



Strategic Plan for The Broker 2012-2015

**Connect and deepen**

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# Connect and deepen

### I Introduction

This document elaborates on the multiyear plan for The Broker discussed with knowledge institutes and NGOs in August 2012. That plan served as a basis for the successful funding of The Broker's relaunch by a consortium of ten organisations<sup>1</sup> and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was agreed at the time that the plan would later be elaborated into a strategic work plan for 2013. Eight general objectives have been distilled from this original document, which are presented in detail in separate chapters. This plan describes The Broker's core functions and does not specifically address the acquisition and extra activities and that The Broker wishes to undertake in the coming period or how these are to be funded.

### II Vision

Global knowledge provides a solid foundation for broad-based foreign policy and social engagement aimed at achieving just, equal, peaceful and sustainable global development. This means more than development cooperation policy alone but, perhaps even more so, other areas of foreign policy (defence, trade, agriculture, finance, environment) and the international dimensions of domestic policy (Europe, justice and migration, transport, monetary policy, etc.).

Global economic and political relations are changing rapidly with the emergence of new economies, technological innovations and transnational economic and cultural ties. That makes it necessary to scale up and cooperate more within Europe, and to develop a genuinely transnational, global perspective.

The growing complexity and interdependence of local, national, international and transnational processes call for an interdisciplinary approach. That is why 'brokering' knowledge and bridging gaps between economic and social sectors and scientific disciplines has great added value.

### III Mission

The Broker works towards an equal, just, sustainable and peaceful world by helping provide a stronger foundation for international policy.

To achieve this, we make knowledge accessible and build bridges between different disciplines, policy areas and sectors. We do this by strengthening communication and the exchange of knowledge between academics, policy-makers and other professionals. We call this approach 'connect and deepen'.

### IV Far horizons: The Broker's strategic direction for the coming period

In pursuing its mission, it is important The Broker has access to broad, state-of-the-art, international knowledge and expertise, can translate, merge and make this knowledge accessible to wider target groups, and can bring the right experts into contact with each other.

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<sup>1</sup> WOTRO, Cordaid, Hivos, SNV, Free Press Unlimited, IKVPaxChristi, Afrika Studiecentrum, NCDO, Woord en Daad and Plan Nederland



To achieve this, we have chosen the following strategic directions for the coming period:

1. **Connecting:** The Broker will produce high-quality content on its website by bringing together up-to-date knowledge, policy and practice
2. **Deepening:** The Broker will deepen knowledge and insight, especially on the three priority themes of human security, food security and inclusive economy
3. **Broadening:** The Broker will broaden its field of vision to include other areas of policy relevant to international cooperation than development cooperation, including security / defence / international law, environment / sustainability / energy, and finance / economy / private sector / agriculture
4. **Shifting the focus:** The centre of gravity of The Broker's activities will gradually shift as it develops an increasingly international focus
5. **Refreshing:** The Broker aims to make its content more accessible and appealing to a wider audience
6. **Enriching:** The Broker will evolve from a web platform to a 'thinknet'
7. **Disseminating:** The Broker will systematically expand its readership and its pool of active contributors to the platform
8. **Making sustainable:** The Broker will continue to develop a model that will ensure a sustainable income and seek more, longer-term funding

## V Strategic aims for 2012-2015

1. **Connecting:** We will identify, connect and process knowledge and use it to produce content on The Broker's three priority themes according to a **continuous programme** (rather than a two or three-monthly cycle). This will take the form of dossiers and articles, together with blogs, online debates and shorter messages online and through social media.
2. **Deepening:** We will deepen this knowledge by inviting experts and networks to affiliate to The Broker. For the three priority themes, we will establish a council of 'fellows' to think along with us and perhaps to contribute written content. Around this core, we will create a virtual international network of experts to further deepen our analysis of the themes.
3. **Broadening:** We will work to broaden The Broker's outreach and presence in three policy areas outside development cooperation: (1) security / defence / international law, (2) economy / financial sector / private sector, and (3) agriculture / environment / sustainability/energy.
4. **Shifting the focus:** We will internationalise The Broker by generating more input, users and support from the international community: (1) at policy level, by networking with policy-makers in other countries and in international organisations; (2) in terms of content (authors, bloggers, advisers on content and topics); and (3) by attracting international readers and participants in debates. There are three main priorities for 2013:
  - Greater access to and commitment from African networks
  - More attention and access to Europe: Brussels (European Commission, Council and Parliament) and a number of northern countries (UK, Nordics, Germany and Belgium)
  - More access to knowledge and expertise in an emerged economy
5. **Refreshing:** We want to increase The Broker's appeal by making our articles, newsletters and social media messages shorter and more accessible, and by making greater use of visual media (infographics)

6. **Enriching:** We want to keep The Broker up-to-date, continually enriching it with the latest knowledge and debates. We are achieving that by switching from the publication of a periodical (online) magazine to the continual provision of up-to-date knowledge and information online.
7. **Disseminating:** We want to improve The Broker's outreach by attracting more visitors to the website and ensuring that they stay longer, increasing the number of active contributors to online debates, and producing online content. And not only in the Netherlands, but especially internationally.
8. **Making sustainable:** We want to increase and widen The Broker's financial base to bring achievement of these objectives closer.

