" (Mizrahi, 2004). It is considered of equal importance that organizations in the developing countries enhance their capacity to utilize, manage and deploy their resources in order to achieve their strategic (development) objectives. In most cases, this involves a need for some kind of organizational or institutional reforms and the capability to manage it.

Although the central role of capacity development is new, the concept itself is not. Capacity and capacity development have been pervasive concepts in international development cooperation since the late 1980s. However, according to Baser and Morgan this pervasiveness was not accompanied by a thorough understanding of 'capacity' as a concept, on the contrary, "for the most of the 1990s, both capacity as an outcome and capacity development as a process [...] attracted little in the way of serious research" (Baser and Morgan 2008, p. 7).

As a consequence we are faced with a paradoxical situation regarding capacity development in development cooperation. On the one hand, capacity development is seen as a cornerstone in development policies of donor countries and partner countries alike and a key element in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On the other hand, there is not even a broadly-accepted definition of what 'capacity' actually is. The commonly used definitions range from the narrow to the more holistic:

- "capacity' [is] the ability of an organization to produce appropriate outputs" (Boesen, 2005, p. 3)
- "capacity' is that emergent combination of attributes, assets, capabilities and relationships that enables a human system to perform, survive and self-renew" (ECDPM, 2005, p. 2-3).

Definitions of the first category define capacity as the ability of an individual, organization or institution to perform certain predefined functions. At the core of these definitions is an understanding that there is some kind of existing norm regarding the performance of a given individual or organization. 'Capacity development' therefore is about closing the gap between actual performance and desired performance. The more holistic definitions share a general understanding of 'capacity' as the product of the interplay of different elements in a system. This second category of definitions of 'capacity' varies regarding the kind and number of elements. For example, McKinsey, when preparing a study on capacity building in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), developed a framework for capacity development that identifies seven aspects of an organization's capacity. It defines capacity in these organizations in a pyramid consisting of these seven elements (see figure 1): "three higher-level elements – aspirations,

strategy, and organizational skills – three foundational elements – systems and infrastructure, human resources, and organizational structure – and a cultural element which serves to connect all the others” (McKinsey & Company, 2002, p. 36).

Figure 1: Seven Elements of Capacity



Source: adopted from McKinsey & Company 2002

Some standpoints of the scholarly debate on capacity development have found their way into policy, converging towards a basic understanding of the practice of capacity development, that the “determinants of capacity development are not only technical but also political and governance related, multi-dimensional and go beyond knowledge and skill transfer at the individual level to consider organizations, institutions, networks and the systems they are embedded [sic]” (OECD-DAC, 2009, p. 4). There is a strong emphasis on the endogenous character of capacity and capacity development. According to Walters, the function of donors is therefore, “not to ‘do’ capacity development but to promote it” (Walters, 2007, p. 4).

Against this background, there is now a growing consensus among official agencies (UNDP 2006, DAC 2006) and academics (Morgan 2006, Fowler 2006) that capacity building is

- A complex process between elements in an open system that involves changes in relationships
- A process involving changes in identity and power structure
- A primarily endogenous process based on the concept of local ownership.

This development notwithstanding, Morgan concludes, that the concept of ‘capacity’ and ‘capacity development’ remains fuzzy to a point, where the mere “concept of capacity and its practice remain puzzling, confusing and even vacuous” (Morgan, 2009, p. 2).

3.1.3 Capacity and Capacity Development from a System Perspective

A starting point for the systems approach towards capacity and capacity development is the theory and practice of complex adaptive systems (CAS). From the systems thinking perspective, cause and effect relationships are seen as multiple, delayed in time and place and non-linear. This approach questions common notions of causality and result chains. The systems approach contrasts with a more linear capacity paradigm: from the provision of some specific inputs to the delivery of certain outputs. Based on donor assumptions, these inputs and outputs should lead to better ‘performance’ and contribute to the achievement of development goals. In this approach, termed ‘reductionist’ (Moore 2009, Watson 2006), improvement of performance is viewed as a kind of proxy for capacity.

A central feature of the systems approach is the concept of 'emergence', understood as the process whereby "elements (of capacity) combine and interact over time to create a greater whole [...]" (ECDPM, 2005, p.3). This notion entails that capacity development outcomes cannot be engineered simply through the delivery of inputs (funding, expertise), but as a result of a complex interplay of variables. As a consequence, outcomes remain uncertain and difficult to predict. Any external intervention is thus to a large extent influenced by system behaviour over which the external agent has only limited control.

Based on a holistic definition of 'capacity' there is an assumption that every organization needs basic capabilities if it is to achieve development goals. For an organization to be able to create public value, it first needs competent people committed to the objective of generating development results. It further requires the capabilities to create these results and an adequate support structure to manage and sustain these capabilities. It also needs the ability to acquire the resources needed to sustain the system as a whole. Finally, it must be able to create a degree of coherence regarding these elements.

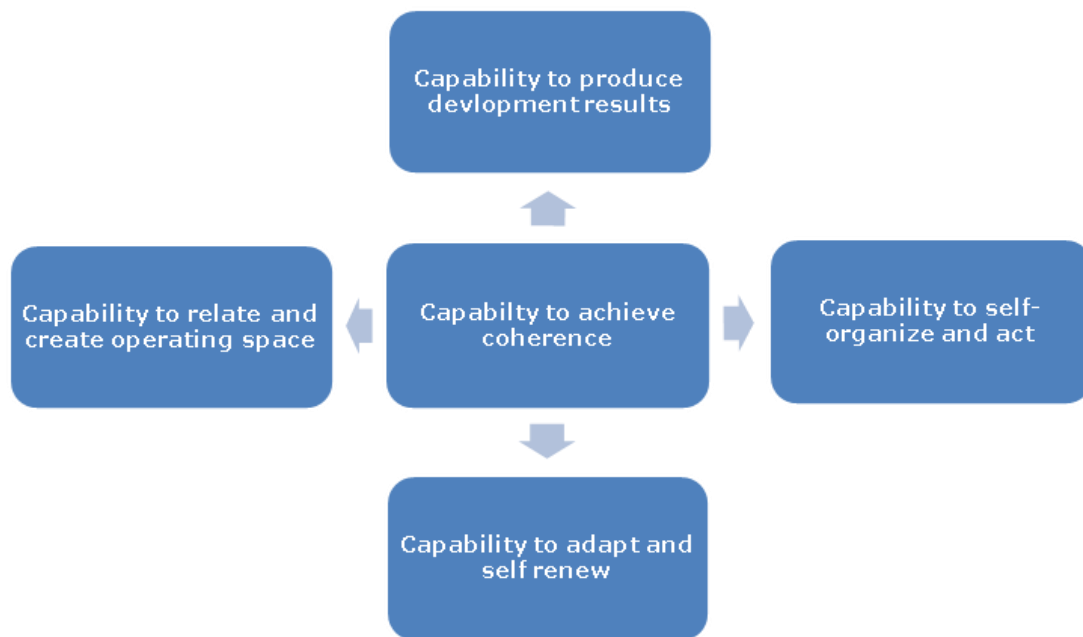
Morgan suggests the following definitions for commonly used terms (Morgan 2006):

- **Competencies:** the energies, skills and abilities of individuals
- **Capabilities:** the collective ability of a group or a system to do something either inside or outside the system.
- **Capacity:** the overall ability of an organization or system to create value for others.

It is those capabilities that enable an organization to fulfil a function ("to do things") and at the same time to sustain itself. He identifies "five core capabilities" in organizations and systems: the capability to act, the capability to generate development results, the capability to relate, the capability to adapt and the capability to achieve coherence (Morgan, 2006, p. 8-19).

- The **capability to act** is fundamental for an organization to have volition, to choose between options, to exert influence and to change and develop on the basis of strategic intent.
- The **capability to generate development results** is closest to the core of the 'reductionist' capacity paradigm. In many cases this capability is to a high degree equated with effective performance management in the form of better service delivery. There are two interrelated types of development results: The first type of development result is improved capacity itself. The second type is programmatic, in the form of organization-specific outputs and outcomes.
- The **capability to relate to other actors** within the context in which a system functions is seen as imperative. To gain support and protection, form informal alliances and/or formal partnerships affects the legitimacy of the organization and thus how effectively it can pursue its mandate.
- The **capability to adopt and self-renew** affects the ability of an organization or system to change and adapt to external or internal developments, new ideas and ultimately to learn.
- The **ability to achieve coherence** relates to a central tension in all human systems, between the need to differentiate and diversify and the need to maintain a common strategic focus.

These five capabilities are separate but interdependent. Figure 2 shows the interdependence of the five capabilities with the capability to achieve coherence at the centre.

Figure 2: The Five Capabilities by Morgan

Source: adopted from Morgan 2006

3.1.4 Capacity Development in Post-Secondary Education

Consulting the extensive literature on development cooperation in the field of post-secondary education, it becomes apparent that capacity development is the paradigm of the day. Depending on the understanding of the term and their object and level of inquiry, some authors stress the need for a functioning system of tertiary education for a country's overall capacity development: Vincent-Lancrin states that "[...] tertiary education contributes to capacity development by training a country's workforce in all fields relevant to its development" (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007b, p. 31). Other authors focus on capacity development *within* the post-secondary education system while investigating human capacity development in universities (Collins, 2011) or capacity development for research and training institutions (Young & Kannemeyer, 2001). In contrast to capacity development in higher education, capacity development in TVET at the post-secondary level is an under-researched topic.

As previously noted, capacity development has in recent years increasingly become the guiding paradigm for development cooperation in post-secondary education, as well as for the internationalization of tertiary education in the global South. In addition to the general popularity of the concept in the development discourse, three developments contribute to the fact that post-secondary educational institutions and cooperation agencies have turned to using capacity development as a guiding strategic principle.

First, in the 1990s and early 2000s the global development agenda on education as formulated by the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), the International Development Targets by the OECD (IDTs) and the MDGs has had an outspoken focus on primary education. This has resulted in a dramatic lack of funding by multilateral and bilateral donor agencies for post-secondary education institutions (King, 2009).¹ As a consequence, organizations that had traditionally been involved in academic exchange and cooperation such as the Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education (Nuffic), the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) or the major American foundations (Rockefeller, Carnegie, Ford, MacArthur) have been filling this gap and have been systematically adjusting their programmes to agendas that are consistent with the current development discourse and practices (Young & Kannemeyer 2001, King 2009). In this context, the agendas of

¹ In fact, with the publication of the Millennium Project Report (UN Millennium Project 2005) that sharply criticized the neglect of tertiary education there has been a noticeable change of thinking in this respect. However, the current education programmes of bilateral and multilateral development agencies are still characterised by a strong bias towards primary and secondary education.

international post-secondary education organisations have noticeably moved from a *mutual understanding approach*² to a more demand-oriented *capacity development* approach that promotes tailor-made programmes and tries to compensate for unmet demands in the post-secondary education systems of developing countries (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007).

Second, developing and especially emerging economies have adjusted their post-secondary education strategies from classical, donor-oriented development cooperation to more self-sufficient and self-reliant forms of development in order to increase their post-secondary education capacity on their own. This is valid especially for South East Asian countries that have introduced policies to encourage students to study abroad as well as to attract foreign post-secondary education providers to build up universities in their country (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007b). Also, the formal untying of aid in 2000 has triggered a development that encourages aid-receiving countries to formulate their own development strategies and also to continuously build up South-South partnerships instead of exclusively pursuing a classical North-South knowledge transfer (King, 2009). In the context of NPT and NICHE however, interviewed government officials did not know why NPT and NICHE were not untied.

Third, the financial constraints of many universities in the South and the fact that they face the threat of losing pace with the global knowledge economy requires clear and systematic solutions that provide answers on how to alleviate this situation and empower post-secondary education systems and research institutions in developing countries.

Against this background, international organizations and education services increasingly and explicitly aim at capacity development and incorporate strategies derived from the practices of international development cooperation (Ibid.).

The most prominent strategies of the current development cooperation in international post-secondary education are scholarship and fellowship programmes, institutional partnerships and support, as well as the establishment of networks. It is clear that these measures by themselves are far from new. However, carried out under the guise of capacity development, several new characteristics can be observed in practices of post-secondary education cooperation and exchange in recent years (Boeren & Maltha 2005, ADA 2009, Stephens 2009a, Vincent-Lancrin 2007a).

They include:

- the alignment of post-secondary education collaboration programmes with (bilateral) sectoral aid;
- an emphasis on programme support rather than projects;
- a shift from bilateral interventions to multi-lateral interventions;
- a focus on development and policy relevance in teaching and research;
- the stimulation of ownership in the South;
- a concentration on fewer countries;
- the introduction of tendering processes: enhancing competition in the North;
- the transfer of responsibility for programme administration to intermediary organizations;
- transparency in programme funding and accountability in international cooperation;
- budget controlling shifts from input to output financing;
- consortia formation both in the North and in the South;
- the untying of aid in post-secondary education cooperation;
- a focus on demand-orientation and ownership;
- context-orientation and a focus on complementarity;
- results-orientation and the introduction of quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation systems;

² The *mutual understanding approach* encompasses political, cultural, academic and development aid ambitions and allows and encourages mobility of domestic as well as foreign students and staff through scholarship and academic exchange (Vincent-Lancrin 2007b).

It is important to note that there is still no comprehensively defined framework of capacity development measures in post-secondary education. Rather, the principles listed above are informed by other areas of international cooperation, such as financial and technical assistance, and have been adopted on the basis of best practice (ADA, 2009). While some education cooperation agencies, especially those in Northwest Europe, have been frontrunners in applying these principles for some years, others, for example in Austria and Germany, are gradually making use of them (Ibid.).

Regarding the impact of capacity development in post-secondary education cooperation, it seems still too early to make well-founded and general statements (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007a). However, it is widely recognized that student and scholar mobility and its increase in the last years has allowed developing countries to access recent knowledge and research methodologies (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007a) and there is evidence that the introduction of quality assurance systems as part of capacity development and international cooperation has already improved the quality of teaching and research in some developing countries (Hopper, 2007).

Taking a critical position, several scholars point to the threats of recent approaches in post-secondary education cooperation. Stephens argues that the trend of programmes increasingly requiring research to be "policy relevant" and relevant for development has left universities in the South with little motivation to carry out important basic research. This current practice of project funding is even more counterproductive, as there is significant academic evidence that policy processes are rarely linked to "policy relevant" research results (Stephens, 2009b).

King criticizes the trends that have arisen in the context of capacity development that researchers from the South are less funded for longer research stays in the North and that more and more programmes dispense with funding individuals but instead favour projects and institutions. He argues that several programmes do not appropriately consider the realities of Southern research institutions and claims that generally too little is known about post-secondary education in developing (African) countries and the realities in which academics have to operate there. Therefore, he argues that education programmes and their designers are often illusionary about the quality of the capacity that is to be developed by means of cooperation (King, 2009).

Vincent-Lancrin contradicts this view, arguing that increased research and study stays of persons from developing countries pose a serious threat of a substantial brain drain and therefore should not be the dominant mode of capacity development in post-secondary education. Boeren points out that while ownership of programmes in the South has many benefits and opportunities, it has been observed that researchers and institutions in the North have lost the interest in cooperation programmes due to a lack of ownership and benefits on their side (Boeren, 2005). Another argument that is repeatedly mentioned in the recent literature is that the common funding span of projects (3-5 years) may be too short to reach sustainable results and therefore may provoke practices based on short-term success only.

3.1.5 Synthesis: Conclusions for the Evaluation

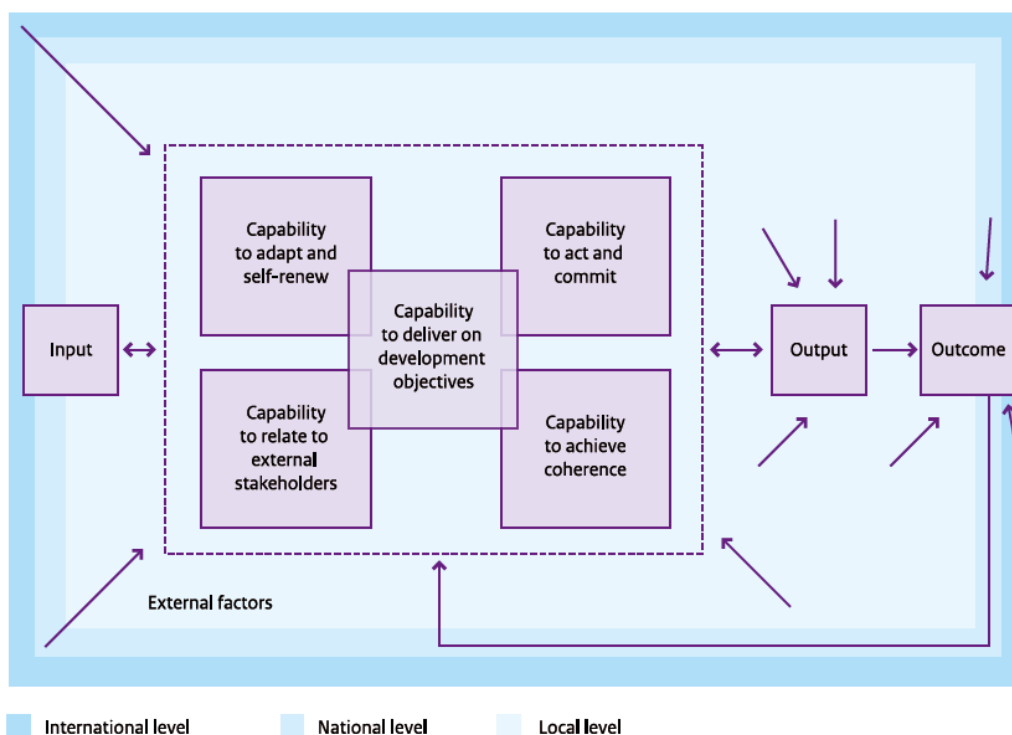
Based upon this theoretical framework the evaluation team adopted Peter Morgan's concept of capacity and his understanding of organizations as open-systems for this evaluation. Morgan's concept provided a starting point for the evaluation of capacity development efforts. However, it was adapted and advanced in order to meet the specific characteristics and objectives of the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) and the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE) programmes. In our methodological approach we operationalised the "multiple dimensions of 'capacity'" (Watson, 2009) along the five capabilities mentioned above and developed evaluation questions related to these capabilities (see chapter 3.2 and annex 2).

When adapting Morgan's approach it was important to adopt a balanced approach towards evaluation of capacity development initiatives in the field of post-secondary education which recognizes the interplay of 'hard' and 'soft' aspects that are relevant for 'capacity' as an emergent phenomena in this sector. 'Hard' aspects of capacity in the context of NPT/NICHE are for example, if new curricula have been developed, whether these have been implemented and

whether or not they result in higher quality education. Some examples of 'soft' aspects might be the acceptance of the integrity of the educational institution, its leadership and staff by internal (students) and external stakeholders. The evaluation of 'capacity' understood in a holistic sense, therefore has to acknowledge the 'soft' and 'hard' aspects of capacity and performance as legitimate and essential development results.

The five core capabilities discussed above provide a basis for assessing the capacity of an organization or system at a given point in time and enabled us to assess changes in the capabilities that happened in the past through the reconstruction of a baseline in the surveys and the case studies (see chapter 3.2 and annex 2). In this sense, the five core capabilities became criteria for evaluating changes in capacity and performance that happened in the past (see figure 3). Changes observed in these five capabilities at relevant points in the system – policy level, organizational level, inter-institutional level and content level - fed into broader capacity and performance changes (see chapter 4.2).

Figure 3: Analytical Framework



Source: Lange & Feddes 2008

All five capabilities were analysed in a holistic, inclusive manner. This ensured that incoherencies were avoided and endogenous capacity-change process could be distinguished from external factors and interventions that affected capacity in an organization or system. Following Paul Engel, we considered a capacity development initiative successful only if "it can be plausibly demonstrated that its interventions have effectively and efficiently contributed to relevant and sustainable changes in the core capabilities of developing systems, in line with the strategy and objectives the system has set for itself" (Engel, Keijzer & Land, 2007, p. 6).

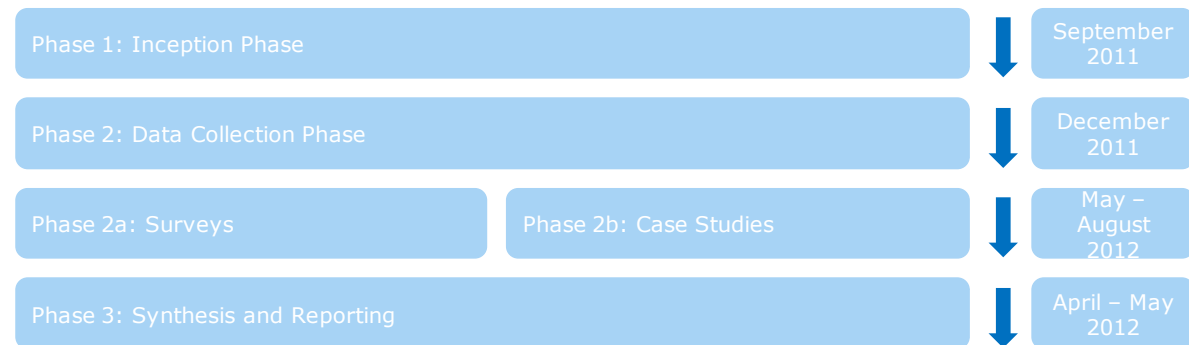
Based on the analytical framework, we developed a methodology that took into account the interdependencies of capabilities that make up capacity and at the same time reflected an understanding of organisations as open systems. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was chosen that allowed thorough triangulation to adequately capture 'capacity' and its development and to distinguish it from the external factors and interventions that influence it (see chapter 3.2).

3.2 Methodological Approach

The following chapter details the methodological approach of this evaluation. It will be illustrated which methodological steps were taken and which research instruments were employed in the evaluation. Thereby, it shall be rendered clear which sources the conclusions are based on and how the conclusions were reached. A more detailed description of the methodological approach can be found in annex 2.

The evaluation consisted of three research phases:

Figure 4: Phases of the Evaluation



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

3.2.1 Inception Phase

At the beginning of the evaluation, a **constitutive coordination meeting** between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rambøll Management Consulting was held on 5th October 2011 in order to discuss the details of the assignment and to adjust the organisation and detailed planning of the evaluation.

The starting point of the inception phase was **desk research** which included the analysis of relevant programme documents, financial documents and academic and “grey” literature. Thus, the desk research had multiple objectives: on the one hand it delivered a first description of the content and objectives of the NPT and NICHE programmes. On the other hand it placed them into a wider analytical context by conducting an academic review and an international review. Hence the desk research consisted of four parts. A complete overview of the analysed documents can be found in annex 1.

In the first part of the desk research, all relevant **programme documents** were analysed to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts, objectives, organisation and procedures of NPT and NICHE. Furthermore, the programmes were situated into the wider policy context by analysing documents on foreign/development aid policies of the Netherlands. The second part of the desk research analysed the **financial documents** of NPT and NICHE to assess the budgetary management of the programmes. The methodology for the efficiency analysis was developed on this basis (see annex 2).

The third part consisted of the **academic review** in which academic and “grey” literature on international cooperation in post-secondary education and training was reviewed. In addition to this, academic literature and “grey” literature in the field of capacity development was analysed. The review served as a basis for developing the methodological approach for this evaluation (see chapter 3.1).

Finally, an **international comparison** of nine international education development programmes was conducted. The objective of the international comparison was to compare the policies of the Netherlands on international cooperation in post-secondary education with similar policies pursued by other players. A summary of the international comparison can be found in annex 3.

In the first step, the nine programmes in post-secondary education were analysed along the following criteria for the comparison:

- Programme Objectives
- Programme Target Groups
- Programme Funding
- Programme Approaches
- Project Duration
- Project Ownership

In the second step four programmes from Belgium, Finland, Norway and Sweden were selected for an in-depth analysis along the above mentioned criteria using the most-similar design method³.

Additionally, we conducted five interviews with the responsible programme manager of each of the selected programmes to clarify questions, gather further information and deepen the analysis. A complete list of interview partners can be found in annex 1. The international comparison can be found in the inception report.

Simultaneously with the desk research we conducted 24 semi-structured **in-depth or telephone interviews** with the following stakeholders: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (nine interviews), Nuffic (two group interviews), Dutch organizations (eight interviews) and the requesting organization (five interviews). The aim of the interviews was, first, to gain a deeper understanding of the structures, objectives, relevance and effectiveness of the programmes. Second, it was the objective to map the processes of the programmes in these interviews in order to conduct an organizational analysis in conjunction with the efficiency analysis at a later stage in the evaluation.

On the basis of the previously undertaken analytical steps we reconstructed the **intervention logic** of NPT and NICHE (see annex 2). The reconstructed intervention logic served as a basis for a discussion for the **theory of change workshop** which was held on 21st November 2011 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs involving all relevant stakeholders. All comments in this workshop were documented and included in the intervention logic by Rambøll Management Consulting.

The intervention logic and the academic review then laid the groundwork to develop the **methodological approach for the evaluation** which included a specific approach towards the **measurement of capacity development**. The latter was built upon the 5C-model and its open-system approach by Peter Morgan. A detailed description of the methodological approach can be found in annex 2.

Against the backdrop of the reconstructed intervention logic, the desk research and the developed methodological concept, Rambøll Management Consulting developed an **assessment grid** (see annex 2). In this assessment grid the collected information of the prior analysis has been summarised and systemised in the form of central questions and aspects relevant to this evaluation. We then assigned indicators and/or descriptors to every aspect. Furthermore, we incorporated the 5C model into the assessment grid by adopting it to the characteristics of NPT and NICHE.

In the next step, we developed **questionnaires** for the online surveys among the embassies, NPT alumni and Dutch and requesting organization (see annex 2) and selected 16 NICHE projects for an in-depth analysis. The methodological approach and the selection of NICHE projects was summarised in an **inception report** which was delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The inception report was discussed with the reference group⁴ and all feedback was incorporated into it by Rambøll Management Consulting.

³ Within the *Most Similar System Design* cases are compared that show similarities in as many variables and aspects as possible. It is based on the hypothesis that between most similar cases variables causing differences will be easier to identify.

⁴ The reference group consisted out of three representatives of the Directie Sociale Ontwikkeling of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DSO), a representative of the Policy and Operations Evaluations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a representative of Nuffic and an independent expert.

3.2.2 Data Collection Phase

In a first step we conducted the **online-surveys** among the embassies, NPT alumni as well as all participating Dutch and requesting organisations with our survey software SurveyXact[®]. The general objective of the online-surveys was to collect comprehensive data regarding the implementation mechanism, relevance and efficiency of NPT and NICHE as well as the effects and sustainability of NPT. The response rate for each survey was the following:

- Survey Embassies: 83.3% (Distributed: 12/ Answers: 10)
- Survey NPT Alumni: 14.6% (Distributed: 825/ Answers: 121)⁵
- Survey Dutch and requesting organisations: 44.3% (Distributed: 445/ Answers: 197)
- Efficiency survey Dutch and requesting organisations: 62.7% (Distributed: 102/ Answers: 64)

The data collected from the surveys was verified and validated by Rambøll Management Consulting. Subsequently, the data was analysed using univariate statistical analyses such as frequencies, percentages or mean. In order to find causal relations between variables, the evaluation team uses bi- and multivariate data analysis methods such as cross tables, chi square tests, regression analysis or factor analysis.

Parallel to the implementation of the surveys the **organisation of the six case studies**, which were proposed in the terms of reference started. In addition a **portfolio for the case studies** was developed in order to ensure that the case studies were implemented on the basis of a coherent analytic system and with a high quality. The portfolio was presented to all international and local consultants in a workshop and revised according to the received feedback.

In preparation for the case studies a **desk research** and a **context analysis** of the socio-economic, economic and political context in the case study countries was conducted by the international and local consultants. The context analysis thereby focussed particularly on the education sector in these countries. At the end of the context analysis a **stakeholder map** was developed in which the relations of the relevant requesting organisations to other relevant stakeholders was visualised. Simultaneously, the international consultant reconstructed the **NPT projects' intervention logics** by taking into consideration the overall intervention logic of NICHE and NPT (see annex 2). These were then discussed and validated in telephone interviews with the relevant programme officers of Nuffic and the northern partners.

The case studies included six countries (Benin, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Rwanda, South Africa and Vietnam) and 34 NPT projects which were pre-selected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nuffic on the basis of the following criteria:

- The distribution of projects (both in numbers and in financial allocations) by country
- The distribution of projects by sector
- The distribution of projects by type of institution(s) involved, both in the Netherlands and in the countries concerned
- The number of projects per country/ sector completed before 2010
- The availability of (recent) project and/ or country evaluation reports
- The presence/ absence of NICHE projects in the countries concerned
- The (im)possibility to effectively undertake field research

All case studies were implemented with an international and local consultant. Within the case studies 172 interviews and workshops were conducted with the following relevant stakeholders:

- Dutch organisations (ministry, Nuffic, RNEs, etc.): 43
- Requesting organisations (project coordinators, (involved) staff, etc.): 104
- Comparison group (colleges, universities, etc. which did not receive funding): 7
- External stakeholders (national stakeholders, Dutch enterprises as well as bi- and multilateral donors): 18

⁵ Literature agrees that tracer studies in general have on average a response rate between 10.0% and 20.0%. As a consequence the response rate can be judged as normal.

Furthermore, a survey among staff of the 34 visited requesting organisations was conducted to gather additional information. A complete list of all conducted interviews and workshops can be found in annex 1.

To measure the short-, medium- and long-term effects of NPT the evaluation chose to adopt a **quasi-experimental design** called post only non-equivalent comparison design (Rist & Imas Morra, 2009, p. 264) in combination with a **contribution analysis** to measure changes on the organisational and sector level. The design was chosen as it addressed best the methodological challenges which were encountered by the evaluation; namely, a missing baseline, a missing control group and intervention variables at the sector level. As a consequence the surveys and case studies reconstructed the baseline and also compared the observed changes through NPT with a comparison group, which was selected on the basis of developed criteria. While the reconstruction of the baseline proved to be successful, the comparison with the comparison group faced obstacles, as it was difficult to identify comparable organisations. As a result, only four organisations in four case studies could be identified which qualified for the comparison group. The evaluator deemed this sample as too small to draw conclusive conclusions. Thus, the evaluator restricted himself in the analysis to the comparison of changes along the reconstructed baseline.

