

## Preparing the online discussion of 19 June 2020

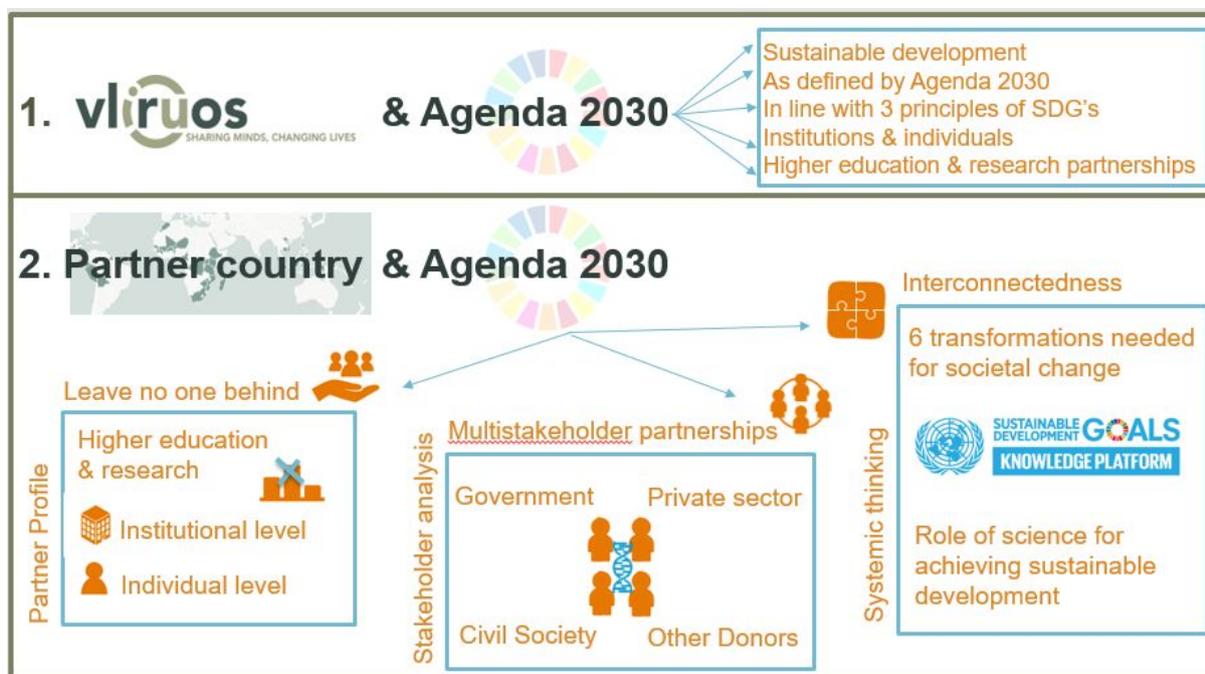
In this online discussion, we want to discuss the concept of a Country Framework and harvest ideas for a future VLIR-UOS portfolio. In order to prepare for this session, we have outlined a set of key questions. VLIR-UOS does not expect you to send your responses to the questions beforehand.

Important to keep in mind, is that the country framework and portfolio need to allow VLIR-UOS to live up to its ambitions to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its underlying principles:

- **Interconnectedness:** VLIR-UOS recognises that given the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of current societal challenges, meaningful social, economic and ecological transformations can only be realised by starting from a holistic and integrated approach to the SDGs.
- **Leave no one behind:** VLIR-UOS recognises the need for pro-active strategies to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised populations are included in and benefit from higher education partnerships for sustainable development.
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships:** VLIR-UOS promotes collaboration between different partners and stakeholders because the complexity of the global challenges that we face, requires us to produce, share and mobilize knowledge and expertise across disciplines, sectors, interest groups, and borders.

## Introducing a new country framework

A concept of a Country Framework has been discussed in the previous months and based on this discussion, a first example has been elaborated for Rwanda. After reading this example, we want to reflect on the following questions during the online discussion.



### 1. Does the concept Country Framework successfully integrate the ambitions put forward in the new vision of VLIR-UOS, including the 3 principles of Agenda 2030?

Are the 3 principles becoming more concrete in the country framework? Is their integration ambitious enough or too ambitious? Is there something missing?

Does the country framework provide clear and complete information to elaborate projects which contribute to sustainable development in a country? Does the framework provide sufficient information on what the 3 prin-

principles mean for an individual project proposal? Is there crucial information missing?

## 2. Is the concept Country Framework in line with the impact areas and objectives formulated in the new Theory of Change of VLIR-UOS?

