

DAC GLOBAL RELATIONS

TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS) – Findings from a 2015 Survey*

Interestingly, one-fifth of the projects reported in a survey that the OECD conducted on triangular co-operation worldwide (with over 420 reported projects), involved small island developing states. This factsheet focuses on the information that the survey respondents provided on triangular co-operation involving these countries and how that information compares with the overall findings of triangular co-operation projects throughout the world.

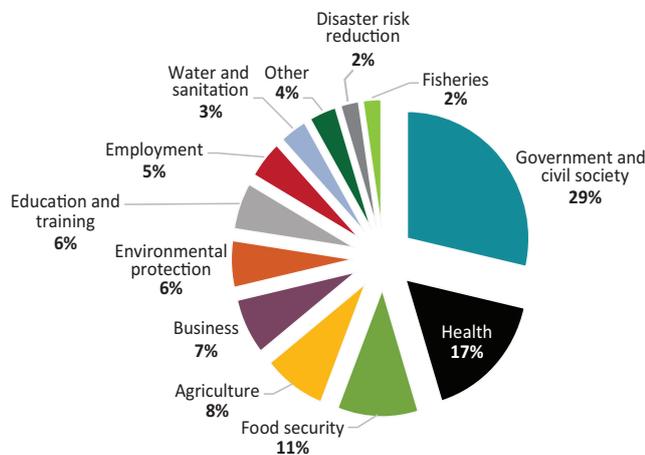
Where can we find most Triangular Co-operation projects?

According to the responses supplied, the most active countries and international organisations in triangular co-operation with small island developing states were Chile, the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia, Timor-Leste, Argentina, Germany, Spain and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Survey respondents also reported on the involvement of their partners in triangular co-operation who may not have replied to the survey themselves. The table on the right uses this additional information to give a fuller picture of the involvement of developing islands in triangular co-operation.

Governments or international organisations are the main actors involved in triangular co-operation with small island developing states (73% of reported projects, compared to 61% overall). However, a quarter of the reported projects also involved academia, research institutions, civil society organisations, the private sector or other non-governmental actors.

The majority of the reported triangular co-operation projects with small islands can be found in the Caribbean (66%), followed by the Pacific (26%) and only 8% involved more than one region, i.e. Africa and the Pacific, or the Caribbean and the Pacific. In comparison, 18% of the overall reported triangular co-operation projects worldwide are implemented across different regions. Thus, since island states share some similar developmental challenges, there is scope for a greater exchange of experiences between regions through triangular co-operation.

SIDS involved in triangular co-operation projects	No. of Projects
Dominican Republic	28
Haiti	17
Timor-Leste	13
Cuba	11
Belize, Kiribati, Samoa	7
Fiji	6
Guinea Bissau	5
Cape Verde, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Suriname, Tonga	4
Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu	3
Anguilla, Nauru, Palau, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Tuvalu	2
Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Niue, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Virgin Islands	1



Surprisingly, given their vulnerabilities, the reported projects in SIDS are not primarily related to climate change mitigation and adaptation or to disaster risk management – challenges that these countries co-operate on through other means. Rather, 29% of projects are related to the government and civil society sector, the same finding as for all reported triangular co-operation projects. Health (17%), food security (11%), agriculture (8%) and business (7%) are the remaining top five sectors. Compared to the overall total, there are more projects in developing islands on health and food security.

* This factsheet was prepared by the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate in October 2016, drawing on the responses received from 60 actors involved in triangular co-operation. In some cases, complete data was not provided on the activities reported.

How do small island developing states engage in Triangular Co-operation?

Countries can participate in triangular co-operation projects as a facilitator, pivotal partner or beneficiary. These roles can either evolve over time or in different project contexts. In some cases involving small islands, the same country can play different roles in parallel. For instance, the Dominican Republic benefits from Chile's and Germany's experience in youth employment with support from the Inter-American Development Bank. At the same time, the Dominican Republic is a pivotal partner in training Haitian professionals of the agriculture and forestry sector together with Japan.