Based upon the data gathered from the surveys and the case studies, a **capacity development index (CDI)** was developed and validated through a factor analysis by Rambøll Management Consulting for each requesting organisation. For this purpose, we developed items which made it possible for the consultants to judge the quality and scope of the observed changes. The assessments of the consultants and the answers from the survey were weighted and interrelated by using calculation algorithms. As a result we received a CDI between 1 (capability is lacking) and 5 (capability is high) for each requesting organization, which could be compared to the CDI of the requesting organization's baseline.

In addition, a **cost-efficiency analysis** of NPT and NICHE and a **cost-effectiveness analysis** were conducted by the evaluation team. For the cost-efficiency analysis a Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed (RACI)-analysis and an intra-programme benchmark was used to analyse and compare the input-output efficiency of the programmes (see annex 2). A challenge here was the low response rate of the efficiency survey. The cost-effectiveness analysis of NPT also used an intra-programme comparison (comparison of NPT projects among each other) to analyse the input-outcome efficiency of the projects. For this purpose it used the available budgets of the projects and linked them to the results of the surveys and the case studies (the CDI) in order to approximate their cost-effectiveness. However, in five cases the available budget was not detailed enough to conduct such an analysis.

3.2.3 Synthesis and Reporting

In a first step we validated the data gathered from the surveys and the case studies in **two focus groups** with representatives of the Dutch project partners and programme officers of Nuffic. Furthermore the focus groups were used to verify whether the results of the evaluation also held true for the other NPT projects which could not be visited. Simultaneously, we **coded and analysed the qualitative interviews of the case studies** with NVivo – a software programme for the analysis of qualitative data.

In a second step, the collected data was analysed, triangulated and synthesised in an **internal workshop** with all experts of Rambøll Management Consulting. In this setting we were able to reflect upon, synthesise and analyse the collected data by considering all different perspectives of the experts from the various case studies. On the basis of the synthesised findings we developed recommendations for the evaluation by taking into consideration all perspectives of the involved experts and the findings of the different data collection methods.

Afterwards, the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations were presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nuffic at a workshop on 16.05.2012. All feedback received was incorporated into the **final report** by Rambøll Management Consulting, which was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 2012.

3.2.4 Methodological Challenges

The measurement of effects of a single intervention such as NPT in the field of development cooperation, which is rather limited in scope and time, poses methodological challenges to the evaluator. In order to measure short-, medium- and even long-term effects of NPT, the evaluator has to find an answer to the hypothetical question: "What would have happened if the intervention had not taken place?" Ideal methodological designs to answer this question are experimental design in which the counterfactual situation (the non-participation in the intervention) can be approximated with the help of a control group. This was however not possible in this evaluation as no suitable control group could be identified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nuffic and the evaluator in the given timeframe of this evaluation. To remedy this fact the evaluators reconstructed the baseline, which allowed a comparison of the social, economic or individual context before the NPT programme with the point of measurement of the evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the programme.

However, the lack of a suitable control group led to methodological challenges in judging the efficiency and impact of the NPT programme. Within the efficiency criteria the efficiency of NPT and NICHE could not be compared to a counterfactual situation but had to be accomplished on the basis of a comparison between the different NPT projects and a comparison between NPT and NICHE. Regarding the measurement of the long-term impact at the level of the NPT alumni, a control group could not be constructed as the addresses and profile of this group was unknown to the Ministry, Nuffic and the evaluator before the evaluation. As a consequence a tracer study was conducted to collect data about the effects of the programme on the careers of the NPT alumni. This data could however not be compared to a suitable control group.

A further challenge was that the NPT programme was evaluated using the 5C model (see chapter 3.1) which was not used in the conceptualisation of the programme and its projects. However, as the 5C model is a theoretical framework for capacity development it can serve as an analytical tool to examine the contributions of a capacity development programme such as NPT to the capacity development of its target group. At the same time it however cannot be used as yardstick as it conceptualises capacity development as a systemic concept which visualises capacity as a complex concept that emerges out of the interplay of different internal and external forces (see chapter 3.1). As a consequence the evaluators used the model to measure changes in the different capabilities of the target group to highlight strengths and weaknesses of the current NPT programme. In the light of the model it is however not possible to judge the increase of capacity as such for the target group. Thus, another focus of the evaluation was to highlight the complex interplay of different capabilities and the resulting consequences for the programme.

4. OVERVIEW OVER NPT AND NICHE

4.1 Historical Background of NPT and NICHE

The Netherlands' engagement in international education cooperation issues dates back to the 1960s but has changed over the past decades in regard to its focal points, targets and implementation processes. The latest outcomes of this engagement are the two programmes Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) and Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE). However, in order to understand the reasons why these programmes were introduced and to illustrate what kind of changes occurred in the past decades, it is important to scrutinise the main characteristics of the predecessor programme 'Joint Financing Programme for Cooperation in Higher Education' (MHO), which was introduced in 1993.

On behalf of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MHO was managed by the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic). In general, the objective of the programme was to support the development of specific countries by generating technical and professional human resources to support higher education as well as research and extension activities. From MHO's point of view, universities were crucial to the development of a country or region because cooperating with universities was seen as the best strategy to realize human resource development and institution building. In order to enhance effectiveness in achieving objectives and make the results more sustainable, the idea of MHO was to concentrate support on a limited number of southern institutes, each having various individual projects, rather than supporting individual projects at a large number of institutes (Nikiema, 2003, pp. 7).

In 1998 the Dutch government commissioned a study into the system of international cooperation in higher education - the Inter-ministerial Policy Review of International Education (IBO-IO). The IBO-IO report suggested reforming and modernising the international education (IE) programmes, which led in the end to the formulation of the NPT programme. The aim of the IBO-IO was to reach a more efficient and effective organization of IE programmes and to enhance the role of IE in Dutch international cooperation. Further, the review found five ways to reach these two aims: (1) An alignment of IE on Dutch bilateral policy priorities could enhance its role; (2) the needs and priorities of southern partners should receive more attention by making the programmes more demand-oriented; (3) a policy with a more flexible application of resources by the Dutch government was needed to make IE more efficient; (4) competition between implementing institutions on the basis of price/quality ratio should determine the result-oriented allocation of funds and lead to increasing effectiveness and flexibility; (5) a transition period from 2000 until 2004 should be defined in order to facilitate the adaptation of the new policy and to replace input finance with output finance.

The new IE policy framework originated from IBO-IO, based on the policy priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and focused on special sectors, countries and target groups favoured by the Ministry, as well as on priorities of recipient countries. Consequentially, there was a focus on fewer programmes and the multiplex IE programme, which covered seven main programmes, was reduced to a three-component programme consisting of NPT and the two Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP), the Academic Programme (NFP-AP) and the Training Programme (NFP-TP). In addition, the number of IE supported countries was also limited (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, p. 2) and MHO was phased out in December 2004 after a transition phase, to be succeeded by NPT (Nikiema, 2003, pp. 7).

The overall aim of NPT was to improve the quality and quantity of trained professional staff in developing countries in order to reach sustainable capacity within the poverty reduction framework. By strengthening post-secondary education and training capacity, NPT helped to give developing countries a better chance of generating their own training institutes and manpower in the long run. Thus, compared to MHO, the overall aim remained the same, while the method of realizing this aim changed in the form of the above mentioned principles: policy alignment, demand orientation, flexibility, competition and result orientation (ECORYS, 2007, p. 22).

After an evaluation of the NPT programme conducted on the behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by ECORYS in 2007 and a gender review in 2009, NPT was phased out in 2009 and replaced by NICHE. The evaluation criticised, among other things, that NPT was not aligned to the policy objectives of the Netherlands development cooperation and the partner countries' development objectives. As a consequence the new NICHE programme had similar objectives as NPT but focused more on labour market orientation, gender and policy (see chapter 3.2).

4.2 Objectives of NPT and NICHE

The objectives of NPT and NICHE are specified by Nuffic in two programme- level logical frameworks (Nuffic, unknown c; Nuffic, unknown d). In the logical framework of NPT, the following overall and specific objectives are defined for the programme:

- *Overall objective:* A sustained and increased availability (in quantity and quality) of manpower and know-how answering the needs of specific sectors.
- *Specific objective:* The capacity of national/sectoral institutions to support post-secondary education and training provision is strengthened.
- *Specific objective:* The capacity of NPT supported education and training institutions to support specific sectors with post-secondary education and training is strengthened (Nuffic, unknown d).

The logical framework of NICHE in turn defines the following overall and specific objectives for NICHE (Nuffic, unknown c):

- *Overall objective:* The quality, relevance and gender sensitiveness of post-secondary education in NICHE countries has improved.
- *Specific objective:* The capacity of national/sectoral organisation and institutions which support post-secondary education and training provision is strengthened.
- *Specific objective:* The capacity of post-secondary education and training institutes to deliver quality, gender sensitive, education and training, or to do relevant research is strengthened.
- *Specific objective:* Gender discrepancies in the post-secondary higher education system have decreased.
- *Specific objectives:* Engendering NICHE country programmes, by analysing international, national and sector policies on women. The specific capacity building needs in higher education to address the different needs on women and men are identified by involving women and gender stakeholders and actors.
- *Specific objectives:* NICHE projects address the gender dimensions of the capacity building endeavours at all levels (Ibid.).

Moreover, the following policy priorities and quality criteria were introduced in NICHE on the level of programme implementation (Nuffic, 2010b):

- More attention to the world of work and the needs of the labour market
- More attention to technical and vocational training
- More attention to gender equality
- Better alignment with national policies and more cooperation with other donors
- Improved institutional and organizational assessment
- Flexible interventions
- More use of local and regional capacity for identification, implementation and monitoring
- More attention to organisational learning as well as programme monitoring at output and outcome level (Ibid.)

From the objectives described above, the collected in-depth interviews and the theory of change workshop held on 21st November 2011, it became obvious that NICHE introduced a stronger focus on gender and labour market orientation as well as a stronger alignment with donors and national policies as well as more coherence with Dutch bilateral interventions through the embassies (see annex 2). These changes were introduced on the basis of evaluation findings and political will according to the relevant interviewed stakeholders. Against this background the

following target dimensions for evaluating the effectiveness of the NPT programme were extracted.⁶ (The order of the target dimensions does not reflect a set of priorities).

- On the **policy level** NPT strengthens the capacity of national and sectoral institutions to develop policies for post-secondary education and to support post-secondary and training provisions. For this purpose, quality assurance systems, national policy frameworks, accreditation systems, etc. are developed to establish framework conditions in which post-secondary education organisations can improve their performance in their sector.
- On the **organisational level** NPT strengthens the organisational systems of sectors to improve their performance and their professional standing. These can be either organisations on a system-level such as ministries or organisations within the system such as universities. To this end, capacity development is undertaken to enable these organizations to provide the relevant sector with the needed training and education courses in the field of post-secondary education.
- On the **inter-institutional level** NPT effectively embeds the supported organisations in the post-secondary educational system of their country. It thereby strengthens the capacity of the supported organizations to relate to other organisations and institutions in the sector.
- On the **content level** NPT helps organizations to develop accredited academic and vocational training programmes that target the needs and demands of the specific sector.

4.3 Description of the Target Group of NPT and NICHE

According to the programmes' documents, both programmes have the same target groups (Nuffic, unknown e). The target groups consist of the Dutch organisations which apply for project grants with Nuffic, the requesting organizations where the projects are implemented and beneficiaries who receive better education facilities, courses, etc. (Ibid.). As a result, the target groups can be divided into *intermediate* and *direct beneficiaries*. For the purpose of this evaluation these two categories are defined as follows:

- *Intermediate beneficiaries* are organisations, institutions or persons which possess a brokering role between a programme's objectives and its target groups and are involved in the realization of the programme's objectives.
- *Direct beneficiaries* are stakeholders who are primarily addressed by a programme and experience changes (impacts) due to the programme.

Using these definitions the three target groups in NPT and NICHE can be categorised as follows:

- The **Dutch organisations**⁷ can be considered intermediate beneficiaries as they receive funds to implement projects with the requesting organizations. Their task is thereby to use their expertise to achieve the programmes' objectives regarding capacity development in the requesting organisations. By doing this, they establish structures which ultimately also benefit persons who use these structures (e.g. newly established Master courses).
- The **requesting organisations** are at the same time intermediate and direct beneficiaries of the two programmes. On the one hand, they are direct beneficiaries because they benefit directly from the projects which enhance their capacity. On the other hand, some requesting organizations are also intermediate beneficiaries, as they are able to deliver improved services. (E.g., universities that are able to provide a better education.) to persons who then receive for example a better education.
- **Beneficiaries** are direct beneficiaries as they benefit from the newly established capacities of the requesting organizations. As a consequence they are e.g. receiving a better education and/or training and are available for work in the relevant sector in the supported country.

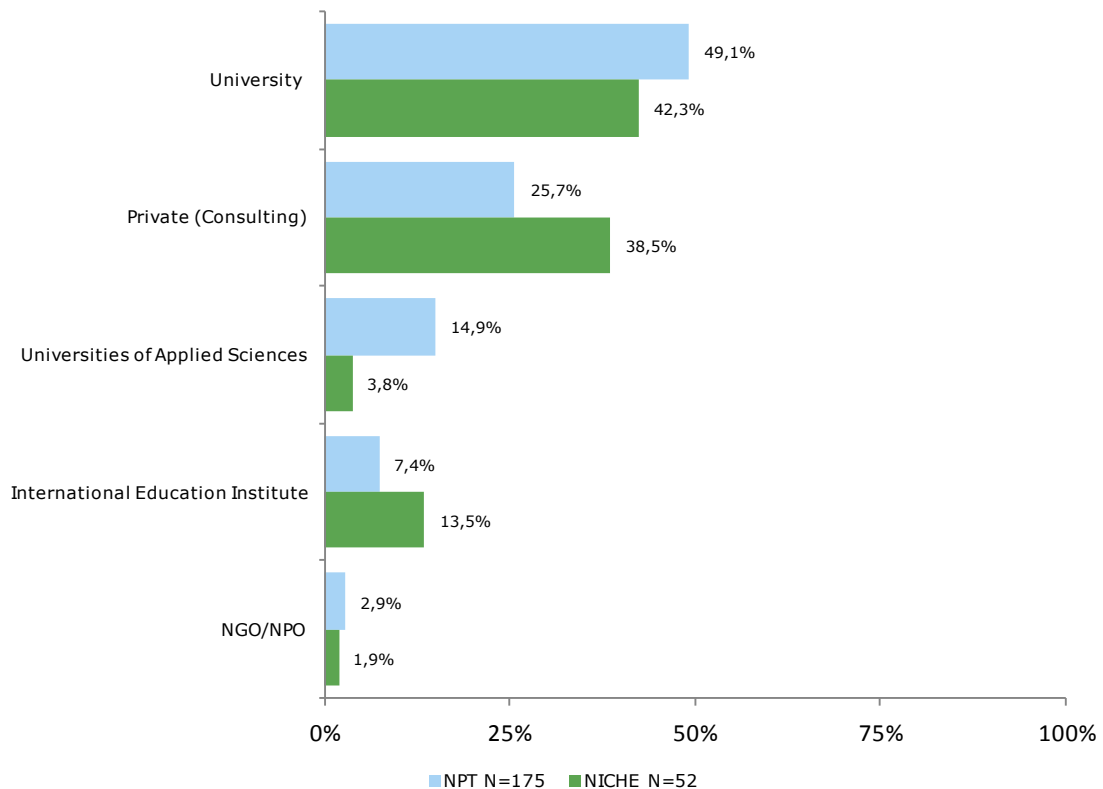
⁶ The effectiveness of NICHE cannot be assessed by this evaluation as most NICHE projects are just in their starting phase. As a consequence no effects of the programme can be observed in the requesting organisations at this stage.

⁷ It has to be noted however, that in many projects Dutch organisations are the lead organisations of national and international consortia of collaborating organisations.

4.3.1 Reached Target Groups

The data collected by Nuffic shows that the majority of the 175 financed NPT projects were implemented by universities (49.1%) as lead partners followed by private consulting companies (25.7%), Universities of Applied Science (14.9%), international education institutes (7.4%) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (2.9%) (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Dutch Organizations in NPT and NICHE



Source: Nuffic Database 2012

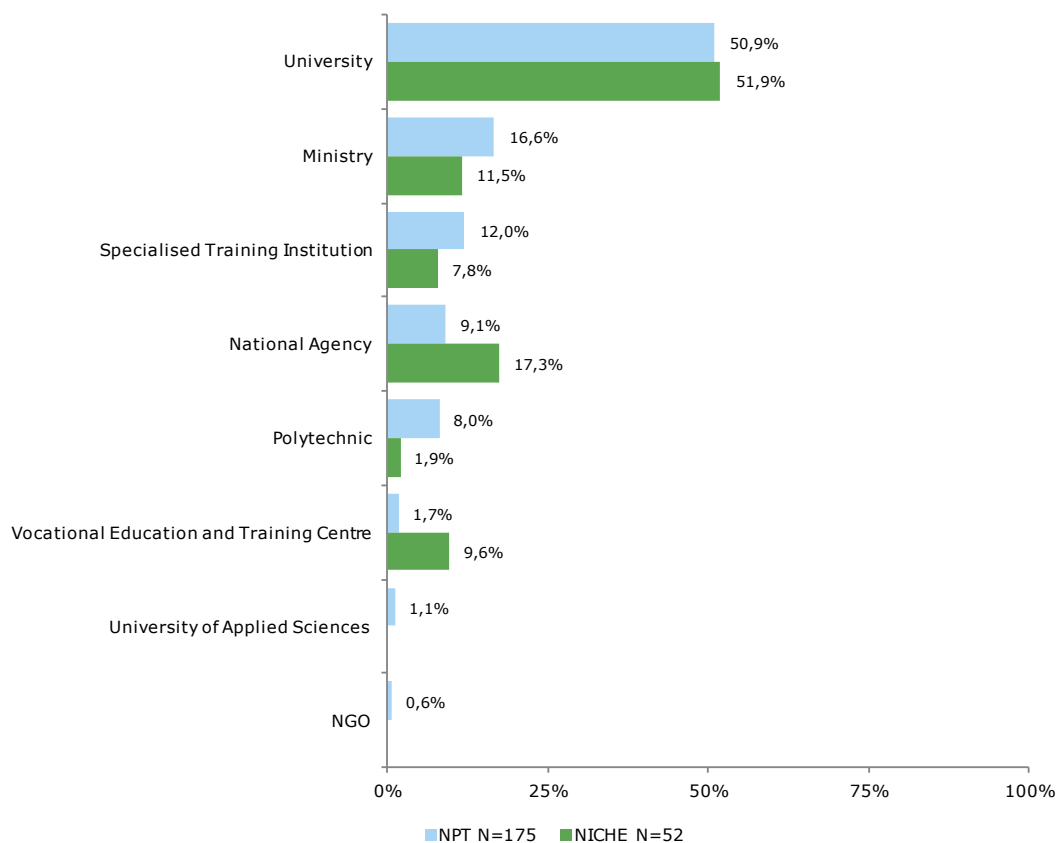
In comparison, in NICHE 42.3% universities, 38.5% private consulting companies, 13.5% international education institutes, 3.8% universities of applied sciences and 1.9% NGOs were reached as lead partners (see figure 5).

When analysing the composition of the winning consortia a rather mixed picture emerges. Regarding NPT, 142 tenders were won by consortia (81.6%). In 17 cases a university won the tender as single bidder (9.7%), as it was six times the case for private (consulting) companies (3.5%), four times for Universities of Applied Science (2.3%), three times for NGOs (1.7%) and two times for an International Education Institute (2.7%). The composition of the consortia differs depending on which actor has the lead. When a university is leading a consortium, the most frequent partner organisations are other universities (51.6%), followed by Universities of Applied Science (25.8%), International Education Institutes (22.6%), Businesses (16.1%), and other type of organisations (9.7%). When private (consulting) companies have the lead a more even distribution can be identified. The most common partner organisations for private (consulting) companies are universities (35.1%), businesses (35.1%), other type of organisations (35.1%), Universities of Applied Science (29.7%), and International Education Institutes (21.6%). If the overall involvement of certain organisational types in NPT projects is taken into account, the analysis of the consortia reveals a rather clear dominance of universities, which are involved in 121 projects (69.5%), followed by businesses (67 projects; 38.5%), Universities of Applied Science (57 projects; 32.8%), International Education Institutes (47 projects; 27.0%), other type of organisations (28 projects; 16.1%), and NGOs (nine projects; 5.2%).

With respect to NICHE, 44 of the 52 NICHE projects were won by consortia (84.6%). Six were won by a single university (11.5%), and two by one single business company (3.8%). When a university wins a bid as leading organisation the most common partners within the consortia are other universities (47.8%), followed by businesses (31.3%), other type of organisations (31.3%), Universities of Applied Science (25%), NGOs (12.5%) and International Education Institutes (12.5%). When private (consulting) companies are the leading organisation, their most common partners are universities (61.1%), businesses (44.4%), Universities of Applied Science (27.8%), International Education Institutes (27.8%), other type of organisations (22.3%) and NGOs (11.1%). Moreover, leading International Education Institutes tend to build consortia with universities (42.9%), Universities of Applied Science (42.9%), other type of organisations (42.9%) and Businesses (14.3%). Overall, a clear dominance of universities can be seen, as they are involved in 37 of the 52 NICHE projects (71.2%). International Education Institutes are involved in 16 NICHE projects (30.8%), followed by businesses (15 projects; 28.8%), Universities of Applied Science (15 projects; 28.8%), other type of organisations (twelve projects; 23.1%) and NGOs (five projects; 9.6%).

The requesting organizations in NPT comprise mainly universities (50.9%), ministries (16.6%), specialised training institutions (12.0%), national agencies (9.1%), and polytechnic colleges (8.0%) (see figure 6). Compared to the requesting organisations in NICHE, difference can be found regarding specialised training institutions, national agencies, vocational training and education centres and polytechnic colleges. While there has been an increase in national agencies and vocational education and training centres, there has been a decrease in specialised training institutions and polytechnic colleges in NICHE (see figure 6).

Figure 6: Requesting Organizations in NPT and NICHE⁸



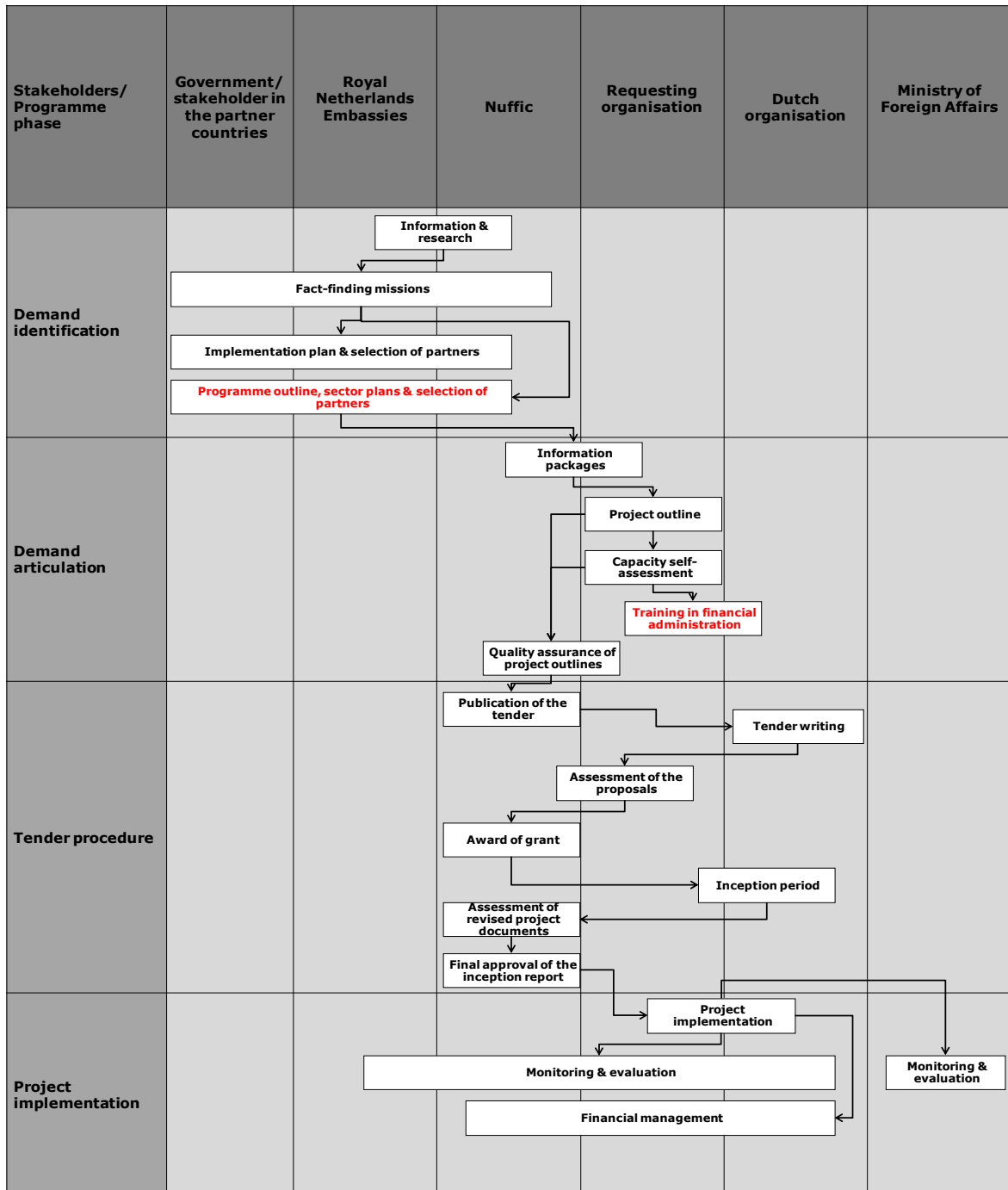
Source: Nuffic Database 2012

⁸ In the database of Nuffic different categories for NPT and NICHE exist for the requesting organisations. For NICHE the categories of "University of Applied Sciences" and "NGO" do not exist. Thus, the value for each category for the respective programme is 0%.

4.4 NPT and NICHE Preparation and Implementation Processes

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs assigned the responsibility of managing and administering NPT and NICHE to Nuffic. The current practice of implementing both programmes can be divided into different phases and standard processes (see figure 7). Changes in the processes, which were introduced by NICHE, will be highlighted in the following description where necessary.

Figure 7: Preparation and Implementing Processes in NPT and NICHE⁹



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

The processes can be divided into four ideal phases: demand identification, demand articulation, tender procedure and project implementation.

⁹ The "red writing" refers to core processes which were newly introduced by NICHE.

The **demand identification phase** consists of three processes: information and research, fact-finding missions, implementation plan and selection of partners (NPT) or programme outline, sector plans and selection of partners (NICHE).

- *Information and research:* In the first step, Nuffic contacts all Royal Netherlands Embassies (RNE) in the relevant partner countries to inform them about the programme. NPT or NICHE is explained to them as well as their roles and responsibilities within the programmes. The RNE in turn recommend sectors, ministries and other stakeholders with which the programmes should be carried out. In a second step, Nuffic conducts desk research to identify demand and possible partner organisations in the sectors and countries. Ideally, the research is based on policy plans which have been developed by local authorities in a participatory manner and in close consultation with local stakeholders. If this has not been the case, priorities for NPT/ NICHE cooperation can be identified through fact-finding missions (see below) and/ or commissioned identification or sector studies by contracted local consultants.
- *Fact-finding missions:* In most cases, before possible partner organisations have been identified on the basis of the desk research Nuffic arranges fact-finding missions. In these missions, workshops and interviews with the potential partner organisations, partner countries' governments and relevant stakeholders as well as the RNE are organised. The objectives of the consultation are to present the programmes to the partners, identify subject areas for NPT/NICHE cooperation and discuss potential projects.
- *Implementation plan and selection of partners (NPT):* The result of the demand identification process in NPT is an implementation plan for the NPT intervention which includes the following components: an indication of the subject areas for NPT cooperation, a list of selected partner organisations that work in these areas and would cooperate in the NPT context, a global indication of the amount of funding available for each possible combination of organisation and a subject area with set priorities. The implementation plan is drawn up in close cooperation with the RNEs and the partner countries' governments.
- *Programme outline, sector plans and selection of partners (NICHE):* In NICHE the implementation plan has been renamed the programme outline. The programme outline has to be signed by the RNE and the relevant national and line ministries of the partner country. It thereby must be in line with the policy objectives of the Dutch development cooperation as well as with the national policy goals of the partner country. In addition to the programme outline sector, plans are composed by Nuffic which specify the available budget and the objectives of NICHE for each sector. If the existing information is not sufficient, a local consultant is contracted to draw up the sector plan. The sector plans are either signed by the national ministry for education or the relevant line ministries as well as the RNE. As in the case of NPT, the programme outline includes a list of selected partner organisations and a global indication of the amount of funding with set priorities.

The **demand articulation phase** is composed of four (NPT) or five (NICHE) processes: information packages for the requesting organisations, project outline, capacity self-assessment, training in financial administration (NICHE) and quality assessment of the project outlines.

- *Information packages for the requesting partners:* Before the articulation process begins, the selected requesting organisations receive the necessary information about NPT/NICHE as well as a formal letter to participate in NPT/NICHE and a request to commit itself to the objectives and policy principles of the respective programme from Nuffic. The information package includes a description of the programme and various examples and models to assist the requesting organisation when it drafts its project outline.
- *Project outline:* The requesting organisations draft a project outline in which they describe their demand and outline the future project under NPT/ NICHE. Although the requesting organisations formulate the specific demand for NPT/ NICHE cooperation themselves, they can call on a local consultant and/or Nuffic for guidance. The local consultant is paid by Nuffic. As most requesting organisations experience great difficulties to draft a project outline, local consultants are involved in most of the demand articulation processes (especially in NICHE).

- *Capacity self-assessment*: While drafting the project outline, the requesting organization also fills out a Checklist for an Organisational Capacity Assessment (COCA). In this checklist the requesting organisations provide information about their staff, their financial resources, their management structure and their organisational weaknesses and strengths. This information is used for the profile document in the project outline. Within NICHE the requesting organisations also indicate in the COCA if they want to take over financial responsibility for the project. Based upon the COCA, Nuffic assesses whether the respective requesting organisation can have the financial responsibility. Moreover, Nuffic can also decide to contract a local accountant of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to assess the completed COCA and the organisation.
- *Training in financial administration (NICHE)*: If the requesting organisation wants to take over financial responsibility for a project in NICHE, but lacks the necessary capacity, they can be trained by the local office of PwC in the necessary skills.¹⁰ Moreover, the training is open to any interested organisations involved in NICHE and can also take place at a later stage (e.g. after the demand articulation phase). The meeting related costs of the training are paid by Nuffic while the participants pay their travel costs from their respective project budgets.
- *Quality assessment of the project outlines*: Nuffic assesses the technical quality of the project outlines. It also considers whether or not the project outline is a logical response to the identified demand. On this basis Nuffic in some cases gives feedback to the requesting organisation or consultant to improve the project outline accordingly. Only after Nuffic deems the project outline satisfactory will it publish the call for tenders.

