

DevSAT a Development Ecosystem Platform for building synergy and alignment to increase impact

In many developing countries, despite all efforts, activities of the various stakeholders yield in general less impact than expected. It is increasingly being recognized that humanitarian aid, development and research projects are frequently being executed in isolation, even in a same territory as illustrated in Figure 1a. The consequence is limited impact and loss of time and money. Therefore, to increase resilience or to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), stakeholders have to think and act differently. A first step is to exchange experiences and results between projects with common characteristics and seek options for mutual benefits (Fig. 1b). This serves at the same time capacity building, opening up and a change in mindset that sharing of information will lead to beneficial effects. The next step will then be the identification of options for synergy and alignment (S&A) of activities between projects with different characteristics (Fig. 1c). Sharing of data will support this process as it helps to determine what one seeks in a collaboration. Finally, all partners will increase their impact through new activities with added value to the ongoing projects of each organization, if needed in the form of a new project (Fig. 1d). Facilitating this process of creating S&A leads to a better integration of disciplines and cooperation between the various stakeholders. Consequently, impact towards the SDGs will sustainably increase.

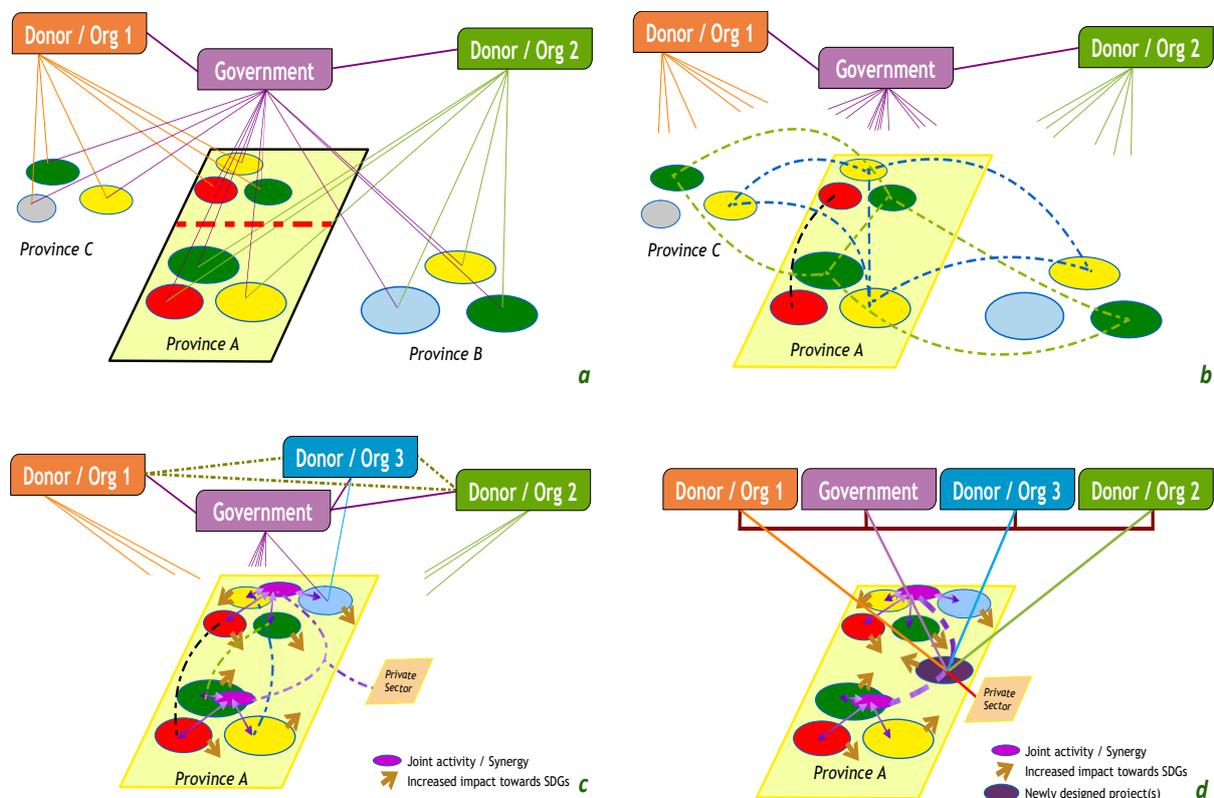


Figure 1. The actual situation without exchanges between the projects (a), and the three phases of linking projects to create added value: b) linking of same theme projects across provinces within a country, c) searching for synergy between projects of different themes, and d) creating increased impact through a new project or specific joint activities.