## VI Activities

The Broker's activities are specified in an annual work plan which describes The Broker's core activities (see the annex for the 2013 work plan). The Broker will also carry out projects that fit within its objectives on an ad hoc basis.

## VII Resources

### a) Human resources

In the 2012- 2015 period, The Broker will continue to work with a core team consisting of an editor-in-chief, a managing editor, two research editors and a web editor / editorial secretary

### b) Financial resources

A consortium consisting of NGOs, DGIS and WOTRO has provided funds for this period, which runs from September 2012 to August 2015. Eighty percent of the total costs of the core programme are covered by contributions from the consortium partners. The Broker aims to cover the remainder of the budget through supplementary fundraising and grant applications (see objective 8).

## VIII Work plan for 2013

Connect and deepen, by developing the three priority themes and identifying and connecting both theoretical and practical knowledge and expertise (objectives 1 and 2): these are the core of The Broker's activities. Achieving objectives 1 and 2 has priority, while objectives 3 to 8 are necessary to enable The Broker to develop further and become sustainable.

The work plan sets out The Broker's ambitions. We will make every effort to achieve these ambitions, but we consider it necessary and justified to leave ourselves the space to respond to current developments and needs. That is why, in some cases, we specify only the minimum result that we aim to deliver.

1. **Connecting:** Producing high-quality content on The Broker website by connecting knowledge. In 2013 we will aim to achieve the following:

*Four dossiers (with a minimum of three):* A dossier comprises at least a series of overview articles, a list of sources with short summaries of important relevant reports and other publications, and an online debate, all of which will be presented on a separate dossier page on the website. The following possible themes have proposed for 2013:

- a) Post-2015 agenda (April).
- b) Social entrepreneurship (June).
- c) (PROVISIONAL) Analysis models / knowledge for diplomacy (September).
- d) (PROVISIONAL) Jobs (employment, quality of labour, youth unemployment) or: International tax justice (December)

*Around 30 articles, 12 of which on cross-cutting themes (emerged powers, inequality, Europe)*

*More than 200 blog posts*

*At least ten Broker newsletters*

*1,000 messages through social media, especially Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn.*

We aim to be featured *twice in the regular media*. We would like to see an article or editorial based on each dossier in the regular media.

We will also produce Dutch versions to be made available to a wider public through the OneWorld/NCDO channels.

2. **Deepening:** We aim to expand our editorial input and advice by affiliating international experts in the priority themes to The Broker.

The aim is to have, by the end of 2013, a Council of Fellows affiliated to The Broker. These will be people with state-of-the-art theoretical and practical knowledge and experience. In 2014, this may be expanded to three councils, one for each of The Broker's priority themes:

- a) Human Security
- b) Food Security
- c) Inclusive Economy

The fellows will be invited on the basis of their expertise and engagement. They will be asked to support The Broker actively, think along with us on themes and perspectives, perhaps to contribute articles or blogs, and actively involve their own networks in The Broker's work.

Around each council a more extensive, preferably international, virtual network will be built up, comprising experts from the fellows' networks and those of The Broker's editors themselves.

In 2013, two Broker Days will be organised, which will present new ideas, evaluate activities to date, and look forward to the future with our consortium partners, fellows and the 'umfeld'.

3. **Broadening.** The Broker has been writing for many years on other areas of foreign policy of relevance to development cooperation, but has not yet established itself as a relevant actor in these fields. We would therefore like to take a more active part in discussion in the following areas:

- a) security / defence / international law
- b) economy / financial sector / private sector / agriculture
- c) environment / sustainability / energy

In practical terms, this means that we will aim to establish sustainable forms of cooperation with institutes or organisations in these policy areas. For 2013, we want to work closely with at least two institutes and develop one project for each theme.

4. **Shifting the focus.** The Broker already has considerable international input and outreach, but we can improve its value by stepping this up. There are three main priorities for 2013:
  - a) Greater access to and commitment from African networks
  - b) More attention and access to Europe: Brussels (European Commission, Council and Parliament) and a number of northern countries (UK, Nordics, Germany and Belgium)
  - c) More access to knowledge and expertise in an emerged economy

We will make efforts in 2013 to acquire more partners in all of these areas.

5. **Refreshing.** in 2013 we will actively work to improve our accessibility and presentation. We aim to do that by making our content more concise, with multiple layers and accessible introductory texts, by making our newsletters and social media messages more appealing, and by using more visual media (infographics). We are also exploring the options for making The Broker available for mobile telephones and tablets.
6. **Enriching.** The essence of this objective is the transition from publication to communication and exchange. By the end of 2013, The Broker aims to function as a platform for sharing knowledge and a hub linking different disciplines, types of knowledge and policy sectors. That means adding an interactive function to the 'publishing' function of the traditional magazine. The results of this 'brokering' and exchange of knowledge will be summarised in short, readable 'syntheses'.
7. **Disseminating.** Through a targeted marketing strategy, we aim to attract more visitors to the website and ensure that they stay longer, increase the number of active contributors to online debates, and produce online content.
8. **Making sustainable.** We want to increase and widen The Broker's financial base to bring achievement of these objectives closer. The aim for 2013 is to have the core budget covered until mid 2015.

These plans are elaborated in greater detail in the task-based work plan and budget.

*Photo on front page: 'Ocean Beach binox' by Cassidy Curtis*