The **tender procedure** can be divided into three processes: publication of the tender, assessment of the proposals and award of grant.

- *Publication of the tender*: Nuffic publishes the call for tenders in the Netherlands. The tender procedure is a public procedure, restricted to organisations or (international) consortia led by organisations based in the Netherlands. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nuffic website. The main part of the tender document is the project outline, which indicates, among other things, the maximum budget available for the project.
- *Assessment of the proposals*: The submitted NPT and NICHE proposals will be evaluated impartially by the Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC) through a system of points awarded for each of the following criteria: capacity of the applicant, quality of the proposed project, technical quality of the project proposal, quality of the team members and price. In NICHE the weight of financial criteria has been raised from 5% to 25% in order to generate more financial competition. The fees have been also raised but they are still fixed to the salary of the proposed expert. The minimum score that is required for each criterion is set beforehand. The grant will be awarded on the basis of an overall score that takes into account both content and price.
- Even if only one proposal has been submitted, it will still be assessed against the criteria by the TEC. If this proposal does not qualify, the tender will be cancelled. A separate TEC will be appointed for each project. A TEC has at least three members each having one vote:
 - One specialist with expertise related to the project's subject area, who will chair the committee
 - One representative of the requesting organisation
 - One Nuffic staff member (who is the secretary of the TEC)
- If the requesting organisation refuses to accept as a partner the Dutch provider whose tender received the highest score, the tender will also be cancelled. In such as case, the requesting organisation must provide a reasonable explanation for its rejection.¹¹
- *Award of grant*: After the winning proposal has been selected, Nuffic drafts the project grant award. The grant is preferably awarded to the requesting organisation, which then

¹⁰ This option was newly introduced by NICHE. At the time of the evaluation statistics about this option were not available.

¹¹ At the time this evaluation was conducted this particular case had not taken place yet.

concludes a contract with the Dutch organisation. Nuffic can make payments directly to the Dutch partner at the request, or with approval, of the requesting organisation. If Nuffic, after assessing the local situation and the capacity of the requesting organisation, comes to the conclusion that this arrangement could lead to problems or in case the requesting organisation prefers otherwise, Nuffic may decide to award a tripartite grant to the two partners, or award a bipartite grant to the Dutch organisation.

The **project implementation phase** consists of six processes: inception period, assessment of the revised project document, final approval of the inception report, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation and financial management.

- *Inception period*: The inception period is the preparatory or introductory phase of a project. It can serve various purposes. For example, the partners can use an inception period to agree on a final strategy for a project, to finalize a detailed plan of implementation for the first year, to conduct a training needs assessment or to define performance indicators which are then incorporated into the project proposals. The revision of a project proposal in the inception period can lead to changes within the budget, but the total budget has to remain within the amount of the grant that was given. While in NPT the inception period was optional, under NICHE it is a standard procedure.¹²
- *Assessment of the revised project document*: Nuffic makes a technical assessment of the revised project document that emerges from an inception period as well as of the conditions in the grant award. Nuffic's assessment ensures that the proposal conforms to the financial rules and regulations of the programmes, and contains sufficient indicators for the proper monitoring of the project.
- *Final approval of the inception report*: After ensuring that the revised project documents conform to the rules and regulations of the programmes, Nuffic gives its final approval to the project partners.
- *Project implementation*: The responsibility for implementing the projects lies with the northern and requesting organisations. Each project is supposed to implement the agreed activities within the given timeframe. The projects' implementation last up to four years (minus the inception phase). Each project submits an annual report every year, including an audited statement of expenditure before 1st May as well as an updated annual plan for the next year before 1st October.
- *Monitoring and evaluation*: Nuffic monitors NPT/NICHE projects mainly through the above mentioned annual reports and work plans. The monitoring thereby rests primarily on the agreed results in the approved project proposals. The assessment of the performance of the project partners is based upon the indicators which they themselves have defined and are an integral part of the logical framework of each project. The annual reports and statement of expenditure are signed by the signatories of the cooperating organizations.

In addition, Nuffic conducts on average one monitoring mission annually to survey the projects. A mission lasts between one and a half and three weeks and is usually combined with a fact-finding mission. Nuffic conducts in general one to two monitoring missions per year. They generally focus this possibility on projects that are not running as smoothly as others. Furthermore, in NICHE the financial officers of Nuffic conduct country missions to oversee the financial side of the projects in the partner countries. They also conduct regional workshops to teach necessary financial administrative skills to the requesting organizations. Moreover, Nuffic conducts monitoring through regular telephone conversations, e-mails, letters and visits of project partners in NPT/ NICHE.

Finally, Nuffic reports back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in annual reports which also include the financial statement.

Regarding evaluations within NICHE, Nuffic can conduct up to five independent evaluations per year (ca. 7% of all projects). This means that Nuffic is able to evaluate ca. 25% of all financed projects within the four year cycle. In addition, projects evaluate themselves if they have planned for it in their activities. In general, the decision to

¹² Although the inception phase was optional under NPT, it was implemented in each project.

conduct external evaluations is made by Nuffic. There are mainly two reasons why a project is evaluated: either it is felt that an evaluation is needed to support the project, or it is a very interesting project from which lessons learned can be extracted.

- *Financial management:* Nuffic approves NPT/ NICHE project budgets for one year at a time. The grant recipient is given a set of rules and fixed fees for drawing up budgets. It can also make use of a prescribed format for NPT/ NICHE budgets. If an organisation wants to make use of its own system for drawing up financial reports this is possible, but Nuffic makes sure that the system meets the requirements for NPT budgets and reports.

The grant recipient is responsible for keeping careful records of projects' expenditures and for monitoring the budget. Guidelines for this are included in the financial rules that accompany the award of the grant.

The implementing organizations are allowed to shift funds between budget items, but any changes made to the objectives or the planned outputs of the project require the advance written permission of Nuffic. The prescribed rules and fees must be observed and the total budget must not be exceeded.

Furthermore, the organisations must make sure that expenditures are audited by independent, external auditors.

5. FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

The analytical approach of this evaluation was based upon the 5C model by Peter Morgan which conceptualises capacity development within five capabilities: capability to act, capability to adapt and self-renew, capability to achieve coherence, capability to relate and capability to deliver development results (see chapter 3). On the basis of this theoretical model Rambøll Management Consulting developed an evaluation methodology to measure the short-, medium- and long-term effects of the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) (see annex 2).

Within the evaluation the five capabilities of the theoretical model were assessed in 34 NPT projects, which were pre-selected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic), in Benin, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Ruanda, South Africa and Vietnam (see chapter 5.2.1 and annex 1). In addition, 16 Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE) projects in Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa and Yemen were analysed in-depth. For this purpose Rambøll Management Consulting conducted interviews in the Netherlands as well as six case studies in Benin, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Ruanda, South Africa and Vietnam in which 172 different stakeholders were interviewed (see annex 1). Moreover, all participating northern partners, requesting organisations, Royal Netherlands Embassies (RNE) and NPT alumni were asked to participate in four worldwide surveys. The response rate of these surveys lay between 44.3% and 83.3 %; the only exception being the NPT alumni survey which had a response rate of 14.6 %¹³ (see chapter 3.2.2). Furthermore, the sample obtained corresponded with regard to its division along types of organisations and countries with the identified population of the two programmes (see chapter 4.3.1)¹⁴.

On the basis of the collected data, the generally high response rates in the surveys and the correspondence of the samples with the known population, valid and sound conclusions can be drawn for the whole NPT and NICHE programmes.

5.1 Relevance of NPT and NICHE

5.1.1 NPT and NICHE in an International Perspective

A sound post-secondary education policy, organisational and research capacity as well as advanced knowledge play a pivotal role in development, both in the North and the South. The processes of globalization and the importance of competitive knowledge emphasize the necessity for a country to have strong organisational and individual capacities in post-secondary education and research. The role of post-secondary educational institutions in fostering knowledge and insight, innovative abilities as well as creative thinking has been acknowledged by academia as a precondition for poverty alleviation in developing countries. Vincent-Lancrin for instance states that "[...] tertiary education contributes to capacity development by training a country's workforce in all fields relevant to its development" (Vincent-Lancrin, 2007b, p.31).

Despite these acknowledgements the global development agenda on education formulated by the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), the International Development Targets (IDTs) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the 1990s and early 2000s has had an outspoken focus on primary education. This has resulted in a lack of funding by multilateral and bilateral donor agencies for post-secondary education institutions (King, 2009).¹⁵ As a consequence, organisations that had traditionally been involved in academic exchange and cooperation such as Nuffic, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (Senter for internasjonalisering av utdanning)

¹³ However, literature agrees that tracer studies in general have on average a response rate between 10.0% and 20.0%. As a consequence the response rate can be judged as normal.

¹⁴ This excludes the survey among the NPT alumni as in this case the population was not known to the evaluation.

¹⁵ In fact, with the publication of the Millennium Project Report (UN Millennium Project 2005) that sharply criticized the neglect of tertiary education there has been a noticeable change of thinking in this respect. However, the current education programmes of bilateral and multilateral development agencies are still characterized by a strong bias towards primary and secondary education.

(SIU), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) or the major American foundations (Rockefeller, Carnegie, Ford, MacArthur) have been filling this gap in the post-secondary education sector (see chapter 3.1.1).

A conducted international comparison¹⁶ showed that the NPT and NICHE programme are in line with recent developments of other donors in the post-secondary education sector. As with programmes by other donors, NPT and NICHE aim for direct organisational and individual capacity development and since NICHE also have a geographical and sectoral focus with regard to their target groups. The most similar programmes with regard to their objective are Flemish Institutional Cooperation Programme, the programme of the Swedish Department for Research and Higher Education and the Institutions-Institutional Cooperation Instrument in Finland.

Differences to NPT and NICHE can be identified in regards to the eligibility criteria for participating organizations. NPT and NICHE are distinguished by the openness of their organisational eligibility criteria and their strictly demand-driven nature. Particularly, the pivotal role of the requesting organisations in the demand articulation, taken together with the tender procedure for partner matching and projection selection are distinctions of singularity of NPT and NICHE and are not found in any other comparable programme. The compared programmes' criteria are far narrower and in comparison less demand-driven. SIDA includes research agents on the post-secondary education and ministry level (cf. Government Offices of Sweden, 2010, p.27). The Flemish Institutional Cooperation Programme and the Institutions-Institutional Cooperation Instrument in Finland aim their programmes mainly at research institutions and universities (cf. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2010, p.6/ VLIR-UOS 2008b, p.10). The Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education offers the narrowest possibility, accepting applicants from the department or faculty level (cf. NORAD, 2009, p.64).

With regard to the duration of the cooperation projects and its programme funding, the NPT and NICHE programme have the largest budget available annually (more than 20 million Euros) with which it finances mid-level duration projects of four to five years. Other comparable programmes either finance projects with lasting one to three or up to twelve to fifteen years, whereby the available annual budgets vary between 5.5 million and 20 million Euros. Considering the share of funding that is provided for each project, the Flemish Institutional Cooperation Programme and the NPT/NICHE programmes provide most with up to 100 per cent. However, co-funding is expected in the Higher Education Institutions-Institutional Cooperation Instrument, the programme of the Swedish Department for Research, the Flemish Institutional Cooperation Programme and the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (cf. VLIR-UOS, 2008b, p.13/ VLIR-UOS, 2009, pp. 7-8/ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2010, p.19). The Flemish Institutional Cooperation Programme works with a gradual financial retreat during the project development until "[a]fter 10 years, the partner university is expected to capitalize on the created capacity and international linkages and be able to compete for other funding sources" (VLIR-UOS, 2009, p. 7).

The reasons for the differences between the compared programmes can be found in the political focus and reasoning behind the respective programmes in each donor country. According to the conducted interviews with the responsible programme officers of other donors, the size of the annual allocated budget depends on the one hand on the political lobbying by higher education institutions and on the other hand on the political focus and emphasis which is given to post-secondary education in the respective donor portfolio. The demand driven nature of the programmes and their durations however, is dependent on the orientation and reasoning behind the programmes. Less demand driven programmes in general focus more on the involvement and motivation of northern partners in the programmes in order to connect them further to the

¹⁶ The comprehensive international comparison including a thorough analysis of comparable programmes can be found in the inception report. The international comparison compared the NPT and NICHE programme with the following programmes along the criteria of programme objectives, programme target groups, programme approaches, project duration and project ownership: ALFA-EU Programme, Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme, DANIDA's Cooperation with Research Institutions and Think Tanks, Programme Area No.5 "Educational Cooperation with Developing Countries" of the DAAD, the Canadian Francophone Scholarship Programme, the Flemish Institutional Cooperation Programme, the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU), the Swedish Department for Research (SAREC) and the Finnish Higher Institutions-Institutional Cooperation Instrument. A summary of the international comparison can be found in annex 3.

international academic debate and to harness their potential added value for the programmes and the southern partners. In addition, these programmes focus more on the establishment of university cooperation between northern and southern universities which aim at creating mutual benefits for both sides.

5.1.2 Alignment with Development Needs of the Partner Countries and the Requesting Organisations

In general the 16 analysed NICHE and 34 analysed NPT projects are aligned with the development needs of the partner countries. From a *post-secondary education perspective* NPT and NICHE projects often support greater change agendas in the analysed partner countries. Good examples of this are the NPT projects in Benin and Rwanda which supported the requesting organisations in implementing general higher education reforms to introduce the Bachelor-Master System in Benin or competence based learning approaches in Rwanda. Within NICHE the projects for instance aim at contributing to the implementation of the Ethiopian Science & Technology Strategy in the post-secondary education sector. However, NICHE in comparison to NPT is thereby following more a sector-wide approach. As the NICHE projects are so far still in their planning or inception stage these observations are solely based on conducted interviews with the relevant stakeholders and a comparison between the project outlines and/ or inception report with the development strategies of the respective countries.

On the level of the requesting organisations all the NPT projects are also aligned with the development needs of these organisations. According to the case study results, the projects aim at this level primarily at the introduction and revision of curricula and teaching methodologies, the introduction of new concepts, the training of academic staff and the provision of basic infrastructure. In most cases however, organisational development (processes, structures and leadership issues) is not equally targeted, although it is equally important. The same holds true (in 22 of 29 cases¹⁷; 75.9%) regarding the networking with relevant stakeholders in the public sector (see also chapter 5.2). As a consequence, NPT and NICHE are not following a holistic approach to capacity development on this level but specifically target certain aspects of the requesting organisations. This is more dominant under NPT than under NICHE, in which a wider approach – although not holistic – to capacity development has been adopted. However, it cannot be concluded yet if this approach has led to other types of intervention under NICHE as most projects were only in their inception phase at the time of the implementation of this evaluation.

From a *country sector perspective* it can be stated that all NPT and NICHE projects are in line with the development needs of the partner country as the chosen sectors correspond with the partner countries' development strategies. Examples of this are the NPT and NICHE projects in the agricultural sector in South Africa which contribute to the South African government's Agricultural Education and Training (AET) Strategy. This strategy stipulates e.g. human resource development in higher education in the fields of rural wealth creation or food security as a strategic priority for the country, which is realised or aimed at by the analysed NPT and NICHE projects (South African National Department of Agriculture, 2003).

However, although universities are often important institutions for long-term development in the sector, it could be observed that higher education is not the most pressing issue in some lesser developed countries to solve the challenges in the respective sector. In the water and health sector in Vietnam and Benin it could be observed that the absorption capacities of the labour market for Bachelor and Master graduates were inferior to the number of produced graduates through the newly introduced programmes. At the same time, employers experienced a shortage of graduates at the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) level, confirming thereby the approach taken by NICHE to focus more on this sector.

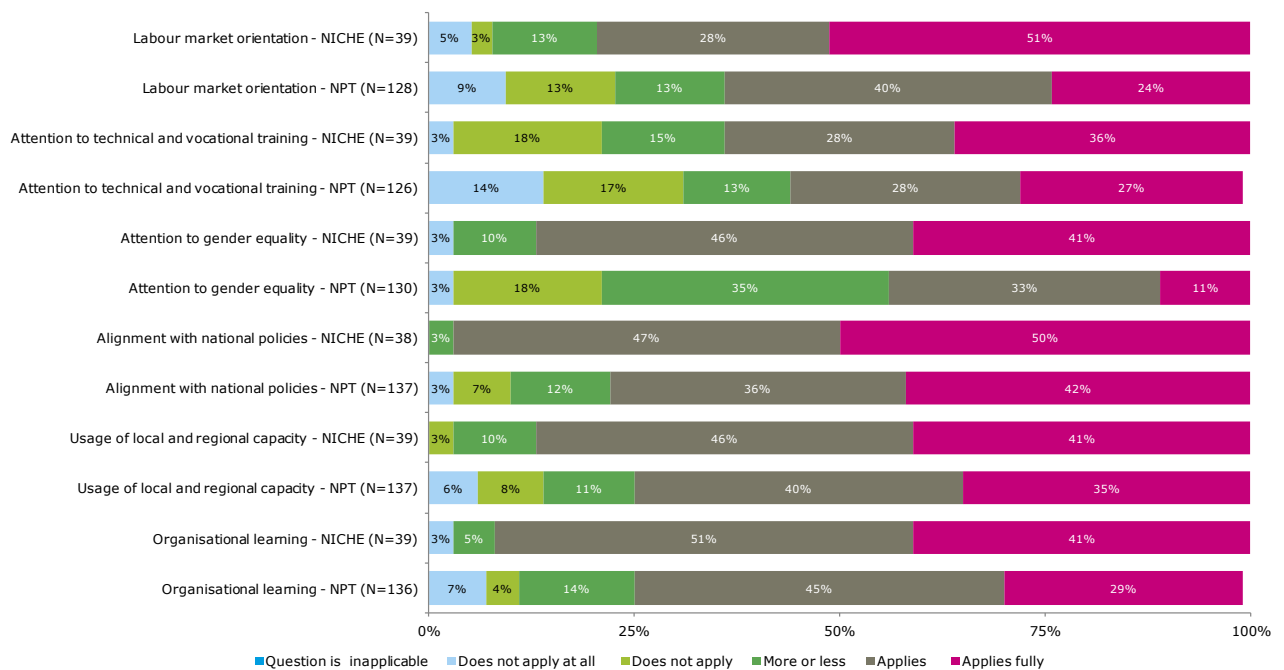
In addition, in small countries with a limited number of universities (e.g. Guatemala or Benin) NPT projects in the same universities were often conceptualised as individual projects thereby creating "project islands" in the organisations without any relations between each other and very different objectives. Furthermore, in Ethiopia and South Africa NPT projects on policy level and

¹⁷ Five of the 34 analysed NPT projects solely aimed at changes on the sector level and thus cannot be assessed regarding their impact on organisational level. They are assessed in chapter 5.2.3 with regard to their impact on the policy level.

projects at organisational level were not well linked with each other, thereby missing out on the chance to address the challenges in the sector in a more holistic manner. This has been addressed by NICHE by striving to adopt a sector-wide approach within the respective countries as can be seen in the respective planning and programming documents (Nuffic, unknown c).

Furthermore, the above described challenges of NPT projects have been addressed in the NICHE programme by the introduction of eight policy priorities (see chapter 4.2). These policy priorities should attune NICHE more to the needs of the labour market, give more attention to TVET and gender, improve alignment and organisational learning as well as increase the usage of regional capacity. As the survey results of the embassies, northern partners and requesting organisations show, NICHE in comparison to NPT was successful in strengthening its orientation along the newly introduced policy priorities. Gender equality, organisational learning¹⁸ and the alignment with national policies especially receive much more attention in the design and first stages of implementation of NICHE projects at country level (see figure 8).

Figure 8: Implementation of NICHE Policy Priorities



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

These findings were mainly confirmed by the northern partners, requesting organisations and embassies interviewed. The northern partners, however, stated that demand with regard to gender is created by Nuffic and the Ministry. Most requesting organisations are not concerned with gender issues as they are not the most pressing concerns for them. This was confirmed in interviews with the requesting organisations in the case studies, in which the majority stated that they adopted the gender theme in their projects as it was a requirement of the programme. In addition, the northern partners stated that there have been improvements with regard to organisational learning within Nuffic. However, monitoring and evaluation is predominantly taking place on output level with little regard to qualitative data. All interviewed northern partners stated that an approach to monitoring and evaluation is needed which is based upon the measurement of outcomes and which enables mutual learning for all programme stakeholders in order to improve and foster organisational learning.

¹⁸ Organisational learning is defined by Nuffic as the continuous improvement of the programme by the exchange of knowledge and information within the organisation (Nuffic, unknown c).

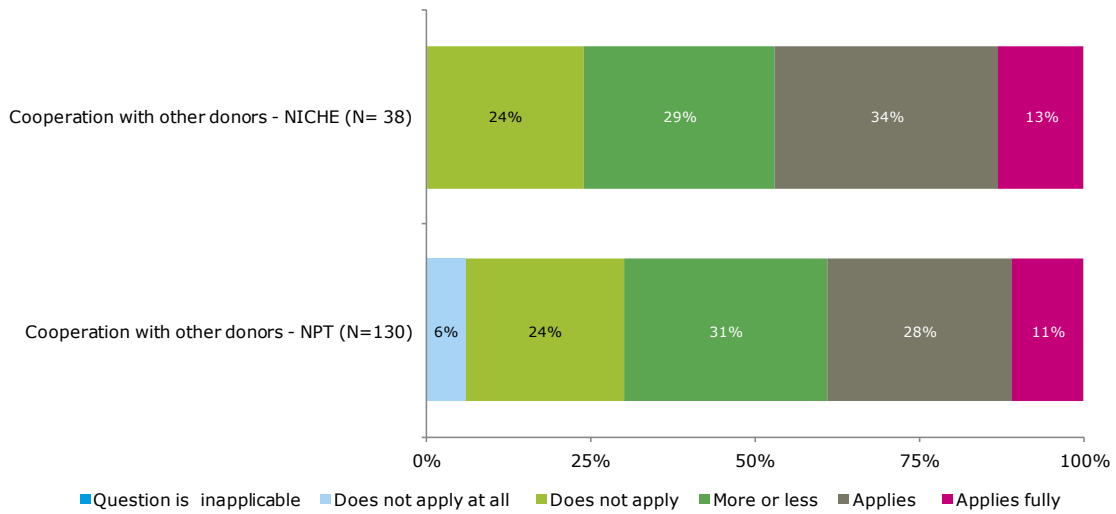
5.1.3 Coordination with other Dutch Development Programmes

The case study results, the annual report of the embassies and the documentation provided by Nuffic highlight that there has been an active coordination of the NPT programme and its projects with the respective RNE in each case study country. The RNEs were involved in the stakeholder meetings in the demand articulation phase of the programme and coordinated the planning of the programme with Nuffic in order to align it with the bilateral priorities of their bilateral development programme and their regional foci in the respective country. Furthermore, the RNEs were actively involved in the monitoring of the projects during monitoring missions (e.g. through project visits) in which Nuffic discussed the progress of the programme and the possibilities for new projects with the RNEs. The RNEs in general also supported the implementation of the NPT programme by attending NPT country meetings and meetings with government authorities.

However, the coordination between Nuffic and the RNEs did not encompass an active coordination and/ or alignment with other Dutch development programmes to generate synergies as the responsibilities were not clearly defined (see also chapter 5.3.2). The RNEs in general viewed the NPT programme as an independent programme for which they only had to monitor. As a consequence, the coordination of NPT with other Dutch programmes was seen as the responsibility of Nuffic by the RNE. However, Nuffic, having no local or regional structures within the country, does not have the oversight over the whole Dutch development portfolio. As a result potential synergies could not be identified and realised. However, possibilities for potential synergies with other Dutch development programmes could only be identified in three case studies (South Africa, Ethiopia and Vietnam). In South Africa for example potential synergies could have been realised between the programme of SANPAD which finances research cooperations between the Netherlands and developing countries and NPT. According to the interviewed South African RNE, it could have been beneficial if both programmes would have targeted the same universities or colleges as they could complement each other. While Nuffic could concentrate on organisational development, SANPAD could finance the research cooperation at the same requesting organisations or within certain NPT projects.

In comparison, coordination with other donors and Dutch development programmes improved significantly under NICHE; especially in embassies which had an education advisor to coordinate the activities. The results of the conducted survey among the northern partners and requesting organisations demonstrate that both project partners experience a stronger coordination with other donors under NICHE than under NPT (see figure 9). This is also confirmed by the embassies interviewed, which state that they are much more involved in harmonising NICHE with other donor initiatives than they had been under NPT. Within NICHE they actively coordinate the programme in the relevant donor forums to avoid overlaps and to generate synergies. This was also confirmed by the interviewed bi- and multilateral donors in the case studies. As a result, NICHE objectives are better aligned with other Dutch development as well as bi- and multilateral donor programmes than NPT. In addition synergies in the form of extended geographical coverage, broadened financial resources and a possible future scaling-up of the impact of NICHE seems possible according to the interviewed bi- and multilateral donors as well as RNEs.

Figure 9: Cooperation with other Donors under NPT and NICHE

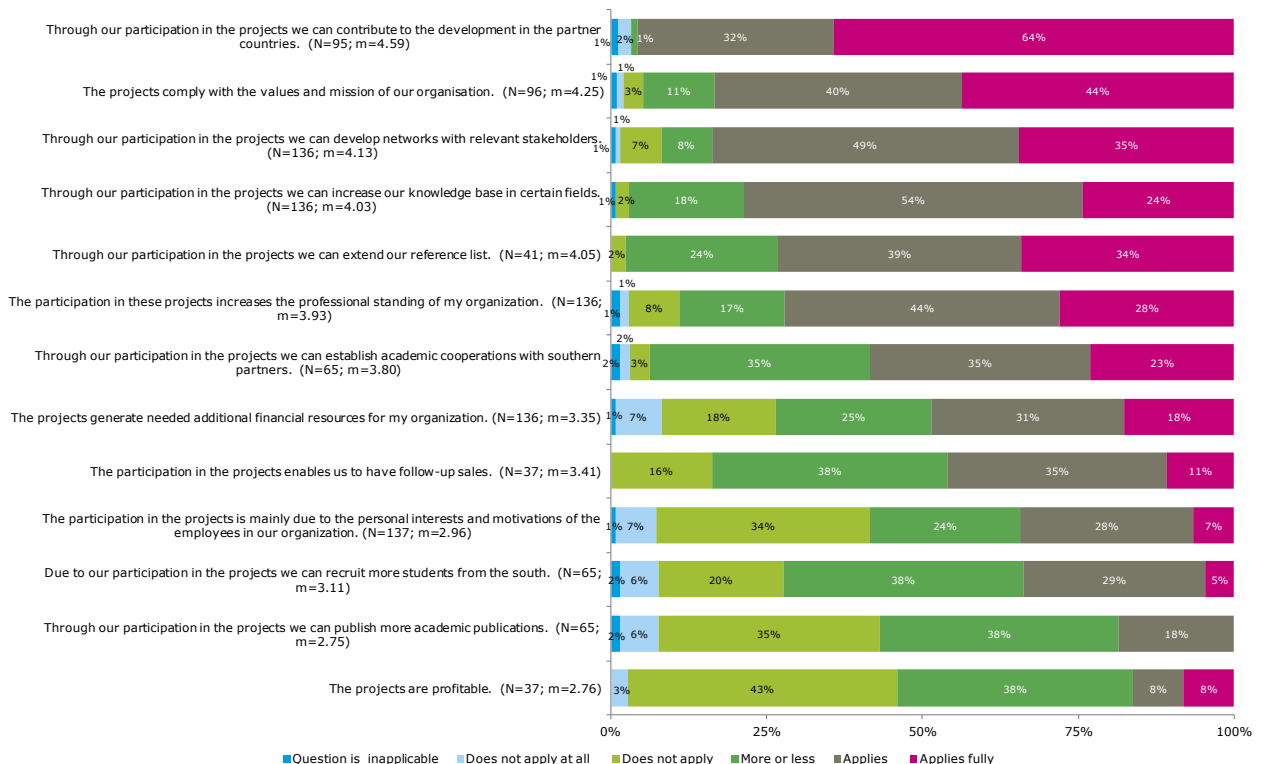


Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

5.1.4 Motivation of Netherlands Institutions and Requesting Organisations for Participation in NPT and NICHE

Taking together the categories “applies” and “applies fully” of the results of the survey among the northern partners, the main motivations of the northern partners to participate in NPT and NICHE are to contribute to the development in the partner countries (96%), to develop networks (84%), the compliance with their values and mission (84%) and that they can increase their knowledge base (78%). In contrast, the northern partners are least motivated to participate in NPT and NICHE because the projects are profitable and or because they can publish more academic publications (see figure 10). Differences in the motivation to participate in NPT or NICHE could not be observed on the side of the northern partners.

