Evaluation of the international education programmes NPT and NFP managed by Nuffic

Final report

Client: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ECORYS Nederland BV

Ruud van der Aa
Amerik Klapwijk
Mart Nugteren
Jan Visser
Miriam Visser
John Zevenbergen

Rotterdam, 28 March 2007
# Table of contents

**Acknowledgements**

9

**Summary**

11

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Background 21

1.1.1 Intermisterial policy review 21

1.1.2 International education policy framework 21

1.1.3 Main policy principles for the NPT 22

1.1.4 Main policy principles for the NFP 23

1.1.5 Implementation of the NPT and NFP 23

1.2 Objectives and evaluation questions 24

1.3 Structure of the report 25

## 2 Design and methodology of the evaluation

2.1 Design of the evaluation 27

2.2 Phase 1: Inception 27

2.3 Phase 2: Quantitative and qualitative information gathering 28

2.4 Phase 3: Analysis and assessment 31

2.5 Phase 4: Reporting 31

2.6 Limitations of the evaluation 32

## 3 Description of the NPT programme

3.1 NPT eligible countries 35

3.2 Budget allocations and disbursements 35

3.3 Sector involvement 37

3.4 Organisations involved 38

3.4.1 Dutch organisations 38

3.4.2 Southern organisations 38

3.5 NPT preparation and implementation process 39

3.5.1 Demand identification 40

3.5.2 Demand articulation 42

3.5.3 The tender procedure 42

3.5.4 Award of the grant 43

3.5.5 Inception period / implementation phase 44

3.5.6 Monitoring and evaluation 44

3.5.7 Financial management 45
4 Policy relevance of NPT

4.1 NPT and the Dutch bilateral policies
   4.1.1 Harmonisation with the Netherlands development policy priorities
   4.1.2 NPT projects in Sub-Saharan Africa
   4.1.3 Selection of NPT countries
   4.1.4 Harmonisation and alignment

4.2 NPT and the policies of the recipient countries
   4.2.1 Harmonisation with the national government priorities
   4.2.2 Bilateral sectors versus higher education sector

4.3 NPT and the needs of the southern education institutes
   4.3.1 Demand-drivenness and ownership
   4.3.2 Type of contractual agreements

4.4 Wider focus of NPT beyond individual education institutes

4.5 Perceptions of RNEs and southern education institutes

4.6 Conclusions

5 Efficiency of NPT

5.1 Cooperation between the various actors
   5.1.1 Relationship between DCO and Nuffic
   5.1.2 Relationship between Nuffic and RNEs
   5.1.3 Relationship between Nuffic and northern institutes
   5.1.4 Relationship between Nuffic and southern institutes

5.2 Tender procedure
   5.2.1 Poor quality of project outlines
   5.2.2 Low response rate to tenders
   5.2.3 Formation of consortia
   5.2.4 Tender Evaluation Committee

5.3 Implementation of the programme

5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.5 Inclusion of regional collaboration

5.6 Performance of Nuffic

5.7 Tied character of NPT

5.8 Perceptions of the RNEs and southern institutions

5.9 Conclusions
   5.9.1 Cooperation between the various actors
   5.9.2 Tender procedure
   5.9.3 Performance of Nuffic

6 Effectiveness of NPT

6.1 Programme aims of NPT

6.2 Usefulness of the NPT programme
   6.2.1 Four perspectives on usefulness
   6.2.2 Project design within long-term development perspective
   6.2.3 Projects, sectors, and the broader social context and institutional development interests
   6.2.4 Perceptions about quality and quantity of assistance received

6.3 Sustainability
   6.3.1 Institutional embedding
6.3.2  Brain drain 96
6.4  Training methods 97
6.5  Perceptions of RNEs and southern education institutes 98
6.6  Conclusions 102

7  Description of the NFP programme 107
   7.1  NFP eligible countries 107
   7.2  Modalities of the NFP 108
   7.3  Planned and realised NFP programme budgets 109
   7.4  The application and selection procedure for individual fellowships 109
   7.5  The application and selection procedure for group training 111
      7.5.1  Tailor-made training 111
      7.5.2  Refresher course 111
   7.6  Trends in applications 111
   7.7  Type of institutions involved 113
   7.8  Multi Year Agreements 114

8  Policy relevance of NFP 115
   8.1  NFP and the Dutch bilateral policies 115
      8.1.1  Harmonisation with the Netherlands policy priorities 115
      8.1.2  Gender and regional distribution 116
   8.2  Relevance of NFP for the southern organisations 118
      8.2.1  Individual fellowships 118
      8.2.2  Tailor-made training 118
      8.2.3  Multi-year agreements 119
      8.2.4  Refresher courses 119
   8.3  Relevance of NFP for the participants 119
   8.4  Perceptions of the RNEs and southern organisations 120
   8.5  Conclusions 122

9  Efficiency of NFP 125
   9.1  Cooperation between the various actors 125
      9.1.1  Relationship between DCO and Nuffic 125
      9.1.2  Relationship between Nuffic and RNEs 125
      9.1.3  Relationship between Nuffic and northern institutes 127
   9.2  Individual modalities (Masters, PhDs, short courses, refresher courses) 127
   9.3  Tailormade training 129
   9.4  Multi-year agreements 130
   9.5  Monitoring and evaluation 131
   9.6  Inclusion of regional collaboration 131
   9.7  Performance of Nuffic 132
   9.8  Perceptions of the RNEs and southern institutions 133
   9.9  Conclusions 135

10 Effectiveness of NFP 137
   10.1 Programme aims of NFP 137
   10.2 Individual modalities (Masters, PhDs, short courses, refresher courses) 138
   10.3 Tailor-made training 139
10.4 Multi-year agreements 140
10.5 Brain drain 142
10.6 Perceptions of RNEs and southern organisations (TMT and MYA) 142
10.7 Conclusions 147

11 Cohesion between NPT and NFP 149
11.1 Synergy between the two programmes 149
11.2 Perceptions of the RNEs and southern organisations 150

12 Conclusions 153
12.1 Main principles of the policy framework 153
12.2 Policy relevance 154
12.3 Efficiency 155
12.4 Effectiveness 156

13 Recommendations 159
13.1 Recommendations with regard to the policy framework 159
13.2 General recommendations within the present policy framework 160
13.3 NPT - Recommendations within the present policy framework 161
13.4 NFP - Recommendations within the present policy framework 164
Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to DCO and Nuffic for providing us with a lot of useful information on the NPT and NFP programmes, both in interviews as well as through written documents. In particular we would like to thank Mr. Ad Boeren from Nuffic, who continuously supported our team whenever we had questions or particular requests for information.

Furthermore, we would like to thank the Nuffic desk officers of the countries that were visited - Vietnam, Tanzania and Uganda - who have been of great help, allowing us access to relevant project documentation and responding to all our questions before, during, and after our missions.

Many thanks also go to the Royal Netherlands Embassies in Hanoi, Dar es Salaam and Kampala, as well as the Netherlands Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, for their help in facilitating our missions. They all took great care in setting up appointments, rigorously following the proposed Terms of Reference. In addition to the logistical support, they provided us with valuable insights from their country experiences with the NPT and NFP.

We also would like to thank the supervisory committee for their constructive comments and ideas during the entire evaluation process.

Most important was the openness demonstrated by those with whom we spoke, both in the Netherlands and in the countries that were visited. Conversations were marked by an atmosphere of enthusiastic dedication to the goals of the programmes and by confidence about their positive outcome.

The evaluation team
Summary

Background
In February 2001 the Minister for Development Cooperation sent a new policy framework for the international education programmes to the House of Representatives of the States General. In the policy framework it was decided to phase out the seven existing programmes and to introduce two new programmes: the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP) and the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT).

The NPT aims sustainably to strengthen post-secondary education and training capacity in developing countries, so as to give them a better chance of generating their own training institutes and manpower in the longer term. The NFP programmes aim to cater for short-term training needs and are geared to building capacity in a broad range of governmental, private and non-governmental organisations.

While the overall aim basically remained the same, the new programmes made a major shift in terms of the following principles:
• A focus on fewer countries;
• Better coordination between foreign and development policy priorities;
• A more demand-driven approach;
• Greater flexibility;
• More cohesion between the programmes; and
• In order to broaden potential supply and introduce a form of competition, allocation of grants on a tendered, competitive price-quality basis from among all the international education activities in the Netherlands relevant to the policy framework.

After a tendering procedure, Nuffic was contractually engaged on 7 June 2002 to run the programmes for a period of four years. In October 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to extend the management contract with Nuffic until the end of 2007, since the new programmes had been phased in very gradually and had only become fully operational in 2004.

Focus of the evaluation
In this evaluation we looked at the extent to which the principles of the international education policy framework have been implemented in practice in the NPT and NFP as well as to their underlying assumptions. The evaluation considers the period from the start of the new NPT and NFP programmes in 2002 until the end of 2005.
The evaluation is for both programmes guided by four central evaluation questions:

1. What developments have taken place since June 2002?
2. Policy relevance:
   - To what extent do the processes and projects dovetail with the aims and basic principles of Dutch development policy and the policies of the country in question and Southern partners? (NPT)
   - To what extent do the scholarships and training courses and the processes leading to the award of scholarships dovetail with the aims and principles of the underpinning policy? (NFP)
3. Efficiency: were the processes efficient?
4. Effectiveness: to what extent do the achieved results contribute to achieving the programme aims?

The evaluation consisted of four building blocks: desk research, interviews in the Netherlands, digital surveys to the Netherlands embassies and the education institutes in the South, and field visits to Vietnam, Tanzania and Uganda.

**Developments that have taken place since 2002: NPT**

From the start of the NPT programme in 2003, 14 countries have been participating in the NPT-programme. At the end of 2005, a total of 105 NPT contracts were signed representing a total value of EUR 155 million. At that time EUR 22.3 million had been disbursed (payments for realised project activities excluding advance payments). Projects are implemented in 14 different sectors of which natural resources and environment, teacher training, and social economic development are the largest.

One of the main principles of the international education policy framework - that potential supply in the Netherlands would not be limited to universities – has been implemented successfully. In addition to a higher participation of Universities of Professional Education, which have now the lead in 18 NPT projects, the share of consultancy firms as leading organisation has become one-quarter of the total. Universities are however still the leading type of education institute for almost half of all projects. In total there are 34 different institutes involved in the NPT programme.

**Developments that have taken place since 2002: NFP**

The NFP target group consists of mid-career professionals from governmental, private and non-governmental organisations who are nationals of and working in one of 57 selected countries. The Dutch higher education institutes offer a wide variety of courses eligible for an NFP fellowship. A distinction is made between five different modalities: Masters programme, short courses, PhDs, tailor-made training (TMT), and refresher courses. In addition, there is the possibility for the southern institute to enter into a multi-year agreement (MYA) which can consist of a mixture of the different modalities. At the end of 2005, 19 MYAs were in place in 8 countries. During 2003-2005, EUR 64.1 million has been spent on the NFP programme. More than half of the total budget is spent on Master courses. Short courses constitute the second largest budget line.
In contrast with the NPT programme, the international education institutes are still the dominating provider type for all NFP modalities. Their share out of the total awarded courses has, however, been declining since 2003. Especially for Ph.D studies, universities have captured a reasonable share. The addition of new eligible master courses has also resulted in a slight shift from the IE institutes to universities and Universities of Professional Education. For refresher courses, there is the effect of a time lag. Since 2005 also universities are using this modality. By far, most fellows originate from a (semi-)government organisation or an education institute. Other types of southern institutions which occasionally are involved in NFP activities are candidates originating from research institutes and small and larger businesses.

Policy relevance: NPT

In general, the NPT projects and activities dovetail well with the aims and basic principles of Dutch development policy, as formulated in the international education policy framework of 2001. The NPT projects are linked to the bilateral sectors of the Netherlands development cooperation. The aim to spend at least 50 percent of the total budget in Sub-Saharan Africa is fulfilled. It was found that the areas that have been chosen for NPT support fit very well with the priorities and policies of the national government. The individual institutes also feel ownership for the NPT projects and the NPT activities dovetail with their own strategic plans.

Some tension, however, exists in the ambition level of the NPT programme versus the scope of the interventions. Demand identification starts at national level with the needs of a sector, but the NPT project activities take place at the level of the individual higher education institutes. The wider context, however, is important to achieve the results at the sector level. Moreover, is the core focus of NPT on the bilateral sectors or on the higher education sector? Without saying that NTP cannot contribute to achieving sector objectives or that it does not have an added value, it could be argued whether the focus on achieving broad sector objectives is the most appropriate point of entry for a programme that is limited in its interventions to developing capacity of higher education institutes.

When looking at future developments, it should be noted that the present set-up of the NPT programme does no longer fit in the current trend towards harmonisation and alignment, as agreed in the Paris Declaration. Donor support will increasingly be given through sector-wide approaches, basket funding and (general) budget support, and it will become more and more difficult to legitimise tied project aid as the preferred modality.

Policy relevance: NFP

The NFP programme, unlike the NPT, is not limited to the Dutch bilateral priority sectors. Although the individual fellowships are not limited to the Dutch priority sectors, the new MYA modality does provide opportunities to integrate the NFP more in the bilateral policy of the RNE. The MYA gives more possibilities for the RNE to influence the selection process and use it for strengthening of organisations in its bilateral sectors.

For the Master’s and short courses the percentage of female fellowships is below the objective of 50 percent. For PhDs, the objective was reached in 2005 with two-third of all PhDs students being females.
For 2005, all modalities achieved or were very close to achieving the objective that at least 50 percent of all fellows should originate from Sub-Saharan Africa. For the tailor-made training a huge preferential was given to this part of the world provided the low percentage of applicants from the region.

In all three countries under investigation, the evaluators encountered many graduates of educational institutions in The Netherlands, some via NFP but also with financing from alternative or personal sources. They all were very positive about this experience.

**Policy relevance: main recommendations**

It is recommended to DCO, Nuffic and the RNEs to take the strengthening of the higher education institutes as the first point of entry in the NPT and not the bilateral sector objectives (although it can still be made supportive to attainment of these sector objectives). It would require that the institutional and policy context of the higher education sector is given more attention.

It is recommended that DCO repositions the NPT and NFP programmes in light of the current trend towards donor harmonisation and alignment. The new challenges should be investigated together with other (like-minded) donors in order to find a common approach that fits in the new aid architecture and at the same time respects the national (academic) interests by not acting in isolation. It is suggested that a pilot is launched within the NPT in which an open tender procedure is followed. This might provide lessons as regards the possible benefits of untying the programme.

It is recommended that DCO become more visible as the Directorate responsible for the NPT programme from the policy perspective. DCO could, for instance, organise a biannual NPT workshop for all Embassies, like the NFP workshop that is being organised every two years. Such a workshop could provide an opportunity to share experiences and discuss various NPT-related issues, for instance how to relate NPT to pooled funding and budget support. Moreover, DCO could facilitate that other Directorates within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs learn from the experiences of the NPT projects.

**Efficiency: NPT**

Although there have been some initial tensions in the relationships between the various actors, they have improved since the start of the programme, such as the relationship between DCO and Nuffic, and between Nuffic and the northern institutes. In general, the relationships between Nuffic and the southern institutes are constructive and cooperative. Most of the southern NPT organisations are positive about the programme management by Nuffic. The help that Nuffic provides in the process of demand identification, articulation and proposal development is highly appreciated.

Although the embassies have an important role in the process leading up to identification of the demand, initially no attention was given to the required capacity that is needed at the RNEs to implement the NPT. Especially as regards NPT there has been a lack of clarity on the question what the role of RNE exactly should and could be.
The new tender procedure has hardly resulted in competition between northern institutes, also because consortia are formed which reduces competition between potential competitors. Therefore it is unlikely that this market-like mechanism has lead to better price/quality ratios. However, the introduction of tendering is seen as an improvement by the southern institutes.

Project development has become a lengthy, time consuming process. Project outlines are often inadequate, requiring a lot of attention in the inception phase. There have been significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up of NPT projects, partly attributable to the fact that procedures for programme implementation still had to be invented (and experimented with at times) while the first projects started to develop.

When the NPT was set up, the intention was that it should be a ‘lean and mean’ programme. In practice the division of time and attention for project preparation versus project implementation has got out of balance. Relatively a lot of attention is given to the preparation of NPT projects (the demand identification and articulation process, tendering procedure etc.), while less resources are available for Nuffic to critically monitor project implementation.

Conditions for the application of training modalities that make use of currently available information and communication technologies (ICT) vary across NPT countries. However, in many NPT countries ICT is already used both internally and in the context of training offered from abroad. Combining face-to-face training with portions of the training carried out at a distance could result in cost savings. It also potentially enhances the impact of training that could partially be undergone away from the training institution, leaving the trainees in their own work environment.

In the current supply of training in NPT the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped.

Efficiency: NFP

The present application procedure for NFP participants is not an efficient process. The two-step selection creates a lot of unnecessary workload for the RNE, Nuffic, the participants and the education institutes in the Netherlands. Moreover, the present system creates an incentive for the Dutch institutes to get as many admissions as possible and do the critical selection only at the end.

The preparation of TMT is a very complex and time-consuming process with significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up phase. It is therefore a positive development that Nuffic (after consultation with DCO) has decided to simplify the procedure, first for proposals below € 50,000 and later for all proposals.

In the current supply of NFP courses the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped.
**Efficiency: main recommendations**

It is recommended to **DCO** that uniform principles and rules be established for making decisions regarding the division of tasks and responsibilities between Nuffic and the RNEs, creating consistency in these matters across countries. At the same time, RNEs need to be provided the human and financial resources to be able to fulfil the role it has to play.

It is recommended to **DCO** and **Nuffic** that the decision on including (regional) partners in NPT projects can be postponed to the inception phase. When the proposal is prepared the real needs are not always clear and there is not always sufficient time to look for suitable regional partners. In some cases it might even be good to follow a step-wise approach. First select a Dutch institute that is specialised in capacity building to work on organisational development and management issues. After such organisational groundwork has been done, then look for suitable partners (regional or international) with the right expertise to provide the content which is needed.

It is recommended to **DCO** and **Nuffic** that the present application and selection process for the NFP be revised. This process is inefficient, creating unnecessary workload for the participants, the RNEs, Nuffic and the Dutch higher education institutes. The process could be made more efficient, for instance, by giving the RNE a stronger role in the selection process on the basis of some additional criteria to make a more critical selection possible, such as work experience and relevance of the employer from the development perspective. Making a stricter initial selection might reduce the number of admissions by the Dutch institutes. Another possibility which was mentioned by Nuffic is to centralise the selection process, for instance to work with selection committees for different subjects with representatives from Nuffic, RNEs and the Dutch higher education institutes.

It is recommended to **Nuffic** to ensure that more serious consideration be given by training providers to the potential of ICT to enhance the quality, efficiency and impact of the capacity building effort. In this context, we think that the potential of modern ICT can also be used more creatively to foster organisational learning.

**Effectiveness: NPT**

It is too early to come to definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of NPT as a programme. Only a single project has so far been concluded. Many projects have been operational for not much more than a year; a few other projects are just about halfway through the implementation cycle. Nonetheless, our field studies have provided sufficient insight to conclude that attainment of the intended effects may reasonably be expected. NPT projects are now generally well on their way, though implementation of planned activities varies. Some projects are considerably behind schedule; occasionally a project may be performing above expectations.

Southern institutions are generally content with the quality and quantity of the technical assistance they receive from the Dutch education institutes. Their opinion about the performance of their Dutch partners is overall positive, though occasionally questions may be raised about the proportion of the budget that gets absorbed into paying for Dutch expertise.
Such expertise is sometimes felt to be dispersed in ways that imply unduly high transaction costs that are out of proportion with the generated benefits (too many too short missions that are not well coordinated—an issue that has as much to do with efficiency as with effectiveness).

The measurability of results is hindered due to deficiencies in the front-end analyses and needs assessments carried out during the outline and inception phase of projects. Particular gaps in trained resources and infrastructural conditions may at first sight appear to be fully representative of perceived problems. However, in many cases fixing the wider context may be essential to making a proposed solution work. A good needs assessment and front-end analysis would bring out the complexity of the problem and attend to all the various elements that are crucial to solving it. Quite a number of those elements may not be training related. Another factor that complicates measurability of results is the fact that rarely the starting condition is charted out in sufficiently concrete detail so that it can serve as a point of reference with which the changed situation during implementation and after project completion can be compared. Absence of a proper baseline often also results in laxity in defining results, outputs and outcomes in precise and operational terms.

We have identified a number of risk factors, which are potential obstacles for achieving the intended effects of the NPT programme. A first risk factor is related to the limited attention given to the institutional and policy context (within countries and within institutes) in which the NPT projects function. A second risk factor is associated with the focus of NPT on activities at the level of concrete isolated projects. This may result in too little attention to the level above, i.e. that of coordination of projects, learning from each other, and networking. A third risk factor is associated with prevailing attitudes in some countries among would-be beneficiaries of NPT to look upon their involvement in a project as an extra burden rather than an opportunity for advancement that one wishes to invest in personally.

We did not find that brain drain is perceived as a serious problem in the NPT institutions in the countries that were visited. Results of the survey among RNEs and southern institutions across the NPT countries in general support this notion.

**Effectiveness: NFP**

As in the case of NPT, it is too early at this stage to present definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the NFP. However, we conclude that there are strong indications that the NFP is indeed an effective contributor to the capacity building effort it aims to be. It is available in a wider range of countries than its counterpart, the NPT. Besides, in countries where both NPT and NFP are available, NFP is sometimes a preferred choice because of a number of characteristics that distinguish it from NPT, such as the possibility to attend to individual training needs in circumstances where other conditions are already satisfied and the possibility to act in a more focused manner or at a smaller scale, potentially leading to less cumbersome procedures and greater flexibility.

Opportunities to pursue training via the NFP programme are generally in high demand. The success of the programme is well known among aspiring students. Embassies receive far more requests than can be accommodated. The programme is thus highly competitive.
According to the Embassies contacted by the evaluators, NFP participants are in general very content with the courses they followed.

A highly visible impact of NFP and its predecessor arrangements is the strong network of NFP alumni one comes across in many countries that have a history of benefiting from the programme. An impressive number of alumni are now often in key positions and make an important contribution to the advancement of their country. There are also effects beyond the level of expectation that are more secondary but equally positive. Two of them are that the presence of so many graduates from Dutch institutions in developing countries provides a network to the Netherlands embassies and the considerable amount of goodwill that is associated with the alumni network.

It is difficult in the case of individual fellowships to pinpoint exactly how the investment in training contributes to the overall programme aim of capacity building.

In general, institutions are satisfied with the Dutch providers of TMT. The quality of Dutch teachers is perceived as very good; the quality of local/regional trainers is seen as somewhat less strong. The focus in Dutch education on hands-on student involvement and active learning is particularly appreciated. Institutions that use this modality of training express that TMT strongly contributes to improving the quality of their staff members. On the other hand, participants are not always adequately selected so as to ensure that their background matches the entry requirements for the course.

The introduction of MYAs has implied a learning process for both RNEs and Nuffic, particularly in the pilot countries. However, MYAs are seen as important for developing more structural relations between a southern organisation and a Dutch institute. The MYA allows organisations to develop training policies, attending to diverse training needs (e.g. MA/PhD at strategic positions and TMT at more operational levels). Most RNEs consider the MYAs of importance as a means to attain the objectives of the NFP.

**Effectiveness: main recommendations**

It is recommended to **Nuffic** that NPT project outlines become less detailed, giving more freedom to the project partners to work out together during the inception period the specific needs and approach to be followed in order to achieve the intended results. This would make the preparation process more efficient (less duplication when detailed planning in the outline is being done again during the inception period) and more effective (real needs become more clear during the inception period and on that basis a more realistic ambition level for clear results to be achieved can be set). In addition, the RNE could do a ‘quality check’ on the project outlines, i.e. do the outlines contain the strategic information necessary for potential bidders to submit an appropriate proposal.

It is recommended to **Nuffic** and **DCO** that in the coming years more attention is given to critically monitor project implementation, especially since the NPT programme has now moved from the start-up phase to the implementation phase. Nuffic could, for instance, have two monitoring missions per year instead of one, or the RNEs could be more involved in monitoring.
In recent years a lot of time and attention has been given to the preparation of NPT projects (demand identification and articulation, tendering procedure etc.) and the available time should now be redirected towards monitoring the progress of projects.

It is recommended that needs assessment and front-end analysis of context and boundary conditions surrounding NPT projects and NFP training interventions be given more serious attention among the various stakeholders (in particular Nuffic). It should be clearly formulated what organisational change, as identified by concrete and measurable products and outputs, will result from the activity and what identifiable societal impact it should have. The recommended explicit analysis of the existing gaps, the surrounding conditions and desired outcomes at different levels should inform in a logical manner the design of projects and interventions as well as the practice of monitoring the progress of their implementation.

It is recommended to Nuffic and the RNEs that more attention be given to networking between NPT institutes that work in one country and/or in one field. Expertise of NPT institutes that are a lead organisation in a particular field could also be used in other NPT institutes in that country and/or in other countries. Also more attention could be given to regional networking, for instance with universities that work on similar programmes in neighbouring countries. Moreover, processes such as annual consultations that bring projects together, along with networking via electronic means, are also important to stay focused on the policy objectives of NPT and explore opportunities for synergy. Such ongoing dialogue at programme level, i.e. over and above the project concerns, is also necessary to stay focused on long-term systemic change to which individual projects and interventions contribute.

Cohesion between NPT and NFP

We have not found much evidence of cohesion between the NPT and NFP programmes, although it was one of the intentions in the policy framework of 2001. In recent years, cohesion has become more on the agenda, in particular because of the increased importance of tailor-made training and multi-year agreements. The present reorganisation within Nuffic, in which the MYA and TMT are merged with the NPT section, illustrates this. In the view of the Dutch education institutes, more cohesion should not mean that NFP would also be limited to the present NPT countries and bilateral sectors of the Netherlands development cooperation.

Cohesion: main recommendation

It is recommended to Nuffic and the RNEs that more attention is given to the cohesion between NPT and NFP, in particular for the modalities of MYA and TMT, which also have an organisational focus. However, we do not think that the NFP should also be limited to the present NPT countries and bilateral sectors of the Netherlands.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP) and the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) are the main instruments of the international education policy of the Netherlands. In 2006, both programmes have been evaluated. In this report, the findings of the evaluation are presented. Before looking at the objectives and main questions of the evaluation, some background is provided on the history and underlying policy principles of the NPT and NFP programmes.

1.1.1 Interministerial policy review

Based on the findings of an interministerial policy review conducted in 1998, the Dutch government decided in 1999 to make radical changes to the existing international education programmes. The main findings of the interministerial policy review working group were that:

• The effectiveness of the international education programmes is difficult to measure, because the programme objectives are insufficiently operationalised;
• The efficiency is difficult to measure, because no comparison can be made with similar programmes; there is limited insight in the relationship between input and output; and the inflexible method used in determining the allocation of funds offers insufficient stimuli to improve efficiency, creativity, innovation and demand-drivenness;
• The coherence of the international education programmes is deficient.

1.1.2 International education policy framework

The government decided to phase out the seven existing programmes and to introduce two new programmes:

• The Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-Secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT); and
• The Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP), subdivided in the NFP Academic Programme and the NFP Training Programme.

After intensive consultation with the main stakeholders, in February 2001 the Minister for Development Cooperation sent a new policy framework for the international education programmes to the House of Representatives of the States General.
The overall aim of the NPT and NFP was formulated in the international education policy framework as follows:

“To help reduce the quantitative and qualitative shortage of trained professional staff in developing countries, so as to build sustainable capacity within the poverty reduction framework.”

The NPT aims sustainably to strengthen post-secondary education and training capacity in developing countries, so as to give them a better chance of generating their own training institutes and manpower in the longer term. The NFP programmes aim to cater for short-term training needs and are geared to building capacity in a broad range of governmental, private and non-governmental organisations.

While the overall aim basically remained the same, the new programmes made a major shift in terms of the following principles:

- A focus on fewer countries;
- Better coordination between foreign and development policy priorities;
- A more demand-driven approach;
- Greater flexibility;
- More cohesion between the programmes; and
- In order to broaden potential supply and introduce a form of competition, allocation of grants on a tendered, competitive price-quality basis from among all the international education activities in the Netherlands relevant to the policy framework.

In the international education policy framework these principles were further elaborated for both programmes as explained in the following sections.

1.1.3 Main policy principles for the NPT

In 2001 the Dutch government had decided to concentrate its bilateral development cooperation on a limited number of countries and sectors. Following this general trend, the NPT should also be limited to the partner countries of the Netherlands and within these countries to the bilateral sectors that had been selected as policy priorities.

The NPT should be demand-driven, meaning that the recipient countries indicate what their priorities are for support of post-secondary education and training capacity. It was realised that the demand-driven approach would not be implemented in the same way in all countries.

Another principle that was formulated in the policy framework was that the NPT should become more flexible. It was intended that the NPT should allow coordinated activities beyond the borders of individual education institutes. It should be possible to give support not only to education institutes but also to ministries, national higher education committees or accreditation committees (following a system approach for the higher education sector as a whole).

Last but not least, it was intended that potential supply would be broadened and not be limited to Dutch higher education institutions, but also include consultancy firms, in particular for support in the area of policy development and policy implementation.
1.1.4 Main policy principles for the NFP

Under the old fellowship programmes, all 126 DAC countries were eligible for the NFP. In 1999 fellows came from 89 countries. It was intended to reduce the country list to 57, including the partner countries, thematic countries and a limited number of other poor countries. This choice was made in line with the concentration policy of Dutch bilateral development cooperation. It was, however, decided not to limit the NFP to the bilateral sectors of the Netherlands, unlike the NPT.

From the perspective of demand-drivenness it was decided that the NFP should be open for a broad range of mid-career professionals coming from governmental, private and non-governmental organisations. This was a continuation of the existing policy for the predecessor programmes of the NFP.

To make the NFP more flexible, it was decided that the programme would be open for all Masters and PhDs education possibilities in the Netherlands and not only be limited to the international education institutes, which was the case in the predecessor programmes. For the short courses and tailor-made trainings potential supply is not limited to the formal education institutes, but can also include other research and training institutes.

In the international education policy framework it was stated that not necessarily the full education has to be offered in the Netherlands. If Dutch institutes cooperate with regional institutes, regional education is also possible. For tailor-made trainings it is preferred that they take place in the country or region in order to make it easier that several persons from one organisation follow the same training.

1.1.5 Implementation of the NPT and NFP

It was decided that the new NPT and NFP programmes would be run by an independent intermediary organisation. Separate tenders were invited from Dutch organisations to manage the programmes. Nuffic was selected during this tendering procedure and on 7 June 2002, it was contractually engaged to run the programmes for a period of four years. In October 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to extend the management contract with Nuffic until the end of 2007, since the new programmes had been phased in very gradually and had only become fully operational in 2004.
1.2 Objectives and evaluation questions

The overall objectives of this evaluation of the NPT and NFP programmes are:

- To provide insight into the development, management and implementation of the international education programmes since June 2002;
- To indicate any problems that arose and how they were dealt with; and
- To record results, both interim and final.

The evaluation is for both programmes guided by four central evaluation questions:

1. What developments have taken place since June 2002?
2. Policy relevance:
   - To what extent do the processes and projects dovetail with the aims and basic principles of Dutch development policy and the policies of the country in question and Southern partners? (NPT)
   - To what extent do the scholarships and training courses and the processes leading to the award of scholarships dovetail with the aims and principles of the underpinning policy? (NFP)
3. Efficiency: were the processes efficient?
4. Effectiveness: to what extent do the achieved results contribute to achieving the programme aims?

In this evaluation we looked at the extent to which the principles of the international education policy framework have been implemented in practice in the NPT and NFP as well as to their underlying assumptions (e.g. has the tendering mechanism indeed led to more competition and a better price-quality ratio?). The evaluation considers the period from the start of the new NPT and NFP programmes in 2002 until the end of 2005.

In the ToR it was envisaged that this evaluation will:

- Give the Minister for Development Cooperation a clear picture of the programmes’ modalities, their policy relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, and the way in which they are managed;
- Provide the Minister, Nuffic and the institutions involved - both in the Netherlands and in developing countries - with lessons learned and recommendations for future policy, and for management and implementation of the programmes.

The results of the evaluation will be used as input for the decision-making on the future Dutch international education programmes and the structures for managing them. In 2007, the government will invite new tenders for the management of the international education programmes (in their current or updated form) with a view to having a new management contract effective from 1 January 2008.
1.3 Structure of the report

The structure of this report is as follows. Part I deals with the NPT, part 2 with the NFP. Both parts begin with a description of the programme, followed by chapters on the main areas of this evaluation: policy relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. In these chapters the main findings of the evaluation are illustrated with examples that we found in the field visits. Each of these chapters ends with a section on the perceptions of the embassies and southern education institutes in which the main results of the questionnaires are presented. After part 2 attention is given to the cohesion between NPT and NFP in chapter 10, followed by the conclusions and recommendations in chapter 11.
2 Design and methodology of the evaluation

2.1 Design of the evaluation

The evaluation consisted of the following four phases and activities:

**Phase 1: Inception**
1.1 Start up meeting
1.2 Basic information collection and analysis
1.3 Preparation of interview lists and questionnaires
1.4 Inception report

**Phase 2: Quantitative and qualitative information gathering**
2.1 Desk research
2.2 Interviews in the Netherlands
2.3 Digital surveys amongst Netherlands embassies
2.4 Digital surveys amongst southern institutes
2.5 Field studies to Vietnam, Tanzania and Uganda
2.6 Validation workshop with the Netherlands institutes
2.7 Presentation of preliminary findings

**Phase 3: Analysis and assessment**

**Phase 4: Reporting**

2.2 Phase 1: Inception

1.1 Start up meeting
The kick-off meeting with the supervisory committee for this evaluation took place at 9 June 2006. During this meeting the proposal and methodology were discussed, which resulted in some adjustments in the methodology compared to the ToR and proposal.

The most important adjustment was that - in addition to the questionnaires for the Embassies – questionnaires would also be sent to the education institutes in the South that participate in the NPT as well as the institutes that participate in the NFP through multi-year agreements and/or tailor-made trainings.
1.2 Basic information collection and analysis
In the inception phase basic data and information were collected (mainly from DCO and Nuffic), which were used as input for the inception report. Data concerned the set-up of the NPT and NFP programmes; the different modalities that are managed under the programmes; and information on the projects itself, its selection process and progress. Also information that gave insight in the background of the programmes and the implementation of the management contracts between DCO and Nuffic were studied.

Second, a list was made of key persons that would be interviewed in the Netherlands (mainly from DCO, Nuffic, the higher education institutes and the representative organisations PIE and Profound).

1.3 Preparation of interview lists and questionnaires
In the inception phase the first lists with topics for the interviews in the Netherlands were prepared as well as the main issues for the questionnaires to the Embassies and education institutes in the South.

1.4 Inception report
In the inception report insight was given in the implementation of the methodology in light of the information that had been gathered. On the basis of the information that was available, we have defined the scope of this evaluation (e.g. the limited possibilities to answer questions on effectiveness given the information that is currently available).