The mission of the social enterprise Trimpact BV is to increase the impact of development, research and humanitarian aid projects to efficiently realize the SDGs.

To realize this, we have developed **Ufahamu** (*Insights* in Swahili), an approach based on the basic principle that one needs first to gain insights into the current situation, the needs, and the expected results in order to be able to steer the development process and obtain the required results and impact. The goals of Ufahamu approach are: 1) to improve the planning, execution and monitoring of integrated multidisciplinary activities based on synergy and alignment at various levels of scale, 2) to increase efficiencies, and 3) to increase impact.

Ufahamu in practice is a modular framework of three software tools: *a)* the Development Synergy and Alignment Tool (**DevSAT**), *b)* the Planning, Monitoring and Reporting module (**PMR**), and *c)* the Interactive Theory of Change module (**I-ToC**). This new interactive software package has been developed using state-of-the-art technologies, including so-called 'graph-database' that are ideally suited to manage highly interconnected data (the same type of database was used to visualize and search through the millions of connections between persons and organisations in the Panama Papers).

PMR assists in three ways through: *a)* planning of the actions (activities) and data collection needed to obtain the required results, *b)* monitoring of the obtained results stored in the database that can export data to Open Data databases, and *c)* reporting the planned and obtained results to the various stakeholders.

I-ToC is a nested Theory of Change based on various ToCs at different levels of scales, that can be assessed by the various stakeholders. This is an innovation to be built in collaboration with the various stakeholders so that the various ministerial plans, development plans of lower administrative areas and research and project plans are included so that the development pathways, the intermediate steps (results) and interactions between those plans are properly identified and assumptions are fully taken into account. With the progress of getting results, the I-ToC adapt itself, so it shows the state of development 24/7.

DevSAT is designed to be a daily interactive Development Ecosystem Platform that stimulates and assists all stakeholders (humanitarian aid, development and research organizations, donors, planners, entrepreneurs, etc.) in three ways:

- a) through mapping and linking of SDGs and national plans at four levels of scale¹ with '*who does what, where, how, when for whom, and their outputs (deliverables) for and their inputs (needs) from third parties*',
- b) through gap and similarity analyses allowing prioritization and coordination of impact-oriented actions (i.e. new activities that add value to ongoing projects, cf. Fig. 1d), and identification of possible exchanges of outputs (e.g. capacity building, Open Data, goods) between projects and enterprises, and
- c) by identifying potential upscaling zones using the results of old projects or by defining options for collaboration with enterprises or ongoing similar projects.

The tool facilitates to describe both the needs of governmental institutions (or donors) and the activities of various organisations, including enterprises. The activities are described conform the guidelines of the International aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), so that DevSAT can also be used as a publishing

¹ Number and names of levels depend on the country: e.g. Burundi: national, province, commune, and colline; Kenya: national, county, sub-county, and ward.

tool for IATI) and supplemented with some details (georeferenced to the lowest administrative unit) required to be able to perform synergy and alignment analyses at different level of scale. The focus of these analyses is on seven dimensions: SDGs and their targets, national plans, target groups, value chains, target landscape units, methodologies, and deliverables. Deliverables are defined as outputs to the target groups of that activity, and secondly, as impact accelerators to third parties because they can be the required input to increase the impact of their activities. For the analyses at various level of scale (country to village), different dashboards exist for the different users (planners/donors, implementing organizations and enterprises). In addition, activities can be filtered on the basis of e.g. territory, project status, implementing organization, funder, and main subject (DAC list). For the thematic maps, distinctive markers have been created.

Compared to other tools (e.g. AidData, DevInfo, DPortal, AIDmonitor, and ORS) that are predominantly focussing on reporting results and financial flows, DevSAT is a development planning and execution tool. DevSAT has added values due to the following features: a) being an interactive tool for all stakeholders at different levels of scale, b) mapping of activities of projects and enterprises, and their six dimensions using three types of geographical information (roads, terrain, and satellite images), c) inclusion of the SDGs and their specific targets, d) linking of SDGs to national development plans, e) identification of potential interactions between activities to increase impact, f) identification of potential upscaling zones, g) capturing lessons learnt, h) identification of options pour alignment of actions, and i) multi-scale gap analysis of planned and ongoing activities for a given territory.