Figure 10: Motivation of Northern Partners to Participate in NPT and NICHE



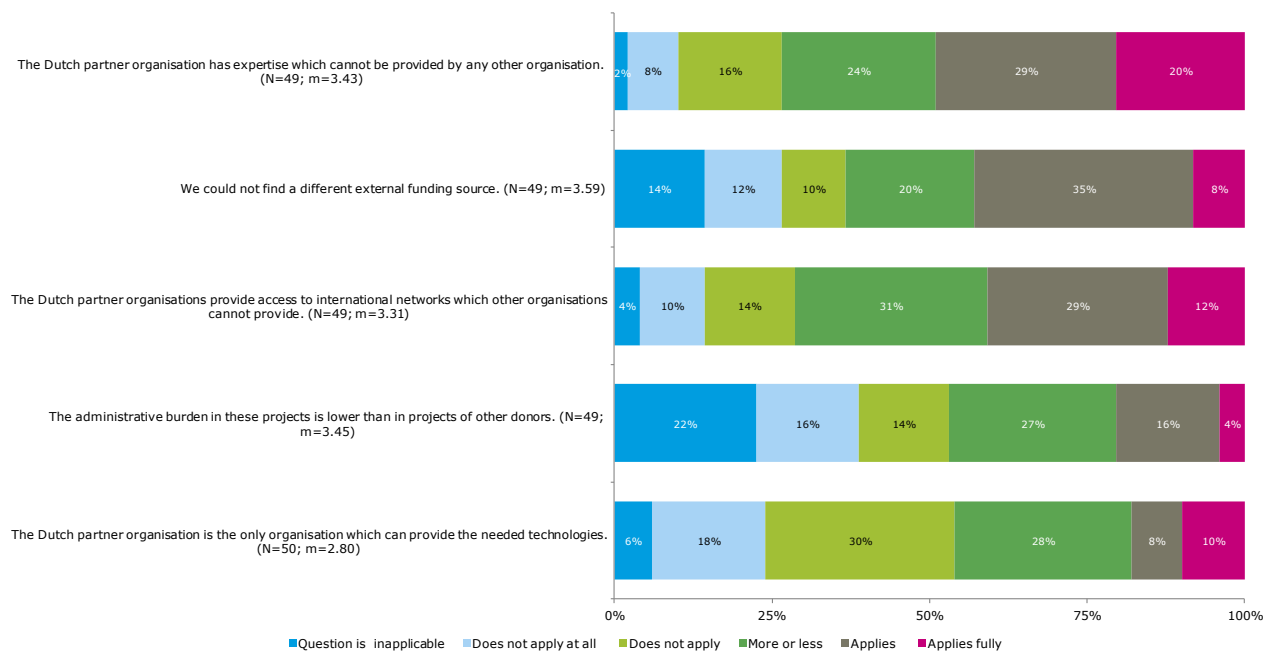
Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

If the survey results are analysed according to the type of organisations¹⁹, two divergent sets of motivations can be seen among private consulting companies and universities of professional education. Private consulting companies put a greater emphasis on developing their networks (87%), increasing their knowledge (86%), extending their references (81%) and their professional standing (79%) than the other organisations. Secondly, universities of professional education also follow a different set of motivations, namely: increasing their knowledge (95%), contributing to the development of the partner country (89%), developing networks (82%) and increasing their professional standing (81%).

These survey findings correspond with the results of in-depth interviews with the northern partners. However, all northern partners interviewed stated that they could not realise any side-effects for their organisations. The northern universities unanimously argued that they have more and more difficulties in justifying participating in these programmes as their participation does not benefit the university as a whole e.g. in terms of its academic ranking. In their opinion, this is mainly due to the fact that the programmes do not support research cooperation and only to a minimal extent support academic education in the Netherlands. The private consulting companies interviewed stated, with the exception of one company, that the projects are not profitable for them and that they only participate in the programmes to expand their networks and to increase their references and professional standing.

In contrast, the survey results of requesting organisations and the case study results show that the main motivations of the southern partners to participate in the NPT and NICHE programme was the acquisition of external funding and external expertise. In the survey 49% and 43% of the requesting organisations agreed that these two motivations were the main reason why they participated in the programmes. Other reasons, such as the provision of technologies and access to international networks, played a secondary role (see figure 11). These results were confirmed in the interviews in the case studies with the requesting organisations.

Figure 11: Motivation of Requesting Organisations to Participate in NPT and NICHE



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

¹⁹ In the survey the following types of organisations were distinguished: international education institutes, NGOs, private consulting companies, university, university of applied sciences and university of professional education.

Analysing the survey results according to the type of requesting organisation²⁰, one difference becomes obvious. Contrary to the general trend, the main motivation of national agencies and specialised training institutions to participate in NPT and NICHE is the access to international networks; followed by the access to external funding and external expertise (see chapter 5.2).

5.1.5 Assessment of the Relevance of NPT and NICHE

Based on these results the evaluator comes to the conclusion that the rationale and purpose of NPT and NICHE is still valid for developing countries. Both programmes contribute to filling a funding gap in the international development agenda which mainly concentrates on primary and secondary education. In addition, both programmes are in line with international development in the field of post-secondary education, whereby their openness of organisational eligibility criteria and their strictly demand-driven nature are unique features. These unique characteristics can be explained by the political reasoning, lobbying, focus and emphasis behind the respective programmes in each donor country.

The analysed NPT and NICHE projects also generally meet respective needs on the partner country level and on the level of the requesting organisations. However, a distinction has to be made between a post-secondary education perspective and a country sector perspective in order to arrive at a comprehensive judgement with regard to their relevance. Taking the post-secondary education perspective, it can be concluded by the evaluators that the NPT and NICHE projects are relevant on the sector level as they contribute to higher learning reforms in the partner countries. This seems to be even more the case under NICHE than NPT, as NICHE has adopted in its planning and programming documents a more stringent sector-wide approach. On the level of the requesting organisations however, not all of the needs of the requesting organisations are addressed equally, as NPT projects mainly focus on curricula development, infrastructure and academic training and do not follow a holistic approach to organisational development. As a result the relevance of NPT projects can be enhanced on this level by taking this perspective into account when conceptualising NPT and NICHE projects.

From a country sector perspective the NPT and NICHE projects are relevant as they chose sectors which are in line with the development strategies of the partner countries. However, sometimes universities are not the main leverage to solve the challenges within a certain sector and a focus on the TVET sector, as under NICHE, is more relevant. On the organisational level – when projects are implemented in the same requesting organisation – a sector-wide approach as undertaken by NICHE can strengthen the relevance of the projects by avoiding “project islands” and creating synergies between different projects.

From the perspective of the Dutch organisations the NPT and NICHE programmes are relevant as they give them the opportunity to increase their knowledge base and their networks. However, universities face increasing difficulties in justifying their participation in the programme internally and private consulting companies consider the projects as not profitable. This in turn might reduce the relevance of the NPT and NICHE programme for them in the future. Furthermore, the northern partners argue that a monitoring and evaluation system measuring outcomes on the programme level is needed to foster mutual learning among the programme stakeholders and to guarantee the future relevance of the programme. The requesting organisations in comparison see the NPT projects as highly relevant as they provide them with the opportunity to acquire external funding and external expertise to implement necessary change processes.

Regarding the coordination of NPT with other Dutch development programmes as well as bi- and multilateral donors the evaluator identifies potential for optimisation. Although Nuffic coordinates the NPT programme with the RNEs actively, the alignment of NPT to the development priorities and regional foci of the RNEs remains at a level of exchange of information and mutual support. Active coordination with other Dutch development programmes as well as bi- and multilateral donors to generate tangible synergies did not take place under NPT. As a result, possible benefits in terms of e.g. financial synergies or realised wider impacts could not be identified. However,

²⁰ In the survey the following types of organisations were distinguished: ministries, national agencies, NGOs, polytechnics, specialised training institutions, universities and vocational education and training institutions.

improvements might be realised under NICHE. By implementing the eight policy priorities in the planning phase of NICHE projects on programme and country level, cooperation with Dutch programmes and other bi- and multilateral donors increased and synergies might be created in the future. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen if these improvements can be upheld in the implementation of future NICHE projects.

5.2 Effectiveness of NPT

The following chapter presents the evaluation findings with regard to the evaluation criteria effectiveness. The analysis of the effectiveness of NPT is based on six case studies, the conducted survey among the northern and southern partners and a tracer study among NPT alumni. Within the six case studies countries 34 projects were analysed while the surveys examined NPT projects worldwide.

The first part of this chapter gives an overview over the 34 analysed NPT projects in the six case study countries. The second part analysis the accomplished outputs of the 34 analysed NPT projects based upon their achievement tables, existing evaluations and final reports. In the subsequent parts the chapter presents the results of the surveys and the case studies and is structured along the intervention logic (see inception report, chapter 2.2.5) which was developed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nuffic in a workshop on 21.11.2011. The intervention logic identifies four levels of intervention for the NPT programme: policy level, organisational level, inter-institutional level and content level. To each of these levels are assigned different capabilities of the 5C model by Peter Morgan (see chapter 4.2 and annex 2). On the *policy level* NPT projects aim to strengthen governance capabilities to formulate post-secondary education policies that support national and sectoral organisations in post-secondary education. Changes in the policy dimension relate to changes in the capability to achieve coherence. On the *organisational level* NPT projects develop the capabilities to act, to adapt and self-renew and the capability to achieve coherence within post-secondary education organisations. The capability to relate is assigned to the *inter-institutional level* as the NPT projects should strengthen alliances, networks, etc. of the requesting organisations on this level. Finally, the *content level* entails the development of curricula, the development of e-learning, etc. Developments on the content level influence the capability of organisations to deliver development results through increased capacity of the organisation and in form of organisation-specific outputs and outcomes. It is important to bear in mind that most NPT project only target specific levels and rarely all levels at the same time.

5.2.1 Overview over the Analysed NPT Projects

In the case studies 34 NPT projects were analysed which were selected on the basis of criteria by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nuffic (see chapter 3.2). Of these 34 NPT projects, five were implemented in Benin, six in Ethiopia, six in Ruanda, five in South Africa, six in Vietnam and six in Guatemala. The budget of these NPT projects varied between 274.824 € and 3.999.599 €. The average budget of the analysed projects was 1.621.322 €. A complete overview of the analysed NPT projects can be found in annex 1.

Most of the analysed projects were implemented in the water and sanitation, the policy development and management, the agricultural and natural resources and environment sector (see figure 12). Most of the granted money was spent in the natural resource and environment sector, followed by the agricultural and policy development and management sector.

Figure 12: Analysed NPT Projects According to Sector

Sector	No. projects	Grant (€)
Water & Sanitation	5	5.091.491
Policy Development & Management	5	8.507.022
Agriculture	5	8.512.024
Natural Resources & Environment	5	9.417.109
Justice & Human Rights	3	5.699.971
Teacher Training	2	3.750.000
Health/ Medicine	2	3.488.894
Engineering/ Technology	2	2.588.133
Social Economic Development	2	3.472.582
Public Administration	1	1.299.494
Gender	1	1.798.330
Quality Assurance	1	1.499.922
Total	34	55.124.972

Source: Nuffic Database 2011

Most of the 34 projects were implemented on the northern side by universities, followed by universities of applied sciences, consultancies and NGOs (see figure 13).

Figure 13: Analysed NPT Projects According to Northern Partner²¹

Type of contracted institution (northern partners)	No. projects	Grant (€)
Universities	17	26.095.094
Universities of Applied Sciences	9	17.214.394
Private (Consulting)	4	6.994.140
NGO	4	4.821.344
Total	34	55.124.972

Source: Nuffic Database 2011

On the southern side also most of the projects were implemented by universities, followed by ministries, national agencies, specialised training institutions and NGOs (see figure 14).

Figure 14: Analysed NPT Projects According to Southern Partner

Type of contracted institution (southern partners)	No. projects	Grant (€)
Universities	19	26.930.753
Ministries	11	22.004.688
National Agencies	2	3.339.974
Specialised Training Institution	1	1.800.000
NGO	1	1.049.557
Total	34	55.124.972

Source: Nuffic Database 2011

5.2.2 Description of NPT Outputs

The data presented in this chapter is based upon the achievement tables, existing evaluations and final reports of the projects. In addition, the data was validated and if necessary corrected through the case study findings. It is emphasised that this data is not comprehensive as the documentation is not standardised and reveals gaps.

To reach their various objectives the 34 NPT projects analysed implement outputs in the following fields, according to their achievement tables:

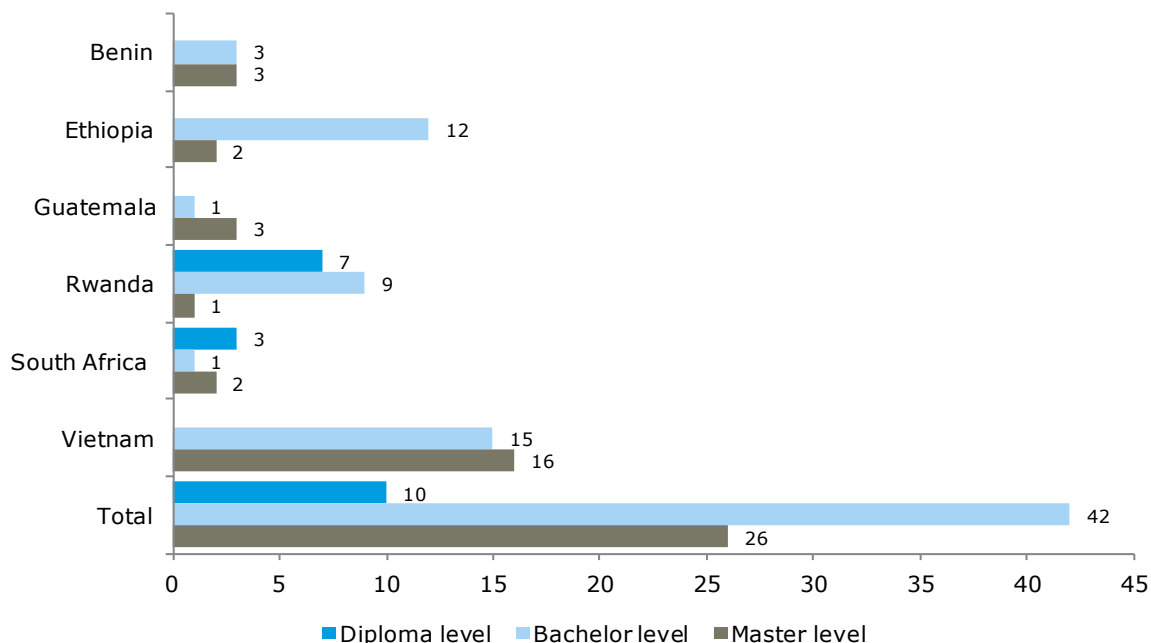
- Establishment of study programmes,
- Staff development,
- Investments,
- Institutional and managerial capacity development,
- Relations with the professional sector,
- Strengthening of international relations,
- Strengthening of research
- HIV/ AIDS and Gender

Concerning the establishment of study programmes, 28 of the 34 analysed NPT projects intended to revise or establish new study programmes. These 28 NPT projects could in total revise or establish ten new diploma courses, 42 new Bachelor courses and 26 new Master courses. The

²¹ Figure 13 only shows the Dutch lead partners of the formed consortia.

highest number of newly introduced or revised programmes could be realised in Vietnam (see figure 12). As a result, the projects could increase the total number of student intake by year by 3086 students. The highest intake was realised in Vietnam.

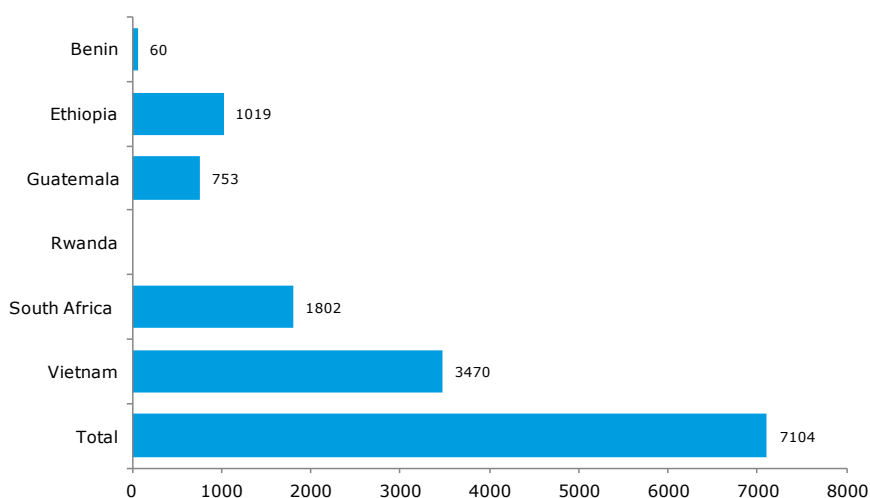
Figure 15: NPT Output in the Field of Study Programmes



Source: Nuffic 2002-2012

The staff development field can be divided into financing degree trainings for individuals and short-term training for personnel of the requesting organisations. Within the 34 NPT projects 45 persons were trained on diploma/ certificate level, 6 on Bachelor level, 258 on Master level and 62 on PhD level. Most persons were trained in Vietnam, followed by South Africa, Ethiopia and Rwanda. In addition, 7104 persons received short-term training, whereby most of the persons were trained in Vietnam (see figure 13). Most of these short-term trainings were professional competence trainings²² (139) followed by methodological competence trainings²³ (121) and didactical competence trainings (64).

Figure 16: NPT Output in the Field of Staff Development – Short-Term Training²⁴



Source: Nuffic 2002-2012

²² For the purpose of this evaluation report professional competence trainings include all trainings which teach expertise within a thematic field; e.g. agriculture or health.

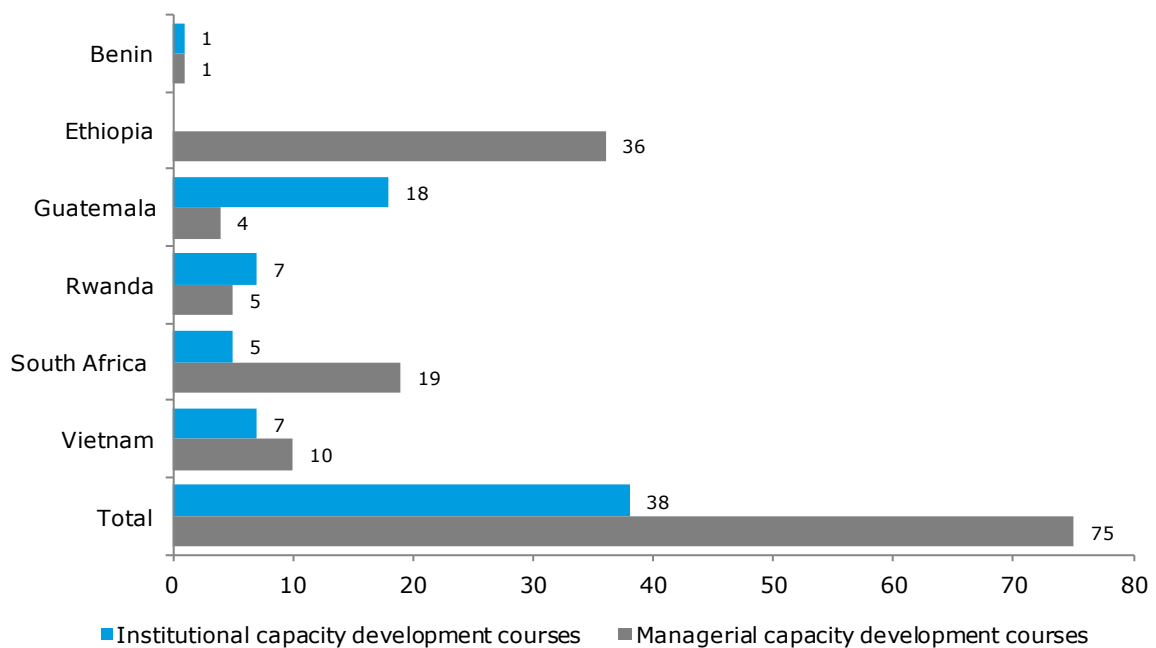
²³ For the purpose of this report methodological competence trainings encompass all training which deal with curricula development methodologies, research methodologies, etc.

²⁴ For Rwanda the total number of staff trained is not available in the analysed documents.

Furthermore, the analysed NPT projects made investments into infrastructure. The main field of investments has been “equipment for entire offices and laboratories” in which 27 of the 34 (79.4%) NPT projects invested. Additionally, 21 (61.8%) projects invested into Information Technology (IT) infrastructure, while 13 (38.2%) professional equipment, eleven (32.4%) into books and videos, eight (23.5%) into overhead projectors and video equipment, seven (20.6%) bought cars and four (11.8%) into the access of E-journals. The most numerous investments were made in Benin.

In the field of institutional and managerial capacity development, 113 courses were conducted, whereby 38 were concerned with institutional capacity development and 75 with managerial capacity development.²⁵ The analysed projects in Ethiopia implemented most courses in this field (see figure 14).

Figure 17: NPT Output in the Field of Institutional and Managerial Capacity Development

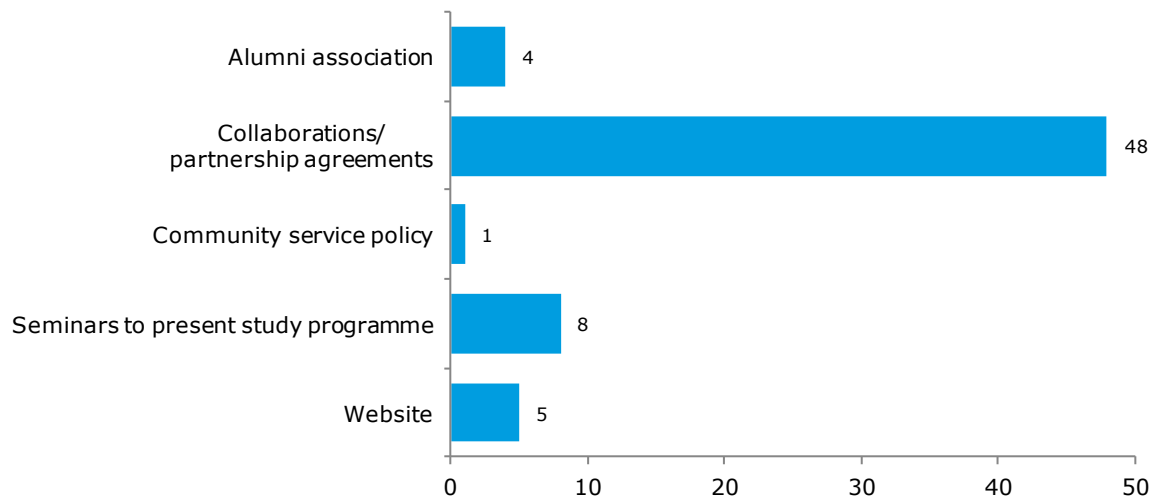


Source: Nuffic 2002-2012

To strengthen relations with the professional sector 48 collaboration and partnership agreements were signed, with the majority being put in place in Benin and Rwanda. Furthermore, four alumni associations were founded and eight seminars and five websites were launched to strengthen the marketing of the respective requesting organisation. The launched websites are still running and up-to-date. Additionally, one community service policy was developed and implemented (see figure 15).

²⁵ For the purpose of this evaluation report institutional competence trainings are defined as trainings which aimed at training the top management while managerial competence trainings targeted the lower and middle management.

Figure 18: NPT Output in the Field of Relations with the Professional Sector



Source: Nuffic 2002-2012

The strengthening of international relations was accomplished by implementing study tours to the Netherlands and/ or to countries in the region. In total 35 study tour were implemented in the analysed NPT projects, whereby the majority was conducted in Benin (15; 42.9%), followed by Vietnam with twelve (34.3%).

In the field of strengthening of research the requesting organisations in total presented 42 papers at international conferences, published 16 scientific articles and developed eleven research proposals. Most of the papers presented at international conferences were presented by one requesting organisation in South Africa (25; 59.5%) and most of the scientific articles (11; 68.8%) were published by one requesting organisation in Vietnam. Also the majority of developed research proposals (8; 72.7%) were developed by one requesting organisation from Guatemala. In addition, the 34 analysed NPT projects implemented 20 courses on research methodology and organised ten research workshops. Moreover, ten research groups were established and four research agendas were developed.

Finally, in the field of gender and HIV/ AIDS one policy paper on HIV/ AIDS was developed, and one gender and HIV unit was established in one requesting organisation. Furthermore, six gender strategies were developed and five gender workshops were implemented.

On the basis of this analysis of outputs it becomes obvious that the NPT programme focuses on curricula development or revision, staff development and training as well as investment in infrastructure. Other aspects are always included in the design of the projects (such as the strengthening of international relations), but are rarely the focus of the NPT programme.

5.2.3 Assessment of Changes at the Policy Level

Ten of the analysed 34 (29.4%) NPT projects in Ethiopia, Guatemala, South Africa and Vietnam aimed at initiating changes at the policy level. Five of these NPT projects also aimed at the organisational level (see below) while the other five exclusively targeted the policy level.

Of these ten NPT projects six were successful in initiating changes and four were not able to induce changes at the policy level. Three of the six accomplished changes by creating new governance structures to either support post-secondary education institutions or other relevant stakeholders within the respective thematic sector. In Ethiopia for example, a NPT project and its NICHE successor project founded and created a Higher Education Institute which supports the Ethiopian Ministry of Education in developing policies for the higher education sector and in guiding the general reform process within this sector. A NPT project in Guatemala contributed to the strengthening of the capacity to implement sustainable and efficient policies for the management of water resources in the public sector by lobbying municipalities to promote the sustainable use of water. In one of these municipalities this advocacy led to the establishment of

a municipal water department. In South Africa new governance structures could also be established. Due to the NPT projects the Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA) of the Western Cape created a new division in rural extension which advises the PDA in rural extension policies. The same developments could be observed in the PDA of the Eastern Cape, which created a division for training in rural extension as a result of the same NPT project.

In Vietnam the analysed NPT projects were able to influence or change national policy guidelines, standards and legislations. A common feature of these NPT projects was a combination of pilot projects in a limited number of universities or colleges with a focus on capacity development on the ministry level in order to transfer lessons learned from the organisational to the ministry level. The involved ministries thereby used the gained experiences as leverage to change existing policies or to develop new policies for the post-secondary education sector. As a result, standards for skill-based nursing were developed at the organisational level which were approved by the ministry level and are now in the process of being implemented nationwide. Furthermore, framework curricula for nurse training were also developed and will also be rolled-out in the whole of Vietnam after the approval of the ministry. In addition, requesting organisations were able to influence the drafting of the new Vietnamese law on gender equality and the national framework for Profession Orientation in Higher Education.

On the basis of the analysis of these NPT projects, it became apparent that the more successful NPT projects create ownership at the ministry level, follow a multi-level approach and convey advocacy and lobbying skills to the requesting organisations. A crucial success factor in these projects has been the active involvement of the ministry level in the projects' activities to create ownership. To generate this ownership and involvement it was important that the ministry level clearly sees the benefits of the projects and also receives tangible results which can be applied to their daily work at the end of the project. In this regard another success factor was the multi-level approach of the projects in which ideas and concepts were tested on the organisational level and, if proven successful, scaled up through the ministry level in order to implement them nationwide. If such an approach was not chosen it became crucial that the requesting organisations received training or coaching in advocacy and lobbying skills as most requesting organisations did not have an understanding of how they can exert influence on the policy level. For this purpose the strengthening of the capability to relate on the level of the requesting organisations became an important success factor in the relevant NPT projects (see below).

An identified hindering factor at the policy level is staff fluctuation, which poses challenges to the analysed NPT projects to generate ownership at this level. Furthermore, in Ethiopia the external circumstances were not taken adequately into consideration in some analysed NPT projects. This led to the fact that changes initiated by the respective NPT project became irrelevant as they collided with national public sector reform plans.

5.2.4 Assessment of Changes at Organisational Level

29 of 34²⁶ (85.3%) of the analysed NPT projects targeted the organisational level. Improvements in the *capability to act* could be observed in all 29 visited requesting organisations in these projects. This is also reflected in the *capacity development index* (CDI), which was developed by Rambøll Management Consulting.

The CDI is an index which is composed out of the answers given in the survey among the northern and southern partners, a survey among staff of the requesting organisations and the qualitative observations of the evaluator in the case studies. Within the first survey the northern and southern project coordinators and managers were asked to rate the situation in the requesting organisation prior (baseline) and after the project along the following five capabilities of the 5C model. A detailed operationalisation of the five capabilities can be found in annex 2 in the assessment grid.

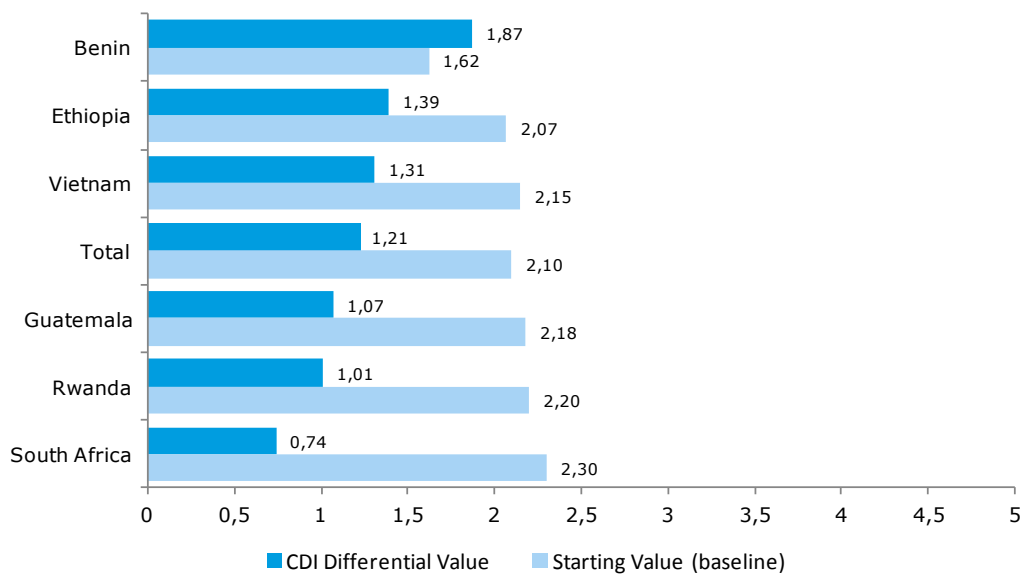
²⁶ Five of the 34 analysed NPT projects solely aimed at changes on the sector level and thus are not assessed according to the 5C model. They are assessed in chapter 5.2.3 with regard to their impact on the policy level.

- The **capability to act** was operationalised as the availability of adequate financial and human resources as well as infrastructure in the requesting organisation. Furthermore, effective administrative, financial, etc. systems and the leadership's integrity and autonomy of the requesting organisation were features of this capability.
- The **capability to generate development results** was operationalised as the existence of newly introduced or revised curricula or courses, the implementation of newly or improved trainings and the introduction of new teaching, research, curricula design and didactical methodologies. Furthermore, the labour market orientation of the newly introduced and/ or revised programmes, their gender sensitivity as well as the involvement of external stakeholder in their revision was dimensions of this capability.
- The **capability to relate to other actors** was operationalised as the existence of networks to other stakeholders which are not involved in the revision of curricula. In this regard the density, frequency and effects of the network were aspects of this capability. Additionally, the capability was also operationalised as the external credibility and legitimacy of the organisation.
- The **capability to adopt and self-renew** was operationalised as the ability of the management of the requesting organisations to understand and adapt to shifting contexts as well as to encourage change processes. In addition it was analysed if the requesting organisation had processes and structures in place (e.g. knowledge management systems) to cope with changing environments.
- The **capability to achieve coherence** was operationalised as the absence of conflicts between the management with regard to the vision and strategy of the requesting organisation. Additionally, the requesting organisation should possess a shared vision and a set of principles which govern the organisation.