2.3 Phase 2: Quantitative and qualitative information gathering

2.1 Desk research
The aim of the desk research was to analyse information that had been gathered during the first phase (activity 1.2 basic data and information collection). The desk research provided the first inputs for analyzing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the NPT and NFP programmes. Some of the desk research took place at the premises of the Nuffic in The Hague.

For the desk research both qualitative and quantitative information available at DCO and Nuffic has been analysed. A distinction can be made between:

- An analysis of aggregated information covering all projects (e.g. quarterly and annual reports, internal monitoring and evaluation information, notes of meetings);
- An in-depth analysis of a selection of the project files of the countries where field visits have taken place: Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam;
- An additional sample of project files available at Nuffic. This part of the desk-study concentrated on the countries Benin, Ghana, Colombia and Yemen and was therefore complementary to the countries selected for field visits (see section 3.4). This selection is considered to represent an equal geographical distribution and also includes two non-Anglophone countries.
2.2 Interviews in the Netherlands

Interviews were held in the Netherlands to gain further and deeper understanding of the NPT and NFP programmes including the developments that have taken place since June 2002. Interviews were held with persons working at:

• DGIS/DCO: one meeting was organised with the relevant DCO staff. The focus was on policy issues, background and history of the NPT and NFP programmes, and the relationship between DCO and Nuffic;

• Nuffic: various meetings were organised with the responsible persons for the NPT and NFP programmes, including the Director of the Department for Human Resource and Institutional Development, heads of the NPT and NFP sections, the financial administrator and senior policy advisers, in particular those who work on the countries that were selected for the field visits. The focus was on the programme and project level, including the relationship between DCO and Nuffic, and between Nuffic and the higher education institutes;

• Higher education institutes in the Netherlands that participate in the NPT and NFP programmes (through multi-year agreements and/or tailor made trainings): in particular institutes that implement projects in the countries that were selected for the field visits. The focus was on the project level, including the relationship with Nuffic;

• Representative organisations of the higher education institutes PIE and Profound: one meeting was organised in which the focus was on the programme level and their views on the set-up of the NPT and NFP as well as how they are implemented.

2.3 Digital surveys amongst Netherlands embassies

Two digital surveys have been conducted amongst the Royal Netherlands Embassies (RNEs), one for Embassies in countries where NPT is implemented and one for Embassies in countries where NFP (MYA and/or TMT) is implemented. Embassies in countries where both programmes are implemented, received two questionnaires. The questionnaires consisted of closed questions as well as open questions where respondents could give their opinion on various aspects of the programmes. The questionnaires (in English, French or Spanish) were distributed through the internet or by e-mail.

Of the 15 NPT Embassies that received the questionnaire, 13 have responded (87%). Of the 49 NFP Embassies, 36 have responded (74%) of which 3 responses were incomplete. These response rates are sufficient to allow for statistically reliable conclusions.

2.4 Digital surveys amongst southern institutes

In addition to the surveys amongst the embassies, two separate questionnaires have also been sent to the education institutes in the South, one for institutes that participate in the NPT and one for institutes that participate in the NFP through MYAs and/or TMT. The questionnaires consisted of closed questions as well as open questions where respondents could give their opinion on various aspects of the programmes. The questionnaires (in English, French or Spanish) were distributed through the internet or by e-mail.

Of the 167 NPT beneficiary institutes that received the questionnaire, we have received 74 responses (44%) of which 13 were incomplete. Of the 40 NFP beneficiary institutes, 14 responses were received (35%). For the NPT institutes, the response rate is sufficient to allow for statistically reliable conclusions. The response rate of the NFP institutes is, however, disappointing.
2.5 Field studies

Three countries have been selected for the field studies. The supervisory committee had proposed to select Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen or Vietnam on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Presence of multi-year agreements.** Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen are NPT-countries in which also multi-year agreements (NFP) were started during the period relevant for the evaluation (mid 2002-end 2005). Other countries to which this criterion applies are: Ethiopia, Rwanda and South-Africa;
- **Substantive number of applications and projects per country.** Tanzania and Uganda have very large shares in applications for NFP scholarships;
- **Geographical argument:** since 10 out of 15 NPT-countries are African, it was felt that 2 out of the 3 countries for field studies should be in Africa.

Based on these three criteria Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen would appear most interesting. However, in these three countries the education sector is supported through Dutch bilateral development cooperation policy. In many NFP and several NPT countries this is not the case. Therefore, Vietnam was selected instead of Yemen. To complement the findings of the field visits, we have selected another four countries that were studied by desk research (see also section 2.1): Benin, Ghana, Colombia and Yemen.

For each country that we visited, we have selected a sample of projects, both NPT projects and NFP (MYA and TMT). For each project, interviews were held with the various actors involved, including project managers and staff of the higher education institutes that participate in the projects, contact persons at the Netherlands embassies, grant recipients, and employers of fellowship programme participants. The projects were selected in order to obtain a representative sample, based on the following characteristics:

- Start date of the project (we tried to visit as much as possible projects that had started already some time ago);
- Subject of the project;
- Size of the project (in budget and participants);
- Type of higher education institute;
- Location.

The field visits were conducted in two steps. The first field visit to Vietnam took place in September 2006. The other two field visits - to Tanzania and Uganda - were conducted in October 2006, which allowed us to learn from the experiences of the first field visit.

At the end of the field visits to Vietnam and Uganda, the preliminary findings were presented to the staff of the embassy and the education institutes visited in order to validate the findings. In Tanzania, it was recommended not to organise such a workshop given that most NPT projects were implemented outside the capital and it would be difficult (and costly) to make people coming to Dar es Salaam for such an event.

2.6 Validation workshop with the Netherlands institutes

In November 2006, we have organised a workshop with the Dutch education institutes to discuss and validate our preliminary findings. It has provided us with useful inputs and has given the institutes an opportunity to more actively participate in the evaluation process.
2.7 Presentation and discussion of preliminary evaluation findings

At the end of phase 2, we presented our preliminary evaluation findings on the basis of the desk research, the interviews in the Netherlands, the surveys amongst the embassies and the southern institutes, and the field studies to the supervisory committee. The feedback of the supervisory committee on the first results has been incorporated in the further analysis and preparation of the draft final report.

In addition, we organised a meeting with the Nuffic management to present our preliminary findings and give them also an opportunity for providing feedback.

2.4 Phase 3: Analysis and assessment

In phase 3 we further analysed all the information that was gathered during the desk research, interviews, questionnaires and field studies with regard to the policy relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the NPT and NFP programmes.

The activities in this evaluation were planned in such a way that the different sources of information built upon each other. Our first impressions on the NPT and NFP were based on the analysis of the documents that we initially received from DCO and Nuffic. A second building block was the information that we received during the interviews with DCO, Nuffic and the education institutes in the Netherlands. The third building block was the analysis of the information from the questionnaires to the embassies and institutes in the South. These surveys provided us with a general picture on the functioning of the two programmes. This overall picture was complemented with more in-depth information from the field visits to Vietnam, Tanzania and Uganda, which was the fourth building block. The field visits were used to assess for ourselves what really happens on the ground.

2.5 Phase 4: Reporting

The analysis of phase 3 provided the input for the draft final report. The first draft final report has been sent to the supervisory committee on 22 December 2006. It included the main report, three country reports and the report on the results of the questionnaires. The draft reports were also sent to Nuffic to give them an opportunity for providing comments, in particular to correct factual issues which were not properly stated.

The draft final report was discussed with the supervisory committee on 10 January 2007. After incorporation of the comments of the supervisory committee a second draft final report was sent on 23 February 2007, which was discussed on 8 March 2007.
2.6 Limitations of the evaluation

As indicated in the inception report, at this stage it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the NPT and NFP programmes given their recent starting dates.

The NPT programme has only started in 2003, with most projects taking off in 2005. At the end of 2005, subsidies were provided for 105 projects whereas 78 projects are being implemented. Only 1 NPT project has been completed.

Moreover, to measure the effectiveness of the NFP programme, a tracer study amongst the individual fellows is needed. However, such a tracer study was outside the scope of this evaluation and will be done separately in 2007. As indicated in our inception report and our meetings with the supervisory committee, our assessment of the NFP has therefore mainly been focused on the multi-year agreements and the tailor-made trainings (for instance, in our questionnaire to southern institutes and meetings with southern institutes during the field visits). It must be considered, however, that the multi-year agreements are of a very recent date and comprise only a very limited part of the NFP programme. Only a few of the present 14 multi-year agreements with education institutes in the South run for 1 or 2 years. Since the start of the NFP in 2003 roughly 2000 fellows have participated in the programme, of which only 1% (about 20) do so under the multi-year agreements. The start-up of tailor-made trainings took also longer than expected and up to now they represent only a small proportion of the NFP budget (less than 10%).

Where possible, we have looked at broader NFP issues relating also to the individual modalities (for instance, in the interviews in the Netherlands, the questionnaire to the embassies and meetings with embassy staff during our field visits). Nevertheless, given the set-up of the evaluation - not having a tracer study and limited visiting of southern NFP institutes to only those that implemented MYA and/or TMT – relatively more attention could be given to the NPT, which is also corresponded in this report.
Part 1 - Netherlands Programme for the Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT)
3 Description of the NPT programme

3.1 NPT eligible countries

Following the original intentions in the international education policy framework of 2001, the NPT has been limited to (a selection of) the partner countries of the Netherlands. From the start of the NPT programme in 2003, 16 countries have been participating in the NPT-programme. The countries are listed below. Peru was among the first batch of NPT countries, but was withdrawn from the list after one year. Officially Eritrea is also part of the NPT country list. However due to the difficult political environment, there have been no NPT-activities in Eritrea in the period under review.

Table 3.1 NPT country list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>Budget allocations in Euro</th>
<th>Disbursements in Euro (2003-2005)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6,291,490</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10,139,512</td>
<td>907,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15,821,042</td>
<td>1,641,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11,572,473</td>
<td>3,695,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13,145,910</td>
<td>2,324,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,835,762</td>
<td>104,375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Budget allocations and disbursements

At the end of 2005, a total of 105 NPT contracts were signed representing a total value of EUR 155 million. At that time EUR 22.3 million had been disbursed (payments for realised project activities excluding advance payments). Table 3.2 gives a geographical distribution of budget allocations and disbursements over the 15 NPT countries.

Table 3.2 geographical distribution of budget allocations and disbursements over the 15 NPT countries
Country | Number of projects | Budget allocations in Euro | Disbursements in Euro (2003-2005)
---|---|---|---
Tanzania | 9 | 11,288,098 | 702,942
Uganda | 9 | 13,163,189 | 3,199,296
Zambia | 6 | 7,333,577 | 1,063,681
**Subtotal** | **70** | **87,299,563** | **13,638,871**
Latin-America
Colombia | 4 | 8,934,746 | 802,542
Guatemala | 10 | 13,530,101 | 2,210,891
**Subtotal** | **14** | **22,464,835** | **3,013,433**
Asia
Indonesia | 3 | 6,395,061 | 105
Vietnam | 8 | 18,055,402 | 2,796,082
Yemen | 10 | 14,838,845 | 2,846,550
**Subtotal** | **21** | **39,289,308** | **5,642,737**
**Total** | **105** | **155,345,208** | **22,295,039**

**Project Duration**
Almost all projects use the maximum allowed project duration period of four years. The average anticipated duration period is 44.5 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 4 years</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Disbursements**
Out of the total budget of EUR 155.3 million, 14.3 percent had been disbursed at the end of 2005. Figure 3.1 indicates that most projects are behind implementation schedule given that the disbursements as percentage of the total budget is in general lower than the percentage of the elapsed (envisaged) project duration.
The Dutch provider of a NPT project in Ghana (GHA41/140) decided to withdraw from the project. This project has therefore been closed and the total budget has been reduced to the amount that had been spent at that time. This is depicted in the dot of a 100 percent disbursement after one third of the envisaged project duration. The project has been taken over by another Dutch provider and continued under the name GHA/215.

3.3 Sector involvement

Projects are implemented in 14 different sectors of which natural resources and environment, teacher training, and social economic development are the largest. Following the classification used by Nuffic, the projects can be divided as follows:

Table 3.4 Project overview per sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects per subject</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Euro</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,810,090</td>
<td>6.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>999,814</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering/technology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8,314,800</td>
<td>5.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6,288,387</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,736,414</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Medicine</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,180,337</td>
<td>5.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informatics/Information Systems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4,163,406</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice &amp; Human Rights</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7,817,083</td>
<td>5.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources &amp; Environment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20,154,712</td>
<td>12.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15,147,140</td>
<td>9.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy development &amp; management</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29,194,540</td>
<td>18.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17,506,996</td>
<td>11.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,678,673</td>
<td>3.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Economic Development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6,620,557</td>
<td>4.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water &amp; Sanitation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10,732,259</td>
<td>6.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
<td><strong>155,345,208</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Organisations involved

3.4.1 Dutch organisations

The start of the new NPT programme has resulted in a higher participation of Universities of Professional Education. They now have the lead in 18 NPT projects (17 percent). The NPT programme furthermore has been opened to commercial consultancy firms. Their share as leading organisation is now one-quarter of the total. Considering that both types of organisations are also participating in a large share of the remaining projects as partners or subcontractors, their involvement is even higher. It can therefore be concluded that one of the main principles of the 2001 international education policy framework - that potential supply in the Netherlands would not be limited to universities – has indeed been implemented successfully. Universities are however still the leading type of education institute for almost half of all projects. In total there are 34 different institutes involved in the NPT programme as leading organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects per type of Dutch lead organization</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Number of different winning institutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Professional Education</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Education Institute</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Company / NGO</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation of the Universities of Professional Education and commercial organisations has thus resulted in a broader variety of Dutch organisations to respond to the demand put forward by the southern institutes compared to previous programmes. A new kind of demand resulted in the opening of the programme for Universities of Professional Education (which were already involved in predecessor programmes) and commercial organisations. It is however questionable if this has also resulted in more competition to respond to demand. Instead the opening of the programme has mainly resulted in more diversification of Dutch supply. In contrast with the former MHO programme, southern institutes for instance now also formulate specific vocational training requests. Dutch universities have less interest in vocational training and visa versa so the number of Dutch providers per subject does not necessarily increase.

3.4.2 Southern organisations

The table beneath expresses how the Dutch institutes are matched to the southern organisations. In almost half of the cases, the southern beneficiary is an university (46%). The southern universities are mainly served by Dutch universities. Ministries from the South are the second largest group of beneficiaries (17%). Also for this category, the Dutch universities play a major role. Universities of Professional Education have a leading role in servicing the polytechnics category. The other relations are more scattered.
Table 3.6 Dutch institutes matched to the Southern institutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>National agency</th>
<th>Polytechnic</th>
<th>Specialised training institution</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Vocational Education &amp; Training Institution</th>
<th>NGO</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Professional Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Education Institute</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Company / NGO</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| %  | 17% | 10% | 12% | 10% | 46% | 4% | 1% | 100% |

3.5 NPT preparation and implementation process

This section aims to provide insight into Nuffic’s current practices of implementing the NPT programme. The following phases can be identified in the NPT process:

Before grant award:
- Demand identification;
- Demand articulation;
- Tendering;
- Contracting.

After grant award:
- Inception;
- Implementation;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

The preparation period before the grant is awarded takes about one year. The phases after the grant is awarded, last between two and four years. The different phases in the process are visually depicted in figure 3.2.
Each phase is described in detail below\(^1\).

### 3.5.1 Demand identification

It is the intention of the NPT programme that demand will be identified as much as possible on the basis of policy plans that already exist in the country itself. Ideally, these plans have been developed by the local authorities in a participatory manner and in close consultation with local stakeholders. If this has indeed been the case, the priorities for NPT cooperation can be identified through dialogue with the ‘owners’ of the policy plans.

During the process leading up to identification of the demand, the role of the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) is important. The RNE can help to achieve (at least) some degree of synergy between interventions through the NPT and the other bilateral cooperation programmes. The embassy’s knowledge of interventions funded by other donor organisations is also useful at this point.

In most cases a meeting is arranged to identify priorities for NPT cooperation. Such a meeting enables the Dutch Embassy and Nuffic to consult with local authorities and local stakeholders. Further steps in the process will be dictated by the specific situation in the country in question. The result of the demand identification process should be an implementation plan for the NPT interventions, which has at least the following components:

- An indication of the subject areas for NPT cooperation;
- A list of organisations that work in these areas and would fit in the NPT context;
- A global indication of the amount of funding available for each possible combination of organisation and subject area.

---

\(^1\) The descriptive part draws heavily upon the NPT programme description, prepared by Nuffic
Projects that are proposed should fit within the NPT framework and they should be consistent with the objectives, policies and character of the NPT programme. This means that the envisaged NPT interventions focus on strengthening capacity deemed relevant to the sectors or themes that have been chosen for bilateral cooperation between the Netherlands and the country concerned. NPT cooperation may also take place in areas that transcend or cut across sectors, or it may be directed towards a general strengthening of the higher education sector.

The organisations in the South will be asked to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement externally funded projects in an effective and accountable manner. On the basis of this information, Nuffic will decide whether the organisation is eligible for NPT cooperation and will determine under which conditions a grant will be awarded to the organisation.

The next step is for the organisation thus selected to articulate the identified demand in more specific terms.

Box 3.1 Demand identification and articulation: the case of Ghana

Demand identification and articulation: the case of Ghana

Ghana joined the NPT programme in March 2003. For the initiation of the NPT programme, a preliminary identification study was commissioned by Nuffic in consultation with the RNE Accra. The study was conducted by a local consultant and related mainly to the GoG’s PRSP, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the challenges facing the tertiary education sector. The study identified nine possible priority areas where strengthening of the post-secondary training and education capacity was needed. On the basis of this preliminary identification study, a Nuffic delegation visited Ghana to further discuss the report’s findings with the relevant stakeholders in Ghana and to agree on the final scope of the programme in the country.

In preparation of the Nuffic visit, prior consultations were held between the RNE and the MoE. During these meetings, the Ghanaian authorities clearly indicated their wishes that NPT should exclusively focus on polytechnics. Furthermore, the proposed concentration was also in line with the preference of the Ministry to make achievements more sizeable. Nuffic and the RNE expressed their concerns regarding the exclusive focus on the polytechnics proposed by the Ministry since that excluded all initiatives that could contribute towards the attainment of synergy between the NPT action and bilateral development cooperation in Ghana. Also, the available information raised serious doubts regarding the financial absorption capacity of the polytechnics.

For the articulation of the identified demand, Nuffic engaged the services of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). This organisation was recommended by the RNE for the preliminary identification study and was later engaged by Nuffic to organise and facilitate the stakeholder’s meetings. Since these two engagements were performed successfully, Nuffic staff held discussions with the IEA management on the continuation of the relationship. IEA was held responsible for contracting capable and experienced local consultants to assist the requesting organisations in formulation the outline. According to the terms of the assignment contract, IEA presented twelve project outlines for NPT cooperation in Ghana.

Source: Nuffic monitoring report Ghana
3.5.2 Demand articulation

The outcome of the process of demand articulation is a project outline drafted by the organisation(s) in the South. Before the articulation process begins, the organisation receives the necessary information about the NPT from Nuffic. The information includes a description of the programme and various examples and models which will be helpful to the organisation in the South when it drafts the project outline. Although the organisation formulates the specific demand for NPT cooperation itself, it can call on a local consultant and/or Nuffic for guidance. Given the fact that southern institutes experienced great difficulties to draft a project outline, local consultants became more and more involved in the demand articulation process. They are often recommended by the RNE to the southern organisation. Nuffic pays for the services of the local expert, which on average last for 15 days.

The project outline needs to be of good quality since it will serve as the basic document for the tender procedure (see section 2.5.3). Nuffic therefore assesses the technical quality of the project outline. It will also consider whether or not the project outline is a logical response to the demand that has been identified. Only after Nuffic finds the project outline satisfactory, it will publish the call for tenders.

3.5.3 The tender procedure

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 document 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. Interested Dutch organisations are invited to submit a proposal which will be evaluated by the Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC). The selection will be done in an impartial way through a system of points for each of the various criteria. The minimum score that is required is set beforehand. The grant will be awarded on the basis of an overall score that takes into account both content and price. However, the Dutch organisations do not compete with regard to the fees that they propose, since these are fixed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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:
- One specialist with expertise related to the project’s subject area, who will chair the committee;
- One representative of the organization in the South;
- One Nuffic staff member (who is the secretary of the TEC).

If the organisation in the South refuses to accept as a partner the Dutch provider whose tender received the highest score, the tender will also be cancelled. In such a case, the southern organisation must provide a reasonable explanation for rejecting the Dutch partner.
The TEC is free to comment on the selected proposal and to add suggestions or make recommendations as to how it thinks project implementation might be improved. The Head of Nuffic’s Cooperation Programmes Section decides whether to accept the suggestions or recommendations, and whether to incorporate them as conditions for the grant. If they do indeed become conditions, they will be translated into concrete instructions which specify the desired results and the timeframe for their realisation, and which indicate clearly who is responsible for which aspect of their implementation. The results thus specified have to be achievable within the given project boundaries regarding budget, staffing and timing.

3.5.4 Award of the grant

After the winning proposal has been selected, Nuffic drafts the project grant award. The grant is preferably awarded to the organisation in the South, which then concludes a contract with the Dutch organisation. Nuffic can make payments directly to the Dutch partner at the request, or with the approval, of the organisation in the South. If Nuffic, after assessing the local situation and the capacity of the partner in the South, comes to the conclusion that this arrangement could lead to problems or in case the southern partner prefers otherwise, Nuffic may decide to award a tripartite grant to the two partners, or award a bipartite grant to the Dutch organisation. The three contractual options are depicted in figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Contractual options
Nuffic makes a technical assessment of the winning proposal or of the revised project document that emerges from an inception period. Nuffic’s assessment makes sure that the proposal conforms with the financial rules and regulations of the programme, and contains sufficient indicators for the proper monitoring of the project.

3.5.5 Inception period / implementation phase

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 the project, to finalise a detailed plan of implementation for the first year, to conduct a training needs assessment, to agree on management structures for the project, or to define performance indicators which are then incorporated into the project proposal. An inception phase can be proposed by the organization in the South in the project outline, suggested in the project proposal by the applicant organisation, or required by Nuffic after a proposal has been selected. The revision of a project proposal can lead to changes within the budget, but the total budget has to remain within the amount of the grant that was given.

3.5.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

The monitoring and evaluation of NPT activities are based primarily on the approved project proposal, in which the project partners have indicated the results and effects they hope to achieve. The project partners themselves define the indicators which will be used to assess project performance. These indicators are an integral part of the ‘logical framework’, which consists of a description - in measurable terms - of the project objectives, inputs, expected effects, planned results, and the relationships between all of these.

The logical framework can be adapted as necessary during the course of project implementation. This means that the framework itself is also an instrument for internal monitoring and evaluation.

The grant award indicates how often reports must be submitted. This is usually once a year, but Nuffic may decide that the nature of the project requires two progress reports a year. The implementers may use their own format for reporting but it should incorporate the following topics:

- Description of the achievements in the reporting period in relation to the project objectives, intended effects and planned output(s);
- Description of changes in the project context that have an influence on the implementation of the project;
- Analysis of bottlenecks which have occurred in the implementation of the project and the measures which have been/will be taken to remove the bottlenecks;
- Assessment of the progress in project implementation (with an emphasis on the level of success in achieving planned outputs);
- Assessment of the actual relevance of the objectives and the possible need to adjust them;
• Description of the measures that are being taken to ensure the sustainability of the project outputs;
• Statement of expenditures. This statement of expenditure has to be accompanied by an auditor’s report.

The annual report and statement of expenditures are signed by the signatories of the co-operating organizations. The annual report and statement of expenditures are to be submitted to Nuffic before the 1st of May of the year following the year to which the report applies.

Nuffic organises annually one two-week monitoring mission to each country where NPT is being implemented. The missions serve mainly to monitor the progress of individual projects, to consult with various concerned parties regarding programme implementation at the overall level, and also concerning the identification of additional projects.

**Evaluation**

At least six months before the project ends, the partners are expected to conduct an internal evaluation. Nuffic then decides whether or not an external evaluation will also be necessary. Nuffic’s decision is based on one or more of the following:

• The outcome of the internal evaluation;
• Nuffic’s interpretation of the available project monitoring data;
• A specific request from the partner organisations;
• A specific request from the Dutch government.

3.5.7 Financial management

As soon as the NPT programme is introduced in a country, Nuffic will indicate approximately how much money can be committed to projects in that country over the next few years. This will give stakeholders some idea how much scope there is for planning NPT activities. The amount is an indication; there are no guarantees that this exact amount will actually be available.

The process of identifying demand, yields a list of subjects and organisations that are eligible for NPT cooperation. It also yields a financial plan, which indicates how the available funds can be distributed over the subjects and organisations, and suggests an order of priority (of subjects). If at a later stage choices have to be made because funds run short, this order of priority takes on extra significance.

Annual budget revisions give financial flexibility to NPT projects. Budgets are approved definitely 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 budgets. If an organisation wants to make use of its own system for drawing up financial reports, this is possible but Nuffic will want to make sure that the system meets the requirements regarding NPT budgets and reports.
The grant recipient is responsible for keeping careful records of project expenditures and for monitoring the budget. Guidelines for this are included in the financial rules that accompany the award of the grant.

The implementing organisations 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.

The responsibility for financial reports lies with the grant recipients. In case a grant is awarded to only one project partner (bipartite), this partner should make agreements in this area with the other partner. An audited statement of expenditure together with a progress report must be drawn up once a year. It must be submitted to Nuffic, together with an auditor’s report, by the 1st of May at the latest.

The organisations must make sure that expenditures are audited by independent, external auditors. On the basis of the various reports and the auditor’s report, Nuffic determines the definite amount of the NPT contribution.
4 Policy relevance of NPT

In this chapter the policy relevance of the NPT programme is assessed. In particular, we look at the extent to which the NPT is harmonised with the Dutch bilateral policies, harmonised with the national government priorities in the recipient countries, and to what extent it is demand-driven from the perspective of the southern education institutes.

4.1 NPT and the Dutch bilateral policies

4.1.1 Harmonisation with the Netherlands development policy priorities

One of the policy principles for the NPT, as stated in the international education policy framework of 2001, was that it should be limited to the bilateral sectors that have been selected by the Netherlands embassies as policy priorities. In our field investigations regarding the implementation of NPT in Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam we have found that the NPT projects and activities within these countries are indeed harmonised with the bilateral sectors of the Netherlands development cooperation.

In Tanzania the focal areas for the NPT programme are business development (in particular the development of entrepreneurship) and decentralisation. Both areas fit very well with the priority sectors of the RNE Dar es Salaam. The RNE is funding two multi-donor programmes which address key weaknesses in the business environment. Both programmes are to improve the enabling environment for the private sector in Tanzania. However, the RNE underlines that for private sector development an attitude of risk taking and business mentality needs to be developed further. For this reason, the RNE had advised Nuffic to select ‘entrepreneurship’ as one of the focal areas of the NPT programme. The RNE has for a long time been involved in supporting government policies regarding district development and local government reform and therefore proposed decentralisation as a second area for NPT support. Effective decentralisation is also considered by the RNE as a pre-condition for effective development of the health and education sectors, which are supported by the Netherlands.

Also in Uganda, most support under the NPT programme is in line with the priority sectors of the RNE, which are Justice, Law and Order; Education; Local Government; Procurement; and Gender and Environment as cross-cutting themes. Incidentally, it has happened, however, that a project is less clearly related to the sector policies of the RNE. Two examples of these are the NPT projects at the Faculty of Medicine of Makerere University (NPT/UGA/082) and at the National Environmental Management Authority (NPT/UGA/085).
Future challenges for the set-up of the NPT programme

In Tanzania, donor support is increasingly given through sector-wide approaches, basket funding and general budget support. This trend is likely to continue in the coming years. The RNE is in favour of this trend and is actively promoting the idea of basket funding and alignment, including the idea of the Government of Tanzania to establish a Trust Fund for all Technical Assistance. At the same time, the RNE is implementing the NPT programme, which - in the present set-up - does not fit into that. given that it is tied aid through projects. The tension that exists between the two approaches is expected to have implications for the future of implementing a programme such as NPT in Tanzania, although other donors still have similar programmes as well.

Source: Field investigation Tanzania (see annex)

Poverty reduction is an overriding goal that drives the Netherlands development cooperation policy in Vietnam. The precise link between a particular intervention and poverty reduction, though, is generally difficult to be established. The reason is that there is no simple linearly causal process that leads to poverty reduction. Multiple factors are at play and approaches toward poverty reduction are therefore multifaceted and transdisciplinary in nature. Nonetheless, for some projects the link is recognisable. This is for instance the case of a NPT project, which focuses on assisting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and farming households in the Mekong Delta. Can Tho University’s School of Economics and Business Administration, where the project is based, engages in extensive outreach that serves directly entrepreneurs in the Mekong Delta. The project in question engages in training, outreach, and the building of research capacity for SME development; marketing; and dealing with environmental issues related to agricultural development in the region. It is reasonable to assume that such efforts will contribute to improving the situation of the poor, provided multiple other factors get addressed as well.

4.1.2 NPT projects in Sub-Saharan Africa

One of the aims of the NPT programme is that at least 50 percent of the budget will be spent on projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. At present, two-thirds of all projects (70 out of 105) have been initiated in Sub-Saharan Africa. In budget allocations these 70 projects represent EUR 87.3 million (60 percent) of the overall budget allocations (EUR 155.3 million). Out of the EUR 22.3 million that has been disbursed in the period 2003-2005, EUR 13.6 million (61 percent) went to projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.

| Table 4.1  Budget allocation and disbursements Sub-Saharan Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa minus South-Africa |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **% of total budget allocations** | **% of total disbursements** |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 60 | 61% |
| Sub-Saharan Africa minus South Africa | 57 | 61% |

When South-Africa is left out of the Sub-Saharan countries category, there remain 67 projects, representing 57 percent of the overall budget and 61 percent of the total disbursements. Both from the perspective of budget allocations and actual disbursements, the aim to spend at least 50 percent of the total budget in Sub-Saharan Africa is therefore fulfilled.
4.1.3 Selection of NPT countries

The 15 countries which are on the NPT country list (see section 2.1) are the result of an inventory of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DCO among its Embassies which was held in 2002. For the selection of NPT countries, DCO has taken a number of factors into account, such as the education sector being a bilateral sector or not, and the presence of a strategic plan for the higher education sector. In addition, the RNEs were asked to express their interest and motivation to participate in the new NPT programme. The country selection by DCO was therefore also based on the motivation of the individual RNEs.

Nuffic is not completely satisfied with the country list. For instance, Nuffic had negative experiences in Zambia under the MHO programme, where it eventually was suspended. However, during the inventory of DCO, the RNE in Zambia expressed its interest in the NPT and therefore Zambia returned on the list in 2003. There has been no discussion between DCO and Nuffic about the selected countries. Nuffic was asked for comments on the proposed list(s) but decided not to make use of the opportunity - to maintain a clear distinction between responsibilities of DCO and Nuffic – and accepted the countries as suggested. Also questions whether or not it is justified that a lower-middle income country like Colombia or an upper-middle income country like South Africa is on the list have not been raised.

4.1.4 Harmonisation and alignment

In all three countries that were visited for this evaluation, donor support is increasingly given through sector-wide approaches, basket funding and general budget support. This trend is likely to continue in the coming years. The Netherlands is one of the donors that is actively promoting this agenda of harmonisation and alignment. At the same time, the Netherlands is implementing the NPT programme, which - in the present set-up - does not fit into that, given its tied project character. The tension that exists between the two approaches is expected to have implications for the future of implementing a programme such as NPT. A concrete example of this tension can be found in Tanzania where the Government has the idea to establish a Trust Fund for all Technical Assistance.

Two remarks need to be made in this context. First of all, the central government authorities (in particular the Ministry of Finance) may often be in favour of this trend. However, this is not necessarily the case for the southern NPT institutes. Some of the interviewed persons at the institutes mentioned the risks of red tape, delays and nepotism when the government would do its own tendering. A second issue here is that it is unlikely that the Netherlands will untie its NPT programme as long as other donors still have similar programmes.

One first step in dealing with this issue could be to investigate whether some kind of untying of the NPT and similar programmes could be agreed with other (like-minded) donors. It would broaden the choice that southern institutes have to select the most attractive institutes from the north, whether they come from the Netherlands or not.
4.2 NPT and the policies of the recipient countries

As stated in the international education policy framework of 2001, the NPT should be demand-driven, meaning that the recipient countries indicate what their priorities are for support of post-secondary education and training capacity. At that time it was already realised that the demand-driven approach would not be implemented in the same way in all countries.

This assumption that was made in 2001 has indeed turned out to be right. We have found that the involvement of the national governments in the demand identification process varies considerably between countries. This is partly due to the level of centralisation of the state in general. In countries like Ethiopia and Vietnam, the government is the main stakeholder in the identification process. In countries like Uganda, Colombia and Guatemala the role of the national government is less prominent. The sectors are in principle chosen by the Embassy and are consistent with the focal sectors of the bilateral relationship between the Netherlands and the beneficiary country.

4.2.1 Harmonisation with the national government priorities

Given the central role of the government in the identification process in Vietnam, there is no doubt about the close link with the policy priorities of the government. The current oversight of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and line ministries is an almost sure guarantee for the existence of that link. It has also resulted in a broadening stakeholder involvement beyond a single institution. In many cases multiple institutions of higher education as well as ministerial departments benefit from the capacity building effort.

In the case of Vietnam the central government structures have a strong say in what will happen at institutional level. Projects proposed by an institution—after the RNE has identified or recognised the institution as a valid instance for sector-related capacity building—go through a lengthy and complicated approval process in which the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) plays a central role.

So far the prevailing conditions in Vietnam have been responsible for significant delays in the approval process of the NPT projects. In many cases it also has held up implementation (for an entire year in the case of VNM/007) due to the requirement that projects that had been approved at the outline stage needed to be re-approved after the tendering procedure had led to adaptations and the identification of a collaborating northern partner institution or consortium.

It is noted, on the other hand, that the involvement of central government has also had positive effects. In some cases it was MPI that suggested seeking a response to an institutional demand via one of the two Netherlands programmes for capacity building. MPI’s role has also led to broadening the range of Vietnamese beneficiaries of NPT projects, considering that demands originally identified with one or two major institutions were equally shared by lesser ones spread across the country. Typically, many of the NPT projects list a large number of Vietnamese project partners.

Source: Vietnam field investigation (in annex)
Also in Tanzania the areas that have been chosen for NPT support fit very well with the priorities and policies of the government. The Government of Tanzania (GoT) has for instance emphasised the need to transform the education system by developing the culture of entrepreneurship as a tool in the struggle against poverty. In Tanzania it is difficult for graduates to find jobs and therefore it is important that graduates are stimulated to start their own business. Not “finding employment” but “creating employment” is the message that they are being given. For this, graduates need to develop entrepreneurial skills. NPT project outputs, such as mainstreaming of entrepreneurship in curricula, development of MBA programmes, and provision of business development services for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), are therefore in line the policy and initiatives of the Government of Tanzania.