In practice, DevSAT provides overviews and results in Google maps and tables. Figure 2 illustrates the type of maps, showing the locations of different activities of development projects for two of the six principal themes. The basic information of an activity is summarized in the information box that can be obtained by clicking on the marker. Similar thematic maps can be made for the commercial activities carried out by enterprises.

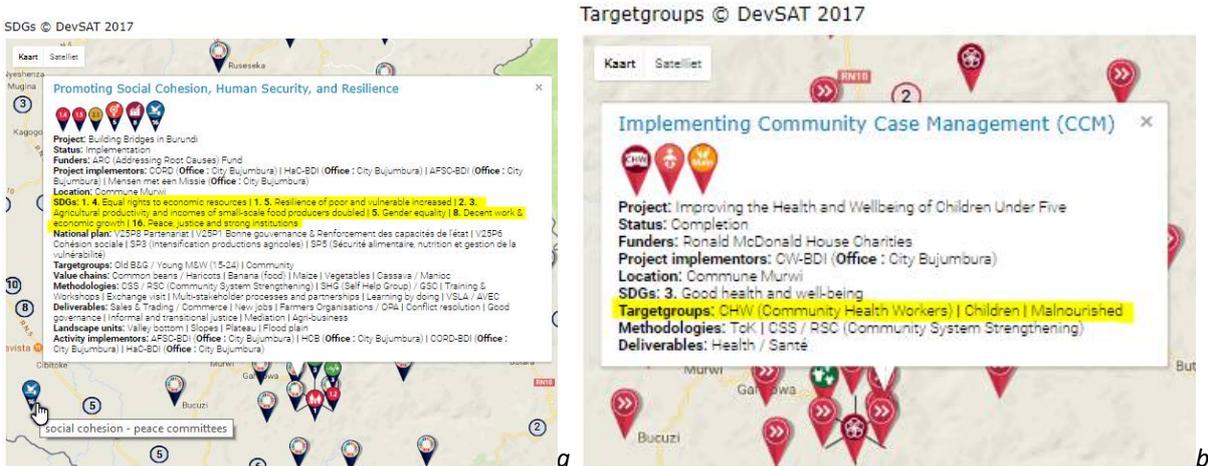


Figure 2. Screenshots of maps with locations of project activities with the focus on a) Sustainable Development Goals, and b) Target groups. The lines made yellow explain the markers given above in the information box.

DevSAT equally provides an overview of activities beyond a country, as illustrated in Figure 3 for projects on renewable energy. In this way, exchange of information across countries or a continent is stimulated. In time, this functionality will increase in importance with more activities being filled in DevSAT in an increasing number of countries.

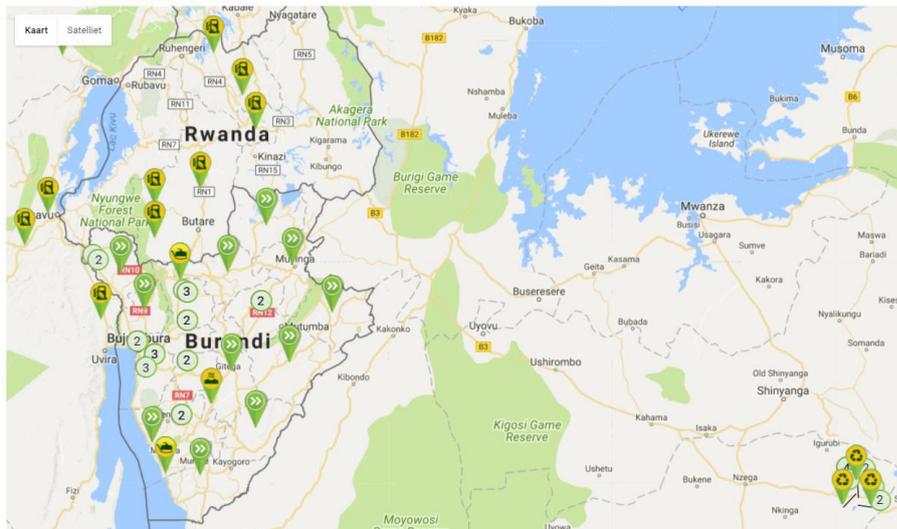


Figure 3. A map of activities on renewable energy value chain.

