



Summary of Workshop

ANALYSIS OF THE PERSPECTIVES FOR STRENGTHENING TRIANGULAR COOPERATION Spain – Latin America and the Caribbean

Asunción, Paraguay, 23 April 2009

In the last few years the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) has broadened the ways in which it works in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to bilateral cooperation and other traditional modalities, the Agency has intensified its collaboration with other actors, in particular with multilateral organizations, subregional integration institutions and middle income countries in the region which have increased their cooperation with other states within and outside the zone. In this latter area which is often called triangular cooperation, in a short period AECID has gone from managing a small number of modest projects to channeling considerable resources in operations of increasing scope. This activity is closely linked with its support to national bodies in charge of horizontal cooperation in various Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries.

However, the Agency wishes to go beyond carrying out a series of relatively discrete projects. Instead, it seeks to articulate a strategic framework so that it might advance qualitatively in its triangular cooperation in Latin American and the Caribbean. In this regard, AECID recently initiated a strategic reflection which has involved –from early on in the process— its Latin American partners.

For that purpose a workshop was organized in Asunción, Paraguay on April 23, 2009, with the participation of the Director for Cooperation with LAC and other members of the AECID team at headquarters, coordinators of the Agency's offices in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the national directors of international cooperation of those same countries.

The workshop was organized in four main parts. The first part began with a brief presentation of the reasons which lead Spain to promote triangular cooperation. In this regard, it was noted that triangular cooperation was included in the *III Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation, 2009-2012*, as a modality that should be strengthened.

This first section also included a brief review of how this modality has evolved. The Agency became engaged in triangular cooperation in 2005, closely linked with its activities in Ibero-American Cooperation, through which AECID is involved in intense collaboration with all of the countries in the region. Spain responded favourably to the interest expressed by several countries in Latin America that it contribute to their horizontal cooperation initiatives, in particular to support Haiti's reconstruction efforts. This was later extended to other countries (going from 4 operations in 2005 to over 10 in 2008) and in diverse sectors. AECID's main emerging donor partners are Argentina, Brazil, Chile and

Mexico, while the main recipients are Bolivia, Haiti and Paraguay. This part of the workshop ended with a general proposal to progress towards broad agreements in which common strategic objectives for the medium term, institutional frameworks and procedures would be defined.

In the second part of the meeting, the Latin American representatives presented their perspectives on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and they reviewed their experience with AECID, identifying elements for advancing in future collaboration. From these presentations two aspects can be highlighted: there is an extremely rich and varied experience in triangular cooperation in the region, and Spain is an increasingly important extra-regional partner for cooperation providers in Latin America. In addition, there are many possibilities to “export” aspects of successful traditional development cooperation to other countries via triangular cooperation.

Considerable time was spent considering the situation in Paraguay, which, in contrast with the other countries present, is mainly a recipient in this modality. There is much interest in working together in Paraguay since it is a priority country for AECID and for many of its neighbours. For its part, the Paraguayan government representatives insisted in the need for support to strengthen the capacity of their organizations to be able to coordinate and manage the resources they receive.

The third part of the workshop involved presentations by the Agency's field office coordinators in Latin America. They described their experiences, underlining some emerging lessons. Of these, the following can be highlighted:

- The need to define methods for tri-partite project/programme identification, lead by the country requesting assistance;
- It is convenient to develop medium term programs in order to achieve greater impact and sustainability;
- Tripartite negotiation may result in significant delays in executing operations;
- Certain flexibility is needed in managing these operations, taking into account different systems of procedures, capacities and local presence.

In the last part of the workshop, some overall conclusions were presented. First and foremost, it was agreed that there is great potential to strengthen triangular cooperation between Spain and the Latin American countries. The effort to get to know each other through this type of workshops is important as it is the best way to visualize concrete opportunities. It is fundamental to advance in the institutionalization of these initiatives to define priorities, clarify roles and systematize and communicate lessons learned. This will require not only greater political will, but also specific advances in aspects such as quantifying projects and programs, defining indicators for results, etc.

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