Decentralisation is an important policy objective of the GoT. Moreover, in the poverty reduction strategy, the improvement of social service delivery at local level is seen as a critical element in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Tanzania. However, capacity at local government levels is weak, which is a constraint to transferring authorities and responsibilities. Under the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), local authorities are offered a capacity building grant to invest in staff development. The LGRP has facilitated the design of standard training courses in financial management, human resource management, planning etc. to ensure that local authorities have access to quality and consistent curricula. Universities and other education institutes that play an important role in the training of local government personnel are accredited to be allowed to offer these standard courses to local authorities. This is a short-term approach to capacity building. The accredited education institutes are now also targeted under the NPT programme to strengthen their capacity on longer term. In the NPT projects they develop curricula that better address the needs at local government levels, both for pre-service and in-service education and training. The NPT is therefore complementary to the LGRP and, albeit indirectly, contributes to the decentralisation policy of the government.

4.2.2 Bilateral sectors versus higher education sector

Some tension exists in the ambition level of the NPT programme (e.g. formulating objectives at sector level) versus the scope of the interventions (capacity building of a particular higher education institute). Demand identification starts at national level with the needs of a sector, but the NPT project activities take place at the level of the individual education institutes. The wider context, however, is important to achieve the results at the sector level. For instance, for the aim of business development in Tanzania, the creation of an entrepreneurial attitude through the NPT projects is an important aspect, but other factors need to be addressed as well, such as the non-transparent complicated legal framework, criminality, high taxes, infrastructure and corruption. Developing entrepreneurial skills is no guarantee that the private sector will improve as long as these barriers have not been removed. The NPT projects should therefore not be seen in isolation, but developments in the wider (policy) framework should be taken into account as well. The institutional context in which the NPT projects are implemented are an essential factor for achieving the desired results at sector level. NPT is only one element.
Related to this, there is a potential tension in the set-up of the NPT programme. Is the core focus of NPT on the bilateral sectors or on the higher education sector? If it is the first, the institutional context of the particular sector becomes more important. In some countries it might even become more important than what actually happens in the NPT projects. For instance, the non-transparent complicated legal framework might be a bigger obstacle for business development in Tanzania than the lack of an entrepreneurial attitude, while only the latter is being addressed through the NPT projects. In other words, the objectives of the NPT programme are formulated at sector level and go further than what can directly be achieved through the NPT interventions in the higher education sector. Consequently, it could therefore be debated whether NPT in all cases is the right programme for achievement of sector objectives? Without saying that NTP cannot contribute to achieving sector objectives or that it does not have an added value, it could be argued whether the focus on achieving broad sector objectives is the most appropriate point of entry for a programme that is limited in its interventions to developing capacity of higher education institutes.

It might be more realistic to take the strengthening of the higher education institutes as the first point of entry in the NPT programme, which still can be made supportive to attainment of bilateral sector objectives. In that case, the institutional and policy context of the higher education sector should be given more attention. For instance, in Tanzania the NPT programme has been formulated first of all from the perspective of the bilateral sectors (business development and decentralisation), whereas the perspective of the higher education sector - including the role and involvement of the Ministry of Higher Education – has got little attention. The higher education sector in Tanzania is very fragmented at present. Reform of the sector is needed, but that requires more than the present isolated NPT interventions at individual higher education institutes.

4.3 NPT and the needs of the southern education institutes

4.3.1 Demand-drivenness and ownership

The NPT programme is supposed to be demand-driven as was clearly indicated in the international education policy framework. But whose demand drives the projects generated in the context of this programme? The set-up of the NPT programme is clear about the need for NPT projects to support the sectoral development needs identified for Netherlands development cooperation in the country in question. Besides, the NPT programme can only function in a country if the RNE agrees to it. These conditions determine that the demand that drives NPT projects is in the first place one that is perceived by the RNE. This is not necessarily bad. After all, the sectoral development interests looked after by the RNE result from discussions with the beneficiary country. They also find their place within the framework of the ongoing conversation among members of the donor community about who does what. However, the needs thus identified are not necessarily perceived in a similar way by the beneficiary institution, which could have implications for ownership building, motivation and dedication.

Notwithstanding the fact that the RNE has the first say in determining demand, in all three field investigations it was found that the local key stakeholders felt that their demands were being recognised.
Also in Vietnam this feeling was expressed, although the demand of the institutes is moderated by the centralised government structures (see also section 3.2). In Uganda and Tanzania participatory processes have been followed to select the institutes for NPT support. In both countries, all major stakeholders were involved in a comprehensive demand identification phase (see also the box below). In that respect, the identification process has been demand-driven from the South.

At the level of the individual institutes it was also found that they feel ownership for the NPT projects and that the activities dovetail with their strategic plans. The split between the outline development by the southern institute on the one hand, and the proposal preparation by the Dutch partner on the other hand, as well as the involvement of the southern institute in the Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC) have positively contributed to creating this ownership. Moreover, the decision to open the NPT programme also for commercially operating training and consultancy firms as well as the larger share that Universities of Professional Education have acquired, may also have contributed to the demand drivenness of the programme. A greater demand from the South for more practically oriented support can now more easily be supplied by the Universities of Professional Education and consultancies than was possible in the past.

**Demand identification for decentralisation in Tanzania**

In December 2003 Tanzania was added to the list of NPT countries. During the first Nuffic mission to Tanzania in March 2004, Nuffic and the RNE agreed that decentralisation would be one of the themes to receive NPT support. It turned out to be difficult, however, to focus the NPT support for decentralisation, since it is a broad theme, cross-cutting different sectors. It was therefore difficult to identify capacity constraints and relevance of institutes within this theme. Nuffic and the RNE had decided that the President’s Office for Regional Administration and Local Governance (PO-RALG) should be given the role to identify potential NPT institutes with the support of a local consultant. At the end of August 2004, PO-RALG, however, indicated that it did not have the necessary capacity to play the envisaged role. The consequence was that an external consultant needed to be hired for an identification study. Based on the advice of the RNE, Nuffic hired a consultant and in December 2004 the assignment commenced.

During the second Nuffic mission to Tanzania in January 2005, the stakeholders workshop for decentralisation was organised in close consultation between Nuffic, RNE, PO-RALG and the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology. This workshop was hosted by PO-RALG and facilitated by the consultants who prepared the needs identification study. A summary of the draft study was sent to the organisations that were invited to the stakeholders workshop (e.g. representatives of LGRP, Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology, Public Service Commission, Temeke Municipal Council). The consultants presented their findings in the workshop and a prioritisation of themes was made, being financial management, human resource management and planning. Based on this prioritisation of themes, the meeting also resulted in a shortlist of the following institutes for NPT support:

1. Tanzania Institute of Accountancy (TIA): finance
2. Institute of Finance Management (IFM): finance
3. Mzumbe University: HR and planning
4. Institute for Rural Development Planning (IRDP): planning
5. Tanzania Public Service College (TSPC): planning

Source: Field investigation Tanzania (see annex)
In Vietnam, the institutes mentioned that current procedures constitute an improvement when compared to the predecessor modalities. There is thus increased perceived relevance on their part. Comparing their experience under NPT with alternative experiences under programmes offered by other donors, they frequently comment that collaboration with The Netherlands allows them to have a greater say and more flexibility in defining what a project is going to look like. The possibility to take responsibility for financial management of a portion of the project’s resources, though still used only to a limited extent, is also identified as an improvement. Having such responsibility translates into a sense of enhanced autonomy within the partnership.

It should be noticed however, that although most stakeholders are involved in identifying the relevant needs, this does not guarantee ownership of the NPT projects throughout the organisation. For instance, the NPT project on *Strengthening capacity of prisons and police training institutions* in Uganda will have far reaching impacts on the functioning of future policemen, since it means a whole new approach of police work. Logically, this means that the whole police organisation must be committed to the project. For the moment, this is seen as a challenge by the project leader yet to be realised.

**Lack of ownership in Ghana**

In 2005, most projects were on track. A general issue noticed concerned the lack of a full and complete sense of ownership at the project level. Often representatives of institutions talked about decisions being dictated to them by Dutch partners. Inaccurate information provided by some of the Dutch partners – very often, allegedly brought in as Nuffic rules and regulations – weakened the position of some of the recipient institutions during preliminary negotiations and prevented them from clearly expressing their own views and desires on how the project should be implemented.

*Source: Deskstudy Ghana*

Another problem for the local ownership of the NPT projects, which was in particularly found in Vietnam, is that outlines often give only a vague idea of what is needed and even after inception there is still considerable room for improvement in project design. If serious local ownership is to be developed, then more attention must be paid to including in project implementation a component that creates capacity in project design and management.

A complicating factor when looking at ownership is that the ambitions of an institute in the South - as formulated in the project outline – can be more than the institute realistically can handle. In these cases, the project aims need to be made more realistic during the inception phase. For instance, some of the interviewed persons indicated that it turned out that the Iringa University College in southern Tanzania (NPT/TZA/099) did not have the capacity to develop a real MBA programme, which was one of the objectives in the outline. Moreover, the demands of the southern institute may not always be the most crucial in terms of impact on poverty reduction. For instance, it was also mentioned that for the Iringa University College questions could be raised whether the development of an MBA is at this stage the most urgent need for the local business community in the Southern Zone of Tanzania.
4.3.2 Type of contractual agreements

The type of contractual agreement that is chosen can also contribute to a sense of ownership by the southern institute. Although Nuffic indicates that they preferably like to sign a contract with the southern organisation, this happened only one time so far. By far, most projects are two-party agreements between Nuffic and the Dutch organisation.

Table 4.2 Type of contractual agreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of contractual agreements</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects with two-party agreements with southern organisation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects with two-party agreements with Dutch organisation</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects with three-party agreements</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though Nuffic prefers to enter into a two-party agreement with the southern institute, the southern institute does not necessarily have the same preference. They may be hesitant to take the financial management upon their shoulders due to limited capacity or they may be reluctant due to other reasons, like for instance a lack of confidence that project funds will remain reserved for project purposes. In that case everyone is better off with one of the other contractual options, although each option has its own advantages and disadvantages. The two-party agreements with the Dutch organisation can be implemented quite easily but undermines in essence the role of the southern institute and the principle of demand-drivenness. Tri-party agreements are actually more like parallel contracts. This open triangle contract - because there is no formal link between the Dutch institute and southern institute - may cause problems if there is no agreement between the two parties. In some cases, Dutch institutes have indicated that they have experienced difficulties in their relationship with the southern institute because of this.

4.4 Wider focus of NPT beyond individual education institutes

One of the principles that was formulated in the February 2001 policy framework on the new international education programmes was that the NPT should become more flexible. It was intended that the NPT should allow coordinated activities beyond the borders of individual education institutes. It should be possible to give support not only to education institutes but also to ministries, national higher education committees or accreditation committees (following a system approach for the higher education sector as a whole).

As intended in the set-up of the NPT programme, the NPT projects not only focus on individual education institutes but also comprise national authorities, which are conditional for “nation wide impacts”. This happens in many NPT countries, including the ones that were visited for this evaluation.

For instance, in Tanzania during the stakeholders workshop on decentralisation an important point was made of responsiveness of the education and training institutions and quality control. How could it be guaranteed that the education institutions offer what is demanded by the local government?
Therefore, it was decided also to have a NPT project at the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE), which is responsible for accreditation of institutes, quality control of curricula etc. Similar examples of projects that go beyond individual education institutions were found in Uganda (see below).

The first example is the NPT project regarding the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) (NPT/UGA/033). The project aims at a variety of sector wide initiatives aiming at quality improvement of higher education amongst others by developing a (sector wide) quality assurance framework, including the development of a system of self evaluation, training of six universities in self evaluation, and the training of external academic auditors.

The second example is the NPT project for the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) with the specific objectives to (i) enhance the capacity of NEMA and of it’s three partner institutions in non-formal education and training for environmental management, and (ii) enhance the capacity of 6 post-secondary institutions in formal education and training for environmental management.

The third example relates to Support for Institutional Capacity Development and Private Procurement Management in Uganda (NPT/UGA/040). The project is embedded in the wider context of the overhaul of the public procurement system, to realize a fair, competitive process, and for the private sector, the enhancement of a competitive strength through effective supply chain management. One of the main activities is the training of staff to acquire professional skills in procurement management at master’s and PhD level.

Source: Field investigation Uganda (see annex)

4.5 Perceptions of RNEs and southern education institutes

In the questionnaire the RNEs were asked whether they agree with the statements that:
- NPT is coherent with Dutch focal sectors;
- NPT is harmonised with other Netherlands funded activities.

As is shown in figure 4.1, most RNEs agree that the NPT is coherent with Dutch focal sectors, but at the same time disagree that the NPT is harmonised with the other activities.
The following box provides some open remarks on the above, especially on the limited harmonisation.

**RNEs opinions on coherence and harmonisation**

NPT does not necessarily need to be coherent with focal sectors of an Embassy. Particularly when considering the education sector, one needs to separate between developing the overall sector (this is done through the bilateral programme) and building capacity across sectors - which could include the education sector but not only (here NPT could play a role). The main challenge is to ensure that the NPT provides enough flexibility to be truly demand-driven. Although NPT is rather well integrated and responding to demands, the programme might have looked different if it was a bit more flexible in its set-up.

It is coherent with Dutch sectors only to the extent of NPT projects with universities. We also have a large number of NPTs with polytechnics taking place in various sectors like fashion, automobile engineering etc. It is not much harmonised with other activities in the sense that it is tied aid and mostly supply-driven. The same can be said for ORET export subsidies on infrastructure by the way.

The NPT programme is completely coherent with the Dutch focal sectors but there is some critic on how the stakeholders and demand analysis is been performed (the RNE influenced considerable this analysis). Conceptually the NPT activities are harmonised with other activities but in practice coordination is still difficult. In some cases and in some themes there are difficulties in confirming the additional value of the Dutch counterparts in the NPT projects.

General satisfaction among the institutes with demand identification and demand articulation is distributed as shown in the next graph.
Figure 4.2 Appreciation of institutes of demand identification and articulation (in absolute numbers)

Embassies were asked whether they considered the overall design of NPT appropriate to achieve the aim to strengthen capacity in a sustainable manner. About half of the RNEs think the NPT is appropriate for this aim.

Table 4.3 Appropriateness of NPT to realise capacity building, according to RNEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriateness</th>
<th>Nmbr of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all appropriate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not appropriate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very appropriate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remarks made by the RNEs on above mentioned issue are related to coherence with Dutch or national development strategies and involvement of local actors.

Remarks by Embassies on appropriateness of design NPT
- Methodology fits badly with SWAP approaches and the harmonisation/alignment agenda. Capacity building too often perceived as organising workshops.
- Linked to local institutions contributes to sustainability. To some extent the projects are not adequately linked to policy reforms, with the exception of a specially designed project to support institutional reform in the Ministry of Higher Education.
- It is appropriate with two important comments: - there should exist more attention for the stakeholder and demand analysis.
- Needs to be more cognizant of existing sector policy and implementation frameworks.

Of the respondent in the RNEs (thirteen), only two had personally been involved in the decision to embark on the NPT programme. However, nine would have made the same positive decision at this moment (but four definitely not). One of the respondents replied:
Reason for or against NPT

Yes and No: Yes: the programme provides opportunities for capacity building in post-secondary education. Capacity is a great concern to all and no one quick fit strategy exists to address this. NPT has managed to adapt well to national requirements and the projects are as much as possible aligned with the Higher Education Sector Strategy. No: the NPT procedures with project formulation, tendering etc are rather cumbersome. There should be ways to make the programme more flexible.

In the following text some general remarks made by RNEs on relevance are contained.

Other remarks made by RNEs on relevance

NPT can be policy relevant, however, the method (projects using mostly inputs from Dutch institutions) fit not very well with a SWAP and an agenda of donor harmonisation, alignment and untied aid. The NPT-programme should be reshaped to fit policy contexts like in Tanzania and Zambia for that matter. Perhaps the Netherlands government should promote Dutch institutes in these countries (instead of imposing them) so that they can become strong competitors in TA-pools. Providing tied aid can no longer be provided. On the other hand, for some countries, the current NPT-programme might still be very relevant.

Separate cash contributions from TA. NPT primarily focussing on TA, training etc. TA then needs to be set up flexible - aimed at the highest possible quality - not necessarily linked to a particular institution. NUFFIC to play a more active role in quality control, brokering expertise, rather than managing projects.

Should be more complementary to the sector programmes of the Embassy and the responsibility for implementation should be more co-ordinated in the country (by better involving the sector specialists and the Embassy during implementation).

Greater inter-sectoral linkages could be promoted.

4.6 Conclusions

The overall conclusion of the field investigation regarding the implementation of NPT in Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam is that the NPT projects and activities within these countries dovetail well with the aims and basic principles of Dutch development policy. Embassies however perceive at instances a lack of cohesion with the SWAP, especially the tied character of NPT may conflict with the Dutch sector policy.

In Tanzania the focal areas for the NPT programme are business development and decentralisation, which both fit very well with the priority sectors of the RNE Dar es Salaam. Also in Uganda, most support under the NPT programme is in line with the priority sectors of the RNE, which are Justice, Law and Order; Education; Local Government; Procurement; and Gender and Environment as cross-cutting themes. Incidentally, it has happened, however, that a project is less clearly related to the sector policies of the RNE. The link between the NPT projects and poverty reduction, which is an overriding goal that drives the Netherlands development cooperation policy, is less clear to make (as demonstrated in the case of Vietnam), although for some projects the link is recognisable. NPT however improves the general conditions for reducing poverty.
Out of the EUR 22.3 million that has been disbursed in the period 2003-2005, EUR 13.6 million (61 percent) went to projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. When South-Africa is left out of the Sub-Saharan countries category, there remain 67 projects, representing 57 percent of the overall budget and 61 percent of the total disbursements. Both from the perspective of budget allocations and actual disbursements, the aim to spend at least 50 percent of the total budget in Sub-Saharan Africa is therefore fulfilled.

The involvement of the national governments in the demand identification process varies considerably between countries. In countries like Vietnam where the government plays a central role in the identification process, there is no doubt about the close link with the policy priorities of the government. However, also in other countries, like Tanzania, it was found that the areas that have been chosen for NPT support fit very well with the priorities and policies of the government.

In all three field investigations it was found that the local key stakeholders felt that their demands were being recognised. Also in Vietnam this feeling was expressed, although the demand of the institutes is moderated by the centralised government structures. In Uganda and Tanzania participatory processes have been followed to select the institutes for NPT support. In both countries, all major stakeholders were involved in a comprehensive demand identification phase. At the level of the individual institutes it was also found that they feel ownership for the NPT projects and that the activities dovetail with their strategic plans.

The type of contractual agreement that is chosen can also contribute to a sense of ownership by the southern institute. Although Nuffic indicates that they preferably like to sign a contract with the southern organisation, this happened only one time so far. By far, most projects are two-party agreements between Nuffic and the Dutch organisation. The major reason is the weak financial management capacity of many southern institutions.
5 Efficiency of NPT

In this evaluation, efficiency is operationalised by looking at process indicators, such as smoothness of interaction between the different actors, clearness in the division of responsibilities, functioning of the tender procedure, timeliness of activities, use of monitoring and evaluation, inclusion of regional collaboration, and the overall performance of Nuffic as implementing organisation of the NPT programme.

5.1 Cooperation between the various actors

5.1.1 Relationship between DCO and Nuffic

In the tendering process for the programme management of NPT and NFP only two proposals were submitted. Nuffic was the only organization that submitted a proposal for NPT as well as NFP. Although a fresh view on international cooperation in the field of education would have been desirable, Nuffic, which managed some of the predecessors of NPT and NFP, turned out to be the only bidder for both strands (another bidder submitted for only one strand) and was selected as programme manager.

The initial relationship between DCO and Nuffic, at the start of the programme, can be characterized as somewhat ‘tense’. Especially the close supervision and control by DCO, for instance on inputs and time spending, was experienced by Nuffic as an indication of distrust on the implementation side of the programme. However, the attitude of DCO towards Nuffic was based on the following:

- DCO had doubts on the possibilities of Nuffic to change its management culture to the new – more demand oriented - requirements of NPT;
- The quality of Nuffic’s tender for managing the programme was critically assessed by DCO, which implicated some considerable adjustments in the initial phase of the programme management by Nuffic;
- The basic principle for DCO was that the programme management of NPT had to be ‘lean and mean’, ultimately requiring a substantial reduction of the number of days that Nuffic initially had proposed for the programme management;
- There were complaints from the Dutch education institutes about the bureaucracy of Nuffic.

In the past four years the relationship between DCO and Nuffic has improved and one appreciates each others skills and professionalism in the process. For the future DCO would like to proceed to a more output oriented programme management, although it is not yet clear how this could be installed.
According to Dutch institutes, the relation between DCO and Nuffic might have been more cooperative from the beginning, if Nuffic had presented itself with more authority based on experience and expertise.

DCO has also been involved and still has a role in smoothing the relations between Nuffic and RNEs, which especially in the beginning period was experienced as tense and with a lot of misunderstandings. Also nowadays there are still a few examples of a somewhat tense relation between Nuffic and RNEs (see below).

### 5.1.2 Relationship between Nuffic and RNEs

The NPT program is clear about the need for NPT projects to support the sectoral development needs identified for Netherlands development cooperation in the country in question. In practice this means that the NPT projects are, or must be geared to the priority sectors of RNE policies. As was described in chapter 2, the RNEs have an important role in the process leading up to identification of the demand. However, when the NPT/NFP programme started, no attention was given to the required capacity that would be needed at the RNEs to implement the NPT/NFP. It was assumed by DCO that the RNEs would cooperate and foreseen that the level of involvement of the RNEs in the programme would differ per country. Depending on own priorities and country specific circumstances, it was up to the RNEs to decide to what extent they would like to be involved in the NPT/NFP. As a result the RNEs have responded very differently to this appeal for support and assistance.

Especially as regards NPT there has often been discussion and a lack of clarity on the question what the role of the RNEs exactly should be. This lack of clarity is also felt by the Dutch institutes. From one side it is obvious that RNE has expertise and a network available in the RNE priority sectors which obviously should be used. On the other hand however, the RNEs formally have no role in the NPT programmes whatsoever. This easily leads to misunderstandings and wrong expectations. In some cases Nuffic was seen as a headstrong organisation with too little sensitivity towards existing portfolios and RNE networks, whereas in other countries Nuffic was clearly expected to take the lead in organizing the whole process. For instance:

In Tanzania the RNE has been heavily involved in the start up of the NPT programme (the process of demand identification and demand articulation), in the view of Nuffic sometimes even too much. In Uganda, the interaction between Nuffic and RNE has not been smoothly in all respects. Especially during the monitoring mission in 2006 there has been some tension as regards the visits the programme officer of Nuffic would like to have made to government officials, but was ‘not allowed’ to by RNE. The RNE sector expert for education was of the opinion that contacts of Nuffic with the government officials in the education sector might thwart the relation between RNE and the ministry. A similar situation has occurred in Zambia where the RNA was opposed to the organisation of a workshop between the four local NPT-institutes.
The RNEs are clearly less involved now the projects are being implemented. The RNEs are being informed on the progress of projects on an ad hoc basis.

For instance, in Tanzania some of the Dutch institutes visit the RNE for a briefing when they come to work on their project, others do not. One sector specialist indicated that there is a risk that the RNE loose touch with what is happening on the ground.

With the present trend of macro-support, the RNE contacts become more and more limited to the central ministries. Projects such as the NPT still offer an opportunity to visit the field or at least to hear what is going on there. At the same time, the sector specialists can also help the Dutch institutes, for instance to inform them on the national policy developments and to provide the broader picture including what other donors do. A clear example of a possible rile of the RNE would be a ‘quality check’ on the sometimes criticised ‘NPT project outlines’, i.e. do the outlines contain the strategic information necessary for potential bidders to submit an appropriate proposal. Now institutes at times complain that outlines lack information on, for example, relevant initiatives realised by other parties and/or financed by other donors, creating a risk of duplication of donor efforts. Scrutiny of the outlines by the RNE sector expert could reduce this risk. (see also section 5.2.1)

The RNEs indicate to have little contacts with DCO as regards NPT. Some of the interviewed RNE staff members mentioned that it could be useful if DCO organises a NPT workshop like the bi-annual NFP workshop, to share NPT experiences among Embassies. For the RNEs, it is a black box what is happening inside DCO with regard to the NPT from the policy perspective.

Depending on the involvement of the RNE, various workable arrangements have developed between Nuffic and the RNEs, to each discharge their responsibilities. However, further consideration is required on the part of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding how to define in general the relationship between the Embassies and privatized implementing agencies of government programs, such as Nuffic. Some rule giving may be required, but more important is to embed the rules in a context of organizational learning that allows partners to adjust to each other’s needs as a function of the local reality. The call is for flexibility as opposed to bureaucracy.

5.1.3 Relationship between Nuffic and northern institutes

The change in the set-up of the new NPT programme had an impact on the relationship between Nuffic and the northern institutes. This is understandable given that the traditional northern education institutions had their vested interests in the former programmes. The introduction of a demand driven approach, ownership in the south, tendering, use of regional expertise, were all elements which to a large degree were new for the northern institutes and to which they had to get used.

Although the northern institutes are in favour of more demand orientation in the programmes, they question the way in which this is put into practice. Whose demand is being formulated?
Various northern institutes hold the opinion that Nuffic at this point should have developed more of an own vision, especially regarding the way in which the use of regional expertise in the South could be developed with the use of Dutch expertise. Although relationships have improved since the start, various interviewees had the opinion that northern institutes still need to get fully used to the ‘client-provider relationship’ that rules the tendering and implementation process of NPT.

Also on other issues the northern institutes are not always satisfied with the way Nuffic operates. For instance, the way how should be dealt with the request of southern partners to incorporate some financial incentives to motivate participants to attend meetings, workshops, courses et cetera. Just saying that this is not allowed, seems somewhat rigid and not constructive for handling the problem.

As regards the division of responsibilities between the northern and southern institutions in NPT there are various options. Although so-called “tripartite” contracts are agreed between Nuffic and the northern and southern institutes, these are in fact (legally) two bipartite agreements with Nuffic, leaving limited possibilities to the northern and southern institutes to mutually enforce the agreement. See also section 3.3.2 on the type of contractual agreements.

Nuffic attaches great value to a good relationship with the Dutch institutes. Besides frequent contacts with the northern institutes as part of the NPT projects, Nuffic also has meetings with the representing organisations of the higher education institutes in the Netherlands (PIE and Profound) on a regular basis. Also DCO considers a good relationship with the Dutch institutes important and has therefore organised various tripartite meetings (DCO, PIE/Profound, Nuffic) in which all parties had the opportunity to express their opinions and explain their intentions. In addition, the Minister for Development Cooperation has had various meetings with PIE and Profound.

5.1.4 Relationship between Nuffic and southern institutes

It has taken a considerable amount of time for a justifiable learning process to take its course, leading to the smoothening of interactions among actors who were all new to the different reality of NPT. Those actors also include the southern institutions. In general, the relationships between Nuffic and the southern institutes are now constructive and cooperative. The help that Nuffic provides in the process of demand identification, articulation and outline development is highly appreciated. For instance, during the preparation of the NPT programme, Nuffic visits the southern institutes to explain the set-up of the NPT and the requirements for the preparation of outlines. Nuffic also gives feedback on draft outlines and offers the assistance of local consultants to help the southern institutes to prepare project outlines.

According to the various parties consulted in this investigation, the beginning of the process was characterized by mild levels of distrust and frustration. However, it is also largely recognized that all major issues of contention were resolved over time. Everyone has learned from the experience.

Time would have been gained had it been realized from the start that organizational learning was a necessary part of the introduction of change in a complex environment.
Considering the ongoing nature of the change aimed at through the comprehensive capacity building effort of NPT and NFP, it is therefore recommended that more attention be given to the need for organizational learning both within and among the various organizational entities referred to above.

### 5.2 Tender procedure

#### 5.2.1 Poor quality of project outlines

Even though Nuffic assesses the technical quality of the project outline, the Dutch institutes are not satisfied with the quality of the published outlines. It is the shared opinion of the Dutch institutes that frequently the project outlines have one or more of the following deficiencies:

- The ‘demand identified’ is not in line with the real need of the southern institutes;
- Not all relevant information is included in the project outline;
- The outline consists of unrealistic assumptions and/or is overambitious (given time and budget limitations);
- The formulation of the outline is too fixed; not only the problem has been identified, but the solution has also been incorporated.

Apparently, quality control by Nuffic is insufficient to eliminate above-mentioned issues. It is noted that, since three years, Nuffic undertakes more corrective actions with regard to the content of the outline. Moreover, it has organised workshops on how to deal with the outlines.

Given the low quality of the outlines, the risk exists that ‘artificial’ proposals are being submitted. During the interviews, it has been confirmed by the Dutch institutes that - even though they have no confidence in the outline - they are willing to submit a proposal to be able to get involved in the project. A proposal as such is being made with the thought that after winning the contract, the project can be reformulated during the inception phase.

Dutch institutes also complain, however, that the current set-up of tendering is time-consuming. Win chances may be high, but time is not spent efficiently given the deficiencies of the project outline, which makes that a lot of work needs to be done again during the inception phase.

The reasons for Dutch institutes to participate in the NPT projects are not always congruent to the programme objectives. One of the universities that implement a NPT project in Tanzania mentioned the following reasons to be involved in the NPT:

- To be present and participate in a globalised world;
- To develop contacts, networks and partnerships;
- To bring ideas from these countries back to the Netherlands;
- To bring real-life experience back into the classroom;
- To create publicity for the university.

At the findings workshop, consulting organisations involved mentioned that obviously commercial objectives also play a role. However, this is not always a major role, since it often pays much better to do consulting work in the Netherlands.

Source: Field investigation Tanzania (see annex) and Findings Workshop
5.2.2 Low response rate to tenders

Until today, the response rate on the published call for tenders is very low with on average not more than 1.3 proposals from Dutch organisations per tender. There are several reasons which could explain this low response rate:

- The articulated demand of the southern institute is very specific; only a few Dutch providers are able to respond to the demand;
- Potential competitors form consortia to improve their individual success rate;
- Not all Dutch providers have sufficient experience or capacity to write project proposals. If there are several call for tenders published around the same time period, the provider will select one outline to respond to;
- In their tender the Dutch providers have to conform to fixed fees, set by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This may imply limitations on the scope of competition.

The response rate is also related to the country in question. Language difficulties make that French (Benin) and Spanish speaking countries (Guatemala and Colombia) have a lower response rate as can be seen from table 2.7. Average response rates below 1 show that for some invitations no proposal was received.

### Table 5.1 Average number of proposals received per tender per country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Average no. of proposals received per tender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table gives an overview of the tender history during the first three years of the NPT programme. In total 152 outlines where published out of which 22 (14.5 percent) were re-tenders. Eleven projects (8.5 percent) were cancelled because there was no qualifying bid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of outlines published</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>69*</td>
<td>65**</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of proposals received</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of tenders without a bid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of successful tenders</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Including 10 re-tenders
** Including 12 re-tenders

When no proposals are received, the Nuffic desk officer makes phone calls with the Dutch institutes that have requested information and then, after hearing their reasons for non-response, the outline might be re-tendered. If only one proposal is received, the NPT host institution in the South is not inclined to be too critical in its assessment. The alternative - no project at all or at least substantial delays when the project is re-tendered - is not attractive for the institute. As a result, proposals might be accepted although the quality and the (international) experience of the consortium is not optimal. More competition would have prevented such an outcome of the tendering process.

Nevertheless the Tender Evaluation Committee still can have a critical role in assessing the proposal, frequently requiring adjustments by the tenderer. See for instance the comments of the TEC on a proposal in Benin below.

**Project NPT/BEN/151: Development of hydraulic courses in the water sector in Benin**

Two project proposals were received for this project both of which were not of very high quality. The proposal which has been selected only just qualified. The TEC made a long list of desired adjustments:

- Analyse labour market needs
- Identify with EPAC training programme
- Ensure that investments are in line with new training programmes
- Clarify partnerships with institutions in the region in terms of technical content (time and budget)
- Clarify responsibilities of EPAC relationships with regional partners
- Explain how to guarantee high quality transfer of knowledge by team members that are not francophone
- Ensure better division of days in Benin and the Netherlands
- Reduce days on project management
- Better incorporate sustainability issues
- Provide a detailed work plan for the first years
- Clarify collaboration with others

*Source: Desk study Benin*
Given the limited competition, it is unlikely that this market-like-mechanism has led to substantially better price/quality ratios. However, the introduction of tendering is, without exception, seen as an improvement by those interviewed from the southern institutes. More specifically, interviewees in the South see as an advantage that:

- Tendering has brought a wider range of potential partners to their attention, like Universities of Professional Education and consultancy firms, allowing for a better response to the variety in demand in the South;
- In many cases collaboration, which previously was with one partner, has grown to include others, thus “increasing the number of friends”;  
- In some of the above cases those additional friends are themselves partners from the south (thanks to the emphasis in the program on regionalization);
- It has made their role in participative project design more prominent and meaningful, increasing their sense of ownership and involvement;
- The process has led to significant improvements on initial ideas about what the project or training activity should look like;
- Participation in the tendering process, particularly being a recognized part of the three-party Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC), is an important learning event in its own right.

5.2.3 Formation of consortia

The Dutch institutes often cooperate with each other instead of compete in the tendering process, resulting in less competition than was intended at the start of the NPT programme. There are two considerations to build consortia with potential competitors. On the one hand it may be possible that the demand cannot be met by one organisation, in which case complementary expertise is found by a partner organisation. For instance, it can be very useful to have a combination of a university and a consultant in a consortium, having complementary roles in a project. Universities often have less experience with institutional development and hire consultancies for these components. When consultancies have the lead in a NPT project, they often sub-contract universities to deliver the academic inputs.

On the other hand, there is an incentive to improve the win chances which are higher if potential competitors are brought together in one team. Especially the last consideration results in consortia and project teams which are larger than strictly necessary, creating additional transaction and coordination costs.

For instance, in one of the NPT projects in Tanzania two Dutch experts conducted a needs assessment in preparation for a new MBA curriculum. They interviewed private sector institutions about the knowledge and skills they expected graduates to have. The findings were presented at a stakeholders meeting. However, then another Dutch expert came after the meeting to give follow-up. It would have been better if the same persons would have continued their work.
5.2.4 Tender Evaluation Committee

The TEC is properly functioning and gives valuable recommendations and suggestions for project improvements. The Dutch institutions are satisfied with the feedback from Nuffic on their submitted proposals. In some southern countries there have been problems with the evaluation of the tenders as the concept is completely new and unknown to some of the evaluators.