These five capabilities were thereby operationalised along different items in the questionnaire (see annex 2). The same items were used in the survey among the staff of the requesting organisations which was conducted during the case studies. Also in this survey the respondents had to rate the situation before and after the NPT project (see annex 2). This data was complemented by the views of each evaluator who assessed the situation before and after the NPT project through the conducted interviews with the requesting organisations, external stakeholders and conducted workshops in the case studies using the same scale. All assessments for each item, requesting organisation and capability were made using a scale of 1 (capability is lacking) to 5 (capability is high). The CDI was conceptualised by Rambøll Management Consulting for this evaluation by weighting and interrelating the different data collection methods. The CDI was calculated as the average of the four different perspectives (requesting organisation, staff of the requesting organisations, northern partners and evaluators), which all had the same value, for each capability for the situation prior and after the NPT project. The calculated mean of these four perspectives resulted in a value for the situation prior and after for each NPT project. The CDI was then calculated as the differential value between the calculated mean for the situation prior and after the NPT project. In the end the CDI was validated by a factor analysis (see also annex 2). As a result the CDI always indicates the changes within each capability which can be attributed to the analysed NPT projects by comparing the collected baseline data to the observed results after the implementation of the project. Thus, it always shows differential values.

Figure 16 shows the calculated CDI for the capability to act for each case study country as well as the starting value in each case study country (baseline). Compared to the overall increase for the whole NPT programme (1.21), which also includes NPT projects which were not analysed in the case studies, it highlights that most changes in the capacity to act could be initiated in Benin followed by Ethiopia and Vietnam. The smallest changes could be achieved in South Africa.

Figure 19: CDI – Capability to Act



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

However, the differences between the case study countries can be explained by the starting position of the different visited requesting organisations and the countries in general (baseline data). Requesting organisations in Benin, Ethiopia and Vietnam experienced the lowest level within the capability to act before the NPT projects started while in South Africa they started from a higher level. As a consequence, changes in the capability to act could be achieved easier in countries which started from a lower level compared with countries which started from a relatively higher level.

Taking a closer look at the case study findings, the most significant changes could be observed in the availability of adequate human resources and the availability of adequate infrastructure within the capability to act. Within the field of human resources all 29 requesting organisations were successful in improving the qualifications of lecturing staff by training them in research and teaching methodologies. According to the interviewed students in the case studies, this led to a general improvement in the quality in the delivery of courses as teaching methods changed from lecture-centred formats to more participatory formats which encourage critical thinking by students. Furthermore, lecturing staff in all 29 requesting organisations could acquire higher degrees such as masters and PhDs through the projects, enabling them to deliver better courses and supervision of students. In Vietnam, for example, in one requesting organisation all lecturing staff could improve their academic qualification from Bachelor to Master or from Master to PhD level respectively (see chapter 5.2.2). These observed improvements in turn benefited the capability to deliver development results of all requesting organisations visited (see chapter 5.2.6).

In South Africa, Benin and Guatemala in nine of the 29 (31.0%) requesting organisations the middle management was also trained in administrative and financial skills. This led in these requesting organisations in the view of the interviewed external stakeholders to a better management of the organisations which manifested itself in the development of business plans of a higher quality, the introduction of quality standards for curricula and courses as well as improved work processes in the fields of financial and administrative management. In five of these nine (55.6%) requesting organisations the NPT projects however failed to initiate changes on the higher management level. Therefore, these requesting organisations as well as the other 18 in which management was not involved in training, did not develop the necessary ownership to trigger changes on the organisational level. This could only be accomplished in four South African requesting organisations in which the higher management was also actively involved. In these organisations, the higher management actively promoted the NPT projects which led to changes in the communication between management and staff as well as in the structures of the

whole organisation; e.g. in the form of the establishment of a department for rural extension at an agricultural college.

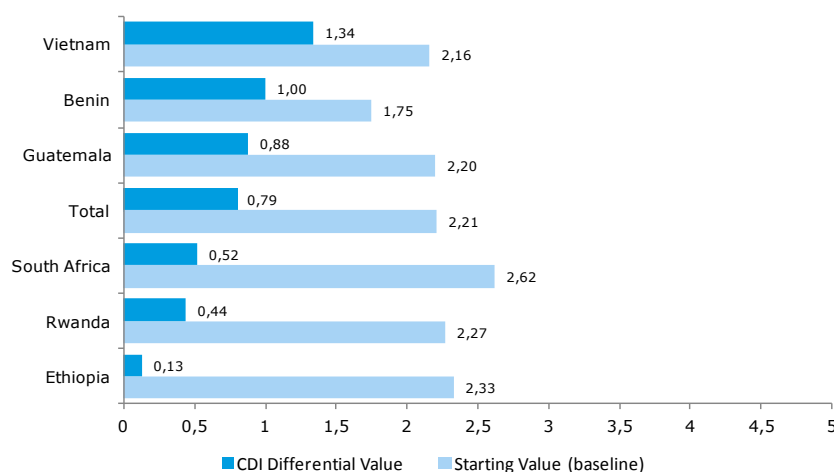
The infrastructure was upgraded by the projects in all 29 requesting organisations. However, the need and demand for adequate infrastructure in these requesting organisations is still high due to the starting situation of these organisations. The infrastructure upgrades mainly concentrated on improving lecturing and study conditions as well as research services. In Ethiopia and South Africa for example, computers and books were bought to equip the libraries while in Benin and Guatemala laboratory equipment was purchased to enable better teaching and research conditions.

In three of the 29 (10.3%) requesting organisations visited the NPT projects also aimed at introducing quality assurance systems. In two of these cases (66.7%) quality assurance systems and units could be established. In Vietnam one requesting organisation introduced the use of standardised services on student satisfaction, developed quality standards and implemented performance evaluations. In another requesting organisation²⁷ in Ethiopia quality assurance units were established and equipped. These units developed standards for the assessment of teachers, courses and curricula as well as courses to teach these standards. However, their competences were transferred to other quality assurance units which were established by a parallel running government programme reducing the NPT established quality assurance units to resource centres.

Furthermore, twelve of the 29 (41.4%) requesting organisations were able to consolidate their financial resources by either acquiring new funding from other donors (e.g. World Bank) or by the national government. In Benin for example the government secured funding for four requesting organisations due to the intervention of the RNE. In addition, six NPT projects in South Africa and Rwanda aimed at improving community outreach. In all six visited requesting organisations community outreach could be improved by re-orienting curricula or course content or by establishing satellite centres in rural areas.

The *capability to adapt and self-renew* was targeted actively by seven of the 29 (24.1%) NPT projects. However, the 5C model stipulates that changes in one capability also have an influence on other capabilities as all capabilities are interrelated. As a consequence, the CDI shows increases in this capability for each case study country. Nevertheless, in comparison to the capability to act these increases are lower as the capability to adapt and self-renew only rises by 0.79 (see figure 17) and the capability to act by 1.21 for the whole NPT programme (see figure 16).

Figure 20: CDI – Capability to Adapt and Self-Renew



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

²⁷ The responsible NPT project established quality assurance units also in eight other requesting organisations according to the interviewed stakeholders. However, as these requesting organisations were not visited during the case study, they are not included in the analysis of this evaluation.

Figure 17 highlights that the largest changes in the capability to adapt and self-renew could be realised in Vietnam, followed by Benin and Guatemala. The lowest increase is experienced by Ethiopia. These differences between the case study countries can be explained by various reasons. Vietnam is the only case study country in which all NPT projects aimed at improving the capability to adapt and self-renew. The NPT projects were seen by all six visited requesting organisations as an element in a pre-existing change agenda. The requesting organisations felt the need for fundamental modifications to be able to adapt to the changes and demands initiated by government authorities, students and employers. As a consequence the Vietnamese requesting organisations used the NPT projects to re-focus their activities on new target groups as well as to make their curricula and courses more labour market oriented.

In Guatemala one NPT project also targeted this capability by establishing departments to keep its staff and curricula up to date and flexible to societal demands. More importantly however, in most projects in Guatemala as well as in South Africa and Benin the middle and top management received training in various fields of organisational management, thereby equipping the management with competencies to react to changing environments (see chapter 5.2.4). This proved to be an asset in these NPT projects not only to create more ownership in the requesting organisations but also to prepare the organisations as such to adapt better to dealing with changing external circumstances. It also increased the attention of the organisations to the importance of continuously updating their curricula and courses to align them with the demands of the labour market in order to guarantee their continuous relevance. In addition, in these NPT projects the management was committed to the initiated changes by the NPT projects and facilitated lessons learned throughout the whole organisation; in some cases also making changes possible outside of the envisaged scope of the project.

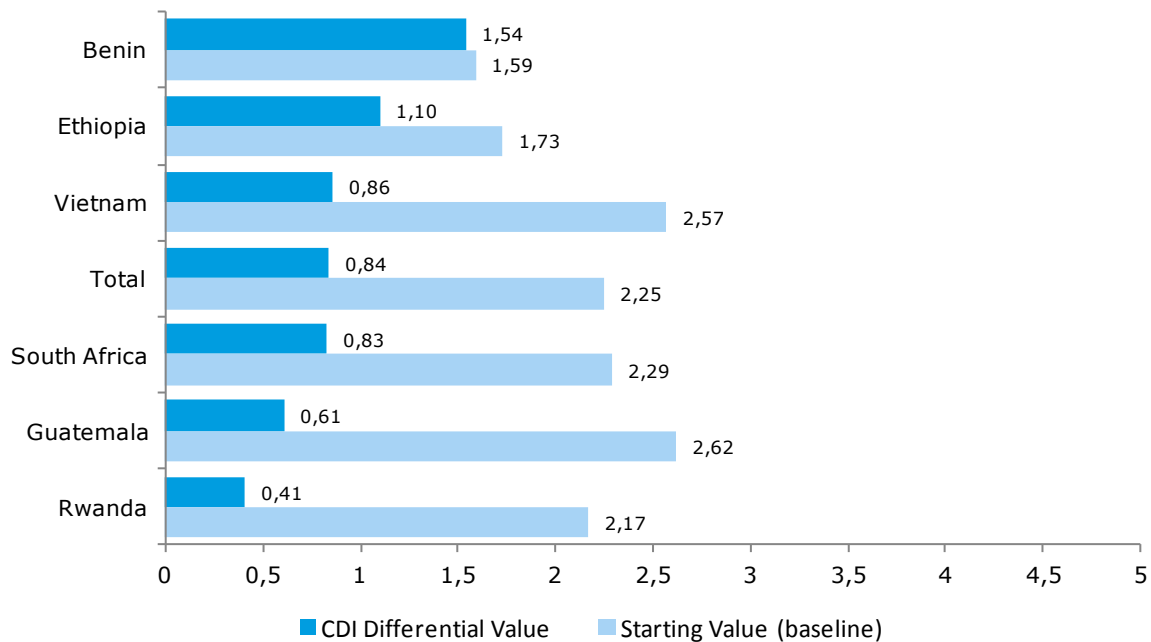
As a consequence the involvement of the middle and top management – especially of the top management – proved to be a success factor in increasing the capability to adapt and self-renew in the requesting organisations. By involving the top management in trainings more ownership was created in the organisations, leading to more changes in the requesting organisations which also positively affected other capabilities as well as the sustainability of the projects (see below and chapter 5.5). Furthermore, NPT projects which were conceptualised by the requesting organisations as part of their change management process also influenced this capability more than others. Another factor which influenced the capability to adapt and self-renew positively were team-building activities in which the management was included. As many of the requesting organisations visited possessed an organisational culture which was characterised by a low information exchange between the management and the general staff, necessary changes perceived from both levels were not communicated to each other, making it difficult for the organisation to adapt to changing circumstances. In South Africa team building activities helped to overcome this lack of communication in the targeted requesting organisations.

However, within the case studies external and internal factors could also be observed which hindered capacity development within the capability to adapt and self-renew. When the autonomy of the management to make decision depends on higher levels e.g. ministries, no incentives to favour change in the organisation can be created. For example, if universities receive funding on the basis of taught hours by its lecturers, it is difficult for the management to institutionalise mechanisms fostering curricula development or innovation in general. In addition in some NPT projects framework conditions had not been taken correctly into consideration as they were based upon outdated needs assessments. As a result, initiated changes of three NPT projects in Ethiopia for example became obsolete as processes external to them rendered them irrelevant. In other NPT projects, such as in Benin, decisions by the requesting organisations were based upon six-year old needs assessments while the development of the respective sector already rendered them obsolete as the qualification needs of the sector had evolved. The adherence to these needs assessment made it impossible for the requesting organisation to react adequately to the new demands of the sector.

In comparison to the capability to adapt and self-renew the *capability to achieve coherence* was targeted by 19 of the 29 (65.5%) analysed NPT projects. Despite the large number of NPT projects targeting this capability, the increase within this capability with 0.84 is only 0.05 points higher than the increase in the capability to adapt and self-renew for the whole NPT programme.

In the case study countries the biggest increase can be seen in Benin and Ethiopia while the lowest is experienced in Rwanda (see figure 18).

Figure 21: CDI – Capability to Achieve Coherence



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

In light of these results, it could be observed in the case studies that the analysed NPT projects, with the exception of Benin, generally experienced difficulties in supporting the requesting organisations in this field, although most of them were in the process of formulating new strategies and visions. This was due to the following reasons: lack of ownership, the scope of the project, staff fluctuation and a lack of knowledge in the steering of strategic processes on the side of the northern partners.

As in the case of the capability to adapt and self-renew, most of the analysed NPT projects were not successful in sufficiently involving middle and top management in the projects' activities, leading to a lack of ownership on their behalf. Therefore, the understanding towards the projects' objectives in these components remained vague for the middle and top management and/ or staff creating frustrations on both sides. This led in most cases to an atmosphere in which progress could not be accomplished any longer. In other cases the scope of the project was too large, thereby overburdening the resources of the projects and making it impossible to start a focused process for establishing a shared vision. In these cases existing divides between the management and the staff were either deepened or created by unfulfilled expectations.

Staff fluctuation was another factor which hindered the initiation of changes in this capability. In NPT projects in which there was a large turn-over of management and/ or staff during the implementation of the project, processes and activities to create a shared vision or strategy were disrupted by newly arrived personnel and their new ideas. Against this background a continuous and successful strategy process could not be implemented in the respective projects. However, the above-mentioned factors were also compounded by a lack of knowledge on the side of the northern partners of how to successfully implement such strategic processes. In many analysed NPT projects the northern partners had expertise in curricula development and the qualification of human resources. However, they lacked knowledge and expertise in organisational and strategic development. Consequently, in many projects the development of visions and strategic plans was seen as something that had to be done while the main focus was given to curricula and course development.

In contrast, the analysed NPT projects in Benin proved an exception to these general trends, although they experienced the same challenges. The difference in Benin however was that the northern partners took the initiative to coordinate the different NPT projects with each other to create synergies and to develop a common approach to the sector, which in turn proved to be a success factor in strengthening the capability to achieve coherence. By coordinating the projects and bringing the relevant stakeholders together, a shared vision of a “foundation of a water institute” could be developed. The developed vision and strategy thereby has to be viewed as an unintended positive outcome of this process. Nevertheless, a future “water institute” could facilitate overall strategy making in the future and move the initiated changes of the NPT projects to the next organisational level (from faculty to university level).

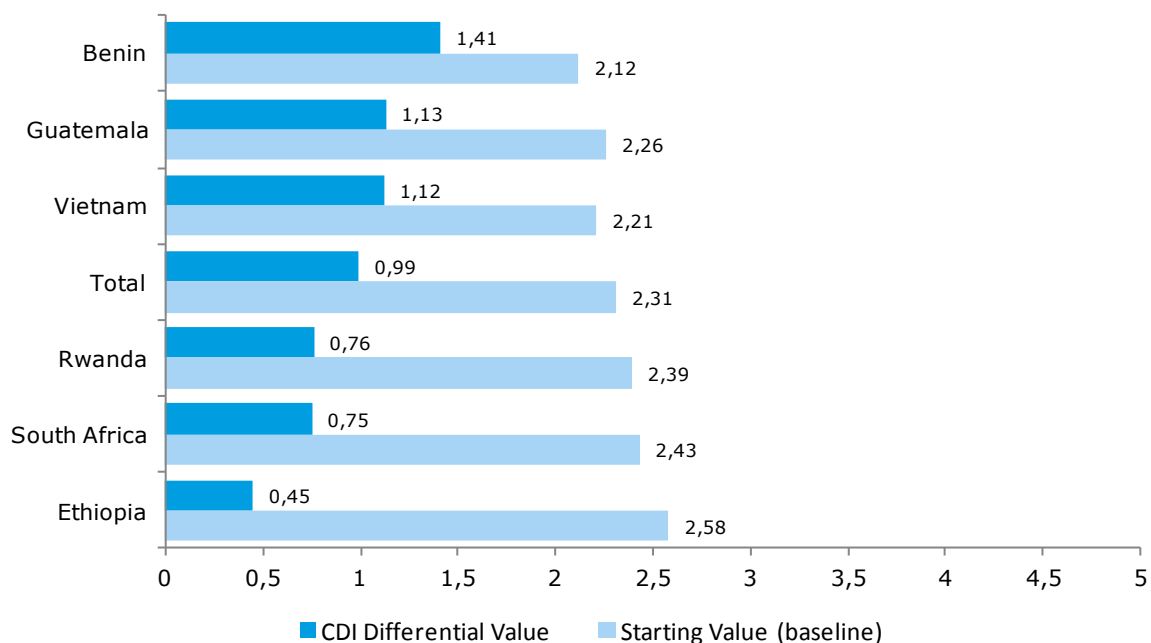
The high results in the CDI for Ethiopia however cannot be explained by the initiated changes of the NPT projects according to the results of the case study. The main factor which contributed to an improvement in the capability to achieve coherence was the implementation of a government reform programme which obliged all involved requesting organisations to develop a vision and a strategic plan. As a result, in many of the NPT projects analysed the respective component was discarded. As a consequence the CDI results are the consequence of processes external to the NPT projects.

The findings show that the NPT programme mainly focuses on the capability to act while the capability to adapt and self-renew and to achieve coherence are most of the time not adequately targeted by the programme. With regard to the capability to achieve coherence, which was targeted by the majority of the projects, the type of interventions undertaken and the competences of the northern partners seem to be the reason for the comparability small accomplished achievements.

5.2.5 Assessment of Changes at Inter-Institutional Level

In 17 of the 29 (58.6%) analysed requesting organisations the NPT projects targeted the inter-institutional level by trying to increase the inter-institutional alliances of the requesting organisations with local, regional and national stakeholders. The *capability to relate* increased for the whole NPT programme by 0.99 while the biggest increases could be seen in Benin and Vietnam (see figure 19).

Figure 22: CDI – Capability to Relate



The increases in Benin can be explained by the coordination initiated among the NPT projects and the requesting organisations, which led to the creation of an umbrella organisation after the inception phase. This led to strong cooperation among the respective requesting organisations and an exchange of professors across institutional boundaries. Furthermore, the institutions share their laboratories as they are equipped with different research devices. In Vietnam the analysed NPT projects were implemented in a number of universities at the same time and put an emphasis on an exchange of information and lessons learned between the participating universities. However, as these activities were financed by the NPT projects these networks are now dormant. The same holds true for some of the projects in Ethiopia, South Africa or Rwanda, while others did not target this capability at all.

Most NPT projects which aimed at the capability to relate tried to increase network abilities only with higher education institutions (e.g. other universities or colleges). Only in seven of the 17 (41.2%) of the requesting organisations visited did the NPT projects try to establish networks also outside the higher education sector in order to increase the reputation of the requesting organisations and to better position them vis-à-vis other important stakeholders. This is also confirmed by the survey among NPT alumni in which 34.1% state that the reputation of their organisation improved through the NPT project, while 61.2% state it remained more or less the same.

The non-existing focus on establishing inter-institutional alliances and networks with other important stakeholders has effects on the achievement within the other capabilities – especially the capability to deliver development results (see below) – and the sustainability of the initiated changes by NPT (see chapter 5.5). When requesting organisations do not possess good relationships to important stakeholders (e.g. government agencies), they cannot influence developments outside of the higher education sector. The same holds true for the accreditation of newly established or revised curricula, which was a challenge in all analysed NPT projects. In these cases the requesting organisations either did not have a good working relationship with the relevant accreditation authority or the accreditation authorities were only informed at a late stage about the on-going processes. As a consequence accreditation was not possible in most NPT projects, although it was needed to guarantee continuous funding from the relevant higher education institutions. The relevant interviewed accreditation authorities however stated in the case studies that an earlier involvement in the processes might make an accreditation easier and less time consuming.

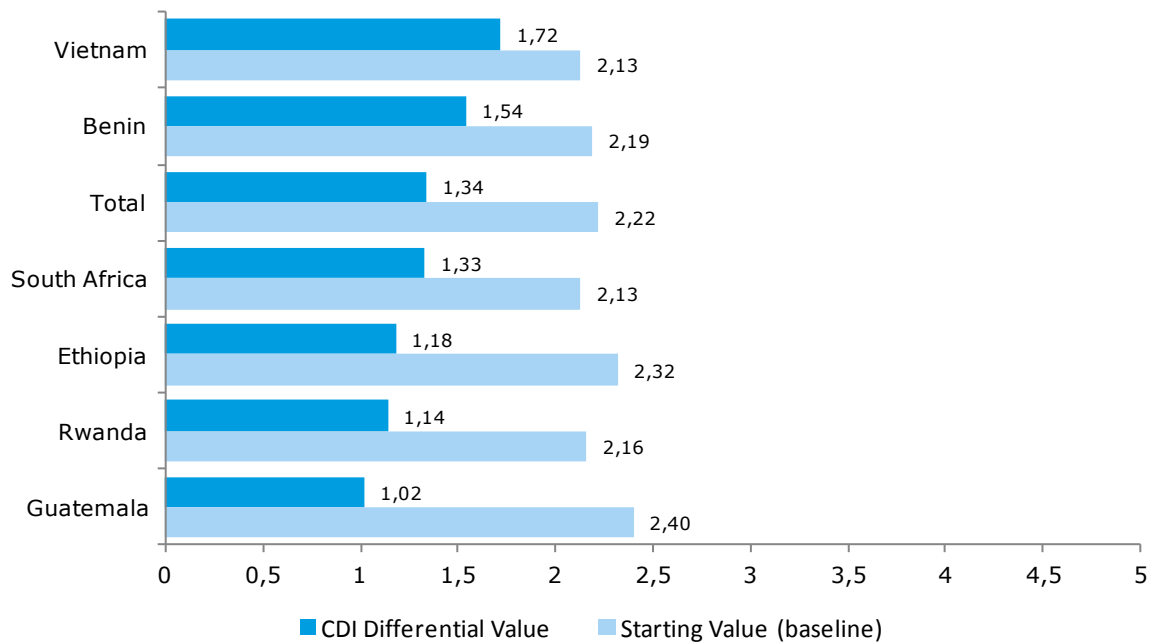
Positive examples for these cases could be found in different case studies. In South Africa, Rwanda and Guatemala four NPT projects aimed at establishing networks between the requesting organisations and relevant stakeholders in the respective sector. These networks are actively used and have a high frequency of contacts (on average every two weeks). As a result, the requesting organisations could establish partnerships for internships for their students, create public platforms to discuss and disseminate their research findings, adapt their research and teaching content according to the needs of their target groups as well as lobby more effectively for the accreditation of their curricula. These activities not only increased the reputation of the respective requesting organisation but also made it possible for them to increase their professional standing vis-à-vis government authorities. In one case a requesting organisation participated in drafting the reform of national legislation because of its increased reputation among government stakeholders.

The findings on the inter-institutional level demonstrate that the NPT programme puts an emphasis on the establishment of networks between higher education institutions. Less focus is put on the establishment of inter-institutional alliances outside of the higher education sector (e.g. with other relevant line ministries).

5.2.6 Assessment of Changes at Content Level

All analysed NPT projects aimed at and could strengthen the *capability to deliver development results* in all 29 visited requesting organisations. Overall the capability to deliver development increased by 1.34 points and thus experienced the highest increase through the NPT programme. Furthermore, figure 20 highlights that the highest increases could be achieved in Vietnam followed by Benin and South Africa. The lowest increase was seen in Guatemala.

Figure 23: CDI – Capability to Deliver Development Results

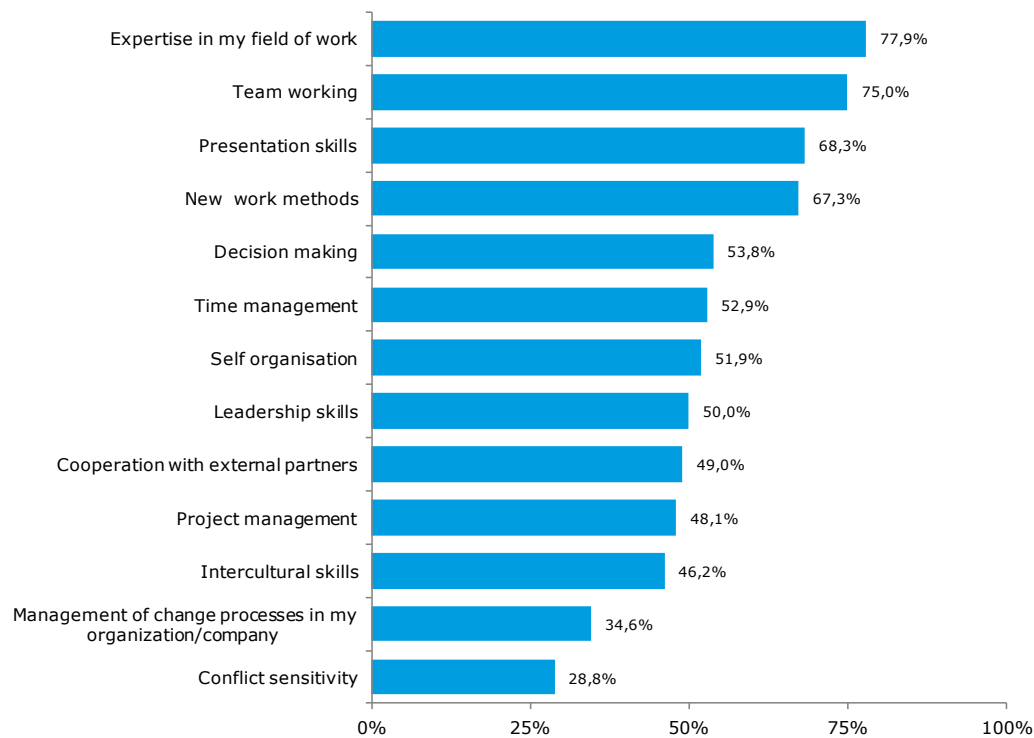


Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

The case studies confirmed these results. In all 29 requesting organisations visited the NPT projects strengthened the capability to deliver development results by establishing and revising new curricula or courses, introducing new teaching methodologies and involving relevant stakeholders in the curricula development. In all case study countries new accredited Bachelor and/ or Master Programmes could be established at 15 of the 29 (51.7%) requesting organisations. In these NPT projects the early involvement of the relevant accreditation authority was a success factor for guaranteeing an easier and less time-consuming accreditation process. Furthermore, in 24 of the 29 (82.8%) requesting organisations, courses and curricula could be revised and implemented successfully.

According to the NPT alumni survey the 69.6% of the NPT alumni assess these newly introduced or revised programmes and courses as very useful and 22.5% as rather useful. Furthermore, 77.9% of the NPT alumni acquired expertise in their field of work, 75.5% team work skills and 68.3% presentation skills through their participation in these courses or programmes (see figure 21).

Figure 24: Acquired Skills and Expertise through Newly Established or Revised Courses



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012 (N=104; multiple response was possible)

In the field of teaching methodologies staff could be trained in new teaching methodologies (e.g. competence-based approach or problem-based learning) in all 29 requesting organisations. On the individual level the staff of all 29 visited requesting organisations gained knowledge in didactical and curricula design methodologies. In seven of the 29 (24.1%) analysed requesting organisations the staff also acquired knowledge and skills in research methodologies. Additionally, in two of the four (50.0%) requesting organisations in which the NPT project aimed at establishing research centres or agendas, research centres or agendas could be successfully established.

This newly acquired knowledge could be institutionalised in 16 of the 29 (55.2%) visited requesting organisation on an organisational level. Most visited requesting organisations (16 of 29; 55.2%) experienced second order learning; meaning that they can adapt the newly gained knowledge to changing or different circumstances. This also correlates with the findings under the capacity to adapt and self-renew on the organisational level (see chapter 5.2.4). In 44.8% (13 of 29) of the requesting organisations only first order learning could be reached; meaning that they can apply new knowledge to a specific context. In the former cases it was possible to establish "competence centres of new knowledge" (e.g. an centre for problem-based learning) at the requesting organisations which actively promote and develop the newly gained knowledge (e.g. agricultural research for development). In addition, these "competence centres" enjoy the commitment and support of the higher management.

In 21 of the 24 (87.5%) requesting organisations in which curricula or courses were newly established or revised, relevant stakeholders from the labour market were included in the curricula or course development. In all these cases the curricula or courses' content are sensitive to the labour market's demands. However, only in six of the 24 (25.0%) requesting organisations were the NPT projects successful in establishing quality standards and mechanisms which guarantee the continuous relevance of these courses and curricula for the labour market. In contrast to the other NPT projects these six projects not only focused mainly on curricula and course development but also targeted the capability to adapt and self-renew by involving the staff and the management in trainings for quality assurance. Furthermore, by involving the higher management actively in the training standards for curricula, development could be created which now applies for the whole faculty or school (capability to achieve coherence).

The mainstreaming of gender into the curricula and courses was an objective in four of the 29 (13.8%) of the visited requesting organisations. In all four requesting organisations gender was partially mainstreamed into the programmes and courses. The main explanation that gender did not play a more prominent part in the NPT projects can be found in the reluctance of the requesting organisations to endorse this topic. According to the interviewed requesting organisations – led either by men or women – gender is not the most pressing issue at hand. As a consequence most requesting organisations go along with the demands of the northern partner to fulfil the requirements of the NPT programme. It can be assumed from the undertaken interviews that this also holds true for NICHE.