When stakeholders want to increase alignment of actions, results of the specific comparing analysis with DevSAT can provide insights where this can be done. For instance, when they want a follow-up for a project that worked with the poorest of the poor (humanitarian aid-oriented) by a project that build on these results and shift the aid towards multidisciplinary development of smallholder farmers. Figure 4 provides an example of comparing two approaches: the Integrated Farm Plan (PIP) that could be a next step and builds on the results obtained by the Farm Field School (FFS) approach.

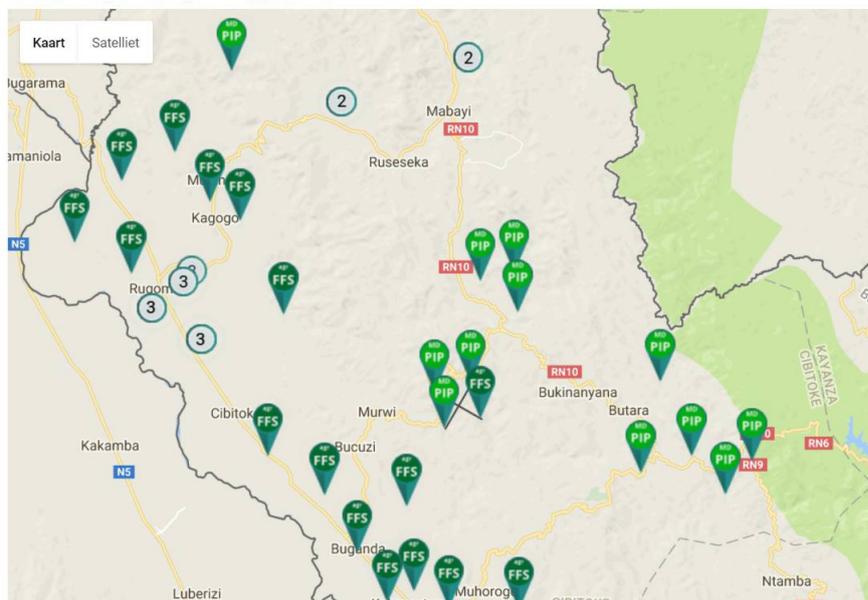


Figure 4. A map of activities in Cibitoke province, Burundi, with different specific methodologies: PIP = Integrated Farm Plan (bright green marker), FFS = Farmer Field School.

To increase the impact of a project and using the characteristics of other (past and current) projects, DevSAT provides the potential upscaling zones of that reference project. These zones are determined based on the degree of similarity of another project compared to the reference project (cf Fig.1b), and is quantified by the Similarity Index (SI). The higher the value, the higher the chance that results of the

reference project can successfully be transferred and up-scaled. Figure 4 shows an example, with the locations of activities with the light green markers having the highest potential to use the results of the activity with the dark green marker. In case complementarity with ongoing projects has to be established, activities with a yellow markers could be a good starting point to talk to.



Figure 5. Locations of project activities with a varied similarity compared to the reference project 'Self-help groups as basis' in Cibitoke province, Burundi.

To take the next step in providing options for S&A between executing organizations, DevSAT can be used to perform a demand and supply analysis based on deliverables of an activity. Deliverables serve on the one hand the target group, and on the other hand, can serve another activity of the same or a different project or enterprise. Then deliverables of one act as impact accelerator for another. Matching results are presented in two ways: a) Options that others are supporting the activity of the DevSAT user), and b) vice versa: the user's activity supports activities of others. Subsequently, this is mapped (Figure 6) allowing to choose the closest demanding or supplying activity, and start interacting for