Evaluation of project proposals - The case of Yemen

The concept and consequences of a tendering process were insufficiently well understood nor appreciated by Yemeni project partners involved. They expressed that:

- They would have had a preference for a project formulation process whereby they could outline a detailed project proposal jointly with Dutch partners;
- They had difficulties to assess the incoming bids, as they had no previous experience. This has caused delays in the process as groups were formed to jointly assess a bid;
- TEC score sheets were not easy to understand and categories were subject to different interpretation. Much assistance from the Project Management Unit and Nuffic was needed to explain procedures;
- More competitive project proposals were expected to choose from;
- Some project proposals were found to be below acceptable standards;
- Emphasis on project experience in developing countries for foreign expert personnel is not always appreciated and many prefer experts with exclusively developed country experience. This increases the learning experience for Yemeni counterparts they claim;
- Some organisations would have preferred to combine two competing proposals and consortia to implement a project;
- Some organisations would have wanted to first select a Dutch organisation to work with and subsequently select appropriate experts to work with based on face-to-face interviews;
- Logistical arrangements of sending proposals by mail were not optimal;
- They preferred face to face contact with other TEC members which would have made communication and in depth analysis of the proposals much easier.

Source: Desk study Yemen

5.3 Implementation of the programme

All parties concerned recognize that NPT project development has become a lengthy, time consuming process. In the case of Vietnam the hardship involved is exacerbated by the intervention—in some other respects beneficial—of central government structures, such as MPI. There are signs and promises that the complications caused by central government intervention will diminish. This will be a welcome change for all concerned, MPI included.

Suggestions have been made that in a situation of rapid change, like in most developing countries, one should not try to nail down everything at the beginning and then expect that the project can be rolled out as designed.
There is a need for greater flexibility; for more serious collaboration and shared problem solving along the road based on mutual commitment to project goals that must be clearly and measurably defined. If this line of thinking is to be followed, it calls for increased attention to organizational learning among stakeholders as well as for training in the areas of needs assessment; project design and development; and project management. In time, or perhaps from the start, project monitoring and evaluation should be included on the menu as well.

The inception phase is perceived as a crucial part of the project implementation. The flexibility that is given by Nuffic to make changes is large and this is appreciated by the Dutch institutes. This flexibility is also considered necessary given the low quality of the outline. The adjustments made during the inception phase can be considerable. This to a large extent may take away the problems caused by the insufficient outlines.

Experiences with Nuffic’s flexibility after the inception period differ among the Dutch institutes. Some institutes complain about the lack of flexibility after the inception period, others share the opinion that there is still sufficient room for changes as long as these changes are substantiated with reasonable arguments. As already noted in chapter 2, the implementation organizations are allowed to shift funds between budget items, but any change made to the objectives or the planned outputs of the project require the written permission of Nuffic in advance.

It is not possible to make changes to the consortium after winning the contract nor is it possible to exclude one of the partners from the contract. In some cases this proved difficult as the ‘real’ demand turned out to be different from the demand indicated in the outline. It is however possible to hire a sub-contractor. An additional risk is that partners are involved in consortia on the base of incomplete information in the outline, which during the implementation appear to be less necessary. Less necessary can imply that there is no actual demand for the services supplied by such a partner, or that similar services are locally available. However, the agreement with the particular partner has already been signed and it is no longer possible to exclude the partner from the consortium. This may be detrimental for the efficiency of the specific project.

It should be remarked here that large consortia are not only less efficient but also may be detrimental for effectiveness and relevance. Consortium partners which at a later instance appear to have little value added but may still demand ‘their share’ negatively influence the coherence and quality of the services. The limited efficiency of large consortia is also recognised by other donors. The EC for example states in its Terms of Reference that it discourages ‘in-consortium’ fixed service package sharing agreements (although it is not clear how the EC implements this preference). In cases where many Expressions of Interest are issued, the EC considers often the size of a consortium a reason to exclude a bid from the ‘short list’. It is understood that Nuffic cannot afford this latter luxury, seen the limited number of proposals, but given the close contact with the institutes, a modus could be found to restrict the ‘large consortium practice’.

There have been significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up of NPT projects and NFP Tailor-made Training events, partly attributable to the fact that procedures for program implementation still had to be invented (and experimented with at times) while the first projects started to develop.
In Vietnam, to a large extent those delays were also due to recognized complications on the Vietnamese side. There was initially almost no difference between the time it took to get a multimillion Euro NPT project going and to do the same for NFP training that would cost no more than a couple of ten thousand Euro. This incongruity has since been resolved by Nuffic through the introduction of a less complex procedure, particularly eliminating the need for tendering, for NFP trainings with a budget not exceeding 50,000 Euro.

Some institutes indicated that they would have spend the money in a different way when they would receive the full amount themselves. Different people mentioned that now a large part of the budget is spent on travelling instead of on tangible outputs. In another project it was mentioned that they would decrease the number of team members that come at the same time and that they would only have “the persons that really came to deliver”.

The example was given in Tanzania of an expert coming 10 days for three days work. “If one person gives a presentation, then only one person should come.” Other institutes also mentioned that if they could decide, they would opt for less missions. As one person of an institute said, “It is a bit expensive, but we need the services”.

Some of the southern NPT institutes indicated that they found the budgetary rules on the investment budget (maximum 20%) and on the institute’s own management (maximum 6%) too rigid and they would like to see more flexibility there.

A number of projects are struggling to attract staff to take part in project activities which add to regular workload and which apart from management activities cannot be paid from project funds. Usually remuneration for these project activities from the beneficiary’s budget is hard to come by. Many project partners were erroneously under the impression that fees for regular curriculum development activities could be paid from the 6 percent allocation for project management fees. There is an incentive to hire external local consultants for these activities, as those costs are reimbursed under the NPT rules.

5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

The choice to describe the Monitoring and Evaluation process in a paragraph of the chapter dedicated to efficiency is somewhat arbitrary, i.e. it could also have been described as part of the general programme and process description. It was here treated as an element improving efficiency, i.e. as a ‘feedback mechanism’ allowing for improvement of the relation between inputs and outputs.

Monitoring and evaluation are areas of concern that still required to be developed at the time when the new programmes for capacity building were introduced and the responsibility for managing them was granted to Nuffic. DCO preferred to take an open attitude towards how these areas should be developed considering that the implementation of the programmes had to fit within the framework of donor harmonisation and alignment. It thus provided an only sketchy monitoring and evaluation framework as an annex to the management contract with Nuffic.
The initial lack of clear guidelines led to complaints on the part of both the participating organizations and DCO. In 2005, an elaborate monitoring and evaluation framework was agreed between DCO and Nuffic.

According to Nuffic’s information, it “monitors, aggregates and reports progress at programme level to DCO, Embassies and national-level stakeholders. Nuffic summarizes the achievements of the various projects at national/sectoral level.” The limited extent to which projects have reached full implementation in the various NPT countries makes it difficult at this stage to assess how effectively the information from the various reports can contribute to insights and formative feedback at programme level. Monitoring missions carried out by Nuffic are an important instrument in this process. Such missions are appreciated by those involved in and with the projects at the field level. In a country like Vietnam, where the RNE plays less of a role than in some other NPT countries in attending to matters related to project implementation, it is generally thought that it would be beneficial if Nuffic could have a stronger field presence, for instance by having someone representing Nuffic permanently on the ground or a higher frequency of monitoring missions.

Nuffic sees its role in monitoring and evaluation as two-fold. Firstly, it exerts quality control by providing ongoing feedback on plans and reports and, secondly, it uses its presence and influence to facilitate the process of project development and implementation. In countries with complex national conditions, different from the mainstream ones on which the general NPT model is based, such as is the case of Vietnam, it has shown creativity and practical ingenuity in guiding the programme amidst significant hurdles. As part of the mechanism for process facilitation, Nuffic encourages the exchange of experiences. If necessary, it intervenes where projects encounter serious difficulties. The regular monitoring missions that Nuffic undertakes are an important tool in these processes. Nuffic takes advantage of such missions to bring projects together in workshops at the country level. It also uses its growing knowledge and experience to work with the Netherlands partner institutions on improving their and the programme’s functionality. From what can be seen at the present stage, Nuffic appears to have gained considerably in experience and competence as a program manager. It shows determination and the ability to make further improvements. To do so effectively, a better determination must be made at the overall programme level of how the roles and responsibilities ought to be distributed between RNEs and Nuffic, taking into account varying circumstances across NPT countries, including the question whether or not Higher Education is a focal sector. In the same context a clearer vision must be created at overall policy level regarding the crucial role of building competence as an essential ingredient of pursuing sectoral interests. In the view of the evaluators this latter issue should not be seen as necessarily coupled to developing the formal higher education sector. Such building of competence also takes place—and increasingly so—outside the purview of formal higher education.

Once a year, a progress report has to be submitted to Nuffic. The institutes have a time path of four months to submit their report. This low frequency and extended deadline of four months limits the possibilities for Nuffic to know what is going on and to give guidance to the project in case this would seem necessary.
Even though the logical framework is part of the project proposal, it is not compulsory to refer to the logical framework in progress reports. Some institutions provide an update of the log frame but others stick to a less specific written description of the activities of the period under review, which hinders a good monitoring of progress. At the same time, a potential downside of detailed guidance, particularly through the logical framework, is that authors of progress reports may start seeing their task accomplished if all or most items have somehow been addressed. This sometimes leads to a bias in reporting towards elements that can easily be named to the detriment of what lies hidden under the surface.

On the other hand, and notwithstanding the indications provided in the logical framework, many projects suffer from problems of measurability of results. A general weakness in the monitoring process is the definition of the indicators. Providers are obliged to develop a logical framework in their project proposal which should serve as a tool to monitor the progress of the projects. The logical framework describes the process from inputs to overall objective by identifying the necessary activities and the underlying assumptions. Each step should be accompanied by objective verifiable indicators. In spite of this, the average quality of the log frames is not good. Vague or overambitious objectives together with non-verifiable indicators make that log frames cannot be used as monitoring tool.

Moreover, the measurability of results is severely hindered due to deficiencies in the front-end analyses and needs assessments carried out during the outline and inception phase of projects. Particular gaps in trained resources and infrastructural conditions may at first sight appear to be fully representative of perceived problems. However, in many cases fixing the wider context may be essential to making a proposed solution work. A good needs assessment and front-end analysis would bring out the complexity of the problem and attend to all the various elements that are crucial to solving it. Quite a number of those elements may not be training related.

Another factor that complicates measurability of results is the fact that rarely the starting condition is charted out in sufficiently concrete detail so that it can serve as a point of reference with which the changed situation during implementation and after project completion can be compared. Absence of a proper baseline often also results in laxity in defining results, outputs and outcomes in precise and operational terms.

At present, Nuffic makes extensive information and guidelines available for monitoring and evaluation. On the relevant segment of its Web site (http://www.nuffic.nl/npt/), Nuffic explains in clear terms why monitoring and evaluation are necessary and who will use the results. It also makes available for downloading in three languages (English, Spanish and French) the following documents:

- A brief overview of monitoring and evaluation in the NPT programme (http://www.nuffic.nl/npt/pdf/M&E_NPT.pdf);
- An outline of the NPT Programme-level Logical Framework (http://www.nuffic.nl/npt/pdf/NPT_Logical_Framework.pdf);
- A format for use by project implementers to prepare their annual reports (http://www.nuffic.nl/npt/pdf/NPT_Model_Annual_Progress_Report.pdf); and
- An instrument for the assessment of sustainability, the so-called Sustainability Barometer (http://www.nuffic.nl/npt/pdf/NPT_Sustainability_barometer.xls English language version only).
These documents provide guidance to the project implementers for the preparation and execution of the internal monitoring and evaluation of their projects. The annual and midterm progress reports based on Nuffic’s above mentioned documentation for the projects that, at the time when the evaluation took place, were reasonably well advanced in their implementation provide generally good insight into what had happened and to what extent planned activities were on course, in addition to signalling problems that required attention.

According to Nuffic, two weeks is not sufficient for monitoring the projects in some depth. The time available for each project is only half a day. By some of the southern institutes and persons present form the northern institutions (programme managers, trainers) it is sometimes even experienced as a lack of interest towards the implementing institutions. Moreover, Nuffic thinks that one monitoring mission per year is not enough to have good monitoring of the NPT projects. The opinions differ whether more monitoring missions than once a year are needed. Some southern institutes think that this would be good, others think once a year is sufficient. The same goes for RNEs. This disparity in opinions is understandable in the light of variable cooperation settings between Nuffic and RNEs and also depending on the degree of professional management among the southern institutes, and the differentiated forms of progress that is made in the projects.

Nuffic also monitors the NPT projects through the annual reports and work plans. With the ‘weaker’ southern institutes, Nuffic has somewhat more regular contact. However, the contact remains limited and at a distance. According to Nuffic it is difficult to manage the NPT programme from The Hague. Telephone and email certainly offer possibilities but they have also serious limitations (some contact persons never answer any email for instance). However, these circumstances does not restrain Nuffic from sometimes drawing harsh conclusions, which can be illustrated by a quote from the report on the Nuffic mission to Uganda in May 2006, saying that as regards NPT/UGA/082:

"the performance of this project is far below expectation. Effectiveness of the project is at stake. Managerial difficulties in combination with cumbersome institutional rules and procedures are constraining the project progress. [...] During the Nuffic mission, it became apparent that improvement in project management is key to better performance of the project. The project leadership as well as the management of the institution have been informed on this requirement. It has been agreed that the Faculty should report to Nuffic the progress pertaining to the establishment of a sound management structure by August 2006. This report will inform further decision-making at Nuffic level as to the way forward for the project."

### 5.5 Inclusion of regional collaboration

Would the use of more regional expertise lead to efficiency improvements? This question is positively answered by almost all actors involved, northern as well as southern partners. At the same time it is clear to most interviewees that in the current supply of training the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped. Therefore, the question should preferably be reformulated to: how can more regional expertise be organised? And: in what circumstances can regional expertise effectively be involved?
Expertise is present in people and organizations. It exists in the north and, increasingly, also in the south. At times, southern expertise can be more relevant than expertise in the north because of the similarity of context. It is also often more easily accessible for people who live themselves in the south and wish to interact with such expertise (cost reduction). However, at the same time the didactical effect of being confronted with a foreign situation, institutionally, economically as well as culturally should not be neglected. In this respect, the use of regional expertise versus northern expertise should be seriously weighed against the project objectives. Besides, south-south exchange generates networking in the same relevant setting that can in important ways help enhance already existing expertise.

For instance: the use of institutions in Thailand and China for a field study in the area of hydrology in the framework of project NPT/VNM/007 is an excellent example of efficient use of expertise. It is one among a variety of cases that came to the attention of the evaluator during the field investigation in Vietnam.

Not always is southern expertise the most adequate input into a project. Numerous cases could be identified by the evaluator where the southern partner had a well argued reason to seek expertise in the north, particularly The Netherlands. Most generally, institutions were interested in taking advantage of the emphasis in education in The Netherlands on the applicability of knowledge and on the pedagogical/andragogical practice inspired by the principle that learning should be linked to agency. They presented clear arguments why they felt this was important for them and why such expertise could not be obtained from elsewhere. In some cases the argument was even stronger.

For instance, an institution like the University of Maastricht is known to be a world leader in problem-oriented learning, particularly in the medical field. An interest in this approach on the part of medical schools in Vietnam thus naturally leads to the source. The same goes for the Faculty of Medicine of Makerere University in Kampala, that was in urgent need of reforming their educational programmes towards problem based learning (PBL).

In Tanzania, in the project at the National Council for Technical Education (NPT/TZA/134), the Dutch partner brought in an expert from South Africa, since it was indicated in the outline that regional expertise should be brought in. The training that this person gave was very useful and more relevant to the context of Tanzania than the training of the Dutch institute. The southern institute wished that this person would do more in the project, but mentioned that it is the Dutch lead consultant who decides on how much the different experts are involved. The southern institute also did the suggestion to involve the University of Dar es Salaam in the project because they had useful experience, but that could not be agreed.

Although it is one of the criteria in the decision making for the winning proposal, it is brought forward by many interviewees, in the south as well in the north, that in the current NPT projects the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped. Of course this depends on the knowledge area that is to be developed, which is illustrated by the following example.

For education and training in the field of management and local government the Uganda Management Institute (UMI) in Kampala is frequently mentioned as a renowned institute that could play a role in international education projects like NPT. Outside Uganda, but also in East Africa, in the field of agriculture the University of Kenia is mentioned and also the Sokoine institute.
Notwithstanding the availability of regional institutes, according to some Dutch as well as southern interviewees, the relevance of southern institutes should not be overestimated, due to their more traditional, theory oriented teaching methods, which is not compatible with the competence oriented methods of many Dutch providers. It should also be recognized that on certain subjects Africa has little relevant experience to offer, for instance water management and procurement, with the notable exception of South Africa. However, the pro’s and con’s of the use of southern expertise are only valid in the light of the training objectives set, something that might be easily neglected.

Besides the occasional use of regional training institutes in the provision of (formal) education and training, regional expertise is frequently, non-formally, used as a good practice or case for reflection.

This is for instance the case in the NPT project Capacity building of the national council for Higher Education (Uganda), in which experiences in Mozambique and South Africa are used. In the Uganda NPT project Strengthening capacity of prisons and police training institutions study visits to South Africa and Botswana were organised. It was mentioned in various interviews that these kind of study trips also have an impact on the motivation and commitment of individual participants in the projects.

So it appears that making more use of regional expertise could enlarge the reach of NPT and NFP to more participants, because of more cost-effectiveness. Depending on the nature of required expertise, there are indications that regional expertise is not always sufficiently considered, eventually leading to a sub-optimal use of resources. In case of a need for regional practices/experiences this could also hinder effectiveness. Concrete possibilities for making use of regional expertise should be further explored. Of course, the training methods used should match with the ones of the Dutch provider.

Besides making use of regional institutes it was also frequently mentioned that local or regional experts or professionals (academic or technical) might be an interesting cost-effective way of more inclusion of regional collaboration. In Uganda some critical remarks were made by the costs of Dutch project leaders which were too expensive to be available on a day-to-day or weekly basis, whereas it was suggested that experts from other countries might be readily available, for instance professors or lecturers seeking for a challenge after their active career (early retired) or next to their current job. Universities as well as consultancy firms often have an active network that might be ised for this.

**Use of distance education**

Related to the above are also considerations that increased efficiency can be reached by making better use of now well developed technological options for students and teachers to interact with each other in a pedagogically sound ways unrestricted by limitations of space and time. If appropriately integrated in the training structure, technology use can greatly diminish the financial and environmental cost of flying human bodies from one place to the other. Study of the available documentation and analysis of the data collected through interviews and field observation suggests that this is an area that is still greatly under explored. It is therefore recommended for serious attention by all concerned.
5.6 Performance of Nuffic

How well does Nuffic perform as programme manager of the NPT, in the perception of the key stakeholders? Nuffic has indicated that its active involvement is constrained by its distance. Based in The Hague it is difficult to manage the programme on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, most of the southern NPT organisations were positive about the programme management by Nuffic. People know Nuffic mainly through its country officer for the countries, who has visited the institutes during one of the monitoring missions that are annually conducted by Nuffic.

During the missions the progress of the projects is discussed as well as issues that the southern NPT institutes face, for instance in their relation with the Dutch partners. Sometimes, the southern organisations find it easier to discuss certain issues with Nuffic than directly with their Dutch partner (for instance that they do not always receive a ToR for each mission of the Dutch partner institute). Nuffic uses the monitoring missions also for coaching of the southern organisations. Sometimes also workshops are organised for exchanging experiences between NPT institutes in the south and possibly other involved actors.

During one of the monitoring mission in Tanzania, the Nuffic officer organised two workshops, one for the NPT institutes in the area of business environment and one for the NPT institutes in the area of decentralisation. The workshops were aimed to share project experiences and enhance networking among the NPT projects and stakeholders in Tanzania. The workshops were very much appreciated by the NPT institutes and stakeholders.

When the NPT was set up, the intention was that it should be a ‘lean and mean’ programme. In practice, the division of time and attention for project preparation versus project implementation has got out of balance. Relatively a lot of attention is given to the preparation of NPT projects (the demand identification and articulation process, tendering procedure etc.) while less resources are available for Nuffic to critically monitor project implementation. At the start of the programme, according to Nuffic, there was a logical balance between the preparation and implementation activities of NPT. Since then, however, the time allocations for demand identification, articulation and for matching demand and supply have been raised, which has not yet been done to the same extent for monitoring and evaluation. This approach certainly has its risks. Outlines, proposals and inception reports may look very nice on paper, but what really matters is what is happening on the ground. Is progress really made? Does the Dutch institute delivers what it has promised? Are the inputs provided by the same persons that were originally proposed? Is the southern partner still content with the Dutch institute? And if things go in the wrong direction, can Nuffic intervene fast enough? Questions that can only partly be answered during the monitoring missions.

An important element that is missing at the moment is an established format for the progress reports, in which explicitly attention should be paid to the implementation and validation of the intervention logic, as it is expressed in the project outline. This also includes reporting on the indicators that have been selected in the project outline and inception phase.
From Dutch institutes that implement NPT projects we heard positive things about Nuffic, such as:

- Nuffic is focused on results and is not too bureaucratic (unlike for instance the European Commission);
- Nuffic keeps to time limits during the tender procedure;
- Nuffic involves the southern partners in the tender procedure, resulting in good ownership for the project;
- Comments of Nuffic on reports are constructive.

One institute remarked that, although it did not always at first instance agree with Nuffic’s decisions, it appreciated the short communication lines and the possibility to discuss these issues with Nuffic, which often resulted in a mutually acceptable ‘consensus’. Possibly other institutes insufficiently utilise Nuffic’s ‘low threshold’.

Although deregulation was one of the basic principles of the implementation of NPT this has not been achieved according to the northern institutes. Although at the same time it is acknowledged that some regulations are inevitable.

5.7 Tied character of NPT

The tied character of NPT makes the programme expensive, since the number of suppliers is technically reduced to Dutch providers. If also other foreign institutes in the north were allowed to tender for NPT projects, then it could be expected that the number of suppliers would increase, possibly leading to more competition and ‘more value for money’.

Second, tied aid does no longer fit in the Dutch development strategy. At the same time, as long as other donors also have tied programmes like NPT, it does not make sense if the Netherlands would untie in isolation. However, in this respect it should be mentioned that recently there has been some more attention for (untied) aid to secondary and tertiary education from the international donor community. The available scarce information does not allow us to draw any conclusions on this, only that these developments should be monitored closely, possibly supplying relevant lessons for Dutch formal education-related assistance.

According to the (Dutch) Platform for International education (PIE) the choice between tying or untying NPT cannot only be answered by looking at the economic arguments in the sphere of development aid, also other interests, i.e. those of Dutch higher education and research itself, should be taken into account².

² Platform for International Education (PIE), De betrokkenheid van Nederlandse Hoger Onderwijsinstellingen bij de ontwikkelingsaanpak op het gebied van het hoger onderwijs en onderzoek (The involvement of Dutch Higher Education Institutes in development aid regarding higher education and research), 2005.
In this respect it can be noted that in the context of globalisation international education is becoming an increasingly important aspect of higher education in general, notwithstanding the difficulties to assess concrete impacts of internationalisation. So, the choice for untying the NPT could also be analysed in the context of the overall internationalisation of tertiary education and the merits this can have for Dutch higher education. However, these arguments fall outside the scope of the NPT programme, which aims at capacity building in the South and not relating this to the international position of the Netherlands higher education sector.

A practical possibility to gain better insights in the effects of untying the NPT, would be to launch a pilot within the NPT in which an open tender procedure is followed, also inviting other providers outside The Netherlands. This might lead to important lessons as regards the possible benefits of untying the programme.

Related to the above, the Dutch institutes note that it might be profitable to make more use of non-Dutch expertise, in the South as well in western countries. In the section on regional collaboration, it has already been noticed that the use of regional expertise is underdeveloped. As long as the political dilemma of untying the NPT is not solved, it would be appropriate to make more use of regional expertise in the coming years, implying a more efficient use of available resources.

5.8 Perceptions of the RNEs and southern institutions

In the questionnaire among RNEs and southern institutions various questions have been present on efficiency related issues. This paragraph shows the main outcomes.

Division of tasks between RNE and Nuffic

As can be concluded from table 43 most RNEs (nine out of thirteen) agree that there is a clear division of tasks between Nuffic and the embassies. The southern institutes have a similar opinion on this (figure 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division tasks between Nuffic and embassies clear, according to RNEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of respondents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 M.M. Kritz, Globalisation and internationalisation of tertiary education. Paper presented at the International symposium on international migration and development, Turin, Italy, 28-30 June 2006
Although the majority of RNEs assesses the task description as clear, there is some discontent, as is also apparent from the next box.

**Opinions RNEs on task division with Nuffic**
- Nuffic indicated several times to us that they didn’t expect us to be as involved as we are. The embassy sees NPT as part of its development cooperation and therefore wants to be fully involved. We had quite some discussions with Nuffic before we could agree on a proper division of tasks.
- To this embassy the NPT activities are not part of the programme. We don’t decide about cooperation and sometimes we even don’t know what is going on. We don’t have sufficient capacity for it!
- I communicate well with Nuffic, and Nuffic communicates well to me, this is important for the division of tasks.
- This is a largely an ad hoc arrangement and there is no clear delineation of tasks between RNE and Nuffic.

**Tender procedure**
From figure 5.2 it can be concluded that the majority of southern institutes is positive on the tender procedure, where as they are even more positive on the role of the Tender Evaluation Committee (TEC). The embassies as well as the southern institutes highly appreciate the role Nuffic plays in the tender procedure (not in figure).

![Figure 5.2 Satisfaction among institutes with Tender procedure and TEC (in absolute numbers)](image)

**Price–quality**
An important element in judging the efficiency of the programme is whether the same (expected) result might also be achieved with less investment i.e. a lower price. This question has been put to RNEs and southern institutes. Of the thirteen respondent embassies, seven were of the opinion that generally the costs of NPT the projects are proportionate to its benefits. Two however felt that this was not the case (four had no opinion on this).
Programme management by Nuffic

On a scale of 1 – 10, (1 being the lowest, 10 the highest) the southern institutes gave Nuffic a score of 8.38 for the management of NPT. In comparison, the Dutch consortium received a score of 8.16. On the same scale, the embassies gave Nuffic a score of 6.38 for the management of the programme. From this it can be concluded that in general the embassies and the southern institutes are positive on the way the NPT programme is implemented by Nuffic.

Notwithstanding the overall positive opinions on the role of Nuffic 28 out of 63 respondents (44 percent) were of the opinion that more help from the side of Nuffic would be useful.

Areas in which more assistance from Nuffic would be appreciated (according to the southern institutes)

- This is my first experience working with NUFFIC. I have to learn many new things, especially financial matters. Nuffic financial rules seem very different from that of the Indonesian government. Honestly, I often feel afraid of making mistakes in spending money from Nuffic. I know that I can hire someone who can handle this. But it should be the one who understands English. And this is quite difficult.
- If the Nuffic desk officer should spend more time in the country and with the project, his remarks would have been better funded
- Assistance regarding the training project coordinator, the accountants and in filing in the spreadsheets of purchased items. for better project management.
- Especially in designing the project outline in line with the goals of the NUFFIC
- Linking our institution to projects of a similar nature in the region (if any)
- A visit once every 6 months, including attendance of a inter-institutional meeting would be valuable for understanding

The large majority of responding institutes, 51 out of 61, were positive (28) or very positive about the monitoring of the project. Appreciation by institutes and Embassies of Nuffic’s handling of the monitoring function is shown below graphically in Figure 5.10 and verbally through some of the comments received to the open item accompanying the relevant survey question.

Figure 5.3  Perceptions by Embassies and beneficiary institutions of Nuffic’s monitoring of NPT projects.
Some views on monitoring expressed by the beneficiary institutions.

A talk of one or two hours is really not sufficient.
As a result of Nuffic monitoring we have been able to bring to attention concerns about lack of funding for local staff to be involved in research and the failure at some stage of The Dutch Institute to provide staff as had been planned. These shortfalls were corrected through the intervention of Nuffic.
The monitoring missions are good but in some cases they come in when its too late. There is need to set up a monitoring office within each country, this office could comprise of one person to monitor projects over the year.

Source: Survey southern institutions.

According to the embassies there are various obstacles for improving the efficiency of the NPT programme.

Obstacles to efficiency, according to embassies

- Difficult to integrate effectively the NPT projects in the larger, more strategic policy dialogue, plans and implementation. No adequate linkages with the Ministry of Education. lack of awareness and knowledge of Dutch institutes (and consultants) on swap approach and harmonisation. Lack of involvement of staff in overall strategic issues (again with the exception of the project that is specifically aimed to work at the ministry of higher education on these issues).
- The rather lengthy procedures of tendering and maybe also the costs of long term Technical assistants. I feel that where long term experts would be appropriate, they are not placed in a programme because of the high costs involved.
- First two years of the NPT programme were needed to tailor the procedures and regulations to the local situation. So the programme had a very late actual start - More flexibility is needed for adjustment along the way - Better focus on results, outputs and outcomes and make them more operational - Improve measurability against well established baseline (Partly based on debriefing evaluator)
- Costs related to the missions of Dutch institutions are rather high and do not always benefit the outcome: is this the most efficient way to use TA? - timetable is often linked to Dutch Institutions - not enough flexibility to adapt to the speed of developments/annual calender in Mozambique - cumbersome tender procedures caused delay in starting up of some activities

Also the southern institutes mention various obstacles that hamper efficiency. Of 61 respondents among the Southern institutes, 20 felt that there were still obstacles for optimal efficiency.

Obstacles to efficiency, according to institutes

- The agreement should be tripartite;
- Performance management aspects should be well detailed and southern organizations trained adequately on these aspects;
- The need to have a Dutch partner makes project management quite expensive. More could be saved for other project activities if local (in this case Uganda) institutions could co-implement the project with the beneficiary institution(s);
- The NPT needs to look beyond 4 years. In four years you can only have a project but not a collaboration with the Northern partners. For example PhD students take four years; so how would they be facilitated to engage in a collaboration after training? In some cases the project needs more funds for infrastructure. So NPT needs to have some of flexibility on the current 20% limit;
- Budget transfers are slow. We are yet to receive our 6% after almost eight months of being in the project.
5.9 Conclusions

The leading question in this chapter has been whether the processes regarding NPT are efficient? This question has been answered by the interpretation of various indicators. Beforehand it is noticed that, since NPT is a relatively young programme, it is difficult to measure the efficiency based on clear output indicators relating them to input. Therefore efficiency in this study was more defined in a practical way looking at smoothness of interaction between the different actors, clearness in the division of responsibilities, and timeliness of activities and responses. In this concluding paragraph we first present the results as they have been assessed by the evaluator of ECORYS during the field visits and interviews with stakeholders. Secondly, we will address the opinions and perceptions of embassies and southern institutes that come forward from the web-based questionnaire that has been conducted (see annex for methodological details).

5.9.1 Cooperation between the various actors

**DCO-Nuffic**

Due to its involvement in the forerunner of NPT Nuffic, which was selected out of a very few applicants for the programme management, was initially approached by DCO in a ‘atmosphere of distrust’, which especially in the beginning period lead to close supervision and control (by DCO). After four years of programme management by Nuffic, DCO would like to proceed to a more output oriented financing of the programme management, although it is not yet clear how this is to be installed. Anno 2006 the relationship between DCO and Nuffic has become more relaxed, appreciating each others skills and professionalism in the process.

**Nuffic-RNEs**

Although the embassies have an important role in the process leading up to identification of the demand, initially no attention was given to the required capacity that is needed at the RNEs to implement the NPT. Especially as regards NPT there has been a lack of clarity on the question what the role of RNE exactly should and could be. This latter question was the more urgent since the RNEs did not receive any extra budget for being involved in the NPT process.

To some degree, this has lead to misunderstandings and wrong expectations at both sides, Nuffic as well as RNEs.

Depending on the involvement of the RNE, various workable arrangements have developed between Nuffic and the RNEs, to each discharge their responsibilities. However, further consideration is required on the part of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding how to define the relationship between the Embassies and privatized implementing agencies of government programs, such as Nuffic.

Among the RNEs there is some discontent on the supervision by Nuffic of the local consultant who is involved in the demand orientation phase of the NPT programme. Taking into account that the local consultant is working in the priority development areas of the RNE, this leaves room for improvement.
Relationship between Nuffic and northern institutes
The ‘atmosphere of distrust’ that influenced the relationship between DCO and Nuffic in the first years of the two programmes also had an impact on the relationships between Nuffic and the northern institutes in the initial phase of the programmes. Although relationships seem to have improved since the start, northern institutes still need to get fully used to the ‘client-provider relationship’ that rules the tendering and implementation process of NPT.

Relationship between Nuffic and southern institutes
In general, the relationships between Nuffic and the southern institutes are constructive and cooperative. The help that Nuffic provides in the process of demand identification, articulation and proposal development is highly appreciated. Notwithstanding the overall positive opinions on the role of Nuffic quite a large group of respondents from southern institutions would appreciate more help from Nuffic, for instance as regards monitoring of projects and financial control of NPT projects.

5.9.2 Tender procedure
Although in general the demand oriented approach is implemented effectively, the new funding procedure has hardly resulted in competition between northern institutes, also because consortia are formed which reduces competition between potential competitors. Therefore it is unlikely that this market-like-mechanism has lead to better price/quality ratios. However, the introduction of tendering is, without exception, seen as an improvement by those interviewed from the southern institutes. In this respect it is relevant to mention that the demand orientation of the programme has made the role of the southern institutes in the project design more prominent and meaningful, also increasing their sense of ownership and involvement, which was one of the policy principles when introducing NPT.

The shift of the demand towards more practically oriented support, has resulted in a broader variety of suppliers (more Universities of Professional Education and extension of the programme towards consultancy firms), which can be interpreted as a positive indicator for demand drivenness of the programme. The number of offering/supplying institutes remains however small, limiting the possibilities for competition.

Tied character of the programme
The tied character of NPT makes the programme expensive, since the number of suppliers is technically reduced to Dutch providers. If also other foreign institutes in the north were allowed to tender for NPT projects, then it could be expected that the number of suppliers would increase, possibly leading to more competition and ‘more value for money’. Although in general it is thought that the Dutch providers have been capable to respond to the demand in an effective and efficient way, it is also thought by a vast majority of southern institutes that more competition between supplying institutes would improve the performance of the NPT programme.

It is suggested that a pilot is launched within the NPT in which an open tender procedure is followed. This might provide lessons as regards the possible benefits of untying the programme.
**Implementation of the programme**

All parties concerned recognize that project development has become a lengthy, time-consuming process. Project outlines are generally inadequate, requiring a lot of attention in the inception phase. There is a need for greater flexibility; for more serious collaboration and shared problem solving along the road based on mutual commitment to project goals that must be clearly and measurably defined. It is also a learning process for both partners to do this. It is generally acknowledged by those involved that a good working relation between partners only after some time can be realized.

There have been significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up of NPT projects, partly attributable to the fact that procedures for program implementation still had to be invented (and experimented with at times) while the first projects started to develop.

**Inclusion of regional collaboration**

In the current supply of training in NPT as well as NFP the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped. Notwithstanding the availability of regional institutes, the relevance of southern institutes should not be overestimated, partly due to their more traditional, theory oriented teaching methods, which are not compatible with the competence oriented methods of many Dutch providers. It should also be recognized that on certain subjects the southern institutes have little relevant experience to offer, for instance water management and procurement. However, the pro’s and con’s of the use of southern expertise are only valid in the light of the training objectives set, something that might be easily neglected.