Based on these findings, it becomes obvious that the NPT programme focuses next to the capability to act also on the capability to deliver development results. In this capability the programme is successful in introducing new degree programmes and teaching methodologies. The programme, however, is less successful in institutionalising this knowledge on the organisational level so that the requesting organisations can adapt the newly acquired knowledge to changing circumstances.

5.2.7 Assessment of the Effectiveness of NPT

Based upon these results, the evaluator comes to the conclusion that the NPT projects are effective on the policy, organisational and content level. More specifically, they are most effective in strengthening management structures in the sector, the capability to act and the capability to deliver development results. On the policy level the NPT projects were successful in initiating changes in regard to the establishment of new management structures as well as to influence or change national policy guidelines, standards and legislations. The creation of ownership at the ministry level within the middle and top management, the implementation of a multi-level approach and facilitation of advocacy and lobbying skills to the requesting organisations proved to be crucial success factors in these projects. Against this background the ingrained multi-level approach which is followed by NICHE in its planning is seen as a major improvement by the evaluator for the future implementation of the programme.

On the organisational level the NPT projects are very effective in strengthening the capability to act by qualifying academic staff and – to a lesser extent – middle and top management of the respective requesting organisations. This contributes to a better performance of the requesting organisations, especially in teaching. The upgrades in essential infrastructure as well as the improvements in human resources and, in some cases, in financial and administrative systems additionally create an enabling environment for promoting higher quality teaching and research. However, the NPT programme and projects' strategies within this capability do not comparatively place much emphasis on promoting the leadership's integrity and autonomy by e.g. implementing team building mechanisms. Furthermore, middle and top management is rarely involved actively in the projects' activities. Nevertheless, the results demonstrate that a well-functioning relationship between middle and top management and staff as well as active involvement on the side of the middle and top management is essential to create ownership for the project and to initiate changes in other capabilities. Furthermore, such activities improve the communication flows between management and staff, making the projects' objectives transparent and levelling expectations on both sides. Moreover, the involvement of the middle and top management facilitates that initiated changes are disseminated throughout the respective organisation and are institutionalised in processes and structures (e.g. in quality standards).

The lack of involvement of the middle management and particularly of the top management in trainings and in the projects' activities in general impacts negatively on the capability to adapt and self-renew in which the NPT projects are less effective. Furthermore, it became obvious that the capability to adapt and self-renew can be effectively strengthened if the NPT projects are conceptualised as part of an on-going change process in the requesting organisations. In addition, decisions in the projects have to be made on relevant needs assessment in order to guarantee that initiated changes do not become irrelevant by external developments. However, often external factors such as a limited autonomy of the middle and top management of the

requesting organisations can curb any attempts to strengthen the capability to adapt and self-renew.

With regard to the capability to achieve coherence the NPT projects are the least effective, although many projects targeted this capability. The reasons for this can be found mainly in the aforementioned neglect of the middle and top management, the scope of the projects, staff fluctuation and a lack of knowledge on the side of the northern partners in managing strategic development processes. While the staff fluctuation is outside of the influence of the NPT projects, the scope of the project and the available knowledge is within the projects' sphere of influence. As a consequence, room for improvement is given to strengthen the NPT programme's effectiveness in this capability by better scoping the projects and selecting northern partners with competences in managing strategic development processes.

On the inter-institutional level, the capability to relate, the evaluator also identifies room for improvement as most of the NPT projects only focus on establishing networks and relationships within the higher education sector. However, to improve the professional standing of a requesting organisation it is vital to strengthen its relationships, networks and strategic alliances with the relevant public authorities. In cases where this could be accomplished, the capability to deliver development results could also be strengthened as accreditation processes were easier and less time-consuming. In this light the approach of NICHE to focus more on the whole sector and to involve the relevant government authorities from the start of the projects is seen as an improvement.

On the content level, within the capability to deliver development results the NPT programme is, as in the capability to act, very effective. The majority of the projects have introduced new programmes and courses, trained staff in new teaching methodologies and involved relevant stakeholders in curricula and course development. However, only half of the requesting organisations experienced second order learning and could institutionalise the newly acquired knowledge on organisational level. NPT projects which facilitated second order learning adopted a more holistic approach to capacity development than the other NPT projects which only initiated first order learning. The former NPT projects in general created more ownership on the side of the middle and top management and the requesting organisation and were also more successful in strengthening the capability to achieve coherence and to relate as well as the capability to adapt and self-renew.

5.3 Efficiency of NPT and NICHE

The following chapter assesses the efficiency of NPT and NICHE programmes. In a first step, the utilisation of NPT and NICHE budgets in the period 2003-2010 is described and analysed. In a second step, it is assessed how efficiently inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were transformed into results (outputs and outcomes). This transformation efficiency has been analysed along two types of economic evaluation²⁸. The cost-efficiency analysis²⁹ contains a qualitative assessment of programme and project management processes. This is mainly done by checking the experiences and perception of NPT and NICHE programme stakeholders about role distribution, timeliness, and availability of human resources. Eventually, the costs related to the main programme and project activities are analysed and linked to the main outputs of NPT and NICHE. In a third step, a cost-effectiveness analysis³⁰ was conducted for NPT, in which the resources spent at the project level were linked to the projects' outcomes.

²⁸ In general, four types of economic evaluation can be distinguished: cost-efficiency analysis; cost-effectiveness analysis; cost-utility analysis; and cost-benefit analysis. The explanation for restricting the efficiency analysis of NPT and NICHE to two types of economic evaluations can be found in the Inception Report.

²⁹ A cost-efficiency analysis is intended to define the costs per output produced in an intervention. The costs are measured through the value of the resources spent, e.g. funds, expertise, time, etc. The outputs are standardized units, which can be directly related to the costs.

³⁰ Cost-effectiveness addresses the analytical question of what the achieved level of effectiveness has been in relation to the resources spent in an intervention. Therefore, it is used to analyse the transformation efficiency from inputs to outcomes. As in the case of cost-efficiency, the costs are measured through the value of the resources spent, e.g. funds, expertise, time, etc. The measure of outcomes is the defined units of effectiveness.

5.3.1 Description and Analysis of the Budget of NPT and NICHE

5.3.1.1 Analysis of the NPT Budget

With respect to NPT, an overall of 279 million EUR were invested by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 2002 and 2011 an overall of 12 million EUR were spent on NPT programme management level. The main cost components at NPT programme level have been monitoring and evaluation (5.273.893 EUR), identification and articulation (1.745.631 EUR), management and administration (1.465.151 EUR) and tendering (1.116.450 EUR). Further cost components were information and communication (240.765 EUR), reporting (231.063 EUR) and regulation (137.759 EUR)

Figure 25: NPT Cost Components at Programme Level by Year³¹

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Identification and Articulation	22.015	263.446	511.276	333.119	185.753	225.122	175.754	28.509	645	8-	1.745.631
Tendering	594	63.728	264.694	268.933	159.609	129.145	129.744	75.255	24.748	-	1.116.450
Monitoring and evaluation	132	3.314	73.055	358.138	573.300	872.562	1.130.702	906.394	751.337	604.957	5.273.893
Regulation	24.746	15.660	31.008	23.841	19.944	9.177	8.957	2.515	1.793	119	137.759
Reporting	2.700	17.006	18.728	21.927	20.374	22.093	28.322	34.768	22.454	42.690	231.063
Information and communication	14.035	17.845	28.089	39.106	50.070	38.349	29.699	17.755	1.527	4.289	240.763
Management	27.666	80.153	155.205	265.480	204.693	190.730	220.907	149.685	109.640	60.993	1.465.151
Overhead	24.897	122.346	293.847	375.993	421.201	367.299					
Total	116.784	583.498	1.375.903	1.686.537	1.634.944	1.854.477	1.724.084	1.214.881	912.144	713.040	11.816.293

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

At NPT project level, the published budgets for 175 NPT projects that were implemented between 2002 and 2010 amounted to 267.8 million EUR. The budget granted for the NPT projects was only a bit below the published budget and amounted to 266.9 million EUR. In the following a more detailed overview of NPT and NICHE project budgets is given.

As can be seen in the figure below NPT projects have a clear focus on Africa, where 65.1% of all projects were implemented and where the granted project budgets account for 60.3% of the overall granted budget. Latin America accounts for 11.6% of the granted budget (12% of projects) and Asia for 28.1% of the budget (22.9% of projects). At country level a mixed picture emerges. The countries with the largest NPT project budgets granted are from Africa and Asia. Uganda has received the largest budget amounts (10%) and is followed by Yemen (9.6%), Indonesia (9.5%), Ghana (9.2%) and Vietnam (9%). Together, these five countries received 47.3% of the total NPT project budget.

³¹ Until 2007 a few categories were named differently. From 2008 onwards overhead costs are not explicitly mentioned, but part of the other cost-components. Therefore numbers until 2007 might not be perfectly comparable with numbers after 2007. Until 2007 the cost-components were "Behoefteninventarisatie; vraagidentificatie en vraagarticulatie; Koppeling vraag en aanbod; Monitoring en evaluatie; Regelgeving; Financieel beheer; Verslaglegging aan de opdrachtgever; Voorlichting en communicatie; Leiding en secretariat".

Figure 26: NPT Project Budgets by Country and Region

Country/Region	No. projects	Published budget	Granted budget
Africa	114	161.632.640	161.058.554
Benin	11	11.250.000	11.241.471
Ethiopia	16	19.155.000	19.131.878
Ghana	17	24.800.000	24.579.138
Mozambique	12	20.851.400	20.869.783
Rwanda	12	15.407.240	15.384.457
South Africa	10	17.460.000	17.427.800
Tanzania	12	15.300.000	15.281.222
Uganda	16	27.559.000	27.309.881
Zambia	8	9.850.000	9.832.924
Latin America	21	31.000.000	30.990.734
Colombia	7	13.750.000	13.761.642
Guatemala	14	17.250.000	17.229.092
Asia	40	75.190.000	74.935.046
Indonesia	14	25.500.000	25.446.783
Vietnam	11	24.000.000	23.949.684
Yemen (Rep. of)	15	25.690.000	25.538.579
Total	175	267.822.640	266.984.334

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

With respect to the number of projects and granted project budgets, three categories can be distinguished. The sectors with a small number of NPT projects (up to 10 projects) are engineering/technology, entrepreneurship, gender, quality assurance, social economic development, and water /sanitation. These six sectors account for 21.7% of all NPT projects and 18.9% of the total NPT budget granted. Sectors with an average number of NPT project between 13 and 18 projects are agriculture, health/medicine, informatics/information systems, justice and human rights, natural resources and environment, public administration and teacher training. These seven sectors account for 60.6% of all NPT projects and 65.6% of the total NPT budget granted. Finally, the policy development and management sector stands out with the largest number of NPT projects. The projects implemented in the public development and management sector account for 17.7% of all NPT projects and 15.5% of the total NPT budget granted.

Figure 27: NPT Budget by Sectors

Sector	No. projects	Published budget	Granted budget
Policy Development & Management	31	41.443.000	41.299.264
Agriculture	18	27.937.240	27.875.955
Public Administration	17	24.475.000	24.272.449
Natural Resources & Environment	16	28.940.000	28.985.547
Teacher Training	15	24.828.400	24.928.886
Informatics/Information Systems	14	29.046.000	28.820.245
Health/Medicine	13	21.825.000	21.560.717
Justice & Human Rights	13	18.750.000	18.770.390
Water & Sanitation	10	12.900.000	12.909.318
Engineering/Technology	8	11.050.000	11.037.528
Social Economic Development	7	9.898.000	9.815.845
Quality assurance	6	5.830.000	5.828.996
Entrepreneurship	5	7.300.000	7.287.902
Gender	2	3.600.000	3.591.292
Total	175	267.822.640	266.984.334

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

With respect to the type of contracted Dutch institution, a clear dominance of Dutch universities exists. As shown in the figure below, this type of institution accounts for 49.1% of all northern partners contracted for implementing NPT projects, followed by the private (consulting) organisations (25.7%), universities of professional education (14.9%), international education institutes (7.4%), and finally NGOs (2.9%). This picture is repeated when looking at the shares of granted NPT project budget. 50% of the budgets go to universities, 22.9% to private

(consulting) organisations, 16.4% to universities of professional education, 7.8% to international education institutes and 2.9% to NGOs.

Figure 28: NPT Budget by Type of Contracted Institution

Type of contracted institution	No. projects	Published budget	Granted budget
University	86	134.340.400	133.574.018
Private (Consulting)	45	61.165.000	61.026.222
University of Applied Science	26	43.752.240	43.779.258
International Education Institute	13	20.915.000	20.919.460
NGO	5	7.650.000	7.685.376
Total	175	267.822.640	266.984.334

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

5.3.1.2 Analysis of the NICHE Budget

With respect to NICHE, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has spent approximately 9.4 million EUR at programme level between 2008 and 2011 and more than 76 million EUR at the project level.³² The main cost components at programme management level are identification and articulation (5.251.627 EUR), programme management (2.076.020 EUR) and implementation (744.803 EUR). Further cost components are regulation (731.530 EUR), information and communication (457.094 EUR), and last, monitoring and evaluation (161.473 EUR).

Figure 29: NICHE Cost Components at Programme Level by Year³³

	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Identification and articulation	-	1.198.059	2.598.586	1.454.983	5.251.627
Implementation	-	476	71.055	673.271	744.803
Regulation	15.882	312.399	173.661	229.587	731.530
Information and	367	86.160	198.588	171.979	457.094
Management	26.987	316.800	761.339	970.893	2.076.020
Monitoring and Evaluation	1.137	27.444	38.979	93.914	161.473
Total	44.373	1.941.338	3.842.208	3.594.627	9.422.547

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

With respect to NICHE project level the published budget for 52 projects between 2008 and 2011 amounted to 76.150.000 EUR. In 2010, NUFFIC approved 21 NICHE projects, with a published project budget of 27.400.000 EUR. In 2011, 31 new NICHE projects were approved. The published budget for these NICHE projects amounted to 48.7500.000 EUR. In the following a more detailed description of NICHE project budgets is given.

As the overview below shows, the regional focus on Africa is still valid for NICHE. The share of NICHE project being implemented in Africa is even more pronounced than in NPT. By far the highest number of NICHE projects is being implemented in Africa (78.9%), specifically in Mozambique (21.2%), South Africa (15.4%) and Tanzania (13.5%). Therefore, the current status quo of NICHE project countries reflects a different picture in comparison to NPT, in which Uganda, Yemen, Indonesia, Ghana and Vietnam were priority countries. In NICHE, Asia's share dropped significantly. The region currently only accounts for 11.5% of the projects (22.9% in NPT), while Latin America's share decreased only slightly to 9.6% (12% in NPT).

³² Information status: January 2012.

³³ For NICHE program only the published budgets were available.

Figure 30: NICHE Project Budgets by Country and Region between 2008 and 2011³⁴

Country/Region	No. projects	Published budget
Africa	41	60.350.000
Mozambique	11	10.750.000
South Africa	8	13.450.000
Tanzania	7	11.300.000
Rwanda	5	4.150.000
Ethiopia	4	12.000.000
Zambia	4	6.400.000
Uganda	2	2.300.000
Asia	5	6.300.000
Yemen	5	6.300.000
Latin America	6	9.500.000
Colombia	4	6.500.000
Guatemala	2	3.000.000
Total	52	76.150.000

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

With the start of NICHE a new and more compact categorization of sectors was introduced along the thematic priority themes of Dutch development cooperation policy. Under the new categories, NICHE projects show a clear emphasis on the education sector, where 28.8% of all projects are being implemented and 32.6% of the overall budget is spent. However, it has to be taken into consideration that although the main objective of these education projects is to strengthen education and training capacity, eight of them have a clear TVET focus. Private Sector Development is the second most important NICHE sector, where 21.2% of the projects are categorized and 18.8% of the budget is being spent. Therefore, two sectors account for 50.0% of all NICHE projects and 51.4% of the total NICHE project budget.

Figure 31: NICHE Budget by Sectors

Sector	No. projects	Published budget
Education	15	24.846.118
Private Sector Development	11	14.303.882
Good Governance	11	14.100.000
Health	5	6.650.000
Water & Sanitation	5	6.800.000
Agriculture & Environment	4	8.650.000
Gender & Emancipation	1	800.000
Total	52	76.150.000

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

Eventually, the NICHE numbers demonstrate that there has been a major shift in the type of organisation contracted in comparison to NPT. While in NPT 49.1% of all projects were managed by Dutch universities, their share in NICHE decreased to 42.3%. At the same time, the private (consulting) organisations, which are summarized under the type "other", increased their share of projects considerably from 25.7% in NPT to 38.5% in NICHE.

³⁴ For NICHE program only the published budgets were available

Figure 32: NICHE Budget by Type of Contracted Institution

Type of contracted institution	No. projects	Published budget
University	22	29.850.000
Business	20	32.400.000
International Education Institute	7	10.400.000
University of Applied Science	2	2.400.000
NGO	1	1.100.000
Total	52	76.150.000

Source: Nuffic Database 2012

5.4 Assessment of NPT and NICHE cost-efficiency

To conduct the cost-efficiency analysis of NPT and NICHE the *quality of processes in the programme* and the *efficiency of project management* was assessed. It is assumed that an efficient programme and project management relies on a clear and common interpretation of the division of responsibilities and accountabilities, timeliness in the processes, and the availability of qualified human resources of the different stakeholders throughout the programme and project management cycle. As regards NPT and NICHE, this is the case for the activities within the programme and project management cycle, which encompasses the *demand identification, demand articulation, tender procedure, and project implementation phase*.

The assessment of the programme and project management efficiency of NPT and NICHE was based on a RACI-analysis (see also annex 2). RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed) is an acronym derived from the four key responsibilities and roles that are necessary to establish an efficient programme and project management between the different programme and project management stakeholders. Through these responsibilities it is possible to illustrate and clarify roles and responsibilities in programme or project management activities. In doing so, the RACI-analysis allows the creation of a matrix that illustrates the roles assigned within each activity, and identifies the responsible and accountable actors, as well as the stakeholders to be consulted and informed. Thereby, it permits checking for potential sources of (in)efficiency, e.g. minimize the risk of responsibility gaps, overlaps, duplications, and confusions regarding responsibility, accountability, consultation and information within a programme and project activity.

The assignment of roles and responsibilities according to RACI clarifies "who does what, with whom and when". Therefore the roles and responsibilities in the RACI-analysis are defined as follows:

- *Responsible*: Regarding an activity the responsibility lies upon the stakeholder(s) that actually work to complete(s) and achieve(s) the tasks. Responsibility can be shared. Therefore, there may be more than one stakeholder responsible for a task or activity.
- *Accountable*: A stakeholder is accountable, when it is ultimately answerable for the activity or decision. This includes the authority and veto to approve or reject a result, decision or deliverable.
- *Consulted*: A stakeholder is consulted, when it is asked prior to a final decision or action. Therefore, a two-way communication takes place, as input from the designated stakeholder(s) to be consulted is required.
- *Informed*: This relates to stakeholders who need to be kept up-to-date regarding programme and/or project processes, activities and/or decisions. These stakeholders need to be informed after a decision or action has taken place. These stakeholders however may be required to react as a result of the information, decision or action. Here, only a one-way communication takes place.

Regarding the *actor specific roles* within the entire programme and project management cycle the results of the RACI analysis show the following patterns and characteristics. The results thereby showed no significant differences between NPT and NICHE.

- The role of *Nuffic* is characterized by being either responsible or the responsible and accountable actor. The respondents assign NUFFIC one of these two roles in 19 out of 23 activities. This is to a large extent in line with the division of responsibilities set out in the standard processes for NPT and NICHE. However, the responses in the survey also show that it is not necessarily clear to other stakeholders whether NUFFIC is also the accountable actor and thus ultimately answerable for the respective activity.
- NUFFIC's central role is contrasted by the role the respondents assigned to the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. The Ministry is mainly seen by the respondents as being either informed or not involved at all. Practically no respondent sees the Ministry as a responsible, accountable or consulted stakeholder in any activity. Again, this is in tune with the role assigned to the Ministry in the standard processes. However, this raises the question of the programme's ownership. It seems that the Ministry is only perceived as a funding actor, without any active involvement.
- The main roles assigned to the *embassies* by the respondents are as consulted, informed or uninvolved stakeholders. This role distribution suggests that the embassies are perceived and have commonly taken a supportive role in both programmes. The answers also underline that the level of involvement is high during the demand identification and articulation phase and eventually decreases. This role perception is to a large extent according to the standard processes in both NPT and NICHE.
- The experiences and perceptions of the respondents regarding the *northern partners'* roles are consistent during the first programme phases where they are commonly assigned no involvement. Experiences and perceptions start to vary from the start of the implementation phase. Most commonly, the respondents have experienced the northern partners as responsible for or responsible and accountable for the activities during the project implementation. As in the case of NUFFIC, this result also reflects that there is no consistent picture with respect to the level of accountability of the northern partners and the extent to which they are ultimately answerable for the respective activity. According to the standard processes in NPT and NICHE, northern partners are responsible and accountable actors in the implementation phase.
- The experience and perception of roles with respect to the *requesting organisations* is the most varied of all stakeholders involved. Although many of the different role perceptions can be traced back to the type of project (e.g. policy or other projects) it also emphasized that there is little consistency in the way they have been involved in both programmes. The requesting organisations are attributed in the survey the role as responsible or responsible and accountable stakeholder, especially during the implementation phase. In the demand identification and articulation phase the requesting organisations are mostly seen as a consulted stakeholder. Only in a few activities in these two phases are the requesting organisations assigned a responsible role. According to the survey results, commonly neither responsibility nor accountability rely on the requesting organisations. This result differs to a certain extent according to the demand-driven design of both programmes and indicates a lack of ownership. Moreover, the standard processes for both programmes assign the requesting organisations a responsible and accountable role for the main activities of demand articulation (e.g. project outline and capacity self-assessment).

Besides these actor specific characteristics, the role distributions within a certain number of *activities* can be highlighted with respect to potential sources of inefficiencies in programme and project management.

Figure 33: NPT and NICHE Activities with a Significant Variety in Role Assignment

Program Management Phase	Activity	Synthesis of Survey Results	Standard Process
1. Demand identification phase	Drafting of the implementation plan (NPT)	The involvement of the southern partners varies significantly. The respondents assign them a role as responsible or consulted actors or do not see them involved at all. Accountability is mainly seen to rely on Nuffic. However, many do not identify an accountable actor for this activity at all.	According to the standard process the southern partners are not involved in this activity. Nuffic is the responsible and accountable actor, while the embassies share the responsibility with Nuffic.
	Drafting of the programme outline and sector plans (NICHE)	The involvement of the embassies and the role distribution between them and Nuffic varies significantly within this activity. It seems to be handled rather differently which of both actors is actually accountable for the activity. Besides, the role of the southern partners is not clear. The respondents mostly see them as a consulted or not involved stakeholder.	According to the standard process in NICHE programme, this activity has three responsible and accountable actors: Nuffic, the embassy and the relevant national ministries of the partner country.
2. Demand articulation phase	Conducting capacity self assessment	Perception here varies a lot with respect to Nuffic. Nuffic is assigned four different roles by the respondents. The average experience and perception of the respondents is that Nuffic can be the responsible, accountable, responsible and accountable or a consulted actor. Moreover, the respondents do not perceive nor have they experienced the southern partners to be accountable for this activity.	The standard process identifies the southern partners to be responsible and accountable actor for this activity. Nuffic's shares responsibility to a certain extent (e.g. assessment whether the respective requesting organisation can have the financial responsibility).
3. Tender procedure phase	Assessing the proposals	The role of the southern partners seems to vary between a consulted and a responsible actor in this activity. Besides, although most see Nuffic's role as a responsible and accountable actor, many do not place accountability on Nuffic or another actor.	According to the standard process the southern partner is a responsible and accountable actor and shares this responsibility and accountability with Nuffic.
4. Project implementation phase	Conducting project monitoring & evaluation	Within this activity major differences exist. Responsibility and accountability are shared between northern and southern partner. However, the respondents assign the embassy three different roles as consulted, informed or not involved actor. NUFFIC's role is seen as responsible or consulted actor.	The standard process foresees a shared responsibility and accountability between Nuffic, northern and southern partner. Embassies are not part of this activity according to the standard programme processes.
	Managing project finances	Again, most respondents see the northern and southern partners as the responsible or the responsible and accountable actors. Besides, many also see accountability relying on NUFFIC. Accountability in this activity seems to be shared by the three actors.	Here Nuffic is the accountable, while northern and southern organisations are responsible actors.

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

Against the background of these RACI-survey results, the main potential inefficiencies in programme and project management could arise due to the distribution of accountability. Within a NPT and NICHE activity the involved stakeholders do not necessarily know who the accountable actor is. In many answers, the respondents do not place accountability on any of the actors involved at all. This indicates an unclear accountability that could affect the efficiency as it is not necessarily clear who is ultimately answerable for the success and efficient implementation of an activity. Moreover, accountability is generally attributed to NUFFIC, which is to a large extent in line with the foreseen standards in both programmes. Not in tune with the standards is the role of the requesting organisations in the demand articulation phase, where they should be accountable for drafting the project outline and the capacity self-assessment. However, the experience of the respondents is that the requesting organisations are not accountable for any of the activities during the demand articulation phase.

With respect to *NICHE* further insights about the role distribution of the involved stakeholders were collected during case studies and in-depth interviews. Experiences from northern partners indicate a changed role perception of NUFFIC in project implementation. It is claimed that NUFFIC tends to intervene more often at the project level, which is reflected in a much stronger communication of NUFFIC with the requesting organisations about e.g. financial and budgetary matters. With respect to project implementation this has led to the establishment of parallel communication structures: the requesting organisations communicate with their partners in the north as well as with NUFFIC. However, the northern partners do not participate in the latter communication processes. This situation has led to communication problems between northern and requesting organisations and seems to make relationships more complicated. Furthermore, northern partners have indicated that administrative burdens have increased since *NICHE* has been introduced. The northern partners state that they have lost flexibility to adapt *NICHE*

projects to external and internal circumstances during the implementation phase. According to the interviewed northern partners, project partners in NICHE need to inform NUFFIC about any changes in their activities that would lead to different outputs or objectives. Moreover, they need to send NUFFIC a formal request for suggested adaptations. According to these northern partners, these circumstances eventually lead not only to a loss of time and efficiency during project implementation but can also jeopardize effective project implementation.

Besides this, an important share of northern and requesting organisations state that NPT and NICHE project budgets do not necessarily cover all needed project costs (e.g. salaries, infrastructure, communication, etc.). In the survey of northern and requesting organisations 44% of the northern and requesting organisations agree that the project budgets cover the necessary costs, 43% only partially agree and 13% disagree. The following main NPT and NICHE budget characteristics have been mentioned as affecting the project implementation, effectiveness and efficiency (in order of frequency of response (N=100)):

- **Incentives/salaries for requesting organisations:** Incentives for participation and commitment of staff members in the requesting organisations are not covered by the project budgets. According to 28.0% of the respondents, this affects the project efficiency through challenges in project implementation and effectiveness. For example, it has been claimed that much of the NPT activities come "on top" of the regular work in the requesting organizations, making it difficult to find committed and available staff members for implementing the projects' activities.
- **High administrative and management costs:** 22.0 % of the respondents claimed that the budget for project management and administration is too low, thereby limiting the time necessary to achieve better results. In many cases the northern and requesting organisations emphasized the challenges in coordination and communication, which eventually result either in unpaid overtime for the involved partners or/and a delay in project implementation.
- **Match of ambitions and budgets of the NPT projects:** According to 6.0% of the respondents, the project budgets and the ambitions in the projects are perceived as not being in balance, as ambitions and expectations are high but cannot be covered accordingly with the budget of the projects. According to the respondents, this situation results in a suboptimal achievement of project goals.
- **NPT and NICHE budget line for infrastructure:** According to 5.0% of the respondents, the 20% budget limit for infrastructure expenses set by the Ministry is too inflexible, as it cannot be adapted to project specific characteristics. Especially when NPT projects involved several requesting organisations or when the outline capacities of the requesting organisations were very low, the budget limit was linked to challenges for the projects' outcomes by respondents.

From a point of view of Nuffic however, the limitations identified above regarding incentives, salaries and the 20% ceiling for investment³⁵ are set to guarantee ownership and sustainability. The measures are meant to produce a financial commitment of the requesting organisations from the start of the projects that supports the continuation of the project outcomes.

Regarding the project management efficiency, the availability of *qualified human resources* both in the northern and requesting organisations was assessed positively. In general, the necessary human resources to perform the activities efficiently were confirmed both by northern and requesting organisations interviewed in the case studies. The added value of the Dutch organisations is mainly seen in the infusion of external specialised knowledge and teaching methodologies. Referring to the interviewed requesting organisations in the case studies, all stated that the Dutch organisations had the necessary technical and academic knowledge within their specific fields with regard to research, applied science and teaching methodologies. Challenges mentioned regarding the qualification of human resources in the case studies were the low English skills of the requesting organisations, a lack of competences with regard to

³⁵ In a small number of projects (especially those with high investment costs such as ICT projects) Nuffic did allow for 25% or 30% of the budget to be spent for infrastructural investments. The regulations allow Nuffic to make these exceptions in reasonable cases.

strategic and organisational development processes and the sometimes insufficient, for example, Spanish skills of northern partners.

Furthermore, the *participation of regional stakeholders* (e.g. other universities in the region) was claimed to add value to an efficient project implementation and goal achievement in the case studies. It was underlined that the regional stakeholders added value to the development of the projects because their knowledge about the challenges in the respective sectors is more similar to the situation in the NPT partner country than in the Netherlands. Some requesting organisations also highlighted the benefit that the costs to invite an expert from the regional stakeholder's institution to teach courses in Guatemala are considerably lower than to invite an expert from the Netherlands. According to the requesting organisations the courses taught by experts of the regional stakeholder institutions have been of high quality. According to more than 87% of respondents of the survey of northern and requesting organisations, NICHE projects are using local and regional capacities in project implementation. For NPT, 75% of respondents confirmed the usage of local and regional capacity in project implementation. Therefore, participation of local and regional stakeholders increased considerably by 13% in NICHE projects. This increase suggests that efficiency advantages caused by the participation of regional stakeholders are being used to a higher extent in NICHE.