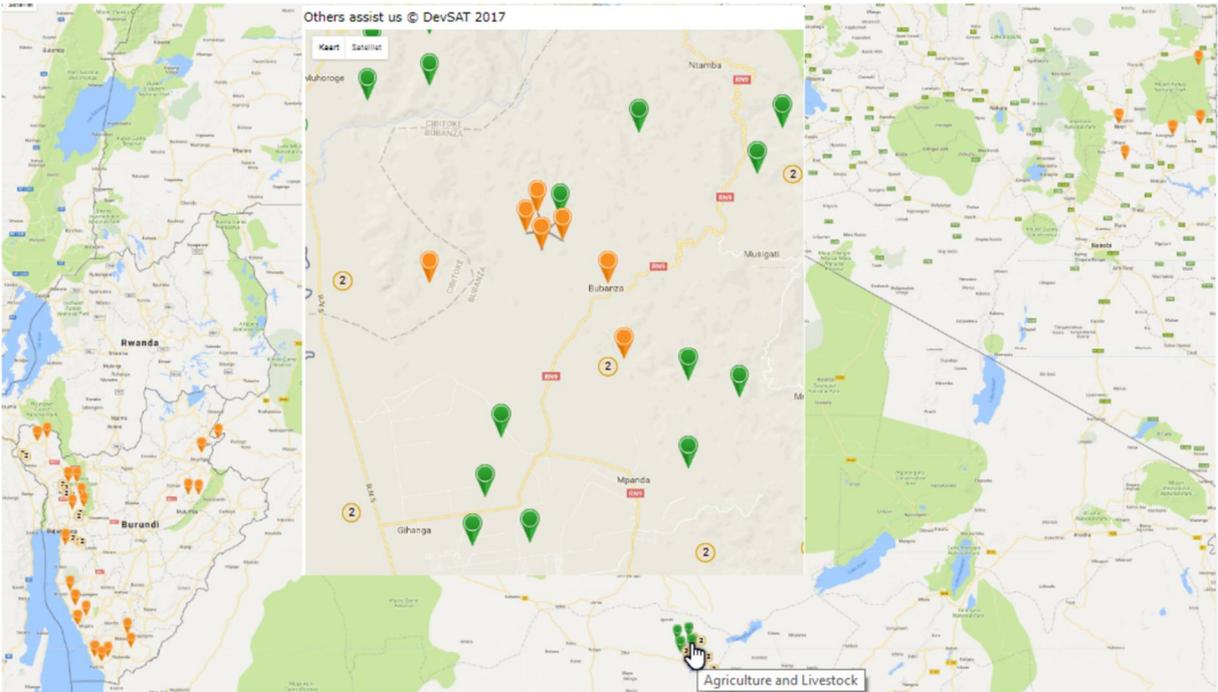


Figure 6. Locations of activities (green marker) that can provide the required inputs of another activity (orange marker) at different levels of scale: within the East African subregion and within a province (Burundi).

mutual benefits. Figure 6 also shows that a project activity can be beneficial to a larger group than only the target group of that activity.

With regards to planning and prioritisation of activities in a territory, DevSAT facilitates a multiscale gap analysis of the needs of the various stakeholders. The needs are expressed in terms of the above mentioned six dimensions by planners at a given administrative level (e.g. province) while taking into account the needs defined at lower and higher levels of scale (i.e. national and commune). The match with existing activities is then provided in terms of subject and location as exact, narrower or broader. An example for the SDGs is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. An example of the matching of needs in the province Rumonge in Burundi. Green = exact match; Orange = partial match (broader or narrower) in terms of subject and location.

GIF coverage Country BI > Province Rumonge							
• 2. Zero hunger							
Project	Activity	Match		Subject		Location	
		Subject	Location	Broader	Narrower	Broader	Narrower
Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) - Burundi	Assurer une couverture nationale des entreprises semencières		*		◦ 2. Zero hunger > 2.3. Agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers doubled		
Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD: part TW)	Accompagner les producteurs en sélection positive	*				◦ Country BI	
Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD: part TW)	Formation des producteurs en sélection positive	*				◦ Country BI	
Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD: part TW)	Installation et suivi des champs de démonstration	*				◦ Country BI	
PROPA-O	Aménagement des marrais de Gatakwa				◦ 2. Zero hunger > 2.3. Agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers doubled		◦ Country BI > Province Rumonge > Commune Rumonge > Colline Kanenge
Projet d'Appui à la Production Agricole au Burundi (PAPAB)	P01.1 Amélioration des opérations de distribution des engrais	*	*				

Finally, using DevSAT allows implementing organizations (projects) and enterprises to increase their visibility, e.g. by making visible what products and services they can share with other projects or enterprises, and how they contribute to the implementation of SDGs and National Plans. In return, the projects and enterprises can search for local knowledge, products, and experiences from other organizations to enhance their performance and create impact.

DevSAT was first tested in 2016 in a province in Burundi. Since then, an increasing number of organizations are including their projects in DevSAT. In 2017, five other provinces in Burundi were included to increase the synergy and alignment with various multidisciplinary stakeholders. In various other countries discussions are being held to use the Ufahamu approach as a means to increase impact.

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