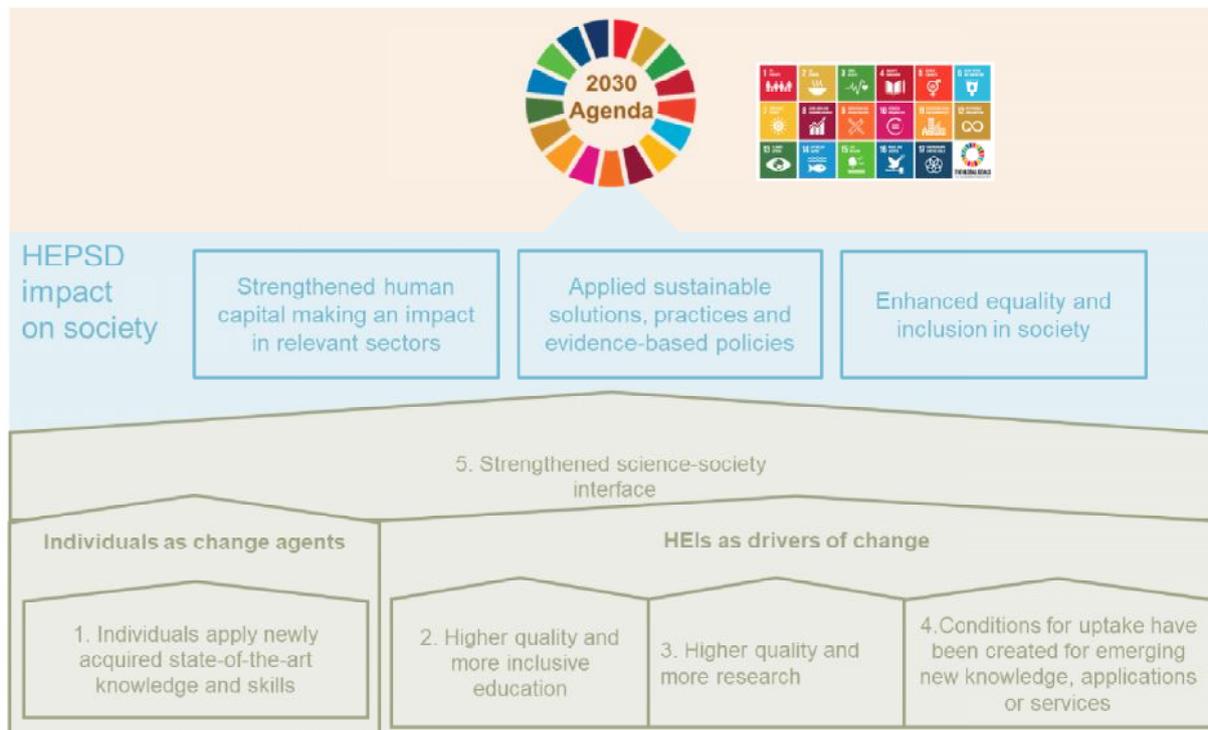
Does the country framework make clear what VLIR-UOS stands for? Is it in line with the desired change described in the Theory of Change? Are all impact areas and objectives sufficiently taken into account? If not, what is missing?

Does the country framework contextualize the Theory of Change of VLIR-UOS? Does it provide enough country specific information? Are national priorities and needs taken sufficiently into account? Next to national priorities, are global challenges an added value for the country framework?

## From theory of change to portfolio

In this part of the online discussion, we aim at harvesting your ideas for a future VLIR-UOS portfolio. This new portfolio should represent the best possible mix of intervention types to realise VLIR-UOS' ambitions, which have been translated to 3 impact areas and 5 VLIR-UOS outcomes in the VLIR-UOS Theory of Change, which also integrates the 2030 Agenda and underlying principles (cf. Theory of Change document, annex 5).

In this first reflection about a future portfolio we strive to have an open debate, starting from the impact areas and outcomes identified. Put differently, the aim is not to simply improve the current portfolio, but to have an outside the box discussion about VLIR-UOS' future portfolio.



## 1. What approaches are needed to realise the impact areas and objectives formulated in the VLIR-UOS ToC? Which interventions do we need?

How do we best organise strengthening individuals as change agents (related to **outcome 1**)? What do you consider essential aspects of an effective and comprehensive scholarship programme that can realise impact and that integrates the SDG principles? Are new intervention types needed to realise this outcome? Why? What kind of interventions? What do we need to change/improve?

What are the best strategies to strengthen HEIs as “drivers of change” (related to **outcome 2-3-4**)? What type of interventions do we need to organize to have the best results? Do we need specific interventions for any of the three underlying outcomes? Are new intervention types needed to realise these outcomes? Why? How would these intervention types look like/work? What current intervention types do we need to maintain? What do we need to change/improve in our current intervention types?

What are potential strategies to strengthen the science – society interface (related to **outcome 5**) in VLIR-UOS partner countries and beyond? How can we use the VLIR-UOS network (academics, HEI, (former) scholarship holders, embassies, other donors...) to strengthen the science-policy interface? Are new intervention types needed to realise this outcome? Why? What kind of interventions do you consider? What can be changed/improved in our current interventions types to strengthen this?

## 2. How do we develop a portfolio which allows VLIR-UOS to integrate the 3 principles of Agenda 2030?

**Interconnectedness:** How can VLIR-UOS integrate this principle? By integrating complexity thinking in processes and formats for all projects? By stimulating more holistic interventions? By promoting more interdisciplinary or even transdisciplinary research? Do we need new intervention types to realise this? How would these intervention types look like/work? What current intervention types do we need to maintain? What do we need to change/improve?

**Leaving No One Behind:** How to focus more on disadvantaged or marginalised groups, as to be included in and benefit from VLIR-UOS interventions? By setting up structural mechanism through for example certain rules (e.g. on types of partner institutions), incentives (e.g. for research projects working with disadvantaged or marginalised groups), or specific calls (e.g. with a thematic LNOB focus)? Are new intervention types needed? Or specific calls within existing intervention types? How would these intervention types look like/work? Should our scholarship programme also focus on widening access to typically overlooked individuals (e.g. with a set of selection criteria), and work on more academic diversity in institutions (e.g. by transforming curricula, designing admission policies differently)? What current intervention types do we need to maintain? What do we need to change/improve?

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships:** How can VLIR-UOS encourage these partnerships? Should interventions have a more proactive stakeholder engagement? Or should interventions go further and should multi-stakeholder partnerships (incl. non-academic partners) be included in all projects? Or a combination of both? Should it be possible to contract non-academic partners? Should transdisciplinarity be actively encouraged? Can VLIR-UOS alumni play a role in linking up with different types of actors? How can we capture relevant questions of other actors, as a starting point for research? Do we need new intervention types to realise this? Why? How would these intervention types look like/work? What current intervention types do we need to maintain? What do we need to change/improve?