As part of the cost-efficiency analysis of NPT and NICHE the effects of the *tendering procedure* and the *opening up process* were assessed through the level of competition reached in the tenders. Regarding NPT, a low level of competition and a clear dominance of two types of bidding organisation can be identified. On average 1.8 proposals were submitted in every tender procedure.³⁶ In 85 cases (50%) there was only one bidder. In 54 cases (32%) Nuffic received two proposals. In 31 cases (18%) three or more proposals were submitted. In 24 cases (14%), NUFFIC had to re-tender the project, as no or not good enough bidders participated. With respect to the opening up process a clear dominance of universities can be identified.³⁷ By far the most tenders are won by universities (49.1%), followed by private (consulting) companies (25.7%), Universities of Applied Science (14.9%), International Education Institutes (7.4%) and NGOs (2.9%).

With regards to *NICHE*, there have been on average two bidders per tender, which represents a small increase in comparison to NPT. In 23 out of 52 tendering procedures, only one bidder participated (44%), while only in one case four bidders were registered (2%). Mostly, two or three proposals were submitted (28 cases or 54%). In only one case, NUFFIC had to re-tender the project. With respect to the participation of different types of organisations in the tendering a rather balanced picture emerges in comparison to NPT. As can be seen in the table below, NICHE projects have been granted to a variety of different types of northern organisations.³⁸ 42% of tenders were won by universities, 39% by businesses (e.g. private consulting companies), and 14% by International Education Institutes. Universities of Applied Science and NGOs account for approximately 5% of all won bids. A comparable picture emerges when lost bids are considered. When putting the total number of bids submitted in relation to the bids won per type of organisation, the most competitive type of organisations are businesses and universities. As only one NGO submitted a proposal, the level of competitiveness of 100% should not be overestimated.

Figure 34: NICHE Level of Competitiveness in Tender Procedures

Type of Dutch organization	No. of won bids	No. of lost bids	Sum of bids	Level of Competitiveness
University of Applied Science	2	6	8	25%
Business	20	12	32	63%
University	22	18	40	55%
NGO	1	0	1	100%
International Education Institute	7	8	15	47%

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

³⁶ N=170, information regarding 5 projects was not available.

³⁷ Reference is made only to the lead organisation.

³⁸ If the northern partner is composed of a consortium, reference is only made to the lead organisation.

Furthermore, the interviewed northern and requesting organisations gave a mixed assessment of the *effects of the tendering procedure and the opening up process of NPT*. On the one hand, there was consensus about positive effects of the opening up process. It was agreed that the involvement of different types of organisations enriches and adds value to the programme due to their diversity in knowledge and experience. This statement is supported by the figures showing that 81.6% of all NPT and 84.6% of all NICHE projects are won by consortia. Moreover, the tendering procedure and the competition that it implies were assessed mostly positively. Only when there was merely one bidder, the requesting organisations questioned the tendering procedure as not being fully developed. According to the survey results among the northern partners and requesting organisations, 36% of the requesting organisations chose to work with a particular Dutch partner because it was the only bidder. However, no requesting organisation also has refused to work with a bidder so far.

On the other hand, criticism was voiced by the northern partners with respect to the *time of involvement of Dutch implementing institutions*. The northern partners indicated that the approach to exclude Dutch organisations from the demand identification and articulation phases eventually results in duplications and an unnecessary additional workload. This was especially mentioned when the workload in the tendering procedure was linked to the activities in the inception phase of project implementation. The interviewees pointed out that drafting the proposals was already a long and cost-intensive task, which nevertheless had to be repeated to a large extent during the inception phase, as the southern and northern perspectives had to be brought in line. It was emphasized that this resulted in a rather long time that could be more efficiently used to start implementing the project activities.

5.4.1 Cost-quality Assessment of NPT and NICHE Outputs

To further assess the NPT and NICHE cost-efficiency at project level a *cost-quality ratio* was developed. The ratio relates the cost (measured and standardized in working hours) to the quality of a specific project output (e.g. implementation plan, final report, etc.). On the one hand, the ratio was built based on the information submitted by the respondents (northern and requesting organisations) in the online efficiency-survey regarding their output-related workload (costs). The respondents were asked to estimate the working hours their organisation spends to deliver a specific output within a certain phase of the programme and/or project management cycle in NPT and NICHE. The end products of a programme/project phase were identified as standard outputs in NPT and NICHE. The following NPT and NICHE programme and project outputs were taken into consideration as standardized outputs:

- Implementation plan of your country (NPT projects only)
- Programme outline and sector plans of your country (NICHE projects only)
- Project outlines
- NPT and NICHE capacity self-assessments
- Inception reports
- Programme annual report
- Project annual report and work plans
- Project financial report

On the other hand, the quality was assessed based on a SMART-Table³⁹, designed to assess the quality of the outputs (see annex 2). For each of the five SMART-Dimensions, three output-specific indicators were developed. Every indicator represents a quality point that could be achieved by the outputs. In consequence, the output quality scale was designed between 0 (the output does not contain any of the quality indicators) and 15 points (the output contained all quality indicators). The cost-quality ratio therefore divides the hours spent to deliver a certain output with the quality of the delivered output. Therefore, the lower the number of the cost-quality ratio the better the cost quality performance of the involved stakeholders.

³⁹ SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Through this methodology it was possible to create a cost-quality ratio of the main NPT project outputs by dividing the amount of working hours with the reached amount of quality points. This allowed clustering the outputs based on their cost-quality ratio by countries, to identify best and lowest cost-quality and to calculate averages. Based on this, the following table emerges for the cost-quality ratio of the main northern partners' outputs:

Figure 35: Cost-Quality Ratio of NPT Main Project Outputs by Country (Northern Partners)

Country	cost-quality ratio	Inception report	Project annual /final report	Project financial report	Country cost-quality ratio
South Africa	best cost-quality ratio	8	5	4	12
	lowest cost-quality ratio	36	18	4	
	average cost-quality ratio	22	11	4	
Rwanda	best cost-quality ratio	40	5	n.a.	37
	lowest cost-quality ratio	56	45	n.a.	
	average cost-quality ratio	47	25	n.a.	
Guatemala	best cost-quality ratio	13	4	n.a.	16
	lowest cost-quality ratio	18	25	n.a.	
	average cost-quality ratio	16	15	n.a.	
Benin	best cost-quality ratio	n.a.	8	9	15
	lowest cost-quality ratio	n.a.	40	9	
	average cost-quality ratio	n.a.	22	9	
Vietnam	best cost-quality ratio	n.a.	24	17	21
	lowest cost-quality ratio	n.a.	24	18	
	average cost-quality ratio	n.a.	24	17	
Ethiopia	best cost-quality ratio	17	n.a.	6	26
	lowest cost-quality ratio	60	n.a.	6	
	average cost-quality ratio	46	n.a.	6	
Output average cost-quality ratio		28	19	9	

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

As shown in the matrix above, the cost-quality ratio can vary considerably both between and within the NPT partner countries. Between countries the best cost-quality ratio can be found in Benin, followed by Vietnam, South Africa and Rwanda. The lowest country average cost-quality ratio can be found in Rwanda and Ethiopia, while the highest country average cost-quality ratio can be found in South Africa (12) and Benin (15). When focusing on the outputs, a similar picture emerges. With respect to the inception report, the highest output cost-quality ratio within a project (8 points) was identified in South Africa, while the lowest ratio (60 points) was identified in Ethiopia. On average the cost-quality ratio of an inception report lies at 28 points. The cost-quality ratio of the annual/final project reports is also significantly different between the partner countries. The highest average cost-quality ratio was identified in South Africa and (11 points) followed by Guatemala (15 points), Benin (22 points), Vietnam (24), and Rwanda (25). Eventually, the cost-quality ratio was also calculated for the project financial report (budgets). In comparison to the other outputs, the differences between countries are the lowest with respect to the budgets. While South Africa scores best (4 points), the lowest score is in Vietnam (17). The average cost-quality ratio lies at 9 points and is therefore considerably higher than the other outputs.

Furthermore, as can be seen in the table below, the cost-quality ratio of a project output is not dependent on the **type of organisation** of the northern partner. Although universities have implemented six of the top ten projects, they also represent approximately 50% of all Dutch implementing organisations. Thus, the NPT projects with the best average cost-quality ratio are not dependent on the type of contracted northern partner. Moreover, the cost-quality ratio at the project level is not strictly dependent on the partner country, where it has been implemented. For example, while on a country level Guatemala scores low, two of the top ten projects are from Guatemala.

Figure 36: Top 10 Cost-Quality Ratio in NPT Projects and Type of Dutch Organisation

Project	Country	Average cost-quality ratio	Type of southern partner organisation
Project A	Benin	8,4	University
Project B	Guatemala	11,1	Private Consulting
Project C	South Africa	12,7	University
Project D	South Africa	13,3	University
Project E	South Africa	14,4	University
Project F	South Africa	15	NGO
Project G	Guatemala	18,7	International Education Institute
Project H	South Africa	21,3	University
Project I	Benin	24,5	University of Applied Science
Project J	Ethiopia	58,9	University

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

Besides the cost-quality ratio of northern partners' outputs, the cost-quality ratio of the *requesting organisations'* main outputs was calculated. In general, the northern partner invests more time (costs) into outputs that are delivered to Nuffic from both northern and requesting organisations. As a result, the cost-quality ratio of the requesting organisations is generally higher than the ratio of the northern partner.

As can be seen in the matrix below (figure 34), the differences between and within the NPT partner countries can be significant. The best *country* cost-quality ratio can be found in South Africa (5 points), followed by Ethiopia (6 points), Guatemala (17 points) and Rwanda (21 points). The lowest *country* cost-quality ratio can be found in Benin (24 points) and Vietnam (45 points). When focusing on the outputs, a different picture emerges. Project financial reports (budgets) have an *output* average cost-quality ratio of 10 points, followed by project annual/final report (16 points), inception report (22 points), project outline (25 points) and capacity self-assessments (44 points).

Figure 37: Cost-Quality Ratio of NPT Program Outputs by Country (Requesting Organisations)

Country	Cost-quality ratio	Project outline	Capacity self assessment	Inception report	Project annual /final report	Project financial report	Country cost-quality ratio
South Africa	best cost-quality ratio	2	2	1	2	2	
	lowest cost-quality ratio	27	3	2	9	5	
	average cost-quality ratio	11	3	2	4	3	5
Rwanda	best cost-quality ratio	3	7	1	10	18	
	lowest cost-quality ratio	64	53	16	16	18	
	average cost-quality ratio	29	38	6	13	18	21
Guatemala	best cost-quality ratio	2	n.a.	57	4	4	
	lowest cost-quality ratio	2	n.a.	57	4	4	
	average cost-quality ratio	2	n.a.	57	4	4	17
Benin	best cost-quality ratio	1	2	n.a.	8	9	
	lowest cost-quality ratio	44	80	n.a.	40	9	
	average cost-quality ratio	23	41	n.a.	24	9	24
Vietnam	best cost-quality ratio	45	75	42	34	17	
	lowest cost-quality ratio	n.a.	n.a.	42	56	18	
	average cost-quality ratio	45	75	42	45	17	45
Ethiopia	best cost-quality ratio	9	6	3	4	6	
	lowest cost-quality ratio	9	6	3	4	6	
	average cost-quality ratio	9	6	3	4	6	6
Output average cost-quality ratio		25	44	22	16	10	

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

However, cost-quality ratio of a project output is not dependent on the type of organisation or country of the requesting organisation. As can be seen in the table below, the top ten cost-quality ratio projects are in all six countries and have been conducted with universities, national agencies, ministries, polytechnic and specialized training institutions.

Figure 38: Top 10 Cost-Quality Ratio in NPT Projects and Type of Requesting Organisation

Project	Country	Average cost-quality ratio	Type of southern partner organisation
Project A	Benin	1,6	Politechnic
Project B	South Africa	2,4	University
Project C	South Africa	2,7	National Agency
Project D	Guatemala	2,8	University
Project E	South Africa	3,6	Specialized Training Institution
Project F	Rwanda	5,8	University
Project G	Ethiopa	6,9	Ministry
Project H	Rwanda	25,5	University
Project I	Vietnam	45	University
Project J	Rwanda	45	University

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

Besides the cost-quality ratio of the NPT project outputs, the *timeliness*⁴⁰ of their delivery was taken into consideration. According to the northern and requesting organisations within the 34 NPT projects 27 outputs (e.g. implementation plan, final report, etc.) were not delivered on time. In 41% of these cases the delays concerned the outputs "inception report" (five cases) and "annual financial report" (six cases). The project annual report (four cases) and the contract (four cases) together constitute 30% of the delays. With regards to NICHE, seven outputs were not delivered on time within 16 projects. However, as the NICHE projects are just beginning, the vast majority of project outputs still need to be delivered and cannot be taken into consideration here.

With respect to *NICHE*, the number of respondents to the survey was too small to analyse the results with the same level of detail as NPT projects. However, there are some aspects of the cost-quality ratio in *NICHE* programme that can be mentioned. With the implementation of *NICHE* new report guidelines were introduced by Nuffic. On the one hand, these guidelines have resulted in a more comparable report quality due to their more detailed structure and description of mandatory report information. On the other hand, northern partners have indicated that this new approach has increased the administrative burdens, as more information has to be collected for the reports. Therefore it can be assumed, that the cost-quality ratio might not have been improved in comparison to NPT.

5.4.2 Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of NPT and NICHE

After having addressed the efficiency of transforming inputs to outputs, the economic evaluation of NPT also entails a **cost-effectiveness analysis**, to assess the efficiency of NPT in transforming inputs into outcomes. As the programme outcomes are reached at project level, the costs (input) are defined through the project budgets. However, as the entire project budget is not spent to create outcomes (for example project management costs), the budget expenditures have been allocated to the respective outcome dimensions (capability to act; capability to adapt and self-renew; capability of achieving coherence; capability to relate; capability to generate development results) for the evaluated NPT projects. The costs per capability level were put in relation to the level of achieved effects of the NPT projects per capability level (Capacity development index (CDI)). The CDI is used, as Nuffic's programme monitoring data for NPT (project achievement tables) is in general at output level and not at outcome level (see annex 2).⁴¹

As can be seen in the matrix below (see figure 36), the cost-effectiveness is rather different both between capabilities and countries. At a country level, the average costs to achieve a 0.1 CDI improvement are statically significant lowest in Benin, followed by Ethiopia, Rwanda, Vietnam, South Africa and Guatemala.⁴² Therefore, the average cost-effectiveness is to a certain extent related to the level of income in the partner countries and the starting situation of the analysed

⁴⁰ Timeliness of outputs is an important aspect for a programme to function efficiently. One can expect that inefficiencies will arise if programme and project documents are not available when they are needed.

⁴¹ With respect to *NICHE*, Nuffic has introduced a more outcome oriented monitoring approach.

⁴² To measure the statistical significance the coefficient of determination R² was used.

requesting organisations (see chapter 5.2). In other words this means that it is cheaper in low-income countries to increase the capacity in a capability of a requesting organisation than in more developed countries.

When focusing on where a certain capability is most cost-effective a similar ranking emerges: On the one hand, the capability to act has been achieved most cost-effectively in Benin, the capability to adapt and self-renew in Vietnam, the capability to achieve coherence in Ethiopia, the capability to relate in Rwanda, and the capability to achieve development again in Benin (see figure 36). On the other hand, the most costly country with respect to the achievement of result in the capability to act has been South Africa, in the capability to adapt and self-renew Rwanda, in the capability to achieve coherence Rwanda again, in the capability to relate in Vietnam and finally in the capability to achieve development results in South Africa (see figure 36).

Moreover, at the capability level figure 36 shows that the relation of average costs per 0.1 CDI improvements are lowest with respect to the capability to achieve coherence, followed by the capability to relate and the capability to adapt and self-renew. The highest cost relations to achieve effects can be found with respect to the capability to achieve development results and the capability to act.

Figure 39: Cost-effectiveness of NPT programme at country level⁴³

Country	No. Projects	Capability to Act	Capability to Adapt and Self-Renew	Capability to Achieve Coherence	Capability to Relate	Capability to Achieve Development Results	Average Cost-Effectiveness at Country Level
		Costs per 0.1 improvement	Costs per 0.1 improvement	Costs per 0.1 improvement	Costs per 0.1 improvement	Costs per 0.1 improvement	
South Africa	4	47605,13	13583,98	604,95	1392,33	24111,06	17459,49
Rwanda	6	19746,24	18073,35	3944,61	363,21	10376,36	10500,75
Guatemala	5	36095,07	n.a	n.a.	3057,80	16704,44	18619,10
Benin	5	5845,13	n.a	1446,90	824,05	1682,99	2449,77
Vietnam	5	36611,73	105,77	999,92	6847,79	13087,07	11530,46
Ethiopia	3	14001,56	n.a.	188,92	402,29	2607,45	4300,05
Average Cost-Effectiveness per Capability		26650,81	10587,70	1437,06	2147,91	11428,23	

Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012

5.4.3 Assessment of the Efficiency of NPT and NICHE

The analysis showed a complex picture of NPT and NICHE programme and project efficiency. With regard to the programme and project management, the programmes in general run efficiently, although some major sources of inefficiencies could be detected. A positive contribution to efficient management in NPT and NICHE was the availability of qualified *human resources* both in the northern and requesting organisations. Moreover, the overall positive assessment also holds true for the participation of regional stakeholders (e.g. other universities in the region) which added value to an efficient project implementation and goal achievement through applied knowledge and costs benefits.

One of the main sources of inefficiency is with respect to the *role distribution in the programme and project management cycle*. There, inefficiencies are caused by unclear perception of accountability. Within an NPT and NICHE activity the involved stakeholders do not necessarily know who the accountable actor is. In many answers, the respondents do not attribute accountability for an activity to any stakeholder at all. This has been identified as the major potential source of inefficiency as it is not necessarily clear who is ultimately answerable for the success and efficient implementation of an activity. The accountability is generally attributed to NUFFIC, even within activities in which the requesting organisations should be clearly perceived as the accountable actors according to the standard programme process. For example, the requesting organisations are not perceived as accountable for any of the activities during the demand articulation phase. Even within the activity of conducting a capacity self-assessment, the requesting organisations are not seen as the accountable actors. With respect to NICHE, further

⁴³ When the budget could not be specifically be related to a certain capability, the matrix shows that the data is not available through „n.a.“.

sources of inefficiency were identified regarding the role perception of NUFFIC and its communication with the requesting organisations. It seems that the requesting organisations communicate with their partners in the north and well as with NUFFIC to discuss project matters. This situation has led to miscommunication between the requesting organisations and northern partners and seems to make communication more complicated and inefficient.

Moreover, the *time of involvement of Dutch partner organisations* has been identified as a source of inefficiency that causes duplications and unnecessary additional workload for northern partner organisations. From a northern partner perspective the drafting of proposals is a long and costly task, which has to be repeated to a large extent during the inception phase, as it is necessary to agree on the final project design with the southern partners. Besides this, it was emphasized that the late involvement of Dutch organisations also results in a rather long inception phase, which could be more efficiently used to start implementing the projects' activities. However, these inefficiencies are the result of the demand-driven design in both programmes that stresses the need for allowing requesting organisations to articulate their demand independently. Therefore, although the time of involvement of Dutch partner organisations causes inefficiencies, these inefficiencies result from a political decision concerning the programme design.

Furthermore, the effects of the *tendering procedure* and the *opening up process* on NPT and NICHE programme efficiency can be assessed as rather low. The level of competition reached in the tender procedures has been fairly low in NPT and in NICHE. On average two proposals were submitted in every tender, whereby for half of all NPT tenders only one proposal was submitted. A more positive effect for competition and efficiency has been the opening up process that has allowed different organisation types to participate in tendering procedures both as leading organisations and as part of a consortium. The different types of organisations enrich and add value to the programme through their different knowledge and experiences, making it more efficient. Nevertheless, a clear dominance of two types of Dutch organisations exists in both programmes. Universities and private (consulting) companies dominate the NPT and NICHE programmes and account for three quarters of the Dutch implementing organisation.

The *cost-efficiency* of NPT and NICHE is not dependent on certain partner countries and type of implementing Dutch organisations. Therefore, it can be concluded that the different cost-quality ratio is caused by specific project circumstances.

With respect to the *cost-effectiveness* of the evaluated NPT projects it can be concluded that there is to a certain extent a relation to the level of income in the partner countries. The average costs to achieve a 0.1 CDI improvement are lowest in Benin, Ethiopia, and Rwanda.

5.5 Impact of NPT

The following chapter presents the results of the evaluation with regard to the achieved impacts by NPT. For this purpose, the evaluation conducted a worldwide tracer study among all NPT alumni⁴⁴ of the programme and six case studies in which the capacity of 34 requesting organisations to produce more and better qualified graduates for the respective sector was analysed.

Within the worldwide tracer study 825 NPT alumni were contacted of which 121 answered. Thus, the response rate of the tracer study was 14.7%. However, as the population of the NPT alumni was not known to the evaluation the evaluation cannot make assumptions about the representativity of the tracer study's findings (see annex 2). Nevertheless, tendencies of the impact of NPT can be derived from it as the sample of the respondents is sufficiently varied regarding their country, academic background, graduated universities and age.

⁴⁴ For the purpose of this report a NPT alumni are defined as a student who has attended a course at the requesting organisation in a NPT country which was supported (improved or developed) by a NPT project.

5.5.1 Achieved Impacts of NPT

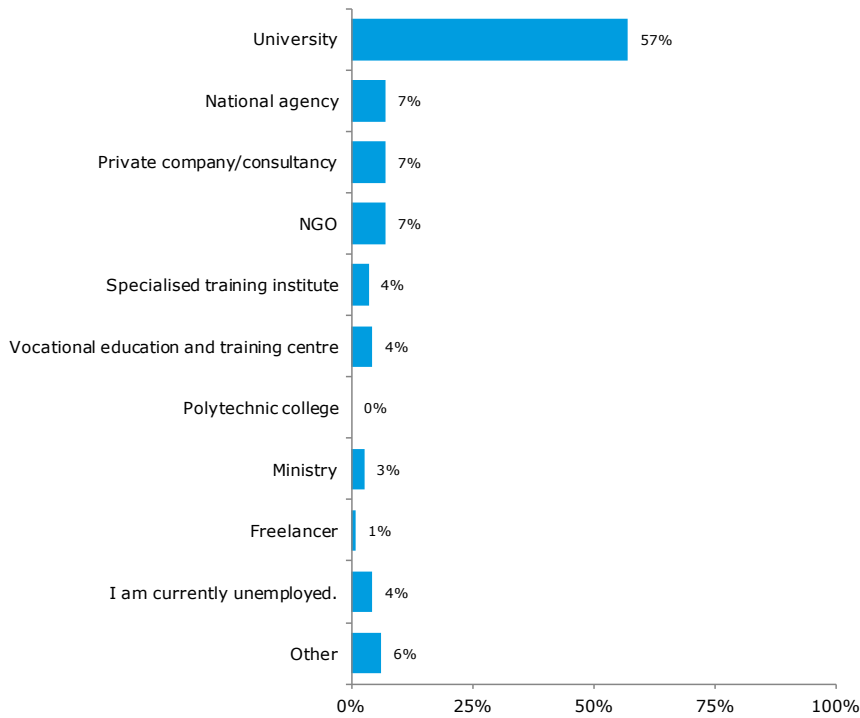
The case study findings highlight that the NPT projects enable 32 of the 34 (94.1%) visited requesting organisations to increase – in quality and quantity – their output of experts for the relevant sectors. However, in most analysed cases (19 out of 34/ 55.9%) the projects had just finished and most of the students enrolled in the revised or new programmes were just graduating. As a consequence, in these cases only possible future trends with regard to the *increase in the availability of qualified human power* could be observed. In South Africa for example, one visited requesting organisation could increase its intake of students by approximately 10% due to the newly introduced teaching methodologies at the School of Public Health. In Benin the analysed NPT projects enabled the visited requesting organisations to increase student numbers on BA and MA level from zero to approximately 150 annually in the water sector.

In the other 15 cases (44.1%), in which students had already graduated from NPT revised or newly established courses, eight of the 15 (53.3%) requesting organisations reported that their graduates were absorbed up to 100% into the labour market, while in four cases the requesting organisations could not give any information about the employment situation of their graduates. In one case a requesting organisation reported an absorption rate of graduates into the labour market of approximately 50%.

However, the case study results also show that the described employment rates cannot be solely attributed to the NPT projects as external circumstances have an important influence on the absorption of graduates into the labour market. In less developed countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, Benin and Vietnam the shortage of qualified human power in general is so immanent that almost all academic graduates are absorbed into the labour market regardless of the quality of their education. Nevertheless, in specific sectors in these countries e.g. IT sector in Ethiopia, water sector in Benin or nursing in Vietnam the absorption capacity of the labour market is very low and not prepared for a large intake of graduates. This can lead, for example, to the phenomena that a university in Vietnam is qualifying nurses for foreign markets (in this case Japan) as their academic degrees are not recognised in the Vietnamese labour market and they are thus not absorbed by the national labour market.

Nevertheless, the above mentioned absorption rates are also confirmed by the NPT alumni survey in which 96% of the alumni state that they are employed and 4% state that they are currently unemployed (see figure 38). The survey results also demonstrate that the majority of the alumni (57%) are working in universities.

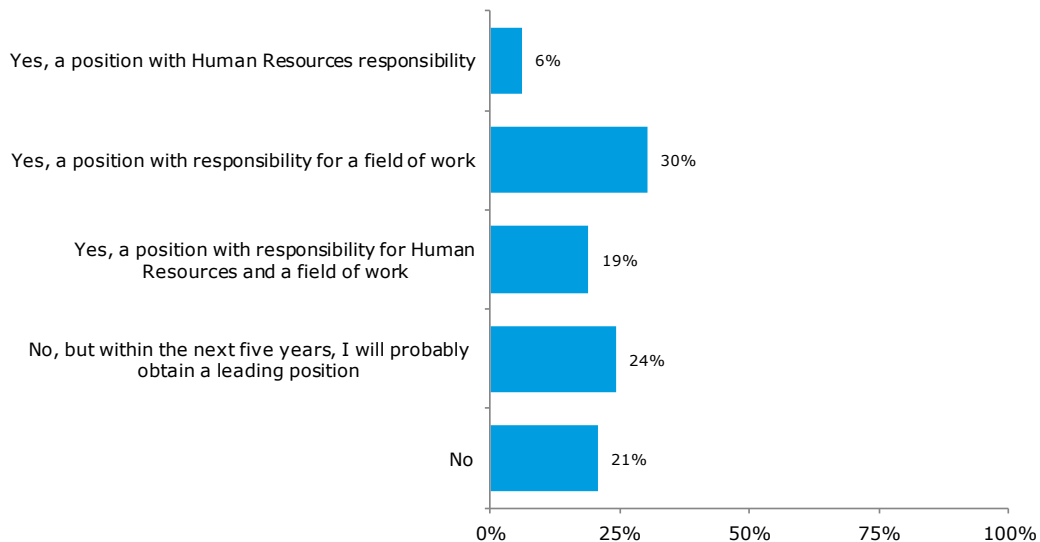
Figure 40: Current Work Place of NPT Alumni



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012 (N=114)

The survey also shows that 55% of the currently employed alumni hold a leadership position in which they either have human resource responsibility for employees, responsibility for a field of work or both (see figure 39). Furthermore, 24% state that they will probably obtain a leading position in the next five years.

Figure 41: NPT Alumni and Leading Positions



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012 (N=116)

Of the alumni holding a leading position 65% can decide if their organisation invests work in a certain topic within their field of responsibility and 57% can decide if the organisation initiates a new project within their department. Furthermore, 27% can allocate budgets within their department and 20% can independently acquire new sources of funding.

According to the survey 46% of the NPT alumni completed a Master programme, 19% short courses, 12% a Bachelor programme and 10% a PhD programme which were newly introduced or revised by NPT. The main field in which they completed their programmes were: Economy (20%), Education (14%), Law (9%), Water (7%) and Environment & Resource Management. 82% of the currently employed alumni thereby work in the sector in which they took their last academic degree.

In the survey the NPT alumni also state that the most useful skills and expertise that they acquired through the revised or newly established NPT course are (top 4): expertise in my field of work (78%), team work skills (75%), presentation skills (68%) and new work methods (67%). Furthermore, on average 75% of the alumni apply their newly acquired skills in their current work place.

In addition 79% of the alumni used their newly acquired skills from the NPT programme to initiate changes at their current work place. When initiating new change the NPT alumni mostly organise work processes differently (55%), introduce new teaching methods (55%) or introduce new rules or standards for certain work processes (50%) (see figure 40).

Figure 42: NPT Alumni and Changes in their Organisations



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012 (N=80)

5.5.2 Positive and/or Negative Unintended Impacts

Long-term cooperation between the northern and the requesting organisations did not result from the 34 analysed NPT projects, although sporadic individual contacts between project partners and participants still exist in many cases. According to the interviewed northern partners and requesting organisations the main reason for this is that the NPT projects do not aim at a longer cooperation between the two partners. To accomplish a long-term cooperation between universities the projects would have to focus more on research cooperation, as this would be of interest to the Dutch partners.

The only exception to this rule that could be identified has been a long-term cooperation in South Africa. In this case, both organisations already had cooperation in place before the NPT project and are nowadays continuing this cooperation by implementing a training course together.

Regarding *better access to the international academic debate* four of the 34 (11.8%) visited organisations could improve their access due to the NPT programme. In two cases in South Africa and Ethiopia two schools participated in regional and international conferences and introduced budget lines to participate in these conferences in the future. In Benin a polytechnic school established a student exchange with Burkina Faso, South Africa, Germany and the Netherlands. In the last case in Ethiopia two faculties could generate research publications out of NPT financed research projects which were published in international journals.

The reason why only a small number of analysed requesting organisations gained a better access to the international debate can firstly be found in the fact that NPT projects in general do not focus on the establishment of networks (see chapter 5.2.5). Furthermore, the focus of the projects is mostly on teaching and not research. As a consequence, activities of the projects are not geared towards accomplishing better access to the international academic debate for the requesting organisations. Secondly, in countries such as Guatemala and Vietnam, English language skills are often not sufficient enough that the partners can actively take part in international academic discussions. In addition the academic qualification of the staff of the requesting organisations is sometimes too low (restricted to BA level) to enable them to participate in the international academic debate.

Involvement of Dutch enterprises in NPT projects and benefits for Dutch enterprises due to NPT projects could not be identified in the framework of this evaluation.