Besides making use of regional institutes it was frequently mentioned that local or regional experts or professionals (academic or technical) might be an interesting cost-effective way of more inclusion of regional collaboration.

**5.9.3 Performance of Nuffic**

Based in The Hague it is difficult for Nuffic to manage the programme on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, most of the southern NPT organisations are positive about the programme management by Nuffic. People know Nuffic mainly through its country officer for the countries, who has visited the institutes during one of the monitoring missions that are annually conducted by Nuffic. The available time for monitoring missions is frequently brought up for discussion, although a straightforward conclusion is difficult to make. Some disparity in opinions is understandable in the light of the variable cooperation settings between Nuffic and RNEs and also depending on the degree of professional management among the southern institutes.

When the NPT was set up, the intention was that it should be a ‘lean and mean’ programme. In practice the division of time and attention for project preparation versus project implementation has got out of balance. Relatively a lot of attention is given to the preparation of NPT projects (the demand identification and articulation process, tendering procedure etc.), while less resources are available for Nuffic to critically monitor project implementation.
An important element that is missing is an established format for the progress reports, in which explicitly attention is paid to the implementation and validation of the intervention logic, as it is expressed in the project outline. This also includes reporting on the indicators that have been selected in the project outline and inception phase. It should be noted that, to avoid double reporting procedures for the southern partners, at the start of the programme Nuffic was instructed by DCO not to impose a reporting format.

In general, southern institutes and embassies are quite positive on the implementation of NPT and NFP, also expressing high appreciation for the role of Nuffic.
6 Effectiveness of NPT

Effectiveness is concerned with the degree to which a particular intervention has an effect and to what extent such effect contributes to achieving the objectives of the intervention under consideration. In this chapter we analyse these questions for the NPT programme, including examples of what worked well and what worked less in terms of effectiveness.

6.1 Programme aims of NPT

The NPT programme aims at strengthening in a sustainable manner the capacity of higher education institutions and increasing the capacity of staff in governmental, private and non-governmental organisations in developing countries. To this effect the programme makes expertise of institutions in The Netherlands available to meet capacity building needs in the south. In the process, lead institutions in The Netherlands may team up with others to form consortia. Lead institutions are particularly encouraged to seek the involvement of competent institutional and individual expertise in and from the south to help them meet the specific needs of southern partners. The education and training capacity that the NPT aims at developing must be relevant to the sectors and themes targeted for the Dutch bilateral support given to the countries in question. More general support for the higher education sector is also possible under the programme, as is support for projects that cut across the chosen sectors and themes.

As stated in the inception report for the current evaluation, it is too early at this stage to assess whether the NPT programme has achieved its programme aims, because the programme has only just started after some initial delays in the start-up phase. It was particularly noted in the inception report that at the end of 2005 only one NPT project had been concluded. Survey research carried out as part of the evaluation established that two-thirds of all NPT projects started in 2005 or 2006, often because the inception period took longer than expected. Nonetheless, time and effort spent on inception was also found by the beneficiary institutions to have been very useful.

Results of the field studies undertaken in Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam confirm the reality just described. Nonetheless, these field studies also provide sufficient insight to conclude that attainment of the intended effects may reasonably be expected. However, little can be said about how sustainable the effects will be on the basis only of observations within the limited period during which the NPT projects have been operational. Pertinent questions can thus be raised about what will happen when the project period is finished.
In Vietnam such questions relate to the country’s interest in systemic change to which multiple projects contribute, but only in ways that will be effective if the possibility exists to create follow-on projects within a perspective of long-term development goals. In Uganda, projects aiming at reforming curricula, making them more competence oriented and geared towards problem-based learning, seem to have a good basis for generating sustainable results. Tanzania sees the roll-out of pilot projects at Vocational Training Centres. The natural question arises: ‘what will happen next, after the pilots prove successful?’.

At least in one case, that of Vietnam, it seems justified to draw some lessons from a more comprehensive look at NPT when seen in combination with its predecessor programmes. In the case of Vietnam, the Netherlands cooperation in the field of capacity building for higher education has been ongoing since 1980. Many of the current projects build on past experience. The Vietnamese have a tendency to interpret NPT activities in the context of this enduring cooperation. While they recognize the differences, their general perception of the NPT programme is that its basic thrust is similar to that of the various predecessors. These perceptions seem less strong in the other two countries studied at field level. The difference in perceptions may be explained, recognizing that Vietnam has long had a strong focus on overall system change in using these programmes of cooperation for capacity development. From their perspective the programme is a tool. Even though the tool changed in some ways, it did not dramatically change its usefulness for the purpose they have in mind. In the case of Uganda and Tanzania the focus seems more on specific institutional and sectoral benefits.

6.2 Usefulness of the NPT programme

Across the countries targeted by the evaluation study, NPT projects are now generally well on their way, though implementation of planned activities varies. Some projects are considerably behind schedule; occasionally a project may be performing above expectations. Multiple factors have contributed to delays in project development and underperformance in project implementation. These factors include issues like inexperience in dealing with the new modalities of work, such as tendering, introduced under NPT; the need for almost all parties concerned to learn and adjust as well as to develop mutual trust and operational modalities of working with each other; and complex and time consuming procedures of governmental oversight in the case of Vietnam. However, such initial hiccups, while taking a long time to resolve, have now generally been overcome and first signs become visible of the effects the projects are having.
6.2.1 Four perspectives on usefulness

Usefulness of the NPT programme can be looked upon from the following four perspectives, representing different levels of immediacy:

1. Contributing to alleviating shortages in trained staff and infrastructure necessary for allowing staff to be effective.
2. Improving the quality of the institution
   a. for its own internal benefits
   b. in the context of the interaction between the institution and its external environment.
3. Bringing about overall system change in the higher education system or a particular area of activity, such as medical practice.
4. Impacting human well-being in society at large.

As detailed below, evidence of usefulness of the NPT programme in all four respects could be found during the field investigations carried out. It was also confirmed by results from the survey.

Re 1: Alleviating immediate shortages.

The vast majority of NPT beneficiary institutions contacted during the field investigations in Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam find that the NPT programme contributes to reducing shortages of trained professional staff. As projects are currently still under implementation, often even at an early stage, this appreciation is based on expectation. However, in many cases this expectation is justified as it is confirmed by prior experience. Having found that staff training worked effectively under prior similar circumstances, beneficiaries of the current NPT modality are in no doubt that similar effect will be attained under the current arrangements, provided, of course, that project execution is on track, which in a significant number of cases it is, according to the findings of the three field evaluators.

Figure 6.1 Perceived usefulness of NPT for diverse purposes as seen by southern institutions (left) and RNEs (right), according to the survey.

As can be seen in figure 6.1, improved training skills and new curriculum rank highest in both appreciation by institutes and RNEs. Both are essential from a training-of-trainers perspective. RNEs rate the usefulness of the programme for improving management skills higher than the institutions themselves do. RNEs see little usefulness of the program for improving facilities, new equipment and improved organizational structure.
The survey results are similarly affirmative regarding the usefulness of NPT for alleviating staff shortages, particularly from a training-of-trainers perspective (Fig. 6.1). Regarding quantitative shortages (Fig. 6.2), 42 percent of the responding beneficiary institutions perceive the NPT programme as making a ‘strong’ contribution; 45% think that this contribution is ‘very strong.’ Regarding the reduction of qualitative shortages, 43% think the contribution is ‘strong’ and 50% ‘rate it as ‘very strong.’ The training as such is found ‘very useful’ by 88% of NPT institutes; 12% rate it as ‘useful.’

![Figure 6.2 Contribution of NPT to reducing quantitative and qualitative shortages of staff as perceived by southern institutions.](image)

Training under NPT is considered particularly useful in those cases where the emphasis is on training of trainers. All three field investigations furthermore established that trained personnel normally stay within the organisation, which is an important condition for institutional impact (discussed below). The survey data support the findings from the field. According to 71% of the responding institutions, trained personnel normally stay within the organization, while 73% think they stay at least in the country. In Tanzania some brain drain to Southern Africa was found, particularly among medical doctors. Both in Vietnam and Uganda brain drain appears to be effectively limited by binding mechanisms of employees. In the case of Vietnam strong identification with one’s own culture may play an additional role in curtailing brain drain. It is also argued that brain drain to a higher level of public administration might be beneficiary for the lower levels of public administration.

Examples of contributions under NPT to infrastructural improvement in support of human and institutional capacity building. Clockwise from top left: library and study room at Nsamizi Training Institute of Social Development in Mpigi, Uganda; computer lab under construction at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda; Morogoro Vocational Teachers Training College, Tanzania; Power generator, Tumaini University, Iringa, Tanzania; library at School of Economics and Business Administration, Can Tho University, Vietnam.

Quality of other support received, such as in terms of improving library and computer facilities, was also found to be positively appreciated by recipient institutions in their responses to the survey.
Re2:  *Enhancing the institution.*

In a number of cases there is evidence indicating that the programme contributes to institutional change in the sense that the institutions start behaving differently as a consequence of the project(s). Quite generally, across the three countries visited, such institutional change is associated with the focus in many projects on curriculum innovation and reform. Such change may be undertaken for the purpose of adapting to emerging needs of the labour market, as is for instance the case of the Tanzania Institute of Accountancy at which curricula had not been revised for a very long time so that these curricula no longer corresponded to the practical needs of employers.

In other cases, and often concurrently, curricula are being revised for the purpose of modernising the methodological aspects of the teaching and learning practices associated with them. Change in the basic philosophy and practice of teaching and learning is indeed another important area of institutional impact. Sometimes it is specifically intended (as is the case of many of the NPT projects in Vietnam) and thus implicitly or explicitly specified as such in the project description; sometimes it is a secondary effect, the benefits of which become clear in the process of project implementation. It is noted that change in pedagogy is often not limited to the domain of project intervention as such. This is particularly so when an institution decides to use newly acquired competence and experience in the field of pedagogy for internal processes of faculty improvement. Impact in this area is observable in cases where NPT is the successor to earlier efforts aiming at this particular outcome. Projects in Vietnam, particularly at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Medicine and Pharmacy and Can Tho University provide the clearest examples. In other cases, for instance the Ho Chi Minh City Hydro-Meteorological College, the effect, though intended, is not (yet) observable and indications exist that better monitoring of this particular impact is called for.


Realised output in following output areas:

- **Staff development and training:** 3 MBA’s graduated, 3 will follow; 7 PhD’s on schedule; 30 participants passed NEVI A; NEVI B has started.
- **Research and documentation:** 6 research proposals on procurement; 2 already approved for funding (after extensive review); research workshops on design/methodology and data analysis; expert input on research infrastructure and policies; sharing results and data through presentations.
- **Course development and curriculum design:** review report on existing procurement programmes (at KYU and MUBS); realignment/redesign of procurement courses has started; curriculum design at KYU for new programmes; development of short courses on procurement, curriculum development academic programmes; review by international procurement professors and experts, partly from abroad; joint development in Uganda by Ugandan universities and same procurement experts.
- **Institutional strengthening and cooperation**: resource center at Kyambogo Campus will be completed in November 2006; procurement process of 152 computers, including servers, printers and furniture; procurement of 500 textbooks on procurement & logistics and research completed.

Source: Uganda Field Investigation (in annex)

Some institutions also report impact of their participation in the NPT programme on how they are being perceived in their relations with other institutions in the region and in the international context. Thanks to involvement by the Netherlands lead institutions of regional partners, they get to know and become known to others in the region. Their enhanced capacity also gives them validity in international fora, such as major professional conferences. They become voices to be listened to and potential partners sought out to collaborate with. This particular aspect of institutional enhancement is particularly noticeable in a country like Vietnam, where development has generally progressed beyond the level found in Sub-Saharan Africa and which is surrounded by countries where relevant partner institutions can be identified. Similar effects should be expected in Sub-Saharan Africa, assuming enough time is allowed for work under the NPT programme to reach maturation.

**Re 3: Fostering large scale systemic change.**

In some instances, NPT projects contribute to overall system change in a particular area of activity. This is exemplified by the training under NPT/VNM/010, the so-called SkillsLab project, of a team of 16 Masters in Health Professional Education (MHPEs) in Vietnam. This team of 16 MHPEs will serve as a shared resource to eight Vietnamese universities and medical schools in different parts of the country. Three MHPEs were previously trained and are now involved in the training of others in their areas of newly acquired competence. It is thus well known what is implied and it is an established fact that the model works. The current project is based on this prior experience. Thus, for the remaining MHPEs to be trained, implementation of NPT/VNM/010 is well on its way and activities are on course. Success similar to that of the first three MHPEs is therefore a reasonable expectation. However, the Ministry of Health, which is itself one of the nine project partners, recognizes that the training of the medical skills as such solves but part of the problem. Before the result of the training can become fully effective, a new framework of regulations must have been developed and put in place. If the project had involved working with just one or two universities there would not have been enough push to bring about the desired change in medical practice. The move to involve no less than eight universities collaboratively made it possible for change to be demanded and implemented on a system-wide scale. It is noted that such an impact does not come about solely because of NPT. Rather, it requires the ingenuity of those in the south who use the programme to make it effective in this particular regard. NPT is to be credited for having been conceived with enough flexibility in mind to make it a useful instrument in the hands of its users. In fact, the field investigation in Vietnam (see Vietnam report in annex) revealed that the NPT project in this case builds on earlier separate initiatives by three Vietnamese universities, using World Bank funding, to establish proof of concept. After this,
one of them, the Ho Chi Minh City University of Medicine and Pharmacy, took the lead in setting up the partnership of eight institutions that now benefit from the NPT programme. Implementation is on schedule and all indications are that the project will reach its set targets. Moreover, the in situ observations during the field investigation revealed an impressive level of commitment and creativity in building on the project results for purposes not foreseen in the project description but relevant to the local context, such as adapting doctor-patient communication protocols to the local culture and prototyping medical skills training models using affordable and locally available materials for their production.

The University of Medicine and Pharmacy at HCMC uses easily available and affordable materials to produce models for practicing medical skills to substitute far more expensive materials available on the international market.

The above example is characteristic of how the NPT programme—often in combination with its counterpart NFP—is perceived in Vietnam as particularly useful in the context of a long-term and fundamental change process that started in 1986 and that may take at least another decade to come to fruition. The change has to do not only with shifting choices among political options, replacing centralized government control by liberalization and a free market economy. In the context of building training capacity at the post-secondary level, such change is particularly focused on abandoning a long tradition of education ‘oriented toward purely academic subjects and theory divorced from practical application.’

The educational practice in The Netherlands, with its strong focus on active pedagogy and problem-oriented participatory learning, in addition to its dual nature in attending to academic and profession oriented learning needs, is seen in this context as a unique model one wishes to emulate. This specific desire to change the teaching-learning paradigm motivates many NPT projects in Vietnam. Perhaps less explicitly, the possibility to import an innovative educational model seems also to be seen as a specific asset of working with The Netherlands in the other countries studied.

In a similar way as described above for Vietnam, one also sees across the various NPT projects in Tanzania, in addition to the project goals proper, a crosscutting interest in attitude change among graduates. Here it is the absence of an entrepreneurial attitude among students that is seen as a crucially limiting factor that blocks Tanzania’s business expansion. Entrepreneurship development has thus been selected as the focal point for NPT (see also Box 5.2).

---

5 Critique formulated in April 1986 by Hoang Xuan Tuy, Head of the Reform Commission (see http://country-studies.com/vietnam/education.html).
A focus on the entrepreneurial mind.
Indications are also that graduates become more entrepreneurial: figures from the University of Dar es Salaam indicate that in 1997 only 7% of the graduates started their own business. In 2004 this had risen to 16%. Of course, this effect cannot directly be attributed to the NPT programme (or its predecessor, the FAME project that was implemented at the University of Dar es Salaam). However, the fact that during this time the Entrepreneurship Centre of UDSM had started to mainstream attention for entrepreneurship in curricula may indeed have contributed students to become entrepreneurs.

Source: Tanzania Field Investigation (in annex)

Re 4: Impacting society at large.
Societal impact can in all cases be associated with the relatively long-term process of producing better graduates who satisfy the human resource needs in the various key development sectors envisaged by the NPT projects. Considering the brief time span during which the NPT program has been operational, this impact can not yet be observed. In some cases, though, societal impact is more direct and the effect of the NPT project becomes observable when the project in question is the continuation of prior collaboration aiming at the same long-term goal. A case in point is the NPT/VNM/013 project with the School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA) at Can Tho University (CTU) in Vietnam (Fig. 5.5). Among three areas of intervention, the project aims at strengthening SEBA’s outreach programme to assist farming households in the Mekong Delta to increase their economic productivity while paying attention to conserving natural resources. Currently, SEBA trains already 100 to 150 business men and women and farmers per year in addition to some 1500 bachelors, 700 of which at satellite colleges and 800 at CTU itself, as well as 45 to 50 Master degree holders. Under the project the school establishes a ‘Centre for Consultancy’ through which training of entrepreneurs and farmers is expected to rise to between 300 and 400 per year. Besides, the school is already thinking about a follow-on project to establish community colleges throughout the Mekong River Delta to absorb the large majority of the 80 000 high school graduates who yearly apply for entry at CTU but of whom no more than 4500 can currently be accepted.

Can Tho University is strategically located in the Mekong River Delta. It is one of the three major universities in Vietnam and is determined to play a key role in the economic and social development of the fertile Mekong Delta, which is also one of the poorest regions of the country.

6.2.2 Project design within long-term development perspective

The above analysis demonstrates the importance of project design in the perspective of long-term and complex change processes that often characterize the international development cooperation landscape. It is noted that currently the possibility to propose follow-up projects under NPT already exists, requiring renewed tendering. However, the fact that this possibility exists is not yet widely known at the field level.

On the other hand, some institutions suggested that the four-year period is too long for decision making regarding continuation of collaboration between partners initially brought together.
A cut-off point might be considered after two years, at which stage partners either renew their determination to collaborate upon serious evaluation of their capacity to work together effectively for the time needed to have a serious impact on important development goals, or they decide to terminate the partnership.

6.2.3 Projects, sectors, and the broader social context and institutional development interests

Too narrow an interpretation of the need to link NPT projects to specific sector goals might lead to a reduction in effectiveness in many obviously useful areas that are less directly related to such sector goals. The Tanzania field investigation, for instance, reveals clearly that NPT projects do not function in isolation. The NPT projects that aim at entrepreneurship development are but a component in a broader effort to achieve particular sectoral as well as transsectoral development goals, such as development of the business environment, which, for instance, also implies the creation of a supportive legal framework for business development. The NPT projects should thus be conceived and developed with the development context in mind in which other factors contribute to the same goals. On the other hand, they will also always serve important additional goals that do not directly relate to the focal sectors but without the attainment of which sectoral interests cannot be pursued effectively. Those additional goals often have to do with attitudes and values that determine the quality of the societal and institutional context within which sectoral interests take shape and are being effectively pursued. Flexible and open-minded attitudes are thus required of collaborating entities— institutions in the south and the north, RNE, Nuffic, DCO, ministries—in seeking to balance manifold interests for the attainment of the right mix of multiple objectives. It is only natural that such a search for the right balance produces the kind of tensions the evaluators came to know in their investigations. Those tensions were relatively high at the start of the process. They diminished over time as the different parties got to know each other better and learned from and with each other.

6.2.4 Perceptions about quality and quantity of assistance received

Southern institutions are generally content with the quality and quantity of the technical assistance they receive from the Dutch education institutes. Their opinion about the performance of their Dutch partners is overall positive, though occasionally questions may be raised about the proportion of the budget that gets absorbed into paying for Dutch expertise. Such expertise is sometimes felt to be dispersed in ways that imply unduly high transaction costs that are out of proportion with the generated benefits (too many too short missions that are not well coordinated—an issue that has as much to do with efficiency as with effectiveness). Nonetheless, the majority of southern institutes rate NPT ‘better’ or ‘much better’ than similar programmes of other donors. In Vietnam some consider NPT ‘unique.’ No other donor offers anything truly comparable in the view of such respondents. On the other hand, almost half of responding RNEs would not start NPT if they had to decide now, as was found in the survey.
6.3 **Sustainability**

6.3.1 **Institutional embedding**

The concern with sustainability is an essential one. However, at this stage it is difficult to pass judgment regarding the sustainability of effects created by a programme that has merely started to become fully operational. At this stage the evaluation is limited to highlighting a number of risk factors.

A risk factor is related to the limited attention given to the institutional and policy context (within countries and within institutes) in which the NPT projects function. This risk can be mitigated through more serious attention to thoroughness of needs assessment and front-end analysis and through project design in the context of shared vision of and commitment to long-term development goals.

A second risk factor is associated with the focus of NPT on activities at the level of concrete isolated projects. This may result in too little attention to the level above, i.e. that of coordination of projects, learning from each other, and networking. There are encouraging signs in a country like Vietnam that these aspects are indeed beginning to receive the attention they deserve. In some other countries this is less so.

A third risk factor is associated with prevailing attitudes in some countries (see for instance the reports of the field investigations in Tanzania and Uganda in annex) among would-be beneficiaries of NPT to look upon their involvement in a project as an extra burden rather than an opportunity for advancement that one wishes to invest in personally. Even project coordinators show such lack of drive. Consequently, in some projects compensation is being paid when staff members spend substantive amounts of time in the project in addition to their regular work. Mitigating this risk involves serious work to change the attitudes in question, which is likely a multi-donor effort.

6.3.2 **Brain drain**

Increased mobility is a natural consequence of training. Except perhaps for totalitarian societies, it can never be totally controlled or excluded. In the context of capacity building efforts such as envisaged by NPT, where the capacity to be built is seen as associated with the functionality of a particular institution, the loss of trained cadre to other institutions or an entirely different sector can be problematic in a short-term perspective of institutional development. If the loss is to a different country, it is even more problematic. The seriousness of such problems depends furthermore on the degree to which there is also reverse mobility, which is usually not the case when there is brain drain from developing countries to the industrialized societies.

The evaluators are satisfied that brain drain is not perceived as a serious problem in the NPT institutions in the countries they visited. Results of the survey among RNEs and southern institutions across the NPT countries in general support this notion.
In many cases individuals who are being trained sign a contract that binds them to the sponsoring institutions for a reasonable amount of time so that their enhanced capacity gets a chance to impact the institution, among other mechanisms because those who were trained under NPT are often, upon completion of their training, involved in the training of others at their institution. Cases of NPT beneficiaries who do not return to their country of origin are rare. Internal mobility can at times be an issue. Trained human resources will seldom spend their entire career at a single institution. In the longer run, particularly after binding contracts have expired, they may find it attractive for diverse reasons to go elsewhere and make their contribution. This process is in principle beneficial. It ensures the exchange of ideas and experience among institutions and enhances diversity.

In countries that have had a long history of benefiting from Dutch International Education initiatives one generally observes the existence of a large network of Netherlands trained individuals who continue to contribute in a distributed manner to the development of their country. They may have moved from one sector to another or within a particular sector from one institution to another. Others may have started out in the public sphere and are now working for private enterprises. However, the effect of their training is still there and it is significant for the country in question. It is not uncommon to find graduates of MHO and past fellowship holders now actively involved in creating and managing the schemes for capacity building that will benefit their country in key development areas via the training of members of the newer generation. An impressive number of graduates from past Netherlands financed capacity building efforts now occupy key positions in strategically important ministries or find themselves at the helm of a large and crucially important university. In Tanzania, for instance, two Ministers, two Vice-Ministers, one Permanent Secretary and the Chief Minister of Zanzibar were found to all have studied in the Netherlands. In Vietnam the Rector of Can Tho University was found to be one of the most ardent advocates and an effective agent for using the capacity building framework offered by The Netherlands in support of the development of the Mekong River Delta. In Uganda the clearest example is a person who, when she applied for the first time for a fellowship, was working for the Ministry of Agriculture. She has since held different other positions, allowing her to become a national authority in the field of food science and nutrition, who presented a radio show on these topics for several years.

6.4 Training methods

The evaluators found a large interest in competence oriented learning in the various countries. They also found that not much has changed in the manner in which institutions in The Netherlands respond to the demand for training. It seems to be tacitly assumed that what worked effectively in the past is still the standard for today and will continue to be so for the future. Very little use is made of all-of-distance education methods, including the modalities currently usually referred to as e-learning.

The evaluators are aware that conditions for the application of training modalities that make use of currently available information and communication technologies vary across NPT countries (Fig. 5.6). However, they also found that those same technologies are used in those countries both internally and in the context of training offered from abroad.
They are furthermore aware of the potentially enhanced impact of training that could partially be undergone away from the training institution, leaving the trainees in their own work environment. They are also aware of the potential cost savings that could result from combining face-to-face training with portions of the training carried out at a distance. Their overall conclusion is that training providers in The Netherlands would do well to take a more serious look at opportunities to bring their training practices and philosophies in line with the rapidly changing international standards lest they may become less attractive than the competition.

6.5 Perceptions of RNEs and southern education institutes

Some of the rationale regarding the usefulness of NPT (Section 5.2 above) is based on survey results about how this issue is perceived by RNEs and southern institutions. The information previously presented in 5.2.1 will not be repeated here. However, we add additional findings from the analysis of the survey data relevant to the interpretation of the effectiveness of NPT.

While both RNEs and southern institutions agree that NPT contributes to reducing quantitative and qualitative staff shortages, the perception of the beneficiary institutions are more highly positive than those of the Embassies, as can be seen by comparing the two graphs presented above (Fig. 5.7). The beneficiary institutions are more positive, or more optimistic, regarding the effectiveness of NPT in attaining its objectives. Yet they are aware of the hurdles that are being encountered in getting projects off the ground and running them. Box 5.3 below gives an overview of the obstacles mentioned in response to an open question on this issue.

**Hurdles in the attainment of objectives as perceived by southern institutions.**

- Setting up projects objectives is done on a theoretical basis. Achieving them practically meets challenges much of which may not have been foreseen.
- Secondly, realisation of the project objectives is managed by different institutions and people, these different personalities may not have the same capacity to attain the projected output from the project.
- Motivation of the participants and the good cooperation between the Indonesian and Dutch teams.
- Communication with staff of some of the regional centres involved, which are diverse in nature.
- Delay in fund release and procurement procedures.
- The low funds available for the project activities.
In our case, the institution is new and when the project was established there were many issues to clarify on how it was to function. The NPT Project helped the institute in this because created condition to go on in what was planned for this project.

Source: Survey southern institutions.

In comparison with similar programmes offered by other donors, NPT is generally perceived by southern institutions as better (responses ranging from ‘equally good’ to ‘much better’). The relevant statistics appear in Table 5.1 below.

Table 6.1 Comparison of the quality of NPT with similar programmes offered by other donors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nmbr of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much better</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally good</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much worse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notwithstanding the positive perceptions as represented by the above statistics, beneficiary institutions have praise, but they also offer critical comments, largely regarding lack of flexibility in making budget adjustments (see Box 5.4 below). Findings of the field investigations are convergent with the survey results. In addition, interviewees contacted during the field evaluations were often able to present a detailed rationale why they considered NPT superior, and sometimes unique, in comparison with available alternatives.

The quality of NPT: Praise and critical observations.

- It focuses on capacity building which is most important element in sustainable development and poverty reduction. It gives freedom in targeting the crucial deficit in human resource.
- More involvement of recipient organization, with much more emphasis on building of local capacity and long term sustainability.
- The project and its objectives look very good on paper, but the assigned budgets are insufficient and lead to a delay of actions. There should be a way to reshuffle the budget (three comparable responses).
- The NPT is comprehensive and targets the capacity building of our own staff.
- There is more involvement of the beneficiary institution(s) both at management and decision making. The beneficiaries do own the project.
- Both programmes focus on strengthening institutional capacity and have tailored their programmes to the expressed needs of the institution.
- There is good and direct co-operation between the Northern and Southern Partners. Partners are responsible for their joint workplans and budgets.

Source: Survey southern institutions.
NPT offers both training and non-training support. The quality of both is greatly, but slightly differentially, appreciated by the beneficiary institutions as shown in Figure 6.4 below.

**Figure 6.4** Quality of NPT services according to institutes (in absolute numbers).

Different actors contribute to the quality of NPT projects. They include the Dutch lead institution; Dutch consortium partners; Local or regional Consortium partners; Nuffic; RNE; local consultants; and government institutions. Figure 6.5 below expresses how they are differentially appreciated. Generally the appreciation is positive, and no great differences are observed for any of the partners, although especially the Lead Partner and Nuffic receive much praise. Below follow some of the responses to an open item that accompanied the survey question used to collect the above statistics.

**Figure 6.5** Appreciation by southern institutes of the quality of the contributions made by different NPT actors (in absolute numbers).
Local partner not playing any active role!

Responses from the Ministry of Education is not fast as required
Actually, I have problem judging something that is not done yet such as the performance of Dutch lead institution and Performance of the Dutch consortium partner(s).
I am very pleased of the progress so far, all parties give a lot of support, without which the project would not run smoothly.
For reason not known to us, the Netherlands Embassy has not been directly involved. It seems to be involved more with the NFP projects. As of now there are no regional institutions involved. This project received very low backstopping support during conception and preparation. Time provided to prepare the project outline was very short. NUFFIC provided useful support preparation of the project outline and has been providing useful guidelines (e.g. financial) on running the project. The implementation of the project is very much integrated within the operations of the Ministry so there is full integration of system by government.
This project has had three Dutch programme managers. The current manager is performing very well.
Source: Survey southern institutions.

Finally, long-term effectiveness would be greatly reduced should trained cadres leave their organization or their country before a sustainable impact would have resulted from the training. The evaluators were thus interested in collecting the views of both the Embassies and the beneficiary institutions regarding the perceived likelihood that cadres could be retained. Both saw no great risk as the graph below (Figure 6.6) shows. Data collected during the field investigations are convergent with these perceptions.

Figure 6.6 Perceived likelihood, as seen by RNEs and beneficiary institutions, that trained cadres will be retained by their institutions / stay in their country.

To end this section on perceptions regarding the effectiveness of NPT on the part of Embassies and southern institutions, we present below a number of comments received from the Embassies, containing suggestions for improvement of the effectiveness of the programme.

Suggestions to improve the effectiveness of NPT as expressed by Embassies.
NPT-programme should be seen in relation to comparable programmes financed by EC and World Bank. Harmonisation and alignment are insufficiently considered in the framework of support to higher education. Here to my opinion there is a potential for improvement. On the longer term, not the supply from the side of the Netherlands will be the issue, but rather European Higher Education in general.
More involvement of local and regional actors (training institutes, consultancy firms) - better understanding of the harmonisation/alignment agenda - critical reflection on methodologies for capacity building (which is too often limited to workshops or study tours in the Netherlands).

Working more closely with the Ministry of Education to facilitate and support better linkages with basic education, secondary education and higher, i.e. TVT education. In other words, there should be more awareness of the importance of a sector wide approach, rather than a sub-sector wide approach. Lesser prominence of NUFFIC, and more embedded in local structures (although difficult in the case of Yemen). See earlier: main challenge is to identify the areas that would require institutional capacity building (together with the Ministry and Embassy) and formulate how this capacity could be organised: flexible methods: bringing in capacity, longer-term TA, training workshops on the spot, cash transfers to eg quality funds. Another important aspect is that it should be easier to change the direction during implementation, bringing in new elements, stopping projects that are not really effective, providing topping-ups, extensions.

Generally I think that NPT provides a complementary function to our bilateral programme that is highly focussed on systematic interventions. The NPT provides some opportunities to be more creative, addressing specific concerns with capacity and it should remain so. One should try to develop NPT more flexible and have NUFFIC playing a stronger role in terms of quality control.

IN GENERAL NPT IS A QUICK REACTION INITIATIVE CAPABLE OF DELIVERING QUALITY PRODUCTS IN TIMELY FASHION. THE INITIATIVE HOWEVER IS NOT IN LINE WITH THE BUDGET SUPPORT MODALITY WHICH REQUIRES ALL ODA TO BE PLANNED FOR IN THE GOVERNMENT MEDIUM EXPENDITURE FRAMEWORK. DISCUSSION ARE ON GOING TO CONSIDER HOW NPT COULD BE ANCHORED WITHIN THE SWAP MODALITY

Source: Survey RNEs.

6.6 Conclusions

It is too early to come to definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of NPT as a programme. Only a single project has so far been concluded. Many projects have been operational for not much more than a year; a few other projects are just about halfway through the implementation cycle. The following observations must therefore be interpreted as indicative rather than final.

The overall conclusion at this stage is that the programme is an effective tool in the hands of those in the south who are dedicated and motivated to build human and institutional capacity with a clear view to pursuing important development goals, rather than for the mere benefit of their own institution or for personal gain. This may sound like a reference to an ideal situation that can never be reached. However, if real ownership by the south is among the goals of the capacity building framework, which it is, then the observation is relevant. Moreover, as the three field investigations reveal, at least in one of the three cases, that of Vietnam, there is clear evidence that this possibility is real. Given southern entities that have a genuine interest to play a role in development beyond the motivation of individual or institutional self-interest, the link between the programme and the focal sectors for Netherlands development cooperation is therefore in principle a healthy attribute of the programme, provided that link is taken seriously (and not simply paid lip service to during the design and inception phase of projects). On the other hand, fostering
the above referred dedication and motivation will be hampered by too bureaucratic an attitude towards and too narrow an interpretation of the linkage principle. Project results often only become truly effective in a broader context.

It is therefore important to pursue sector related development goals while at the same time attending to important requirements for improving the overall context (e.g. the development of a spirit of entrepreneurship in Tanzania and broad based system change in Vietnam).

While NPT has advantages over its predecessors in terms of efficiency, it may be less distinct from its predecessors in terms of effectiveness, precisely because the program is in the first place a tool. The quality of a product produced by someone using a tool is usually more a function of the abilities and creativity of the user than that it depends on the quality of the tool. As long as the programme is still the main determinant of its own effective use there is something wrong that must be fixed. Basically, in that case, it is the overall environment that must be put right. As the Vietnam field investigation highlights, a precondition for this is that all concerned are thoroughly familiar with processes and procedures involved in conceiving, developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects. Additionally, the field investigation carried out in Uganda revealed an impressive array of more generic conditions that must be in place if the programme is to be used effectively. These conditions include:

- Motivation and commitment on the part of those involved in implementing NPT projects;
- Openness in the environment towards change resulting from successful implementation of projects;
- Capacity to organize the local conditions necessary for training to be effective;
- Knowledgeability regarding effective training methods;
- Capacity to maintain an environment in which infrastructural changes, such as through the provision of computers, result in sustainable improvements;
- The presence of social, cultural and economic factors that allow projects to benefit citizens equitably regardless of gender, ethnicity, etc.;
- The presence of a culture of sharing, thus allowing good practices to diffuse;
- Substantial involvement of the southern institutions in taking charge of their own projects, in other words living up to the reality of true ownership.

The above analysis suggests that improved effectiveness is in the first place contingent upon changes in the overall context in which the program is applied. That context is owned by the south. While the tied nature of the programme was found not to be an important problem in the perception of the southern institutions, it may have a psychological effect on dispositions in the south to take full control and responsibility, not only of the projects in question, but also of the broader context in which they are embedded.