Generally, triangular co-operation provides a diverse range of actors with an opportunity to explore new ways of working together. Respondents reported engaging in triangular co-operation mainly through project-type interventions. Technical co-operation activities and dispatching experts, e.g. for training, workshops and exchange visits, also occurred frequently – more so in the case of triangular co-operation with small island developing states than in the overall sample of reported projects.

Duration of triangular co-operation activities	Total no. of projects	% of total no. of projects	No. of SIDS projects	% of SIDS projects
< 12 months	58	15%	17	21%
Between 12 and 24 months	142	38%	37	46%
Between 25 and 48 months	125	33%	21	25%
Between 49 and 168 months	53	14%	7	8%
Total	378	100%	84	100%

This finding on the types of development co-operation used is supported by the information gathered on project durations and budgets. The average duration of triangular co-operation projects with small island developing states was 25 months. The durations of projects involving small islands were considerably shorter than those of the overall reported triangular co-operation projects, e.g. more workshops or training activities were reported.

Triangular co-operation budgets (in USD)	Total no. of projects	% of total no. of projects	No. of SIDS projects	% of SIDS projects
Under 100 000	109	32%	19	30%
Between 100 000 and 500 000	99	28%	32	48%
Between 500 000 and 1 000 000	47	14%	6	8%
Between 1 000 000 and 5 000 000	63	18%	5	8%
Between 5 000 000 and 10 000 000	10	3%	6	5%
> 10 000 000	17	5%	1	1%
Total	345	100%	66	100%

Of the projects for which budget information was provided, costs were shared in more projects involving small island developing states (56%) than in the overall sample (48%). The average budget was slightly lower for small island developing states (USD 1.3 million) than for the overall reported projects (USD 1.7 million). However, overall budgets as well as those for projects involving small islands varied from approximately USD 5 000 to more than USD 40 million (for a triangular co-operation project between China, the Cook Islands and New Zealand).

According to respondents, 66% of overall reported triangular co-operation projects were evaluated. However, few actors conducted joint evaluations. Most respondents from small island developing states said that they evaluated their triangular co-operation projects. Timor-Leste described a two-step evaluation process: in addition to the monitoring and evaluation performed by the providers, the line ministry that benefits from the triangular co-operation initiative is responsible for the evaluation from the perspective of Timor-Leste. Overall, many respondents stated that the specific value-added of triangular co-operation was not adequately captured through existing evaluation methodologies.

Why do small island states engage in Triangular Co-operation?

Actors reported that their main motivation for engaging in triangular co-operation was to share knowledge and experience. This enables the combination of different assets - e.g. specific expertise and technology or cultural proximity - as a way to maximise the benefits for all actors, especially among developing countries that face similar challenges. All respondents from small islands replied that receiving support to carry out south-south co-operation was their main motivation for engaging in triangular co-operation, followed by building capacity to manage development co-operation, and to learn and share experience with partners in south-south co-operation. Samoa replied that countries in the Pacific are eager to learn from their peers through triangular co-operation.

What are the trends in Triangular Co-operation, especially in small island developing states?

The OECD has now conducted two surveys on triangular co-operation, in 2012 and 2015. Comparing the findings, it is clear that triangular co-operation remains highly relevant. More project data and evaluations are now available and point to an increase in the number of projects, their budgets and durations, also in the case of small island developing states. There is a great variety of triangular co-operation in terms of scale, scope, regions, sectors and project types. Moreover, respondents to the 2015 survey mentioned a more strategic use of triangular co-operation by pooling different actors' expertise and resources. In the long run, this evolution can lead to greater ownership by the actors involved, the involvement of other actors, scaling-up and joint implementation of activities designed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the actions agreed at the UN Conference on Small Islands Developing States in Samoa (2014).

What's the methodology behind these findings?

The OECD conducted a survey on triangular co-operation between May and August 2015 and received 73 replies (from the 203 questionnaires sent out). Of these, 60 respondents provided detailed information on over 400 triangular co-operation programmes, projects and activities. The report "Dispelling the myths of triangular co-operation - Evidence from the 2015 OECD survey on triangular co-operation" (available at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-cooperation.htm>) provides a detailed description and analysis of the survey findings.