5.5.3 Assessment of the Impact of NPT

Drawing conclusions from the evaluation's results, the evaluator assesses the impact of the NPT programme as positive. The majority of the NPT projects enable the requesting organisations to increase the availability of human power for the specific sector in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Although no conclusive results could be drawn from the case study findings as many projects only recently ended, the survey results confirmed that the graduates meet the demands of the labour market and find employment.

However, it also became obvious that most graduates gain employment due to a general shortage of adequate qualified staff in the respective sector and most of them find employment in universities. However, in some cases the absorption capacity of the labour market is not given for graduates of only introduced or revised NPT programmes. In those cases a more holistic sector approach would be needed which integrates the NPT programme into the sector strategy of the Dutch development policy and the partner country's own strategies. In this light, the sector-wide approach adopted by NICHE is seen as a step in the right direction by the evaluator.

Positive or negative unintended impacts of the NPT programme could not be observed, with a few exceptions. The main reason for this can be found in the fact that the NPT programme and its projects do not aim at establishing long-term cooperation between Dutch and requesting organisations as well as at facilitating better access to the international debate. The programme's focus is on teaching and not on research. Furthermore, Dutch enterprises are so far not actively involved in the programme and thus also do not draw any benefits from the programme.

5.6 Sustainability of NPT

The *policy level* was targeted by ten of 34 (29.4%) analysed NPT projects (see also chapter 5.2.3). In four out of ten of the projects the sustainability of the NPT-initiated changes on the policy level can be ascertained. In Vietnam, for example, a guideline for Profession Oriented Higher Education (POHE) was established in one project while in another project the Vietnamese law on gender equality was changed. In Ethiopia, a policy institute was founded and its mandate and functions were codified in the Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation Act and the Education Sector Development Programme III. However, it is currently still supported financially by a NICHE project, although the government is providing the core funding.

The other projects were not successful in reaching sustainability due to various reasons. In Ethiopia and Vietnam one reason was the lack of ownership on the side of the relevant higher education organisations (e.g. universities or colleges which implemented the NPT projects in the end). As the projects were initiated via the respective line ministries the relevant higher education organisations were not involved in the needs analysis prior to the projects. Consequently, the higher education organisations perceived the projects as something which had to be done and not as something useful for their daily work. Another reason was that one project established structures which were not relevant for the sector, as they were already established by a larger public sector reform. In South Africa the reasons can be found in the fact that the participants did not have any access point to the relevant national ministry and also did not possess the necessary lobbying skills to influence national policies and standards.

In comparison, a differentiated picture emerges concerning the various aspects of sustainability (institutional, technical, academic and financial sustainability) when analysing the sustainability of the 29 NPT projects⁴⁵ on the level of the 29 visited requesting organisations in the case studies. For the purpose of the evaluation the different aspects were operationalised as follows. A detailed operationalisation of the different aspects of sustainability can be found in annex 2 in the assessment grid.

- **Institutional sustainability** was operationalised as the institutionalisation of initiated changes by the analysed NPT projects in strategic plans, processes, structures, etc. Furthermore, the availability of adequate staff to continue implementation and the ownership of the project were aspects of this kind of sustainability.
- **Technical sustainability** was operationalised as the user rate of the newly installed equipment and the availability of adequate number of staff for their use and maintenance.
- **Academic sustainability** was operationalised among others as the future student enrolment trend and the academic staffing trend of the requesting organisation: Furthermore, the existence of mechanism to ensure the continued relevance of the curricula was a feature of this kind of sustainability.
- **Financial sustainability** was operationalised as the existence of adequate financial means at the requesting organisation the existence of competitive salaries and the availability of financial staff and the prospect of acquiring future funding.

The *institutional sustainability* of the realised changes by the NPT projects could be achieved in approximately half of the visited requesting organisations. In 15 out of 29 (55.2%) cases the introduced changes were institutionalised into the strategic or business plans of the relevant school, faculty or department. The NPT projects which were successful in this respect involved the management of the requesting organisation at an early stage of the projects' implementation. This involvement created ownership for the projects on the side of the management committing them to the projects' objectives and results which in turn encouraged them to ensure the sustainability of the initiated changes. The NPT projects which followed an exclusively bottom-up approach created a situation in which the teaching and middle management was highly motivated to institutionalise changes but met resistance to do so at the higher management level. In those cases NPT projects were only successful in institutionalising changes when a person of the middle management involved in the project was promoted to a higher management position. In the new position the person was then able to change strategic or business plans accordingly as they fell into her or his competencies.

Another challenge with which the NPT projects and the visited requesting organisation were confronted was retaining an adequate number of NPT trained staff to continue the implementation of the initiated changes. In 17 (58.6%) of the requesting organisations analysed, the organisation were successful in retaining an adequate number of staff while twelve (41.4%) were not successful. Influencing factors for reaching sustainability in this point can be found within the conception of the NPT projects, but also outside the projects' sphere of influence. Externally to the projects, the history and location of the requesting organisations had an effect

⁴⁵ Five of the 34 analysed NPT projects solely aimed at changes on the sector level and thus are not assessed according to the 5C model (see also chapter 5.2.3).

on the ability to retain an adequate number of staff. In general requesting organisations which belonged to a historically disadvantaged group of organisations and were located at the periphery experienced challenges in retaining and attracting adequate personnel. The reasons for their disadvantaged status are country-specific and vary with regard to the history of each country. In South Africa for example the formerly disadvantaged “black” higher education institutions still deal with their apartheid legacy. In addition, most of these institutions are located in rural and peripheral areas with lacking infrastructure to which employment seeking personnel are rarely attracted if they can find a job elsewhere. In Vietnam universities which are not situated near the large cities and economic centres have been receiving less government funding than other universities, making it difficult for them to attract and retain personnel.

However, some NPT projects were able to counter brain drain by either implementing trainings of trainers or by training a large number of employees in the requesting organisations in the necessary skills. By using an embedding training of trainers approach, the requesting organisations e.g. in South Africa could establish their own “centres of competence” (e.g. for problem-based learning) in the transferred skills and expertise which they could then teach new employees or if trainers were leaving new trainers. In requesting organisations where a large amount of the staff was trained most requesting organisations established their own training programmes for new employees when they realised they were losing the newly acquired skills and competencies because employees were leaving the organisation.

In addition, 18 of 29 requesting organisations (62.1%) experienced a lack of ownership on the side of the requesting organisations (also see chapter 5.2). The lack of ownership arose in most cases from an insufficient involvement of the higher management of the requesting organisations in the NPT projects (see above) which impeded the institutionalisation of changes. In other cases, as in Ethiopia, the initiation of projects via the responsible line ministry without involving the actual organisations in which the projects should be implemented led to a lack of ownership in these organisations. They felt that their needs and views were not taken into consideration when the projects were conceptualised and thus considered them solely as additional work and not as something useful for the development of their organisation. In other projects external circumstances also played a role in diminishing the ownership for the NPT projects. In Guatemala for example most NPT projects were championed by and anchored with the dean of the respective requesting organisation. However, as the position of the dean is a political office in Guatemala and changes every four years by election, newly elected deans in general were not inclined to continue the “politics” in form of the NPT project of their predecessor.

In contrast, the majority of the 26 requesting organisations (89.7%) in which the analysed NPT projects financed infrastructure could achieve *technical sustainability*. In 25 of the 26 requesting organisations (96.2%) the newly introduced infrastructure is still in use. For example, newly purchased books or computers are used by the students and lecturers and newly bought laboratory equipment is used within the curricula of the requesting organisations. The maintenance of the new infrastructure is also guaranteed in 22 of the 26 requesting organisations (84.6%) as budget lines have been established and personnel have been seconded for their maintenance. However, differences in the quality of maintenance exist between the different requesting organisations. As some requesting organisations have more financial funds and human capacity available than others, they also can guarantee a higher quality with regard to the maintenance of the newly introduced infrastructure. Furthermore, in all cases, with the exception of South African requesting organisations, new purchases of equipment are not possible if equipment breaks down beyond repair as they lack the financial means for it.

With regard to the *academic sustainability* of the initiated changes by the 29 analysed NPT projects a differentiated picture emerges. In 26 of the 29 visited requesting organisations (89.7%) future student enrolment trends for the NPT supported courses are positive. However, these trends cannot be attributed to the changes initiated by the NPT projects as the current and future demand for higher education in the visited case study countries is exceeding the general supply. As a consequence, all NPT supported courses are sought after as there is a general lack of study places and a high social demand for academic qualification in these countries. Concerning the academic staff trend, 17 of 29 visited requesting organisations (58.6%) have a positive outlook while 12 (41.4%) experience difficulties due to high staff fluctuations. In general

fluctuation in academic staff poses a challenge to the academic sustainability of the NPT project if it is related to brain drain of NPT trained personnel. However, some NPT projects were able to counter this by institutionalising training of trainers in the requesting organisations (see above).

Another challenge which the NPT projects faced was the establishment of mechanisms to ensure the continued relevance of the newly introduced or revised curricula or courses. In the 29 visited requesting organisations six (20.7%) were able to introduce such mechanisms in the form of internal evaluations or reviews. Consequently, most requesting organisations will not be able to adapt their newly introduced or revised curricula in the future. The main reasons for this outcome are the fact that most of the analysed NPT projects did not specifically aim at introducing such mechanisms or were not successful in doing so due to the limited time period of the projects. To change processes and to establish structures for successful review mechanisms takes time and an on average four years period of implementation poses obstacles for the accomplishment of such objectives.

The outward orientation of the 29 analysed requesting organisations was strengthened in seven cases (24.1%). These organisations have developed concrete plans to develop networks and/ or to establish strategic alliances with other stakeholders in the future. The requesting organisations not only have plans to establish networks within the higher education sector but also outside of it to position themselves strategically and to improve their professional reputation.

The achievement of the *financial sustainability* of the initiated changes by the analysed NPT projects posed a challenge in the majority of the projects. Although the majority of the 29 visited requesting organisations (55.2%) possess adequate financial resources to continue financing the initiated changes, 13 (44.8%) do not have these finances at their disposal. The number of requesting organisations which have adequate financial resources correspond with the requesting organisations which could institutionalise the NPT initiated changes into their strategic or business plan. All requesting organisations which institutionalised the initiated NPT changes in their strategic plans also provided budget lines to support these changes in the future, thereby guaranteeing their financial sustainability. In the other requesting organisations the financial sustainability depends on future external funding. An exception to this trend is the maintenance of newly introduced or upgraded infrastructure. Here most of the requesting organisations could establish budget lines for their maintenance (see above).

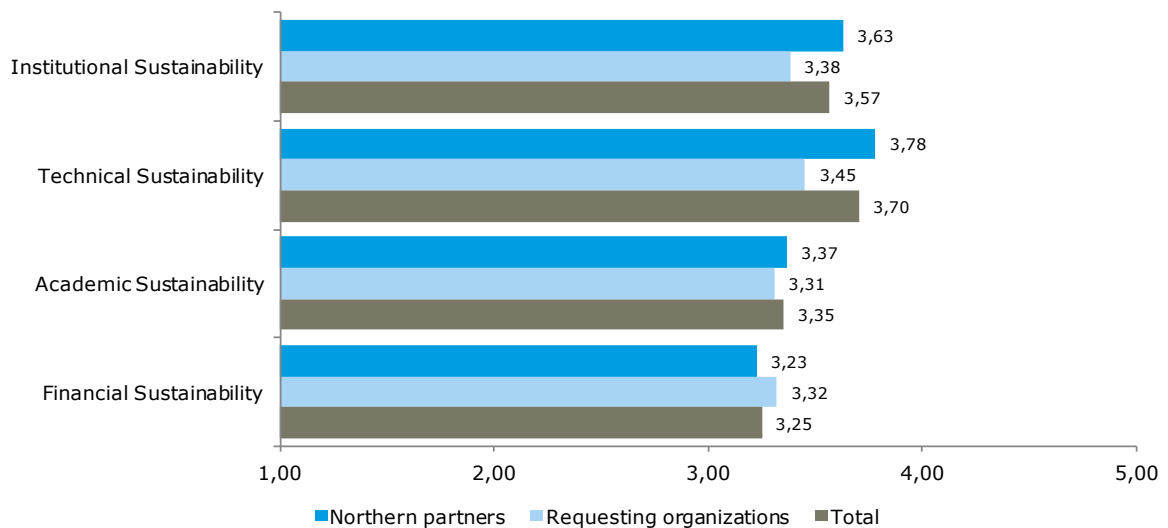
Another impediment for the visited requesting organisation to guaranteeing financial sustainability was the provision of market competitive salaries to their academic staff. The majority 19 of the 29 (65.5%) requesting organisations could not provide competitive salaries. As a result, employees leave the requesting organisations if they can find another employment opportunity in other universities or in the private sector. Others work part-time at the requesting organisations and also pursue other occupations. This is challenging for the requesting organisations as this exaggerates the shortage of available staff in light of an increasing student number at these organisations. In South Africa an additional challenge emerged. Well educated academic personnel, which also include persons trained by NPT, are headhunted by the more established universities causing an "internal brain drain" among the less well established universities and colleges.

In addition the majority of the requesting organisations (17 of 29; 58.6%) do not face concrete prospects of acquiring support from other donors, third party funds or contract research. The main reason for this is that these organisations in general do not have professional departments in place which actively look for external funding. The other twelve (41.4%) requesting organisations have concrete external funding prospects as they are firstly well-known and secondly possess contacts and networks in the donor community as well as with relevant national and/ or regional funding agencies. However, most of these contacts already existed before the respective NPT projects and were not a result of it (see also chapter 4.2.4).

In contrast 28 of the 29 (96.6%) requesting organisations have the adequate and financial staff available to guarantee good financial management and administration of their organisation. All requesting organisations possess sufficient administrative financial staff. However, their qualification to guarantee good financial management and administration was not given in 14 (48.3%) of the requesting organisations. The projects did not address these shortages of qualifications adequately in these 14 requesting organisations while in the other 15 adequate qualifications were either already in existence or the personnel was trained in the necessary fields during the project.

The case study results are partially confirmed and contradicted by the survey results among the northern partners and requesting organisations. In general the northern partners and requesting organisations rate the four different aspects of the sustainability of the NPT programme higher than the case study results indicate. Moreover the northern partners, with the exception of financial sustainability, judge the sustainability of the programme higher than the requesting organisations (see figure 41).

Figure 43: Sustainability of NPT Projects



Source: Rambøll Management Consulting 2012 (N=92)

However, if the results are analysed on country level of the case study countries it becomes obvious that the requesting organisations in Benin and Guatemala rate the sustainability of the projects in all aspect with the exception of financial sustainability substantially lower than the northern partners. In Ethiopia, South Africa and Vietnam the requesting organisations evaluate the sustainability of the projects higher than the northern partners. Nevertheless, one has to bear in mind that these survey results also compromise assessments of NPT projects which were not analysed in the case studies.

If the survey results for the sustainability of the analysed NPT in the case study countries are analysed, the results demonstrate that the requesting organisations, with the exception of South Africa and Vietnam, assess the sustainability lower than the northern partners (on average by 1.0 point).⁴⁶ These differences can be explained by cultural response patterns in the case of Vietnam. Asian cultures and especially Vietnamese culture are not prone to voice criticism, especially not in online-surveys, and therefore usually have very positive answering patterns. In South Africa the variations can be explained by the fact that three of the five visited NPT projects also demonstrated in all aspects a high sustainability. As a consequence the survey results are confirming the case study results for South Africa.

⁴⁶ For Ethiopia the sample is too small to draw conclusive observations.

Overall this demonstrates that the sustainability of the analysed 34 NPT projects is assessed in four out of six case studies considerably lower by the requesting organisations than by the northern partners. In one case – South Africa – the relatively high assessment of the sustainability is also confirmed by the survey results. Consequently, the survey results for the 34 analysed NPT projects confirm from the perspective of the interviewed requesting organisations the case study results in five out of six cases while in Vietnam the divergent results can be explained by the cultural response pattern.

5.6.1 Assessment of the Sustainability of NPT

Against this background the evaluator identifies room for improvement with regard to the sustainability of the NPT programme as many analysed projects are not deemed sustainable academically, financially and institutionally. The reasons for this can be found in a mismatch of the conception of the projects to the external circumstances in which they are implemented. The NPT projects which could not achieve sustainability are marked by a lack of involvement of the higher management in the requesting organisations, a lack of ownership, a lack of attention towards reaching a critical mass in terms of training and a loss of trained personnel. Under NICHE improvements could be realised in the planning stage of the projects. However it cannot be judged at this time if they will be implemented and have an effect on the future sustainability of the NICHE projects.

However, sustainable NPT projects demonstrate that institutional and financial sustainability can be achieved on the policy level and on the level of the requesting organisations when the higher management of the requesting organisations is involved in the conceptualisation and planning of the projects. The involvement guarantees that initiated changes are institutionalised in the strategic or business plan of the requesting organisations and are provided with a budget line for the coming years. Furthermore, ownership for the project is thereby also generated at the level of higher management and not only at the middle or lower management level. In addition more emphasis has to be placed on existing strategies and external circumstances of the projects in order to increase the prospects of continued funding after the project has ended and the institutionalisation of the initiated changes.

Moreover, it became obvious that academic and financial sustainability can be guaranteed when the NPT projects adopted training of trainer approaches or trained a critical mass of personnel. These measures in general countered the results of high staff fluctuations and missing market competitive salaries in the requesting organisations. NPT projects which established trainers or “competence centres” in the newly-acquired skills enabled the organisations to train new personnel when trained personnel left the organisation. This made the respective requesting organisations self-reliant and enabled them to use the newly acquired skills in the future.

The evaluator identifies the general duration of the NPT projects as another impediment to reach academic sustainability. The duration of the projects is deemed too short to establish internal review mechanisms for newly introduced or revised curricula in order to guarantee their continued relevance. To change processes and structures for successful review mechanisms takes time and continued involvement with respective requesting organisation at a higher management level. Experiences from similar projects (e.g. DAAD) show that seven to ten years on average are needed to establish well-functioning review mechanisms.

In contrast to the academic, institutional and financial sustainability, the technical sustainability of the NPT projects is assessed by the evaluator as high. Most requesting organisations still use the newly bought infrastructure by the NPT projects and also maintain it effectively.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) and the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE) programmes are highly **relevant** for Dutch and international development cooperation and are much needed in developing countries as they contribute directly to the development strategies of the partner countries. The Dutch implementing organisations help their requesting organisation in capacity development and in qualifying – in qualitative as well as quantitative terms – needed human power for the respective sector by transferring their specific competencies and knowledge.

The participation of the Dutch implementing organisations is crucial to the relevance of the programmes as they provide added value in the form of needed expertise and knowledge. They are seen by the requesting organisations as knowledge brokers and equal partners who know about the specific needs within post-secondary education. However, Dutch implementing organisations, particularly universities, face increasing difficulties in justifying their participation in the programme internally while private consulting companies consider the projects as not profitable. In addition, the current practice of monitoring the programme's results on an output-level does not foster mutual learning among the relevant stakeholders of the programme. This might threaten the relevance of the NPT and NICHE programme in the future.

Nevertheless, the relevance of the programmes could still be improved. From a post-secondary education perspective the relevance on the level of the requesting organisations can be increased by adopting a holistic approach to organisational development and by not only focusing on curricula development, infrastructure and academic training. From a sector perspective, relevance can be strengthened by focusing more on the demands of the labour market (e.g. absorption capacities of potential employers) than on the needs of the higher education sector. NICHE is already moving in this direction. Furthermore, by adopting a sector wide approach, as undertaken by NICHE, synergies between different projects can be created.

The coordination between the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic) and the Royal Netherlands Embassies (RNE) in the partner countries is functioning well. Both programmes are coordinated within the bilateral and regional foci of the RNE. However, an active coordination with other Dutch development programmes as well as bi- and multilateral donors to generate tangible synergies did not take place under NPT. Under NICHE the coordination with bi- and multilateral donors as well as the RNE improved, and synergies might be realised in the future. This will likely have a positive effect on the linkage between the university programmes and the labour market in the respective sector.

On the policy level the **effectiveness** of the NPT programme is assessed positively. In countries where NPT projects took place on educational policy level, NPT had strong effects on sector policy making. The adopted multi-level approach, the transfer of skills in advocacy and the active involvement of higher management in the relevant line ministries enabled NPT programmes in these projects to successfully establish new governance structures and to influence legislation in the post-secondary education sector.

On the level of the requesting organisations the NPT programme is most effective in strengthening human resources and teaching capabilities as well as in upgrading needed infrastructures. By conceptualizing and introducing new degree programmes NPT enables universities to produce comparably well-educated graduates for further research and for the labour market in the respective sector.

However, the NPT programme mainly aims at the development and revision of curricula and courses as well as at the improvement of the qualification of academic staff. It rarely seeks to change wider organisational structures and processes. As a consequence it does not capacitate the requesting organisations to adapt their newly acquired knowledge to changing circumstances in the future as it does not apply a holistic approach to capacity development. This makes it

challenging to sustain the initiated changes in the future as the programme does not embed the changes within the organisational set-up of the requesting organisations.

As a consequence in most of the reviewed requesting organisations the academic and institutional **sustainability** of the programme's results is not guaranteed. Furthermore, the financial sustainability is also not given in most analysed NPT projects. The lack of involvement of the management, a lack of ownership, a missing focus on the institutionalisation of training of trainers in the requesting organisations and the short duration of the projects were identified by the evaluation as the main impediments to their financial, academic and institutional sustainability.

In contrast, the reviewed NPT projects in the evaluation have proven to have a high technical sustainability. The newly introduced or upgraded infrastructure is still in use and is maintained on a regular basis by the requesting organisations. Most requesting organisations have allocated budgets and/ or employed personnel to maintain the newly acquired equipment.

The **efficiency** of NPT and NICHE can be assessed positively, although major sources of inefficiency could be identified. A contribution to an efficient programme and project implementation are the availability of human resources in the northern and southern partner organisations, the involvement of regional stakeholders, and the diversity of organisational types of Dutch implementing organisations. Therefore, the opening up process of NPT and NICHE has caused positive effects on the efficiency of both programmes. Sources of inefficiency that have been identified are related to the role distribution in the programme and project management cycle, the time of involvement of Dutch partner organisations, and the low level of competitiveness in the tendering procedure. Moreover, the evaluation found out that the cost-efficiency of the projects is not dependent on certain partner countries and type of implementing Dutch organisations, but rather dependent on specific project circumstances. The cost-effectiveness of the evaluated NPT projects is related to a certain extent to the level of income in the partner countries.

The **impact** of the NPT programme is positive. The majority of the NPT projects enable the requesting organisations to increase the availability of human power for the specific sector in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Graduates from revised or newly established NPT courses or programmes are often employed and find employment in the sector in which they have received their education. Half of them occupy positions in which they either have thematic or human resource responsibility. The majority of them initiate organisational changes by restructuring work processes or introducing new teaching methodologies in their respective organisations. However, most of the graduates gain employment in universities, confirming a weak linkage of the NPT programme to the labour market. In this light the adopted focus within NICHE on the labour market as well as technical and vocational training is seen as a remedy to this challenge.

6.2 Recommendations

Based upon the findings of the evaluation the following recommendations are put forward on how to further develop NPT and NICHE.

6.2.1 Continue the NICHE Approach and Further Strengthen the Connection to the Labour Market

Programmes such as NPT and NICHE that promote capacity development in higher education and specific labour market sectors should be carried on. The adopted labour market focus sector-wide approach under NICHE should also be maintained so that the relevance for the thematic sectors can be increased.

1. **Recommendation:** *The needs and demands of the thematic sector should be given priority in a successor programme, but at the same time the systemic level should not be neglected.*

The findings of the evaluation demonstrate that under NPT there is potential to consider developments of the thematic sector even more. The adopted sector-wide approach and labour market orientation under NICHE is headed in the right direction. However, a successor programme should pay even more attention to the needs, developments and demands of the

thematic sector by enabling the higher education institutions to continuously and independently adjust to demands of the sector (as in competencies) and the sector's labour market (as in absorption capacities). At the same time the successor programme should not neglect the development at system level.

2. **Recommendation:** *The active coordination of activities involving all relevant stakeholders should be strengthened and responsibilities should be clearly defined.*

Under NPT, projects in the same sector in a country were rarely coordinated to realise synergies and to strengthen their effects on sector level. Improvements could be identified under NICHE which adopted a sector-wide approach. This approach should be further strengthened by introducing a multi-level approach on policy level within each sector which involves actively the relevant line ministries in the activities of the projects.

6.2.2 Approach Capacity Development at Requesting Organisations in a Holistic Manner

NICHE and its successor programme should be based upon a holistic approach towards capacity development to strengthen the effects and the sustainability of the initiated changes. The adopted theoretical model in this evaluation could be a basis for such an approach.

3. **Recommendation:** *NICHE and its successor programme could reach even better and more sustainable results by adopting a holistic approach such as the 5C model to capacity development.*

The evaluation highlighted that NPT and NICHE strengthen the requesting organisations on the organisational level by qualifying academic, upgrading infrastructure and introducing new degree programmes and teaching methodologies. It rarely seeks to change wider organisational structures and processes. As a consequence, it does not capacitate the requesting organisations to adapt their newly acquired knowledge to changing circumstances and makes it challenging to sustain the initiated changes in the future. A holistic model such as the theoretical model applied in this evaluation which conceptualises the organisation as a whole will enable NICHE and a successor programme to be more effective and sustainable.

4. **Recommendation:** *To strengthen ownership at the requesting organisations the middle and top management should be actively committed to the projects' activities and the institutionalisation of training of trainers in the requesting organisations should be made compulsory.*

The findings of the evaluation showed that the NPT projects experienced a lack of ownership in the requesting organisations as a whole. This was mainly due to the pronounced bottom-up approach of the NPT programme which in most cases excluded the involvement of the management. High staff fluctuation in the requesting organisations which were not adequately targeted by most of the projects' activities reinforced this phenomenon. Other examined projects however highlighted that ownership can be created by embedding training of trainers in requesting organisations and involving the management actively in the projects' activities.

5. **Recommendation:** *The mechanism to enable long-term capacity development should be extended under a successor programme.*

A prerequisite for the adoption of a holistic model to capacity development (such as the 5C model) is an extension of the four year duration of the projects. According to academic literature organisational change is a process which takes on average seven to ten years. A mechanism to handle long-term capacity development could thus improve the effectiveness of NICHE and its successor programme.

6.2.3 Define Roles and Responsibilities more clearly and Improve Organisational and Mutual Learning Mechanisms

The roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders should be defined more clearly in NICHE and its successor programme. To avoid inefficiencies Nuffic should clearly communicate to the programme's stakeholders their roles and responsibilities.

6. **Recommendation:** *To strengthen the accountability of the programme's stakeholders, NICHE and its successor programme should communicate their roles and responsibilities within the programme cycle more clearly and ensure that each stakeholder be kept to its role.*

The evaluation identified the role distribution in the programme and project management cycle as the main source of inefficiency. Most programme stakeholders do not know who the accountable actor is for relevant activities in the programme cycle. In order to create ownership, accountability and to make processes more efficiently Nuffic should define and clearly communicate the roles and accountability of all stakeholders within the programme cycle.

7. **Recommendation:** *Nuffic should limit its role to the general management and oversight of the programme as well as monitoring on outcome level, respecting at the same time the rules for financial accountability.*

Nuffic is an important partner for the requesting organisations. At the same time however Nuffic engages increasingly into management on project level. This has created inefficiencies as it has led to miscommunication between the northern partners and requesting organisations as well as to double structures. As a consequence it is recommended that Nuffic takes on more responsibility in the management as well as in monitoring and evaluation on programme level and only engages on the project level if projects are not in line with the objectives of the programme.

However, the current monitoring system is based on the measurement of outputs and does not allow for the drawing of conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of NPT and NICHE. Furthermore, it is used more as a controlling instrument than an instrument for learning. The objective of a results-based monitoring instrument is to enable the relevant stakeholders to identify and discuss good and poor practices in order to find solutions for challenges experienced in the programme. In addition, it should serve as an instrument which maps the effects of the programme. As such it is an instrument which at the same time supports the management of the programme and the monitoring of projects as well as enabling systematized learning. Nuffic is already thinking along these lines, but did not have the necessary resources available to implement such a system.

6.2.4 Ensure Future Interest of Dutch Organisations in the Programme and Foster Competition through Improved Incentive Structures

The participation of the Dutch organisation is crucial for the success of the programme and should be preserved. A successor programme should introduce incentives for their participation.

8. **Recommendation:** *The Ministry should investigate whether and how measures for Dutch organisations could be introduced to guarantee their participation in the current programme and its successor programme.*

The evaluation demonstrated that the participation of the Dutch implementing organisations is crucial to the relevance of the programmes as they provide added value in form of needed expertise and knowledge. They are seen by the requesting organisations as knowledge brokers and equal partners who know about the specific needs within post-secondary education. However, Dutch implementing organisations, particularly universities, face increasing difficulties in justifying their participation in the programme internally as they do not contribute to their key performance indicators (such as national university rankings). As a result, Nuffic should investigate whether and how in a successor programme measures could be introduced for the Dutch organisations which create mutual benefits on both sides.

9. **Recommendation:** *The Ministry should continue to investigate how measures for Dutch organisations could be introduced to make the tender procedure of NICHE and of a successor programme more competitive.*

The efficiency analysis illustrated that the tendering procedure and the opening up process in NPT and NICHE only had a low effect on the efficiency of the programmes as the reached level of competition has been fairly low. With the introduction of incentives the competition in

the tendering procedure could be increased, which would result in efficiency gains for NICHE and its successor programme. The right incentive structures should be identified in a dialogue with the Dutch organisations. Nuffic has already started an investigation into this field and should continue this effort.

6.2.5 Coordinate more Effectively with other Programmes

The coordination of NPT and NICHE should place an emphasis on the generation of tangible synergies between their funded projects as well as between Dutch development programmes and programmes of other bi- and multilateral donors to strengthen their impact on sector level. Where this happens, the RNE should play a key coordinating role.

10. **Recommendation:** *The coordination with other Dutch development programmes as well as with other bi- and multilateral donor programmes should be strengthened.*

The coordination between the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic) and the Royal Netherlands Embassies (RNE) in the partner countries is functioning well. However, an active coordination with other Dutch development programmes as well as bi- and multilateral donors to generate tangible synergies did not take place under NPT. Under NICHE the coordination with bi- and multilateral donors as well as the RNE improved and synergies might be realised in the future. This approach should be retained and strengthened to generate positive effects on the university programmes and the labour market in the respective sector.