In some specific respects there are indications of greater effectiveness of NPT when compared to its predecessors. For instance, the emphasis in NPT on involvement of expertise from and in the south, where effectively implemented, has resulted in a less exclusive focus on skills building to the benefit of greater attention to fostering networks.
The importance of such a shift in emphasis was well expressed in an interview with the Research Centre for Forest Ecology and Environment in Vietnam: “Building the network is equally important as building the skills.” Also, the introduction of tendering, which has resulted in broadening the base of participating expertise in the north, has equally contributed to enhanced network building. Not only are the networks as such a valuable outcome of the projects in question, they also provide an opportunity for changing self-perceptions among southern institutions. One is less in a relationship of dependence. One also becomes more of a recognized part of the international context in which one wishes to play an autonomous role. The process may have been slow, but it is an important step in the right direction.

Based on the analysis in this chapter, major efforts to improve effectiveness of the programme should concentrate on:

- Project design within the perspective of long-term development goals, allowing projects to be seen from the start as building blocks of processes that potentially extend beyond the four-year project period;
- Introduction of a cut-off point after two years to decide whether or not collaborating partners will be committed to long-term cooperation with a view to attaining long-term development goals;
- Project design that takes contextual factors seriously into account so as to ensure that project results can be relevantly applied in the local situation and that undertaking capacity building efforts will be contingent upon the presence of a propitious context;
- Enhancing the focus on organizational learning among all collaborating partners concerned, with major emphasis on creating institutional competence in the south for design, development, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects by southern institutions;
- Widening the interpretation of the idea that projects must support sector goals, recognizing the crucial transsectoral role of competence building through mechanisms that are increasingly no longer restricted to the formal (higher) education sector;
- Ensuring that the above considerations be taken into account in monitoring and evaluating NPT action.
Part 2 – Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP)
7 Description of the NFP programme

7.1 NFP eligible countries

The NFP target group consists of mid-career professionals who are already in employment and who are nationals of and working in one of 57 selected countries (see Table 7.1). Given the demand-driven character of the NFP, the participants can come from governmental, private and non-governmental organisations as was the case in the predecessor programmes of the NFP. While fellowships are awarded to individuals, the need for training must occur within the context of the organization for which an applicant works. The training must help the organisation to develop its capacity. This means that applicants must be nominated by their employers. In fact, an application without the support of an employer will not be considered. Half of the available funding from the NFP budget should preferably be spent on fellowships for female candidates and for candidates from sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 7.1 Country list NFP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afghanistan</th>
<th>El Salvador</th>
<th>Namibia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Ethiopia²</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous Palestinian Territories</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Guatemala²</td>
<td>Peru²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Rwanda²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>South Africa²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>Surinam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Tanzania²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China¹</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Uganda²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Vietnam³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Moldava</td>
<td>Yemen²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador²</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Zambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt²</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Citizens from Hong Kong and Macao are exempted
² Countries originally selected for Multi-year agreements
Before 2003, all 126 DAC countries were eligible for the NFP. As intended in the 2001 international education policy framework the country list was reduced to 57 at the start of the new NFP programme, including the partner countries, thematic countries and a limited number of other poor countries. This choice was made in line with the concentration policy of the partner countries of Dutch bilateral development cooperation. As indicated in the policy framework, the thematic selection of the fellowships does not necessarily coincide with the Dutch bilateral sector focus, unlike the NPT programme.

### 7.2 Modalities of the NFP

The Dutch higher education institutes offer a wide variety of courses eligible for an NFP fellowship. A complete overview can be found in the NFP brochure 2007 or at NUFFIC’s website. A distinction is made between five different modalities:

**Individual fellowships:**

1. **Masters Programmes:** include courses at universities and Universities of Professional Education. Vocational master’s degrees are usually of shorter duration than a research-oriented Master’s degree programme (university). The duration of a Master course varies between 9 to 24 months;
2. **Short Courses:** Short courses are aimed at professionals who need to acquire specialised knowledge and skills through a period of intensive training. The course results in a certificate or a diploma and the duration varies between two weeks to twelve months;
3. **Ph.D. courses:** PhD degrees can be pursued at 18 Dutch universities and institutes for international education. The maximum NFP budget available for a PhD study programme is EUR 74,000. The maximum duration of a PhD fellowship is four years.

The individual fellowships are awarded to individuals, but the need for training must arise in the context of the organization the applicant works for. The employer should therefore nominate the applicant.

**Group training:**

4. **Tailor-Made Courses:** designed to meet specific needs identified by a requesting organisation in the South. Usually, tailor-made training is of brief duration (between one and nine months), and does not lead to a formal degree or diploma. The training can take place in the Netherlands or in the South or at different locations depending on the needs and the options available. In order to match supply with demand, a tender procedure is used to select the provider of the training.
5. **Refresher Courses:** are intended for alumni of the above-mentioned four NFP modalities. The aim of the refresher courses is to increase the benefits and prolong the effect of earlier training. The course has a duration of two weeks and is intended for a maximum of 20 participants. As a rule, refresher courses are organised in the fellow’s home country.

In addition, there is the possibility for the southern institute to enter into a Multi-Year Agreement (MYA) which can consist of a mixture of the different modalities. This instrument is discussed in section 6.8.
7.3 Planned and realised NFP programme budgets

During 2003-2005, EUR 64.1 million has been spent on the NFP programme. Table 6.1 gives an overview of the planned and realised programme budgets for the different modalities. More than half of the total budget is spent on Master courses. Short courses constitute the second largest budget line.

Table 7.2 Planned and realised programme budgets (in Euro)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003* Plan</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
<th>2004** Plan</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
<th>2005** Plan</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
<th>Total Realisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,668,282</td>
<td>14,316,000</td>
<td>15,339,007</td>
<td>10,767,718</td>
<td>14,103,071</td>
<td>36,110,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Courses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,891,179</td>
<td>5,521,000</td>
<td>5,187,208</td>
<td>5,268,079</td>
<td>5,872,682</td>
<td>14,951,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>867,712</td>
<td>944,000</td>
<td>1,067,096</td>
<td>1,934,808</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor-made</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>770,276</td>
<td>2,265,000</td>
<td>1,924,778</td>
<td>3,327,332</td>
<td>2,690,288</td>
<td>5,385,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refresher courses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,897,242</td>
<td>2,160,000</td>
<td>2,489,206</td>
<td>1,998,014</td>
<td>1,333,023</td>
<td>5,719,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13,226,979</td>
<td>24,300,000</td>
<td>25,807,911</td>
<td>22,305,143</td>
<td>25,066,160</td>
<td>64,101,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2003 no planning data available
** Additional EUR 1.5 m was added to programme funds
*** Programme funds were structurally increased with EUR 2.5 m annually

7.4 The application and selection procedure for individual fellowships

The application and selection procedure for individual fellowships consists of the following steps:

1. Applicants first apply for admission to the course of their choice. Applications should always be directed to the Dutch provider of the programme. The deadlines for these applications vary;
2. The provider assesses the application and decides whether or not the applicant’s educational background and other experience meet the specific requirements for the programme in question. The provider then informs all applicants of its decisions. Successful candidates will receive a letter indicating that they have been (provisionally) admitted. Admission must be unconditional in terms of the candidate’s education and language proficiency. Admission may be granted provisionally, subject to the candidate finding suitable funding for the programme;
3. After receiving their letter of admission, candidates can apply for an NFP fellowship by presenting a completed application form to the Netherlands embassy or consulate in their own country, accompanied by the necessary documentation;

---

*Nuffic, The Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP), 2007.
4. The embassy or consulate assesses each application against the eligibility criteria. Besides the administrative checks, special attention is given to:
   a. whether the application stems from multi-year agreements made with selected organizations (see section 6.8);
   b. whether the programme has added value for the sustainable capacity development of the employing organization and the development of the NFP country;
   c. whether the candidate fulfils any other specific requirements set by the embassy, consulate or country in question.

Eligibility criteria
A candidate applying for an NFP fellowship for a master’s degree programme must:
• Be a national of and working in one of the 57 NFP countries (see section 6.1);
• Have been unconditionally admitted by a Dutch institution to one of the master’s degree programmes on the course list.
• Have completed an NFP application form and have submitted all the required documentation to the Netherlands embassy or consulate;
• Be nominated by his or her employer, who pledges to continue paying the candidate’s salary and guarantees the candidate will be able to return to an equivalent position at the end of the fellowship period. (Partial payment of salary can sometimes be allowed.)
• Not be employed by a large industrial, commercial, international or multinational organization, which can be assumed to have sufficient resources of its own to finance staff training;
• Offer evidence of proficiency in speaking and writing the language of instruction.
• Be available for the entire period of the programme and be physically and mentally able to take part in the entire programme;
• Declare that they will return to their home country immediately after the study programme has ended.

5. The embassies and consulates forward the fellowship applications that meet all of the criteria to Nuffic;
6. Nuffic decides how many fellowships will be available for each programme. The allocation of fellowships between the various programmes is based on the number of eligible applicants for each programme;
7. The Dutch provider then selects the candidates who will receive fellowships. The provider informs all candidates of its decisions, and applies to Nuffic for a grant;
8. Nuffic awards the grant for the provider to cover the fellowshipholders’ expenses, including the tuition fees;
9. The Dutch providers pay each fellowship holder a monthly allowance for the duration of the programme; they also administer the fellowships, make logistical arrangements, and give guidance to the fellowship holders.
7.5 The application and selection procedure for group training

7.5.1 Tailor-made training

The application and selection procedure of tailor-made training is similar to the process followed for NPT projects. The interested southern institute is invited to submit a project outline to the RNE. During the phase in which the training outline is formulated, the help of a local expert, Nuffic and/or the embassy or consulate may be called upon to assist the requesting organization in translating the identified priority training area into a training outline. The embassy or consulate will forward the outline to Nuffic together with its own recommendations regarding the outline and the requesting organisation. The provider of the tailor-made training is subsequently selected by means of a tender procedure.

7.5.2 Refresher course

Applications for refresher courses can be submitted to Nuffic either by organizations in the South, by NFP alumni or by Dutch organizations that will provide the course. Nuffic will select the winning proposals and award grants accordingly.

7.6 Trends in applications

Table 7.3 shows that for each modality, the number of applications increased dramatically during the period 2003-2005. Unfortunately, the steady rise can not solely be explained as the consequence of an increased popularity of the NFP programme. The high number of applications is also attributable to the technique which is used to award fellowships to the various Dutch institutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of applicants</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master courses</td>
<td>2538</td>
<td>3134</td>
<td>3842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short courses</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>2614</td>
<td>3022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. studies</td>
<td>- *</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor made training courses</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(number of outlines received)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refresher courses</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(number of applications)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*) phasing out of old programme

In theory, it is the demand from the South which is leading to allocate the available budget over the different master and short courses. E.g. the higher the demand for one particular course, the more fellowships will awarded to that course. The incentive of the Dutch provider is therefore to mobilize as many as possible applications.
The ‘demand’ is therefore also an indicator of the Dutch institute to generate interest for a particular course. The competition between courses was further surged by a growing number of eligible courses on the NFP-list as shown in figure 6.1. The courses that received fellowships may have raised in absolute terms, in relative terms there was a sharp decline in relation to the fast growth of eligible courses on the NFP list.

Figure 7.1 Number of courses on the list versus Number of courses that received fellowships, 2003-2005

The awarded fellowships in absolute terms, are provided in table 7.4 Comparison of these figures between years should be made with some caution. In case more expensive courses or courses with a longer duration are awarded, the absolute number of grants may be lower compared to the year before. This does not imply a reduction in the total budget which was shown in table 6.1 above. It is however an observation that tuition fees rose more steadily than the programme budget, therefore declining the overall capacity of the NFP.

Table 7.4 Awarded fellowships, 2003-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of fellows</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master courses</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short courses</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. studies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor made training courses (number of outlines approved)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refresher courses (number of applications approved)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a consequence of the surge of applications and to a lesser degree to the higher tuition fees and the limited rise of the project budget, winning changes to obtain a fellowship have also dropped dramatically as shown in table 7.5.
Table 7.5  Chance to obtain a fellowship, 2003-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chance to obtain a fellowship</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master courses</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short courses</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. studies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor made training courses (number of outlines received)</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refresher courses (number of applications)</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*) phasing out of old programme

7.7  Type of institutions involved

Dutch institutions involved

To make the NFP more flexible, it was decided in the 2001 policy framework that the programme would be open for all Masters and PhDs education possibilities in the Netherlands and not only be limited to the international education institutes, which was the case in the predecessor programmes. In contrast with the NPT programme, the IE institutes are in practice still the dominating provider type for all NFP modalities. Their share out of the total awarded courses has, however, been declining when figures for 2005 are compared with 2003. Especially for Ph.D studies, universities have captured a reasonable share. The addition of new eligible master courses has also resulted in a slight shift from the IE institutes to universities and Universities of Professional Education. For refresher courses, there is the effect of a time lag. Since 2005 also universities and Universities of Professional Education are using this modality.

Figure 7.2  Dutch institutions involved
Southern institutions involved

By far, most fellows originate from a (semi-)government organization or an Education institute. For the master courses, the latter made a huge jump in 2005 at the expense of the (semi-) government, small businesses and NGOs. Figure 7.3 shows the top 3 type of Southern institutions involved for the master and short courses. All other NFP modalities show a similar picture. Other types of Southern institutions which occasionally are involved in NFP activities are candidates originating from research institutes and small and larger businesses.

Figure 7.3 Southern institutions involved

7.8 Multi Year Agreements

A special NFP instrument is the Multi Year Agreement (MYA) which started as a pilot in 10 countries in 2003. A MYA is an agreement based on a multi-year training programme between Nuffic and an organization in the South. It aims to help the selected organizations to solve their staff development needs on a more structured basis. Nuffic consults with the RNE and with local experts to identify suitable organizations. At the end of 2005, 19 agreements were in place in 8 countries. More details on the individual MYAs can be found in Annex 2.

Table 7.6 Countries with a Multi Year Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of MYA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A budget for the total estimated costs of the training courses listed in the plan will be reserved by Nuffic for the indicated period. The indicative budget of a MYA is EUR 500,000. The MYA lasts for three years. Once a MYA is in place, candidates are guaranteed a fellowship as long as they meet the other criteria of the NFP.
8 Policy relevance of NFP

In this chapter the policy relevance of the NFP is assessed. In particular, we look at the extent to which the NFP is harmonised with the Dutch bilateral policies (including the gender and regional distribution of the NFP participants), the relevance of the NFP for the southern organisations, and its relevance for the individual participants.

8.1 NFP and the Dutch bilateral policies

8.1.1 Harmonisation with the Netherlands policy priorities

The NFP programme, unlike the NPT, is not limited to the Dutch bilateral priority sectors. In the questionnaire to the RNEs it was found that the majority of respondents (85%) feel that the NFP should indeed not be limited to the Dutch priority sectors. This perception was confirmed during the field visits. For instance, the RNE Dar es Salaam mentioned that the NFP would have less impact - and be less beneficial to Tanzania - when it would be limited to only the Dutch focal sectors. The number of participants would drop at least with 40%. There is much interest for instance in agriculture and geographic information systems and the Tanzanian people perceive the Netherlands as having an added value here in terms of expertise. “Why would the RNE then limit the NFP to the priority sectors of the Netherlands?” was the question raised by the RNE.

The number of countries that are eligible for the NFP programme is also much larger than for the NPT (57 instead of 15), although there were even more before 2003, when all 126 DAC countries were eligible.

Not surprisingly, the Dutch education institutes are not in favour to limit the NFP to the Dutch bilateral sectors nor do they want to further limit the number of NFP countries, given that this would mean a drastic reduction of potential applicants.

Under-utilisation of the NFP budget in Yemen

For some time the NFP has been under-utilised in Yemen. This was partly due to understaffing at the Embassy and too few Yemenites with good English language skills. The Embassy in Yemen indicated that in principle the Embassy’s vision is to support the NFP programme but that it also looking beyond NFP for two reasons: 1) many people who would benefit from the NFP courses on offer do have insufficient command of English. For them, training in the MENA region would be more appropriate and 2) the Embassy does not necessarily want to tie aid to Dutch providers.
Although the individual fellowships are not limited to the Dutch priority sectors, the new MYA modality does provide opportunities to integrate the NFP more in the bilateral policy of the RNE. The MYA gives more possibilities for the RNE to influence the selection process and use it for strengthening of organisations in its bilateral sectors. For instance, in Tanzania the MYAs are explicitly linked to sectors or themes supported by the Netherlands development cooperation; also the sector specialists at the RNE Dar es Salaam were involved in the identification of institutions for a MYA. Also in Uganda it was found that the MYAs are linked to the Dutch priority sectors (see box below).

In Uganda the multi-year agreements show a clear relation with one of the policy priority areas that has been selected by the RNE, i.e. strengthening local government. Of the three districts in Uganda with MYAs aiming at capacity building in the field of local government, two have been visited for the evaluation. The one in Soroti is operational for some time and is clearly positively received by the beneficiary organisations, also due to earlier positive experiences as regards academic and short courses in the Netherlands. The one in Arua is still in the starting blocks, waiting on approval of applications. However, it should be noticed that, although local government organisations are the primary focus of these MYAs, there appears to be a large variety in the courses that are being taken by the local government employees. For instance, in the district of Arua, there are applicants for courses in the field of government administration, veterinary, and entomology. A too wide variety of course supply could hinder an effective capacity building, due to lack of interrelatedness between sub-sectors and sub-levels within the local government organisations.

Source: Field investigation Uganda (see annex)

However, not all countries have MYAs. For instance in Vietnam, the RNE is not in favour of MYAs, considering the risk of nepotism in an environment that leaves to be desired in terms of transparency. Besides, in a country like Vietnam a specific demand is rarely identified with only one institution. An agreement with a single institution would thus be less desirable than an agreement with multiple institutions, something which is not (yet) a contemplated programme modality.

8.1.2 Gender and regional distribution

One of the programme objectives is that at least 50 percent of all fellows should be female and that 50 percent of all fellows originate from Sub-Saharan Africa. For individual fellowships, Nuffic has however limited power to steer the gender and geographical distribution because the final selection is delegated to the Dutch institutes. The Dutch institutes may weight other interests, like their relationships with southern institutions, the quality of the candidate fellowship holders, or the internationally mixed composition of the classes, above the NFP programme objectives.

Gender

The number of applications received from females is relatively low. Females therefore receive a preferential treatment and have a relatively higher winning chance than male applicants. Still, for the Master’s and short courses the percentage of female fellowships is below the objective of 50 percent. For PhDs, the objective was reached in 2005 with two-third of all PhDs students being females.
Table 8.1  Female applicants and female fellowship holders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% female applicants</td>
<td>27,7%</td>
<td>26,6%</td>
<td>24,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% female fellowship holders</td>
<td>36,2%</td>
<td>44,4%</td>
<td>40,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korte cursussen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% female applicants</td>
<td>35,2%</td>
<td>27,9%</td>
<td>28,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% female fellowship holders</td>
<td>41,7%</td>
<td>40,7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% female applicants</td>
<td>30,0%</td>
<td>30,1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% female fellowship holders</td>
<td>44,4%</td>
<td>31,6%</td>
<td>66,7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regional distribution

For 2005, all modalities achieved or were very close to achieving the objective that at least 50 percent of all fellows should originate from Sub-Saharan Africa. For the tailor-made training a huge preferential was given to this part of the world, provided the low percentage of applicants from this region.

Table 8.2  Applicants and fellowship holders from Sub-Saharan Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of applicants from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>57,5%</td>
<td>58,0%</td>
<td>66,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% fellowship holders from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>50,1%</td>
<td>50,8%</td>
<td>52,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korte cursussen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of applicants from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>47,2%</td>
<td>51,5%</td>
<td>53,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% fellowship holders from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>44,6%</td>
<td>53,4%</td>
<td>51,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of applicants from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>37,5%</td>
<td>37,5%</td>
<td>40,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% fellowship holders from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>22,2%</td>
<td>42,1%</td>
<td>48,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor made training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of applicants from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>37,5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% fellowship holders from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>22,7%</td>
<td>39,1%</td>
<td>46,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refresher courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of applicants from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>40,4%</td>
<td>54,1%</td>
<td>47,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% fellowship holders from sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>48,4%</td>
<td>68,8%</td>
<td>62,5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2 Relevance of NFP for the southern organisations

8.2.1 Individual fellowships

For individual fellowships, Nuffic and the RNEs have limited power to steer the NFP development objectives as the final selection of NFP participants is delegated to the Dutch education institutes. They do this on the basis of their own academic criteria (e.g. the candidate’s education or language proficiency, motivation, overall composition of a class of students representing different countries and organisations) without necessarily giving priority to the NFP development objectives.

In two of the countries that were visited for this evaluation (Uganda and Tanzania) the Fellowship Officers of the RNE had the perception that their recommendations for selection of NFP participants were not taken into consideration by the Dutch institutes. Much work goes into preparing the advice. It is frustrating to have to believe that it is subsequently ignored. Not following the RNE advice negatively affects the relevance of the NFP programme from the development perspective, despite the fact that the education institute may have genuine reasons for doing so on the basis of its own interests.

To avoid frustration on the side of the RNEs, better communication from the institutes to the Fellowship Officers, possibly via Nuffic, may help. This could be in the form of a short report at the end of the selection procedure describing how the selection was made and how it could thus happen that some recommendations were not followed.

The tension between the academic criteria and development criteria has been overruled in case of the MYAs. As a rule, the Dutch institutes have to accept candidates from MYAs that qualify on academic criteria. This restriction in freedom to choose the best candidate is accepted but not longed for by the Dutch institutes. As a consequence, the Dutch institutes may be extra critical to label a MYA candidate as eligible on academic criteria.

8.2.2 Tailor-made training

In the field investigation of Vietnam it was felt that – since NFP is not linked to the priority sectors of the Netherlands - demands articulated in the framework of training events proposed under NFP are more directly those of the proposing institution in the south. This gives NFP a certain edge over NPT. It is also a preferred modality in cases where training costs can be limited to an amount inferior to € 50,000\(^7\), in which case procedures are simplified and potentially\(^8\) faster and no tendering is necessary. It is furthermore a preferred option when training needs can be narrowly defined, calling for a targeted intervention without all the bells and whistles that come with the NPT modality.

\(^7\) Since September 2006 this simplified procedure is used for all TMTs.
\(^8\) Indeed ‘potentially’: in practice the preparation of TMT appeared to be a very time-consuming process (for more details about this, please refer to section 8.3)
8.2.3 Multi-year agreements

An example of good ownership and relevance of the NFP is the Immigration Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Tanzania. This organisation took the initiative to approach the RNE and is now one of the four MYA organisations in Tanzania. Under the MYA, 15 staff members have been approved to follow a Masters in the Netherlands and two persons have followed a short course. At present an outline for a TMT is in the process of tendering. For one additional staff member (who could not be financed anymore under the MYA), the Immigration Division financed the Masters from its own resources, which of course is a good indication that the education in the Netherlands is perceived as relevant.

8.2.4 Refresher courses

More problematic in terms of relevance can be the modality of refresher courses. The efforts to submit a proposal for a refresher course are relatively low and the chances to receive budget for a refresher course are relatively high. This makes that this modality is popular among the Dutch institutes. Consequently, the relevance of the refresher course is not always clear cut.

8.3 Relevance of NFP for the participants

The NFP in Tanzania
Since 1961 the Netherlands Government has been sponsoring Tanzanian professionals to study under the NFP. At present, the NFP is one of the largest fellowship programmes and there is a big demand for it. It is estimated that over the years more than 3000 Tanzanians have taken this opportunity and have studied a variety of courses in the Netherlands, ranging from Masters, short courses, PhDs and tailor-made training. The past years have shown a steady increase in the number of applications in Tanzania. In 2005 136 NFP awards were given: 78 short courses, 54 Master courses and 4 PhDs.

Source: Field investigation Tanzania (see annex)

In all three countries under investigation, the evaluators encountered many graduates of educational institutions in The Netherlands, some via NFP but also with financing from alternative or personal sources. They all were very positive about this experience.

On various occasions, it was mentioned that the benefits of studying in the Netherlands are not only content related. In addition to benefiting from the knowledge and skills gained through the variety of courses offered under the NFP, it often also has to do with particular approaches to interacting with content (active student involvement, problem orientation, involving hands-on experience, focus on real-life application, etc.) that are seen to distinguish collaboration with the Netherlands from alternative opportunities. The quality of education in the Netherlands is regarded higher than in the region also because of elements such as having more direct contact with the professor, the smaller size of the class, the internet and library facilities, etc. Moreover, as one of the interviewed persons said, the exposure to the very different environment of the Netherlands “changes the mindset of people”.
8.4 Perceptions of the RNEs and southern organisations

The RNEs were asked about whether the NFP is compliant with national development policies. About half of the RNEs (18 out of 35) think that the NFP indeed (fully) complies with the national development policies, while 7 see no or little compliance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No compliance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full compliance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that, although the majority of respondents agree with the statement that the NFP is compliant with national priorities, an important group disagrees with this statement. Almost half of respondents disagree or has no opinion on this (‘neutral’). Since, according to the embassy, the initiative for the application is almost fully with the individual candidate (PhD, Masters, Short Courses and Refresher courses) or with a local institute (MYA, TMT) there is in most countries no mechanism which could ensure a full compliance with national development priorities.

The southern institutes involved in a MYA felt however that the programme was well in line with the national strategy for the sector in which the institute was active: eight respondents (80 percent) felt that this was fully the case, one partially and one had no opinion on this.

Two questions related to compliance with Dutch bilateral development policies were addressed to the embassies:
- Is the NFP responsive to the needs in sectors identified for Dutch Development Assistance;
- Is the NFP harmonised with other activities in sectors identified for Dutch Development Assistance.

The following graph illustrates that slightly more RNEs agree that the NFP is responsive to the needs in the bilateral sectors than that the NFP is harmonised with the other activities in these sectors.
Also here, a mechanism for compliance is lacking, which is logical, considering the fact that NFP is not limited to the sector policy. A majority of respondents feels that the NFP should indeed *not* be limited to the Dutch priority sectors (85 percent, the other 15 percent feeling that it should be limited).

Despite of the above, the majority of respondents feel that NFP has an added value to the bilateral cooperation programme (may be exactly because it is not limited to the same sectors).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously, among the respondents who agree there are those who represent the Netherlands in countries which have no bilateral cooperation programme with the Netherlands. Of the other respondents, the following remarks were selected which are representative for all remarks made.
Open remarks on Added Value of NFP

The NFP programme itself stand alone as one of the best tools of assistance. It has an added value of fostering cultural and people to people contact between and the Netherlands as NFP fellows are the best ambassadors for the Netherlands.

NFP programme besides being the open fellowship, has played a very important role in the development of the candidate, organizations and to the country. The government of …. does not have sufficient funds for the capacity building of the civil servants, and neither to strengthen the private sectors, although the government puts the private sector development in the centre. The NFP programme has played a very important role in helping the government and the private sectors in strengthening the capacities of the potential employees in the development of their organizations.

It could be linked better to the government priorities for development in the country.

It has added value in the sense that providing training, expertise and know how helps the root of many organisation problems. Without expertise, some organisations do not have the capacity to administer programmes (from the bilateral cooperation) successfully.

Virtually all respondent southern institutes felt that their organisation had sufficient possibilities to express their ideas on the training outline: eleven out of twelve TMT beneficiaries and nine out of ten MYA partners answered ‘yes’, in both groups one respondent answered ‘to a limited degree’.

Southern institutes were asked whether the training outline of the TMT reflected the training needs of the participants. Seven out of twelve respondents felt that they reflected the needs very closely, the remaining five answered ‘well enough’.

The conclusion therefore is that there is a demand for NFP and that in the design and implementation of MYA and TMT the demand of the beneficiary is taken into account.

8.5 Conclusions

The NFP programme, unlike the NPT, is not limited to the Dutch bilateral priority sectors. In the questionnaire to the RNEs it was found that the majority of respondents (85%) feel that the NFP should indeed not be limited to the Dutch priority sectors. This perception was confirmed during the field visits. The number of countries that are eligible for the NFP programme is also much larger than for the NPT (57 instead of 15), although there were even more before 2003, when all 126 DAC countries were eligible.

Although the individual fellowships are not limited to the Dutch priority sectors, the new MYA modality does provide opportunities to integrate the NFP more in the bilateral policy of the RNE. The MYA gives more possibilities for the RNE to influence the selection process and use it for strengthening of organisations in its bilateral sectors.
One of the programme objectives is to strive to achieve that at least 50 percent of all fellows are female and that 50 percent of all fellows originate from Sub-Saharan Africa. For individual fellowships, Nuffic has however limited power to steer the gender and geographical distribution because the final selection is delegated to the Dutch institutes. The Dutch institutes may weight other interests, like the candidate’s education or language proficiency, above the NFP programme objectives.

The number of applications received from females is relatively low. Females therefore receive a preferential treatment and have a relatively higher winning chance than male applicants. Still, for the Master’s and short courses the percentage of female fellowships is below the objective of 50 percent. For PhDs, the objective was reached in 2005 with two-third of all PhDs students being females.

For 2005, all modalities achieved or were very close to achieving the objective that at least 50 percent of all fellows should originate from Sub-Saharan Africa. For the tailor-made training a huge preferential was given to this part of the world provided the low percentage of applicants from the region.

RNEs sometimes have the perception that their recommendations for selection of NFP participants are not taken into consideration by the Dutch institutes. Not following the RNE advice, however, negatively affects the relevance of the NFP programme from the development perspective, despite the fact that the education institute may have genuine reasons for doing so on the basis of its own interests.

In all three countries under investigation, the evaluators encountered many graduates of educational institutions in The Netherlands, some via NFP but also with financing from alternative or personal sources. They all were very positive about this experience.
9 Efficiency of NFP

Similar to the NPT programme, we have assessed the efficiency of the NFP on the basis of process indicators, such as smoothness of interaction between the different actors, clearness in the division of responsibilities, functioning of the procedures for the different NFP modalities, timeliness of activities, use of monitoring and evaluation, inclusion of regional collaboration, and the overall performance of Nuffic as implementing organisation of the NFP programme.

9.1 Cooperation between the various actors

9.1.1 Relationship between DCO and Nuffic

As was described in chapter 4 the tendering process for the programme management of NFP (and NPT) resulted in only two proposals. Nuffic was the only organization that submitted a proposal for NFP as well as NPT. Although a fresh view on international cooperation in the field of education would have been desirable, Nuffic which managed the predecessors of NPT and NFP, turned out to be the only bidder for both strands and was selected as programme manager.

Earler in this report the initial relationship between DCO and Nuffic was characterized as somewhat ‘tense’. Especially the close supervision and control by DCO, for instance on inputs and time spending, was experienced by Nuffic as a proof for distrust on the implementation side of the programme. This attitude of DCO towards Nuffic was fed by various grounds.. In the past four years the relationship between DCO and Nuffic has improved, as was described also in the chapter describing NPT.

9.1.2 Relationship between Nuffic and RNEs

In general it appears that NFP is not awarded very much priority in the activities of the RNEs. It is sometimes even called “a toy of the embassy to make a good impression on the outside world”. The low priority also appears from the small number of hours that in general is available for coordinating NFP activities. The activities are usually performed by one person, the fellowship officer. In some instances the NFP office at the embassy is being closed for a certain period (even up to six months). There also appear to be differences in handling the application form. Some embassies do not have any selection procedure at all, whereas on other embassies additional criteria are in use.
There appear to be, therefore, considerable differences in the way in which RNEs are involved in the NFP process. This is partly due to the fact that there is no prescribed general role description for the embassies. The RNE can decide itself if and how active they want to be involved in NFP, depending on their policy and priorities set. It should be noticed that no additional resources are given to RNEs for providing substantial NFP inputs. As a result of all this there are also considerable differences in the way Nuffic and the RNE cooperate with each other. The example of Tanzania shows how actively involved an RNE can be in NFP:

In Tanzania, the RNE plays an important role in facilitating the NFP. First of all, it disseminates information on NFP. Second, applications are received for the whole range of NFP courses including tailor-made training. Applications are assessed and processed by the Embassy before being sent to Nuffic with the RNE recommendations. When results are received, RNE informs the candidates as well as the government.

In Tanzania, requests for tailor-made training are reviewed, commented on by RNE and advice is given to organisations on how to improve the proposals before they are sent to Nuffic. Where necessary, consultants are engaged to assist with the proposals.

The Embassies in Tanzania as well as in Uganda have been actively involved in the Multi-year Agreements (MYAs). They identified and recommended the organisations that have been selected by Nuffic under this programme.

The example form Uganda demonstrates also how NFP can be geared towards the RNE development policy in a certain country:

In fact the RNE in Kampala has developed three different application procedures for the 2007 NFP programmes, indicating the policy priorities they want to achieve with the help of NFP:

1. NFP procedure for some of the priority sectors in Uganda (Justice, Law and Order; Uganda Revenue Authority and Procurement Sector)
2. NFP procedure for Nebbi, Arua (incl. Koboko & Maracha), Yumbe, Moyo, Adjumani, Lira (incl. Amolatar & Dokolo), Kaberamaido, Soroti and Katakwi (incl. Amuria)
3. NFP procedure for Gulu (incl. Kilak), Moroto, Kamuli (incl. Kaliro), Hoima, Masindi (incl. Buliisa), Kibaala, Rakai, Bushenyi and Kisoro.

For every NFP procedure of the RNE in Kampala a detailed guide is available indicating the various phases the applicant has to go through, resulting in an application which is scored in the following way:

Furthermore the RNE has developed a scoring list, indicating the priority of NFP applicants according Ugandan needs in term of capacity building for development and is based on the development policy of the RNE in Kampala. The scoring list is as follows (total maximum score is 50):

- Applicant is female: 10
- Applicant is working in one of the priority areas of the embassy: 25
- Applicant is working up-country in a needy region: 10
- Applicant is employed by one of the three organisations with a Nuffic Multi Year - Agreement but not part of the agreement: 5
The RNEs have experienced an increasingly heavy NFP workload over the last few years. This can also be illustrated by the developments on NFP in Tanzania.

In recent years, the NFP programme has become increasingly popular in Tanzania and applications are received not only from the Government, but also from the private sector and NGOs. The number of inquiries regarding the programme, and other correspondence with candidates, local organisations, Dutch institutes and Nuffic have risen.

In Tanzania, applications are not only received from the government but also increasingly from NGOs and the private sector. All applications must be channelled via the Civil Service department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Also many of the applications are received incomplete and require follow-up. Furthermore, the government authorities have to be informed regarding the outcome of the results which proves to be tedious administrative work. Another contributing factor to the increasing workload of the RNE is that tailor-made training is becoming popular in Tanzania and training proposals are on the increase. At the same time, requesting organisations have little or no skills in writing good quality proposals. RNE facilitates the preparation of proposals by engaging consultants with funding from Nuffic. The Embassy reviews, comments and assists in improving the quality of the draft proposals before sending them to Nuffic. RNE is also fully involved in the MYA programme.

The Embassy - through its active involvement - has certainly contributed to the success of the NFP programme in Tanzania. However, the overwhelming success has become a heavy burden on the NFP staff of RNE. “We are now drowning in our own success” has been stated by the RNE staff. To reduce the workload the RNE Dar es Salaam has recruited a second staff member for NPT/NFP.

9.1.3 Relationship between Nuffic and northern institutes

As was described in chapter 4, the new set-up of the programmes had an impact on the relationship between Nuffic and the northern institutes. For NFP this was particularly related to the new multi-year agreements and the new set-up of the tailor-made trainings. Although relationships have improved since then, northern institutes still need to get fully used to the ‘client-provider relationship’ that rules the tendering and implementation process of the tailor made training of NFP.

9.2 Individual modalities (Masters, PhDs, short courses, refresher courses)

The new NFP brought along that the application procedure was split into two phases. In the past, candidates could apply for admission to a (master) course and at the same time apply for a fellowship. Since 2002 these two applications were separated which has resulted in a duplication of activities. First, candidates have to apply for admission at the education institute. When they have been (conditionally) admitted, they can ask for a fellowship based on their conditional letter of admission. This procedure has had negative impacts on the efficiency and accessibility of the NFP programme. The efficiency has been reduced due to more administrative procedures for the individual applicants as well as for the northern institutes.
The accessibility is at stake also due to the increased administrative burden for the applicants, but also because of increased costs for acquiring necessary documents (also travel costs) and taking an official language test (obligatory). This test can be very costly, particularly for short courses, especially when the RNE requires a certificate from a specific language institute. It should be noted that these tests were introduced to ensure an appropriate competence level in the English language to follow (English) lessons in the Netherlands. In countries where primary and secondary education are provided in English, these tests are less obligatory. The costs for the applicant have been reduced by eliminating the medical test out of the application procedure. The reduced chances for being awarded a fellowship can be illustrated by some figures from Uganda NFP figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.1</th>
<th>Uganda NFP figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of Application procedures started</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of application procedures not completed (in time)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of admitted applications (1-2)</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Proportion of non-completed procedures (1/3)</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of Applications rejected</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Number Applicants awarded a fellowship or alternative scholarship</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success rate (6/3)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: RNE Uganda, Kampala

From the table it can be concluded that whereas the proportion of not completed procedures has increased from 33 percent in 2002 to 46, 40 and 38 percent in the following years the proportion of awarded applicants (success rate) have dropped from 25 percent (2002) to 19 percent in 2005. As was already described in chapter 6 (table 6.4) the chances to obtain and a fellowship vary between the various individual NFP modalities, being lowest for master courses (11.4% in 2005) and highest for refresher courses (43.8%).

Especially, in case of a MYA with an organisation with an agreed multi-year training plan, indicating individuals to be admitted to the courses, the bureaucracy is perceived as contra-productive to an effective implementation of the MYA. This is clearly the case in Uganda in the district of Arua where impatience and misunderstanding regarding the bureaucracy of NFP is growing.

The two-step selection process also creates unnecessary workload for the RNE, Nuffic and the education institutes in the Netherlands, although interviewees hold different opinions on this. Illustrative is the number of deadlines an individual NFP applicant is confronted with, especially as regards the master courses.

---

9 The success rate of awarded applicants is calculated by dividing the the number of application procedures started (1) minus the number of application procedures not completed (2), divided by the number of applicants awarded a fellowship (3).
First there is the deadline for the academic application at the university. Then, after having been provisionally admitted to the university, there is a deadline by Nuffic for receiving fellowship applications. In Uganda this process is coordinated by the fellowship officer at RNE, creating an additional layer of subsequent deadlines for the academic applications and for the fellowship applications. Apparently, this is done for the sake of an efficient coordination at the RNE. However, for the organizations in the south and their applicants it causes a lot of bureaucracy, stress and uncertainties. Especially, when their is a MYA with an organisation with an agreed multi-year training plan, indicating individuals to be admitted to the courses, the bureaucracy is experienced as contra-productive to an effective implementation of the MYA.

Fellowship Officers at the RNE and the Consulate General in Vietnam encountered frustrating delays in obtaining information from receiving institutes in The Netherlands allowing them to notify unsuccessful applicants about the negative result on their application. Successful applicants received their information in time. This costs much extra work for the Fellowship Officers.

Fellowships are awarded based on a formula of received applications per course in relation to the total available budget. This has resulted in an incentive for the Dutch institutes to mobilise as many as possible applications in order to receive more grants, while doing the critical selection of applicants only at the end. Various institutes mentioned that they found it very expensive to send people to the Netherlands for a PhD. If they could decide on the budget they would prefer to have three to four local PhDs instead of sending one to the Netherlands. Although the positive effects of the demand driven approach are acknowledged by the Dutch education institutes, they have difficulties with the effect of fragmentation. With so many eligible courses (see section 6.6) chances are high that a specific course will receive none or a limited number of grants. Under these circumstances, it is found difficult to pay attention to the specific needs from candidates from developing countries. Year to year fluctuations in the demand is also not favourable for the Dutch institutions. The actual number of awarded fellowships per course manifests itself at a rather late stage at which time it is difficult for the institutions to be flexible in their programme.

9.3 Tailormade training

The preparation of TMT – although being a limited intervention - is a very complex and time-consuming process. The quality of the outlines for the TMT is often insufficient. One reason for this is that the applicant organisation has to develop a project outline without any help from possible (Dutch) suppliers. This procedure is meant to enhance a proper demand oriented approach. To alleviate the problem of the low quality, Nuffic supplies help in developing the project outlines. Nevertheless, it remains difficult, even for local experts or consultants to disentangle the real demand from the actual needs. Tailor-made trainings have a shorter duration and subsequently a smaller budget which make the tender procedure a costly and time-consuming process in relation to the investment. Therefore, Nuffic initially had decided to simplify the procedure for proposals below EUR 50,000. For these trainings, it was not longer required to tender, but Nuffic could directly approach Dutch institutes to ask for a short expression of interest.
On that basis, one institute is selected and can formulate the training together with the southern partner. Since 1 September 2006 this ‘direct consultation’ procedure has been introduced for all tailor-made trainings with the exception that they are still published in a tender procedure.

9.4 Multi-year agreements

At the time of the evaluation 19 multi-year agreements had been signed in nine countries. The selection process for the MYA organisations has been very time consuming, in particular for the pilot countries such as Tanzania. Since there were no clear guidelines and no examples to follow, the RNE Dar es Salaam with the support of Nuffic had to search for ways of identifying organisations. The criteria for selection of organisations were not straightforward and many issues had to be clarified between RNE and Nuffic. After internal RNE discussions, 13 organisations were short-listed. However, only four could be selected in the end given the budget constraints of the MYA modality. The RNE would have preferred that Nuffic had indicated earlier in the process how much budget was available for MYAs in Tanzania. RNE staff started enthusiastically and put a lot of effort in identifying organisations and then later it became clear that much less resources were available for Tanzania than they thought. According to Nuffic, the information was, however, given from the set off and at the first Fellowship Officers Conference, but apparently, this was not internalised within the embassy.

Initiated by the RNE, the MYAs in Uganda are being implemented at the level of local government, being one of the priorities of the RNE. It was also decided by the RNE that the MYAs should have a regional perspective, being three up-country districts in the north of Uganda (Soroti, Lira and Arua). The main reason for selecting these regions was that the regular NFP fellowships are traditionally dominated by applicants from Kampala. This bias to the capital is mainly due to logistics (long travel distance for applicants to the fellowship office at RNE), a more knowledge based economy in and around Kampala, and a focus of central government policies on the capital. The up-country regions were already given extra attention by the RNE, before the MYAs came into action. In this respect the introduction of the MYAs are clearly in line with the RNE policies in Kampala. The MYAs offer a targeted policy instrument for the RNE to improve the accessibility of the NFP programme, while at the same time contributing to capacity building in the one of the priority sectors of RNE. In line with the NFP programme target to have at least 50 percent female applicants, the RNE in Kampala actively approaches local organizations with the request to promote applications among their female employees. In close cooperation with the RNE suitable local governments organisations were identified in the districts mentioned. For all three districts the local district office was selected as the targeted organization for a MYA. In Soroti also participants from NGOs were selected for the short courses in NFP.

For the beneficiary organization the MYA has the advantage of a long term agreement giving a more structural basis to their capacity building. The employees who are included in the multi-year training plan have priority in the selection procedures for the courses that are provided by Dutch education institutes.

We think that focusing on a selection of strategic positions in organisations might benefit the effectiveness of training and education, clearly creating an added value for the organisation.
9.5 Monitoring and evaluation

Procedures for monitoring and evaluation of NFP are far less sophisticated than in the case of NPT. In fact, this is an area in great need of development. Initially no extensive role for Nuffic had been foreseen regarding monitoring and evaluation. The need to become more serious about M&E has now been recognized by DCO as well as Nuffic. A logical framework has recently been developed, and this year more time and budget has been allocated to Nuffic to start setting up a proper process and to develop relevant instruments and procedures. Moreover, the subject of the latest annual meeting for NFP contact persons at the Netherlands institutes (which took place on 2 November 2006) was monitoring and evaluation. It has also been agreed that in 2007 a tracer study will be undertaken making use of contact details for alumni that are available with alumni associations considering that no centralized archive exists of past fellowship holders.

Currently some appreciative feedback is being collected of individual students who attend courses. So far the relevant evaluation forms are being processed through the institutions at which the students took their courses. This has the risk of introducing a bias as students may be less inclined to be critical of their experience. Nuffic therefore intends to change the method of data collection in the future, approaching students directly by email.

While there is a declared intention in the case of the Tailor-Made Training and Multi-Year Agreement modalities to impact the organizations to which the students pertain, there is no process in place for systematic data collection regarding such impact. M&E is restricted to what comes out of the individual evaluation forms. No baseline studies are being carried out either. Such studies would be required for measuring impact in terms of institutional change against known starting conditions.

9.6 Inclusion of regional collaboration

In the international education policy framework of 2001 it was stated that not necessarily the full education has to be offered in the Netherlands. If Dutch institutes cooperate with regional institutes, regional education is also possible. However, it is brought forward by interviewees, in the south as well in the north, that in practice in the NFP academic courses the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped. Of course this depends on the knowledge area that is to be developed, which is illustrated by the following example.

For education and training in the field of management and local government the Uganda Management Institute (UMI) in Kampala is frequently mentioned as a renowned institute that could play a role in international education projects like NPT of NFP. This institute not only could be involved in facilitating TMT courses but could also supervise PhD courses which are principally coordinated by a Dutch university. This construction seems to be used by the Maastricht School of Management (MSM) that, in cooperation with the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (in Namibia), provides a PhD course for which the field work is done in the home country and the thesis is being defended in Maastricht. Also at a more local level there appear to be training institutes which could be involved in providing training courses, e.g. commercial training institute in Soroti.
The possibilities to make use of regional expertise will differentiate between the various NFP modalities and can even differentiate depending on the subject of the course or training that is being provided or requested.

9.7 Performance of Nuffic

The Nuffic officers for NPT and NFP are not the same persons, reflecting differences in activities for NPT and NFP. NFP officers are generally speaking more administratively involved, whereas the NPT officers are (also) more policy oriented. However, for tailor made training the role of Nuffic is comparable to that of NPT and other competencies are required than for managing the fellowships.

There have been significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up of TMT, partly attributable to the fact that procedures for programme implementation still had to be invented. The time that Nuffic needs for processing the applications for TMT can take very long. In one of the field investigations a case was observed of a TMT that took Nuffic 1.5 years to process (not including the time that was needed for tendering). It has happened that Nuffic came with questions after a year, while in the mean time the needs of the organisation had already changed. Consequently, the RNE had to do a lot of damage control.

 Apparently Nuffic had to recruit new qualified staff to implement the TMT proposals in an effective way, which became necessary after a sudden and quick rise in TMT requests. This has seriously delayed the process in the beginning. Also the rotation of TMT staff within Nuffic is mentioned as a problem. In the perception of one of the RNEs a lot of micromanagement is going on at Nuffic with regard to the details of a TMT. As one Fellowship Officer said, “it has often been difficult for the RNE to explain Nuffic’s point of view”.

In the individual NFP modalities the RNEs have often more of a guiding and monitoring role than Nuffic. Fellowship officers at the RNEs frequently have developed a clear compassion for the NFP programme, showing personal interest in the fellows and also keeping in touch after the ending of the course. This way of involvement can impossibly be met by Nuffic.

As was already indicated in chapter 4, Nuffic sees its active involvement constrained by its distance. Based in The Hague it is difficult to manage the programme on a day-to-day basis, in particular for the MYAs of the NFP this is a problem. Nevertheless, most of the southern partners are positive about the programme management by Nuffic. See also section 2.7 in which the perceptions of the various stakeholders on the performance of Nuffic are presented.
9.8 Perceptions of the RNEs and southern institutions

Division of tasks and responsibilities

Over 80 percent of the embassies feel that the division of tasks and responsibilities between Nuffic and the Embassy are reasonably or well defined. Of the Southern institutes, 72 percent (ten) are of the opinion that the tasks between Nuffic, the Dutch training institute and themselves are reasonably or well defined, 21 percent (three) are neutral on this topic. Of the same institutes, 86 percent are of the opinion that the communication with Nuffic is clear and sufficient. The following box contains the remarks from the side of the embassies on this topic.

Comments from embassies on procedures and communication with Nuffic

- The guidelines for fellowships officers at Embassies are very detailed and clear;
- I have never had any problem with Nuffic. Whenever I have requested their assistance (for different matters) it has always been provided quickly. I think that as far as a lot of Fellowship Officers are concerned, more decisions should be made by Nuffic than presently is the case;
- The provisional acceptance by the institute is still creating some confusion as participants like to think they are accepted. The qualitative criteria for judging tailor-made proposals are not all that clear. The NFP guidelines brochure would be more easy if structured according to subject area rather than according to course modality;
- There is no frequent contact between Nuffic and the embassy;
- Have more communication with students;
- More collaboration with local partners emphasized.

Management by Nuffic

On a scale from one to ten (one lowest, ten highest appreciation) the embassies gave Nuffic a score of 7.52 for managing the programme. The lowest mark given was ‘four’ (two respondents), the highest ‘ten’ (also two respondents), the modal score (thirteen respondents) was ‘eight’. The Southern institutes are more positive, the average score here being 8.50, the lowest ‘seven’ and the highest ‘ten’ (each with four respondents). The overall score ‘sufficient to good’ could therefore be given. In the open remarks however some criticism was given.
Critical remarks on management by Nuffic

- Multi year agreement criteria need to be communicated more effectively;
- Improving the consultation and communication with the embassies e.g. when selecting the candidates list of the multi year agreements;
- Nuffic should decentralise the programme in such a way that we have regional officers because in this way we will be able to know the needs of different countries and structure the programmes/courses accordingly. Also, if we have regional officers training in the region can be easily facilitated thus making it cheaper (because it will reduce the travel and accommodation costs);
- Nuffic should play a stronger role in the whole process of NFP implementation, i.e. to make sure the objectives of the NFP are respected and realized by the Dutch universities. With regards to Tailor-made training programmes, several times it took too long to give feedback on the proposals which were already processed and sent earlier to them by the Embassy;
- Tailor Made course processing at Nuffic need to be faster as the relevance of the programme is lost after a very long delay in giving a decision;
- Regarding tailor-made training, the time taken for processing within Nuffic is too long and should be shortened. We have had cases of a tailor-made application taking 1½ year before we got an answer from Nuffic;
- Quality differs from person to person. The connections within the Embassy depend on who is in charge. One could consider how to uniformise the services;
- More flexibility and transparency required.

Tender procedure

The following graphs show the appreciation of the Tender procedure for TMT as well as the role of the Tender Evaluation Committee by the Southern Institutes. The appreciation is clear.

Figure 9.1 Appreciation of Tender procedure for TMT (in absolute numbers)
Price-quality
Out of the respondent embassies, twenty (61 percent) feel that the total costs of the NFP are mostly or always proportionate to its benefits. Twelve (36 percent) do not have a judgment on this, only one respondent feels that this is in general problematic.

Concluding remarks from embassies on efficiency of NFP
- I have no insight in the costs involved. But I think it could be done cheaper if it would also be executed in the region, e.g. linked to NPT program or for short courses by regional institutes;
- I do not have insight in the costs. I see the NFP as an important factor for development. But, I do not see the costs for the Netherlands. I think its more like an investment which many times will pay itself back in goodwill towards de Netherlands. Fellowship holders are among the best and most talented people in their countries and many of them are going to play an important role in their societies.

Administrative burden
Out of the 33 RNE respondents, 21 feel that the available time and human resources are sufficient to manage the NFP programme. Among those, who feel that this was not sufficient, the following response was received.

First of all, the embassy does not recognise fellowships as very important part of development cooperation, therefore they tend to dismiss the activities of NFP programme.

From the open question put to the embassies it appears that normally the management of NFP within the embassies takes less than one FTE on annual base. The extreme low is one week per year, four hours per month and two hours per week. Other embassies report however 1.5 to two FTEs on an annual basis. This difference is most probably caused by the presence in the country of MYAs and TMTs.

9.9 Conclusions

The leading question in this chapter has been whether the processes regarding NFP are efficient? This question has been answered by the interpretation of various indicators. Beforehand it is noticed that, since NFP, as well as NPT, is a relatively young programme, it is difficult to measure the efficiency based on clear output indicators relating them to input. Therefore efficiency in this study was more defined in a practical way looking at smoothness of interaction between the different actors, clearness in the division of responsibilities, and timeliness of activities and responses. In this concluding paragraph we first present the results as they have been assessed by the evaluator of ECORYS during the field visits and interviews with stakeholders. Secondly, we will address the opinions and perceptions of embassies and southern institutes that come forward from the web-based questionnaire that has been conducted (see annex for methodological details).

Nuffic-RNE
In particular the tailor-made training has the potential of a demand-driven modality in which the training can be tailored to the particular needs of the institute. However, the preparation of TMT is a very complex and time-consuming process.
It is therefore understandable that it has been decided by Nuffic (after consultation with DCO) to simplify the procedure for proposals, allowing direct consultation with Dutch providers instead of tendering. Hopefully this also contributes to speed up the decision procedures for TMT applications, better reflecting the principle of short term training needs.

**Application procedure**
The present application procedure for NFP participants is assessed to be not an efficient process. The two-step selection creates a lot of unnecessary workload for the RNE, Nuffic, the participants and the education institutes in the Netherlands. Moreover, the present system creates an incentive for the Dutch institutes to get as many admissions as possible and do the critical selection only at the end.

**Performance of Nuffic**
There have been significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up of Tailor-made Training events, partly attributable to the fact that procedures for program implementation still had to be invented (and experimented with at times) while the first projects started to develop.
As was already indicated in relation to NPT Nuffic sees its active involvement constrained by its distance. Based in The Hague it is difficult to manage the programme on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, most of the southern partners are positive about the programme management by Nuffic. In fact, in the NFP the RNEs have often more of a guiding and monitoring role than Nuffic. Fellowship officers at the RNEs frequently have developed a clear compassion for the NFP programme, showing personal interest in the fellows and also keeping in touch after the ending of the course. This way of involvement can impossibly be met by Nuffic.
In general, southern institutes and embassies are quite positive on the implementation of NFP, also expressing high appreciation for the role of Nuffic. On a scale from one to ten (one lowest, ten highest appreciation) the embassies gave Nuffic a score of 7.52 for managing the programme. The Southern institutes are more positive, the average score here being 8.50. The overall score ‘sufficient to good’ could therefore be given. In this section we will address the main critical issues, brought forward by embassies and southern institutes.

**Inclusion of regional collaboration**
In the current supply of NFP courses the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped. There are various examples of courses, tailor made as well as academic courses, in which available regional expertise is not being used, and probably also not has been carefully considered.

**Tendering and performance by Dutch institutes**
In general, most embassies are positive about the responsiveness of Dutch education institutes regarding the demand from the south. However, it is almost equally valid to conclude that most embassies have no opinion on this, probably because they lack insight on the implementation of the TMT and the academic courses in NFP.
As was already found for NPT, a majority of southern institutes think that more competition between supplying institutes would improve the performance of the NFP programme.
10 Effectiveness of NFP

Effectiveness is concerned with the degree to which a particular intervention has an effect and to what extent such effect contributes to achieving the aims of the intervention under consideration. In this chapter we analyse these questions for the NFP programme, including examples of what worked well and what worked less well in terms of effectiveness.

10.1 Programme aims of NFP

Both NPT and NFP focus on capacity building, qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Contrary to NPT, in the case of NFP the attention is more strongly focused on the individuals to be trained rather than on the individuals together with their institutional context. NFP actions are thus usually of a more limited nature. They may also be of shorter duration, particularly for non-degree training. The latter modality is often tailor-made to attend to specific human competency needs. In the case of Multi-Year Agreements, and to a lesser extent Tailor-Made Training interventions, the distinction with NPT tends to blur, considering that in those cases agreements are signed with institutions and the TMT procedure for providing grants is substantially the same as the one that applies in the case of NPT, except if the budget remains under € 50 000. It should also be noted that NFP is available in a substantially larger number of countries than NPT, which makes NFP the only option for capacity building in the non-NPT countries. In the NPT countries, NFP is an additional option that may sometimes be the preferred choice if no more is needed than the specific training or if capacity building is sought outside the sectoral interests of the RNE in the country in question.

As stated in the inception report for the current evaluation, it is too early at this stage to assess whether the NPT and NFP programmes have achieved their programme aims, because the programmes have just started after some initial delays in the start-up phase. More specifically it was noted that the NFP was gradually introduced from 2003 onwards, while at the same time the old NFP was being phased out. For the NFP, 2004 was the first ‘normal’ year, while only in 2005 all implementing institutions had the same possibilities and conditions. Moreover, to assess the effectiveness of the NFP one would need a tracer study, but this is not part of the evaluation and will be done separately in 2007. The current assessment of the NFP will thus focus on the multi-year agreements and the tailor-made training interventions.

Details about the different modalities available under NFP and statistics regarding their use have been given above in Section 6 of this report. In the current section we focus on the effects of the programme.
10.2 Individual modalities (Masters, PhDs, short courses, refresher courses)

Opportunities to pursue training via the NFP programme are generally in high demand. The success of the programme is well known among aspiring students. Embassies receive far more requests than can be accommodated. The programme is thus highly competitive. Fellowship Officers at the Embassies consequently spend a considerable proportion of their time—they usually accumulate several tasks—on NFP business. Also, applicants themselves have to go through a process of complex paper work, which, if the fellowship is awarded, pays off; if the fellowship is not awarded it will have been a frustrating experience, particularly as the receiving institutions in The Netherlands are quick to acknowledge those that are accepted but it may take months before the unsuccessful applicants and the respective Embassies are notified.

Successful applicants are invariably satisfied with their experience, so much so that in countries where enough wealth exists for individuals to study in The Netherlands using their own or alternative resources to which candidates have access, the known quality and relevance of degrees obtained in The Netherlands by NFP graduates becomes a strong attractor also to non-NFP candidates. Returning fellows usually report back on their experience to the Embassies. According to the Embassies contacted by the evaluators, NFP participants are in general very content with the courses they followed.

A highly visible impact of NFP and its predecessor arrangements is the strong network of NFP alumni one comes across in many countries that have a history of benefiting from the programme. As already mentioned in Section 5.5 above, an impressive number of alumni are now often in key positions and make an important contribution to the advancement of their country. At present, for instance, in Tanzania two Ministers, two Vice-Ministers, one Permanent Secretary and the Chief Minister of Zanzibar have all studied in the Netherlands; in Vietnam the Rector of Can Tho University, who holds a PhD from Wageningen, plays a very active and highly effective role in using both the NFP and NPT facilities for capacity building efforts that benefit the development of the Mekong River Delta. A proportion of his faculty members are equally graduates from Netherlands institutions and assist him in these efforts. A typical example is that of former NFP student Dr Nguyen Thi Gam, now Project Coordinator of the Vietnam–Netherlands Higher Education Project (reported in Nuffic’s NFP-NPT Newsletter of March 2006, available at http://www.nuffic.nl/nfp-npt/pdf/news0306.pdf). All in all, this creates an interesting multiplier effect, as does the emphasis on training of trainers, which is strongly present in Vietnam’s use of the programme. The stated goals of NFP are more modest and do not envisage such enhanced effects, which clearly are well above the programme’s expectations.

There are also effects beyond the level of expectation that are more secondary but equally positive. One of them is that the presence of so many graduates from Netherlands institutions in developing countries is often of great help to the Embassies in their search for qualified personnel for different internal or external tasks. In addition, there is the considerable amount of goodwill that is associated with the alumni network.
On the other hand, it is difficult in the case of individual fellowships to pinpoint exactly how the investment in training contributes to the overall program aim of capacity building. This association is more easily made in the case of Tailor-Made Training and that of the Multi-Year Agreements. However, the flexibility associated with the individual fellowships may be seen as a positive asset that compensates for the lack of direct relationship with the capacity building effort.

The graduation rate is very high. Typically more than 95% of NFP fellowship holders—obviously a highly select group due to the competitive selection process—complete their courses successfully. Less than 1% of the students abandon the effort prematurely. In some cases extra guidance is provided and/or students are allowed to extend their fellowship up to a maximum of three months in order to complete unfinished work over the summer months.

10.3 Tailor-made training

Regarding the specific modality of tailor-made training (TMT) under NFP, the generic conclusions of the evaluation are the following ones:

- Institutions are satisfied with the Dutch providers of TMT;
- The quality of Dutch teachers is perceived as very good; the quality of local/regional trainers is seen as somewhat less strong;
- The focus in Dutch education on hands-on student involvement and active learning is particularly appreciated;
- Institutions that use this modality of training express that TMT strongly contributes to improving the quality of their staff members;
- On the other hand, participants are not always adequately selected so as to ensure that their background matches the entry requirements for the course.

The field investigation in Uganda found that “so far hardly any information is available on the results of the courses, let alone the impact. It seems that it is not clear whose responsibility it is to monitor the results. Although it is not requested by DCO, Nuffic has started with collecting basic information on the appreciation and perceived usefulness of short courses and TMT. Also most training institutes have some sort of subjective evaluation by the participants in the courses. This kind of information so far has not systemically been processed and used in the development of new courses. Measuring impact related indicators is furthermore complicated by the fact that the contacts with participants after the course appear volatile.” Nuffic is in the process of correcting this situation, ensuring that requesting southern partners report specifically on relevance and usefulness in the new Nuffic reporting format, although from a subjective participants’ perspective. Nuffic also aims at developing more structural contacts with former course participants.

In the case of Tanzania it was found that at times TMT participants do not have the background they claim to have. Consequently, they don’t have the conditions to benefit from the course in which they are supposed to participate. Besides, the capacity of the institute could be found to be more limited than indicated in the outline. This indicates poor needs assessment.
The outline may have been made by a consultant who has little knowledge of or involvement with the institute. It was also noted that, sometimes, training is offered as a ‘bonus’ for employees. To correct this situation it would be better if the Dutch provider could first meet the potential candidates for a TMT and be involved in the selection of the participants. Under the new set-up of TMT (in which the Dutch institution prepares the training together with the southern institute) this has indeed improved.

The field investigation in Vietnam revealed good and effective use of this training modality. Those in charge had a strong focus on the development purpose of the training interventions in question. The fact that NFP actions are relatively small in comparison with NPT projects seems to heighten the level of personal attachment to the activity and the sense of ownership that goes with it. The choice for NFP, as opposed to NPT, was often deliberate. Those involved had prior experience with MHO. Yet, for different reasons, often simply because this was all that was needed, NFP was seen as the best solution for the problem at hand. Such small actions make sense in an environment in which multiple donors, including The Netherlands, already operate via other programs that interact with the wider context. Institutions like the Research Centre for Forest Ecology and Environment that make use of this training modality are very satisfied with it. Those like the General Statistics Office that are still in the process of creating the modality have high expectations of the programme because of its known success.

10.4 Multi-year agreements

Generic findings regarding the use of Multi-Year Agreements (MYA) can be summarized as follows:

- MYAs are important for developing more structural relations between a southern organization and a Dutch institute;
- MYA as a modality in addition to other training modalities such as TMT allows organizations to develop training policies, attending to diverse training needs (e.g. MA/PhD at strategic positions via MYA and TMT at more operational levels);
- MYA being a new modality, its introduction has implied a learning process for both RNEs and Nuffic. Particularly in Tanzania, which was used as a pilot country for the MYA modality, some initial mistakes were made;
- Most RNEs consider the MYAs of importance as a means to attain the objectives of the NFP.

Of the three countries targeted by the field investigation, only Tanzania and Uganda make use of Multi Year Agreements. In Vietnam this modality does not exist. The Embassy is not in favour of it.

The field investigation in Tanzania found that there is tension in the set-up of the MYA. On the one hand it is a programme for institutional development (like the NPT), but on the other hand, the interventions are at the level of the individual only. For capacity building of an institute, training of individuals might not be sufficient. Interventions at the organisational level (e.g. restructuring of organisations, cultural change, improving financial and information management systems, introduction of new working or teaching methods) often need to complement the training to individuals in order to achieve results in terms of institutional capacity building.
Moreover, individuals do not always stay within the same organisation, in particular when they have been trained abroad. Besides, there have been cases of questionable choices of institutions and poor preparation, i.e. inadequate needs assessment. It is noted in this context that Tanzania served as pilot country for the MYA modality making it in a sense justifiable that a number of mistakes occurred. It is important for those concerned, particularly Nuffic, to learn from these negative experiences.

In Tanzania two network organisations have been selected for a MYA: the Tanzania Women Lawyers’ Association (TAWLA) and the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP). In practice these have not been good decisions. For instance, TAWLA is not the employer of its members, who work at other offices or have their own law firm. For a lot of the participants it has therefore been difficult to find the time to fully participate in the TMT that was offered and, as a result, the attendance levels were low. It was not easy for TAWLA and the Dutch consultant to agree on dates for the TMT that were suitable to both. In general, on both sides one was not completely satisfied with how the TMT had gone. One of the interviewed persons also raised questions about the choice of TAWLA for a MYA since, according to this person, its members belong to the elite of Dar es Salaam.

Source: Report of field investigation in Tanzania (in annex)

The unfavourable experiences reported above are compensated by positive examples of the use of the MYA modality in Tanzania at, for instance, the Immigration Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs (see Box 9.2 below) and the College of Business Administration.

A positive example of a successful MYA is the one with the Immigration Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs. This organisation took the initiative to approach the RNE and the staff is very active and enthusiastic. Under the MYA, 15 staff members have been approved to follow a Masters in the Netherlands. Six have already finalised their Master, five are still in the Netherlands and another four will go next year. The people that are back found it a positive experience: a new culture, the content was good, it opened new horizons and all noticed the differences between the education system in the Netherlands compared to that in Tanzania. They found the facilities (e.g. library, internet) better, but also the relationship between the professor and the students (less distance) and appreciated the lower number of students in one class. Two persons have followed a short course (for three months). At present an outline for a TMT is in the process of tendering. The Immigration Division is internally establishing a training academy for its staff. The Masters students will also be involved in the training of other staff (training-of-trainers approach). A lot of staff is also trained locally (e.g. undergraduate level), but that is mostly financed by the Immigration Division itself. Also one staff member was sent to the Netherlands for a Masters paid by the Division itself (since the maximum number under the MYA was 15 and they wanted to send one more). The education in the Netherlands does fit in the public sector reform programme that is being implemented.

Source: Report of field investigation in Tanzania (in annex)

The experience with the MYA modality in Uganda was found to be generally positive by the evaluator as well as in the perception of the users. Particularly interesting is also in this modality the emphasis often placed on the training of trainers. Thus, trainees are being invited to share their knowledge and experiences with staff, their colleagues and the wider community in which they work. They also play a role in briefing new NFP candidates.
10.5 Brain drain

As in the case of NPT, brain drain was found to be no serious problem during the field investigations. The survey results about this issue are convergent with the findings on the ground. Comments on this issue are the same as the ones presented earlier in Section 5.5. They will therefore not be repeated here. Readers are requested to consult the referred section.

10.6 Perceptions of RNEs and southern organisations (TMT and MYA)

Asked to rate the importance of different objectives of the NFP, southern organizations attribute the highest level of importance to staff improvement, both in terms of general quality and regarding competence in specific areas. Next come, at an only slightly lower level of importance, the reduction of shortages in human resources and the improvement of the quality of the organization. The responses correspond to the following ranking in order of attributed importance—from low to high—of the different objectives:

- Attracting new talented staff members;
- Contributing to training policy of the organisation;
- Reducing manpower shortages in specific divisions;
- Contributing to career perspectives of mid-career staff;
- Improving the management of the organisation;
- Improving quality of the organisation;
- Reducing manpower shortages in specific positions;
- General improvement of quality of staff;
- Improvement of competences in specific areas.

Asked specifically how the modality of Tailor-Made Training contributes to these objectives, the responses given show a strong rank correlation with those given to the previous question. Figure 10.1 below, presenting the two graphs side-by-side, gives the complete picture:

Table 10.1 Appreciation by southern organizations of the importance of different NFP objectives (left) and of the extent to which the Tailor-Made Training modality contributes to these objectives (right).

NFP is clearly seen as a programme that aims at capacity building through strengthening of both the staff and the organization.
The quality of the training offered is generally perceived by the beneficiary organizations as good to very good. Ten out of twelve southern organizations felt sufficiently qualified, through their familiarity with the results of training evaluations and training reports, to express an opinion on the usefulness of NFP training for their individual staff members. They were asked to rate the quality of the following elements:

- Quality of the Dutch trainers;
- Quality of local or regional trainers;
- Content of the courses;
- Responsiveness to specific training needs of participants;
- Match with the knowledge level of participants;
- Duration of the courses;
- Size of the groups.

Their responses were distributed as represented in Figure 10.1 below.

In addition, and despite their positive appreciation in general, they offered various recommendations for improvement listed in the adjacent sidebar.

**Suggestions for improvement offered by southern organizations.**

- Introduce a proper / better mix of long-term (PhD, Masters) with short, or applied courses.
- NFP should include some bachelor programmes which are in short supply in Africa, like health programmes at bachelor level - there are very few regional institutes offering these.
- Increase the number of training AND the number of participants
- Dutch providers MUST be required to: 1. use data from local context, 2. include local experts as part of their training teams 3. be more familiar with the local context and issues.
- Local experts on issues pertaining to local environment be engaged. Method of identifying trainers be more transparent.

Source: Survey southern institutions

In addition to the beneficiary organizations in the south, embassies were equally queried about their perceptions of the usefulness of training offered under NFP via five different
modalities of training, i.e., Tailor-Made Training; PhD trajectories; refresher courses; short courses; and Master degree programmes. The distribution of their responses (in absolute numbers) is given in Figure 9.3 below. The great ‘unknown’ here is the category of refresher courses. Refresher courses are typically the result of initiatives on the part of either a training provider in The Netherlands or a particular constituency of former trainees in the south. Embassies do not get involved. Consequently, they have no insight in this modality of training. There is an obvious risk that such courses may be invented for purposes that are not clearly related to real capacity building needs. On the other hand, from a perspective of consolidating skills and updating participants on recent changes in their field, such courses can very well be justified for sound reasons having to do with the long-term effectiveness of the capacity building effort. It would be a mistake to discard this modality simply because they have so far escaped the scrutiny of the managing authority. Rather, there is a need for more serious monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the various training modalities, making their appreciation less dependent on possibly subjective opinion on the part of both beneficiary organizations and Embassies.

The large majority of respondent embassies feel that the design of the NFP programme is appropriate to alleviate qualitative and quantitative shortages of skilled human resources. Of the 33 embassies that responded to this question, 58 percent feel that it is appropriate and 24 percent even ‘very appropriate’ (six percent does not know). The modalities considered most appropriate are MYA and TMT, least appropriate, in the opinion of the RNEs, are Refresher courses; PhD courses; generally courses with high academic content; short courses; courses not geared to national priorities; courses in areas like mathematics, tourism, theology, fine arts, humanities, and ‘soaps and society’.

Figure 10.2 Appreciation by RNEs of the degree to which different NFP training modalities cater to short term training needs and capacity building.
Opinions expressed by RNEs on potential effectiveness of NFP for capacity building.

For medium sized organisations, a dose of Dutch training can radically change the way organisations operate as most of these organisations lack the capacity to train their personnel. Therefore one person who got an NFP can transfer the knowledge to other and effect a shift in the confidence level and help them find innovative ways of delivering their services and products. The spin-off effect is tremendous. Our candidates are mainly civil servants and people of NGOs, researchers, university teachers and so on. The embassy always looks especially if the concession of the scholarship will help the organisation, will be positive for the development and will result in the spreading of knowledge and expertise. The impression exists that though there is a need for short term courses and for capacity development in general, much is left to individual initiatives or needs despite the embassy's efforts to integrate this in the organisation needs. Some progress has been made in this regard but is not satisfactory. Tailor made ranks strong because, we have had only one organisation training under this course, we have not yet evaluated the outcome of the course. Refresher courses are also not very commonly attended, but for Masters and PhD's they are in great demand because the job market is very competitive and organisations are looking for not only the best people but also competent. Netherlands is known to be one of the countries with very good universities and hence is becoming very competitive. It appears that people studying in the Netherlands through NFP have been very effective in implementing their knowledge. They have high positions as advisers to PM or even Minister.

Close to half (48 percent) of the RNEs consider the MYA modality to be of major importance for the achievement of the objectives of the NFP. Another 33 percent perceive this modality as of some importance. Those who rated it as not or less important, as appears from the responses to the associated open question, have no experience yet with a MYA. Especially the possibility under MYA to assess the needs and to focus supply on the assessed needs is appreciated by RNEs.

Of the ten organisations with which a MYA had been signed, six were satisfied with its implementation, one very satisfied, but three highly (!) unsatisfied. Reasons for the latter are especially the disappointing speed of implementation, although also some criticism was expressed regarding the lack of diversity and focus of the training.

Sustainability is a natural concern regarding the effectiveness of any training programme. A key question in this connection has to do with the likelihood that trainees, once their training is completed and their value on the labour market has changed, will be retained by the organization to the capacity of which the training was supposed to contribute. The views expressed by Embassies (see Figure 10.3 next page) indicate that they are reasonably confident about this aspect of sustainability.
Southern organizations were similarly queried about this aspect of sustainability. Their responses are represented in Figure 10.4 below.

As argued before, enhanced mobility, and thus the risk of brain drain, is a natural consequence of training. However, going by the perceptions of both Embassies and southern organizations—as well as based on the field observations—there seems to be no reason for serious concern in general.

We conclude this section with an overview of observations made by respondent embassies that could not be easily classified under any of the above categories but that may yet be relevant for consideration in trying to improve the functionality and effectiveness of the programme. We present them ‘as is’.

**Not otherwise classified observations by respondent Embassies on effectiveness of NFP.**

The selection criteria of the universities. The fellowship officer knows better the needs of the country and the entity the candidates work for. - The use of an entity of the country that evaluate and approve the candidate before the application is send to Nuffic has proven very useful here. It assures that all candidates are really involved in development projects where the knowledge is required and used. Recommendation part of the concerned RNE should be taken seriously as they are the one who really can evaluate which training is suitable for which organization or applicant of their country of
representation. Institution especially newly added to the NFP list should be more flexible in informing the Fellowship Officers of the awards and rejection as some are doing directly to the applicants of which FOs are not aware.

NUFFIC should be more strict in publishing NFP booklets and not changing course subjects or dates or adding institutes under NFP after the brochure has been distributed to all RNE and from there to local authorities.

For tailor made courses FOs from all countries should be well informed of the progress of the outline proposal. Institutes should not admit applicant for short courses of 1.5 weeks under one module and advice them to apply for NFP as we FOs forward the application to NUFFIC who rejects since it is not under NFP list. Institutes under NFP should update their websites and make the application forms available in time so that applicants can apply in time and get the admission letter in time to meet the deadline of NFP application.

Recommendations made by the embassy should be taken better into account by the universities, who do the final selection. Also, universities should more seriously apply their initial selection (for the application letters), because the embassy gets the impression that they try to hand out as many applications as possible to secure a sufficient number of fellowships. ALL universities should inform the embassy also the candidates selected.

As regards the Middle East, either eliminate the program or expand it considerable. If expanded, appoint Fellowship Officers who can devote 100% of their time to the program. As matters stand now, there is only so much we can do.

Don’t let schools and universities select the fellowship holders!

There is a need for tailor made training, but people do not know how to write a proposal and therefore let go of the opportunity.

Brief information in Portuguese would be helpful to introduce the full info brochure to the organisations.

This programme should be incorporated within the embassy as one of the bilateral programmes because as is the case at the moment, nobody recognises what the programme is because the results are almost invisible and cannot be measured.

Dutch universities should respect and take into account the objectives of the NFP as well as recommendations made by Fellowship Officers.

### 10.7 Conclusions

As in the case of NPT, it is too early at this stage to present definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the NFP. However, on the basis of the above analysis we conclude that there are strong indications that the NFP is indeed a contributor to the capacity building effort it aims to be. It derives its usefulness from the fact that the programme is available in a wider range of countries than its counterpart, the NPT. Besides, in countries where both NPT and NFP are available, NFP is sometimes a preferred choice because of a number of characteristics that distinguish it from NPT, such as the possibility to attend to individual training needs in circumstances where other conditions are already satisfied and the possibility to act in a more focused manner or at a smaller scale, potentially leading to less cumbersome procedures and greater flexibility. Besides, it allows the capacity building effort to be broadened to areas with great development relevance that are not part of the sectoral concerns of the RNE.
Like in the case of NPT, efforts to improve the effectiveness of the NFP should concentrate on:

- Design of training opportunities within the perspective of long-term development goals, allowing NFP, in addition to its usefulness in its own right, to complement the NPT effort in those areas and circumstances where NPT is a less appropriate option;
- Design that takes contextual factors seriously into account so as to ensure that results of the training can be relevantly applied in the local setting and that undertaking capacity building efforts will be contingent upon the presence of a propitious context;
- Enhancing the focus on organizational learning among all collaborating partners concerned, with major emphasis on creating institutional competence in the south for design, development, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects by southern institutions;
- Ensuring that the above considerations be taken into account in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of NFP interventions.
11 Cohesion between NPT and NFP

11.1 Synergy between the two programmes

In the February 2001 policy framework on the new international education programmes it was intended that there would be more cohesion between the NPT and NFP. However, in this evaluation we did not find much evidence of such cohesion between the NPT and NFP programmes in practice. In the field visit to Vietnam, it was even found that not all institutional users of one of the programmes were aware that the other programme also exists. There is thus a need for clearer and more complete information about the two offerings so that better informed choices between the two can be made. Those who do know the two programmes are aware of their differences, which they weigh when making decisions about which one they want to use.

It was found that the Vietnamese users of the programs are creative and knowledgeable about exploring the differences between the two. This is a good thing. If choices were less deliberate it would be an indication that the differences are irrelevant, in which case the programs could better be merged into one. This is not the case, however, and it is therefore recommended to maintain the separation between the two modalities, perhaps even more consciously adding further diversity to the available options. It must be acknowledged that the new modalities of NFP (TMT and MYA) have characteristics that make them more similar to the NPT. However, regarding the individual NFP modalities, we think that – given the very different set-up of the NFP focusing on individuals rather than organisations – integration with the NPT programme would not work if the present purposes of both programmes are to be maintained.

Because the different options exist, one sees both programmes being used in a single institution for different purposes, depending on the specific needs. Thus, the two programmes can at times complement each other and mutually strengthen each other’s effect. Can Tho University is perhaps the best example of an institution where multiple projects work in synergy to implement the institution’s mission geared towards the educational and socio-economical development of the Mekong Delta. This results in greater impact and improved efficiency.

In Tanzania only two examples of a link between NTP and NFP were found. The RNE staff indicated that they also explain about NFP when they visit NPT organisations. Sometimes this has resulted in NFP applications and when the RNE receives such a request from an organisation that is implementing a NPT project, the RNE supports it. A second example of cohesion is the College of Business Education that initially was not suitable for NPT support because of the quality of the institute.
Alternatively, it had been selected for a MYA under the NFP and now also the start of a NPT project was approved. However, for the organisational analysis as part of the NPT preparation another consultant was hired than the one that had done the same thing for the NFP-MYA, which is not an example of good coordination between the two programmes.

The only thing about cohesion found in Uganda was that there are some good practice examples of former NFP fellows now being involved in NPT courses, and the other way around. However, this was not done in a strategic way.

DCO has indicated that they emphasised the need for cohesion in its meetings with Nuffic from the start of the programmes onwards. However, from the interviews in the Netherlands with other stakeholders we did not get the impression that the relation between NPT and NFP has really been an issue so far. In recent years, it has also been put more on the agenda from the side of Nuffic, in particular because of the increased importance of the NFP modalities of tailor-made training and multi-year agreement. The present reorganisation within Nuffic illustrates this. Until now, separate sections have existed within Nuffic for NPT and NFP without much coordination between them. In the new organisational structure, that will be effective from 1 January 2007, the MYA and TMT will be merged with the NPT parts of Nuffic to better address the organisational aspects of these NFP modalities. It is also intended that in the future the NFP staff for MYA will travel more frequently to visit the MYA institutions.

At present, NPT is limited to the Dutch bilateral sectors and a limited number of partner countries, while NFP is much broader. In the view of the Dutch education institutes, more cohesion should not mean that NFP would also be limited to the present NPT countries and bilateral sectors of the Netherlands development cooperation. This interpretation of cohesion is clearly not supported by them.

11.2 Perceptions of the RNEs and southern organisations

Only two of the respondent Southern institutes were familiar with NPT. From the answers on the open questions it is apparent that there is little or no synergy observed, one respondent reports rather confusion.

Of the respondent Southern Institutes twelve were familiar with NFP. Out of these, nine considered the distinction between NPT and NFP clear, two unclear and two had no opinion on this. The same reaction was received on the question as to whether the distinction is efficient. It appeared from the open remarks that the institutes saw as the main difference the fact that ‘NPT is targeted at institutions, NFP is targeted at individuals’. In other words, the capacity building character of NFP is not recognised by the institutes. One respondent felt strongly that the two programmes should be integrated.

Also the embassies were asked whether they saw a synergy with NFP. It was found that about half of the respondents saw some synergy (six out of the 13 embassies), another six embassies saw none or hardly any synergy, while only one respondent saw extensive synergy (see table below).
These results confirm our own findings from the interviews and field visits that overall there is no clear synergy perceived between the two programmes by the various stakeholders.

Table 11.1 Synergy between NFP and NPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly any</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 Conclusions

12.1 Main principles of the policy framework

In the international education policy framework of 2001, the following principles were formulated for the new NPT and NFP programmes:

- A focus on fewer countries;
- Better coordination between foreign and development policy priorities;
- A more demand-driven approach;
- Greater flexibility;
- More cohesion between the programmes; and
- In order to broaden potential supply and introduce a form of competition, allocation of grants on a tendered, competitive price-quality basis from among all the international education activities in the Netherlands relevant to the policy framework.

Overall, it can be concluded that both programmes are indeed concentrated on a smaller number of countries than its predecessors: 14 countries for the NPT and 57 for the NFP. The NPT programme is harmonised with the bilateral sectors of the Netherlands development cooperation. For the NFP, it was however decided not to limit it to these bilateral programmes.

The NPT programme can be characterised as demand-driven, although it differs per country how this is implemented. In some countries central government institutions can be more involved in demand identification than in others where demand is more directly formulated at the level of the beneficiary institutes. Also the NFP is demand-driven, being open for a broad range of mid-career professionals coming from governmental, private and non-governmental organisations.

Greater flexibility has been realised for the NPT. It allows coordinated activities beyond the borders of individual education institutes, giving support not only to education institutes but also to ministries, national higher education committees or accreditation committees. Increased flexibility for the NFP has been realised by opening the Masters and PhD programmes also to regular universities and Universities of Professional Education, and allowing training institutes to provide short courses and tailor-made trainings as well.

The policy intention to enhance the cohesion between the NPT and NFP has not been realised. However, in recent years, cohesion has become more on the agenda, in particular because of the increased importance of tailor-made training and multi-year agreements.
Potential supply from Dutch organisations for the NPT has been broadened by including consultancy firms, which now have a share of one-quarter as lead institute. Tendering has been introduced for the NPT. However, the response rate on the published call for tenders has been very low, limiting the potential of competition. The tendering process was also introduced for the TMT, but this has been simplified again, because it was too complex and time-consuming given the relative small size of the intervention.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, the conclusions for the main evaluation questions with regard to policy relevance, efficiency and effectiveness are presented.

12.2 Policy relevance

**NPT**
The NPT projects and activities within these countries dovetail well with the aims and basic principles of Dutch development policy. Both from the perspective of budget allocations and actual disbursements, the aim to spend at least 50 percent of the total budget in Sub-Saharan Africa is therefore fulfilled.

In general, it was found that the areas that have been chosen for NPT support fit very well with the priorities and policies of the national government.

In all three field investigations it was found that the local key stakeholders felt that their demands were being recognised. All major stakeholders were often involved in a comprehensive demand identification phase. Also at the level of the individual institutes it was also found that they feel ownership for the NPT projects and that the activities dovetail with their strategic plans.

**NFP**
The NFP programme, unlike the NPT, is not limited to the Dutch bilateral priority sectors. In the questionnaire to the RNEs it was found that the majority of respondents (85%) feel that the NFP should indeed not be limited to the Dutch priority sectors. This perception was confirmed during the field visits.

Although the individual fellowships are not limited to the Dutch priority sectors, the new MYA modality does provide opportunities to integrate the NFP more in the bilateral policy of the RNE. The MYA gives more possibilities for the RNE to influence the selection process and use it for strengthening of organisations in its bilateral sectors.

The number of applications received from females is relatively low. Females therefore receive a preferential treatment and have a relatively higher winning chance than male applicants. Still, for the Master’s and short courses the percentage of female fellowships is below the objective of 50 percent. For PhDs, the objective was reached in 2005 with two-third of all PhDs students being females.

For 2005, all modalities achieved or were very close to achieving the objective that at least 50 percent of all fellows should originate from Sub-Saharan Africa. For the tailor-made training a huge preferential was given to this part of the world provided the low percentage of applicants from the region.

In all three countries under investigation, the evaluators encountered many graduates of educational institutions in The Netherlands, some via NFP but also with financing from alternative or personal sources. They all were very positive about this experience.
12.3 Efficiency

*NPT*

Nuffic initially was approached by DCO in a ‘atmosphere of distrust’, which especially in the beginning period lead to close supervision and control. Anno 2006 the relationship between DCO and Nuffic has become more relaxed, appreciating each others skills and professionalism in the process.

Although the embassies have an important role in the process leading up to identification of the demand, initially no attention was given to the required capacity that is needed at the RNEs to implement the NPT. Especially as regards NPT there has been a lack of clarity on the question what the role of RNE exactly should and could be.

Although relationships between Nuffic and the northern institutes seem to have improved since the start, northern institutes still need to get fully used to the ‘client-provider relationship’ that rules the tendering and implementation process of NPT.

In general, the relationships between Nuffic and the southern institutes are constructive and cooperative. The help that Nuffic provides in the process of demand identification, articulation and proposal development is highly appreciated.

Although in general the demand oriented approach is implemented effectively, the new funding procedure has hardly resulted in competition between northern institutes, also because consortia are formed which reduces competition between potential competitors. Therefore it is unlikely that this market-like-mechanism has led to better price/quality ratios. The introduction of tendering is, without exception, seen among those interviewed as an improvement by the southern institutes.

The tied character of NPT makes the programme expensive, since the number of suppliers is technically reduced to Dutch providers. If also other foreign institutes in the north were allowed to tender for NPT projects, then it could be expected that the number of suppliers would increase, possibly leading to more competition and ‘more value for money’.

All parties concerned recognize that project development has become a lengthy, time consuming process. Project outlines are generally highly inadequate, requiring a lot of attention in the inception phase. There is a need for greater flexibility; for more serious collaboration and shared problem solving along the road based on mutual commitment to project goals that must be clearly and measurably defined.

There have been significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up of NPT projects, partly attributable to the fact that procedures for program implementation still had to be invented (and experimented with at times) while the first projects started to develop.

In the current supply of training in NPT as well as NFP the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped.
Based in The Hague it is difficult for Nuffic to manage the programme on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, most of the southern NPT organisations are positive about the programme management by Nuffic.

When the NPT was set up, the intention was that it should be a ‘lean and mean’ programme. In practice the division of time and attention for project preparation versus project implementation has got out of balance. Relatively a lot of attention is given to the preparation of NPT projects (the demand identification and articulation process, tendering procedure etc.), while less resources are available for Nuffic to critically monitor project implementation.

An important element that is missing is an established format for the progress reports, in which explicitly attention is paid to the implementation and validation of the intervention logic, as it is expressed in the project outline. This also includes reporting on the indicators that have been selected in the project outline and inception phase.

**NFP**

The preparation of TMT is a very complex and time-consuming process. It is therefore understandable that it has been decided by Nuffic (after consultation with DCO) to simplify the procedure, first for proposals below € 50.000 and later for all proposals.

The present application procedure for NFP participants is assessed to be not an efficient process. The two-step selection creates a lot of unnecessary workload for the RNE, Nuffic, the participants and the education institutes in the Netherlands. Moreover, the present system creates an incentive for the Dutch institutes to get as many admissions as possible and do the critical selection only at the end.

There have been significant delays in the approval procedure and start-up of Tailor-made Training events, partly attributable to the fact that procedures for program implementation still had to be invented (and experimented with at times) while the first projects started to develop.

In the current supply of NFP courses the possibilities of cooperation with regional institutes are underdeveloped.

### 12.4 Effectiveness

**NPT**

It is too early to come to definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of NPT as a programme. Only a single project has so far been concluded. Many projects have been operational for not much more than a year; a few other projects are just about halfway through the implementation cycle. The following observations must therefore be interpreted as indicative rather than final.

The overall conclusion at this stage is that the programme is an effective tool in the hands of those in the south who are dedicated and motivated to build human and institutional capacity with a clear view to pursuing important development goals, rather than for the mere benefit of their own institution or for personal gain.
Project results often only become truly effective in a broader context. It is therefore important to pursue sector related development goals while at the same time attending to important requirements for improving the overall context.

While NPT has advantages over its predecessors in terms of efficiency, it may be less distinct from its predecessors in terms of effectiveness, precisely because the program is in the first place a tool. The quality of a product produced by someone using a tool is usually more a function of the abilities and creativity of the user than that it depends on the quality of the tool. As long as the programme is still the main determinant of its own effective use there is something wrong that must be fixed. Basically, in that case, it is the overall environment that must be put right.

Improved effectiveness is in the first place contingent upon changes in the overall context in which the program is applied. That context is owned by the south.

In some specific respects there are indications of greater effectiveness of NPT when compared to its predecessors.

**NFP**

As in the case of NPT, it is too early at this stage to present definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the NFP. However, we conclude that there are strong indications that the NFP is indeed an effective contributor to the capacity building effort it aims to be. It derives its usefulness from the fact that the programme is available in a wider range of countries than its counterpart, the NPT.

Besides, in countries where both NPT and NFP are available, NFP is sometimes a preferred choice because of a number of characteristics that distinguish it from NPT, such as the possibility to attend to individual training needs in circumstances where other conditions are already satisfied and the possibility to act in a more focused manner or at a smaller scale, potentially leading to less cumbersome procedures and greater flexibility.
13 Recommendations

On the basis of the field investigations in Vietnam, Tanzania and Uganda, the surveys amongst the RNEs and the southern institutes as well as the interviews that were held in the Netherlands, we make the following recommendations. For each recommendation, it is indicated (in bold) to whom in particular the recommendation is addressed.

To make clear how the recommendations follow-on from our evaluation findings and conclusions, a distinction is made whether the recommendations refer to policy relevance, efficiency or effectiveness. If a recommendation refers to more than one of these (e.g. if it contributes to both efficiency and effectiveness) it has been put just under one.

Our first three recommendations are far-reaching in the sense that they require a change of the present policy framework for the international higher education programmes NPT and NFP. The other recommendations are more limited in scope. These are suggestions for improvements of the policy relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the NPT and NFP that can be implemented within the context of the present policy framework.

13.1 Recommendations with regard to the policy framework

1. Concerning the trend towards donor harmonisation and alignment
   It is recommended that DCO repositions the NPT and NFP programmes in light of the current trend towards donor harmonisation and alignment. The set-up of the NPT (tied aid through projects) and NFP (fellowships for study in the Netherlands) no longer fits in the present context of the Paris Declaration and new aid modalities such as sector-wide approaches, basket funding and budget support. The new challenges should be investigated together with other (like-minded) donors in order to find a common approach that fits in the new aid architecture and at the same time respects the national (academic) interests by not acting in isolation. If (partly) untying of these programmes could be agreed with other donors, it will enhance competition, which should be expected to lead to reduction of costs and/or further quality improvements. It is suggested that a pilot is launched within the NPT in which an open tender procedure is followed. This might provide lessons as regards the possible benefits of untying the programme.

2. Concerning the involvement of (regional) partners in NPT projects
   It is recommended to DCO and Nuffic that the decision on including (regional) partners can be postponed to the inception phase. When the proposal is prepared the real needs are not always clear and there is not always sufficient time to look for suitable regional partners. In some cases it might even be good to follow a step-wise approach.
First select a Dutch institute that is specialised in capacity building to work on organisational development and management issues. After such organisational groundwork has been done, then look for suitable partners (regional or international) with the right expertise to provide the content which is needed.

3. **Concerning the inefficient application and selection process of the NFP**
It is recommended to **DCO** and **Nuffic** that the present application and selection process be revised. This process is inefficient, creating unnecessary workload for the participants, the RNEs, Nuffic and the Dutch higher education institutes. The process could be made more efficient, for instance, by giving the RNE a stronger role in the selection process on the basis of some additional criteria to make a more critical selection possible, such as work experience and relevance of the employer from the development perspective. This could be done before the candidates apply for admission. Making a stricter initial selection might reduce the number of admissions by the Dutch institutes. Another possibility which was mentioned by Nuffic is to centralise the selection process, for instance to work with selection committees for different subjects with representatives from Nuffic, RNEs and the Dutch higher education institutes.

13.2 **General recommendations within the present policy framework**

Recommendations regarding policy relevance:

4. **Concerning the cohesion between NPT and NFP**
   It is recommended to **Nuffic** and the **RNEs** that more attention is given to the cohesion between NPT and NFP, in particular for the modalities of MYA and TMT, which also have an organisational focus. However, we do not think that the NFP should also be limited to the present NPT countries and bilateral sectors of the Netherlands.

Recommendations regarding efficiency:

5. **Concerning the processing and use of monitoring data**
   It is recommended that **Nuffic**, in collaboration with key stakeholders, develop a process for systematised processing, presentation and dissemination of monitoring data and findings with a view to informing the organisational learning process of the projects established under the NPT and NFP programmes.

6. **Concerning the logical framework**
   It is recommended to **Nuffic** and **DCO** that the formulation of the monitoring and evaluation framework first of all start with a limited number of key questions, such as: what kind of information do the different actors at different levels within Nuffic need to manage the programmes and what kind of information does DCO need from its policy perspective? The required information can be quantitative but also qualitative. The logical framework that recently has been developed for both programmes is rather complicated and consists of a large number of indicators, which at present are not being measured or used in any way.
7. **Concerning the use of technology**
   It is recommended to **Nuffic** to ensure that more serious consideration be given by training providers to the potential of ICT to enhance the quality, efficiency and impact of the capacity building effort. In this context, we think that the potential of modern ICT can also be used more creatively to foster organisational learning (see also point 7).

Recommendations regarding effectiveness:

8. **Concerning measurability of results**
   It is recommended that needs assessment and front-end analysis of context and boundary conditions surrounding NPT projects and NFP training interventions be given more serious attention among the various stakeholders (in particular **Nuffic**). In the inception period it should be clearly formulated what organisational change, as identified by concrete and measurable products and outputs, will result from the activity and what identifiable societal impact it should have. The recommended explicit analysis of the existing gaps, the surrounding conditions and desired outcomes at different levels should inform in a logical manner the design of projects and interventions as well as the practice of monitoring the progress of their implementation. A positive step in this direction is the change in NPT outline format introduced in 2004, which encourages a broader contextual gap analysis and linkage to the organisation’s development objectives.

9. **Concerning organisational learning**
   It is recommended to **all parties involved** that organisational learning\(^{10}\) be recognised as an integral aspect of the change processes to which the capacity building effort is dedicated. The focus in organisational learning should be on the project in its context, comprised of the various entities involved in project and programme development and implementation (i.e., southern and northern institutions, DCO, RNEs, government entities in the south, Nuffic).

### 13.3 NPT -Recommendations within the present policy framework

Recommendations regarding policy relevance:

10. **Concerning the focus of the NPT programme**
    It is recommended to **DCO, Nuffic** and the **RNEs** to take the strengthening of the higher education institutes as the first point of entry in the NPT and not the bilateral sector objectives (although it can still be made supportive to attainment of these sector objectives). It would require that the institutional and policy context of the higher education sector is given more attention.

---

\(^{10}\) *Organizational learning* is to be interpreted as learning at the level of an entire organization or organizational network (as opposed to learning at the level of isolated individuals). Learning organizations are, according to Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline* (1990, New York: Currency Doubleday), “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.” Senge describes five characteristics of the learning organization, namely systems thinking; personal mastery; mental models; building shared vision; and team learning.
11. Concerning the role of DCO

It is recommended that DCO become more visible as the Directorate responsible for the NPT programme from the policy perspective. DCO could, for instance, organise a bi-annual NPT workshop for all Embassies, like the NFP workshop that is being organised every two years. Such a workshop could provide an opportunity to share experiences and discuss various NPT-related issues, for instance how to relate NPT to pooled funding and budget support. Moreover, DCO could facilitate that others within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs learn from the experiences of the NPT projects, for instance staff that works on policy development in the areas of business environment and decentralisation.

Recommendations regarding efficiency:

12. Concerning the division of tasks and responsibilities between Nuffic and the RNEs

It is recommended to DCO that uniform principles and rules be established for making decisions regarding the division of tasks and responsibilities between Nuffic and the RNEs, creating consistency in these matters across NPT countries. Such principles and rules should take into account that competency building and institutional capacity building are transsectoral interests. They deserve attention from the RNEs whether or not the (higher) education belongs to the sectoral interests of a particular RNE. At the same time, RNEs need to be provided the human and financial resources to be able to fulfill the role it has to play.

Concerning the programme management by Nuffic

It is recommended to DCO and Nuffic to look for possibilities to have programme management to a larger extent taking place in the South. Although most of the southern NPT organisations are positive about the programme management by Nuffic, it is difficult for Nuffic to manage the programme on a day-to-day basis from the office in The Hague. For instance, more responsibilities could be given to the RNEs to critically monitor project implementation or to give guidance to local consultants to do such monitoring activities (see also recommendations 12 and 17).

13. Concerning the efficient use of expertise

It is recommended to Nuffic that the efficient use of expertise be more carefully scrutinised—including the analysis of efficiency of such use in the progress reports—giving due attention to alternatives, such as facilitating the building of capacity through the creative and effective use of ICT to replace or supplement expert missions. To the extent that expert missions can be argued to be necessary, planning should focus on reducing high transaction costs associated with too frequent too short missions by too many experts at the same time. In general, the models of training observed are outmoded and utterly traditional when held against the light of current developments in the fields of distance education/e-learning, which in some cases can also be applied in developing countries.
Recommendations regarding effectiveness:

14. Concerning the institutional capacity of the southern organisations
It is recommended to DCO and Nuffic that more resources be invested in a more in-depth institutional analysis of the southern organisations before the tender procedure starts. This would allow to better assess the absorption capacity of the southern organisation and provide a better basis for defining a realistic ambition level for the NPT project in terms of results that can be achieved. Alternatively, such an institutional analysis should be done at the start of the inception phase, under the assumption that the project outline is giving sufficient flexibility to work out a realistic ambition level for the project (see also recommendation 16).

15. Concerning capacity building for project design and management
It is recommended to Nuffic that project design, development and implementation be taken advantage of as opportunities for capacity development (e.g. trainings could be provided in these areas during the inception period). If project management skills are strengthened among those involved in the south, higher quality initial outlines can be obtained in the future. In addition, such enhanced competence in the south will contribute to higher levels of ownership of the entire process.

16. Concerning the project outline
It is recommended to Nuffic that project outlines become less detailed, despite that - according to Nuffic - many southern institutes find this very risky. Outlines should give more freedom to the project partners to work out together during the inception period the specific needs and approach to be followed in order to be able to achieve the intended results. This would make the preparation process more efficient (less duplication when detailed planning in the outline is being done again during the inception period) and more effective (real needs become more clear during the inception period and on that basis a more realistic ambition level for clear results to be achieved can be set). In addition, the RNE could do a ‘quality check’ on the project outlines, i.e. do the outlines contain the strategic information necessary for potential bidders to submit an appropriate proposal.

17. Concerning project implementation
It is recommended to Nuffic and DCO that in the coming years more attention is given to critically monitor project implementation, especially since the NPT programme has now moved from the start-up phase to the implementation phase. Nuffic could, for instance, have two monitoring missions per year instead of one, or the RNEs could be more involved in monitoring. In recent years a lot of time and attention has been given to the preparation of NPT projects (demand identification and articulation, tendering procedure etc.) and the available time should now be redirected towards monitoring the progress of projects.

18. Concerning networking and the facilitation of dialogue
It is recommended to Nuffic and the RNEs that more attention be given to networking between NPT institutes that work in one country and/or in one field. Expertise of NPT institutes that are a lead organisation in a particular field could also be used in other NPT institutes in that country and/or in other countries. Also more attention could be given to regional networking, for instance with universities that work on similar programmes in neighbouring countries.
Moreover, processes such as annual consultations that bring projects together, along with networking via electronic means, are also important to stay focused on the policy objectives of NPT and explore opportunities for synergy. Such ongoing dialogue at programme level, i.e. over and above the project concerns, is also necessary to stay focused on long-term systemic change to which individual projects and interventions contribute.

19. Concerning learning from each other
It is recommended to Nuffic and the RNEs that individual NPT institutes learn more from each other, both within and between countries. In addition to the annual workshops for the NPT institutes in one country, Nuffic could organise workshops in the Netherlands to share experiences across countries. For these workshops Dutch institutes that work in a particular area or theme (e.g. business environment, decentralisation, but also competence based learning) could be invited.

20. Concerning the need for a long-term vision
It is recommended to Nuffic and DCO that the policy framework for capacity building - including the short-term results to be achieved - be clarified and amended to reflect the need to design, develop and implement projects and training interventions within the perspective of long-term development concerns, allowing existing activities, when appropriate, to be succeeded by subsequent action within the same long-term development perspective. However, this does not necessarily mean that the same partners continue after the project has been finished. The follow-up project can be tendered again, giving other providers also a chance to submit a proposal. The southern organisation can decide whether it wants to continue with the same partners or whether it prefers a change.

13.4 NFP - Recommendations within the present policy framework

Recommendations regarding efficiency:

21. Concerning the division of tasks and responsibilities between Nuffic and the RNEs
Like for the NPT, it is recommended to DCO that uniform principles and guidelines are formulated regarding the division of tasks and responsibilities between Nuffic and the RNEs, creating consistency in these matters across NFP countries. At present, RNEs have a large freedom to make their own decisions with regard to their involvement in the NFP (e.g. to limit the NFP to the bilateral sectors or to temporarily close down the NFP desk when the RNE lacks the capacity). RNE staff often have not sufficient time for the NFP, for instance to monitor the tailor-made trainings or the new multi-year agreements. Again, RNEs therefore also need to be provided the human and financial resources to be able to fulfill the role it has to play.

22. Concerning the letter of acceptance
It is recommended to the Dutch institutes that the letter of acceptance of individual fellowships be sent to the applicants through the RNE. At present, some of the Dutch higher education institutes send the letters of acceptance directly to the applicants and the RNEs are not informed.
23. **Concerning the tailor-made training**
   It is recommended that Nuffic invests more capacity in the managing of TMTs in order to be better able to process the TMT requests in a timely manner.

24. **Concerning monitoring and evaluation**
   It is recommended to Nuffic to facilitate that evaluation forms of NFP participants can be sent directly to Nuffic (e.g. by email) and not through the Dutch higher education institutes. Moreover, Nuffic should aggregate the results of the individual evaluation forms, analyse them, and use the information obtained to improve the NFP programme.

25. **Concerning the involvement of (regional) institutes**
   It is recommended to Nuffic, the RNEs and the Dutch institutes to more explicitly look for regional institutes to provide (parts of) tailor-made training courses and other short courses. Moreover, with regard to PhDs, it is recommended that a larger part of the research time is spent at the own institute.

Recommendations regarding effectiveness:

26. **Concerning mutual understanding between the RNEs and the Dutch institutes**
   It is recommended to Nuffic, the Dutch institutes and the RNEs that clear selection criteria are agreed for prioritising NFP participants (see in this context also recommendation 3 on the revision of the application and selection process). In addition, communication between higher education institutes in The Netherlands, which receive NFP students, and the Fellowship Officers at RNEs should be improved so as to avoid unnecessary frustration caused by misunderstanding. It is particularly recommended in this context that Dutch institutes report back to the RNEs regarding their rationale for not following given advice to prioritise particular candidates.

27. **Concerning the multi-year agreements**
   It is recommended to Nuffic and the RNEs that a (limited) institutional assessment takes place of potential MYA institutions and that there is more direct involvement of Nuffic for the implementation of this new modality.
Annexes
Annex 1  Country report Tanzania
Annex 2 Country report Uganda
Annex 3 Country report Vietnam
Annex 4  Results of the Questionnaires
Annex 5 Interviewed persons
Annex 6  List of documents
Annex 7  Dutch organisations that participated in the validation workshop